

risalire, tramite Euripide, per tracciare la storia della trasformazione del carattere di Ulisse, che da corrotto, crudele, falso, ambizioso, sicofante subisce una totale purificazione e giunge ad apprezzare solo la virtù morale nell'ombra e nel silenzio²⁵⁾.

Pavia

Adelmo Barigazzi

25) Sarebbe interessante e utile studiare la trasformazione dell' Ὀδυσσεὺς φιλότιμος nell' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἡσυχός, che abbiamo tratteggiato brevemente fino a Platone, perché costituisce un capitolo nuovo nella storia dell'evoluzione del carattere di Ulisse, che su tale aspetto nulla è detto né dallo Schmidt, né nella *R. E.*, né dal Cesareo, né altrove, per quel che io so. Sulla trasformazione di Ulisse in uomo virtuoso ha influito non poco la scuola cinico-stoica. Lo stesso Antistene interpretava in senso lodevole, come Socrate, la figura di Ulisse e, come quello, amava servirsi abbondantemente di passi poetici nelle sue discussioni e nei suoi scritti: in ciò erano guidati dall'intento d'illustrare il loro insegnamento, forzando al loro scopo il vero significato dei versi (non si tratta d'una vera interpretazione allegorica, che Antistene non fu, pare, un vero allegorista: v. J. Tate, *Erano* 51, 1953, 14 ss.; 16 n. 1). Il carattere dell'Ulisse ἡσυχός, così individualistico, non pare stonare nel mondo di Antistene, per il quale la famiglia, la patria, l'onore, la ricchezza, tutta la società e la civiltà sono vanità ed errori, che la σωφροσύνη sta nell'autonomia morale, nel τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν (cfr. E. Maier, *Socrate* II, 221; 102, n. 2).

THE DATE OF COMPOSITION OF TACITUS, ANNALS II

Ann. II, 61 (A. D. 19): ceterum Germanicus aliis quoque miraculis intendit animum... exim uentum Elephantinen ac Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii, quod nunc rubrum ad mare patescit.

This passage has long and widely been held to prove the composition of *Annals* II in A. D. 116-7, in which years alone the Roman Empire can be said to have reached the Persian Gulf¹⁾; but in 1948 Meister, following the lead of Clason and Asbach, published a careful and largely convincing study which interpreted *rubrum mare* as 'Red Sea', and placed the

1) The arguments of *PIR* (C. 1200) and *PIR*³ (C. 1467) on the dating of this passage are worthless.

upper limit of composition at ca. A. D. 105²⁾. Yet Meister's conclusions took little or no account of a considerable body of epigraphic evidence which appears to the present writer to prove that Tacitus was misinformed concerning the Egyptian frontiers of the first century A. D., and to suggest that the deductions permissible from *Ann.* II, 61 are somewhat different. In fact, the statement . . . *rubrum ad mare patescit* is true at any time after Octavian's assumption of power in Egypt, and what Tacitus, relying upon insufficient or out-of-date sources, here means must be further examined.

Our enquiry, which should be read in conjunction with Meister's article, falls under two main heads: 1. What did Tacitus mean by *mare rubrum*? 2. What were the frontiers of Egypt on the south-east and south in the early empire? If any clear facts emerge to conflict with Tacitus' statement, we may then speculate upon the causes which led him astray.

Meister has provided abundant evidence to show that *mare rubrum* here does indeed mean the *sinus Arabicus*, our Red Sea, as it often does in both Greek and Latin authors generally. This has, of course, always been the natural interpretation of the expression at *Ann.* II, 61, since the Red Sea (unlike the Persian Gulf) has a bearing from Rome which might conceivably seem to make it represent an advance upon an earlier frontier at Syene, and the desert journey from Koptos to Berenike is somewhat longer, and decidedly more laborious, than the river voyage from Koptos to Syene. But the well-founded conviction of the moderns that Roman Egypt, like Ptolemaic Egypt, extended to the Red Sea in 30 B. C. already, and the more questionable belief that Tacitus is correct in matters of fact, led scholars from Lipsius onwards to interpret *mare rubrum* here as meaning what it does at some dates and in some contexts outside Tacitus also mean: the Persian Gulf. In Tacitus the phrase occurs twice more, first at *Agr.* 12, where the vague allusion might refer equally to the coast of S. India, the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea, for pearls were gathered in antiquity in all these regions; and secondly at *Ann.* XIV, 25: eos (sc. Hyrcanorum legatos) regre-

2) O. Clason, *De Taciti annalium aetate quaestiones geographicas ad mare Rubrum et Aegyptum maxime pertinentes interpretatus est* O. C. (Rostock, 1871); Asbach, *Römisches Kaisertum und Verfassung bis auf Traian* (1896), 153; K. Meister, *Zur Datierung der Annalen des Tacitus und zur Geschichte der Provinz Ägypten*, *Eranos* XLVI (1948), 94—122.

dientis Corbulo, ne Euphraten transgressi hostium custodiis circumuenirentur, dato praesidio ad litora maris rubri deduxit, unde uitatis Parthorum finibus patrias in sedes remeauerunt. Here Meister adheres to the MS reading *maris rubri* and, holding as he does to the identification 'Red Sea', causes the Hyrcanian envoys to be returned by Corbulo from Armenia to their own country by a détour even more incredible than that tolerated by scholars who hold *mare rubrum* to mean the Persian Gulf: "Corbulo hat die Gesandten zunächst nach Ailana oder nach einem Hafen des Arabischen Golfes geleiten lassen. Von dort haben sie die von Plinius 6, 101 beschriebenen Meeresstraßen des Indischen Ozean überquert und sind über den Pamir nach Baktrien und von da in ihr Heimatland am Kaspischen Meer gelangt." But from Armenia to Hyrcania, avoiding Mesopotamia, the way lies neither by the Persian Gulf nor by the Red Sea, but by Albania and the Caspian Sea. The absurdity of supposing a Persian Gulf détour was shown by Woodcock in his edition of *Ann.* XIV (1939), and Lipsius' *maris sui* or Clason's *maris proprii* solves the difficulty effectively; a détour via the Red Sea is even more absurd. Neither passage, therefore, helps us to understand our initial quotation.

While, therefore, it is not possible to defend the identification *mare rubrum* = Persian Gulf at *Ann.* II, 61 by Tacitean usage, on the other hand from a study of other authors Meister with good reason concludes that, although *mare rubrum* can and frequently does mean the Indian Ocean together with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, it must, on Roman lips, if used in a more restricted sense, be normally understood as referring to those waters which fell most obviously within the sphere of Roman politics and geography, namely the Red Sea³). This is the conclusion, also, to be drawn from three inscriptions which clearly testify to this meaning of Ἐρυθρὰ Θάλασσα and *mare rubrum* in the years within which Tacitus wrote the Annals: OGIS 674 of A. D. 90, ILS 5834 of A. D. 106 and OGIS 701 of A. D. 137.

We come now to our second head. Tacitus' words *nunc rubrum ad mare patescit* seem likely to give us a *terminus post quem* for the composition of *Annals* II if we can determine the date at which the frontier of Roman Egypt was advanced

3) This is already the meaning in OGIS 69 (2nd century B. C.), 186 and 190 (1st century B. C.), and 199 (1st century A. D.).

to the Red Sea. Relying on the weak evidence provided by Mela's and Pliny's description of the west coast of the Red Sea as "Arabia"⁴) and on Tac. *Histories* I, 11 (!), Meister comes to the following conclusion: "Zu welchem Reich damals [sc. at the time of the early empire] die Westküste des Roten Meeres gehört hat, ist ungewiß. Vielleicht gehörte sie zum Gebiet der Nabatäer oder anderer arabischen Fürsten, vielleicht war sie zum größten Teil staatenloses, den troglodytischen Nomaden überlassenes Gelände. Es ist auch nicht ausgeschlossen, daß einzelne Küstenpunkte wie der in der ersten Kaiserzeit viel benutzte Landeplatz von Myos Hormos schon damals in die Provinz Ägypten einbezogen waren. Daß aber die ganze Küstenstrecke von Klysm bis Berenike schon unter den Flaviern zum *Imperium Romanum* gerechnet worden sei, wird durch die angeführten Beschreibungen von Mela und Plinius ebenso ausgeschlossen wie durch den Tacitussatz a. 2, 61, von dem wir ausgingen." Against this view we may set the considerable bulk of apparently contrary contemporary first-century evidence (chiefly epigraphic) which is capable of being dated exactly or within narrow limits. The accompanying tables, which do not claim to be exhaustive, set out some of this evidence.

4) Mela (I, 49—60; III, 74. 80) and Pliny (VI, 142—68; V, 59. 61) speak as geographers, not as political cartographers. In the same way, Strabo applies the name "Arabia" to the Eastern Desert of Egypt and to the right bank of the Nile, as opposed to "Libya", the geographical name for the left bank and the Western Desert; for him Heliopolis was in "Arabia" (XVII, 1, 30), Memphis in "Libya" (XVII, 1, 35), the country east of the Pyramids across the Nile lay *ἐν ὄψει τῆς πυραμίδων ὅν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ* (ibid. 34) and Thebes was built partly in "Arabia", partly *ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς Ἀραβίᾳ* (ibid. 46). He explains the geographical and political toponymy at XVII, 1, 5, where the words spaced show that Strabo believed Roman Egypt to reach the Red Sea: *οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀρχαῖοι τὸ οἰκούμενον αὐτὸ καὶ ποτιζόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ Νείλου μόνον Αἴγυπτον ἐκάλουν, ἀπὸ τῶν περὶ Συήνην τόπων ἀρξάμενοι μέχρι τῆς Θαλάσσης· οἱ δ' ὕστερον μέχρι νῦν προσέλαβον ἐκ μὲν τῶν πρὸς ἑωμερῶν τὰ μεταξὺ τοῦ Ἀραβίου κόλπου καὶ τοῦ Νείλου σχεδὸν τι πάντα Ῥωμαῖοι τε διαδεξάμενοι τὴν ἐκείνων (sc. τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου βασιλέων) ἐπαρχίαν κρινάντες τὴν Αἴγυπτον (sc. from Cyrene and Cyprus) ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὄροις διεφύλαξαν. Slightly different in outlook is Mela I, 9 (*in litore Alexandria, Africae contermina, Pelusium Arabiae*). Cf. Str. XVII, 1, 21, referring to Arabia Petraea: *ἡ δὲ μεταξὺ τοῦ Νείλου καὶ τοῦ Ἀραβίου κόλπου Ἀραβία μὲν ἔστι, καὶ ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀκρῶν αὐτῆς Ἴθρυται τὸ Πηλοῦσιον.**

1. MYOS HORMOS AND PHILOTERAS ROADS

No.	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
1	Koptos from Myos Hormos	Ostrakon, Tait I, 3, 222		Receipt for goods	Dating by Caesar (Augustus)	18 August, 1 B. C.
2	Koptos from Myos Hormos	Ostrakon, Tait I, 3, 223		Receipt for corn	"Dionysius . . . Publius Mamilius Ambrosius"; dating by Caesar (Augustus)	17 May, A. D. 6
3	Koptos	Various ostraka from Tait I and II	Fuchs, <i>J. Jur. Pap.</i> 5 (1951), 209-16	Nicanor's Transport Company	Koptos - Myos Hormos road regularly travelled	6 - 50
4	Wādi Semna	Stele <i>AE</i> 1910, 207 = Ehrenberg & Jones, <i>Docs.</i> 232	Green, <i>Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.</i> 1909, 323; Couyat-Barthoux, <i>CRAI</i> 1910, 541; Cagnat, <i>ibid.</i> 580-5; Tregenza, <i>Bull. Fac. Arts, Fouad I Univ.</i> 13(2) 39 ff.	Proscynema	Publius Juventius Rufus ἐπαρχος of Berenike and Superintendent of Mines of Egypt	26 May, 11.
5		Strabo II, 5, 12; XVII, 1, 13.	De Laet, <i>Portorium</i> 303-311 cf. No. 15.	Large fleets from Myos Hormos, and import dues exacted there upon traffic from India and the S. E.	Mention of improvement since time of Ptolemy Auletes, and portorium at Myos Hormos.	Aug./Tib.
6	Koptos	<i>CIL</i> III, 6627 = <i>ILS</i> 2483; Ehrenberg & Jones, <i>Docs.</i> 261.	Mommsen, <i>Eph. Ep.</i> V (1884), 5, no. 15; Lesquier, <i>L'armée rom. d'Eg.</i> 420, 94, etc.		Cisterns constructed by legionary and auxiliary troops at Myos Hormos (and Berenike)	? Aug./Tib. (Meredith, <i>Chron. d'Eg.</i> XXIX (1954), 281 suggests 43-50.)

No	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
7	Wādi Semna	Inscription	Tregenza, <i>Bull. Fac. Arts, Fouad I Univ.</i> 13 (2), 1951, 46-7.		Dating by Tiberius	Tiberian
8	—	<i>PME</i> , 1-2		λιμὴν τῆς Αἰγύπτου Μυὸς Ὀρμος . . . ἐν τῷ ἐσχάτῳ τῆς Αἰγύπτου. τούτων ἐκ μὲν τῶν δε- ξιῶν ἀπὸ Βερνίκης συνα- φῆς ἐστὶν ἡ βαρβαρικὴ χώρα.	Myos Hormos and Berenike in Egypt	? Between 40 and 75

2. LEUKOS LIMEN ROAD

No	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
9	Wādi Hammāmāt	Inscription <i>IGR</i> 1235	cf. nos. 4, 10	Proscynema to Pan of Publius Juventius Agathopus	Freedman of <i>praefectus montis Berenicidis</i>	14
10	Wādi Hammāmāt	Inscription, <i>IGR</i> 1236 = <i>OGIS</i> 660	cf. nos. 4, 9	Proscynema of same	Freedman of P. Juven- tius Rufus Superinten- dent of Mines of Egypt	18
11	Wādi Hammāmāt	Inscription, <i>IGR</i> 1237		Proscynema Ἰουλίου στρατιώτου καὶ Διδυμᾶτος	Roman auxiliary troops	20

N ^o	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
12	Wādi Hammāmāt	Inscription, IGR 1241		Proscynema Μάρκου Λονγείνου και Γαίου Κορνηλίου στρατιωτῶν ἑκατονταρχίας Ἐβρεννίου	Roman auxiliary cohort troops	64 - 5
13	Wādi Hammāmāt	Inscription, IGR 1243		Proscynema of Γαίου Βένιου Κέλερ, χόρτης Πρώτης Φλαυίας Κυλικῶν ἑκατονταρχίας	Roman auxiliary soldier of Cohors I Flavia Cilicum	Domitianic

3. BERENIKE ROAD

N ^o	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
14	Koptos (from Berenike)	Ostrakon, Tait, I, 3, 220 and 221		Receipt for grain	"Gaius Iulius"; dating by Caesar (Augustus)	23 October, 6 B. C.
15	Wādi Menih (cave shelter)	Photograph of inscription in Winckler, <i>Rode Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt</i> (1938-9), I, pl. VIII.	Meredith, <i>Chron. d'Egypte</i> XXIX (1954), 283-4	C. Numidius Eros hic fuit anno XXIIIX Caesaris exs Ind(i)a red(i)e(n)s menos P(h)amen(oth)	Dating by Caesar (Augustus); travel from India by freedman of Roman?	2 B. C.
16	Koptos (from Berenike)	Ostrakon, Tait I, 3, 224		Receipt for wine and grain	Dating by Caesar (Augustus)	22 October, A. D. 6

No.	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
17	Wādī Menih (cave shelter)	Graffiti, Meredith, <i>JRS</i> XLIII (1953), 38 - 40; cf. Meredith, <i>Chron. d'Eg.</i> XXIX (1954) 284-5 for another graffito (dated 29 April 44) from this spot		Cave graffiti by Lysas, slave of P. Annius Plocamus - Cf. No. 31.	Cf. Pliny VI, 84, Annius Plocamus, farmer of Red Sea <i>uectigal</i>	2 and 5 July, 6.
18	Koptos (from Berenike)	Various ostraka from Tait I and II	Cf. no. 3	Nicanor's Transport Company	Koptos-Berenike road regularly travelled	6 - 50
19	Wādī Semna	No. 4			P. Juventius Rufus, <i>praefectus montis Berenicidis</i>	26 May, 11
20	Koptos	No. 6			Cisterns constructed by legionary and auxiliary troops at Berenike (and Myos Hormos)	Aug./Tib. (v. No. 6)

No.	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
21	Berenike Temple	Sculptured portrait of Tiberius with cartouches	Golénischeff, <i>Rec. trav. rel. à l'arch. égypt.</i> XIII (1890), 86; Meredith, <i>JEA</i> 39 (1953), 100; <i>Chron. d'Ég.</i> 1954. The cartouches, copied by Wilkinson (MS, XXXVIII, 62-3) are being deciphered by Prof. Jean Leclant.		Representation of emperor with inscriptions. 'Tiberius is foremost among the names in the cartouches' (Meredith in letter to present writer)	Tiberian
22		<i>CIL</i> X, 1129			L. Pinarius Natta, tribune of legio III Cyrenaica and <i>praefectus montis Berenicidis</i>	ca. 25? (cf. Tac. <i>Ann.</i> IV, 34)
23	Koptos (from Berenike)	Tait I, 3, 227		Receipt given by Evander, slave of Cornelius, for provisions	Goods or supplies from Koptos to Berenike	28 Feb., 26
24		<i>CIL</i> III, 32			L. Junius Calvinus, <i>praefectus montis Berenicidis</i>	72
25	—	Pliny <i>NH</i> VI, 102		Vetus Hydreuma garrisoned by <i>praesidium... duum milium</i>	Roman garrison	before 77

№	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
26	Wādi Menih el-Hir (Afrodito)	Inscription found by Wilkinson, published by Meredith	Meredith, <i>JEA</i> 39 (1953), 99; <i>Chron. d'Eg.</i> XXIX (1954), 284-7	Construction (or repair?) of <i>praesidium</i>	M. Trebonius Valens, <i>praef. Bernic(idis)</i>	? 84
27	Koptos	<i>IGR</i> I, 1183 = <i>OGIS</i> 674	Hogarth in Petrie, <i>Koptos</i> , 22, etc.; Milne, <i>Hist. Egypt</i> ³ , 163, fig. 63	Road-tolls for Koptos-Berenike road	L. Antistius Asiaticus (cf. <i>ILS</i> 2698, 2699, 2700) <i>praefectus montis Berenicidis</i>	90
28		Pap. Hamb. 7	P. Meyer, <i>Griechische Papyrusurkunden d. Hamburger Staatsbibliothek</i> I, 24	Reference to Nome of Berenike in A. D. 132	? Military administration replaced by civil.	After 90 and before 132

4. RED SEA

№	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
29	Pselkis	<i>OGIS</i> I, 202		Proscynema to Hermes	Strategus of nomos Ombites, Philae and Elephantine was also παραλήμπτης τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης	Augustan

No.	Find-spot	Document	Comment	Contents	Apparent Evidence of Roman Rule	Date
30	—	<i>PME</i> 19	Wilcken, <i>Archiv. f. Pap.</i> III, 195-200; Rostovtzeff, <i>Archiv.</i> VI, 306-13; Warming-ton, <i>Commerce</i> 16, 334-5; Charlesworth, <i>CQ</i> XXII (1928), 97-8; De Laet, <i>Portorium</i> 303-11.	Description of Leuke Kome	φρούριον . . . παραλήπτης τῆς τετάρτης . . . και ἑκατοντάρχης μετὰ στρατεύματος . . . ⁵⁾	? Between 40 and 75.
31	—	Pliny <i>NH</i> VI, 84	Meredith <i>JRS</i> XLIII (1953), 39 n. 3	Roman knowledge of India in Claudian times	Freedman of Annius Plocamus (farmer of Red Sea <i>nectigal</i>) <i>circa Arabiam nauigans</i>	Claudian
32	—	Pliny <i>NH</i> VI, 101		Monsoon voyages to India: omnibus annis nauigatur sagittariorum cohortibus inpositis; etenim piratae maxime infestabant	<i>sagittarii</i> on board ships (cf. no. 27 στρατιωτῶν and <i>PME</i> 20)	Before 77

Tait = *Gk. Ostraca in the Bodleian Library*, etc. I (ed. J. G. Tait); II (ed. J. G. Tait & Claire Préaux).

Form the evidence tabulated — as well as from the expedition of Aelius Gallus into Southern Arabia in 25 B. C., which Augustus cites together with the Aethiopian expedition as a somewhat disingenuous illustration of his statement “omnium prouinciarum populi Romani, quibus finitimae fuerunt gentes quae non parerent imperio nostro, fines auxi” (*RG* 26) — it seems reasonable to conclude that Roman Egypt reached the Red Sea, in theory from 30 B. C., and in fact shortly afterwards, and that Tacitus has misled us in suggesting an extension of the frontier in this direction between A. D. 19 and the time at which he wrote *Annals* II.

But it is necessary to consider what prompted Tacitus to his statement. He was perhaps basing it incautiously upon

5) The meaning of *ἑκατοντάρχης μετὰ στρατεύματος ἀποστέλλεται* is undoubtedly “a Roman centurion with a party of troops is regularly posted there”. Wilcken’s arguments for a Nabataean identification were: 1. That the author of *PME* is a Roman subject proves nothing concerning the meaning of *ἑκατοντάρχης* which *might* be a rough Roman equivalent for some Nabataean rank; 2. Strabo XVII, p. 780 speaks of *Λευκὴν κόμην τῆς Ναβαταίων γῆς*. 3. *τετάρτη* is an Arabian, not a Roman, rate of taxation; 4. The first *portorium* in Roman territory on the caravan route from the Sabaei to the Mediterranean was at Gaza itself (Pliny *NH* XII, 65). The answers to these objections are: 1. Here the onus of proof, as opposed to conjecture, lies upon W., for the natural interpretation of *ἑκατοντάρχης* in the mouth of a Greco-Roman writing for Greco-Romans is certainly ‘centurion’; 2. Strabo speaks geographically; see n. 5; 3. 25% is a normal Arabian impost adopted in Arabia by the Romans both at Leuke Kome and on the Syrian frontier (*AE* 1947, nos. 179 and 180; de Laet, *Portorium* 334—6); 4. The land route from S. W. Arabia to Palestine lies some way inland from Leuke Kome which will be by-passed except in the case of merchandise landed at this port; and it is with these imports by sea that *PME* is concerned; the Gaza post dealt with movements not necessarily and not probably the same as those at Leuke Kome. Linguistically, too, the evidence tells against W., for *ἀποστέλλειν* usually describes the despatch of a force outside its native land, and would be strange if applied to local Nabataeans; and the present tense suggests a regular (and annually repeated?) action across the Red Sea at the appropriate monsoon season. The run of the Greek sentence makes it impossible to distinguish the troops from their leader, and it would be quixotic to join Warmington (*Commerce*...335) in his compromise solution of a Roman officer exacting Nabataean dues. The difficulty of supposing a centurion kept beyond the Red Sea for Roman customs supervision has been exaggerated. Rome encouraged and protected the Indian-Egyptian traffic at some financial cost to herself; what more natural than that she should attempt to recoup herself by a heavy (but, in Arabia, customary) tax on those goods which left the north-bound ships at Leuke Kome and passed into Arabian hands? Goods bound for Alexandria must have been taxed at Berenike and Myos Hormos. The lonely Roman officer on the east

out-of-date or ambiguous information in Pliny (e. g. *NH* VI, 102 *nunc primum notitia patescit*; cf. *nunc rubrum ad mare patescit* of T.). But one feels that some particular event, some clear territorial advance, must have been in his mind. This can be none other, so far as the Red Sea is concerned, than the constitution of the province of (Nabataean) Arabia in A. D. 105-6. Tacitus' rather sketchy knowledge of Egyptian and Arabian topography has led him to suppose that in that year the Roman Empire for the first time reached the Red Sea. This solution seems rather more credible than that of Meister, who believes that our author had in mind the alleged reorganisation as a civilian nome of the Eastern Desert of Egypt, previously a military district ruled by the *praefectus montis Berenicidis*, a change which, on the evidence of *OGIS* 674 and *P. Hamb.* 7 (Table, nos. 27 and 28) must have taken place between A. D. 90 and 132. Meister dates this reorganisation at ca. A. D. 100; but Meyer and Lesquier had dated it at A. D. 130, and Meister's reasons are conjectural. Even less convincing is his assumption that Tacitus was well informed of such a minor administrative transformation in a remote part of the empire, and that this is what is meant by *nunc rubrum ad mare patescit*. Our knowledge of this presumed change rests upon the interpretation of one word in a single document and on the other hand the evidence of military occupation in the Eastern Desert continues long after A. D. 130 with no apparent alteration in political status. Even if this reorganisation is accepted, we may well feel that Meister is rating the knowledge or industry of Tacitus rather high; and doubt whether, even if Tacitus had known of the change, he would have believed that it constituted an advance of the Roman frontier of Egypt.

coast of the Red Sea would certainly need some protection, however friendly the Nabataean client-state. Huber's BENEFIC(iarius) inscriptions in the Medain Sâlih (Egra) area inland from Leuke Kome must reflect a frontier-post of the Roman province of Arabia after A. D. 106 (for details see C. Huber, *Journal d'un voyage en Arabie*, 408, Seyrig, *Syrie*, 22 (1941), 220, and Littmann and Meredith, *BSAOS* XVI (1954) 240-1.). The position of Medain Sâlih N. E. of Leuke Kome makes any connexion with southward-bound Aelius Gallus (*pace* Littman) unlikely, and there was no expedition into Arabia between 25 B. C. and A. D. 77 (Pliny *NH* VI, 160), nor, I believe, until A. D. 105/6. But these things, and the possible presence of one Fabatus Καίσαρος διοικητής at Petra (Josephus *BJ* I, 574; and Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes* . . . 254) show Roman interest in the trade of N. W. Arabia; and make an early claim to the Eastern Desert of Egypt more likely.

A final word on the southern frontier seems necessary. The actual limit of Roman-occupied Upper Egypt in A. D. 19 was the island of Philae above the First Cataract, abounding in Roman inscriptions of Augustan/Tiberian date. But since Syene a few miles below was the first garrison town, we may accept Tacitus' statement that it was in A. D. 19 a key-point in the empire. The first century saw, however, a slow military penetration of the Dodekaschoinos granted by Tiberius (as it had been by his Ptolemaic predecessors) as a temple domain to the priests of Isis at Philae, and therefore claimed *de iure*⁶). For in A. D. 33 T. Servilius of legio III Cyrenaica was at Pselkis⁷) χωρογραφήσας (OGIS 205), and later cohorts I Hispanorum Equitata was at Talmis in A. D. 84 and 99 (Cichorius, *PW* IV, 298 s. v. 'Cohors'). It is therefore beyond question that, at the moment when Tacitus wrote the sentence at the head of this discussion, the boundary of the Roman Empire stood at Hieria Sykaminos, the traditional limit of the Dodekaschoinos. The truth of this is confirmed, were confirmation necessary, by an item which Meister refers to: *CIL* III, 14148² of A. D. 103-5, a milestone of Trajan bearing the legend A PHILIS XXXII (= Tāfa, but found some way further up-river)⁸).

What Tacitus, then, should have written at *Ann.* II, 61 is: *exim uentum Elephantinen ac Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii, quod nunc (ad Hieran Sykaminon aut) rubrum ad mare patescit*. The confusion which lurks behind what he did in fact write is manifold. First, Tacitus' implication that a frontier on the Red Sea marks an advance upon a frontier at Syene is geographically and historically unsound. Secondly, his statement that between A. D. 19 (*olim*) and the date of writing (*nunc*) the Roman Empire advanced to the Red Sea is true, not of the western coast already occupied under Augustus, but of the north-eastern coast reached under Trajan. Lastly his mention of Syene, accompanied by a reference to an advance beyond it, should have introduced an

6) Wilcken, *H.* XXIII (1888), 596n.; H. Brugsch, *Die Geographie des alten Ägypten* I (1857), 69-70 and n.

7) At Dakka (Pselkis), Murray's *Handbook* speaks of a custom-house on the site of which a good many ostraka have been found, and there are cartouches of Tiberius in the sanctuary of Arq-Amen just as there are at Berenike Temple.

8) Cf. also OGIS 202, 204 and 207, probably all Tiberian; Pliny *NH* VI, 181 (Nero's reconnaissance); *CIG* 5042; Mommsen *RG* V⁴ 594-5 and n.; Lesquier, *Armée* . . . 466-7.

allusion to the Dodekaschoinos, not to the Red Sea. The intrusion of the latter at this point is most credibly accounted for by the supposition that the creation of the province of Nabataean Arabia in A. D. 105/6 was fresh in Tacitus' mind.

Meister's argument in favour of a *terminus ante quem* of A. D. 114 or 115 for the composition of this book is sound, except that, in view of *Annals* II, 56 (the Armenians: *ambigua ea gens antiquitus . . . ; maximis imperiis interiecti et saepius discordes sunt; illa tempestate . . .*) and the constitution of the province of Armenia in A. D. 114, the earlier date must be adopted. With regard to the *terminus post quem*, the date suggested by our present discussion so far — A. D. 106 — should be returned to A. D. 108. For the later books of the *Histories*, whose composition must precede (and is unlikely to have overlapped with) that of the *Annals*, were still being written about A. D. 107, if we may rely on the dating of the letters of Pliny, who in that year, or a little earlier, was supplying Tacitus with material relating to the years A. D. 79 and 93⁹). It is therefore unlikely that Tacitus was able to embark upon his last and greatest work until A. D. 108 at the earliest. Whether we can claim with Münzer (*Klio* I (1901) 330) that allusions to Asia in the *Annals* point to their composition after his governorship in 112-3 A. D. lies outside the scope of this enquiry.

Our conclusions are consequently these: *Annals* II was written between A. D. 108 and 114, and Tacitus was not accurately informed concerning the frontiers of Egypt in the first century.¹⁰⁾

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9) Pliny *Ep.* VI, 16 and 20; VII, 33. (Dating: Mommsen-Otto.)

10) I am greatly indebted to Mr. David Meredith for discussion by letter of the above article, which he has kindly read, for unpublished information, and for his valuable articles on the Eastern Desert (cited), which now form the indispensable basis for any such enquiry as this; and to Dr. T. J. Cadoux for helpful criticism on many points.