

SURA AND SENECIO

By C. P. JONES *

At first glance, L. Licinius Sura and Q. Sosius Senecio have many points of resemblance. Both were men of erudition and culture, like their mutual friend the younger Pliny. Both stood close to Trajan and participated in the two Dacian wars. Both received the rare honour of a public statue from the emperor. Together they gave their names to the year 107, sharing the *fascēs* as *consules ordinarii*.

So many are the similarities, in fact, that the two are difficult to think of as separate and defined characters. There is another and graver reason for juxtaposing their careers. Sura's is often assumed to be largely known from an acephalous inscription found in Rome in the sixteenth century: that view goes back to Lipsius, but was first forcefully argued by Borghesi.¹ In recent years doubts have been voiced, in the first place by Professor Syme: not Sura, but possibly Sosius Senecio.² It is time to argue that the *ignotus* is indeed Sosius, and to draw the consequences for the early years of Trajan's reign.

It will be best to begin by leaving the question of the acephalous text *sub iudice* and considering the undisputed evidence for Sura. By origin he is Spanish, probably resident in one or both of the coastal cities Barcino and Tarraco, but with his origin somewhere else, perhaps at Celsa in the valley of the Ebro.³ His career before Trajan's reign is valuably illuminated by three poems of his fellow Tarraconensian, Martial. These may be briefly reviewed.

The impression conveyed by these poems, if they are approached without preconceptions, is distinct and harmonious. Already in the first, I, 49, addressed to the poet's friend Licinianus of Bilbilis in 85/86,⁴ Sura is successful and applauded (lines 37-40).⁵ In the second, VI, 64, published about 89/90,⁶ the suggestion of the first poem is reinforced. Martial defends his trifles against criticism by appealing to the highest authorities, the leaders of the city and civil life ('*proceres urbisque forique*'): besides Sura, these are Silius Italicus, consul in 68 and remembered for his blameless proconsulate of Asia, M. Regulus, long feared as a merciless prosecutor and already (it can be presumed) a consular,⁷ and the emperor himself. Sura is already in possession of the famous house on the Aventine, another mark of forensic success and Caesar's favour. Lastly, in VII, 47, of the year 92,⁸ Sura is 'the most celebrated of all learned men' and, having just recovered from a nearly fatal illness, lives to 'enjoy his own posterity'.⁹

Another source may also reflect Sura's eminence under Domitian. Epictetus is made by Arrian to refer to the rich catamite of a Sura, who ought to be Licinius: the wealth of his favourites is attested by his freedman Secundus at Barcino.¹⁰ If Epictetus' allusion is drawn from his experience of Rome before his expulsion in 93, it coheres well with the evidence of Martial.

* I owe thanks to G. W. Bowersock, E. J. Weinrib, and especially Peter White, whose research on Martial had independently led him to reject the usual view about *ILS* 1022.

¹ *CIL* VI, 1444 = *ILS* 1022. B. Borghesi, *Œuvres complètes* 5 (1869), 32 ff., followed by E. Groag, *RE* 13 (1926), 472 ff., and now G. Alföldy, *Die Legionslegaten der römischen Rheinarmeen = Epigraphische Studien* 3 (1967), 16 ff.

² R. Syme, *JRS* XLVII (1957), 134, n. 31; *Tacitus* (1958), 646, *Ignotus* B. Note also the opinion of H.-G. Pflaum, *Les Empereurs romains d'Espagne* (1965), 83.

³ *CIL* II, 4282, 4508. Cf. Syme, *Tac.* 790-91; *Les Empereurs romains d'Espagne* (1965), 82.

⁴ L. Friedländer, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Libri* (1886), 53-54.

⁵ Groag, *RE* 13 (1926), 472, remarks on this passage (my italics): 'um das J. 85/86 war er . . . zwar offensichtlich noch ein jüngerer Mann, erfreute aber doch schon eines gewissen Namens'.

⁶ Friedländer, op. cit. 57-58.

⁷ Syme, *JRS* XLIII (1953), 161. *Iuvenis admodum* in

the last years of Nero, but *quaestorius* in 70 (*Tac., Hist.* 4, 42, 1, 5), and so consul probably in the early or mid 80's. Pliny, *Epp.* 2, 11, 22, shows Regulus in 100 influencing (Sex.) Pompeius Collega, *cos. ord.* 93, to propose a motion in the senate and then failing to support it at the vote. A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (1966) 94, cf. 171, infers that Regulus was only a praetorian, if that, and hence had to work through others. But Pliny does not indicate that Regulus was unable to present the motion, only that he preferred to let another do so. If Regulus had the *auctoritas* to 'dictate' to an *ordinarius* of 93, he should have been one of the senior consulars.

⁸ Friedländer, op. cit. 58-59.

⁹ Note Pliny on Verginius Rufus after 69, his fifty-fifth year: 'posteritati suae interfuit', *Epp.* 2, 1, 2.

¹⁰ Arr., *Diss. Epict.* 3, 17, 4. Thus Groag, *RE* 13 (1926), 484. Secundus: *CIL* II, 4536-48, 6148-49; *Eph. Epigr.* IX, no. 395; *AE* 1957, 26. On Epictetus' reminiscences of his life in Rome, F. G. B. Millar, *JRS* LV (1965), 141 ff.

The literary evidence, especially of Martial's poem in which Sura is ranked with 'the leaders of the city', might be thought relevant to a vexed problem, that of his first consulate.¹¹ For various reasons, it can hardly be later than 97: Sura was already consular for the second time in 102, and before that he had been governor of Lower Germany. 97 is indeed the most widely accepted year,¹² but the evidence for Sura's position in the 80's and early 90's makes it uncomfortably late. The possibilities are restricted by the fact that the years 87 to 92 and 94 to 96 are full in the consular *fasti*. A consulship in 86 or slightly earlier does not seem excluded, though it would require an abnormally long wait before Sura's tenure of Germany. On the present evidence 93 is the best date, even if Martial, congratulating Sura on his recovery from illness in 92, makes no mention of a forthcoming consulate.

Sura's later career is more easily followed, even without the aid of the acephalous inscription. The so-called *Epitome de Caesaribus*, usually assumed to be of the late fourth century, states that Trajan as emperor built baths 'ob honorem Surae, cuius studio imperium arripuerat'.¹³ Parts of the author's account of Nerva and Trajan rest on good sources,¹⁴ and there is a chance that he has preserved something of value here. He is generally taken to mean that Sura proposed the name of Trajan to the beleaguered Nerva in October, 97.¹⁵ *Imperium arripere*, however, in the language of the Epitomator and his contemporaries, is regularly used of usurpation.¹⁶ Even if he knew that Nerva was alleged to have chosen freely,¹⁷ his words suggest that Sura urged Trajan to grasp the opportunity offered by events in Rome, 'ruens imperium super imperatorem'.

That may cohere with a known fact about Sura, his consular legateship of Lower Germany, where an undated inscription from the Brohltal quarries shows him in command of *singulares*.¹⁸ This item might suggest a date under Trajan, the first emperor in whose reign such troops are attested, and the favoured date for Sura's legateship is 98—*ca.* 100.¹⁹ But an earlier date cannot quite be excluded, and Lower Germany is free from about 90 onwards.²⁰ Perhaps Sura was appointed by Domitian at the end of the reign, a trusted adherent of the régime. He could have continued to hold command under Nerva, while the upper province passed to Trajan, and in that position he may have strengthened Trajan's resolve in the autumn of 97. In October of that year and the following months, Trajan had to be sure of Lower Germany, and Sura's loyalty then may explain the emperor's trust and esteem later. No other legate is known before 101: Sura's tenure may have run, for instance, from 95 to 98. He would not have been the only appointee of Domitian to a consular legateship who continued in office until Trajan's sole rule. T. Pomponius Bassus, *suffectus* in 94, held Cappadocia-Galatia from 95 to 100.²¹

Sura's part in the Dacian wars is attested (again, with the acephalous inscription left aside) only scantily. In the first campaign, he conducted unsuccessful negotiations with Decebalus in 102, and some rôle in the second is indicated by the third consulate in 107 and the grant of triumphal ornaments.²² But there is no evidence that he took a leading

¹¹ On this see Groag, art. cit. (n. 5) 476; A. Degraasi, *I fasti consolari* (1952), 29; Syme, *JRS* XLIII (1953), 150-51; *Tac.* 641.

¹² cf. the references given in n. 11 above. Groag argued for 97 from *CIL* VI, 32445, which he held to show that Sura became a pontifex after Q. Pomponius Rufus, *suff.* 95, and before A. Cornelius Palma, *ord.* 99; *Wiener Studien* 40 (1918), 16-17, and in E. Ritterling, *Fasti des römischen Deutschlands unter dem Prinzipat* (1932), 60-61. But the evidence does not support the supposition that the order of entry into a priestly college corresponded with the order of consular seniority: cf. M. W. Hoffman Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians* (1955), 24-25, 87-88.

¹³ *Epit. de Caes.* 13, 6.

¹⁴ Thus he is the only author to preserve Narnia as the *origo* of the Cocceii (*Epit.* 12, 1), Tuder of the Ulpri (*Epit.* 13, 1, cf. Syme, *Tac.* 786). And note *Epit.* 12, 5, showing knowledge of Pliny, *Epp.* 4, 22, 4-6. This can be added to the number of allusions to Pliny's letters in the late fourth century: Alan Cameron, *CQ* 15 (1965), 292-98;

17 (1967), 421-22; C. P. Jones, *Phoenix* 21 (1967), 301.

¹⁵ Thus Groag, op. cit. (n. 5) 475 and sources quoted there.

¹⁶ Observe the uses in the *Epitome* 8, 3; 26, 1; 47, 7; and those in the *HA* listed by C. Lessing, *Scriptorum Historiae Augustae Lexicon*, s.v. *arripere*: also *TLL* 2, 642, 38 ff.

¹⁷ *Epit.* 12, 9 'hic Traianum in liberi locum inque partem imperii cooptavit'.

¹⁸ *AE* 1923, 33 = Smallwood, *Documents of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian*, no. 158.

¹⁹ *Singulares*: Syme, *JRS* XLIX (1959), 27. Sura's legateship: Syme, *Tac.* 647, no. 23, Alföldy, op. cit. (n. 1) 19.

²⁰ A. Lappius Maximus is now attested in Syria in 91, *AE* 1961, 319. The tenure of Vestricius Spurinna (Pliny, *Epp.* 2, 7, 2) appears to belong in the early years of Domitian: Syme, *JRS* XVIII (1928), 43, n. 1; *Tac.* 634-35.

²¹ Syme, *Tac.* 647, no. 31.

²² Decebalus: Dio Cass., 68, 9, 2. Ornaments: *CIL* II, 4508.

rôle in operations, and accordingly it would not be wise to identify him with a figure on Trajan's Column who appears to be the emperor's 'Generalstabschef'.²³

The allusions to Sura under Trajan confirm Martial's picture of a respected and influential minister. Pliny writes twice to him, respectfully soliciting his opinion on scientific matters.²⁴ Later authors concentrate on his influence with Trajan: the speeches that he wrote for him,²⁵ the emperor's confidence that no malice could shake,²⁶ the baths constructed by Trajan in his honour near the house on the Aventine.²⁷ Lastly, a detail that will be of relevance later: after Sura's death, Trajan gave him a state funeral and the commemoration of a public statue.²⁸ Sura may have died as early as 108.²⁹ A Tacitus writing the history of the period would have marked the event with an obituary that characterized not only a scholar and a diplomat, but also a voluptuary and a hated master of intrigue.³⁰

It is time to turn to the acephalous inscription. The text is as follows: ³¹

[. . . cum ?] imp. Caesar Nerva Traianus [Aug. Germanicus]
Dacicus gentem Dacor. et regem Decebalum
bello superavit, sub eodem duce leg. pro pr., ab
eodem donato hastis puris VIII vexillis VIII
coronis muralib. II vallarib. II classicis II
auratis II, leg. pro pr. provinciae Belgicae, leg. leg. I
Minerviae, candidato Caesaris in praetura
et in tribunatu pleb., quaestori provinciae
Achaiae, IIIIviro viarum curandarum.
Huic senatus auctore imp. Traiano Aug.
Germanico Dacico triumphalia ornament.
decrevit statuamq. pecun. public. ponend. censuit.

The *ignotus* began his career in the vigintivirate, as *IIIIvir viarum curandarum*, which suggests no great social eminence but befits a later military career.³² No military tribunate is recorded, either because the item was omitted from the stone or because the post was not held. After the quaestorship in Achaëa, the man had the emperor's favour for the tribunate and praetorship. Since the man was already consular by the time of the first Dacian war, the unnamed Caesar is evidently Domitian; and his favour suggests that these posts were held at the minimum age, 27 or 28 and 30, or little later. The praetorian posts show an exemplary career for a *vir militaris*: only a legionary legateship, with I Minervia in Bonn, and the legateship of Gallia Belgica intervene before the consulate. That again suggests an exceptionally rapid career, with access to the consulate at 37 or 38. Cn. Julius Agricola can be compared, born in 40, praetor in 68, legate of XX Valeria Victrix from 70 to 73 or 74, legate of Aquitania—a province that like Belgica carried the promise of further honours from the emperor—and *consul suffectus* in 77, at the age of 36 or 37.³³

The *ignotus'* consular career is obscured by the loss of the beginning of the inscription. It can be presumed that after the name there followed the consulate or consulates, a priesthood, and consular posts in both the Dacian wars: the last item emerges from the double set of consular military decorations. His position in the first war appears to have been named in the missing part of the inscription: in the second he was consular legate without specified *provincia*.

²³ As Groag does, art. cit., 476–78.

²⁴ Pliny, *Epp.* 4, 30; 7, 27.

²⁵ Julian, *Caes.* 327 B; *HA Hadr.* 3, 11.

²⁶ Dio Cass., 68, 15, 3²–16, 1a.

²⁷ Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 13, 8; *Epit. de Caes.* 13, 6. Cf. Platner-Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary* 532–33; G. Lugli, *I monumenti antichi di Roma e suburbio* 3 (1938), 561–63; G. Carettoni et al., *La Pianta marmorea di Roma antica: Forma Urbis Romae* (1960), 1, 79.

²⁸ Dio Cass., 68, 15, 3².

²⁹ Syme, *Tac.* 232, 233, n. 8.

³⁰ cf. Arr., *Diss. Epict.* 3, 17, 4, and the hint in

Martial, 7, 47, lines 11–12. His enemies: Dio Cass., 68, 15, 4–16, 1a. The *Lic(i)nius Sura Isspan(us)* named in a *defixio* from Siscia in Pannonia Superior (V. Hoffiller—B. Saria, *Antike Inschriften aus Jugoslavien* 1 (1938), no. 557) is evidently a person of low degree.

³¹ *CIL* VI, 1444 = *ILS* 1022.

³² E. Birley, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 39 (1953), 202–3; D. McAlindon, *JRS* XLVII (1957), 195.

³³ On Agricola's career see Syme, *Tac.* 19 ff.; R. M. Ogilvie and I. A. Richmond, edition of Tac., *Agr.* (1967), 317 ff.

The item of greatest distinction is reserved for the end of the text. Trajan granted triumphal ornaments to the *ignotus*, clearly in recognition of his part in the recent wars, and also a public statue. The two items appear to have been conjoined, and that is important since the triumphal ornaments show that the *ignotus* was still alive to receive the double honour.

If the *ignotus* is identified as Sura, many problems arise. The basic one is the nature of the career: a fast rising *vir militaris* who began his career under Domitian can hardly be identified with a barrister already eminent in the mid 80's. The praetorian posts cause particular difficulty. If Sura was consul in 97, then the legateship of Belgica would either have to be squeezed into the same year, since Q. Atilius Agricola is attested there down to 97,³⁴ or pushed back to before Agricola's tenure, perhaps to 93 or 94, even though in 92 Sura had recently recovered from a nearly fatal illness. If the consulate goes in 93, the praetorian posts in Lower Germany and Belgica will have to go back even further, into the late 80's or early 90's—just when Martial was appealing to Sura on the Aventine as a leader 'urbisque forique'. Lastly, whereas the *ignotus* appears to have received the public statue in his lifetime, Sura's was granted posthumously.

The statue is a clue that leads to the correct identification. Dio mentions three men who received public statues together because of Trajan's high esteem, Sosius Senecio, Cornelius Palma, and Publilius Celsus.³⁵ Neither Palma nor Celsus can be the *ignotus*: Palma did not fight in the second Dacian war, Celsus attained his first consulate only in 102. No other public statues, except Sura's, are known to have been granted by Trajan. That creates a presumption in favour of Sosius.

There is another argument which appears not to have been noticed. The acephalous inscription was found 'in Caelio monte non procul a Lateranensi basilica'.³⁶ That might imply that the *ignotus* had a *domus* in the vicinity, and accordingly it is generally assumed that Sura had a second palace there, otherwise unattested, in addition to the famous one on the Aventine.³⁷ Where Sosius had his house is not directly indicated, but there is a powerful clue. His daughter, Sosia Polla, married the young marshal Pompeius Falco, and the descendants of the pair continue to use 'Sosius' as a *nomen*, sometimes to the exclusion of 'Pompeius'.³⁸ It can safely be assumed that any property of Sosius would have devolved in this line. It so happens that two fragmentary inscriptions were found in Rome in the late nineteenth century, one in fine letters recording the career of Pompeius Falco, the other the career of his grandson, the polyonymous consul of 169.³⁹ From the proximity of the places in which they were discovered, Huelsen drew the inevitable inference: 'videntur indicare Pompeis Falconibus domum fuisse vel in Esquilis vel in Caelio prope Lateranum'.⁴⁰ That is, there is more than a chance that the acephalous inscription was found on or near the site of Sosius' house. When the house passed to Sosius' descendants, they too had inscriptions recording their honours set up in front of it.

Let it be assumed, then, that the inscription refers to Sosius. If it combines easily with the independent evidence for his career, that will be the final argument for the identification.

Sosius was consul for the first time in 99, and soon thereafter held high command in the Dacian wars. It is a natural inference that, like the *ignotus*, he was one of the class of *virii militares* who reached the consulate at 37 or 38.⁴¹ He would then have been born in 60–62, closely coeval with Pliny. The quattuorvirate would belong about 78–80. If he held the military tribunate, it would have fallen in about 82–84. While it might have taken him anywhere, it is worth remembering that this was a good time for a young laticlave to distinguish himself, when the emperor was in Germany for his campaign against the Chatti. One of his advisers in the operation may have been Sex. Julius Frontinus, later the father-in-law of Sosius.⁴²

³⁴ *ILS* 1021; Syme, *op. cit.*, 641.

³⁵ Dio Cass., 68, 16, 2.

³⁶ Metellus, cited on *CIL* VI, 1444.

³⁷ Thus Groag, *RE* art. cit. 482; Platner-Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary* 184; Lugli, *Fontes* 3 (1955), 107–8, no. 24.

³⁸ On the family, Groag, *JOAI* 18 (1915), Beih. 265–74. Observe *ILS* 1105 = *ILAlg* II, 652, in which the consul of 149, the son of this pair, is

referred to both as 'Q. Pompeius Sosius Priscus' and 'Sosius Priscus'.

³⁹ *CIL* VI, 31752–53.

⁴⁰ On *CIL* VI, 31752–53 (my italics). Accepted by Groag, *art. cit.*, 271; Lugli, *Fontes* 4 (1957), 103–4, nos. 49–51.

⁴¹ Syme, *Tac.* 655–6.

⁴² Syme, *op. cit.* 214. For the relation between the two, cf. *ILS* 1105, 8820.

The quaestorship, which on the present reckoning he would have held between about 85 and 88, was spent in Achaëa. That may be fitted with one of the most notable facts about him, his friendship with Plutarch. Plutarch dedicated to him the *Parallel Lives*, the treatise on progress in virtue, and the nine books of the *Table Talk*. In the last work, Plutarch recalls several occasions on which he and Sosius had been together in Greece, in Athens, Patras and Chaeronea.⁴³ There is independent evidence for Sosius at Sparta, since at some time he obtained the Roman citizenship for persons there.⁴⁴ Sosius' quaestorship, it can now be guessed, was the occasion of his first meeting with Plutarch, and some of the conversations recalled in the *Table Talk* may go back to that time.⁴⁵ Groag in fact was led to infer from them that Sosius had held some position in Greece, and, assuming Sura to be the *ignotus*, he was surprised that no connection was attested between him and the Greek author.⁴⁶

For the next two posts, the tribunate and the praetorship, Sosius had the commendation of Domitian. Since it is unlikely that he held these posts much after the minimum age, they can be dated to about 90–92 and 92–94 respectively. If that is right, Sosius moved forward very fast in the years after the crushing of Antonius Saturninus' revolt in 88/89 and the simultaneous disturbances in Asia Minor, where the Parthians were supporting a false Nero and a proconsul of Asia had to be removed.⁴⁷ The emperor's favour in those insecure years might indicate something about Sosius' behaviour in the crisis, or possibly about his origin.⁴⁸

He probably did not have to wait long before becoming legate of I Minervia in Bonn. There is evidence that he was absent from Rome in April 97, when Pliny wrote him a letter on the state of poetry there.⁴⁹ If Sosius was then near the end of a triennial tenure with his legion, 95–97, he would have been in Germany at a momentous time: Domitian assassinated in Rome, a successor placed on the throne and soon obliged to adopt Ulpius Traianus, then governor of the upper province, in the autumn of 97. Chance may have juxtaposed the careers of two men destined for great prominence in the next reign, since Sosius' commander, the legate of the province, was perhaps none other than Licinius Sura.⁵⁰

In 97 Gallia Belgica, which supplied the pay of the Rhine armies, was vacated by Atilius Agricola.⁵¹ It has long been wondered who took over the province at that crucial moment. Belgica is Sosius' next command, and he will have continued to hold it while Trajan made the tour of his troops on the Rhine and the Danube. Sosius had a high reward for his loyalty, the ordinary consulate of 99, inaugurating Trajan's sole rule. It was a rarity for a man who had never before held the *fasces* to do so as an *ordinarius*.

As for Sosius' consular career, the evidence of the acephalous stone can now be checked closely against other sources. The stone, it has been seen, indicates commands in both Dacian wars. Pliny writes to Sosius in a letter of about 103 requesting a legionary tribunate for a protégé: Sosius is reminded that he has already conferred benefits on many others.⁵² The clear implication is that he is in an army command, and not at the beginning of his tenure. From new study of the document called 'Hunt's Pridianum', Professor Syme has shown that there is room for him in Upper Moesia *ca.* 100–103.⁵³ That Sosius held high command in the second war is shown by his second ordinary consulate in 107 and the public statue. From the inscription it appears, as Professor Syme has suggested independently, that Sosius held a consular army command without a defined *provincia*, like the Pergamene Quadratus Bassus.⁵⁴

⁴³ *Quaest. Conviv.* 612 F, 673 C (Athens), 629 F (Patras), 666 D, with Hubert's emendation (Chaeronea).

⁴⁴ *SEG* xi, 544, 579, 620. Cf. H. Box, *JRS* xxii (1932), 171.

⁴⁵ Thus R. M. Ogilvie, *Phoenix* 21 (1967), 114, n. 21.

⁴⁶ Sosius: *RE* 3 A (1927), 1181, *Die römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia bis auf Diokletian* (1939), 44–45. Sura: *RE* 13 (1926), 483; *Reichsbeamten* 116.

⁴⁷ *Tac., Hist.* 2, 8, 1, *Suet., Nero* 57, 2; *Tac., Agr.* 42, 1, *Suet., Dom.* 10, 2, *ILS* 1374.

⁴⁸ See below, p. 103.

⁴⁹ Pliny, *Epp.*, 1, 13. On the date, A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (1966), 27–28, 115.

⁵⁰ See above, p. 99.

⁵¹ Above, p. 101.

⁵² Pliny, *Epp.* 4, 4.

⁵³ Syme, *JRS* xlix (1959), 28–29, cf. *Tac.* 648, no. 35. Sherwin-White, *op. cit.* 268, holds that the date of the letter is not determinable, though his 'Chronological Analysis', 32–34, would permit a date between 103 and 105. Cf. *Phoenix* 22 (1968), 128–129.

⁵⁴ *JRS* xxxv (1945), 112. For Quadratus Bassus: *PIR*² I/J 508; Chr. Habicht, *Altertümer von Pergamon VIII*, 3: *Die Inschriften des Asklepieions* (1969), 43–53, no. 21.

The inscription records that after the close of the campaign Sosius received the triumphal ornaments and the rarer honour of a public statue. That again fits the independent evidence of Dio, who attests the statue : ⁵⁵ Dio's affirmation that Sura's statue was awarded posthumously was one of the arguments against identifying him with the *ignotus*. No further action of Sosius is recorded, though a garbled notice in the *Historia Augusta* may indicate that he was a friend of Hadrian at the beginning of the Parthian War.⁵⁶ His disappearance from the record after 107 justifies the assumption that he died comparatively young. Again, the example of Julius Agricola can be invoked. He died in August 93, some nine years after his recall from Britain, at the age of fifty-three.⁵⁷ Sosius perhaps attained that age about 113-115.

Lastly, the *patria* of Sosius. A once general view made him an Italian.⁵⁸ But the evidence was not good : ' Sosius ' is not distinctive, and no tribe is recorded.

In fact, a number of clues suggest Eastern origin. Not merely Sosius' evident familiarity with Greek culture : another friend of Plutarch, Mestrius Florus, is scarcely less versed in it than Sosius, and he appears to be from the Transpadane zone.⁵⁹ Sosius' connections provide firmer evidence. His son-in-law, Pompeius Falco, appears to have taken over, at some time after 116, the entire nomenclature of a prominent Spartan, C. Julius Eurycles Herculanus. That may have been an inheritance from Sosius, whose clients in Sparta are fully attested.⁶⁰ Pompeius Falco appears on the present evidence to be from Hierapolis-Castabala in Smooth Cilicia, and Professor Syme has recently suggested that Sosius himself is from a dynastic house of the same province.⁶¹ If so, his name could indicate a grant of citizenship made by C. Sosius, Antony's proconsul of Syria and Cilicia.

Other signs may point to a different province, Asia, and indeed to a circumscribed area of it. When Sosia Polla, Sosius' daughter and the wife of Pompeius Falco, accompanied her husband during his proconsulate of Asia in 123/24, she received notable honours in Phrygian Apamea, where the citizens and resident Romans combined to signify their gratitude ' for her ancestral goodwill to the city '.⁶² One of her ancestors was certainly a benefactor of other cities of Phrygia : her maternal grandfather, Julius Frontinus, is attested as the donor of splendid gates at Hierapolis and Laodicea.⁶³ If these connections of the family with these three cities are not coincidence, they may suggest that the *origo* of the Sosii is to be sought in southern Phrygia.⁶⁴

An Eastern origin would also accord with the evidence of Sosius' career. His rapid advancement in the early 90's recalls Domitian's simultaneous admittance of oriental dynasts to the consulate.⁶⁵ Similarly, as a commander of Trajan's armies, Sosius takes his place beside the Pergamene Julius Quadratus, legate of Syria during the time of the first Dacian war,⁶⁶ and the other Pergamene Quadratus Bassus, like Sosius a *comes* of the emperor in the second.⁶⁷

For clarity and comparison, it may be useful to tabulate the two careers here postulated. Much uncertainty remains, especially in dating.

⁵⁵ Dio Cass., 68, 16, 2.

⁵⁶ *HA Hadr.* 4, 2. On the reading, Groag *RE* 3 A (1927), 1187, H.-G. Pflaum, *Klio* 46 (1965), 331-37.

⁵⁷ *Tac., Agr.* 44, 1.

⁵⁸ Thus Groag, *RE* 3 A (1927), 1181, while conceding that his ultimate origin might be Eastern. That was because Borghesi had called Sosius ' un Greco ' (*Œuvres complètes* 8 (1872), 367), but solely on the basis of the false reading ἐκ Χαίρωνείας in Plut., *Quaest. Conviv.* 666 D.

⁵⁹ Fluss, *RE* 15 (1931), 1292-94 ; Ziegler, *RE* 21 (1951), 687-88.

⁶⁰ *ILS* 1035-36, cf. *PIR*² I/J 302. On Sosius and Sparta, cf. p. 102.

⁶¹ Falco : A. R. Birley, *Epigraphische Studien* 4 (1967), 69. Sosius : Syme, *Historia* 17 (1968), 101, n. 127.

⁶² *IGRR* IV, 779, cf. *OGIS* 490 = *ILS* 8820 = *IGRR* IV, 780 = *MAMA* VI, 182.

⁶³ Hierapolis : *Ann. Scuol. Arch. di Atene* 41/42, n.s. 25/26 (1963-64, published 1965), 409-10 (J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Épig.* 1967, 581). Laodicea : *MAMA* VI, 2.

⁶⁴ One item might lead by a long way round back to Laodicea. The apocryphal *Acts of Paulus and Thecla* produce a Queen Tryphaena with a daughter Falconilla, the name borne by Sosius' great-granddaughter, the granddaughter of Falco and Polla : *Acta Pauli et Theclae* 27 ff. = R. A. Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* I (1891), 255 ff. (I owe this reference to Professor Syme). The true Queen Tryphaena (*PIR*² A 900) was the granddaughter of the dynast Zeno of Laodicea (G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (1965), 8, 51-53).

⁶⁵ Syme, *Tac.* 510.

⁶⁶ *PIR*² I/J 507.

⁶⁷ *PIR*² I/J 508.

L. Licinius L. f. Sergia Sura

Origin : somewhere in Tarraconensis, conceivably Celsa, though he resided in Tarraco or Barcino

Cos. I suff. ? 93, conceivably 86 or earlier

Leg. pro pr. Germaniae inf., ? 95-98

Cos. II ord., 102

Present in first Dacian war as ambassador, 102

Probably present in second Dacian war

Cos. III ord., 107

Dead ? *ca.* 108

Ornamenta triumphalia, state funeral, and posthumous statue granted by Trajan

Q. Sosius -. f. (*tribu*) Senecio

Origin : Eastern, possibly Cilicia or Greater Phrygia

Born ? *ca.* 60-62

IIIvir viarum curandarum, ? *ca.* 78-80

? *Trib. mil.*

Quaestor Achaiae, ? *ca.* 85-88

Trib. pleb. (candidatus Caesaris), ? *ca.* 90-92

Praetor (candidatus Caesaris), ? *ca.* 92-94

Leg. leg. I Minerviae, at Bonn, ? 95-97

Cos. I ord., 99

? *Leg. pro pr. prov. Moesiae sup.*, 100-103

[? *Comes Aug. cum*] ⁶⁸ *imp. Caesar Nerva Traianus [Aug. Germanicus] Dacicus gentem Dacorum et regem Decebalum*

superavit, sub eodem duce leg. pro pr., 105-106

Cos. II ord., 107

Ornamenta triumphalia and public statue granted by Trajan, ? 107

? Last attested 114

Dead ? *ca.* 115

University College, Toronto

⁶⁸ For this restoration, see Groag, *op. cit.* 478.