Classical Quarterly 61.2 704–721 (2011) Printed in Great Britain
doi:10.1017/S0009838811000085

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE *BREVIARIUM* OF FESTUS*

Surprisingly little is clear about Festus and his *Breuiarium*. Among scholars, it is agreed that the work known as Festus' *Breuiarium* was indeed written by a man named Festus, probably around the year A.D. 370, and certainly later than 363, the date of the most recent event described in the *Breuiarium* itself. There, clarity ends. Who Festus was remains a subject of debate. He may have been one Festus of Tridentum, identified by Ammianus Marcellinus as *magister memoriae* and then Proconsul of Asia under the emperor Valens; or he may have been another Festus, not of Tridentum, possibly also *magister memoriae* and Proconsul of Asia under Valens, possibly not. The evidence is too scanty and ambiguous to rule out any of these possibilities.[1] In the case of Festus' text, too, interpretations differ: on the one hand, there is the opinion that Festus wrote his *Breuiarium* as a brief textbook of Roman history, containing basic facts, either for the purpose of preparing new, uneducated senators of the late fourth century to mingle with a literate and historically informed Roman aristocracy (Momigliano) or for the purpose of conveying to Valens and his uneducated officials all they needed to know about the history of the eastern Roman provinces, in preparation for their impending war with Shapur, king of Persia (Cameron).[2] Then there is the opinion of M. Peachin, that Festus wrote his *Breuiarium* in connection with Valens' preparations for war with Persia, but as a panegyric of sorts, rather than as a historical primer. According to Peachin,

* My sincere thanks to Susanna Elm, Erich Gruen, Kenneth Jones, Andreas Mehl, Fergus Millar and *CQ*'s anonymous referee, who read drafts of this article carefully, offered stimulating comments about its themes and made concrete suggestions about how to improve the text. The first impetus to pursue the project came from Susanna Elm and, in gratitude for her guidance and unflagging encouragement over the past decade, I dedicate this article to her.

[1] The ancient references to a Festus who may have been the author of the *Breuiarium* appear to be as follows: Amm. Marc. 29.1.36–44, 29.2.22–8; Zos. 4.15.2–3; Eunap. *VS* 7.6.6–13 (Loeb marginal numeration, 480–1); Lib. *Orationes* 1.156–9, 27.29, Epistle 152 (Seeck's numeration); Petrus Patricius, in *FHG* 4.39; *IG* 3.635; *CIL* 6.537, 10.212, 11.2997; *Cod. Theod.* 8.4.11. See e.g. O. Seeck, s.v. 'Festus', *RE*; and Festus, *Abrégé des hauts faits du peuple Romain*, ed. and trans. M.-P. Arnaud-Lindet (Paris, 1994), vii–xiv. On the continuing dispute over whether Festus of Tridentum wrote the *Breuiarium*, see e.g. B. Baldwin, 'Festus the historian', *Historia* 27 (1978), 197–205. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1971), list Festus of Tridentum as the author of the *Breuiarium*, but, as Baldwin and den Boer maintain, the identification is by no means certain; not only is Festus (the historian) identified as *magister memoriae* under Valens in only a single manuscript of his *Breuiarium* – albeit one whose ninth-century scribe is perhaps unlikely to have supplied the official title from Ammianus' description of Festus of Tridentum – but it is also quite possible that two men named Festus held the same office under the same emperor. See J.W. Eadie (ed. and introd.), *The* Breuiarium *of Festus: A Critical Edition with Historical Commentary* (London, 1967), 4–7; and, in opposition, W. den Boer, *Some Minor Roman Historians* (Leiden, 1972), 182–3. On the ninth-century manuscript of Ammianus' history, see C.A. Clark, *The Text Tradition of Ammianus Marcellinus* (New Haven, CT, 1904), 3–4.

[2] A. Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian historiography in the fourth century', in A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), 85–6; A. Cameron, review of *The Breuiarium of Festus* by J. W. Eadie, *CR* 83 (1969), 305–7.

Festus' *Breuiarium* is 'perfectly suited to all the vicissitudes of an unpredictable war': Festus makes a point of drawing a contrast between invariably successful Roman military expansion in the West and the less successful wars against Persia in the East, presumably in order to protect Valens' honour whether he should win (like his glorious Western predecessors) or lose (like many great commanders in the East) against the Persians.[3] Finally there is the opinion, apparently the most widely held in English-language scholarship of the past forty years, that Festus intended to justify and encourage a Roman campaign against Persia – that he 'was concerned to encourage Valens to Persian campaigns by reviewing past Roman glories in that area' (Baldwin); that he was a paragon of 'optimism' who 'preferred the emperor who enlarged the empire by means of conquests' and 'wished Valens … to take a firmer line with the Parthians than had been favoured by Constantine the Great' (den Boer); and that he offered Valens 'jingoistic encouragement' in the form of an 'upbeat account' of Roman history, 'in part to justify his intended campaign against the Persians' (Bird).[4] Most recently of all, and with by far the most reference to the details of contemporary Roman–Persian relations, Lenski has endorsed this last interpretation; Festus' purpose, he writes, 'is beyond doubt: to employ historical discourse as a practical instrument to prepare for and justify war with Persia'.[5] Valens, Lenski explains, wanted to 'promote the empire's legal rights to territories that Shapur argued should be his', a policy for which Festus provided ideological support, employing in his *Breuiarium* 'the rhetoric of aggression, expansion, and realpolitik'.[6]

The authority of Lenski and Festus' other expositors notwithstanding, reaching any satisfactory conclusion about Festus' aims would require a more thorough and detailed study than has yet been undertaken. Although one important basis for the investigation of his aims already exists in the form of careful studies of Festus' likely sources, which reveal many instances in which he deviated from them, the significance of those deviations has hardly been examined.[7] In fact, despite all talk of Festus as having written with a view to Valens' preparations for war with Persia, very little effort has yet been expended on the more general task of placing the *Breuiarium* in the context of contemporary disagreements about Roman provincial expansion and relations with Persia. What is needed, among other things, is a systematic search for disagreements not only between Festus and his probable sources but also between Festus and his approximate contemporaries – Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, the authors of the *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome de Caesaribus*,

[3] M. Peachin, 'The purpose of Festus' *Breviarium*', *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985), 158–61.

[4] Baldwin (n. 1), 204; den Boer (n. 1), 213; H.W. Bird, 'Introduction', in Eutropius, *Breuiarium ab Vrbe Condita*, Translated Texts for Historians 14 (Liverpool, 1993), xxv. Eadie (n. 1), 170, holds a view similar to Baldwin's.

[5] N. Lenski, *End of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century* A.D. (Berkeley, CA, 2002), 188.

[6] Ibid., 193, 195.

[7] Studies of Festus' sources include R. Jacobi, *De Festi Breuiarii Fontibus* (Bonn, 1874); W. Hartke, *De saeculi quarti exeuntis historiarum scriptoribus quaestiones* (Leipzig, 1932); E. Wölfflin, 'Das *Breviarium* des Festus', *Archiv für Lateinische Lexikographie* 13 (1904), 69–97, 173–80; Eadie (n. 1) and Arnaud-Lindet (n. 1). For a useful survey of several such studies, including Wölfflin's, see H. Sanders, 'The lost epitome of Livy', in H. Sanders (ed.), *Roman Historical Sources and Institutions*, Univ. Michigan Studies, Humanistic Ser., vol. 1 (New York, 1904), 149–260. A greater focus upon the significance of Festus' deviations from his sources and contemporaries, though with conclusions that should only be considered suggestive and preliminary, can be found in den Boer (n. 1).

Ammianus, Eunapius and Libanius, for example – followed by an imaginative but disciplined investigation of how these disagreements might reflect disagreements over Roman 'foreign policy' and, more specifically, Roman interactions with Persia, in so far as we can discern the details of those interactions. Even without such a comprehensive study, however, a careful reading of Festus' text reveals that the now-conventional wisdom about Festus – that he was an expansionist advisor or propagandist for Valens, writing on behalf of a Roman military expansion into territory claimed by Persia – is badly in need of qualification, if not wholesale revision. Though the *Breuiarium* gives every reason to suppose that Festus, as Lenski claims, was concerned with the question of Rome's legal claims to eastern territories, he cannot be taken simply to have argued or implied that any claim Valens might have wished to make would have been just. Nor can he be taken more generally to have been simply an 'expansionist', nor his *Breuiarium* taken to contain, in unadulterated form, either 'jingoistic encouragement' or the 'rhetoric of aggression, expansion, and realpolitik'. In fact, his text gives reason to suppose that he had reservations about the extension of Roman dominion, and that, if he was indeed writing at Valens' request, he was aiming to convey something too complex to be categorized as mere 'optimism'.

Most scholarly summaries divide the *Breuiarium* into four parts: an introduction, consisting of a dedication, a brief chronology of Roman kings, consuls and emperors, and a 'brief sketch' of how much Rome advanced (*quantum Roma profecerit*) under each (sections I–III); followed by a two-part 'catalogue of provinces', with the western provinces (IV–IX) preceding the eastern (X–XIV); concluding with a description of Rome's battles with Parthia and Persia (XV–XXX).[8] The authority for such a scheme appears to come from Festus himself, who introduces each of the four parts with a statement of what will follow. The problem with the scheme, however, is that taking Festus' own introductions too seriously results in a disjointed view of the structure of his *Breuiarium* and therefore further obscures his purposes. From the dedication, in which Festus declares his intention to fulfil Valens' request for a 'breuis' by 'indicating' rather than 'elocuting' past events (*res gestas signabo, non eloquar*), one could easily infer that Festus meant simply to supply an uneducated Valens with a brief outline of the basic facts of Roman history (I).[9] Such an inference would be confirmed by Festus' colourless introductions to sections III (*Sub his igitur tribus imperandi generibus, hoc est regio consulari imperatorio, quantum Roma profecerit, breuiter intimabo*: 'How much Rome has advanced under these three types of rule – that is, regnal, consular and imperial – I shall briefly sketch') and IV (*Quo ordine autem singulas prouincias Romana res publica adsecuta sit, infra ostenditur*: 'Moreover, in what order the Roman state acquired individual provinces is shown below'). On the other hand, clear indica-

[8] For example, G. Bonamente, 'Minor Latin historians of the fourth century, A.D.', in G. Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 115–16; den Boer (n. 1), 197. Teuffel, among others, divides the work more broadly into two sections, the first (III–XIV) 'geographical' and the second (XV–XXIX) 'historical'. See W.S. Teuffel, *History of Roman Literature*, rev. L. Schwabe, 5th edn, trans. G.C.W. Warr, vol. 2 (New York, 1892, rept. 1967), §416.

[9] Latin quotations come from Arnaud-Lindet's text (n. 1). For all English quotations, I have used the Banchich and Meka translation (based on Wagener's Latin text), with extensive revisions of my own. See Festus, *Breviarium of the Accomplishments of the Roman People*, trans. T.M. Banchich and J.A. Meka, <http://www.roman-emperors.org/festus.htm>. I have also consulted Arnaud-Lindet's French translation (n. 1).

tions that Festus meant to focus Valens' attention on the East, in preparation for a campaign against Persia, do appear in sections X and XV. At the beginning of section X, he writes:

> Nunc Eoas partes totumque Orientem ac positas sub uicino sole prouincias, qui auctores sceptris tuis parauerint, explicabo, quo studium clementiae tuae, quod in isdem propagandis habes, amplius incitetur.
>
> I shall now describe those responsible for acquiring for your dominion the Eastern parts and the entire East and the provinces located just beneath the sun, so that the interest of your clemency, which you have in these same being enlarged, may be more amply aroused.

Also indicating a focus on the East, and particularly Roman conflict with Persia and Parthia, is Festus' introduction to section XV:

> Scio nunc, inclite princeps, quo tua pergat intentio. Requiris profecto, quotiens Babyloniae ac Romanorum arma conlata sint et quibus uicibus sagittis pila contenderint. Breuiter euentus enumerabo bellorum: furto hostes in paucis inuenies esse laetatos, uera autem uirtute semper Romanos probabis exstitisse uictores.
>
> Now I know, renowned prince, where your intent is heading. You assuredly seek to know how often the arms of Babylonia and Rome were joined and in what places javelins contended with arrows. I shall briefly enumerate the outcomes of the wars. In a few, you will find that the enemy rejoiced as a result of trickery; you will judge that the Romans, however, came out the victors always by means of genuine virtue.

On their own, these two passages may not allow the question of Festus' expansionism to be addressed decisively,[10] but at the very least they indicate an attention to the East, and particularly Persia, which by no means appears in Festus' brief introductions to the earlier sections of his *Breuiarium*. Using his introductory statements as the basis for a four-part summary of the *Breuiarium* therefore creates a problem – namely, how to reconcile the various apparently different parts, the first two of which seem far less relevant to war with Persia than the other two – which a more detailed examination of the text as a whole would prevent from ever arising.[11] A longer and less brutally schematic summary shows quite clearly that the *Breuiarium* is more or less a unity. Not only is the so-called 'catalogue of provinces' not a catalogue at all, but the entire work, beginning with section III, is a history of the spread of Roman dominion and the acquisition of provinces by Rome. Region by region, and chronologically within each region, it describes how Rome expanded, devoting by far the most space to and including by far the most detail in its treatment of the eastern empire and, in particular, the provinces for which Rome fought and negotiated with Parthia and Persia.

The *Breuiarium* begins with the dedication quoted above, followed by a brief enumeration of the lengths of each of three periods in a tripartite scheme of Roman history: the period of 243 years in which Rome was ruled by kings, followed by

[10] For a useful but incomplete discussion of their ambiguities, see Peachin (n. 3), 159.

[11] Den Boer (n. 1), for example, considers sections I–IX to have been a necessity by virtue of the *Breuiarium*'s genre, but 'not specifically geared to the emperor's new expedition' (177). A clear articulation of the supposed 'problem' of how to reconcile Festus' introduction and catalogue of provinces with his history of Roman wars in the East can be found in Peachin (n. 3), 158–61.

477 years of rule by consuls, followed by 407 years of rule by emperors, from Octavian Augustus to Jovian. The next section (III) begins with Festus' promise to 'sketch briefly how much Rome has advanced under these three types of rule'. Under the kings, 'Roman *imperium* did not advance beyond Portus and Ostia'. Under the consuls, Roman *imperium* advanced through Italy 'beyond the Po' (*trans Paduam*), Africa, Spain, Gaul and Britain (as tributaries), Illyricum, Achaea, 'all the way to the Danube' (*ad Danuuium usque peruenit*), into Asia, Armenia and up to Mesopotamia, with various peoples 'conquered' or 'warred with' and treaties made with others along the way. Under the emperors, still more regions were added, including all of Pontus, Armenia Maior and the East: Mesopotamia, Assyria, Arabia and Egypt. This paragraph proves to be a summary of what follows.

In section IV, Festus sets out to show 'in what order the Roman state acquired the individual provinces' (*quo ordine autem singulas prouincias Romana res publica adsecuta sit*). What follows, however, is not entirely in chronological order but rather in chronological order by geographic area. First comes Sicily, followed by Carthage and provinces of Africa, with (erroneous) reference to the defeat of King Juba by 'Augustus Caesar'. In the next section, Festus describes the extension of Roman *imperium* over Spain, followed by the creation of provinces in Gaul, Britain and Illyricum, including the conquest of Dacia by Trajan and the aftermath under Gallienus and Aurelian (V–VIII). Festus then moves to the acquisition of the six provinces of Thrace, followed by 'the eastern parts and the entire East and the provinces located just beneath the sun' (IX–X). This last region he treats in far greater detail; his description of its various parts – from Asia and Rhodes to Galatia, the Taurus Mountains, Cyprus and the East – occupies 90 lines, as opposed to 22, for example, devoted to the provinces of Gaul (X–XIV).

Next, after declaring his intent to 'enumerate briefly the outcomes of wars' between Babylonia and Rome, Festus proceeds to focus the rest of his *Breuiarium* upon Armenia and three eastern provinces: Mesopotamia, Assyria and Arabia (XV). The wars over these provinces, and the circumstances of their acquisition and loss, are described in chronological order, beginning with negotiations between Arsaces and Sulla, followed by the eastern campaigns of Lucullus, Pompey and Crassus (XV–XVII). After treating battles with the Persians conducted by P. Ventidius Bassus and Marcus Antonius, Festus proceeds to describe Roman disputes, negotiations and battles with Persia – and the gain and loss of eastern provinces – under the emperors: Octavian Augustus, Nero, Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Alexander Severus, Valerian, Gallienus (with reference to Odenathus and Zenobia), Aurelian, Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Constantine, Constantius II, Julian and Jovian (XVIII–XXIX).

Throughout this history of Roman imperial expansion and acquisition of provinces, Festus' attention to the legal aspect of Roman dominion and the justness of Roman acquisitions suggests an intention to give advice oriented toward questions of justice – advice, moreover, that can by no means be described as simply for or against war with Persia. The fact that Festus employs language and treats facts that display a concern with law and administration is clear, at any rate. Not only does he describe the advance of Roman power with reference to law – he summarizes the acquisition of Pontus, Armenia Maior, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Arabia and Egypt as an extension of the *ius imperii Romani* – but he also makes sure, in the case of almost every province, to indicate how it has been governed. Sardinia and Corsica, for example, he describes in two sentences, the longer of which reads as

follows: *Iuncta administratio harum insularum fuerat, post suos praetores habuit, nunc singulae a praesidibus reguntur* ('There had been a joint administration of these islands; then they had their own praetors; now they are ruled individually by *praesides*') (IV). Nor is this pattern unusual. In the case of many provinces, Festus indicates whether they are 'consular' or 'praesidal' – or, in the case of Egypt, subject to the control of a *iudex*.[12] He also pays attention to their precise status – whether it be tributary (in the case of a *tributaria*), dependent (*consuetudo parendi*) or genuinely provincial (that is, under the *ius prouinciae*).[13]

Nor does Festus merely refer to the legal and administrative character of Roman rule; he also describes the advance of Roman power in such a way as to indicate whether it was just or unjust in the case of each individual province, suggesting in almost every case that it was indeed just. The acquisition of the Spanish provinces, to take one of many examples, Festus describes as simply the suppression of multiple attempts at armed resistance:

> Hispanis primum auxilium aduersum Afros per Scipionem tulimus. Rebellantes Lusitanos in Hispania per Decimum Brutum obtinuimus et usque Gadis ad Oceanum mare peruenimus. Postea, ad Hispanos tumultuantes Sylla missus eos uicit. Celtiberi in Hispania saepe rebellauere, sed misso iuniore Scipione cum excidio Numantiae subacti sunt. Omnes prope Hispaniae Sertoriani occasione belli per Metellum et Pompeium in dicionem acceptae sunt; postea, prorogato quinquennii imperio, a Pompeio perdomitae sunt. Ad extremum quoque ab Octauiano Caesare Augusto Cantabri et Astures, qui freti montibus resistebant, deleti sunt. Ac per omnes Hispanias sex nunc sunt prouinciae … (V)
>
> First we bore aid to the Spaniards against the Africans through Scipio. We obtained the Lusitanians in Spain, who were fighting back, through Decimus Brutus, and we extended from Gades to the ocean. Afterwards, Sulla, having been dispatched against the Spaniards, who were in an uproar, conquered them. The Celtiberians in Spain often fought back, but, when Scipio the Younger had been dispatched, with the destruction of Numantia they were subjugated. Nearly all Spain was brought under sway through Metellus and Pompey on the occasion of the Sertorian War; afterwards, when his *imperium* had been extended for five years, they were subjugated by Pompey. Ultimately, too, the Cantabrians and Asturians, who, relying on the mountains, were resisting, were destroyed by Octavian Caesar Augustus. And now through all Spain there are six provinces …

Of course the logical and temporal conundrum posed by the mere suggestion that armed resistance (*rebellare*) was in some cases the *cause* rather than the effect of Roman conquest strongly suggests that Festus intended to portray the conquest in those cases as just, or at least justified. The alternative – that Festus simply inherited the conundrum from sources that he copied verbatim and without any intent to comment on the justice or injustice of Roman conquest – cannot be confirmed by any other existing sources. In any case, it is difficult to ignore the blatant partisanship of Festus' brutally short summary of the Punic Wars: 'Africa fought back three times' (*Ter Africa rebellauit*) (IV).

Armed resistance is not the only cause of defensive conquest in the *Breuiarium*. Festus describes some conquests as responses to acts of hostility against Rome, such as the acquisition of Syria from Antiochus, who 'led a formidable war against the Roman people' (XI); the conquest of Gaul, provoked by the Gauls' sack of

[12] E.g. Festus, *Breuiarium*, V, XIII.
[13] E.g. ibid., VI, X, XI.

Rome (VI); and the conquest of Achaea, which Festus characterizes as simply a response to violence suffered by Roman ambassadors in Corinth:

Libera diu sub amicitiis nostris Achaia fuit: ad extremum legatis Romanorum apud Corinthum uiolatis per Lucium Mummium proconsulem capta Corintho Achaia omnis obtenta est. (VII)

For a while Achaea was free under our friendship; finally, after ambassadors of the Romans had been done violence at Corinth, and after Corinth had been captured by the proconsul Lucius Mummius, all Achaea was obtained.

Some provinces were conquered by Rome as a response to their having allied themselves with her enemies, as in the case of Galatia (allied with Antiochus) and the Cilicians and Isaurians (allied with 'pirates and seagoing marauders').[14] Others were acquired by another just means: legal inheritance, as in the case of Asia, willed to Rome by King Attalus, and Paphlagonia, made a Roman province upon the death of King Palamenes (XI).

The attention that Festus consistently pays to the justice of Rome's provincial acquisitions also extends to cases of unjust acquisition, such as that of Cyprus:

Cyprus, famosa diuitiis, paupertatem populi Romani, ut occuparetur, sollicitauit. Eam rex foederatus regebat, sed tanta fuit penuria aerarii et tam ingens opum fama Cypriarum, ut lege data Cyprus confiscari iuberetur. Quo accepto rex Cyprius nuntio uenenum sumpsit, ut uitam prius quam diuitias amitteret. Cato Cyprias opes Romam nauibus aduexit. Ita ius eius insulae auarius magis quam iustius sumus adsecuti. (XIII)

Cyprus, renowned for riches, seduced the poverty of the Roman people, with the result that she was occupied. A treaty-bound king was ruling her, but so great was the poverty of the Roman treasury and so immense the report of the wealth of Cyprus that, after a law had been issued, Cyprus was ordered to be confiscated. When this announcement had been received, the Cyprian king took poison in order to forfeit his life before his riches. Cato transported the Cyprian wealth to Rome by means of ships. And so we obtained authority over this island more avariciously than justly.

Festus' distinction between just and avaricious acquisition of territory, which appears most explicitly but not exclusively in the passage above, should serve as a warning against imagining him to have been simply an expansionist partisan. Although it is clear that he portrays the vast majority of Roman provincial acquisitions as having been just, and that he probably consciously distorted the historical record to do so, the example of Cyprus demonstrates that he neither considered the acquisition of provinces to be by nature a just act nor believed Rome to be incapable of injustice in her territorial acquisitions. In fact, Festus' detailed treatment of the provincial acquisitions disputed by Persia reveals even more clearly his intent to show that the justice – and the divine sanction – of Rome's territorial expansion had definite limits.

On the one hand, Festus describes many of the campaigns against Persia as just and, in at least one case, as divinely sanctioned. He portrays Gordian III's eastern campaign, like so many other instances of Roman conquest, as the suppression of armed resistance: *Sub Gordiano, ... rebellantes Parthi ingentibus proeliis contusi*

[14] Ibid., XII (*piratis ac praedonibus maritimis*).

sunt ('Under Gordian, … the Parthians, fighting back, were beaten in great battles') (XXII). In the case of Constantine, Festus emphasizes the justice of the impending campaign against Persia by insinuating that it served as punishment for Persian raids within Roman territory, and that Persian supplications for peace were therefore unworthy of respect:

Constantinus rerum dominus extremo uitae suae tempore expeditionem parauit in Persas. Toto enim orbe pacatis gentibus et recenti de Gothis uictoria gloriosior cunctis in Persas descendebat agminibus. Sub cuius aduentu Babyloniae in tantum regna trepidarunt, ut supplex ad eum legatio Persarum adcurret, facturos se imperata promitterent, nec tamen pro adsiduis eruptionibus, quas sub Constantio Caesare per Orientem temptauerant, ueniam mererentur. (XXVI)

In the final portion of his life, Constantine, master of affairs, prepared an expedition against Persia. For, more glorious since the races throughout the world had been pacified and the recent victory over the Goths, he was descending on Persia with all his armies. During his approach, the court at Babylonia was so frightened that a suppliant delegation of Persians hastened to him and promised that they would obey his commands, but, in return for the constant raids which they had attempted throughout the East under Constantius Caesar, they did not deserve forgiveness.

Festus even suggests that Alexander Severus' Persian campaign had divine sanction; alluding to Alexander's Macedonian namesake, Festus describes him as having been 'reborn as if by some destiny for the destruction of the Persian race' (*quasi fato quodam in exitium Persicae gentis renatus*) (XXII). Festus' additional reference to the justice of Alexander's campaign takes a subtler form: 'He had Ulpian, the jurisconsult', Festus writes, without any reference to Alexander's domestic duties, 'as his *magister scriniorum*'.[15]

The most explicit suggestion of a connection between justice – or at least Roman moral superiority – and Rome's acquisition of territory from Persia can be found in Festus' account of Diocletian's campaign. After Diocletian had 'utterly annihilated' (*ad internicionem cecidit*) Persian forces in Armenia Maior,

[r]ex Persarum Narseus effugit, uxor eius et filiae captae sunt et cum maxima pudicitiae custodia reseruatae. Pro qua admiratione Persae non modo armis, sed etiam moribus Romanos superiores esse confessi sunt. Mesopotamiam cum Transtigritanis regionibus reddiderunt. Pax facta usque ad nostram memoriam rei publicae utilis perdurauit. (XXV)

[t]he King of the Persians, Narses, fled; his wife and daughters were captured and kept with the utmost concern for their chastity. In admiration for this, the Persians admitted that the Romans were superior not only in arms but also in behaviour. They returned Mesopotamia, along with the Transtigritanian regions. The peace made endured to the benefit of the state right up to our own time.

Why the Persians returned Mesopotamia and the Transtigritanian regions, Festus does not explicitly say. What he is careful to report, though, is not simply the fact that Narses fled and that his wife and daughters were captured but also the detail – not, apparently, preserved in any sources believed to have been used by Festus – that the chastity of Narses' wife and daughters was not allowed to be violated, and that the Persians themselves praised Roman *mores* as superior to their

[15] On the likelihood that Festus held a similar office, see below, final paragraph.

own.[16] This fact precedes Festus' mention of the peace settlement in an earlier, more abbreviated account of Diocletian's eastern campaign as well:

… ac Diocletiani temporibus uictis prima congressione Romanis, secundo autem conflictu superato rege Narseo, uxore eius ac filiabus captis et cum summa pudicitiae custodia reseruatis pace facta Mesopotamia est restituta et supra ripam Tigridis limes est reformatus… . (XIV)

[I]n the times of Diocletian, after the Romans had been defeated in an initial encounter but Narses had been overcome in a second engagement, and his wife and daughters captured and cared for with the utmost regard for their chastity, when peace had been made Mesopotamia was returned and the frontier restored beyond beyond the bank of the Tigris … .

In both descriptions, Festus mentions the Persians' praise of Roman *mores* immediately before adding that Persia returned Mesopotamia and the 'Transtigritanian regions' to Rome and negotiated a lasting and beneficial peace. He thereby undermines, by the power of suggestion, the perhaps more plausible assumption that the advantages that accrued to Rome after Diocletian's campaign were the result solely of the Persians' having admitted Roman military superiority; Diocletian's lasting territorial acquisition, it would seem, should also be attributed to the superiority of Roman *mores*.

Inversely, Festus on several occasions also connects Roman loss of territory to Persia with the vices of the emperors during whose reigns the losses occurred. His descriptions of Nero and Hadrian, whom he contrasts with Trajan, provide a pair of uncomplicated examples:

Nero, quem turpissimum imperatorem Romana est passa res publica, amisit Armeniam. Duae tunc Romanae legiones sub iugum a Persis missae extremo dedecore Romani exercitus sacramenta foedarunt. Traianus, qui post Augustum Romanae rei publicae mouit lacertos, Armeniam recepit a Parthis, sublato diademate Armeniae maioris regnum ademit. Albanis regem dedit; Hiberos, Bosphorianos, Colchos in fidem Romanae dicionis recepit; Osrhoenorum loca et Arabum occupauit; Carduenos, Marcomedos obtinuit, Anthemusium, optimam Persidis regionem, Seleuciam, Ctesiphontem, Babyloniam accepit ac tenuit. Vsque ad Indiae fines post Alexandrum accessit. In mari rubro classem instituit. Prouincias fecit Armeniam, Mesopotamiam, Assyriam, quae inter Tigridem atque Euphraten sita inriguis amnibus instar Aegypti fecundatur. Hadrianum gloriae Traiani certum est inuidisse. Qui ei successor in imperio sponte propria reuocatis exercitibus Armeniam, Mesopotamiam, Assyriam concessit et inter Romanos ac Persas Euphraten medium esse uoluit. (XX)

Nero, the vilest emperor the Roman state has endured, lost Armenia. Then two Roman legions, having been sent under the yoke by the Persians, violated their oaths, to the great disgrace of the Roman army. Trajan, who, after Augustus, set in motion the muscle of the Roman state, regained Armenia from the Parthians, and, after the crown had been offered, abolished the kingdom of Armenia Maior. He gave a king to the Albani; received Hiberians, Bosphorians and Colchians into the protection of Roman authority; occupied localities of the Oshroenians and Arabs; obtained the Carduenians and Marcomedians; received and maintained Anthemusia (Persia's finest region), Seleucia, Ctesiphon and Babylon. After Alexander, he even reached the borders of India. He established a fleet in the Red Sea. He made provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria, which, situated between the

[16] The source noted by Jacobi, at any rate, is Petrus Patricius, who only mentions that Narses' wife and daughter were returned to him. Eutropius does not mention even this. See Jacobi (n. 7), 51–2.

Tigris and Euphrates, is made fertile by the flooding rivers, like Egypt. It is certain that Hadrian envied Trajan's glory. As [Trajan's] successor in power, after the armies had been recalled, he surrendered Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria on his own initiative and willed that the Euphrates be the median between the Romans and the Persians.

Festus declares neither that Armenia was simply lost nor that it was lost during the reign of Nero, but that Nero himself, the *imperator turpissimus*, lost Armenia.[17] Hadrian, too, did not simply relinquish control of the provinces that Trajan had gloriously acquired for Rome; he relinquished them on account of envy, and moreover *sponte* – on his own initiative.

It would seem, from these examples, that Festus meant to depict Roman territorial expansion as just, as divinely sanctioned and as the aim of morally praiseworthy emperors, and inversely to associate the loss of territory with imperial vice. Other examples, however, show even more clearly than the example of Cyprus that Festus cannot be taken as simply an advocate for expansion. In the cases of Marcus Antonius, Carus, Crassus and Julian, he suggests that certain types of expansion did not have divine sanction: namely, expansion undertaken with vicious motives and expansion that passed beyond certain geographical boundaries.

Marcus Antonius' army, for example, appears to have endured divine punishments after engaging the Parthians in Media:

M. Antonius Mediam ingressus, quae nunc Madena appellatur, bellum Parthis intulit, et primis eos proeliis uicit. Verum post, duabus legionibus amissis, cum fame, pestilentia, tempestatibus premeretur, uix per Armeniam, Persis insequentibus, reuocauit exercitum, tanto per momenta temporis terrore perculsus, ut a gladiatore suo percuti postularet, ne uiuus ueniret in hostium potestatem. (XVIII)

M. Antonius, having invaded Media, which now is called Madena, waged war against the Parthians and defeated them in the initial battles. Afterwards, after two legions had been lost, when he was being overwhelmed with famine, pestilence and tempests, he barely withdrew the army through Armenia with the Persians in pursuit, momentarily struck by such great terror that he contemplated being run through by one of his own gladiators, lest he come into the enemies' power alive.

That Festus intended to present the famine, pestilence and tempests as signs of divine disapproval is of course not entirely clear; he does not explicitly make any reference to the divine. That famine, pestilence and tempests often appear in other, contemporary authors as divine signs, however, suggests that Festus may have expected his audience to draw inferences on their own, without needing them spelled out. In Orosius' *History* of 416 A.D., famine and plague – and, it should be mentioned, military defeat – appear again and again as 'divine punishments of [human] sins'.[18] In Ammianus' *Res gestae*, tempests – or at least thunder and lightning – appear explicitly as divine signs.[19] Admittedly, even given that Festus

[17] For a history of late antique descriptions of Nero, with some reference to that of Festus, see W. Jacob-Sonnabend, *Untersuchungen zum Nero-Bild der Spätantike*, Altertumswissenschaft Texte und Studien 18 (Hildesheim, 1990), esp. 89–90.

[18] Oros. 1.1. Among divine punishments, Orosius lists 'enemies, famines, diseases, and prodigies' (5.6.2). For an example of divinely dispensed pestilence, see also Oros. 3.4.1–2.

[19] Amm. Marc. 21.1.11. For a brief discussion and references to other discussions of divine signs in Ammianus, see D. den Hengst, 'The scientific digressions in Ammianus' *Res Gestae*', in J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (edd.), *Cognitio Gestarum* (New York, 1992),

did intend the afflictions to be interpreted as divine punishments, or as signs of divine disapproval, the transgression that prompted them is not manifest. In the absence of any other explicit possibility, it would seem that Antony should not have invaded Media.

In the case of Carus, Festus' reference to divine punishment is more explicit:

Cari imperatoris uictoria de Persis nimium potens superno numini uisa est. Nam ad inuidiam caelestis indignationis pertinauisse credenda est. Is enim ingressus Persidam quasi nullo obsistente uastauit, Cochen et Ctesiphontem, urbes Persarum nobilissimas, cepit. Cum uictor totius gentis castra supra Tigridem haberet, ui fulminis ictus interiit. (XXIV)

Emperor Carus' victory over the Persians seemed too mighty to the celestial divinity. For it must be believed to have led to the jealousy of heavenly indignation. For, after he had entered Persia, he devastated it as if no one opposed him and took Coche and Ctesiphon, the noblest cities of the Persians. While, as victor over the entire race, he had his camp beyond the Tigris, he died, struck by a bolt of lightning.

Carus' death by lightning, Festus explains, was the result of divine jealousy, provoked by the excessive 'mightiness' of Carus' victory over the Persians. What made this victory too mighty, it would seem, was either his having devastated Persia or his having taken the cities of Coche and Ctesiphon or his having encamped beyond the Tigris – that is, on the east side – or perhaps all three. Now, although it may be impossible to supply compelling evidence that one should be preferred to the other two as the grounds of divine disapproval, there are at least two reasons to think that Festus placed greater emphasis on the encampment beyond the Tigris. First, Festus explicitly connects the lightning strike, temporally, with the encampment; this is the weaker basis for preferring it. Second, and far more persuasive, the encampment beyond the Tigris resembles the reason offered in another account of Carus' death by lightning, an account ridiculed and dismissed by the author of Carus' biography in the *Historia Augusta*, who presents allegedly eyewitness testimony, in the form of a letter, that Carus was not killed by lightning at all:

Hanc ego epistulam idcirco indidi, quod plerique dicunt uim fati quandam esse, ut Romanus princeps Ctesifontem transire non possit, ideoque Carum fulmine absumptum, quod eos fines transgredi cuperet, qui fataliter constituti sunt. sed sibi habeat artes suas timiditas, calcanda uirtutibus. licet plane ac licebit (per sacratissimum Caesarem Maximianum constitit) Persas uincere atque ultra eos progredi, et futurum reor, si a nostris non deseratur promissus numinum fauor.

I have inserted this letter for the reason that many declare that there is a certain decree of Fate that no Roman emperor may advance beyond Ctesiphon, and that Carus was struck by the lightning because he desired to pass beyond the bounds which have been established by fate. But let cowardice, on which courage should set its heel, keep its devices for itself. For clearly it is granted to us and always will be granted … to conquer the Persians and advance beyond them, and I believe this will come to pass if only the promised favour of the divinities is not abandoned by us.[20]

39–46. A far more comprehensive discussion of divine signs, but in the historical and imperial-biographical literature of the earlier empire, can be found in A. Vigourt, *Les présages impériaux d'Auguste à Domitien* (Paris, 2001).

[20] *Historia Augusta*, *Vita Cari Carini et Numeriani*, ed. and trans. D. Magie, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (New York, 1932), IX; ed. E. Hohl, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1971), 9.

Carus' biographer in the *Historia Augusta* matches two versions of Carus' death with two interpretations of divine will; the author himself claims that Roman expansion will be favoured by the gods as long as the Romans themselves do not spurn their favour, and that Carus was not struck down by divinely sent lightning, whereas those who claim he was struck by lightning believe that a geographical boundary to Roman expansion has been divinely established, and that Carus' advance beyond Ctesiphon violated that boundary. If Festus is taking sides in this disagreement, then he is clearly taking the latter side, for he claims that Carus was struck by lightning, and he makes a point of mentioning that Carus' camp was beyond the Tigris.[21]

In his descriptions of Julian's and Crassus' failed Persian campaigns, Festus presents a more comprehensive mixture of the geographical and moral transgressions that appear piecemeal in his accounts of Marcus Antonius, Carus and the Roman acquisition of Cyprus. Take, for example, Festus' description of Julian:

Iuliano in externos hostes expertae felicitatis principi aduersum Persas modus defuit. Is enim ingenti apparatu, utpote totius orbis regnator, infesta in Parthos signa commouit, instructam commeatibus classem per Euphraten inuexit. Strenuus in ingressu multa Persarum oppida et castella aut suscepit dedita aut manu cepit. Cum contra Ctesiphontem in ripa Tigridis et Euphratis iam mixti castra haberet, ludosque campestres, ut hosti sollicitudinem demeret, per diem agitasset, noctis medio inpositos nauibus milites in ulteriorem ripam repente transtulit. Qui per ardua nitentes, qua difficilis etiam per diem et nullo prohibente fuisset ascensus, Persas terrore subito miscuerunt uersisque agminibus totius gentis apertas Ctesiphontis portas uictor miles intrasset, nisi maior praedarum occasio fuisset quam cura uictoriae. Tantam adeptus gloriam, cum de reditu a comitibus admoneretur, intentioni suae magis credidit et exustis nauibus, cum e transfuga qui se ad fallendum obiecerat inductus uiae in Madenam compendia sectaretur, dextrum aduersa Tigridis ripa nudato militum latere iter relegens, cum incautius per agmen erraret, excito puluere ereptus e suorum conspectu, ab obuio hostium equite conto per ilia ictus inguinum tenus uulneratus est. (XXVIII)

Emperor Julian, of proven good fortune against external enemies, lacked moderation against Persia. For he, with immense provision, as one might expect of the ruler of the entire world, set hostile standards against the Parthians, and sailed through the Euphrates a fleet furnished with supplies. Relentless in his advance, he either took control of many of the Persians' cities and bases which had surrendered or took them by force. When he had made camp opposite Ctesiphon on the banks of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates and was holding competitions during the day in order to reduce the enemy's attentiveness, in the middle of the night he rapidly transferred to the opposite bank soldiers who had been loaded on ships. These, distinguishing themselves through hardships which would have been difficult to surmount even in daylight and with no opposition, threw the Persians into confusion with sudden fright and, when the units of the entire nation had been turned about, the victorious soldiery would have entered the open gates of Ctesiphon, if the opportunity for plunder had not been greater than the concern for victory. Having obtained such great glory, when he was warned by his staff concerning his return, he gave his own plan more credence and, after the ships had been burnt, when he took shortcuts, led on a route toward Madena by a deserter who had delivered himself for the purpose of deceiving him, again traversing a route along the right bank of the Tigris with his soldiers' flank exposed, while wandering too incautiously through the formations when his own men's sight had been snatched away as a result of dust that had been stirred up, he was wounded, pierced with a lance through the abdomen as far as the groin by an enemy cavalryman who had encountered him.

[21] Eutropius, ed. Bird (n. 4), 9.18.

Festus attributes the failure of Julian's Persian campaign to his lack of moderation and his army's greater concern for plunder than for victory; the first of these two causes recalls Carus' excessively mighty victory over the Persians, while the second recalls the avaricious – rather than just – Roman conquest of Cyprus. The geographical boundaries that Julian appears to have crossed recall Festus' accounts of Marcus Antonius and Carus. Antony was afflicted with misfortune when he attempted to invade Media, which, Festus reminds his audience, 'is now called Madena', the very region toward which Festus claims Julian allowed himself to be led by a deserter or *transfuga*. Moreover, just as Festus claims that the excessively mighty Carus was killed by lightning after advancing past Ctesiphon, while encamped 'beyond the Tigris', he likewise associates the glory of Julian's defeat of the Persians at Ctesiphon with his overly self-confident decision to advance beyond Ctesiphon against the wishes of his staff, and he notes that Julian was killed by the enemy while travelling 'along the right bank of the Tigris'. Festus focusses his attention, in other words, on Julian's lack of moderation, his army's unchecked avarice and the geography of his campaign, specifically his movements east of the Tigris River.

Festus' account of Crassus' eastern campaign resembles his rendition of Julian's quite closely – so closely, in fact, as to suggest that Crassus was a distinct precursor or 'type' of Julian:

Marcus Crassus consul aduersum rebellantes Parthos missus est. Is cum pacem missa a Persis legatione rogaretur, apud Ctesiphonta responsurum se ait. Apud Zeugmam traiectit Euphraten et a transfuga quodam Mazaro inductus ad ignotam camporum solitudinem descendit. Ibi undique circumuolantibus sagittariorum agminibus cum Silate et Surena praefectis regiis est cinctus exercitus et ui telorum obrutus. Ipse Crassus cum ad conloquium sollicitatus uiuus paene capi posset, repugnantibus tribunis euaserat et fugam petens occisus est. Caput eius cum dextera manu resectum ad regem perlatum est atque ita ludibrio habitum, ut faucibus eius aurum liquefactum infunderetur: scilicet ut, quia ardens cupiditate praedandi pacem regi dare rogatus abnuerat, etiam mortui eius reliquias auri flamma conbureret. (XVII)

Marcus Crassus, a consul, was dispatched against rebelling Parthians. When he was asked for peace by a legation dispatched from Persia, he said that he would respond at Ctesiphon. He crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma, and, guided by a deserter, a certain Mazarus, descended into the unfamiliar wilderness of the plains. There the army was surrounded from all sides by formations of archers flying around them, under the King's prefects Silas and Surenas, and was overwhelmed by the impact of the missiles. Crassus himself – although he was nearly able to be captured alive after he had been enticed to a parley – had escaped while his tribunes resisted, and was killed as he sought flight. His severed head, together with his right hand, was borne to the king and kept for sport, so that molten gold might be poured into his throat: in order that a fire of gold, it was said, might consume his remains even after he perished, because, burning with lust for plunder, when asked by the king to grant peace, he had declined.

Like Julian, Crassus fell prey to the deceits of a *transfuga*, spurred on by the vice of avarice, a vice that had caused him to neglect a victory, of sorts, in the form of a peace settlement, and that drew him further into Persia – a geographical fact, to be sure, albeit with reference to Ctesiphon but not to the Tigris. The details of Crassus' character and his defeat are not original to Festus; many of them can be

found in Cassius Dio, Plutarch and Florus.[22] What appears unprecedented, however, is Festus' inclusion of the allegation that Crassus' avarice was the cause of his refusal to negotiate a peace, by which Festus makes Crassus into an example of the error committed by Julian's army: an excessive desire for *praeda* or, in Crassus' case, *praedandum*.

Now, Festus' four accounts of failed eastern campaigns are by no means identical, and he does not attribute failure to the same causes in each case. Even Julian and Crassus, though very similar in their failings, did not make identical mistakes: whereas Crassus preferred plunder to *peace* and died after rejecting Persian peace offers and crossing the Euphrates, Julian's army preferred plunder to *victory* and Julian himself died after rejecting the advice of his more cautious counsellors and crossing the Tigris. The similarity is close, but not exact. Nor did either Julian or Crassus make precisely Carus' mistake: Carus conducted a campaign against Persia whose excessive mightiness aroused divine jealousy and provoked a fatal lightning strike after he had advanced beyond Ctesiphon. Festus' explanation for Marcus Antonius' failure is still more different and more obscure: he seems to have incurred divine punishment for having advanced beyond Armenia into Madena (Media). What all four failed campaigns have in common, however, is that they were immoderate – excessively avaricious, excessively mighty, insufficiently attentive to recommendations of caution or offers of peace, or simply aiming at the conquest of too much territory or at the invasion of territory too far east. The question therefore arises, especially given the fact that Festus associates all four failed campaigns with the last type of excess – an excess, so to speak, of geographical ambition – whether Festus meant simply to inveigh against injustice and all kinds of immoderateness in Valens' impending Persian campaign, or whether he meant to convey a more specific geographical warning as well – a warning, in other words, that there was a geographical line that Valens should not cross, or that there was specific territory that Valens should not aspire to conquer.

The temptation to infer that Festus meant to warn Valens against crossing a specific geographical line – or to justify to others, perhaps at Valens' request, the limits on Valens' territorial ambitions – is quite strong; it comes from Festus' repeated references to the Tigris river, a very clear geographical line, as a boundary whose crossing preceded disaster in the cases of Julian and Carus, and whose repudiation by Hadrian was the product merely of jealousy rather than good judgement. This temptation, however, must be indulged with caution, primarily because Isaac's argument that Romans did not conceive of a *limes* as a geographical line cannot be ignored. Isaac argues first that the Romans conceived of their *imperium* as extending over peoples rather than lands, and second that, in the fourth century, the word *limes*, often mistakenly understood to be a line of military defences or a geographical boundary, was in fact 'the formal term used to designate a frontier district under the command of a *dux*'.[23] The first of these points may be something of an overstatement, and its implication that the Romans did not associate the idea of *imperium* with ideas of geographical extent and geographical limits need not be

[22] E.g. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, trans. E. Cary, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1914), 40.17–27; Plutarch, *Lives: Life of Crassus*, trans. B. Perrin, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1916), 19–32; Florus, *Epitome*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. and trans. P. Jal (Paris, 1967), 2.19.46.

[23] B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1993), 394–6, 409.

accepted.[24] In his discussion of the second point, however, Isaac notes that Festus' references to the *limes* established by Trajan *supra ripas Tigridis* cannot be taken to mean that Trajan established the eastern banks of the Tigris as the boundary of the Roman Empire:

> … et per Traianum Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria et Arabia prouinciae factae sunt ac limes Orientalis supra ripam Tigridis est institutus.
>
> … and Trajan made Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Arabia provinces and established the eastern *limes* beyond the banks of the Tigris.[25]

What 'establishing the *limes* beyond the banks of the Tigris' meant to Festus becomes clearer in his account of Diocletian's peace settlement with the Persians, which he describes as a *restoration* of the *limes* established by Trajan:

> … ac Diocletiani temporibus, … pace facta Mesopotamia est restituta et supra ripam Tigridis limes est reformatus, ita ut quinque gentium trans Tigridem constitutarum dicionem adsequeremur.
>
> Under Diocletian, … when the peace had been made, Mesopotamia was restored and beyond the banks of the Tigris a *limes* was re-established, so that we gained sovereignty over five peoples beyond the Tigris.[26]

Later in the *Breuiarium*, Festus elaborates, as we have seen above, that, under Diocletian, the Persians 'returned Mesopotamia, along with the Transtigritanian regions'.[27] Clearly, as Isaac correctly perceives, Festus makes no effort to hide the fact that, under the principates of Trajan and Diocletian, Rome gained *dicio*, 'authority' or 'sovereignty', over peoples *beyond* the Tigris. Given his unambiguous depiction of Trajan's and Diocletian's Persian settlements as glorious and just, respectively, it would therefore seem that Festus did not mean to give the impression that any attempt to extend Roman authority past the Tigris was to be condemned as unjust or excessively ambitious.

Dicio, however, is not the same as provincial acquisition and, given Festus' obvious awareness of the differences between the various types of subject-status – since, after all, he distinguishes tributary peoples from dependent peoples and both, in turn, from provinces – it is very unlikely that Festus used the term *dicio* as a synonym for the reduction of a foreign nation to provincial status. In fact, his usage of *dicio* elsewhere in his *Breuiarium* has the general connotation of *imperium*, referring to the act of extending Roman dominion over foreign peoples, including but not limited specifically to the imposition of *ius prouinciae*.[28] Therefore Isaac's observation about the *limes* still leaves room for the possibility that Festus meant

[24] See, for example, Isaac's own reference to Tacitus, on the strategic geographic advantages of conquering Ireland, in ibid., 405.

[25] Festus, XIV, trans. in B. Isaac, 'The meaning of the terms *limes* and *limitanei*', *JRS* 78 (1988), 134.

[26] Festus, XIV, trans. in ibid., 135.

[27] Festus, XXV. See above, pp. 711–12.

[28] M.L. Fele (ed.), *Lexicon Breuiarii Rufi Festi* (New York, 1988), s.v. 'dicio'. This use of *dicio* to refer generally to the extension of dominion over foreign peoples is standard. See T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, vol. 3.1 (Leipzig, 1887), 46–8.

to indicate the Tigris as a geographical limit, not perhaps to Roman authority in general, but specifically to Roman provincial expansion.

The evidence for this possibility is compelling. For one thing, in his two, very similar descriptions of how Hadrian differed from Trajan, Festus places unmistakable emphasis on the gain and loss of *provinces*, and on the contrast between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. It is true that he does mention that Trajan established the eastern *limes* beyond the banks of the Tigris, but his emphasis is clearly on the acquisition of provinces; Hadrian, he points out, gave up Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria. Festus does not mention the relinquishment of *dicio* over the peoples encompassed by the Transtigritanian *limes*, though it clearly must have happened (XIV). Moreover, in his repetition of how Hadrian gave up what Trajan had conquered, he does not even mention the Transtigritanian regions at all (XX). What is more, he quite evidently depicts this great contrast – between Trajan's institution of provinces up to the Tigris and Hadrian's preference of the Euphrates as a *medium* – with calculated tidiness and perhaps with some distortion or creation of historical evidence. For one thing, Festus and Eutropius are the first sources attesting Trajan's establishment of Assyria as a province; until their attestation, there is no evidence for it. According to Lightfoot, there is neither numismatic evidence that Trajan made Assyria into a Roman province nor record of any Roman official having been appointed to Assyria.[29] Nor does Festus' explicit description of Assyria as lying 'between the Tigris and Euphrates' match that given by his contemporary, Ammianus, who writes of Assyria as a region extending beyond the Tigris to the east.[30] The idea that the Tigris river is the legitimate boundary of Roman provincial expansion – established by Trajan, rejected by Hadrian in favour of a *different* river further west, and restored by Diocletian in the form of a lasting peace settlement – therefore appears to be one that Festus is quite concerned to emphasize.

This emphasis upon the legitimate limit of provincial expansion is also echoed in Festus' accounts of the four failed eastern campaigns. Three defeats – those of Antony, Carus and Julian – involved intrusion beyond the Roman provinces listed by Festus at the beginning of the *Breuiarium*, and two failed campaigns aimed specifically at Media. Most significantly, the defeats of Crassus, Antony and Carus make reference to the most recent defeat of all, Julian's, which involved excessive desire for plunder, a desire to reach Media and a refusal to retreat behind the Tigris. The connection that Festus is drawing between moral flaws, violation of divine sanction and a discontent with the provincial boundaries of Trajan's settlement could hardly be clearer.[31]

[29] C.W. Lightfoot, 'Trajan's Parthian war and the fourth-century perspective', *JRS* 80 (1990), 121–4.

[30] Amm. Marc. 23.6.15–23. Arnaud-Lindet's text of Festus XX.3 reads: *Prouincias fecit Armeniam, Mesopotamiam, Assyriam, quae inter Tigridem atque Euphraten sita inriguis amnibus instar Aegypti fecundatur*. Banchich and Meka reverse the order of *Assyriam* and *Mesopotamiam*, so that Festus appears to be describing Mesopotamia, and not Assyria, as between the two rivers. No manuscript, however, contains this order; moreover, one manuscript, the Vindobonensis 323, s. XII, lists the provinces in the order *Mesopotamiam Armeniam Assyriam*.

[31] It should also be noted that the attention that Festus pays to the necessity of divine sanction for any victory by Valens appears in his concluding declaration (XXX): *maneat modo concessa dei nutu et ab amico, cui credis et creditus es, numine indulta felicitas, ut ad hanc ingentem de Gothis etiam Babyloniae tibi palma pacis accedat* ('May the felicity recently allowed by the will of God and granted by the friendly divinity whom you trust and by whom you are trusted persist, in order that a palm of peace with Babylonia, too, may join this enormous [palm of peace] from the Goths'). Contrary to superficial appearances, this cannot be interpreted as simply

In light of this connection, the initial 'catalogue of provinces' takes on the character of a prescriptive – and proscriptive – list, or rather a blueprint, of sorts, for legally, morally and geographically correct provincial ambitions, a blueprint justified by the details that Festus includes in the remainder of his text. In the East, this means Roman provincial jurisdiction over Armenia Minor, Armenia Maior, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Arabia – whatever Festus understood the geographical extent of these territories to be. That this list and the historical narrative that accompanies it could not simply have been 'educational' in the sense of providing basic facts, and must have been related to Valens' considerations of a Persian campaign, is made obvious by the subjects of Valens' negotiations with Persia – that is, the 363 settlement negotiated by Jovian, and particularly the persistent questions about how to interpret the settlement's provisions for control of Armenia.[32] Clearly, explicating the complexities of this episode in the history of Rome's relations with Persia could illuminate many arguments implicit in Festus' apparently 'factual' account of Roman expansion, but even the most superficial survey indicates that the account of Roman provincial possessions in his *Breuiarium* – even simply by virtue of its inclusion of 'Armenia Maior' – contains facts that were neither basic nor uncontroversial. Moreover, Festus' warning against excessive provincial expansion, beyond the Tigris and beyond Armenia, cannot be called an expression of simple 'optimism'.[33] Suggestions that the *Breuiarium* ought to be considered a primer of Roman history, therefore, or a one-sided polemical pamphlet, can be discarded.

Finally, if compelling evidence could be found that Festus was Valens' *magister memoriae*, it might be more appropriate to call his *Breuiarium* a position paper or a brief,[34] since what little is known about the office of *magister memoriae* in the late fourth century suggests that composing the *Breuiarium*, with its emphasis upon law, administration, justice and eastern foreign policy, could easily have been within a *magister memoriae*'s competence. Not only does the *magister memoriae* appear to have had need of legal and jurisprudential knowledge, given his responsibility for dictating and sending out imperial memoranda and answering legal petitions with a high degree of authority and independence until Justinian placed him under the quaestor's control in 541, but a precedent for his involvement in negotiations with Persia can also be found in the person of Sicorius Probus, Diocletian's *magister memoriae*, who evidently negotiated Diocletian's Persian settlement.[35] However,

hearty encouragement of war – or even a new peace settlement – with Persia; Festus makes emphatic reference to the fact that Valens' *felicitas* is a divine gift, which cannot be counted upon to exist unconditionally.

[32] Ammianus' various references to the provisions of the 363 settlement do not resolve these questions. For one clear treatment of the evidence supplied by Ammianus, see R. Seager, 'Ammianus and the status of Armenia in the peace of 363', *Chiron* 26 (1996), 275–84.

[33] This denial of Festus' optimism holds even if, as the anonymous reviewer of this article astutely proposes, Festus hoped that his several laudatory references to acts of vengeance against the Persians in return for Roman defeats (XVIII and XXIII) would sway Valens to envision his expansion of Roman provinces at Persia's expense as an act of vengeance for the one imperial death still unavenged – namely Julian's, which Festus explicitly attributes to a Persian cavalryman (XXVIII).

[34] At the very least, this suggestion does not contradict Festus' own term, *breuis*, which was used not only in everyday contexts to refer to a short written account or a brief document but also in bureaucratic contexts to indicate a list used for official purposes. Cf. O. Seeck, s.v. 'Brevis', *RE*; and s.v. 'brevis', *TLL*, 1.2.d.∂.

[35] O. Seeck (ed.), *Notitia Dignitatum* (Berolini, 1876), 1.21, 19.6–7; A.E.R. Boak, *The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires* (New York, 1919), 84–5; M. Clauss,

in the absence of more compelling evidence for Festus' office than has yet been found – evidence that should probably include the contents of his *Breuiarium*[36] – Festus' words alone, regardless of the precise circumstances under which he wrote them, indicate that he offered a more complex view of his ostensible subject than any with which he has yet been credited.

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Der magister officiorum in der Spätantike (4.–6. Jahrhundert), Vestigia 32 (Munich, 1981), 17; F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY, 1977), 265–7; J. Harries, 'The Roman imperial quaestor from Constantine to Theodosius II', *JRS* 78 (1988), 148–72; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), 50–1, 367–8, 505.

[36] Contra Baldwin (n. 1), 200.