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THE CAMBRIDGE  
ANCIENT HISTORY

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# THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY

SECOND EDITION

VOLUME XI

The High Empire, A.D. 70–192

edited by

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Map 1 The Roman world in the time of Marcus Aurelius



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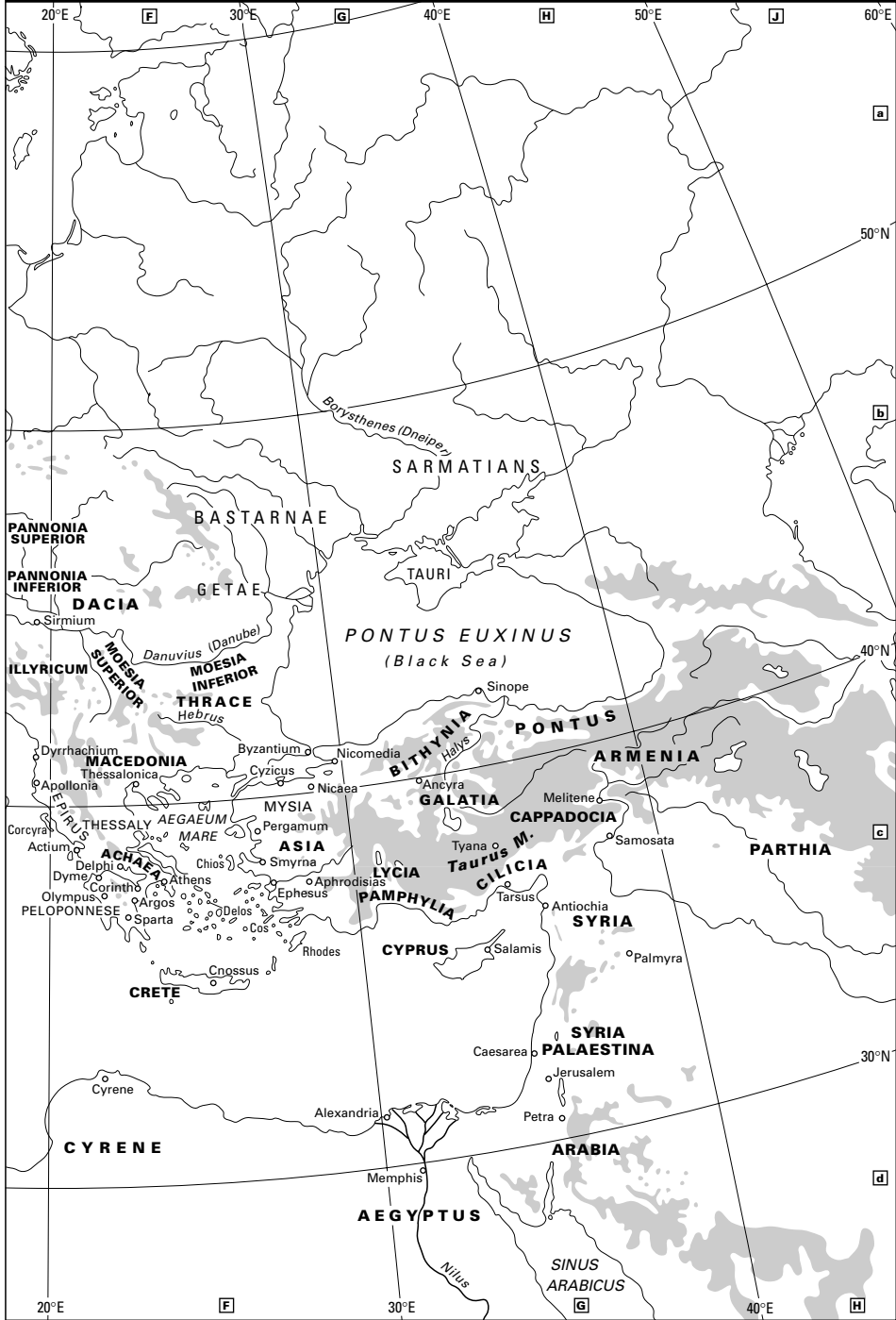
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## PREFACE

This volume covers the history of the Roman empire in the period from A.D. 70 to 192, the period of well over a century of political stability, if we ignore the hiccup of Domitian's assassination, between the end of the first imperial civil war and the eve of the second. In its first edition, published in 1936, this volume was entitled 'The Imperial Peace', a title with contemporary resonance, if one which also echoed the favourable judgement of the age found in Dio and made famous by Gibbon. But however happy the life of some of the élite, a post-colonial assessment is more inclined to note that this was also an age marked by dangerous external attacks contained with difficulty and some of the most serious internal revolts ever raised against Roman rule. Our title, 'The High Empire', equally traditional and judgemental, leaves room for a more dynamic picture, in which the empire survived, even prospered, by evolving in response to external and internal challenges. The new edition has cut back the accounts of warfare and the principal external enemies of Rome in favour of much more extensive discussion of social and cultural developments in the empire as a whole, a shift of emphasis which reflects developments in the discipline of history since 1936, themselves epiphenomena of wider cultural and social changes.

This volume, following the structure of the new volume x, begins with the political and military history of the period, ordered by dynasties and emperors, and incorporating the wars and other frontier events which were treated separately in the first edition (Part I, chapters 1–3). Next, developments in the structure of the empire as a system of control are examined, dealing first with the organization and personnel of the central government (Part II, chapters 4–7) and then with province-based institutions and issues (Part III, chapters 8–11). There follows a series of provincial studies, including Rome and Italy, which, although not exhaustive (Egypt, notably, is treated in volumes x and xii, and there is no separate account of Rhaetia), is much fuller than that of the first edition and illustrates the kaleidoscopic development of provincial cultures (Part IV, chapters 12–22). Finally, the society, economy and culture of the empire as a whole, whose developments and achievements are at least as important as the political stability and military successes in justifying the title 'The High Empire', are

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reviewed in a group of thematic chapters (Part v, chapters 22–35). These chapters are often equally relevant to the period covered by volume x, and sometimes also to the period of volume xii (A.D. 193 to 337). While most of this section is new compared to the first edition, some topics have been omitted. The origins and spread of Christianity and the development of Roman law have been treated in the new volume x, and their stories will be resumed in the new volume xii. The detailed history of the literature of the period is covered in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*. Also, as is normal practice in this series, there is no separate survey of the sources, literary or other, which are usually summarised as appropriate in the individual chapters.

Since 1936 no new literary sources for this period have emerged, although there have been major advances in our understanding and interpretation of the extant works, notably the imperial biographies known as the *Historia Augusta*. The main accretions to our knowledge have come from inscriptions, new and old, and other archaeological data. Patient study of persons and titles has deepened our knowledge of the structures of the imperial government, and combining this with the literary sources in analyses influenced by sociology has produced a much sharper picture of its functioning. The legal status, the workings and the image-building of cities have been illuminated by inscriptions ranging from the Lex Irnitana in Spain to texts recording grand benefactions and foundations in the Greek world. The humbler material, mostly funerary, for soldiers and civilians has spawned new areas of expertise in military, social and demographic studies. The unexpected discovery of the Vindolanda tablets in Britain (plus others elsewhere) and the continuing publication of documentary papyri from Egypt have provided a wealth of local detail with some more general implications. New archaeological discoveries and the re-assessments of earlier finds which they provoke are fundamental to almost all the chapters on the provinces, and to the study of frontiers and their nature; without archaeology there would be precious little history of the western provinces to write. The interest of ‘new’ archaeology in using everyday artefacts to reconstruct settlement patterns, production and distribution systems, and cultural developments, is crucial to some of the thematic chapters and permeates the provincial studies too.

The bibliography for this volume has been organized on a different pattern to previous volumes, which we hope will make it easier to consult. There is a list of ‘Frequently Cited Works’ of central importance or frequently referred to by contributors, which are cited in footnotes by their abbreviated title. Other works, referred to in footnotes by the author’s name and the year of publication, are grouped by the Parts into which the volume is divided, with the exception of Part iv, in which each chapter on an area retains its own separate bibliography, and Part v, where the bibliog-

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raphies have been grouped into two sections, one for chapters 23–9 (economy and society), the other for chapters 30–5 (culture).

Contributors were, as normal for this series, asked to write accounts which summarized current knowledge and generally held views, but were not required to suppress any reference to heterodox beliefs. Inevitably there are overlaps of subject-matter between the narrative, provincial and thematic chapters, and the approach to and interpretation of the same topics sometimes vary. It would, however, have been spurious and misleading to try to blend the various authorial voices into a conformist monotone. Most of the chapters in this volume were written between 1991 and 1994. A few came later, and early contributors were offered the opportunity to update their contributions. The editors regret the time it has taken to get the volume to publication, but hope that the numerous checks and changes made in this long process have led to worthwhile improvements.

The editors have various debts of gratitude. John Matthews was one of the editorial team in the early stages when the volume was planned. Malcolm Todd and John-Peter Wild gave invaluable assistance with chapter 15. Chapters 4–7 were translated by Andrew Stevenson, chapter 14 by Greg Woolf and chapters 21 and 26 by Geoffrey Greatrex. David Cox drew the maps, and the index was compiled by Barbara Hird. Above all, we are grateful for the patience and support of the staff of the Cambridge University Press, in particular Pauline Hire, the pilot of the whole enterprise.

A.K.B.  
P.D.A.G.  
D.W.R.