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Ethnic Constructs, Royal Dynasties  
and Historical Geography  
around the Black Sea Littoral

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Dedicated  
to the lasting scholarship  
and singular humanity of

Heinz Heinen  
(14 September 1941 – 21 June 2013)



## ZUM GELEIT

Der vorliegende Band kam auf die Initiative von Altay Coşkun zustande. Er enthält vornehmlich Studien, die im Zuge mehrerer Tagungen in den Jahren 2015 bis 2019 entstanden sind und der Pflege und Weiterführung des wissenschaftlichen Vermächnisses von Heinz Heinen dienen. Thematisch kreisen sie um einen der Forschungsschwerpunkte Heinens, den nördlichen Schwarzmeerraum mit seinen ethnischen, kulturellen und politischen, insbesondere dynastischen Verflechtungen. Ein zentrales Anliegen der Autor\*innen ist es, überkommene Vorstellungen von Ethnizität und Kultur und deren Einfluss auf politische Verhältnisse zu hinterfragen.

Vielfältig sind die historisch-geographischen Bezüge der Beiträge, deren Veröffentlichung in den *Geographica Historica* mehr als gerechtfertigt ist, zumal sie aus dem Blickwinkel ihrer Thematik der Forschung einer Region neue Aspekte hinzufügen, der bereits frühere Bände der Reihe gewidmet sind.

Darüber hinaus ist diese Publikation eine willkommene Möglichkeit, unserer persönlichen Verbundenheit mit Heinz Heinen Ausdruck zu verleihen.

*Eckart Olshausen und Vera Sauer*



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## PREFACE

As is the case with most books, there are some threads of its pre-history that authors or editors are keen to talk about. The longer story would take us back to the early 1960s, when my former supervisor and mentor Heinz Heinen discovered his interest in Russian politics, language and culture in the hottest phase of the Cold War. As the first Chair of Ancient History at the University of Trier (1971–2006), he developed his department into an international hub for ancient Black Sea studies. It felt intuitively right to me that the Greeks called the Black Sea *Pontos Euxeinus* – ‘Hospitable Sea’. Heinen’s intellectual skills and love for the ancient world were paired with a sense of humour, generous hospitality and, perhaps most of all, a deep respect for the student, colleague or simply the human who was engaging in a discussion with him. He thus fostered open discourse between scholars across the ideological boundaries that deeply divided the West and the Soviet-dominated East (cf. Heinen 1996; Cojocaru et al. 2014), an effort that resulted in many reflections on the roots of the divide, especially the scholarly work and biography of Michail Rostovtzeff and the effect of Marxism or Leninism on the course of Russian Classical studies (e.g., Heinen 1980; 2006a; 2006b; 2008). Besides, many lasting friendships and multiple research cooperation arose along the way. However, I have told this story elsewhere (Coşkun 2014).

I gained my first insights into this kind of dialogue as a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year undergraduate student (1992), but shifted my own research towards the Black Sea only much later, when I began collaborating with Heinen on Roman diplomacy and the dynasties of the Graeco-Roman world, briefly in 1999/2000 as his assistant and again as his research associate from 2002 to 2008. Initially, I concentrated on Anatolia and the theory of Roman *amicitia* (Coşkun 2008 and *APR*), while Heinen’s focus was on the Mithradatid house that connected Pontos on the southern littoral of the Black Sea with the Kimmerian Bosphorus on the opposite side (e.g., Heinen 1994; Coşkun & Heinen 2004; Heinen 2006a). In 1997, the first chapter drafts of an envisioned monograph on the dynastic history of the Bosphorus from 63 BC to AD 68 materialized (cf. Coşkun 2016; 2020c; in preparation). His several commitments to his students and administrative duties, besides his dedication to the study of ancient slavery since the later 1990s, prevented him from following through on this plan, especially when his life was cut short by an aggressive cancer.

A year after his death (21 June 2013), his widow Marie-Louise Heinen entrusted me with his unfinished book chapters on the Bosphorus. The best I could think of was to leverage them into a broad international cooperation, in order to acquire the support and expertise to one day publish them in a setting that would at least come close to the original book design, without falling short of the required expertise. To this end, I began building a network of advisors and collaborators, both from among his former friends and, as Heinen would have liked it,

also including many young colleagues with their fresh ideas on ancient Black Sea studies. I could draw on the previous contributors to my *Amici Populi Romani* database (*APR*) and further on the *Interconnectivity* workshop that I co-organized with Victor Cojocaru in Iași (8–12 July 2013). We had designed it to honour Heinen’s achievements, but eventually held it with sorrowful hearts to commemorate him a few days after his funeral (cf. Cojocaru et al. 2014).

A series of workshops and conference panels followed to discuss old traditions and new trends in ancient Black Sea studies, with a special emphasis on, but not limited to, Heinen’s main ideas, the reflection of ideological implications, and his demand for a sober and diverse methodological approach, paired with strong encouragement for intra- and interdisciplinary cooperation.

4–5/7/2015 (with Andrea Binsfeld): *Colloquium in Memory of Prof. Dr. Heinz Heinen*, St. Vith, Belgium

6–11/7/2015 (with Victor Cojocaru & Alexander Rubel): *Mobility in Research on the Black Sea Region*, Archaeological Institute of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Romania

5–8/4/2017: *Recent Research in Ancient Black Sea Studies*, Panel at the 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of CAMWS, University of Waterloo, ON.

16–18/7/2017 (with Victor Cojocaru): *Advances in Ancient Black Sea Studies: Methodological Innovation, Interdisciplinary Perspectives and International Cooperation*, Archaeological Institute of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Romania.

23/7/2018 (with Joanna Porucznik and Krzysztof Nawotka): *Power, Status and Symbols in the Black Sea Area in Antiquity*, Institute of History, University of Wrocław, Poland.

12/11/2018 (with Germain Payen): *Recent Research in Ancient Black Sea Studies in Canada and Beyond. Colloquium Ponticum Canadiense*, University of Waterloo, ON.

2/8/2019 (with Nick Sekunda): *Black Sea Study Day: The Northern Black Sea Coast on the Fringes of the Roman Empire*, Sopot near Gdańsk, Poland.

Many of the papers given on those occasions have been published elsewhere (such as in Cojocaru & Rubel 2016), while others are still being developed for a volume dedicated specifically to the Bosphoran kingdom (Coşkun in preparation). The present collection assembles 14 original studies on the history, archaeology and geography of the ancient Black Sea region, many of which were first discussed at one of the abovementioned gatherings. When combined, they cover the Euxine coastlines of all four hemispheres, while addressing problems from the archaic to the Byzantine period with a panoply of methodological approaches.

(A) The first five papers (I / Mordvintseva, II / Porucznik, III / Harland, IV / Oller Guzmán and V / Podossinov) try to overcome essentialist views on cultures and ethnicities, demonstrating how much more can be learned about the past and the present, if we regard such notions not as stable and closed entities, but as highly fluid and permeable concepts. In fact, they are best understood as social constructs that one way or another work within ideological frameworks, ancient or modern, and sometimes tell us more about those who speak of them than about what they are supposed to describe. The Orientalism debate, the Postcolonial turn and many other constructivist approaches have gradually allowed such wisdom to

penetrate the Humanities and Social Sciences for some time now, but their reception is heavily delayed in ancient Black Sea studies: European nationalisms and Marxist materialism appear to have cast longer shadows on this part of the ancient world than elsewhere. While this is particularly true for Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship, such perspectives are by no means limited to eastern Europeans (cf. Coşkun 2020c).

The fundamental role that the Russian scholar Michail Rostovtzeff has been playing for more than a century is disproportionate to the limited accessibility of his publications, especially in the West. A clear description of his world-historical analysis, placed within its historical and cultural context, thus opens this book (I / Mordvintseva). And I recommend the study of the Olbian *chora* (II / Porucznik) as a second introduction to this volume, thanks to its lucid survey of scholarship on intercultural encounter and (in)considerate use of physical evidence.

(B) Four further chapters are the result of my colleagues' and my interest in dynastic history along the shores of the Pontos Euxeinos. At the same time, most of these studies illustrate the potential of questioning pre-conceived ideas of ethnicity and their assumed or effective influence on politics (VI / Dana, VIII / Ballesteros Pastor, IX / Coşkun & Stern). The investigation of Pharnakes I (VII / Payen) traces the Mithradatid dynasty's pre-history on its way to becoming the leading player in the Black Sea. As such, it could as well have been grouped with the next part.

(C) Feeling the need for short-termed adjustments to the overall book plan (see below), I have contributed three chapters on the historical geography of Pontos and Kolchis. These exemplify how quickly research in political or cultural history leads to controversial questions on toponymy, settlement history or political geography, while also illustrating how many details of our ancient literary accounts have remained underexplored. Too often modern scholars have quarried them, looking for the information they were expecting, while missing subtle points that ancient authors were making. Even worse than this traditional 'positivism' is a bequest of Marxist materialism, a strong tendency to downplay or even discard literary evidence as unreliable or ideologically distorted – as if documents, such as coins, inscriptions and artefacts, were not subject to similarly purposeful distortions. I would hence like to show how reading ancient authors in context provides at least glimpses of the world 'through their eyes'. Many problems disappear, while new ones may emerge. In other words, accounting for every source individually rather than selecting or rejecting according to our preconceived ideas is a path that still promises to yield many new insights. Similar emphasis on the subjective perspective of ancient authors are also prevalent in the earlier chapters, such as the one that deconstructs ethnic hierarchies in ancient civilizations (III / Harland), explores paradoxical descriptions of barbarians (V / Podossinov) or discovers clusters of confrontation between Greek settlers and indigenous people (IV / Oller Guzmán).

Many chapters compare material evidence with the literary or documentary tradition, e.g., in an effort to illustrate assumed ethnic markers (I / Mordvintseva), to anchor the sense of threat as reflected in historiographical accounts also in ar-

chitectural remains (IV / Oller Guzmán), to shed light on the Achaimenid agenda of Pharnakes II (VIII / Ballesteros Pastor) or in the context of Roman imperial propaganda as displayed in the friezes of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (IX / Coşkun & Stern).

(D) Three contributions primarily focus on archaeological data, also showing the vibrancy and methodological diversity of archaeological fieldwork along the Black Sea coasts – by far the most intensive area of research in terms of manpower and financial resources. The first of these studies is on cult rituals in the *chora* of Olbia (II / Porucznik) and has been grouped with part A. Another chapter soberly challenges the perceived view that Christianization reshaped the urban structure in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD – an unbiased reassessment of the evidence appears to tell a different story (XIII / Ruscu). Third comes the final chapter of this volume (XIV / Elton), which offers a long-term perspective from the Classical to the Byzantine age and thus briefly revisits many of the historical periods addressed throughout the book, while investigating the crops that farmers cultivated in Pontos. It is innovative for its combination of biology, geology and cultural history.

Science and technology have left their traces also in other studies: osteology contributed to the scrutiny of Olbian rituals (II / Porucznik) and satellite images hugely benefitted my own research on Kolchian geography (XII / Coşkun; cf. Coşkun 2020a and 2020b), just as the maps that my student Stone Chen has skillfully drawn for this volume (printed at the end of this volume), beginning with the summary map ‘Key Settlements on the Black Sea Littoral’. The investigation of farming in Pontos (XIV / Elton) yields the well-documented result that periods of climate change, which was a reality in the past as it is in the presence, ultimately affected the choice of crops to a much lesser degree than major political reversals and the new fiscal and economic conditions that these entailed. As such, our volume closes with an example of the fresh insights that historical research may expect from new technologies in the future, while, at the same time, implicitly endorsing the relevance of the most traditional concern of historical studies: political power – its protagonists, the structures within which these operated and the effect it wielded on historical societies.

This preface provides me with the opportunity to thank those who have contributed in so many different ways to produce this book, to develop its much broader research agenda or to rekindle the passion for collaborative research on the ancient world of which the Black Sea region formed an integral part.

I start with Heinz Heinen for the immeasurable support, guidance and inspiration he gave me ever since we first met in 1991. Close by his side, I mention Marie-Louise Heinen for her ceaseless moral support and heart-warming affection.

Next, I would like to thank all the co-organizers and participants of the workshops mentioned before as well as the authors of the studies presented here. To many of them, I am indebted for more than entrusting me their research papers; many gave me advice, offered hospitality or shared literature. I refrain from re-

peating all their names and refer the readers instead to the short CVs assembled at the end of this volume.

This restraint notwithstanding, I wish to mark out Valentina Mordvintseva, a model of dedication (in her roles as daughter, mother and grandmother no less than as colleague and professor), bestowed with a mysterious source of energy. I mention Luis Ballesteros Pastor for the friendship we have been enjoying since our first encounter in Trier in 2007, which goes beyond discovering ever new facets of Mithradatic history. I first made friends with Alexandr Podossinov during his visits to Trier in the 1990s, lost touch but happily reconnected with him in Moscow in 2017; he did not hesitate to offer a contribution. Our shared interest in *Dynamis* and the *Ara Pacis* allowed me to learn much from Gaius Stern, to benefit from his generous editorial support and to be inspired by his devotion to exploring the ancient and modern worlds and sharing new insights.

While working intensively on this book, devastating news reached me twice, first of the passing of my friend Mackenzie Lewis (7 March 2020). As a scholar deeply invested into ancient colonial history and archaeology, he actively contributed to my research workshops at Waterloo and gave me encouraging feedback (not only) on my *Leukothea* piece (XII), which I would like to dedicate to him. Not much after this loss, I was saddened by the likewise premature death of Federicomaria Muccioli. Our friendship goes back to my undergraduate years in Trier; he last hosted me at Bologna in 2018. One of my next publications on Hellenistic history (a passion we shared), will be dedicated to his memory.

We lost four paper commitments towards the conclusion of the present volume, at least in part due to the corona pandemic, which continues imposing unusual restrictions on all of us. Three of these would have strengthened and diversified part C on historical geography (to which I originally planned to contribute only one paper). One of them was meant to explore the geography of the Bosporan kingdom and would thereby have addressed the most sensational discovery in recent years, the Kuban Bosphorus, a second straight connecting the Maiotis (Sea of Azov) with the Pontos Euxinos. Its two straights thus carved out Phanagoreia as an island (Zhuravlev & Schlotzhauer 2016; Schlotzhauer et al. 2017; cf. Dan 2016, 270f.; Papuci-Władyka 2018, 312 and see Map 1 at the end of this volume). While hoping to include contributions by this team in one of my subsequent Black Sea volumes, I do not want to fail to thank Udo Schlotzhauer and Anca Dan for kindly receiving me in Berlin (2017) and Paris (2019) respectively, and for the many valuable books they gifted. The latter trip to France is memorable also for other reasons, the generous hospitality of Madalina & Dan Dana in Paris and of Suzan and Alexandru Avram in Le Mans, besides the opportunity of visiting Notre Dame a few days before it went up in flames.

Germain Payen and I connected some eight years ago due to our shared interest in Asia Minor studies. I am glad I enlisted his support for my Black Sea studies agenda, which brought him to Waterloo as a postdoctoral fellow (September 2017 to December 2018). Much of the support for this book he has provided as a postdoc at Cologne University. I look forward to continuing our cooperation and friendship in whichever format in the future. Joanna Porucznik was a postdoctoral

research fellow at Wrocław University when I met her first at a Humboldt Conference hosted by the Russian Academy in 2017. I immediately benefitted from her many talents, including not getting lost in Moscow. She was quickly appointed assistant professor at Opole University, and I foresee that many other institutions will want to have her. Germain and Joanna both joined me repeatedly at workshops or even co-organized them with me in 2018. They gave feedback on some of the papers and helped me with formatting others. Germain prepared the index of names. Joanna took it on herself to unify the transcription of Russian titles in all bibliographies and translated into Russian all abstracts from English, with the support of Olga Olszewska (Wrocław), whom I include in my expression of gratitude. Cordial thanks further go to Stone Chen for his diligence and aesthetic ambitions in drafting five maps for this volume.

I got in touch with the series editors of *Geographica Historica* Eckart Olshausen and Vera Sauer in Spring 2019, and received more than kind encouragement, useful advice and mature guidance. I very much appreciate the efficient and diligent review process as well as the bibliographical support they provided during the pandemic library closures of 2020. My cooperation with the Franz-Steiner Verlag was as pleasant as previously, thanks to the dedication of Katharina Stüdemann and Sarah-Vanessa Schäfer.

Much of the research that I have been conducting on the ancient Black Sea would not have been possible without the institutional support of the University of Waterloo, my academic home since 2009, as well as the financial support that my project ‘Ethnic Identities and Diplomatic Affiliations in the Bosporan Kingdom’ is receiving from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (2017–2022).

My prefaces usually close by acknowledging one of the two women who have mattered most in my life, my mother Brunhilde and my wife Dorothea. This time, both of them are to be named: less so for the typos they picked in some of the chapters than for patiently and lovingly allowing me to be away, whether absorbed in books or off to a conference: my mother regularly took generous care of the logistics of my European travel base in Herzogenrath, while my wife never fails in giving me peace of mind by keeping our children safe and happy.

Altay Coşkun  
Waterloo, August 2020

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## QUEEN DYNAMIS AND PRINCE ASPURGOS IN ROME?

Revisiting the South Frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (13/9 BC)

*Altay Coşkun & Gaius Stern*

*Abstract:* The Senate voted to build the *Ara Pacis* to welcome home Augustus after restoring order in the western provinces, while Agrippa pursued a similar mission in the East. Agrippa had settled the turmoil in the Bosphorus by arranging for Queen Dynamis to marry King Polemon of Pontos, thereby uniting the two realms. Brian Rose (1990) explained that two boys on the *Ara Pacis* who do not wear togas are foreign princes in Rome in 13 BC exactly when Augustus and Agrippa returned from their foreign tours. Rose considered the older boy on the south frieze an eastern prince, probably Aspurgos, the future king of the Bosphorus. He speculated that Queen Dynamis had come to Rome with Agrippa, and that she is the woman who puts her hand on the boy's head. Rose exposed the frailty of Giuseppe Moretti's theory, who regarded the two boys as Gaius and Lucius Caesar dressed as Trojans. We agree with Ann Kuttner, Gaius Stern, John Pollini, Ilaria Romeo that the boys are barbarians, not Romans, but cannot accept the identifications with Dynamis and Aspurgos, (1) on prosopographical lines, because the placement of Dynamis on the *Ara Pacis* relies upon identifying her as the mother of Aspurgos, which claim the ancient sources do not support; (2) on practical terms, since Dynamis should have stayed in her kingdom to help Polemon consolidate his new throne (not speculation but positive evidence would be needed to counter this view); (3) iconographically, as the woman on the *Ara Pacis* does not closely resemble the image of Dynamis; (4) because Dynamis was a mature, middle-aged queen by 13 BC, as her portrait on two gold staters indicate, whereas the *Ara Pacis* teenager is far too young. She is actually Agrippa's least famous daughter, wearing not a diadem, but a brill appropriate for a Roman teenage girl close to marrying age. Her hand is resting on the head of a Parthian prince, a 'guest' in Rome, hosted by the family of Agrippa.

*Абстракт: Динамия и принц Аспург в Риме? Возвращаясь к южному фризу Алтаря Мира Августа (13/9 г. н.э.):* Сенат проголосовал за создание Алтаря Мира, чтобы приветствовать Августа на родине после восстановления порядка в западных провинциях, в то время как Агриппа выполнял аналогичную миссию на Востоке. Агриппа подавил беспорядки на Босфоре, договорившись о том, чтобы царица Динамия вышла замуж за Понтийского царя Полемона, тем самым объединив два царства. Брайан Роуз (1990) объяснил, что два мальчика на Алтаре Мира, которые не носят тоги, являются иностранными принцами, которые пребывали в Риме в 13 г. до н.э. именно тогда, когда Август и Агриппа вернулись из своих зарубежных поездок. Роуз считал старшего мальчика на южном фризе восточным принцем, вероятно Аспургом, будущим царем Боспора. Он предположил, что царица Динамия приехала в Рим с Агриппой и что изображенная на Алтаре женщина, которая кладет руку на голову мальчика, – это именно Динамия. Роуз обнаружил слабость теории Джузеппе Моретти, который считал, что два мальчика, одетые как троянцы – это Гай и Люций Цезарь. Авторы согласны с Энн Каттнер, Гайусом Стерном, Джоном Поллини и Иларией Ромео, что мальчики – это варвары, а не римляне, но авторы не могут согласиться с идентификацией этих персон с Динамией и Аспургом (1) по

просопографическим причинам, потому что присутствие Динамии на Алтаре Мира зависит от ее идентификации как матери Аспурга, а древние источники этого не подтверждают; (2) с практической точки зрения, поскольку Динамия должна была остаться в своем царстве, чтобы помочь Полемону укрепить свой новый трон (чтобы противостоять этой точке зрения необходимы будут настоящие доказательства, а не спекуляция); (3) по иконографическим причинам, поскольку женщина на Алтаре Мира не очень похожа на изображения Динамии; (4) потому что Динамия к 13 г. до н.э., как показывает ее портрет на двух золотых статерах, была зрелой женщиной средних лет, в то время как подросток, изображенный на Алтаре Мира, слишком молод, чтобы считать его Аспургом. В действительности женщина на Алтаре – это наименее известная дочь Агриппы. На ее голове нет диадемы, а есть лента которую надевали римские девушки в брачном возрасте. Ее рука лежит на голове парфянского принца, «гостя» Рима, принятого семьей Агриппы.

## I. THE *ARA PACIS AUGUSTAE*: NEW EVIDENCE FOR BOSPORAN DYNASTIC HISTORY?

### 1. Dynamis, the Most Prominent and Controversial Queen of the Bosphorus

Queen Dynamis is the most illustrious example of a royal female from both the Bosporan kingdom and the Mithradatid dynasty. The former was a realm that began to develop from the city of Pantikapaion (modern Kerch, located close to the easternmost tip of the Crimea) in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It controlled substantial portions of the European and Asian Kimmerian Bosphorus (the modern Strait of Kerch) until the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The aforementioned dynasty gained fame as rulers of a small principality in northwest Asia Minor under the Achaimenids, before establishing itself as a kingdom in Paphlagonia and northern Cappadokia around Amaseia (Amasya) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. After the conquest of Sinope (Sinop) starting in the early-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, its orientation shifted towards the Black Sea coast and its kingdom became known as Pontos. The most famous dynast of this ruling house, Mithradates VI Eupator (123/16–63 BC), gradually extended his territory to include the former Bosporan kingdom in the north (ca. 110 BC) and Kolchis (west Georgia) in the East. He became most notorious as the man who defied the Roman Empire for about half a century. His appetite for expansion brought him in constant conflict with the superpower of the Mediterranean world, which resulted in a series of major ('Mithradatic') wars (89–84, 82–80, 73–63 BC).

Having lost his possessions in Asia Minor and Kolchis, Mithradates tried to renew the war once more from Pantikapaion in 63 BC, but his own son Pharnakes opposed him and forced him to commit suicide, after which he took over the Bosphorus as Great King of Kings Pharnakes II (63–47 BC).<sup>1</sup> He was the father of our main subject, Queen Dynamis. After gaining recognition from the Romans and extending the boundaries of his northern dominion as far as Tanaïs on the mouth

1 On the Mithradatids of Pontos up to Pharnakes II, see Hoben 1969; Gajdukevič 1971; Sullivan 1990; Ballesteros Pastor 1996; Højte 2009; Roller 2020; see also Payen, chapter VII on Pharnakes I in this volume.

of the homonymous river (now the Don), to fully encircle the Maiotis (Sea of Azov), he seized the opportunity that the Roman civil war offered. Caesar had defeated Pompey at Pharsalos (9 August 48) and was chasing him down as far as Egypt when Pharnakes invaded his ancestral homeland Pontos (48 BC). But despite Pharnakes' initial success, Caesar defeated him at Zela and expelled him from Asia Minor almost exactly a year later, on 2 August 47 BC.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly before the Battle of Zela, Asandros, one of Pharnakes' leading generals, who had been left in control of the Bosphorus, revolted and he established himself as ruler after killing Pharnakes in the same summer. Conducive to the stability of his rule was his marriage with princess Dynamis, who gave him at least the appearance of dynastic legitimacy. His position was corroborated when Mark Antony sold him recognition as a *rex amicus populi Romani* in 44 BC. Aged over 90 years, Asandros finally appointed his wife *basilissa* and co-regent, but not even this gesture held Dynamis back from joining the usurper Scribonius, who took control in 20 or 19 BC. Scribonius' bluff about Roman support was soon exposed and he was killed in due course (ca. 16 BC), while Dynamis stayed in power. The Romans, however, insisted on establishing a king they could trust and dispatched Polemon I, then the ruler of Pontos and Kolchis, to take control. Resistance was fierce, even after Polemon was victorious in a first battle (ca. 15 BC). Only when M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the associate emperor, was gathering a fleet in Sinope for a major naval campaign to the Bosphorus did Dynamis give in and accept Polemon into her realm as her king and third husband (14 BC).<sup>3</sup>

Her biography is by no means without difficulties thus far, but the timeline here proposed is quite firm.<sup>4</sup> Much more controversial are the remaining parts of her life. Clear evidence for her abruptly ends with the arrival of Polemon, who immediately became the sole minting authority. Likewise, our literary sources turn silent about her after the royal wedding. At least, Strabo mentions Polemon twice as campaigning on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, where he was killed by

2 Besides the previous note, see also chapters VIII (Ballesteros Pastor) and X–XII (Coşkun) in this volume for more on Pharnakes II and Roman imperial politics 63–47 BC.

3 The two most important literary sources, Lukian, *Makrobioi* 17 and Cass. Dio 54.24.4–6, are quoted below, in notes 10 and 18 respectively. Easiest access to the numismatic sources is by MacDonald 2005; cf. Frolova 1997. For a selection of royal inscriptions, see Ivantchik & Tokhtas'ev 2011; Coşkun 2016; for a comprehensive discussion, see Coşkun in preparation. See also next note.

4 Scholars have dated the accession of Asandros between 49 and 42 BC and his death to ca. 20/15 BC, but once ideological distortion is set aside and methodological flaws are overcome, the literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence combined yields exactly the year dates suggested above, see Coşkun 2019a; also 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2019b; 2020a; 2020b; in preparation, based on or developing further Heinen 1998; 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2011; forthcoming a; forthcoming b; arguing with Rostovtzeff 1919; Macurdy 1937, 33–38; Golubtsova 1951; Hanslik & Schmitt 1963; Hoben 1969; Gajdukevič 1971; Sullivan 1980; 1990; Anokhin 1986; Saprykin 1990; 1996; 2002, 97–99; Saprykin 2005, 170f.; Nawotka 1991/2; Leschhorn 1993; Frolova 1997; Kozłóvskaia 2003; 2004; Braund 2004; MacDonald 2005; Ballesteros Pastor 2008a; Saprykin & Fedoseev 2009; Primo 2010; Yaylenko 2010; Ivantchik & Tokhtas'ev 2011; Roller 2018a; Zavoykina, Novichikhin & Konstantinov 2018, 682–686.

the so-called Aspurgians in ca. 9 BC. The same geographer also mentions Pythodoris as his widow,<sup>5</sup> who succeeded him in Pontos and in Kolchis, while Dynamis and the Bosphorus remain unmentioned. The most radical conclusion would be that Dynamis died shortly after her third wedding and thus gave way to Polemon's remarriage with Pythodoris. This reconstruction is very implausible, however, since it requires us to date all inscriptions mentioning the queen prior to the arrival of Polemon.

Except for one inscription that names her together with Asandros, the others do not specify a king by her side, but only her father, suggesting that they fall into a period of sole rule. But the window after the death of Scribonius and before her marriage with Polemon (15/4 BC) is simply too short to accommodate most of the royal inscriptions from more than half a century. In addition, most inscriptions provide her epithet *Philorhomaïos* – 'Friend of the Romans', which she certainly did not bear after betraying the *amicus populi Romani* Asandros and while defying the Roman candidate Polemon. Inscriptions with this title thus date to her second period of sole rule (after 9 BC) after the death of Polemon. A series of dated gold staters from the Bosphorus that depict Augustus on the obverse and Agrippa on the reverse imply the same chronology. They do not have a legend to name the royal minting authority, but use instead a monogram (Fig. 1), which can easily be deciphered as *Dynamis*. As with the previous and subsequent coins, most specimens are dated according to the dynastic era. The Mithradatic years 289–304 equal the time span from 9/8 BC to AD 7/8. It would be utterly unconvincing to posit an otherwise unknown king or Roman governor behind this monogram.



Fig. 1: Monogram of the Gold Staters of Dynamis as Sole Ruler with Portraits of Augustus and Agrippa, dated 9/8 BC to AD 7/8. Source: Minns 1913, 595; cf. MacDonald 2005, 68.

Most scholars thus rightly assume that Dynamis enjoyed an extended period of sole rule until AD 7/8. Over the next few years, there is a quick succession of monograms on the coinage before a steady series of coins was minted with a monogram unanimously attributed to *Basileus Aspurgos* (AD 14/5–37/8). The frequently changing monograms in the previous decade are normally understood as reflecting dynastic turmoil. Many scholars interpret the monograms of AD 10/11 and 13/4 as earlier reigns of Aspurgos (perhaps without the royal title). Since there is a second coin type of AD 13/4 with a monogram similar to that of Dynamis, there are at least four possible scenarios: Aspurgos may have contended for the throne and been expelled intermittently or he co-ruled. This second potentate may either have been Queen Dynamis herself or someone else. The full dis-

5 Polemon and Pythodoris: Strab. *Geogr.* 11.2.18 (499C); 12.3.29 (555f.C). Cf. on Pythodoris: 12.3.31 (557C); 12.3.37 (559C); 14.1.42 (649C). See Olshausen 1980; Braund 2005; Roller 2018a; 2018b. See also the previous note and further Coşkun, chapter XI in this volume (on the territories of Pythodoris).

cussion would require close involvement with the epigraphic and numismatic sources, which would exceed the scope of the present chapter.<sup>6</sup>

What matters for our current investigation is that many (especially Russian) scholars advocated the view that Dynamis and Aspurgos were closely related and thus co-ruled until ca. AD 14. Mikhail Rostovtzeff, for instance, suggested that Aspurgos was the fourth husband of Dynamis, which is quite unlikely in the face of the great age difference between the two. Instead, many more historians believe rather that Aspurgos was the son of Dynamis and Asandros. In favour of this view, they refer to several inscriptions which call Aspurgos the son of king Asandrochos.<sup>7</sup> The same scholars regard Asandrochos as the original Iranian version of the Hellenized form Asandros, and they relate this Asandr(och)os and Aspurgos in some way to the abovementioned Aspurgianoï who revolted against Polemon near Gorgippia (Anapa) on the Taman Peninsula. Dynamis is believed to have cooperated with the insurgents or even led the uprising against Polemon. As the background to these conflicts, Rostovtzeff saw a lasting opposition between the Iranian population on the one hand and the Greek colonists ready to collaborate with the Roman imperial power on the other. Mithradates VI Eupator and his offspring are viewed as fighters against Roman oppressors.<sup>8</sup>

This reconstruction does not stand up to scrutiny. The assumption of ethnically-based hostilities that lasted over centuries is no more than a speculation, and quite implausible at that, in a multi-ethnic kingdom with a dynasty that had been intermarrying in the Hellenistic and Near-Eastern world for centuries. The theory further conflicts with the fact that nearly every ruler of the Bosphorus from Mithradates Eupator until the disintegration of the kingdom in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD was keen on becoming a friend of the Roman Emperor and people, or at least to be seen as such (as in the case of Scribonius).<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, the identification of Asandros with Asandrochos is fraught with problems of its own. That none of the many inscriptions of Bosporan royals mentions Dynamis and Aspurgos together should give us pause. Of course, the mere possibility of name variants or name switching should not be denied in an inter-ethnic context, but such a claim makes little sense in the case of Asandros. This is how the first husband of Dynamis is persistently called in the literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, whereas the inscriptions set up in honour of Aspurgos

6 Frolova 1997, 24–73 proposed Dynamis' death in or around 14 BC; cf. 2009. For documentation of the monogrammatic coinage, see also Minns 1913, 599–604 and MacDonald 2005, 48–68, who ascribe these coins to Dynamis. For discussion and further references, see Cojocaru 2014, 6 and the references above in n. 4.

7 *CIRB* 40 and see Heinen 2008b, 191–201 for a critical discussion of the evidence, including more recent finds as well as the questionable supplement of Asandrochos' name in *CIRB* 39. Add the latest epigraphic discovery from Anapa published by Zavoykina, Novichikhin & Konstantinov 2018, 682–686, who also document the earlier evidence.

8 E.g., Saprykin 2005, 170f. and Saprykin & Fedoseev 2009, a good example of 'creative' epigraphy that produces 'evidence' by supplementing whatever is desired (cf. the criticism by Avram 2011). For further references, see n. 4 above.

9 See Braund 2004; Coşkun 2016, besides further references in n. 4 above.

name his father Asandrochos throughout. They do not, however, ascribe him the epithet *Philorhomaïos*, although it is attested for the later Asandros. Aspurgos was not indifferent to such titulature, since he proudly bore the titles *Philokaisar kai Philorhomaïos*.<sup>10</sup>

Also, one must mention biological implications that are so significant that even some of the scholars who subscribe to Rostovtzeff's theory of a lasting ethnic divide reject the equation. Literary sources record that Asandros made his wife co-ruling queen when he was 91 or 92 years old, before dying at 92 or 93 during the revolt of Scribonius.<sup>11</sup> Had he had a capable son by either Dynamis or by any other woman, he would certainly have chosen him over his wife. And if Dynamis had had a son of any age with someone else, she would hardly have taken Scribonius' side, but ensured the succession of her own blood. By all means, Asandros' advanced age is incompatible with him having a minor son too young to rule, especially a late-born son. We conclude that the absence of any talk of such a boy under Scribonius or Polemon (who would have wanted to get rid of him), and, further, the lack of any sign of co-rule during the first short and second long, sole reign of Dynamis indicate that no such prince existed.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Dynamis and Aspurgos in Rome?

The discussion was reignited by Brian Rose in his investigation of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome. He suggested that a lady on the south frieze may well be Dynamis, touching the head of her little boy Aspurgos. The relief was sculpted in 13–10 BC, and both figures are grouped with M. Vipsanius Agrippa, so that this son-in-law and deputy of Augustus may have taken the queen and her son to Rome after his eastern campaign. Some scholars happily embraced this re-interpretation and thought it explains why Dynamis is no longer attested in the Bosporean kingdom after Polemon's arrival. They further conclude that it was from Rome that she approached the tribe of the Aspurgianoï to rise against Polemon.<sup>13</sup>

But, once again, there are unsurmountable problems involved with such speculations, besides the lack of any positive evidence. First, we should wonder why the Aspurgians, if understood as loyal to their former ruler Asandr(och)os and his

10 See especially Heinen 2008b, 191–201, besides further references in notes 4–8 above.

11 Lukian, *Makrobioi* 17: Ἄσανδρος δὲ ὁ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἀντὶ ἐθνάρχου βασιλεὺς ἀναγορευθεὶς Βοσπόρου περὶ ἔτη ὧν ἐνεθήκοντα ἵππομαχῶν καὶ πεζομαχῶν οὐδενὸς ἦττων ἐφάνη: ὡς δὲ ἑώρα τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπὸ τὴν μάχην Σκριβωνίῳ προστιθεμένους ἀποσχόμενος σιτίων ἐτελεύτησεν βιοῦς ἔτη τρία καὶ ἐνεθήκοντα. 'Asandros, who, after being ethnarch, was proclaimed king of the Bosphorus by the divine Augustus, at about 90 (89?) years proved himself a match for anyone in fighting from horseback or on foot; but when he saw his own entourage going over to Scribonius before the battle, he starved himself to death at the age of 93 (92?).' For in-depth discussion, see Coşkun 2019a.

12 Nor does the latest epigraphic find from Anapa compel us to believe this; see Zavoykina, Novichikhin & Konstantinov 2018 and Coşkun in preparation.

13 Rose 1990. And see next note.

assumed son Aspurgos, would have supported Dynamis, who had betrayed this family by allying herself with Scribonius. Secondly, the abovementioned concerns about Asandros' age still stand. But even if we accept a 'Biblical potency' for that man in his early 90s and admit the possibility that he left behind a pregnant wife, who later appeared on the *Ara Pacis* with that hypothetical son, such a child would have been six and a half years in 13 BC, while the boy on the south frieze looks closer to a five-year old.<sup>14</sup> Viktor Parfenov has proposed an alternative, accepting that Asandros was too old to be Asandrochos, the father of Aspurgos. Instead, he regards Scribonius as the father of Dynamis' child.<sup>15</sup>

At least age-wise, there is nothing to object to this speculation, for a queen in her early 40s could in theory still conceive. But, at the time of the *Ara Pacis* procession in 13 BC (on which see more in the next sections), she would have been between 47 and 50 years old. We can infer this from the fact that she should be the daughter whom Pharnakes offered to Caesar in marriage before the Battle of Zela in spring 47 BC, which makes her at least 12, probably 13 to 15. She might even have been older, if she was already married to Asandros at the time of the revolt; in this case, the king would have to look around for a new match for her after putting down the insurgent (which he failed to do).<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, there is the possibility that she had sisters who escape our record. But we happen to have two coin portraits of her, one dated to 21/20 (Fig. 2) and the second to 17/6 BC. They both show her as a mature (and well-nourished) lady barely younger than 40.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 2: Gold Stater of Dynamis as Sole Ruler, dated to the Mithradatic Era Year 281 (ΑΠΣ) = 17/16 BC. State Historical Museum, no. A 393. Cf. Rostovtzeff 1916/19; RPC I 1864; Frolova 1997; Heinen 1997; Frolova – Irland 2002, 49; MacDonald 2005, 53f.

- 14 Pollini, 1987, 23 says the child is approximately 86 cm. But more important is the ratio of child to adult size, which suggests that the boy is about five. See below, with n. 42 for details.
- 15 Parfenov 1996, followed by Romeo 1998, 130f. Cojocaru 2014, 6f. is positive, but undecided. Ballesteros Pastor 2008b remains uncommitted. Roller 2018a, 96, 145 is somewhat hesitant to regard the boy as a child of Dynamis due to age reasons, but still considers her trip to Rome possible. Saprykin 2002, 98f. rejects both Rose's and Parfenov's view, without, however, closely engaging with their arguments.
- 16 Pharnakes was killed by Asandros some four to five weeks later. See App. *Mith.* 120.590–595, with Coşkun 2019a; 2019b; 2020a.
- 17 Cf. Coşkun 2019a.



Fig. 3: 'Hermitage Dynamis'. Hermitage PAN.1726. Source: Rostovtzeff 1919.

Many readers will be more familiar with a bust found in Novorossiysk on the south-eastern margins of the former Bosporan kingdom, generally known as the 'Dynamis' of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, ever since Rostovtzeff proposed this identification in 1916 (Fig. 3). The identification is not based on an inscription or monogram, but mainly due to the fact that Dynamis was the single-most prominent female in the area throughout antiquity.<sup>18</sup> Rostovtzeff connected the star on her head gear with the dynastic iconography. But the Mithradatid dynasty typically used that combination of star and crescent (as did other Near-Eastern potentates), which is not depicted on the Hermitage bust. Moreover, the 'Phrygian cap' of the bust may instead point to an Anatolian context, perhaps even hinting at the Phrygian Kybele, who was indeed venerated as a celestial goddess in many parts of the ancient world.<sup>19</sup> Given the limitation of our visual evidence for the appearance of Dynamis, it would be risky to draw on the bust of the Hermitage.

Besides iconography, aspects of political plausibility must be considered as well. One might speculate about the chances of survival of a very young son of Asandros during the revolt against him, likewise those of an offspring of Scribonius when the subjects rose up against him. Proponents of the identification of Dynamis and a son of hers on the *Ara Pacis* might suggest, on the one hand, that Dynamis sought Roman protection from Polemon; on the other hand, it would hardly have been a wise choice to go against the popular queen (and her son, if she had one), considering the people's affection for her. In fact, Agrippa's insistence on the dynastic marriage carries an implication for Polemon that violence against Dynamis (and therefore her putative son) would have angered the Romans and for Dynamis that her place was at the Bosphorus, to allow Polemon to rule and campaign. Dynamis was not in need of Roman protection, once the deal had been accepted. If she had chosen to defy Polemon and Rome, she would have had to withdraw to one of the confederate Scythian tribes rather than to Rome.

This is at least the conclusion we draw from the combined literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, most of all Cassius Dio, our main witness for the turbulent dynastic successions in the Bosporan kingdom. About 14 BC, he writes:

18 Opinions over the accuracy when matching coin portraiture to a statue can vary greatly, but we do not find the resemblance between the Hermitage bust and the Dynamis stater to be very strong. The facial features of the bust are timeless and ageless, they are more ideal than personal. The coin displays maturity and regal markers.

19 See Rostovtzeff 1919, based on an earlier publication in Russian from 1916. He is still followed, e.g., by Kozłóvskaia 2003 and 2004, 125, 133; Halamus 2017, 162. For a more sceptical view, see, e.g., Roller 2018a, 94. On Mithradatid dynastic symbolism, see also Ballesteros Pastor 2021.

(4) And the revolt among the tribes of the Kimmerian Bosphorus was put down. For someone named **Scribonius**, claiming himself to be a grandson of **Mithradates** and claiming to have received the kingdom from Augustus after **Asandros** had died, married Asandros' wife, the one named **Dynamis**, who also had been **entrusted with the regency by her husband**. She was really both the daughter of **Pharnakes** and the granddaughter of Mithradates, and thus Scribonius was holding the Bosphorus under his control. (5) And so **Agrippa**, upon learning of these matters, sent against him **Polemon**, the king of that part of Pontos bordering on Kappadokia. Polemon learned Scribonius was no longer alive (for the people of Bosphorus, learning of this invasion against them, pre-emptively killed him), but they were still opposing Polemon out of fear that they would be given over to be ruled by him and come under his hand. (6) And even though he defeated them, he was unable to bring them to terms before Agrippa came to Sinope, to campaign against them, also. Then they laid down their arms and gave themselves up to Polemon; and the lady **Dynamis** became his wife, for it was clear that Augustus was approving of it.<sup>20</sup>

Having unfolded the evidence for the dynastic history of the Bosphorus, we conclude that a visit of Dynamis (and a potential son of hers) to Rome in 14 or 13 BC is quite unlikely and entirely unsupported by the ancient sources investigated so far. The question is whether the re-interpretation of the *Ara Pacis* yields new evidence urging us to reconsider our previous reconstruction of Bosphoran history.<sup>21</sup>

## II. THE *ARA PACIS*: A SNAPSHOT OF AUGUSTAN IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

The Roman Senate voted on 4 July 13 BC to erect the *Ara Pacis Augustae* to honour the successes of Augustus and Agrippa achieved in Germany, Gaul and the East by 13 BC as well as those that were yet to come.<sup>22</sup> Augustus himself reports that the altar was built on the *Campus Martius* on the west side of the *Via Flaminia* (today's Corso), one Roman mile from the *pomerium*, near the present Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina.<sup>23</sup> Palazzo Fiano-Almagià (Palazzo Ottoboni-Fiano until

20 Cass. Dio 54.24.4–6 ed. Boissevain 1898: τά τε ἐν τῷ Βοσπόρῳ τῷ Κιμμερίῳ νεοχμώσαντα κατέστη. Σκριβώνιος γάρ τις τοῦ τε Μιθριδάτου ἔγγονος εἶναι καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Αὐγούστου τὴν βασιλείαν, ἐπειδὴ περὶ ὁ Ἄσανδρος ἐτεθήκει, εἰληφέναι λέγων, τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ Δύναμιν τε καλουμένην καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν παρὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐπιτετραμμένην, ἢ τοῦ τε Φαρνάκου θυγάτηρ καὶ τοῦ Μιθριδάτου ἔγγονος ἀληθῶς ἦν, ἠγάγετο, καὶ τὸν Βόσπορον διὰ χειρὸς ἐποιεῖτο. (5) πυθόμενος οὖν ταῦτα ὁ Ἀγρίππας τὸν Πολέμωνα ἐπ' αὐτόν, τὸν τοῦ Πόντου τοῦ πρὸς τῇ Καππαδοκίᾳ ὄντος βασιλεύοντα, ἔπεμψε: καὶ ὅς Σκριβώνιον μὲν οὐκέτι περιόντα κατέλαβε μαθόντες γὰρ οἱ Βοσπόριοι τὴν ἐπιβολὴν αὐτοῦ προαπέκτειναν αὐτόν, ἀντιστάντων δέ οἱ ἐκείνων δέει τοῦ μὴ βασιλεύεσθαι αὐτῷ δοθῆναι, ἐς χεῖρας σφισιν ἦλθε. (6) καὶ ἐνίκησε μὲν, οὐ μὴν καὶ παρεστήσατό σφας πρὶν τὸν Ἀγρίππαν ἐς Σινώπην ἐλθεῖν ὡς καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς στρατεύσοντα. οὕτω δὲ τά τε ὄπλα κατέθεντο καὶ τῷ Πολέμῳ παρεδόθησαν: ἢ τε γυνὴ ἢ Δύναμις συνώκησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ Αὐγούστου δῆλον ὅτι ταῦτα δικαιοῦσαντος. Our translation has modified the Loeb edition by Cary & Foster 1914. See § 1 for the consular year date.

21 Cf. Cojocar 2014, 6f., who is undecided between Rose, Parfenov and Frolova, calling for a thorough scrutiny of the *Ara Pacis*.

22 *CIL IX 4192 = EDCS-55800157*: ... *quod eo die ara Pacis Augustae in campo Martio constituta est Nerone et Varo cos.*

23 Aug. *RG 12 = EDCS-20200013 = Mitchell & French 2012*, no. 1, p. 76, col. 2, ll. 36–41 (though reading *co[nsacrandum]* in l. 39): [*Cum*] *ex [His]pania Gal[li]aque, rebus in eis*

1898) and the San Lorenzo Church today occupy the grounds where the *Ara Pacis Augustae* stood, one kilometre away from the *Ara Pacis* Museum. The *Ara Pacis* was a temple-like sanctuary, but it did not ‘house’ a divinity or have a roof.<sup>24</sup>

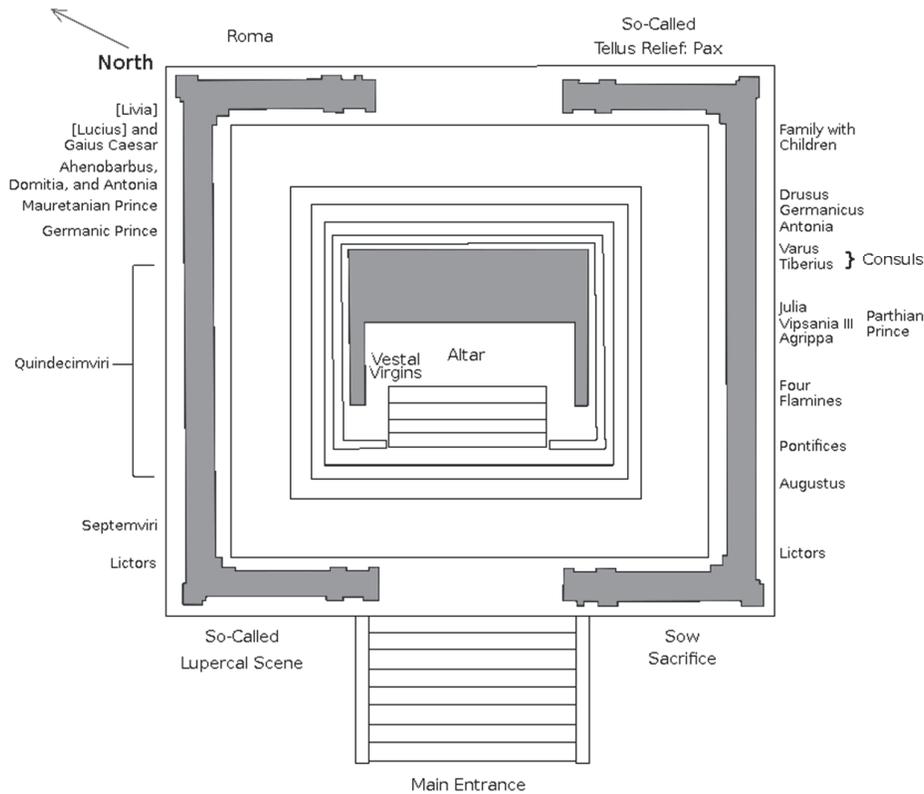


Fig. 4: Iconographic Plan of the Ara Pacis. Drawing by Gaius & Ben Stern, 2020, based on the ‘Plan Ara Pacis Augustae’ by Wikimedia user ‘Augusta 89’, updated by Wikimedia user ‘Vigneron’, translated into English and adapted by Gaius and Ben Stern. Public Domain (CC BY-SA 3.0). URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ara\\_Pacis#/media/File:Plan\\_Ara\\_Pacis\\_Augustae.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ara_Pacis#/media/File:Plan_Ara_Pacis_Augustae.svg).

*provinciis prosp[er]e [gestis Romam redi] Ti. N[er]one P. Qui[n]tilio consulibus aram [Pacis A]u[g]ust[ae] senatus pro] reditu meo co[n]secrandam censuit ad cam[p]um Martium, in qua m[ag]istratus et sac[er]dotes et virgines V[est]ales [anniversarium sacrific]ium facer[e] decrevit.* ‘When I returned to Rome from Spain and Gaul, since matters were faring prosperously in the provinces in the year when Ti. (Claudius) Nero and P. Quintilius (Varus) held office as consuls, the Senate decided an Altar of August Peace should be consecrated on the Campus Martius, at which the magistrates and priests and Vestal Virgins should make a sacrifice annually.’

24 It measures 11.625 m (east and west) by 10.655 m (north and south) and stands 3.7 meters tall (40 x 37 x 10 feet). On the dimensions, see Pasqui 1903, 568; Rizzo 1919/20, 4; Moretti 1948, 149–151, 1939/75, 8f.

All of the walls of the *Ara Pacis*, inside and out, bear very high-quality sculpture. Its complex imagery (Fig. 4) models and proclaims the unprecedented peace, stability, prosperity, and collaboration of leadership. The Roman World was about to enter this new era of Peace due to the sage guidance of Augustus and his closest allies, who had brought Rome through the terrible era of civil wars and restored the *mos maiorum* ('ways of the ancestors'). The *Ara Pacis* stands out due to the sophistication with which the artists displayed a series of positive ideals to predict and to assure the public that the new Golden Age had just begun and that the wisdom of Roman internal cooperation had even greater benefits than previously expected.<sup>25</sup> However, to understand the more complex messages, one must look at the monument and the imagery as did the Roman audience rather than with modern eyes. It was a monument made by Romans for Romans, so messages that were obvious to them are not always obvious to us and can seem to be coded in a foreign language.

The east and west sides (front and back) of the altar show people and deities in allegorical rather than realistic scenes. Modern drawings fill in the very badly damaged NW and NE panels to recreate the original Lupercal scene (a cave with the legendary she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus) and a seated Roma, respectively, but neither drawing is at all secure. The better-preserved SW and SE panels show a sacrifice of a sow and a seated goddess in a very tranquil setting. The sow sacrifice is widely interpreted as Aeneas sacrificing either to Juno or to the Penates, but many discrepancies hinder that interpretation, such as the absence of the miraculous thirty piglets, so that we prefer to identify the priest with king Numa. The latter panel was long called the Tellus Relief, but she is surely Pax Augusta herself, for she differs from contemporary Tellus representations, and her presentation advertises the benefits of peace.<sup>26</sup>

The north and south friezes of the *Ara Pacis* display three colleges of priests (the Pontifical College, the *Septemviri Epulones* and the *Quindecimviri Sacris Faciundis*), twelve lictors, four cult attendants, and the imperial family, totalling most probably 96 figures.<sup>27</sup> They wear their finest apparel, marching in a religious ceremony, which bears distinct political overtones, most likely, in a *supplicatio*, a ritual of public thanksgiving to the gods.<sup>28</sup> John Pollini has shown that within each

25 The bibliography for the *Ara Pacis* is vast. For post WW II reception, see chapter 2 of the much-cited dissertation by Pollini 1978 as the state of scholarship before Rose 1990. For a post 2000 view, see Stern 2006b. The latest is Cornwell 2017, esp. 155–186.

26 See Rehak 2001 and Stern 2015a. For discussion, see also Cornwell 2017, 163–177.

27 Different scholars suggest between 91 and 100 figures. E.g., the old view repeated in Pollini 1978 placed 46 and 45 figures on the north and south friezes for a total of 91; Koeppl 1987 counted 49 and 48, totalling 97; Rossini 2006 surmises twice 48, likewise Kleiner & Buxton 2008; Stern & Coşkun in preparation.

28 Polacco 1960/1 proposed that the *Ara Pacis* ceremony was a *supplicatio*, followed by Simon 1967, 22, and argued more forcefully by Billows 1993 (cf. Cornwell 2017, 177f.). On *supplicatio* in general, see Wissowa 1931. In the Middle Republic, the Senate would occasionally mark a great military victory by declaring a *supplicatio* for one to three days. The length of these *supplicationes* began to increase along with the inflation of other honours. In 29 BC, the Senate declared several of Augustus' victories were to be repeated as annual *supplicationes*,

religious college an attendant carried an incense box that identifies the college.<sup>29</sup> The uneven distribution of the lictors on the two friezes actually unites the two friezes, for only when taken together do the dozen lictors form a coherent escort for Augustus, who was not a consul but held consular power. Thus, the *Ara Pacis* depicts a single event represented on its two sides.<sup>30</sup>

A lengthy debate divided scholars from 1880 to the 1940s over the date of the procession (13 BC vs. 9 BC) on the friezes, the participants, and the messages those individuals transmitted (the latter two debates continue to this day), since some candidates for inclusion died or were born between the dates in question. Every Roman magnate wanted to be included on the friezes to advertise his own importance and loyalty to the regime in 13 BC, so which participants made the cut helped scholars date the event to 13. Crucial for this was the identification of Augustus (S-13, Fig. 5) and Agrippa (S-25, below, Fig. 8) on the south frieze.



Fig. 5: Left Half of South Frieze, Nearly Beginning with Augustus (S-13).  
Photo by Gaius & Ben Stern, 2020.

We assert that the festival on the *Ara Pacis* occurred well after 4 July. The preparations took time to arrange, so weeks or even months passed before the elaborate

including the Battle of Naulochus (3 Sept. 36 BC), the Battle of Actium (2 Sept. 31 BC), his Triple Triumph (13–15 Aug. 29 BC) and his birthday (23 Sept.). The Senate also declared a *supplicatio* should be held every time Augustus returned to Rome, an honour he found obsequious and frequently frustrated by entering the city unannounced at night. See Wissowa 1931, 949f.; Kienast 2004, 61–64, 363–366; Stern 2006b, 168–176. Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 68–71 argue that the replacement of the triumph was not solely due to modesty or jealousy.

<sup>29</sup> Pollini 1978, 84f.

<sup>30</sup> In reconstructing the *Ara Pacis* in the 1930s, Moretti (1938/75 and 1948) allocated space for twelve lictors at the front of the south frieze beyond the pair he identified on the north frieze. We propose that the correct number for the south frieze is seven lictors, plus five on the north frieze: Stern & Coşkun in preparation.

*supplicatio* took place. And several important officials, whose participation was essential, were not present in early July. To mark the start of the construction of the *Ara Pacis*, i.e. the digging of the first spade of earth, they probably selected a pre-existing annual holiday, such as the anniversary of the Battle of Actium (2 September) or Augustus' 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (23 September).<sup>31</sup> Augustus evidently wanted to show his modesty in the Roman spirit of *satis gloriae* ('enough glory' for one person) to avoid adding another holiday celebrating him in swift succession.<sup>32</sup>



Fig. 6: Right End of South Frieze, with Antonia (S-35) and Drusus (S-38).  
Photo by Gaius & Ben Stern, 2020.

Several of Augustus' former enemies had eventually joined him and attended the celebration of the successes of the regime.<sup>33</sup> The extended imperial family populates more or less the back third of the *Ara Pacis*. The artists arranged the relatives of Augustus in family groups to make sure the audience would recognize the participants of 13 BC. One of the more important of these family groups consists of the emperor's niece Antonia Minor and his younger stepson Drusus, together with

31 Stern 2006b, 175–179. The Romans counted inclusively in many situations, so one was born one year old. Thus, what we call the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday was 51<sup>st</sup> in customary Roman reckoning, but this day could well be seen as the conclusion of his 50<sup>th</sup> year of birth.

32 It is possible that since the *consecratio* took place on his birthday, Livia's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (49<sup>th</sup> for us) was selected for the *inauguratio*.

33 We mention here only the pardoned son of Antony, Iullus Antonius (S-45), who was *praetor urbanus* in 13 BC, and M. Aemilius Lepidus (S-15), the *Pontifex Maximus*, who was obliged to participate, even if unwilling, to fulfil a religious duty. See Cass. Dio 54.15.5f. See Stern & Coşkun in preparation.

their son Germanicus (S-35, S-38, S-36 on Fig. 6), whose exact birthday is known to be 24 May 15 BC.<sup>34</sup> Obviously, his sister Livilla (born 14 BC)<sup>35</sup> was too young to participate, and the later emperor Claudius was not yet born.<sup>36</sup> Drusus had just returned to Rome from Gaul, so he was able to participate.<sup>37</sup>

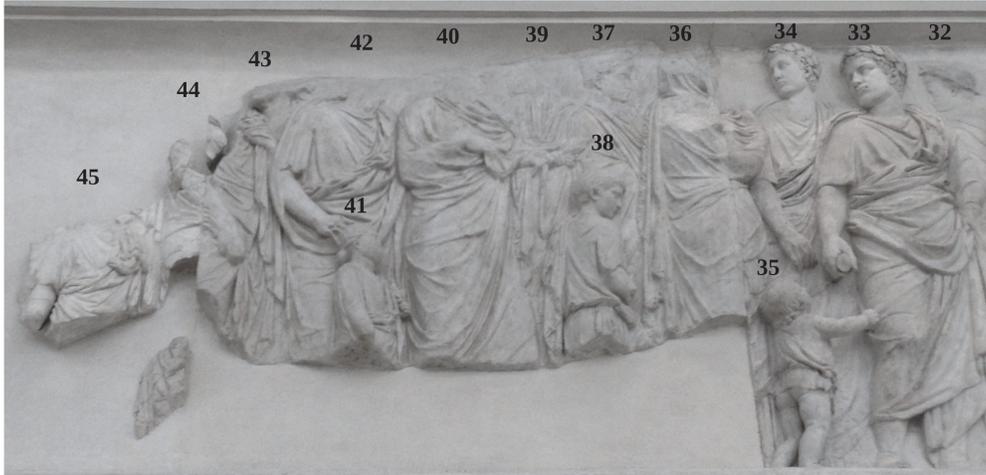


Fig. 7: Fragment of Left End of North Frieze, with Gaius Caesar (N-45) and German Prince ('Buttock Boy', N-35). Photo by Gaius & Ben Stern, 2020.

The real-life age of Germanicus perfectly matches the toddler who clings to his mother's finger. He serves to verify the date in late Summer 13 BC against the argument for 9 BC when Germanicus turned six. This child is obviously too small to be a six-year old, even though advocates for 9 BC acknowledged him as Germanicus! The conversation between Antonia and Drusus is one of the many human touches we find in the friezes. Another example would be the weary toddler

34 *CIL* VI 28028.31; cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 221; Mommsen 1878, 245; Kienast 2004, 68; 79–81.

35 Claudia Livia (Livilla) Iulia, daughter of Drusus the Elder and Antonia the Younger, married to Gaius Caesar in ca. Sep. 1 BC. See *PIR*<sup>2</sup> L 303; Mommsen 1878; Kienast 2004, 69, 74; cf. Bleicken 1998/2010, 641f., who mistakenly assumes that she was about the same age as Gaius, who was born in 20 BC. Since she was born at least ten months after her older brother Germanicus, thus after March 14 BC, she would have been just 14 when she married Gaius. The minimum age for girls to marry was 12, but around 14 was far more common. Given Gaius' assignment to the East, perhaps an early marriage was deliberately selected.

36 Claudius was born 1 Aug. 10 BC, see Suet. *Claud.* 2.1: *Claudius natus est Iulio Antonio Fabio Africano cons. Kal. Aug. Luguduni eo ipso die quo primum ara ibi Augusto dedicata est.* Cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 942; Kienast 2004, 90–92.

37 Von Domaszewski 1903, 63 n. 27, 1909, 98 n. 5, argued that the testimony of Cass. Dio 54.25.1 prevents the participation of Drusus in the *Ara Pacis* ceremony on 4 July 13 BC, because Augustus left his stepson in command in Germany when he returned to Rome that summer, followed by Löwy 1926, 57; Toynbee 1961, 155; Pollini 1978, 124; Torelli 1982, 55; Polacco 1960/1, 629; Billows 1993, 91; Holliday 1990, 548. That objection vanishes entirely when the ceremony is moved to 23 September.

on the north frieze (N-35, see Fig. 7), who is too young and too exhausted to understand the ceremony and wants to be carried. We shall argue below that this ‘Buttock Boy’ was actually a German prince.<sup>38</sup> Regarding chronology, we refrain from adducing further prosopographical evidence, except for the most obvious case: the presence of Agrippa (S-25, Fig. 8), whose death in March 12 BC provides another firm *terminus ante quem*.<sup>39</sup>



Fig. 8: Centre-Right Part of South Frieze, with Agrippa (S-25), Eastern Prince (S-27) and Putative Dynamis (S-28). Photo by Gaius & Ben Stern, 2020.

The south and north friezes of the *Ara Pacis* combined thus presented an idealised and yet naturalistic snapshot of the procession of September 13 BC. It was of course a construction, since it represented a selection from among the thousands of participants and ensured that the most prominent aristocrats be recognisable by their realistic portrait and dignified habitus. Our genealogical table (Fig. 9) tries to visualise in an alternative format the members of the imperial family as we suppose that they participated in the celebration.

38 More on him below, with n. 64.

39 Agrippa died in March 12 BC during the *Quinquatrus*, a five-day festival to Minerva (19–23 March): Cass. Dio 54.28.3; see also Vell. 2.98.1; Liv. *Per.* 138; Plin. *NH* 7.8.45. The presence of Lepidus, whom we identify as S-15, also invalidates a date of 9 BC for the procession: Lepidus died before 6 March 12 BC when Augustus was elected *Pontifex Maximus* to replace him, perhaps due to exhaustion after the *Ara Pacis* ceremony; cf. Aug. *RG* 10; the *Fasti Praenestini*; Ov. *Fasti* 3.415–428; Cass. Dio 54.27.2. For more prosopography, see Stern & Coşkun in preparation.

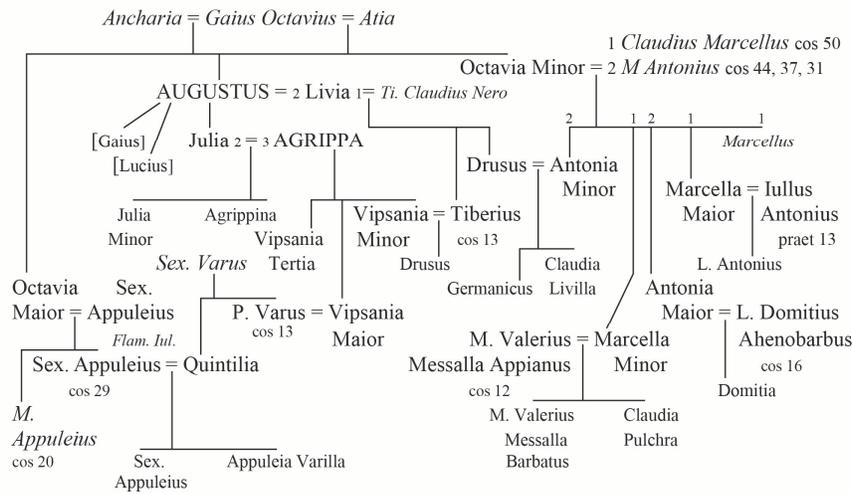


Fig. 9: A Genealogical Table of the Imperial Family in 13 BC.

Draft: Gaius Stern & Altay Coşkun. Drawing: Stone Chen. Berkeley & Waterloo 2020.

Gaius and Lucius Caesar were adopted in 17 BC and appear in square brackets as Augustus' adoptive sons. Italics indicate 'deceased before 13 BC'. Children are in smaller font than adults.

Agrippa (S-25, Fig. 8 above and Fig. 11 below) plays central roles in many regards, not only for our present argument that is concerned with the individuals besides him. He also serves as a crucial transition figure at the centre of the south frieze, commanding the attention of the audience. He was veiled because he was sharing the duties of officiation with Augustus on behalf of the Pontifical College. His location, height, and prominence display him as a second emperor, although the regime would have denied that they were rulers, because it maintained the trappings of a republic to deflect charges of monarchy and dynasty. Other clues indicate his status as well. He was a *pontifex*, but unlike the other priests, he has his wife Julia by his side (S-29) (rather than his step-mother-in-law Livia, who was somewhere in the now-lost left part of the north frieze, Fig. 7 above). Indeed, Julia's posture closely mimics Agrippa's, a clear sign they are man and wife.

A little behind this couple come other families with children, the latter all dressed in the *toga praetexta* (Fig. 10). Germanicus (S-36), a boy and a girl who have mistakenly been identified as Domitius and Domitia (S-40, S-42). In between Agrippa and Julia stands a young child (S-27, Fig. 8 above and Fig. 11 below) clinging to Agrippa's toga. Earlier scholars took him for Lucius Caesar and then later Gaius Caesar, the biological sons of Agrippa and Julia, whom their grandfather Augustus adopted in 17 BC.<sup>40</sup> In fact, this boy is not their son at all,

40 In favour of Lucius Caesar: Petersen 1894, 177–228, 1902, 108; Reisch 1902, 427f.; von Domaszewski 1903, 62; Dissel 1907, 17; Strong 1907, 29; Studniczka 1909, 913; Sieveking 1917, 91; Lugli 1935, 382; Riemann 1942, 2099; Toynbee 1953, 84; Polacco 1960/1, 614, Bonanno 1976, 29. The opinion was close to unanimous before 1920. Petersen 1902, 109 n. 1, provides a correspondence in which Benndorf argues against Lucius, based on age. Benndorf

but a foreign prince they are fostering for reasons of state, whose presence in Rome counts as a diplomatic success for Augustus (and Agrippa), and whose presence on the *Ara Pacis* brags of Rome's global stature, since foreign royalty come to Rome to learn Roman ways.<sup>41</sup>



Fig. 10: Three Roman Children on Left Side of South Frieze: Germanicus (S-36) and the Putative Domitius and Domitia (S-40 and S-42). Photo by Gaius Stern, 2013.

preferred 13 to 9 BC, but does not name Gaius as such. See also Stuart Jones 1903/4, 256f.: 'Gaius or Lucius'; Strong 1907, 49: 'may be one of his (Agrippa's) sons'; Ducati 1920, 683: 'one of the two sons of Agrippa'; Kleiner 1978, 758: 'Gaius or Lucius'. The consensus shifted to Gaius Caesar, starting with Löwy 1926, 60 n. 28, adopted by Monaco 1934, 32f.; Moretti 1948, 229; 270–273; Kleiner 1978, 758; 1992, 93; Torelli 1982, 48–51, n. 72; Koepel 1982, 507–535, esp. 527; 1987, 124; Pollini 1978, 105f., initially concurred with Löwy (and others), but changed his mind by 1987, 22–25. However, Löwy's view persists today, even after Rose's decisive 1990 article: e.g., Holliday 1990, 548; Polacco 1991/2, 24, pl. 5.1. The view of Zanker 1987/2009, 218–220 has remained unchanged even in the 5<sup>th</sup> ed., which still fails to account for Rose 1990 and Kuttner 1995. However, Zanker 1987/2009, 348 does speak out against the identification of the boys as 'Barbarenprinzen' by Simon 1968, surmising that 'die Künstler der *Ara Pacis* auch sonst nicht an Wirklichkeitstreue in der Körperwiedergabe interessiert [sind]'.

41 See below, notes 71–73 for sources on child hostages under Augustus. Compare Rome in 13 BC to Athens in 431 BC from Perikles' 'Funeral Speech', Thuk. 2.41.1: ξυνελών τε λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν εἶναι καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον δοκεῖν ... 'In a nutshell, I declare that our entire city seems to be the school of Hellas and in every way ...'

In the background reaching her hand out to touch this boy's head stands a woman (S-28), whom Rose formerly suggested identifying as Queen Dynamis of the Bosphorus. Her true identity is also tied to those directly adjacent to her on the south frieze, especially the boy in foreign dress, on whose head her hand is resting (S-27). These two figures form the centre of this study. So, one must understand the implications of the identity of each figure around them to understand why Rose thought the boy might be her son, the future king Aspurgos. Giuseppe Moretti, however, thought the boy was Gaius Caesar in Trojan dress for the Troy Games of 13 BC.<sup>42</sup> We maintain that he is a foreign 'guest', though rather a Parthian prince, while the young lady behind him most likely is a daughter of Agrippa.<sup>43</sup>

### III. THE YOUNG LADY AND THE BOY IN THE COMPANY OF AGRIPPA: DYNAMIS AND ASPURGOS?

#### 1. Moretti's Troy-Games Theory

We have so far identified the scene of the south and north frieze as representing the *Ara Pacis* ceremony of September 13 BC, and further specified Augustus and – more importantly for our present concern – Agrippa in the procession of priests on the south frieze. Agrippa appears as one of the last *pontifices* (S-25, cf. Fig. 8 above), veiled to show he shares officiating duties with Augustus.<sup>44</sup> His wife Julia (S-29) follows him. A boy tugs at his toga, and the background woman puts her hand on the child's head in an affectionate gesture (S-27 and S-28).

Looking at the boy's figure, Moretti decided he was Gaius Caesar, despite the fact that he does not wear Roman shoes or the *toga praetexta* – which all the other Roman children wear, even the two girls. Moretti did not even notice that the boy has no *bullae*. Moretti explained the discrepancies by claiming that Gaius was dressed for the Troy Games of 13 BC and thus appears like a Trojan.<sup>45</sup> Before we

42 We concur with Pollini 1987, 21–23 (cf. Zanker 2009, 348) that this boy, approximately five years old, is too small to be the seven-year-old Gaius Caesar. A father's elbow is likely to touch the head of a child when about turning five. At least, this was the case with all four of A. Coşkun's children, with a variance of plus minus three months. But his size is merely one of many problems barring an identification as either Gaius or Lucius. If he were Gaius, he would be dressed in a toga and accompany his adoptive parents Augustus and Livia, as well as his brother Lucius. Instead, he is dressed as a foreigner and is too short and appears without a sibling. Nor does he wear the *bullae*, a *sine qua non* for a Roman aristocratic boy.

43 For more on this lady, see below, III.3.

44 For Lepidus and Agrippa as *pontifices*, see Stern 2006a; 2006b, 126–30; 2015b 70–75; Rüpke 2007, 12 and 232. Tiberius was also a *pontifex*, and maybe Varus. But he certainly appears as a consul in his red toga, rather than in a religious role on this occasion.

45 In total, three boys appear in the processional friezes in non-Roman clothing, of whom the most obvious is the one clinging to Agrippa. The other two are the German toddler (N-35, Fig. 7 above) in the foster care of M. Lollius and the boy (N-38) close behind him, whom Pollini 1987, 26f. and Rose 1990, 463f. consider to be Gaius dressed as a *camillus* (an aristocratic boy serving as cult attendant). He could be the grandson of Mark Antony and Kleopatra

explain why Rose regarded them as queen Dynamis and her (assumed) son Aspurgos, we shall enquire more broadly into the foreign nature of the boy. This had not been a subject for Eugen Petersen or Emanuel Löwy, who just identified him as Lucius or Gaius Caesar respectively. It is Moretti who first attempted to explain why this boy is not represented as a young Roman citizen. Moretti read in Dio that Troy Games were among the festivities of 13 BC.<sup>46</sup> Thinking that Augustus had returned to Rome on 4 July and accepting that date for the festivities both that greeted Augustus' return and that included the procession on the *Ara Pacis*, he added the Troy Games to the mix. In his view, 4–5 July 13 BC witnessed major celebrations in Rome that comprised the welcome home for Augustus, the *constitutio* of the *Ara Pacis* in the Senate and the Troy Games.

The Romans held Troy Games at irregular intervals to recall their national heritage, to parade the origins of the leading Roman families from Troy, and to emphasize the teamwork that had made Rome successful. They may have included a lesson lost to us about unity regarding plebeians and patricians or the success of the unified state against all odds. Two squads of cavalry, composed of boys of noble families aged eight to thirteen, performed a parade which displayed horsemanship and teamwork, but not combat. Occasionally someone was hurt, leading to complaints. Sometime after the Troy Games of 2 BC, in which his grandson Agrippa Postumus rode, Augustus temporarily halted the games, because P. Nonius Asprenas and M. Claudius Aeserninus both broke a leg, as we learn from Suetonius.<sup>47</sup> Vergil's fifth book of the *Aeneid* has much detail on athletic contests. In particular, the following section caught the attention of the Italian scholar:

*omnibus in morem tonsa coma pressa corona  
cornea bina ferunt praefixa hastilia ferro,  
pars levis umero pharetras; it pectore summo  
flexilis obtorti per collum circulus auri.*

The hair of all pressed by a twisted crown, according to custom;  
Some carry two cornel lances tipped with iron each,  
Some hang polished quivers from their shoulders, while at their throats  
A pliant circle of twisted gold hangs around their necks.<sup>48</sup>

The most important potential link between the Troy Games and the boy clinging to Agrippa on the *Ara Pacis* is that the boy wears what appears to be a torque. Matching Suetonius and Dio with Vergil, Moretti devised a theory that the Troy Games were part of the welcome festivities for Augustus. This would explain why Gaius was dressed as a Trojan in the procession seen on the *Ara Pacis*. Moretti's

VII, the future king Ptolemy of Mauretania, in Rome to learn Roman ways from his kinsmen. He is walking before his aunt Antonia Maior (N-40), who may have been hosting him, perhaps together with his own mother, if the woman in the exotic dress preceding him is Kleopatra Selene (N-36) and not Julia, as many others have suggested; see Stern & Coşkun in preparation for discussion and references.

46 Cass. Dio 54.26.1; Moretti 1948, 116–146; 270f.

47 Suet. *Aug.* 43.2, who leaves it unclear whether the two fractures occurred in the same year.

48 Verg. *Aen.* 5.556–559.

proposal was universally accepted, even though it is extremely tenuously formulated. When Erika Simon first disputed it, she was quite ridiculed by some scholars.<sup>49</sup> It took another 25 years before Brian Rose and Ann Kuttner came forth to refute Moretti, with very strong evidence against him, largely based on iconographic grounds. In his 2006 dissertation, Gaius Stern followed Rose and Kuttner and added historical reasons to refute Moretti as well.<sup>50</sup>

Moretti did not maintain the chronology Dio established. Dio does not link the Troy Games of 13 directly to Augustus' return. He associates them with the inauguration of the Theatre of Marcellus and with Augustus' birthday on 23 September, which he explains as the occasion for the deaths of so many wild beasts.<sup>51</sup> Moretti's Troy Games were not held in conjunction with the return of Augustus in July, at all. According to Moretti's own reconstruction of the events, the Troy Games were still two months away, but he already dressed Gaius as a Trojan (*sic*) all the same and somehow lost his *bullā*, in order to ride in Troy Games that were still months away! As a further problem, we are far from convinced that the boy's costume is Trojan. It does not especially resemble the ensemble of Ascanius/Iullus seen in Roman art and most of all lacks a Phrygian cap, which Ascanius/Iullus frequently wears. We note both the anachronism of Moretti's Troy Games theory and the fact that all of the Roman children from the imperial family wear the *toga praetexta*, even the girls. The real Gaius Caesar wore a *toga praetexta* in the ceremony; this is not a depiction of the real Gaius or any Gaius at all.

Moretti's theory has additional holes. To start with, Vergil does not use the word *torques* in association with the equestrian performance of Iullus/Ascanius and company, although Torelli (falsely) attributes it.<sup>52</sup> Nor is there any evidence that participants in historical times ever wore a torque when riding in the Troy Games. Suetonius says only that Augustus gave a torque to one participant, not to the others, and he did so the last time boys rode in the games.<sup>53</sup> If boys always wore a torque in those performances, little Nonius Asprenas would have no need for a new torque, he already would have had one. In addition, what makes Augustus' gift special is clearly its uniqueness for a child, whereas it is otherwise attested only as a rare distinction for bravery in combat.<sup>54</sup> Be this as it may, the torque

49 Simon 1963, 9 theorized that the foreign-dressed boys N-35, S-27 are eastern princes, reworded 1968, 18 to 'barbarians'. Torelli 1982, 60, n. 72, flippantly dismissed Simon's view as 'perfect nonsense'. But he also claims to see 'the two-year-old Lucius Caesar' (p. 50), who was four in 13 BC!

50 Rose 1990; Kuttner 1995; Stern 2006b, 175f.

51 Cass. Dio 54.26.1–3.

52 Torelli 1982, 60, n. 72: 'The boys wore also "torques flexilis obtorti per collum circulus auri" (1.559), a jewel of Trojan, oriental flavour.' Torelli's use of quotation mark seems to be attributing the torque surreptitiously to Vergil, who makes no mention of *torques* albeit.

53 Suet. *Aug.* 43.2.

54 The torque was originally perceived as a piece of typically Gallic jewellery and is first mentioned in the report of the Battle of the Anio (361 BC), in which T. Manlius volunteered for a man-to-man combat. He defeated his Gallic opponent, ripped off his torque and put it on himself, as the aetiology for the cognomen in this family goes. Livy (7.10) makes it clear that the torque was not the reward granted by the commander, which was rather a golden crown. In

on the south frieze may not even be authentic. Independently from our current concern, Gerhard Koeppl has suggested that the torque is the result of a misleading modern restoration.<sup>55</sup> If he is correct, Moretti's speculative theory will even lose its material premise.

Moretti's reconstruction has as a further premise that the boy must be Gaius. But we have shown in the previous chapter that neither the age of the child nor his grouping between Agrippa and Julia is compatible with this identification. If, however, Moretti were right, Augustus would have exposed his adoptive sons Gaius (and Lucius) in a way that challenges the subtlety of his PR efforts. We would rather like to endorse the conclusion of Diane Kleiner and Bridget Buxton:

In 13 B.C.E., Augustus continued to shield his adoptive sons from the kind of public attention that might spur resentment and suspicion. Dressing them as Eastern princes would have been a needlessly provocative gesture ... This situation positioned the boys not as sole heirs to Augustus' unique political authority but as part of a community of Roman and foreign children representing the next generation of aristocratic peers.<sup>56</sup>

## 2. A Foreign Prince in Augustan Rome

In fact, we assert that three of the boys are not even Roman citizens, given that they neither wear a toga nor a *bulla*. Our argument owes much to the observations of Simon, Rose, and Pollini, who first argued for the representation of foreign princes on the *Ara Pacis*.<sup>57</sup> Other scholars have added more detail, approaching the problem from different angles. Kuttner realized the toddler boy identified as 'Lucius' by Moretti (N-36) bore a striking resemblance to a Germanic or Gallic child on the Boscoreale cup, whose family begs Augustus for clemency. She theorized that the nearly identical boys corresponded to a Roman standard image of Germanic or Gallic children in a pose of submission to the Romans. In no way could a figure in such a pose associated with submissive barbarians be a Roman noble, let alone a member of the imperial family.<sup>58</sup>

Rose provided a number of iconographic reasons why the boy at Agrippa's side (S-27), who had inversely been regarded as 'Gaius' or 'Lucius' respectively,

Roman context, the torque reappears only in the Social War when the consul Pompeius Strabo adorned Iberian horsemen with torques, beside Roman citizenship (*ILS* 8888, line 58). It is uncertain whether the torque became a more regular reward under Augustus or whether some Roman soldiers, as the *centurio* M. Caelius who fell in the Teutoburg Forest (AD 9), simply liked to show off torques as the most distinguished spoil. The tombstone of his cenotaph (now in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, with the epitaph *CIL* 8648 = *ILS* 2244 = *EDCS*-11100742) displays two torques hanging over his shoulder. See <https://www.livius.org/pictures/germany/xanten-cut/cenotaph-m-caelius/xanten-cenotaph-of-marcus-caelius/>.

55 Koeppl 1987, 124, no. 31; 135, no. 35.

56 Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 75f.

57 Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 72f.; Simon 1968, 18; 21; Pollini 1987, 27.

58 Kuttner 1987; 1995, 99–101; 107–111. Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 72–74 agree, but offer an alternative argument for a British prince in n. 68. Cornwell 2017, 179–181 accepts that the children are foreign and the notion is imperial, but remains agnostic as to their identities.

cannot be either, but better fits a prince from the East. Firstly, the boy's face does not at all resemble the portraiture of Gaius or Lucius. We cannot overemphasize this fact. Secondly, Rose believes the boy's distinctive cork-screw curls are a non-Roman hair style for this era, but acceptable for a foreigner. Thirdly, his shoes are un-Roman compared to the *mulleus* or *calceus* of the other participants on the friezes. They do resemble the shoes seen on eastern barbarians in Roman art and also match representations of the Phrygian Attis. The torque (which Rose accepts as authentic) appeared to be another indicator of an eastern context. He was thinking specifically of Galatians, although many cultures actually used this ornament as a prestige object.<sup>59</sup> Identity with Antiochos (III), the son of King Mithradates and Queen Iotape of Kommagene, as suggested by Kuttner, seemed possible to him, though he inclined towards Aspurgos, the later king of the Bosphorus, in 1990, before expressing preference for a Parthian prince in 2005.<sup>60</sup>

Ilaria Romeo is one of few Italian scholars to break with Moretti over the identity of the boys on the *Ara Pacis*.<sup>61</sup> She found the size of the foreign boy on the south frieze to be too small (more appropriate for a five year old) for Gaius and the Germanic toddler (under or perhaps around two years old) on the north frieze to be too small for Lucius. She also agreed with Rose and Kuttner that the hairstyle and clothes were too un-Roman for Augustus' sons. She inclined to Rose's identification of Dynamis and Aspurgos, though she considers Aspurgos a son of Scribonius on chronological grounds (as Parfenov). For her the two foreign boys represent the success of Agrippa's and Augustus' work in the East and West in bringing peace to the world.

In principle, we can endorse this general conclusion and even extend it by adding the African Hellenized prince, probably Ptolemy of Mauretania, a grandson of Kleopatra VII and Mark Antony through Kleopatra Selene, who was married to Juba II of Mauretania in 25/20 BC. Their son Ptolemy was born sometime after 20 BC, to become co-ruler with his father in AD 21 (N-38, Fig. 7 above). Hence, we suggest that this boy represented Africa as the third continent.<sup>62</sup> However, we do not agree with Romeo on the identities of Dynamis and Aspurgos, although the political message for the Roman audience amounts to much the same.

Kleiner and Buxton largely followed in Kuttner's, Rose's, Romeo's and Stern's paths, claiming exotically un-Roman looks for three children altogether: 'each shows off his atypical attire with an audacious impropriety. The sleeveless tunic of N-34 [*N-35 in our count*] flips up to reveal his chubby buttocks, the neckline of N-37 [*N-38*]'s belted tunic slides off his right shoulder, and S-30 [*S-27*]

59 Rose 1990, 456. Note that Latène torques are attested nearly throughout the Celtic-speaking world and beyond, though not among the earliest Galatian settlers in central Anatolia. They are first attested in Asia Minor in the context of later eastern-European mercenaries; see Coşkun 2014, 143–149.

60 Rose 1990, 458f. and 2005, 38–42 with n. 105; Kuttner 1995, 104. Uzzi 2005, 149 joined in the rejection of the boys' identification with Gaius and Lucius, but hesitated to accept Bosphoran royals on the frieze.

61 Romeo 1998, 130–132.

62 See over-next note.

has a similar cascading left collar'. They even ascribe a second torque to the German toddler (N-35).<sup>63</sup> They, too, considered all three propositions for the eastern prince beside Agrippa feasible, though favoured Kommagenian origin. For the toddler of the north frieze, they assumed German or Gallic roots. They share our view that the older 'Hellenistic' boy (N-38) was a grandson of Kleopatra VII and Mark Antony through Kleopatra Selene, though settle on an otherwise unknown brother of the abovementioned Ptolemy, the later king of Mauretania.

This way, the *Ara Pacis* frieze includes princes from the three different continents which accepted Roman hegemony under the principate of Augustus – a harmonious and powerful expression of Augustan imperial ideology or *pax*.<sup>64</sup>

### 3. A Hellenistic Queen Grouped with Agrippa and Julia?

Simon, Pollini, Kuttner, Rose, Romeo, Stern, Kleiner and Buxton extended their argument also to the woman (S-28, Fig. 8 above) standing behind the eastern-looking boy (S-27) and gently holding her hand on his head. Those who thought he was 'Gaius' or 'Lucius' often avoided committing to an identification, but some of them called the woman 'Julia' (S-28),<sup>65</sup> if the lady (S-29) following the boy was 'Livia', and not Julia, as we suggest, while others simply thought of a nurse.<sup>66</sup> In contrast, the new trend takes her (S-28) for his mother. Her headband is identified as a diadem, which no Roman would ever wear publicly in the very city of Rome. This seemed to be giving strong support for an oriental interpretation also of the boy and significantly limited the options for identifications.

Those who identify the boy as Antiochos (III) of Kommagene address the lady behind him as Jotape, a princess of Media Atropatene and wife of King Mithradates III of Kommagene. In support of this identification, Kuttner says the headband closely resembles that of her granddaughter Jotape, wife of Antiochos IV, on a coin, just as the boy's shoes resemble those on two Republican decorative bronze lamp holders (ca. 40–20 BC) with boys from that kingdom. If this

63 Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 72 '... N-34 [N-35] and S-30 [S-27] wear foreign torques and are groomed in a decidedly non-Roman way, with full curls rather than the customary Augustan comma-shaped locks'.

64 Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 68–87. The idea that non-Roman children represented the three known continents was first expressed by Stern 2006b, 401–405: chapter 8.3 'The Boy with a Chlamys (N-38)', where preference is given to Ptolemy, the later king, and the idea of an undocumented brother is rejected. Stern had shared these ideas with Buxton and although they ultimately settled on different princes, he would have appreciated to be credited for his ideas.

65 Ducati 1920, 683 invented the idea of placing 'Julia' in the background, followed by E. Strong 1923, 31, Lugli 1935, 382; Riemann 1942, 2099; Ryberg 1949, 83–85; Toynbee 1953, 85; Kähler 1954, 76; Moretti 1957, 10f. (a posthumously revised version reversing earlier opinions); Polacco 1960/1, 616, tav. 5.1; Bonanno 1976, 185 n. 156.

66 Monaco 1934, 33, Moretti 1948, 272; Toynbee 1953, 84f.; Kleiner 1978, 758; Pollini 1978, 118f. One can ignore eccentric suggestions, such as that of Kebric 2014, who misidentified the lady (S-28) as the deceased first son-in-law of Augustus, Claudius Marcellus, claiming an allegedly perfect match of the earlobes with another Marcellus statue.

were right, we doubt that any average member of the Roman elite might have been able to draw the connection. Although we agree with Kuttner in so far as the affiliation with Agrippa would certainly be a more efficient indicator for a contemporary, we do not see any evidence for the claim that the son-in-law of Augustus had personally interfered in Kommagene.<sup>67</sup> A further weakness of Kuttner's interpretation is that we have no hint of dynastic turmoil which may have resulted in the queen's travel to Rome.

Therefore, the pair Jotape / Antiochos appear as an even less satisfactory proposition to us than Dynamis plus any Bosporan prince. Despite all the reasons for our concern with Rose's interpretation, we can at least concede that Agrippa's personal involvement is sufficiently attested by Dio, as is the potential for tensions within the Bosporan royal family. We acknowledge Rose's more recent work on this matter and his change of mind. Surprisingly, his original view continues to draw supporters. At the 2011 CAMWS conference, a paper was presented that sought to corroborate Rose's identification of Dynamis and incidentally Aspurgos on the *Ara Pacis*, based on matching the earrings of the background lady on the south frieze (S-28) with those on the assumed bust of Dynamis in the



Fig. 11: Verona Girl with Brill, 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD. Verona Museo Lapidario Maffeiano. Photo by Gaius Stern, 2014.

Hermitage (Fig. 3 above). As we have argued in the introduction, however, nothing compels us to accept the speculative interpretation of Rostovtzeff, which is based mostly on wishful thinking rather than positive evidence.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, using a simple, removable form of jewellery to identify a historical character is especially shaky, unless it is very distinct. Altogether, nothing on the *Ara Pacis* friezes points to the Bosporus or Mithradatid dynasty in any meaningful way, nor do we have independent sources to even support the likelihood of Dynamis visiting Rome for whatever reason.

We actually doubt that the mysterious lady represents a queen. The presence of female royals in Rome was quite unusual and less likely to escape our (admittedly lacunose) sources.<sup>69</sup> At any rate, the headband of figure S-28 does not seem to be a diadem, which was usually worn higher on the head and not over the forehead. More likely, it is a brill, the typical adornment for teenage girls in Roman times. We found a good example (Fig. 11) in the

67 Kuttner 1995, 104; cf. Kleiner & Buxton 2008, 74. But note that Cass. Dio 54.9.3 mentions Augustus' interference in the dynastic succession of Kommagene without reference to Agrippa's eastern mission (17–13 BC, see Kienast 2004, 72). See, in a different context, Facella 2006, 314, who rightly questions that the *Tabula Peutingeriana* presents valid evidence for any kind of Agrippa's involvement with Kommagene.

68 Gorham 2011.

69 Our sources take special interest in the visits of foreign royalty to Rome. E.g., Cato the Elder scorned the visiting ally Eumenes II by saying 'yes he is a great friend of Rome, but a king is a creature that feeds on human flesh' (Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 8.8). More examples could be added.

Museo Lapidario Maffeiano in Verona: the head of a Roman teenage girl wearing such a brill over her forehead, although it is erroneously labelled as ‘diadem’ on the exhibition plate.

The clothing of the lady on the *Ara Pacis* is neither that of a queen or princess, but fully in line with the dressing style of her Roman peers. If anything, a queen might wear considerably more jewellery, such as necklaces and rings, neither of which are visible. While her neck is in very low relief, both of her hands are in plain view and lack signet rings or any other ring. And her affectionate relation with the boy does not necessarily make her his mother. Given her placement so close to Agrippa, she is most likely one of his many daughters from his previous marriages, perhaps Vipsania III. Why not assume that she had taken particular care of her royal foster brother?

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The south and north friezes of the *Ara Pacis* present the *supplicatio* procession of September 13 BC, which shows Augustus, his extended family and his friends acting in harmony with the Roman senatorial elite. While the *Ara Pacis* scene avoids making an impression of monarchical rule by Augustus and the exposure of a potential successor designate, the dignity and vitality of the imperial family is certainly implied amidst the expressions of Roman prosperity. More subtly formulated is the claim of Rome’s global hegemony through the presence of one prince each from the three continents onto which the Empire’s influence extended. At least two of them had been given into the foster care of most distinguished Roman noblemen who were also strong supporters of Augustus: the German boy, cared for by Augustus’ friend M. Lollius (N-35) and the oriental prince warmly received into the family of M. Agrippa (and Julia, the emperor’s daughter). We are less certain about the son of the Mauretanian rulers, who is most likely in the company of his aunt Antonia (N-40), daughter of Augustus’ sister Octavia the Younger and the *triumvir* Mark Antony, because he may just be visiting Rome on the occasion of Augustus’ birthday together with his mother Kleopatra Selene (N-36), if our identification is acceptable: the caution against queens sojourning in Rome that we have expressed above does not have to apply to a royal woman who was at the same time a member of the imperial family.<sup>70</sup> The Roman audience could not easily recognize the different costumes of these foreign nations, even if the sculptors used great accuracy in their work, but they were certainly in a position to recognize their alien nature, which they were likely to map out geographically thanks to the affiliation with their host families.

Regarding the foster child of Agrippa, we would finally like to align ourselves with Rose’s more recent interpretation of a Parthian prince. The Romans were

<sup>70</sup> The figures that we regard as Antonia and Kleopatra have previously been identified as Julia (whom we place beside Agrippa) and Octavia Minor (who most likely walked at the now-lost end of the south frieze); see n. 45 above.

always far more fascinated by and preoccupied with the bordering super-power than with the client kingdoms of Armenia, Bosphorus or Kommagene. These kingdoms may have had short moments of crisis, but Parthia remained a constant concern, owing to its considerable power. For that reason, contemporary Romans and Romans of future generations could be expected to recognize a Parthian prince and recall with pride why he would be represented on the *Ara Pacis*, where his presence demonstrates the successes of Augustan foreign policy and verifies Rome's status as a centre of global attention. Rose has shown that the presence of Parthians in person and in imagery was already ubiquitous in Rome by 13 BC. In 30 BC, Tiridates I fled to Syria from Parthia, taking with him one of the sons of Phraates IV, whom he held as a hostage. Augustus gave Tiridates asylum in Syria, but confiscated the hostage, allegedly to ensure his safety. Subsequently, Augustus sent the (unnamed) son back to Parthia, in return for which he demanded the standards and maybe the captives from Crassus' ill-fated invasion of 53 BC, the campaign of Decidius Saxa in 40 BC and the attack of Mark Antony in 36 BC. The kidnapped son was likely the crown-prince, given how badly Phraates IV wanted him back.<sup>71</sup>

Later, Phraates IV sent four of his sons, Seraspadaes, Rhodaspes, Phraates and Vonones, as well as four grandsons to Augustus to keep them safe from his new wife and new son, who were suspected of trying to murder their rivals. Eventually, prince Phraatakes (later Phraates V) did murder Phraates IV and took the throne in 2 BC, through both patricide and fratricide, following the 'good' example of Phraates IV in 37 BC. Although this overthrow was much later than the *Ara Pacis* procession, it is not at all surprising that Phraates IV would send his sons abroad to Augustus for safe-keeping, given the perils at the Parthian court. Also, it indicates the triumph of his favoured wife, Musa, whose aforementioned son had become the favourite to succeed as Shah.<sup>72</sup> Augustus welcomed the Parthian princes to display to the Roman people as proof that Rome was now the centre of the world and the city with which foreign kings wanted to be 'friends and allies' (*amici et socii populi Romani*) and to which they sent their sons for an education in civilization and lessons on how to stay on the Romans' good side. Besides providing shelter to dethroned kings or unsuccessful rivals, the city on the Tiber had thus become the 'school' of princes of the Mediterranean world and beyond, or even a 'princely kindergarten', to use an expression coined for Augustan Rome by Olivier Hekster.<sup>73</sup>

71 On Tiridates I and Phraates, see, e.g., Aug. *RG* 32; Just. 42.5.6–9; Cass. Dio 51.18.2f.; cf. Luther 2008/19; Bräckel 2019, 128–130. For more on Parthian princes in Augustan Rome, see Strab. *Geogr.* 6.4.2 (288C); 16.1.28 (748f.C); Tac. *Ann.* 2.1f.; Suet. *Aug.* 43.4; 48 and Cass. Dio 53.33.2; cf. Timpe 1975; Sullivan 1990, besides the next two references.

72 On Vonones and his siblings, see Aug. *RG* 32f.; Just. 42.5.12; Strab. *Geogr.* 16.1.28 (748f.C); cf. Alidoust 2017/9; Bräckel 2019, 131–133.

73 Hekster 2010, 54. On hostage-taking in general, see Aug. *RG* 26, 27, 29, 32, 33; Suet. *Aug.* 21.2f. On hostages from among the Herodians, see Jos. *AJ* 18.6.1 (143); 18.6.4 (165); 18.6.6 (191); 20.2.3 (37). For German princes, see Tac. *Ann.* 1.58; 11.16. See also Coşkun 2008;

To return to our initial concern with Bosporan dynastic history, the *Ara Pacis* clearly does not provide us with the firm evidence we would require to reconsider our previous conclusions: first, that Dynamis was childless, at least by the time Asandros appointed her *basilissa* around 22 BC, secondly, that Agrippa needed her to be in the Bosporan kingdom in and after 14 BC, to support Polemon, and, thirdly, that she had fulfilled Augustus' expectation of being a loyal wife to his friend. As a result, she could be trusted with sole rule after the death of her third husband.

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