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Conflicts and Cohabitations in the Southern Levant during the first Centuries of the Roman Rule
(64 BCE – 135 CE)

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FOREWORD

Every man in every time felt the desire and the need to connect himself to the other. It is easily clear for the contemporary world, but it was also true for the ancient past. We have often heard about our world as a globalised one, with many interconnectivities and the possibility to know what happened everywhere. The principal issue of this work is to understand if a certain degree of «globalisation» was reached even among ancient communities of the Near East, if there were cases of interconnectivities, cohabitations or conflicts.

First of all, I shall attempt to explain my choices. The chronological limits are mostly political: from the coming of Pompey in the region during 64/63 BCE until the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, when Rome seems to have suppressed any independence will in the territories of the Southern Levant. The chosen period was full of interesting political activities, which subverted the lives of local population. More than the annexation of the former Nabataean kingdom, in fact, the defeat of rebels during the Bar Kokhba revolt represented the start for an accelerating process of integration.

The analysis starts with a brief history of modern theories about Roman approaches on subjected populations. The concept of Romanisation, as well as the idea of Hellenisation, has been used for a long time by scholars for explaining the hierarchical relationship between a supposed «superior» culture (in this cases, the Roman and the Greek ones) with «inferior» civilisations, namely the peoples which Romans and Greeks have met around the Mediterranean Sea.

In this sense, the accounts of Western scholars about Roman history shared often an anti-Oriental interpretation of history, with many prejudices on African and Near Eastern areas. The processes of cultural integration (or, in some cases, their refusal) were the results of long and multifaceted interactions and sometimes clashes. According to Saskia Roselaar, many studies of the Roman empire lack to explain the causes of the changes, as if the Roman conquest was itself sufficient to justify these profound transformations.

Modern social and anthropologic theories have shown that the relationships between people are far more complex, abandoning the concept of «Romanisation». In fact, the development of a global world system over the past fifty years has shown that the European past cannot represent the universal past, criticizing the Western perspective of the history. Romanisation helped to create a school of thought that perceived a natural superiority of Roman identity over local culture: therefore, Romanisation has been considered an early form of progress.

The case of Rome was undoubtedly sui generis: there was, in fact, a vast variety of responses to Roman conquest, even inside the same province. How provincial subjects reacted to Roman rule is complex, particularly in the Near East: here many ancient cultures and religions intertwined, transforming the expressions of Greekness, which became a new original culture, hybrid and reshaped in all its aspects. Instead of homogenisation or Romanisation, for the Eastern provinces the term resistance was the main concept and the attention was mostly directed at the survival of the Greek culture.

\[^{1}\text{HINGLEY 2005, 29.}\]
\[^{2}\text{ROSELAAR 2015b, 1-2.}\]
\[^{3}\text{HINGLEY 2005, 37.}\]
\[^{4}\text{LULIC 2015, 20.}\]
The aim of this study is to explore the centrality of integration processes during a period that has often been regarded as formative for the culture of the empire: the coming of Rome tended to increase the diversity of cultural identities. Even those activities that were at first instance considered unambiguously Greek were absorbed into Roman framework: however, there were many local realities which developed and were always considered different, like the Jews and Arabs, who represented something of different in the Empire.

For these reasons, this work is focused on one area that knew a very impressive mingle of nations and people. It has been not possible to explore the entire Near East in detail, because the amount of material is too great and varied. For the same reason, I have chosen to trait only marginally the religious question. There are many excellent works about religion of these ethnicities, mostly about Judaism, and I have preferred to not compete with them. The best part of the work has been devoted to archaeological evidences, in particular to architectural and topographic features, albeit I have tried to collect all the sources connected to the places under examination. In detail, literary sources have constituted an important role in the analysis, as well as epigraphic and numismatic ones. The absence of defined political boundaries constituted one of the biggest problems. The issue of exactly defining these areas is connected to the lack of one clear geographical or cultural entity. This area has been interdependent even before the Roman rule: as we will see, Phoenicia, Syria, Palaestina, Arabia and Mesopotamia were so strictly related that their political boundaries were often not taken in account. The presence of nomads entangles the already complicated situation. In particular, so many different people

FIG. 1. The Roman Empire under Trajan rule. The area investigated is in blue. From https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ARoman_Empire_Trajan_117AD.png
dwelt Transjordanian area that it is very difficult to reconstruct precise borders of such nations that emerged during the 2nd century BCE, like Ituraeans, Nabataeans or Judeans. Another important aspect that is sometimes forgotten is that the area represented for many centuries the periphery of Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, and then was close the eastern frontier zone of the Roman empire.

All these conditions have made the study of these territories very problematic but fascinating. Ethnicity and culture are very difficult concept to examine, even because the social identities we are able to detect were not the only ones that existed. Many ways, based on social, religious and political institutions, might identify social individuals. Cultures and ethnicities are constantly renegotiated and reformulated, because each individual was part of a network of social relations and had the capacity for deciding to accept, transform or reject incentives that had different origins.
CHAPTER 1: GLOBALISING ATTITUDES

1.1 THE ROMANISATION DEBATE

Romanisation is a modern concept, derived from national and imperial ideologies born at the end of the 19th century, which introduced the ideas of nationhood and empire. According to Greg Woolf, the premises of these accounts were two: first, non all the human races were considered equally participating in civilization; second, there was a profound Eurocentric vision of the world5. Some of these visions are still popular, albeit they have been subjected to a continuous redefinition throughout the 20th century: concepts like «civilisation» or «just war» are in fact present in current debates.

The first scholar who defined the concept of Romanisation or Romanising was Francis Haverfield 6. He started from the works of Theodor Mommsen, who had already explained cultural changes occurred across the empire using the word «Romanising»: for him, in fact, Roman territories showed a high degree of homogeneity, legitimated by the levelling action of Rome itself7. In addition, Rome’s unification of Italy had to represent a good model for German unification8. However, Mommsen considered this model to be inappropriate for the Greek East.

Romantic interest in the ethnic identities and the emphasis on race as a natural and immutable characteristics constituted the perfect background for the development of these ideas. The Darwinian evolutionary theory, then, led to believe that biological inequality existed among humans9.

Haverfield, indeed, developed Mommsen’s ideas, encouraged by the political situation of Britain at the early 20th century10: Britannic imperialism, in fact, found an excellent explanation of its actions with the will to «civilise» third world countries11. The words of the British scholar are clear: «here Rome found races that were not yet civilized, yet were racially capable of accepting her culture»12. Roman terminology and symbols were adopted to create a moral legitimisation of colonisation: it constituted an idealised benevolent power, which carried its superior culture to other regions13.

Romanisation was a general, progressive process which involved many, if not all, of the areas of life, including language, art, religion, architecture and material culture, and allowed the emergence of a common culture and the extinction of the differences between Romans and provincials14. Like Europeans, and in particular Britannic empire, expanded civilisation ideals among primitive countries, so Romanisation deleted pre-Roman cultures in barbarian Europe. The concept of Romanisation, in fact, had many parallels with the idea of acculturation, used in anthropology and sociology during the

5 WOOLF 1998, 5.
6 HAVERFIELD 1923.
7 On his idea of «Romanising», see, for example MOMMSEN 1886, 193.
8 FREEMAN 1997, 30.
9 Hodds 2010, 5.
10 For a complete review of Haverfield’s work on Romanisation in the context of British imperial discourse, see HINGLEY 2000, 111ff.
11 WALLACE-HADRILL 2012, 111.
12 HAVERFIELD 1923, 5.
13 Terrenato 2005, 64.
14 HAVERFIELD 1923, 18.
first half of 20th century: both ideas developed from the same cultural framework\textsuperscript{15}. For the Mediterranean East, however, the term assumed vaguer significance. Haverfield himself made a clear distinction between East and West, deeming the former only partially romanised\textsuperscript{16}.

This approach is clearly teleological, reflecting views of social evolution from a primitive to a civilised state and enabling a direct connection between Western Europeans and classical Rome\textsuperscript{17}. Romanisation was considered a predictable event, because Rome promoted values superior than the native ones. On the behalf of a supposed superiority, colonialist views considered natural that the colonisers prevailed over colonised natives. However, Haverfield was aware that the archaeological evidences showed a much more complex picture, because some native aspects survived\textsuperscript{18}. Starting from these unclear aspects of Romanisation theory, that is the enduring presence of native culture and in some cases the revival of ancient tradition during the last phases of Roman dominion in Britain, Robin George Collingwood in the 1930s challenged Haverfield’s vision: in fact, he affirmed that civilisation of Roman Britain was “Romano-British, a fusion of two things into a single thing different from either”\textsuperscript{19}. For him, some natives had never embraced Roman culture and, instead, many country villages were romanised at a very low degree\textsuperscript{20}.

From the 1960s, archaeological excavations and surveys developed and spread throughout Europe: archaeologists found a great variety of settlements which testified many different attitudes to the arrival of Roman army. For the eastern Mediterranean, a debate emerged, too: the term «Romanisation» was sometimes explained as an individual choice made for a political career\textsuperscript{21}, albeit other scholars were more sceptical about its use\textsuperscript{22}.

During the 1970s and 1980s the «nativist» movement emerged: for the first time the notion of local resistance to Romanisation appeared clearly, and nativists considered the adoption of Roman elements as a veneer, while the best part of indigenous people preferred to not become Roman. In this period, new thoughts entered in theoretic debate in archaeological and historical fields, causing the emergence of new historiographic perspectives, usually labelled «post-colonial». It is not a case that even the reaction to Romanisation found a fertile ground in Britain, which was experiencing the effects of post-colonialism. This model, although important for having given attention to submitted people, like Romanisation has failed because it has not explained the emergence of new features that make every provincial experience unique. It created two distinct poles, not going beyond the dualism that was already evident in Romanisation thinking\textsuperscript{23}. One of the better critics to colonial views was postulated by Edward Said, who in his book Orientalism explained very well that colonial discourses represented binary oppositions, favouring colonial cultures, depicted as civilised, dynamic, complex, modern, and representing the others as inferior, passive, savage, lazy, simple and

\textsuperscript{15} Jones 1997, 40ff.
\textsuperscript{16} Haverfield 1923, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{17} Hingley 2000, 124; 2005, 39.
\textsuperscript{18} Haverfield 1923, 22; Webster 2001, 211; Hingley 2005, 35.
\textsuperscript{19} Collingwood 1932, 92.
\textsuperscript{20} Webster 2001, 212.
\textsuperscript{21} Welles 1965, 44.
\textsuperscript{22} Bowersock 1965, 72.
\textsuperscript{23} Webster 2001, 213; Curchin 2004, 9-10.
primitive. Said, in fact, has examined the ways in which the West saw the Orient, that is the Middle East, based on the ideas that European scholars had of East Mediterranean people.

From this first phase, other approaches developed studying the way colonised people have been represented in colonial literature and the nature of colonial identities. In particular, many studies about identities flourished, exploring the complexities of the relationship between conquerors and subjected people.

The dualism between Romans and native people was overemphasized by Martin Millett, who described Romanisation as a «dialectical process, determined on the one hand by Roman imperialist policy... and on the other by native responses to Roman structures».

Millett's model was built on Haverfield's theories, but attempted to reconcile his views with the nativists' objections: however, unlike Haverfield, Millett considered local elites as active agents of Romanisation, claiming that the rapid adoption of Roman customs was the result of spontaneous challenge between natives, as Paul Zanker had already pointed out.

The Roman empire, indeed, was able to establish patron-client relationships with the local elite: in this way the rule of very distant and different territories had no need of a strong military and administrative intervention. Non-elites were romanised at second hand, emulating the upper classes, which mediated Roman culture: Romanisation was still considered a self-generating process. The major obstacle derived from these visions was that they did not consider the possibility of grey areas, following the idea that Romanisation was the only way for civilisation: lower classes seemed to appear only as passive recipients which experienced Rome through the mediation of romanised elites.

Furthermore, if Romanisation was primarily a matter of local elites who had to re-negotiate their authority with the new rulers, it is not clear why eastern provinces elites did not seem to be such romanised as those in the west Mediterranean. Romanisation studies focused on the western provinces because they were subjected to more visible changes in material culture, often forgetting that objects have no fixed meaning, which change when the object passes from hand to hand.

However, according to David Mattingly, these approaches lacked in considering how power dynamics operated, because «the Romanization paradigm is a classic example of a common tendency to simplify explanation by labelling complex realities with terms that exaggerate the degree of homogeneity».

From this brief analysis, it is clear that the term Romanisation assumed varied forms during the 20th century and it is still in use, assuming a number of different forms. Furthermore, it seems to be a debate born and widespread first of all among Anglo-Saxon scholars. Miguel John Versluys has recently pointed out that «individual scholar's view of Romanization appears to greatly depend on the area that he/she studies, as well as on the historical and archaeological sources available for that particular region»: this assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that Continental scholarship, unlike Anglo-Saxon scholarship, assumes different forms.

Said 1978.
Millet 1990.
Millett 1990.
Webster 2001.
Morley 2010.
Mattingly 2011.
Versluys 2014.
Saxon, has not rejected the term «Romanisation» at all.

1.2 The Development of New Approaches

Many of the 1990s studies, starting from divergent reactions to Millett’s theories, focused new attention on the relationships between the imperial power and local elites: in fact, on one side the promotion of Roman life style was an interest of Roman administration; on the other side local elites were not simply assimilated, but participated in the creation of a new social order.

One of the main challenges to archaeology posed by postcolonial theory has been a reconsideration of how archaeologists represent the past: historical archaeologists have often stressed the ability of material culture to give a voice to subaltern people, often underrepresented in historic texts, but Romanisation approach misread material cultures, because it has often no taken in account the different identities that archaeological evidences show. As John Moreland has pointed out, «objects were actively used in the production and transformation of identities». Indeed, during the 1990s archaeologists tried to pay much more attention toward the responses of native people.

Among these scholars, Greg Woolf refined Millett’s assumption, stressing that adopting Roman culture might work as a marker of status, not of political or ethnic identity: indeed, the use of Roman materials did not mean a complete acceptation of all Roman values. The importance of Woolf’s account lays in the trying to go beyond the dichotomy between Romans and natives, because Roman experience greatly diverged from a place to another. Native people were not merely assimilated into an already constituted order: instead, they actively participated to create a new one. Another important feature of Woolf’s book is the notion that Roman identity is a fluctuating concept and differs from time to time and from place to place, created in the local context through acts of accommodation.

However, Woolf continued to follow the path traced by Haverfield and Millett, talking about elites’ relationships: the majority of Mediterranean people was constituted by lower social actors, like peasants or craftsmen, who showed a great cultural variety, and were much more conservative than elites.

Moreover, Woolf stirred up even the debate about Romanisation of eastern communities: in his view, the Romanisation here involved cultural and political elements. Nevertheless, he was well aware about the confusion that the term generated and the difficulty to apply a common term for every region of the empire. Susan Alcock, who completely avoided the use of the term in her valuable volume about the Roman Greece, some years later agreed with Woolf about the necessity to proceed to a revaluation and reinterpretation of the evidences in order to better investigate the

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32 Whittaker 2009, 199.
33 Moreland 2001, 84.
34 Woolf 1998, 239.
35 Woolf 1997, 341.
36 Woolf 1997, 347.
38 Alcock 1993.
consequences of Roman actions. From the American history, a number of archaeologists started to use the term «Creolisation» for indicating that Roman culture did not replace previous cultures, but they together created a new mixed culture. As outlined by Jane Webster, creolisation represents a process of negotiation between asymmetric power relations: the most important assumption of this theory has been that it has not ascribed the adoption of new customs or material goods to a simple desire of a less civilised people to emulate someone else; on the other end, as noted by David Mattingly, there was the risk that the application of this model to the Roman world could create readings of a steady resistance in the use of material culture. Mattingly himself has preferred to use the concept of «Discrepancy» for representing not only the existence of different identities in a Roman province, but the full spectrum of distinctive experiences of relationships between peoples. However, scholars disagreed on labelling this phenomenon, utilising a vast range of words. In fact, in addition to creolization and discrepancy, many other terms were used, such as hybridity, middle ground, mestizaje (or métissage), and so on. It appears clear that we are confronting a set of concepts that do not lend themselves an easy definition or consensus: they have been alternatively used for expressing the creation of new transcultural forms, with a complex situation of mutual influencing and imitation. These new views have tended to recognise a sort of dynamism inside cultural processes, which diverge over time and space: they helped to destabilise boundaries, creating buffer zones where different cultures converge. The idea of a homogeneous and clearly-defined Roman culture, conceived as easy recognisable in all its aspects, has been now considered an invention.

In this context, Chris Gosden has examined the interplay of people and material culture: in his analysis, he identifies three forms of colonialism, among which Roman empire would belong to the second one. These three models are:

1. Colonialism within a shared cultural milieu. In this case it is difficult to distinguish colonial and non-colonial types of relationship, because the societies involved shares cultural values.
2. Middle-ground colonialism. Cultural change results to be multilateral, because all parties think they are in control.
3. Terra nullius. It is the most violent approach, pre-existing cultures are not recognised by colonisers, who destroy them.

In the middle-ground model, the dominant power does not necessarily displace pre-existing traditions and material cultures; instead, a new set of cultural habits emerges. However, Mattingly has outlined that the Roman expansion was much more complex, covering all the three models shared by Gosden: in its early stages, in fact, when Rome started to expand its imperium over Italian peninsula, we can talk of colonialism within

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40 Webster 2001, 218.
41 Mattingly 2011, 41.
42 Mattingly 1997b, 12-13; 2011, 216
43 The Bhabha’s concept of hybridity has been central in the accounts of a number of archaeologists who were dissatisfied with the traditional view of colonialism. For further information, see Bhabha 1994 and Prabhu 2007, for its applications in archaeological studies, see van Dommele 1997.
a shared cultural milieu, while the *terra nullius* model would be shared by many Roman
writers, who, according to Brent Shaw, were unable to give a true picture of peoples
outside the *limes* because of their negative idea of the barbarians.45

These approaches have been criticised recently by a number of scholars: Nicola
Terrenato, for example, has claimed that «some of its key concepts, such as resistance or
creolization, assume colonial encounters in which ethnic factors have an overriding
importance»; he has hoped for overcoming definitely the old view of pre-modern
empires, structurally different from the modern ones. From its inception, archaeology
had a clear local perspective: the first target that a new generation of scholars is trying
to go beyond post-colonial approaches and to analyse the concept of connectivity,
influenced by modern global transformations.

Starting from the study of the Roman Greece, Maria Papaioannou has suggested a good
alternative that should be taken in account. She has affirmed that we should find an
alternative among the Greek-language context: for these reasons, she has proposed the
use of *synoecism* to denote a variety of political and cultural combinations.

As Andrew Gardner has recently pointed out, like among post-colonialist scholars there
are many positions and theories, there is also a broad debate about globalisation and the
limits of this phenomenon in time and space.48

1.3 GLOBALISATION AND THE ROMAN WORLD

Globalisation approaches have their origins in the Immanuel Wallerstein’s World
Systems theory: he believed that the first long-time stable world economy started during
the 16th century.49 His claiming has been then challenged by Andre Gunder Frank and
Barry Gills, who dated the phenomenon of World Systems back to 5000 years.50 The
concepts derived from the world history have constituted the base for globalisation
thoughts: globalisation does not represent a single universal period of universal history,
instead an instance of globalisation has always involved all the humankind.51

Furthermore, globalisation is not identical in every historical period and place. However,
the interactions and integrations among different people represent a clear aspect of
globalisation.

Antony Gerald Hopkins has given a good explanation of what globalisation means:
«Globalization involves the extension, intensification, and quickening velocity of flows of
people, products and ideas that shape the world. It integrates regions and continents; it
compresses time and space; it prompts imitation and resistance»52. Indeed, globalisation
does not represent a singular phenomenon, but the result of many processes. The idea
of the presence of interconnectivities and networks seems to be one of the most
important features of globalisation theories: in this sense, as Manuel Castells has pointed
out, globalisation «appears to have happened not only in the 19th century of the common

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45 SHAW 2000, 374.
46 TERRERATO 2005, 70.
47 PAPAIOANNOU 2016, 39.
48 GARDNER 2013, 6.
49 WALLERSTEIN 1974.
50 FRANK and GILLS 1993. For a full analysis about Globalisation, see PITTS and VERSLUYS 2015b, 8-10;
51 JENNINGS 2011, 13.
52 HOPKINS 2006b, 3.
era, but thousands of years ago»\(^{53}\). The principal role of connectivity in the past has been already outlined in the book of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, who depict the Mediterranean as a set of micro-regions traditionally interdependent\(^{54}\).

For Martin Pitts and Miguel John Verluys, the Roman empire was a perfect model of the interconnected world\(^{55}\), providing many opportunities for economic expansion. Each singular identity is the product of this social interaction: in this view the Roman empire is a jumble of local groups, a very heterogeneous society, in which individuals operated differently for becoming Roman, on one hand holding their inherited identity and, on the other, following a centralising imperial culture. This process is particularly underpinned by Michal Sommer, who, following the words of Aelius Aristides, has found three areas that the effects if Rome’s power were mainly felt: space, law and belonging. The Mediterranean, depicted by Greeks as a sea full of alien and fantastic worlds, was transformed in a «globalised» area. Furthermore, throughout its institutions, Rome gave a standard of legal security unheard-of and, albeit diversities continued to exist, many Greco-Roman features in several fields, such as architecture, cuisine, bathing, spectacles and religion, changed the provincial world, not only in the West Mediterranean, but even in the Semitic world\(^{56}\). Nevertheless, we cannot forget that the integration happened not only at a vertical level (between Romans and natives), but also at a horizontal one: in a globalising world, in fact, communities had much more opportunities to contact each other. Rome seemed to have never tried to stop this process for favouring a homogenisation\(^{57}\). In this sense, being Roman means being part of a larger community, in which it is possible to preserve an own identity.

Conversely, even under Roman rule many areas were slightly involved in this process and indigenous elites dominated their communities with a substantial degree of continuity from the pre-Roman period\(^{58}\). As seen, the persistence of local features is another aspect of globalisation, sometimes defined as «global localisation» or «glocalisation». In this way, Rome results to be globalised and globalising, as Jan Nederveen Pieterse claimed: it appears clear the need to decentralise Rome in studying ancient history, as well as the Eurocentric vision in modern history\(^{59}\). Robert Bruce Hitchner has outlined that Roman empire was global in the sense that it was able to replace a highly fragmented system of states with a system of interdependent provinces: this integration was favoured by investments in military institutions and transport infrastructures\(^{60}\). The provincial societies re-formulated their own identities, in a different process for each province. Therefore, the global system itself emphasises cultural differences, hybridisation and even the marginalisation of those civilisations who do not are able to be involved in new global perspectives, because global and local are two faces of the same movement\(^{61}\). Zygmunt Bauman at the end of 1990s already noted that «globalization divides as much as it unites»\(^{62}\): the introduction of new features

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\(^{53}\) CASTELLS 2006, 158.

\(^{54}\) HORDEN and PURCELL 2000.

\(^{55}\) PITTS and VERSLUYS 2015b, 17.

\(^{56}\) SOMMER 2015, 176.

\(^{57}\) NAEERBOUR 2014, 278.

\(^{58}\) DOWNS 2000, 209; HINGLEY 2005, 115.

\(^{59}\) NEDERVEEN PIETERSE 2015, 233. See also HINGLEY 2010 about the dichotomy of cultural diversity and unity between Rome and its provinces.

\(^{60}\) HITCHNER 2008, 3-4.

\(^{61}\) PITTS 2008, 494.

\(^{62}\) BAUMAN 1998, 2.
into an existing culture, in fact, can be even seen as part of the diversification, and not as homogenisation of the indigenous pattern. It is therefore impossible to identify a unique and uniform Roman culture: it probably has never existed as «pure» culture, but as a set of diversified cultures.

We can deduce that the main differences between the ancient and modern worlds are linked with the scale of networks, the speed of communications and the politic and economic relationships: if we look at an economic level, it appears clear that a single world market emerged only at the end of 18th century and not before. On these bases, a number of authors refuse to use the term «globalisation» if applied to eras before modern times, when the phenomenon has become truly global. The Roman empire obviously could not have the modern high-speed technologies that led to the time-space compression. Globalisation is seen as an empty concept, that is utilised instead of old concepts like colonialism or imperialism. For some global historian, like Helle Vandkilde and Richard Hingley, globalisation is a characteristic of all human societies, because social, cultural and economic systems have always been present in human societies: however, Friedrick Naerebout has claimed that in this case Roman empire should not be an exceptional case, in which it is possible to recognise specific values. He considers that globalisation is just a recent phenomenon, because space-time compression and interconnectivity are possible only during our era.

The doubts emerged during the last years are more than licit, and the risk of replacing Romanisation with another generic term is high: I am more inclined to talk of «globalising attitudes» that involved human kind in all his history, more than proper globalisation. It is undoubtedly that a certain kind of interconnectivities have always existed and that modern technologies have favoured the time-space compression: in this way, a globalising aspiration, namely the desire to have relationship and comparison with the other, has always been present in human actions. In this sense, it needs to be clarified and better explained more than replacing the term «Romanisation», erasing old connotations of colonialism and imperialism and in the light of the new instances brought by World History. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, in fact, has already outlined that «Romanisation is Globalisation». This idea is quite old: in 1934, Fritz Schulz developed the idea that the spread of Roman citizenship led the Mediterranean to be considered a unique nation rather than a set of different peoples.

1.4 Identity and Ethnicity

Globalisation itself in many cases has recovered and resumed an increasing interest in ancient traditions and identities. Nowadays, in fact, we are constantly exposed to listen words like ethnicities, identities, cultures and so on. In the last years, there has been an explosion of interest in issues of ethnicity, nationalism, race and religion, around a

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63 NAEREBOU 2014, 276-277.
64 PITT 2008, 494.
68 NEDERVEEN PIETERSE 2015, 233.
69 SCHULZ 1934, 96ff.
renewed preoccupation with the question of defining and asserting collective identities. However, defining these terms is very difficult: although each word is often used in current discourses, definitions of it usually lack. As remembered by Geoff Emberling, in fact, many scholars have preferred to avoid to discuss about the term. The so-called «collective identity» is most common in ethnic and migration studies. This view of identity best answer to the questions about Who are we? What distinguishes us from other groups in this society? Where do we draw the lines (or boundaries) between our group and others?

Bernard Knapp has outlined that identity designates a broad category, which includes ethnicity. «Ethnic identity» is often used to refer to a particular group’s shared sense of belonging together. This connection is based on certain experiences and notions deriving from group-members’ perceptions of common cultural heritage and common geographical and/or ancestral origins.

Ethnicity involves even tradition: the alleged authority of its «roots» makes a group stronger. However, we cannot forget that identity is just a cultural construction, with both an endogenous and an external conception. Establishing history, culture and tradition mean making a choice, excluding other possibilities and operating a sort of political operation. For these reasons, identities can be multiple, as the result of the intersection between different types of identities. Active kinship is often central to the definition of ethnicity, alongside the historical subjects’ notions of a common history and a shared homeland.

During the 1920s Max Weber postulated that modernisation would erased from our minds such primordial phenomena as ethnicity and rationalism: on the contrary, collective identities seem to emerge for expressing resistance and opposition to cultural homogenisation. In addition, the practice of classifying groups has re-emerged in several countries.

On the other hand, our era is characterised by the phenomenon of massive migrations of people, that have increased in intensity and complexity compared with the past centuries. It can be said that increasing multiculturalism of our cities or nations has required flourishing contacts among different groups, emphasizing differences and a sense of collective identity different from the global one. In this sense we can assume that even Roman conquest had to stimulate two different feelings: one more «global», one more «local». Probably many groups were prompted to find differences from the other, looking for their own tradition for preserving a sort of independence.

Ethnicity, in fact, has always been a basic attribute of self-identification, not only because of shared historical practice, but because «the others» remind people every day that they are «others» themselves. This generalized «otherness» be it defined by skin colour, language, culture, religion or any other attribute, is a distinctive trait of the humans, the experience of our multi-cultural world, but even the reality of past worlds. Living closely

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70 Emberling 1997, 300.
72 Harland 2009, 6.
73 On the problem of roots and traditions, see Bettini 2016.
74 Aime 2004, 103.
75 Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005, 2.
76 Weber 1980.
77 Castells 2010, 56-63.
78 Mateos 2014, 10.
79 Castells 2010, XXV.
made people from different cultures to distinguish themselves in terms of ethnicity. In this way, an individual could find solidarity, refuge and even defence in his group against the prejudices of other factions. When oppression and repression induce revolts, ethnicity often provides the material basis that constructs the commune of resistance. The definition of ethnicity and race, indeed, are controversial because identification is subjective, multi-faceted and changing in nature and because there is not a clear consensus on what constitutes an “ethnic or racial group”: at the core of the concept of ethnicity is a subjective belief of common origins without the necessary existence of genetic linkages or physical similarity.

It appears, then, difficult to give a precise definition, because each society varies the range of criteria for defining its own ethnic characteristic. However, it seems likely to discern some usual benchmarks applied by many ethnic groups: they usually delineate a shared ancestry and speak a mutually intelligible language. For this characteristics, they differ from families or clan, because are bigger than them, and from states, because their members have a sort of kinship. Indeed, amongst the main reasons for a perception of self-identity are certain shared characteristics, including physical appearance, but most importantly geographical and ancestral origins, cultural traditions, religion and language. According to Philip Harland, the term «ethnic group» is commonly used to describe a group that is perceived by members and, secondarily, by outsiders in particular ways: in this way an ethnic group see itself as sharing certain distinctive cultural characteristics associated with a particular geographical origin 80.

Therefore, at the core of the concept of ethnicity is the question of an individual’s identity, which is defined by the characteristics of the ethnic group that he or she considers herself to belong to, always understood in a contextual rather than in an essentialist way. The social context in which the ethnic group is defined is therefore key to understanding its identity. However, the creation of ethnicities is due even to the need of people to classify the other: ethnicity, indeed, helps to simplify the vision of the foreign world. In fact, new ethnic identities develop when a group conquers inhabited territories or when people are obliged to migrate elsewhere. In other words, if there is no contact with other groups that are perceived as “culturally different”, the identity of an ethnic group does not emerge. The need to differentiate the other has always stimulated ethnic constructs. The desire of purity seems to be essential in the genesis of ethnic groups: it is only through the suppression of supposed foreign elements that an identity could arise.

1.5 Archaeological Approaches toward Ethnicity

The study of ethnicity is still considered one of the most problematic phenomenon studied by social scientists. The myth of race, developed during the 19th and the first part of the 20th century, seems to be definitely faded, but it has been replaced by the concept of identity 81. The differentiation and supremacy of a culture has constituted an important vehicle for the propaganda of nationalisms: the «White-European race» was always on the top of the rank, and this position justified colonialism and white hegemony.

80 Harland 2009, 10-11
81 Remotti 2010, XIV.
For many years, archaeological studies were influenced by the concepts of different races and western supremacy. Material culture has been attributed to a precise people: more than one hundred years ago, Gustaf Kossinna systematically delineated cultures on the basis of material culture of a particular region: in this way, he identified many prehistoric «ethnic» groups, such as the Germans or the Celts. Sixteen years later, Gordon Childe, moving from Kossinna's statement, emphasized the importance of material assemblages more than single findings. Archaeologists tended to consider identity like individuals, with an own life and development: they were seen almost as proper ethnic groups, especially after the Second World War. Indeed, identity was considered as objective and primordial.

During the 1960s and 1970s there was a shift in the analysis of the concept of culture's boundaries: the presence of minority groups, together with the processes of decolonisation, challenged the ideas of acculturation and homogenization. Ethnic groups were not seen any more as isolated units with fixed boundaries: on the contrary, these boundaries would have defined a group, not its culture. The fundamental work of Fredrik Barth outlined the importance to understand and study the formation and maintenance processes of ethnic boundaries, instead of aiming to find exclusive cultural traits. During these years, it appeared clear that ethnic groups were fluid, determining a break between the notions of ethnicity and culture.

During the 1980s, post-processual archaeologists looked with interest on the ethnicity theme, trying to connect anthropological and archaeological studies. The conjectures of some anthropologists constituted important bases for the archaeologists' work: in particular, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus was used in archaeology for explaining that the world operates on the base of common practice, and not on cleared rules. For him, social actors possess a sort of subliminal disposition and perception toward things and practices, which at the same time shaped the habitus itself. Shared habitual dispositions provide the basis for the recognition of commonalities of sentiments and interests.

In particular, two principles became central in the study of archaeological ethnicities:

1. Change in material culture is a gradual and regular process which occurs in a uniform manner throughout a spatially homogeneous area;

2. the prime cause of variation in design is the date of manufacture. Ian Hodder depicted material culture as an active agent in social relationships: for understanding the meanings of the things, it becomes important to understand the entire context.

In the 1990s discussion has developed: in his important study about Greek ethnicity, Jonathan Hall has affirmed that ethnicity is always an artificial construct, based on internal markers more than on fixed criteria. Hall was very sceptic about the attempts to make interpretations about identity of a group based only on the archaeological record.

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82 Kossinna 1911.
83 DIAZ-ANDREU and LUCY 2005, 3.
84 BARTH 1969, 11.
85 JONES 2007, 48.
86 See in particular the books of Hodder 1982 and SHENNAN 1989.
87 BOURDIEU 1977.
considering literary and epigraphic evidences much more relevant\(^{88}\). These conclusions, of course, led to accepting the primacy of writings on all the other evidences: however, written sources have often represented an elite evidence, and cannot be considered as unique tool for reconstructing entire cultures or groups. Pascal Ruby has proposed an intermediate position, much more based on the distinction between the emic and the etic level. Albeit the literary sources should be considered of a primary importance, Ruby has outlined the fictive character of genealogies and kinships and the importance of the context\(^{89}\).

However, there have been opposite point of view: Sian Jones, for example, underpinned the active role of the communities in choosing their material culture and has claimed, following Bourdieu’s theory of practice, that «the construction of ethnic identity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of the habitus which shape, and are shaped, by commonalities of practices»\(^{90}\). Material culture, indeed, has been seen as a conscious, not arbitrary, selection.

During the last years, a long debate about the opportunity for archaeologists to study non-observable processes has developed: together with more traditional approaches, renewed visions about the problem of ethnicity have risen. Someone has believed that archaeology can help only in a very detailed context, with the help of other disciplines\(^{91}\), while others are more optimistic, believing that it is possible to reconstruct part of ethnic processes\(^{92}\). It is a truism affirming that we cannot know past actors’ intentions or reconstruct their experiences, but a part of material culture could represent a clue of social interactions.

### 1.6 Roman Ethnicities

In archaeology, many aspects (like pottery, architecture, textiles, food, body ornaments and so on) could share differences among ethnic groups; however, it is no easy to identify material markers of ethnicity. Less than ten years ago, Bernard Knapp has claimed that archaeology would have to shift the focus to how ethnicity was constructed, more than to define an ethnic group\(^{93}\): ethnic identity is not something completely arbitrary, but it is delineated by different criteria such as kinship or descent and territorial homeland. However, according to David Mattingly, it was not constant in time and space\(^{94}\): in fact, an ethnic group is not static and it is often subject to processes of assimilation or differentiation when it meets another ethnic group\(^{95}\).

Roman identity represents a very problematic concept, which changes according to each province: it is easy to think of multiple and hybrid «Roman identities».

If we take into account what the Romans, and particularly the Romans during the

\(^{88}\) Hall 1997, 142. These concepts were more recently reiterated (Hall 2002).

\(^{89}\) Ruby 2006, 44-45;

\(^{90}\) Jones 2010, 226.

\(^{91}\) Jones 1997, MacSweeney 2009.

\(^{92}\) Roymans 2004 represents a good example: he, in fact, has been successful in reconstructing the history of Batavians in the Lower Rhine area. See also Knapp 2008, Tammar and Hodos 2010, Reher and Fernández-Gótz 2015.

\(^{93}\) Knapp 2008, 63.


\(^{95}\) Hall 2002, 9-10.
principate, thought, we easily realise that the concept of an ethnic identity does not seem to be present among them, or, at least, it was less important to them. The concept of purity, that represents one important feature for an ethnic group, is not present in Roman myths of origins. On the contrary, Roman group is a mixture of different people since the dawn of their history: Eric Gruen has brilliantly pointed out that the idea of autochthony held no great attention for the Romans. They were the descendants of Aeneas, a Trojan prince, who wed the daughter of Latinus, the king of a local population in Italy: as clear from the account of Livy, the Aborigines and the Trojans have quickly formed a unique people.

Furthermore, when the city was founded, the first act of Romulus was to give the right of asylum to everyone. Then, the Roman king authorised the rape of Sabines women, which precluded the mixture between Romans and Sabines.

On the contrary, the Greek world tended to show a number of different ways to express membership of a group by reference to descent from heroes or gods. Fictive genealogies, related with claiming of autochthony, were the bases of Greek identity: in fact, not only the Athenians affirmed to be «unmixed», but Thebans and Arcadians declared to be autochthonous as well.

The third century BCE tradition of the dual nature of earliest Rome allowed her citizens to not focus their distinctiveness on their autochthony or blood pureness, but on their ability on accepting the foreigners and newcomers under their law. The integration became the first recognizable Roman characteristic, as outlined already by king Philip V in a letter of 215/214 BCE to the people of Larisa and later by Dionysius of Halicarnassus: both glorified this attitude, considering it one of the causes of Roman prominence.

The Roman empire has in fact resulted able to extend the scale of participation to the political and social life through the establishment of patron-client relationships with

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96 Gruen 2013, 3
97 Liv. I, 2, 4: «Aeneas, adversus tanti belli terrenum ut animos Aboriginum sibi conciliaret, nec sub eodem iure solum sed etiam nomine omnes essent, Latinos utramque gentem appellavit».
98 Denchi 2005, 244-245.
99 Syll. 543; IG IX. 2. 517, 30-38: [...] νομίζω μὲν οὐδὲν ύμνον ὑδένα ἢν ἂν... τοῖς λοιποῖς τοὺς τοῖς ὁμοίως πολιτογραφίας χρωμένους θεωρεῖν ὑν καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι... οἱ εἰσέρθουσιν, οἱ καὶ τοὺς οἰκετές ὅταν ἐλευθερώσωσιν, προσδεχόμενοι εἰς τὸ πολίτευμα καὶ τῶν ἀρχαιῶν με... [παθιδόντες].
100 Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. I, 9, 4: «Ῥωμύλου δὲ τὴν ἐπώνυμον αὐτοῦ πόλιν οἰκίσαντος ἐκκαθισκά γενεάς τῶν Τρικυνδῶν ἦσαν, ἡν τὸν ἐκείνους ὑμοῦς μεταλαβόντες, ἐπονομάζετε τόν ἐξ ἐλαχίστου γενεάθης σύν χρόνον παρασκεύασαν καὶ περιφρανεύσαντο τῷ ἀδηλοτάτῳ, τῶν τε δεδομένων οἰκίσσεις παρὰ φιλανθρώπου ὑποδοχῇ καὶ πολιτείας μεταδόσει τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ γενναίου ἐν πολέμῳ κρατηθέσις, διόλου τοῦ ὅσιον παρὰ αὐτοῦς ἐλευθερώθηκεν ἀντίστοις εἶναι συνυπηρετεί, τύχης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐδένας εἰ μέλλοι τό καινὸν ὑφελεῖν ἀπαξίωσι: ύπ' ὅταν τάτα ἄν πάντα κόσμῳ τὸν πολιτεύματος, ὅν ἐκ πολλῶν κατεστήσαντο παθημάτων, ἐκ παντὸς καιροῦ λαμβανόντες τὸ χρήσιμον». 
local elites, creating a web of interactions. This web of interactions let the Romans to rule with a minimal military and administrative involvement: from the perspectives of an individual subject, the freedom limitation would be reasonably balanced by the expectation of a social promotion, connected with the chance to attain Roman citizenship and to become an integral part of the empire. Roman ethnicity was related to Roman citizenship, the community was firstly political and then ethnic. The eastern part of the empire saw the spread of the phenomenon of the «dual citizenship»: in this way, the inhabitants of a city were probably prompted to become an active part of political activity of the empire.

The Roman world was indeed constituted by many different souls and it seems not easy to recognise specific traits that would characterise the Roman ethnicity. In her valuable work, Emma Dench has claimed that «not all Roman identities were the same», and that «defining Roman identity by reference to a single, imagined out-group was only a mode of self-perception, and it was one that never remotely attained the prominence of dividing the world into two categories, as Greeks usually did». The Greeks, in fact, were used to divide the world between themselves and the Barbarians, creating a sort of closed world in which barbarians could not become Greeks, whereas the Romans tended to divide the world between barbarity and humanity, but the doors of «Romanness» were open to all. The word «humanitas», in fact, represented the real limit between who belonged to the Roman empire and the others. With the territorial expansion of their rule, self-consciousness about Roman role in the world raised: in this context, building up traditions about what it meant to be Roman became necessary. Humanitas represented the principal component of the great vision which late Republican aristocracy had of herself. In this sense, a letter of Cicero to his brother Quintus, written when the latter was governor of Asia, is illustrative: Cicero explains here that Romans are obliged to give their good office to wild and barbarous people, like Africans, Spanish or Gauls, and to return back the «humanitas» to civilised regions, such as Asia Minor, because they firstly spread it. It was at the end of the civil wars that the civilising mission of Rome became ascertained, directed foremost to western non-Greek peoples. The universalistic mission was indeed a peculiar character of Roman identity: after Cicero, many scholars continued to advocate for Rome the same scope. For example, Pliny the Elder was sure that Italy had to give «humanitas» to mankind.

The idea of «humanitas», then, developed during the principate together with the idea of «Romanness». It seems not a case if the first attestation of the term «romanitas» is relatively late: Tertullian, in fact, is the first known writer using it, albeit in an unclear...
context. The moral and cultural values of piety, austerity, self-control and discipline were all characteristic of Roman self-consciousness or, in a broader sense, of perception of belonging to Roman community.

This sort of universalism, this globalising tendency, became a key element of Roman identity. Every study about Roman identity, however, is further complicated: its plural and relatively permeable quality discourages enquiry and evades definition. The difficulty to study Roman identity is due even to the fact that Rome has often represented an important reference point for the construction of the political self-image of many modern societies: as seen above, the concept of Romanisation developed amongst the imperialistic ideas and judgements about «race mixture» have played a significant role in explanations of the rise and fall of Rome.

1.7 INTEGRATION AND PREJUDICES

The Roman society, then, has appeared to be more tolerant than others: however, in some cases a sort of prejudice against different uses and customs emerges from literary sources. The integration of defeated peoples is an ambiguous phenomenon, because not all of them saw the integration in a positive manner. Livius reported the words of the consul Publius Sulpicius Galba, who in 200 BCE remembered the desertion of many populations of South Italy during the wars against Pyrrhus and then Hannibal for asserting that those states will never fail to revolt from Romans, except when there will be no one to whom they could go over.

During the imperial period, Tacitus reported the hope of the Britannic king Calcagus that Germans, Gauls and Britons would abandon Roman army. In this views, «being» or «becoming» Roman had not to be an easy choice: the aim of the Roman ideological project was not to create homogeneity amongst all the subjected populations, but establish loyalty through the empire: in this sense it was unnecessary to destroy the diversities. Roman culture was constantly re-interpreted. However, it appears itself evident that Rome did not generally seek to remove native religions and cults or to impose her own traditions. Roman attitude toward adversaries was not completely pacific, of course: the rising of pockets of resistance is a normal consequence of an occupation, although partly pacific. Furthermore, abuses of governors took place and no all the conquered nations were ready to lose their freedom.

In the East, the Romans had to face with more sophisticated societies, already unified by Alexander the Great, with a long and glorious past and proud of their level of technology.

107 TERT. De pallio, 4,1: «Quid nunc, si est Romanitas omni salus, nec honestis tamen modis ad Graios estis?». The Christian author in this case was talking with the Carthaginians.


109 LIV. XXXI, 7, 10-12: «nostra nunc compara. quanto magis florentem Italiam, quanto magis integras res, salvis ducibus, salvis tot exercitibus, quos Punicum postea bellum absumpsit, adgressus Pyrrhus tamen concussit et victor prope ad ipsam urbeb Romanam venit! nec Tarentini modo oraque illa Italiae, quam maiorem Graeciam vocant, ut linguam, ut nomen secutos crederes, sed Lucanus et Bruttius et Samnis ab nobis defecerunt. haec vos, si Philippus in Italiam transmiserit, quietura aut mansura in fide creditis? manserunt enim Punico postea bellum. numquam isti populi, nisi cum deerit, ad quem desciscant, ab nobis non deficient».

110 TAC. Agr. 32: «adgnoscent Britanni suam causam, recordabuntur Galli priorem libertatem: deserent illos ceteri Germani, tarn quam nuper Usipi reliquerunt».

111 BEARD, NORTH AND PRICE 1998, 314.
and culture. On the base of their view of civilisation, Romans tried to not interfere so much with these traditions, in particular with the Greek one. They found a good system of urbanised countries and had no need to create new cities or *coloniae*. Pompey was the only Roman general who realised a policy of new foundations, in direct continuation with the work of Alexander the Great, while, since Augustus onward, imperial policies were more focused to increase the power of older cities or to develop previous villages into cities, creating a sort of network through which local rule might be easier. For their attempts, Roman emperors supported old civic institutions and traditions, and did not try to exporting their own cults. For the extent and heterogeneity of the Mediterranean countries, Romans did not adopt a unique model, but they followed their pragmatic needs. However, as outlined by Greg Woolf, although respectful for Greek culture and past, Romans were aware that Greek world was in a period of decadence, especially on the moral profile. Roman prejudices towards the others were an important part of their thinking and consciousness of their superiority, as well pointed out by Benjamin Isaac, who has talked of «proto-racism». The need of oversimplify foreigners is typical of every society, both ancient and modern: it is prompt by the human need to classify everything, even people, creating a range useful for better approaching with the things and people around us. However, this sort of prejudice not always become racism or need to see the others as subordinate. It is undoubtedly that the civilising mission that Romans appointed to their rule is a clear sign that they considered proudly themselves as the only nation able to unify the entire world. This thinking led to pejorative views of the foreigners, especially of who did not live according to their laws outside the empire. Judging the enemies as degenerate, evil or with no laws is obviously a way to confirm their inferiority.

Roman prejudices affected almost all the subjected populations, in particular in the Eastern Mediterranean. We have already seen how Romans, albeit respectful towards them, had often considered Greeks in a period of moral and cultural crisis: they usually were considered affected by the flaws which involved other eastern nations. Syrians, besides, were often target of dislike: the biggest difference between Greeks and other Eastern Mediterranean people was that Greeks had no attitude to be slave. Cicero, for example, affirmed that Syrians and the Jews were born to be slaves; Livy had the same attitude: Syrians were usually considered no good fighters, living in a luxurious way and tending to prefer baths rather than exercises. Tacitus attributed to the Batavian leader Civilis the same prejudices towards Eastern people that we have found among Roman writers.

These characteristics were considered to be determined by climate and geography: the idea of a natural slavery developed since Aristotle onward, and spread in Rome the belief

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112 Woolf 1994, 121.
114 Isaac 2004, 493.
115 Cic. Prov. Cons. 5, 10: «iam vero publicanos miseranos—me etiam miserum illorum ita de me meritorum miseris ac dolore!—tradidit in servitutem Iudaes et Syris, nationibus natis servituti».
116 Liv. XXXV, 49, 8: «varia enim genera armorum et multa nomina gentium inauditarum, Dahas et Medos et Cadusios et Elymaeos, Suros omnis esse, haud paulo mancipiorum melius propter servilia ingenia quam militum genus».
117 Tac. Hist. IV. 17: «quippe illic Macedones Thraceseque et Illyrii erant, ferocissimae omnes gentes, hic Syri et Asiatici Graeci sunt, vilissima genera hominum et servituti nata».
that over time slavery caused deterioration. People subjected for more than one generation were believed to not be any more able to rebel against their conquerors. Amongst oriental nations, Jews were probably the most mocked: Roman feelings were often hostile toward them, as clear in the words used by Cicero\textsuperscript{118}, Seneca\textsuperscript{119}, Tacitus\textsuperscript{120} and Quintilian\textsuperscript{121}. Most of Latin scholars attacked Jews for their religious practices, in particular the observance of Sabbath, the avoidance of pork and circumcision: they were followers of a dangerous superstitio. Furthermore, the Jews developed the special reputation for preferring their own company and showing fierce hostility towards the others\textsuperscript{122}.

In conclusion, Romans did not ascribe to themselves an exact ethnic profile; however, they were used to generalise prejudices toward nations under their rule.

1.8 COMMON ANCESTORS

As we have already said, one of the conspicuous groups was formed by «Syrians». In fact, many individuals coming from different and far places referred to themselves with such term. The word had certainly a geographical meaning, but it is no clear if it had any cultural connotation: sometimes it has indicated the great part of the Near East, sometimes only small portions\textsuperscript{123}, Flavius Josephus, mentioning the population of Aramaeans, affirmed that Greeks called them «Syrians»\textsuperscript{124}:

The Near East at all was one of the regions where Hellenistic culture flourished and developed: many were the contributors to Greek literature born in this huge area. Greek became a sort of lingua franca for intellectuals and elites. However, Hellenistic culture did not constitute a sort of monolithic entity\textsuperscript{125} and each region knew many ways of being Greek and then Roman. Even inside who professed to be Greek there were differences: in the work of Photius\textsuperscript{126}, named Βιβλιοθήκη or Μυρόβιβλος, a note made by a scholar

\textsuperscript{118} Cic. Flacc. 67: «
\textsuperscript{119} Sén. in August. De civ. D. VI. 11: «De illis sane ludaeis cum loqueretur, ait: “Cum interim usque eo sceletteratisissae gentis consuetudo convaluit, ut per omnes iam terras recepta sit; victi victoribus leges dedero”».

We have to keep in mind that this is only a fragment reported by a later author and we ignore the context.

\textsuperscript{120} Tac. Hist. V. 8: «Magna pars ludaeae vicis dispersitgur, habent et oppida; Hierosolyma genti caput. illic immensae opulentiae templum, et primis munimentis urbs, dein regia, templum intimis clausum. ad fores tantum ludaeo aditus, limine praeter saecrodes arcabantur. dum Assyrios penes Medosque et Persas Oriens fuit, despectissima pars servientium: postquam Macedones praepolluere, rex Antiochus demere superstitionem et mores Graecorum dare aditus, quo minus taeterrimam gentem in melius mutaret, Parthorum bello prohibitus est [...]».

Recently Erich Gruen (2011, 179-196) has brilliantly shown that the entire excursus of Tacitus, who well knew prejudices against Jews, was not polemic or defensive, but it eludes ethnographical discourses and is used as exemplum. Tacitus here «plays with paradox, testing his reader» (Gruen 2011, 195).

\textsuperscript{121} QUINT. Inst. III. 7.21: «Et parentes malorum odimus: et est conditoris urbium infame contraxisse aliquam perniciosam ceteris gentem, qualis est primus ludaeae superstitionis auctor».

\textsuperscript{122} Tac. Hist. V. 5: «Hi ritus quoquo modo inducti antiquitatem defenduntur: cetera instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate valueru. nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patris tributa et stipes illic congrerebant, unde auctae ludaeorum res, et quia apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium. separatni epiclis, discreti cubilibus, proiectissima ad lidibinem gens, alienarum concubitu abstinent; inter se nihil illicitum. circumsidere genitalia instituerunt ut diversitas noscantur».

\textsuperscript{123} Butcher 2003, 270-271.

\textsuperscript{124} JOSEPH. AJ l. 144: «[...] Αραμαίους δὲ Αραμός ἐσχεν, οὕς Ἐλλήνες Σύρους προσαγορεύουσιν [...]»

\textsuperscript{125} SARTRE 2008, 28.

\textsuperscript{126} Photius was a Byzantine bibliography who lived during the 9\textsuperscript{th} century.
about the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus was preserved. The scholiast, in fact, stated that Iamblichus was Syrian not in the sense that he was a Greek who lived in Syria, but he was a native who knew Syrian language and customs. The term «Syrian», then, was used for indicating both the natives and the «Greeks», who represented a huge minority group, easily to recognise, still during the Late Antiquity.

The context of the Near East, the figure of Alexander became fundamental: he invented and promoted kinship patterns. He forged close links between his own person and his acts, between «his» heroic ancestors, such as Herakles or Achilles, and the regions he conquered. He finally became a heroic ancestor for many cities: this is the case of some Decapolis city, for example Gerasa and Scythopolis, connected their foundations with the figure of the Macedonian, albeit he never visited that sites.

Local communities felt the need to re-formulate their positions and statuses, prompted by the globalising impulses derived from Hellenistic and then Roman comings. A certain degree of homogenisation was occurring amongst local elites: the roots of this process are probably to find in Hellenistic promotion of a cultural κοινή. The need to create connections helped the practice of fabricating alleged ancient ties in order to better accept the new political and cultural situation. At local level, the creation of legends related to Greek heroes and cases of συγγένεα were locally adapted and used. Many non-Greek communities accepted Greek characteristics, adopting standard Greek institutions and Greek political language. However, at the same time they modified these concepts and re-formulated them in a new view. Andrew Erskine has claimed that kinship arguments were suitable frameworks for persuading local elites, but also for creating more stable relationships, whereas Lee Patterson has seen them as facilitators of Greek political action to bring different people into a shared heritage. As seen above, Greeks usually divided world in two categories: it appears clear that kinship connections helped them to interact with other populations, not simply labelling them as barbarians. With the coming of Pompey, something in the connotation of Syrians changed: they were circumscribed in a single province, west of the Euphrates. The previously strong ethnic distinction lost its importance: citizens of Greek cities were now both Greeks and Syrians, and Syrians earned citizenship in Greek πόλεις. Strabo, for example, considered parts of Syria Commagene, Seleucis, Coele Syria, Phoenicia and Judaea, albeit he knew that others were used to divide it in more ἑθνη.

127 Piot. Bibl. 94, 40, p. 1: «Οὕτως ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος Σύρος ἦν γένος πατρόθεν καὶ μητρόθεν. Σύρος δὲ σύξι τῶν ἐπωρκηκτῶν τῆς Συρίας Ἐλλήνων, ἀλλὰ τῶν αὐτοχθόνων, γιλώσαν δὲ σύραν εἰδὼς καὶ ταῖς ἐκείνων ἔθεσι ζών ἐως αὐτόν τροφεύσαι».
128 Stavrianopoulos 2013b, 182.
129 Lichtenberger (2008) makes a brilliant examination of the problem of the figure of Alexander or Antiochos on the coins of Gerasa. For further information about Decapolis cities and their history, see below, chapter 4.
130 Musti 1963 is still a fundamental work about the συγγένεα.
131 Erskine 2002, 110.
132 Patterson 2010, 3; 163.
133 Andrade 2013, 8.
134 Strabo XVI, 2, 2: «μέρη δ’ αὐτής τίθεμεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κύπρους άρξαμένοι καὶ τοῦ Αμανου τῆν τῇ Κοιμαμαγήν καὶ τῆν Σελευκίδα καλομέμενη τῆς Συρίας. Ἔπειτα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας, τελευταίαν δ’ ἐν μὲν τῇ παραλίᾳ τῆν Φοινίκην, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ τῆν Ιουδαίαν. ἐν θαυμασίᾳ τῆς Ιουδαίας, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ τῆς Ιουδαίας. ἐν θαυμασίᾳ τῆς Ιουδαίας, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ τῆς Ιουδαίας. Κοιλοσύρους τούτους ἀναμείζει φασι τέπαρα ἐθνη, Ιουδαίους Ισραήλ Γαζαίους Ἀζωπίους, γεωργίους μὲν, ὅς τούς Σύρους καὶ Κοιλοσύρους, ἐμπορικοὺς δὲ, ὃς τούς Φοινικαῖς».
It seems very likely that many people knew at least two languages. Many textual evidences testify that there was a high degree of bilingualism. That Greek became a sort of language for international relationships has been confirmed by one letter from the so-called Bar Kokhba archive: in this text, in fact, it seems likely that the foreign sender, probably a Nabataean named Soumaios, had decided to write in Greek because he was not able to communicate through Aramaic or Hebrew letters.

On the other side, it seems even more remarkable that non-Greek communities thought that themselves were bound to Greek past and myths: Eftychia Stavrianopoulou has well pointed out that this self-perception was a clear evidence of a process of appropriation and re-contextualisation of foreign ideas and practices. It happened something similar to what occurred to Rome’s construction of her myths and origins.

However, we know at least one case in which it appears clear that a Near Eastern population found an ancestral kinship with a Greek group: the books of Maccabaeans and Josephus, in fact, reported that the relationships between Judeaens and Spartans were improved because both peoples were descendant of Abraham. The Spartan king Areus would have sent a letter to the Judeaen High Priest Onias, claiming to have discovered that Spartans and Judeaens were brothers. After this letter, other messages followed, all of them reporting the good relationships between them. Jews not only considered themselves comparable to Spartans for their obedience to laws, but Flavius Josephus used Spartans for showing the superiority of Jews, who never abandoned their laws.

According to Eric Gruen, it seems likely that Judeaens tried to assimilate Greeks in their

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135 De Jong 2007, 11.
136 Cotton 2006, 145-146. See discussion below, chapter 3.
137 Stavrianopoulou 2013b, 181.
138 See above.
139 I Macc. XII, 20-22: «Ἀρείος βασιλεὺς Σπαρτιατῶν Ονια ἱερεί μεγάλων χαίρειν, εὐρέθη ἐν γραφῇ περὶ τε τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ Ιουδαίων ὑπὸ εἰσιν ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ὑπὸ εἰσὶν ἐκ γένους Ἀβρααμ καὶ νῦν αἱ οὓς ἔγνωμεν ταῦτα καὶ θὰ ποιήσατε γράφοντες ἡμῖν περὶ τῆς εἱρήνης ὑμῶν».

Joseph. AJ XII, 225-226: «Τελευτήσαντος δὲ καὶ τούτου ὁ ἦν ἄνω ἀντίκεισθαι τοῦ τίμης Ονιας γίνεται, πρὸς οὖν ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιον βασιλέως Αρείου προέβιβα τοὺς εἰς ἐπίσκοπον καὶ ἐπιστόλας, ὡς τὸν ἀντιγράφον ἐστὶν τοιοῦτο: ‘βασιλεὺς Λακεδαιμόνιον Ἀρείος Ονιας εὐχήν, ἐνσυχόντες γραφῇ τοι τῇ εὐρουμένῃ, ἃς ἐξ ἐνδεικνύου ἐκ γένους Ιουδαίων καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Ἀβρααμ ὀικείτηστος, διδακοῦν ὑμῖς ἐστὶν ἀδελφοὺς ὑμᾶς ὄντας διατέμπεσθαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς περὶ ὑμῶν ἂν ὑμᾶς πολύβασθε.»

own tradition, instead of becoming part of Greek mythology\textsuperscript{141}. Generally, the Jews were seen as something special in the empire, and their history is nowadays used to analyse ancient Judaism rather than to form a basis for understanding a similar experience of other provincials under Roman rule. However, even inside the Judaism there were many different groups, as evident in Galilee, where the predominant Jewish group was interweaved with other different peoples\textsuperscript{142}. For other provincial societies, we know primarily the acts of elites and their relationships with Rome. Little is known about local population, but few hints can be found in material culture\textsuperscript{143}.

\section*{1.9 Conclusions}

Greek mythological narrative was deliberately very flexible, allowing changes, adaptations or alterations of the original prototype: a universal Syrian culture never developed, because local experiences brought to regional variations, which individually interacted with the Greek culture and created hybrids. Imperial processes had to constitute an important instrument in shaping ethnic groups in the area. Roman empire diverged from Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms: they consequently dealt with different reactions to their politics. As well analysed by Nathanael Andrade, Roman rule prompted inhabitants of the Near East to integrate Greek elements in their own culture, making mixed communities in the Greek cities\textsuperscript{144}. Previous ficticious kinship bonds helped new communities to find common ancestors: as revealed by Nicole Belayche for Palestinian cities\textsuperscript{145}, many were the options adopted by the cities: most of them recovered their own traditions, while others, like Scythopolis, developed a more complex system of origins, probably forced by the necessity to distinguish themselves from their non Greek neighbours. More than in other places, it was among Near Eastern cities that the processes of middle ground\textsuperscript{146} were evident, where oriental elements interwove Greek and Roman features. We cannot know which were Near Eastern thoughts about their identity, but it appears clear that their sense of belonging to their past and their often thousand years old culture survived, even changed.

The analysis made in this chapter has clearly enlightened how all the terminologies that has been applied by scholars were created by moderns. We cannot forget that they are superstructures and they tend to generalise a complex reality in which several independent instances emerge. Clearly there is no single word upon which there is agreement, but we should take in mind that we see the past with the eyes of 21\textsuperscript{st} century historians and to use modern terms even for explaining the past seems to be appropriate. The use of «globalising attitudes» help us to well recognise a system of connection among different peoples, because it clarify human natural need to go beyond and to explore what is unknown. These attitudes has been always present among the human beings, as it will be easily recognisable in the following chapters.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{141} Grue\-n 1996, 268-269.
\bibitem{142} About Galilee, see next chapter.
\bibitem{143} Mat\-tly 2011, 26.
\bibitem{144} Andrade 2013, 16.
\bibitem{145} Belayche 2009.
\bibitem{146} See above.
\end{thebibliography}
CHAPTER 2: THE GALILEANS

2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Galilee is still today a very fertile and productive region, producing several agricultural items, like wheat, grain and first of all wine and olive oil. Galilean territory has relatively small width, but, according to the Mishnah, three different areas are recognizable:

1. «Upper Galilee», remembered as the territory where the sycamores do not grow.
2. «Lower Galilee», the region where there are sycamores.
3. «The Valley», the area around the city of Tiberias and the Kinneret lake.

Upper Galilee has a rough aspect, with the highest mountains of the entire region. These mountains create a system of valleys, basins and ravines through which communications are not really easy. the nature itself of the region consequently led to the growing of small independent villages, often isolated.

Lower Galilee, instead, is divided in two parts by deep basins running in east-west direction. The eastern side is characterised by a series of plateaus covered by a basalt layer, because of the Vulcan activity of the area. The valleys are indeed narrow, with difficult communications. On the western side, the valleys are broader and the local rock is the limestone.

The third area is constituted by the shore of Kinneret lake and the surrounding hills: its agriculture and fishing were the main local economic sources; moreover, the navigability of the lake had to favour contacts with Transjordan area.

2.2 GALILEE BEFORE THE HASMONAEANS

The term «Galilee» seems to be attested for the first time in one list of the countries ruled by the Egyptian king Thutmosis III\(^{147}\). The Egyptian term «k-r-r» could be originated by the word «GLL», indicating «cylinder» or «ring» and, for extension, «circumscribed district»\(^{148}\). In this sense the Jewish expression «ha-galil», found in a number of biblical sources, could be a secondary abbreviation of «g’lil ha-gajim», meaning «circle of heathens»: indeed, the Galilee was considered as a territory inhabited by foreign people\(^{149}\), for centuries subjected to the pressure of its neighbours.

\(^{147}\) SIMONS 1937, list I, 80.

\(^{148}\) Hypothesis sustained by ALT 1953, 263-274, and then by HORSLEY 1995, 38.

\(^{149}\) Is. VIII, 23: «καὶ ὢν ἁπαξηθήσεται ὁ ἐν στενόχωρῃ ὃν ἔως καὶ ὅπου ἄρτι πρώτων ποιεῖ ταχύ ποιεῖ σχῆμα Ζαβουλῶν ἡ γῆ Νεφθαλίμ ὅπως θαλάσσης καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ τὴν παραλίαν κατοικοῦντες καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν τὰ μέρη τῆς Ιουδαίας»;

I Macc. V, 15: «λέγοντες ἐπισπευδάτηκεν ἐπὶ αὐτούς ἐκ Πτολεμαίδος καὶ Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος καὶ πάσαν Γαλιλαίαν ἀλλοφύλων τοῦ ἔξαναλώσας ἡμᾶς»;
The region was also known as the «country of Naphtali»\textsuperscript{150}, namely one of the Israelite tribes who settled in the north after the exodus from Egypt.

The biblical references suggest that the ancient Galilee correspond with the area known today with this name: nevertheless, the ancient borders are not so definite. Initially the name of Galilee had to comprise the mountainous area in the northern part of the land of Israel, surrounded by valleys, delimited by the see to the west, the Jezreel Valley to the south, the Jordan valley to the east and the Litani river to the north. It had to include even the twenty villages given by king Salomon to Chiram, king of Tyre\textsuperscript{151}, and the village of Kedesh\textsuperscript{152}. The central mountainous area was scarcely populated, unlike the surrounding valleys\textsuperscript{153}.

One of the most important events for the settlement history of the Galilean area surely was the Assyrian occupation of several territories north of Samaria: during the 733-732 BCE, in fact, the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pilesar destroyed Damascus and defeated Pekah, king of Israel\textsuperscript{154}.

According to Mordechai Aviam, the areas of Upper Galilee and Jezreel Valley were devastated by Assyrians and re-occupied by non-Jewish people. A support to this claim would be recognizable in the Book of Judith\textsuperscript{155}: here, in fact, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar send his messengers only to the people of these areas, whereas the Lower Galilee inhabitants would not have been mentioned at all. Aviam believes that the absence of Lower Galilee was due to the fact that it would have been partly populated by Jews\textsuperscript{156}.

It seems hard to accept this suggestion, because in the Book of Judith also Israelites areas are mentioned: in fact, the presence of Jezreel Valley and the long list encompassing the cities of Samaria and the territory west from Jordan river let us think that even Lower Galilee was included. Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar swore he would exterminate all the

\textit{Matthew} IV,15: «ἡ ζαβουλῶν καὶ γῆ νεφθαλί, ὄδὸν θαλάσσης, πέραν τοῦ ἱορδάνου, γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν».

\textsuperscript{150} II Esd X V, 29: «ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Φακέη βασιλέως Ἰσραήλ ἤλθεν Θαγλαθφελλασάρ βασιλεύς Ασσυρίων καὶ ἐλαβεν τὴν Αιν καὶ τὴν Ἀβελβαθαμασάχα καὶ τὴν Ιανυχ καὶ τὴν Κενες καὶ τὴν Ασωρ καὶ τὴν Γαλαάδ καὶ τὴν Γαλλαίαν πάσαν γῆς Νεφθαλὶ καὶ ἀπώκησεν αὐτῶν εἰς Ασσυρίους».

\textsuperscript{151} I Esd IX, 11: «Χίραμ βασιλεύς Τύρου ἀντελάβετο τοῦ ᾿Αλωμίων ἐν ἐξίλοις κεδρίνοις καὶ ἐν ἐξίλοις πευκίνοις καὶ ἐν χρυσῷ καὶ ἐν παντὶ βελήματι αὐτῶν τούτω ἐδωκεν ὁ βασιλεύς τῷ Χίραμ εἰκοσι πόλεις ἐν τῇ γῇ τῇ Γαλλαία».

\textsuperscript{152} Josh.XI, 7: «καὶ διεστείλεν τὴν Καδῆς ἐν τῇ Γαλλαία ἐν τῷ ὅρει τῷ Νεφθαλι […]».

\textsuperscript{153} Josh.XXI, 32: «καὶ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Νεφθαλῆ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἀφωρισμένην τὴν φονεύσαντι τὴν Καδῆς ἐν τῇ Γαλλαία καὶ τὰ ἄφωρισμένα αὐτῆ».  

\textit{I Chron.} VI, 61: «καὶ ἀπὸ φυλῆς Νεφθαλῆ τὴν Κεδῆς ἐν τῇ Γαλλαία». 

\textsuperscript{154} FRANKEL et alii 2001, 141. 

\textsuperscript{155} I Esd XXV, 29. See note 150. 

\textsuperscript{156} Aviam 2004b, 42.
people that not helped him, including Judaea, which appears in the list of the enemies of the Babylonian king. Many scholars have instead claimed that the area was depopulated by the Assyrians and experienced a new settlement phase during both the Achaemenid and the Ptolemaic rule, when no Israelite communities started to live there. Accordingly, the region was rapidly «judaised» after the conquest of Alexander Jannaeus in 104 BCE. It seems likely that foreigners have settled Galilee already during the Assyrian rule, as deduced by some passages in the books of Ezra and Nehemia: here it is described how Israelites refused to be helped by other communities for re-building Jerusalem, not recognising them as Jews. In the book of Tobit, instead, people from Galilee are said to accept the prerogative of the temple of Jerusalem, albeit many of them do not follow the Temple law.

After the Assyrian rule, in three different times Jerusalem had the opportunity to conquer again the northern territories:

1. at the end of the 7th century BCE, when the political vacuum caused by the Assyrian decline reinforced the authority of the Judean king Josiah, who imposed his power in the north and destroyed a Samaritan altar and sanctuary. The process of integration of Galileans with Judaeans was stopped by the two Babylonian invasions of Jerusalem in 598 and 587 BCE.

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157 In Jer 1,12 it is explicitly written that all the cited countries refused to help Nebuchadnezzar: «καὶ ἐθύμωθι ἁμαρτονον πάντα τὴν γῆν ταύτην σφόδρα καὶ ὄμοσε κατὰ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴν ἐκδικήσειν πάντα τὰ ὁρία τῆς Κιλίκίας καὶ Δαμασκινῆς καὶ Σύριας ἀνελεῖν τῇ ρουμαίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐν γῇ Μωαβ καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς Αμμων καὶ πάντας τὴν Ιουδαίαν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐως τοῦ ἐθελεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ ὁρία τῶν δύο βαλασσών».


159 Neh IV, 1: «Factum est autem, cum audisset Sanballat quod edificaremus murum, iratus est valde: et motus nimiris subannavit Judaeos».

160 T⁸ I, 4-6: «καὶ ὅτε ἦμιν ἐν τῇ χώρῃ μου ἐν τῇ γῇ Ιςραήλ νεστέρου μου όντος πάσα φυλή τοῦ Νεφθαλίμ τοῦ πατρός μου ἀπέστη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁίκου ιεροσολύμων τῆς ἐκλεγείας ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν φυλῶν Ἰςραήλ εἰς τὸ θυσιασθὲν πάσας τὰς φυλὰς καὶ ἤλησθεν ὁ ναὸς τῆς κατασκηνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ του καὶ ἤθελεν εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεᾶς τοῦ αἰώνος καὶ πάσας αἱ φυλαι αἱ συναποστάσατα ἐθυνο τῇ Βασιλίᾳ τῇ δαμάλει καὶ ὁ ὁ ὁκὸς Νεφθαλίμ τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ μόνος ἐπορευόμεν πλεονάξης καὶ ἤθελεν εἰς τῆς ἐφορούς καθоς γεγραφθα παντὶ τῷ Ιςραήλ ἐν προστάσιμα αἰώνιοι τῆς ἀπαρχῆς καὶ τῆς δικάς τῶν γενεσίων τῆς Πρωτουκορίας ἐμῖς».

161 II Kes XXIII, 15-16: «καὶ γε τὸ θυσιασθῆραιν τὸ τοῦ Βασιλῆ τῷ υἱῷ γενόμενον ιεροσολυμίας εἰς ναβατὸς ἐν τὸ εξήμαρτεν τοῦ Ιςραήλ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιασθῆραιν εἴκοσι καὶ τῷ υἱῷ Κατασκηνώσεως καὶ ἁπαρχῆς αὐτῶν λίθων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀλήθουν εἰς χοῦν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ ὁλός καὶ ἔξωθεν ὅλας καὶ εἰδὲν τοὺς τάφους τῶν ὅντος ἐκεῖ τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέστειλεν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὸ ὁστα ἐκ τῶν τάφους καὶ κατέκαυσεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιασθῆραιν και ἀπαρχῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ταυτάς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐστάναι Ιεροσολυμίας ἐν τῇ δική ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιασθῆραιν καὶ ἀπαρχῆς ἐν τῶν ὁφθαλμίων αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ ἐν τῷ λαλήσαντος τοὺς λόγους τοῦτος».
2. At the end of 6th century BCE, the king Cyrus of Persia re-established the Judaean state, which was weakened by internal fights among the priestly class. The instability of the government of Judaea, that persisted until the end of the 5th century BCE, was one of the causes of the expansion of the Phoenician power in Galilee.

3. The Seleucid domination was usually rather permissive and respectful of local tradition, because Seleucid kings limited their rule to collect taxes. In Judaea, instead, some priests, supported by Seleucids tried to completely reform Jewish customs, provoking unrest which resulted in the Maccabaean revolt.

It seems possible that Persian and Ptolemaic rules favoured a certain degree of autonomy, entrusting the government of the region to local aristocracies. In addition, the Ptolemies founded important cities in the area, like Ptolemais on the coast and Scythopolis in the south. However, it is unlikely that these foundations brought any consequence on the Galileans. Even for this period we cannot be sure about the borders of the Galilee itself: according to Michael Avi-Yonah, the hyparchy of Galilee existed, together with other three hyparchies in Palestine (Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea). In one of the Zenon papyri, in fact, the word «Γαλιλα» appears for the first time in Greek, albeit only once: in any case there are no data for understanding what exactly was this hyparchy: it probably served for a military and economic control, since the Ptolemies did not attempt to impose any cultural or religious reform.

The political and cultural semi-autonomy of Galileans seems to end after 104 BCE, when it was again under the direct control of Jerusalem.

2.3 FROM THE HASMONAEANS TO THE BAR KOKHBA REVOLT

For many scholars the most challenging question in the study of Galilee was the nature of Galileans, namely whether they were Jews or not. One of the most problematic texts is in the First Book of Maccabees, when Simon was sent by Judas Maccabaeus to Galilee for «saving his brothers» attacked by other people. This text does not say if in Galilee there was a majority of Jews, but only that some Jews had to live there. Flavius Josephus remembered that Aristobulus conquered part of the territory of the Ituraeans, forcing

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162 Stern 1984, 87.
164 Freyne 1980a, 28.
165 Westermann and Hassemer 1934, Pap. 2, 6-8.
166 I Mac V, 16-23: «ψώς δὲ ἦκουσεν Ἰουδας καὶ ὁ λαὸς τοῦς λόγους τούτους ἐπισυνήχθη ἐκκλησία μεγάλη βουλεύσασθαι τί ποιήσωσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτῶν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν θλίψει καὶ πολεμομενοῖς ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ ἔπειτα Ἰουδας Σιμωνι τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπίλεξεν σεαυτῷ ἄνδρας καὶ ποιεῖται καὶ ῥύσαται τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς σου τοὺς ἐν τῇ Γαλαλαίᾳ ἐγώ δὲ καὶ ἤκουσαν ὁ ἀδελφός μου πορευόμεθα εἰς τὴν Γαλααδίτην [...] καὶ ἐπορευθῇ Σιμων εἰς τὴν Γαλαλαίαν καὶ συνήμην πολέμους πολλοὺς πρὸς τὰ ἐθνεὶ καὶ συνετρίβῃ τὰ ἐθνεὶ ἀπὸ προαὐτοῦ αὐτοῦ [...] καὶ παρέλαβεν τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Γαλλαλαίας καὶ ἐν Ἀρβάτοις σὺν ταῖς γυναιξῖν καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις καὶ πάντα δόσα ἦν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἤγαγεν εἰς τὴν Ιουδαίαν μετ᾽ εὐφροσύνης μεγάλης». 

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them to live according to the Jewish laws and to adopt circumcision\textsuperscript{167}: some scholars believed that the Ituraeans lived in Upper Galilee, but we have not sound evidence. It seems very likely that at the end of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BCE Galilee was ruled by foreign people and inhabited by a mixed population: if these rulers were Ituraeans, it is hard to say\textsuperscript{168}. Starting from the passage of Antiquities about the campaign in Ituraea, many scholars have given many different interpretations on Galilean ethnicity:

1. at the end of 19th century, Emil Schürer supposed Galilee was foremost inhabited by Ituraeans, forced to be converted to Judaism by Hasmonaeans kings at the end of second century BCE\textsuperscript{169}. According to this theory there was a strong hostility between people from the north and people of Jerusalem’s area. People from the north, in fact, would not have recognised the authority of the Temple and Galilee had not belonged to the territory of the Jewish High priest. This interpretation was supported by the fact that the territories north and east of Galilee were still predominantly non-Jewish in the Herodian period: they cannot therefore have already been “judaized” by Aristobulus.

2. According to a second theory, Galilee was fundamentally Jewish, not only because it was populated by Jews even before the Hasmonaeans conquests, but mostly because Hasmonaeans colonised and repopulated these territories driving there people from Judaea\textsuperscript{170}. In this case, the Temple of Jerusalem would have played an important socio-political role even outside Judaea.

3. In the Fifties Albrecht Alt supposed that the bulk of Galilean people survived the Assyrian conquests and deportations at the end of 8\textsuperscript{th} century BCE. These survivors would develop their own customs and rituals. Richard Horsley, getting this hypothesis back, gives us a socio-economic interpretation, believing that the best part of these people was constituted by the descendants of Israelites farmers\textsuperscript{171}.

Markus Cromhout says that «the Hasmonaean expansion northwards to Galilee must have been part of restoration hopes and the greater Israel ideology as encountered in Ezekiel 40-48»\textsuperscript{172}. Even after the conquest of Aristobulus, some Galilean tradition and

\textsuperscript{167} See the chapter about Ituraeans.
\textsuperscript{168} E. Schürer 1973, 216-218; 561-573.
\textsuperscript{169} Samuel Klein is the first to assume that Galilee was inhabited by a Jewish people. He has been more recently followed by Seán Freyne: Klein 1928; Freyne 1980a, 43-44; 1988 and 2001, 208-209.
\textsuperscript{170} Alt 1953; Horsley 1995.
\textsuperscript{171} Cromhout 2008, 1287.
particular customs were probably preserved, as well as it happened for Idumaeans, always considered as a different «Ethnος» by Judeaeans. It is possible that the Hasmonaeans supported the immigration in Galilee of a number of people from Judea: a new aristocratic elite had to take the power and rule the northern area of the reign, probably in substitution of the previous leaders defeated by Judeaeans.

Before the expedition of Pompey in 63 BCE, the Hasmonaeans tried to impose their laws and customs, but they failed: Alexander Jannaeus had to settle several internal revolts, especially among scribes and officials. Flavius Josephus reported 800 men crucified and 8000 exiled.

... 8000 exiled.

... 8000 exiled.

173 JOSEPHAJ XV, 253-255: «Κοστόβαρος ἐν γένε μὲν Ἰδομαῖος, ἀξιόματος τῶν πρῶτων παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ πραγμάων ἱερατευσάντων τῷ Κωζαί: θεόν δὲ τούτον Ἰδομαῖοι νομίζουσιν. Ὄρκανοι δὲ τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ Ιουδαίων ἔθη καὶ νόμιμα μεταστάθησαν […] Κοστόβαρος δὲ τούτων τυχών ἁμένως καὶ παρὰ δόθην ἤρθη μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τῆς εὐτυχίας καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν ἔξεβαινεν, οὕτως αὐτῷ καλὸν ἤγομενος ἄρχοντος Ηρώδου τὸ προσπαθήσεων ποιεῖν οὔτε τοῖς Ἰδομαίοις τὰ Ιουδαίων μεταλαβόμενα ὑπ᾽ ἐκείνους εἶναι».

174 HORSLEY 1995, 74 claimed that Galilee had no its own autonomous aristocracy before 104 BCE, when Hasmonaeans introduced a new Judean aristocracy in the north. Contra FREYNE 1980, 49-50, who affirmed that a local aristocracy emerged in that period.

175 JOSEPHBJ I, 4, 6 (97-98): «προϊόντος μὲν αὐτῷ δι᾽ ὑπερβολῆν ὁργὴς εἰς ἀσβεσθήναι τὸ τῆς ὑμόστητος τῶν γὰρ ληφθέντων ὁκτακοσίων ἀνασταυρώσας ἐν μέση τῇ πόλει γυναίκας ταύτης καὶ τέκνα αὐτῶν ἀπέσφαξεν ταῖς ὁμήρεσι καὶ ταῦτα πίνων καὶ συγκατακείμενος τοῖς παλλακίσις αἱρεύτως. τοσαυτή δὲ κατάπληξις ἦσαν τὸν δήμον, ὡστε τῶν ἀντιστασιαστῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐποίουσαν νῦκτα φυγήν ὀκτακοσίως ἔξω Ἰουδαίως ὅλης, αἰς ὁρὸς τῆς φυγῆς ὁ Ἀλεξάνδρος θάνατος κατέστη. τοιούτοις ἐργοῖς ὑπὸ καὶ κόλος ἤσυχην τῇ βασιλείᾳ πορίσας ἀνεπάπαστα τῶν ὅπλων»:

A/ XIII, 372-383: «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τῶν οἰκείων πρὸς αὐτὸν στασιασάντων, ἐπανέστη γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ ἔθνος ἐρήτης ἀγομένης καὶ ἐστῶτος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βυσσοῦ καὶ θεοῦ μέλλοντος κτησίων αὐτῶν ἐβάλλον […] ἐπὶ τούτοις ὀργασθεὶς κτείνει μὲν αὐτῶν περὶ ἐξακοσίως, δρῦςκακτον δὲ ἔπλων περὶ τοῦ βυσσὸν καὶ τὸν ναὸν βαλόμενον μέχρι τοῦ θρηγοῦ, εἰς ὅν μόνοις ἐξῆν τοὺς ἱερεύσας εἰσείναι, τούτῳ τὴν τοῦ πλήθους ἐπὶ αὐτὸν ἀπέφραττεν εἰσόδον. […] καὶ πρὸς τὴν κακοπραγίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπιθεμένου τοῦ ἔθνους πολεμήσας πρὸς αὐτὸ ἔτσιν εἶ ἀναγρεῖ τῶν Ιουδαίων οὐκ ἔλατον πέντε μυριάδας. παρακαλούντος δὲ παῦσα τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν διεισίδειν ἐπὶ μᾶλλον ἐμίσουν αὐτὸν διὰ τὰ συμβεβηκότα. πυθαγομένου δ′ αὐτοῦ τί βουλοῦνται, πάντες γενικεῖα ἐβόρσαν ἀποδανεῖν αὐτὸν, καὶ πρὸς Δημήτριον τὸν Ἀκαριὸν ἔτεκμεν παρακαλούντες ἐπὶ συμμαχίαν. […] Φεύγοντος δ′ Ἀλεξάνδρου εἰς τὰ ὅρα κατὰ ὅκτων τῆς μεταβολῆς συλλέγονται παρὰ αὐτῶν Ιουδαίων ἐξακοσίως. καὶ τὸ μὲν δεῖς ὑποχωρεῖ Δημήτριος, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ οἱ Ιουδαίοι ἐπολέμησαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ νικώμενοι πολλοὶ ἐπέθεσαν ἐν τοῖς μάχαις. […] ἐστίψωμεν γὰρ ἐν ἄπτοτε μετὰ τῶν παλλακίων ἀνασταυρώσας προσατέσαν αὐτῶν ὡς ὁκτακοσίως, τους δὲ παῦσαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς γυναίκας ἐν ζώντων παρὰ τὰς ἐκείνων ὁμίῳ ἀπέσφατεν […]. ἄλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐπηθείσι δοκεῖ ταῦτα ὑπάρξαι, ὡστε διὰ τῆς ὑμόστητος ὑπερβολῆς ἐπεκλήθηναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν Ιουδαίων Θρακίδων. οἱ δ᾽ ἀντιστασίαται αὐτὸν τὸ πλήθος ὄντες περὶ ὁκτακοσίως φεύγουσιν νικήτας καὶ παρ᾽ ὦν ἔξω χρόνον Ἀλεξάνδρος ἦθαν ἐν τῇ φυγῇ, καὶ οὗτος μὲν ἀπηλλαγμένος τῆς ἐκ τούτων ταραχῆς μετὰ πᾶσας τῇ λοιπῇ ἕρμαίας ἐξασφάλισεν». 
In his Antiquities, Flavius Josephus reported that John Hyrcanus sent his youngest son Alexander Jannaeus to live in Galilee\textsuperscript{176}. Samuel Klein, who was the first to assume that Galilee was inhabited by Jews\textsuperscript{177}, affirmed that John sent his son in Galilee, where learned men lived\textsuperscript{178}. On the contrary, Mordechai Aviam has claimed John was afraid of Alexander and sent him to the very far end of his kingdom\textsuperscript{179}, as confirmed by Josephus’ words. The Galilee had to be a not completely subdued and hostile to Hasmonaean rule. There is, indeed, no surprise that the theatre of Alexander’s first military acts was Galilee, where he lived: Akko-Ptolemais was in fact besieged because it was the centre of hostility against the Jewish advancement. During his reign, Hasmonaean territory reached its maximum extent, having conquered also many territories in Transjordan. The internal situation was more stable only after Alexander’s death, when his wife, Alexandra Salome, ruled as queen: she reconciled the royal house with the Pharisees, who became the kingdom administrators\textsuperscript{180}.

The coming of the Romans did not change the political situation: for political and economic purposes Galileans and Idumeans were considered Judeans and comprised among the people subjected to Jerusalem. The internal struggles among Alexander’s successors continued even after the departure of Pompey and provoked a massive emergence of brigands and bandits in Galilee. In this troubled time the authority of the kings was certainly weakened and the war made by Herod for the throne did not help to repair to this instability.

It is hard to reconstruct exactly the connections between Galilee and Jerusalem under Herod’s rule, because we have not so much evidence: Flavius Josephus remembered the

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|}
\hline
Judas Maccabaeus & 167-160 BCE \\
Jonathan Maccabaeus & 160-142 BCE \\
Simon Maccabaeus & 142-134 BCE \\
John Hyrcanus & 134-104 BCE \\
Aristobulus & 104-103 BCE \\
Alexander Jannaeus & 103-76 BCE \\
Salome Alexandra & 76-67 BCE \\
Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II & 76-63 BCE \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textbf{Tab. 1 List of the Hasmonaean rulers}

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{176} Josephus, \textit{Antiquities of the Jews}, XIII, 322: «[...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τοὺς τούτου χαρακτήρας δείξαντος, λυπηθείς ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν αὐτοῦ πάντων οὗτος ἦσσα κληρονόμος, γενόμενον εἰσαγεν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ τρέφεσθαι [...]».
\item \textsuperscript{177} Klein 1928, Freyne 1980, 43-44 and 1988.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Klein 1977, 15.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Aviam 2004b, 45.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Josephus, \textit{The Antiquities of the Jews}, XIII, 405-406: «Ἡ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρα τὸ φρούριον ἐξελοῦσα κατὰ τός τοῦ: ἀνδρὸς ύποθῆκας τοῖς τε Φαρισαίοις διελέχθη καὶ πάντα ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνοις θεμένη τὰ τε περὶ τοῦ νεκροῦ καὶ τῆς βασιλείας, τῆς μὲν ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ τῆς πρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐπαυσεν, εὖνος δὲ ἐποίησεν καὶ φίλους, οἱ δ’ εἰς τὸ πλῆθος παρελθόντες ἐξημηγήσαν τὰς πράξες τὰς Αλεξάνδρου δηνουμένοι, καὶ ὃς δικαιος αὐτοῦ ἄπολοιτο βασιλεύς, καὶ τὸν δήμον εἰς πένθος καὶ τὴν ὑπέρ αὐτοῦ κατήφειαν ἐξεκαλέσαντο τοῖς ἑπαίνοις, ὡςτε καὶ λαμπρότερον ἢ πνα τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλέων αὐτὸν ἔκηδευσαν».}
\end{itemize}
installation of a colony of cavalrymen at Gabaa for monitoring Galilee. Herod's policy was probably oriented to respect local customs, as clear in the episode of Costobar the Idumaean: it is very likely that he used the same attitude toward other subjected people, like Galileans. Another episode rather meaningful was the creation of a great village in Batanaea for fighting the brigands of Trachonitis: here Herod established a colony of a group of people from Babylon, among them there were even Jews. Furthermore, Herod left them to follow their own traditions, surely different from Judeans. Nevertheless, Herod had to fight for controlling the Galilee: Josephus remembered the clash with the brigands at Arabela and in Upper Galilee. However, Herod's policy was much more compelling on the economic aspect, because he increased taxes: at his death, many people subjected to him suddenly declared themselves independent. Josephus registered at Jerusalem the presence of people from Galilee, Idumaea, Jericho and Perea, who came in the capital city for protesting and not for celebrating the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Undoubtedly the decision to go to

Jerusalem for revealing unrest could indicate that this city was still considered the religious and political centre.

After the revolts were suppressed, Romans divided Herod’s kingdom among his sons: Archelaus was ethnarch of Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea, Philip had the territories north and east of the Kinneret Lake, Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. Galilee, indeed, was not longer subdued to Jerusalem: moreover, there is no evidence that the Temple and his high priests continued to have any kind of influence on the Galilean territory. It seems more likely that Roman activity tried to divide the Herod’s kingdom for avoiding the integration between its populations and better controlling them. Antipas started a number of changes in his tetrarchy: first of all, the city of Sepphoris was re-built and fortified, becoming his first capital city and an active centre of political influence, totally involved in Graeco-Roman culture: during the revolt in 66 CE, in fact, the inhabitants of Sepphoris preferred to stay with Rome and not with the Judeans. Herod Antipas continued his activity founding Tiberias, a new capital city on the Kinneret Lake. He principally acted as a «client king»: Romans did not intervene directly in Galilee when he ruled. They displayed a sort of influence on this area with no direct control, but through Antipas, who many times visited Rome and was friend of many emperors, in particular Tiberius, after whom Tiberias was named. However, Romans had little in count the needs and the aspirations of local population: they just wanted to preserve the public order and collect taxes.

The results of this choice were probably related to economic issues rather than cultural, but it is relevant that one of the most important cities in Galilee preferred to not declare war to the Romans. See Josephus Vita 38: «[...] ἅρβαι γὰρ εὑρὼς τὴν μὲν Σέπφωριν, ἐπιδήμῃ Ρωμαίοις ὑπῆκουσαν, τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καταλυθήναι δὲ παρ’ αὐτοῖς τὴν τε βασιλικὴν τράπεζαν καὶ τὰ ἄρχεια»; Vita 404: «Οἱ δὲ τὴν πόλιν ταύτην κατοικοῦντες ἄνδρες κεκρικότες τῇ πρὸς Ρωμαίους ἔμμεναι πίστει, δεδιότες δὲ τὴν ἐμὴν ἁρίζην, ἐπειράθησαν ἔτερα με πραξίνες περισσότερας ὅσας ἔναες ἐνεπί ἑαυτῶν»; Vita 346: «τῶν ἐν Γαλιλαίᾳ πόλεων αἱ μέγισται Σέπφωρις καὶ Τιβερίας ἢ σή παρίς, ὡς Ἰουστῆ. ἄλλα Σέπφωρις μὲν ἐν τῷ μεσαιτάτῳ τῆς Γαλιλαίας κειμέναι καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν κώμας ἑχούσα πολλὰς καὶ τι καὶ θεραπευθησαί δυναμένη πρὸς Ρωμαίοις ἐπεῖρ ἤλθεν εὐχέρειας, διεγνωκύσας τῇ πρὸς τοὺς δεσπότας ἐμένεναι πίστει καὶ τῆς πόλεως αὐτῶν ἔζεκλεισε καὶ στρατεύσασθαι τινα τῶν πολίτων ἱσδαιος ἐκλύσεν». About client kings in the Near East, see Paltiel 1991; Sartre 2001, 498-527; Butcher 2003, 87-98; Kropp 2013.
The imposition of a client king, who had his hands tied, presumably blocked the emergence of a local aristocracy, that suffered the lack of a political autonomy. Antipas was able to maintain his reign peacefully and Josephus himself, often disapproving Herodians’ policy, was unable to find any proof of unrest during his rule.\textsuperscript{192} Galilee played a minor role even during the revolt: according to Per Bilde, Josephus was sent to Galilee in order to ease tensions for obtaining a peace agreement.\textsuperscript{193} He tried to gather together the countryside dwellers and the citizens. As confirmed in \textit{Life}, in fact, Galilee had not entirely rebelled against Rome, whereas several internal contrasts emerged: Sepphoris and Tiberias fought for supremacy; Tiberias and Taricheae

\textsuperscript{192} JENSEN 2006, 99-100
\textsuperscript{193} BILDE 1988, 45-46.
\textsuperscript{194} JOSEPH. \textit{Vita} 39: «ταύτα καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτερα πολλὰ κατὰ βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα λέγων ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὸν δήμον εἰς τὴν ἀπόστασιν ἔρεθισαι, προσετίθει νῦν εἶναι καὶρόν ἀραμένον ὑπὸ καὶ Γαλιλαίους συμμάχους προσαλβόντας, ἄρξειν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐκόντων διὰ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς Σεπφωρίτας μίας ὑπάρχειν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πίστιν διαφυλάσσουσιν, μεγάλη χειρὶ πρὸς τὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τιμωρίαν τραπέσθαι». 

\underline{FIG. 2 Sepphoris city plan. From Fiensy and Strange 2015, 60, fig. E.}
challenged for the control of the Lake \textsuperscript{195}; the major cities opposed people from countryside, called by Josephus «οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι»\textsuperscript{196}. In \textit{Life}, the term «Γαλιλαῖοι» recurs 45 times and is always referred to people from small villages in opposition to the big cities\textsuperscript{197}. It seems likely that this opposition emerged yet during the 1st century BCE and broke out when a political instability took place. After the war, Galilee experienced an age of transition, with a massive presence of Roman soldiers. However, the greatest change occurred in Lower Galilee, where many Judeans settled: with farmers and workers, even priests and rabbis moved there. The rabbinic movement was so strong that in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century the rabbinic council was transferred to Tiberias and eventually the Palestinian Talmud was written. The Galilee, therefore, became the new religious centre of Judaism since the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century CE, albeit experienced a more intense Roman presence.

### 2.4 Epigraphic Sources

Compared with other parts of the Roman Empire, Galilean inscriptions dated between 63 BCE and 135 CE and are relatively few, while their number increased from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century onwards. Greek was the most preferred language, like in many other parts of Eastern Mediterranean: as already seen by Eric Meyers, they were more common in Lower Galilee than in Upper Galilee\textsuperscript{198}. This happened because a number of inscriptions were found in the principal centres of the area, namely Sepphoris and Tiberias, both located in Lower Galilee\textsuperscript{199}.

Aside the coins, only burial inscriptions were quite common, whereas honorific and euergetic inscriptions almost completely lacked. The same anomaly has been found even in the pre-70 CE Jerusalem’s epigraphic corpus, as recently pointed out by Seth Schwartz\textsuperscript{200}.

\textsuperscript{195} \textsc{Joseph \textit{By} \textit{II}, 21,4 (608)}: «Ἐπὶ τούτοις οἱ Ταριχεώται μὲν αὐτῶν ἀνευφήμουν, οἱ δ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς Τιβεριάδος σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐκάκιζον καὶ διπείλουν: κατασπάντες δ᾽ ἐκάτεροι τοῦ ἱώσητον ἁλλήλοις διεφέροντο: κάκεινος θαρροῦν ἢτοι ἀκρεύσαντες, ἢσαν δὲ εἰς τετρακισιμυρίους Ταριχεᾶται, παντὶ τῷ πλῆθει παρηρησιαστικώτερον ὑμῖλε».

\textit{Vita} 143: «δαπανομένων εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομίαν αὐτῶν: πρὸς ταύτα παρά μὲν τῶν Ταριχεώτων καὶ ἔξων ἐγείρεται φωνὴ χάριν ἔχειν ὁμολογοῦντων καὶ θαρρεῖν προτρητομένων, Γαλιλαῖοι δὲ καὶ Τιβεριεῖς τοῖς θυμοῖς ἐπέμενον, καὶ γίνεται στάσις πρὸς ἁλλήλους τῶν μὲν κολάσειν ἀπειλοῦντως με τῶν δὲ καταφρονεῖν».

\textsuperscript{196} \textsc{Joseph, \textit{Vita} 383-384}: «τούτον κοιμίας τά γράμματα γνωρίσαντες οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι καὶ συλλαβόντες ἀγουσιν ἐπ᾽ ὕμα, το δὲ πάν πλῆθος, ὡς ἦκουσαν, παροξυσμένοι ἐφ᾽ ὁπλα τρέπεται. συνοχθέντες δὲ πολλοὶ πολλοχόδεν κατὰ τὴν ἐποίσαν ἦκον εἰς Λασχῶν πόλιν, ἐνθά δὴ τὴν κατάλυσιν ἐποίσαν, καταβοήσεις τε σφόδρα ἐποίοιντο, προδότιν ἀποκαλοῦντες τὴν Τιβεριάδα καὶ βασιλέως φίλην, ἐπιτρέπεται τὸ ἡζῶν αὐτοῖς καταβάσιν ἀρδην ἀφανίσατο: καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Τιβεριεῖς εἶχον ἀπεχθῶς, ως πρὸς τοὺς Σεπφωρίτας».

\textsuperscript{197} \textsc{Mason 2001, 38, p. 136.}

\textsuperscript{198} \textsc{Meyers 1976, 97}

\textsuperscript{199} \textsc{Chancey 2006, 88.}

\textsuperscript{200} \textsc{Schwartz 2009, 77-78.}
It seems clear that in Galilee, like in Judaea, the epigraphic habit spread only after Rome consolidated its power in the area, namely after 70 and especially 135 CE. Although our evidence is partial, the lack of inscriptions before this period could be related to the absence of cities in the area and the substantially rural character of the Galilean villages.

2.5 THE COINAGE

The best part of our evidence come from coins, which were often minted outside the region until the rule of Herod Antipas, who minted coins at Sepphoris and mostly at Tiberias. Galilee represented for century a crossing point between the coast and the inland territories, as marked by coins’ distribution. During the period before the coming of Rome, the Hasmonaean coins, favoured by the conquests of Alexander Jannaeus, spread throughout the Lower Galilee, with a significative drop of exemplars from Tyre and Sidon, that previously were dominant in the area. Throughout the coins’ distribution, it seems clear that the area under control of Hasmonaeans was limited to the territory of Sephphoris until the area of Mount Meiron to the north and the west shore of the Kinneret Lake to the east. The Mediterranean coast, instead, was dominated by the coins of Akko-Ptolemais. In the territory of Scythopolis the situation was much more complex, because several late Seleucid coins from Akko-Ptolemais, Antioch and Damascus were found there, before the conquest of Hyrcanus, which took place in 108 BCE. After the capture of the city, Hasmonaean coins were attested in the territory of the city and in the city itself. Hippos-Sussita represented an anomalous situation: the city was probably under Hasmonaean rule but excavations have revealed the presence of only two Hasmonaean coins on 26 in circulation in this period. On the contrary, the best part of the issues came from Akko-Ptolemais, a clear sign of the economic contacts between the city of Hippos and the coast. The coins from Tyre were spread mainly in Upper Galilee, whereas Sidonian coins were attested primarily in the area of Paneas and Huleh Valley.

As seen above, after the conquests of Pompey Galilee was much more independent from Judaea than previously and a period of extensive local minting started. The start of local minting, together with the drop of foreign coins, could be caused by a tighter policy acted by Herod and his descendants: in particular, the mints of Akko-Ptolemais and Sidon seemed to be less active. Under Herod Antipas’ rule, Sepphoris and then Tiberias minted different issues, as well as did Paneas under Philip. Galilean mints produced only copper-alloy coins. Most striking is the increase of coins from Jerusalem, clear symbol of trade relations between Judaea and Galilee. According to Bradley Root, the trade was one sided because Judaeans rarely purchased items from Galilee; however, Danny Syon rightly claimed that Galilee exported agricultural product and especially oil, that not leave archaeological evidence.

201 SYON 2012, fig. 1
202 FINKIELSZTEJN 1998, 50-51
203 SYON 2015, 159.
204 BERMAN 2013, 289; SYON 2015, 159.
205 SYON 2015, 62.
206 SYON 2015, 171.
207 ROOT 2014, 180.
208 SYON 2015, 184.
In the easternmost areas of Galilee, in particular in the territories of Paneas and Scythopolis, in addition to Gaulanitis, Nabataean issues of kings Aretas IV, Malichos II and Rabbel II were well attested: probably they represented greater trade contacts between Galilee and Transjordan area.

After the first revolt, king Agrippa II still preserved the mints of Paneas and Tiberias, but now Roman style coins were issued. Tiberias was undoubtedly the principal mint of the area, although it became more prolific only at the beginning of the 2nd century CE.

2.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

In a survey conducted during the early 1990s, Zvi Gal has shown that in Galilee between 8th and 5th century BCE there were no settlements with continuity of life. Some data confirm his conclusions: first of all, during the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, several cities and villages were completely destroyed and abandoned 209; moreover, no Assyrian pottery or local imitations were found, as instead happened in Samaria or on the coast, which continued to be settled during the 7th and 6th centuries BCE 210. The Assyrian conquest indeed had to cause a strong and long decline of the best part of the northern area of ancient Israel: it is likely that just few Jewish communities have continued to exist, while their nobility was deported. There are not solid archaeological bases for establishing what really happened in that territories. Ephraim Stern has claimed that Phoenician communities, although conquered by Assyrians, seemed to have recovered themselves more rapidly than Israelites communities and that the northern part of Galilee was somewhat colonised by Phoenician people 211. The survivors were gradually concentrated in the western part of Lower Galilee: the pottery of the Persian and Hellenistic period has confirmed the presence of two distinct groups, one living in the east in the area of Mount Hermon, the other one closer the coast. The valleys were mostly inhabited: people lived in very small rural villages, perhaps administered by Sepphoris 212.

After the coming of Alexander the Great, a number of sites were re-founded as «πόλεις», both on the coast and in the inner part of the area: within ancient sites were founded the Decapolis cities of Hippos and Scythopolis, on the coast Ptolemais. This phenomenon involved only marginally the Galilee, because the Ptolemies and then the Seleucids were probably much more interested to the coastal area and the Jordan valley. The production of the inner valleys was mainly agriculture, producing wheat, wine and oil.

In the western area the ceramics were Phoenician and a new temple was built at the site of Mizpeh Yamam, in Upper Galilee: here the visitors were Phoenicians, according to the discoveries of an inscription and the vessels 213. Around the Mount Hermon and in the northern Golan Heights, instead, a particular type of pottery, principally «πίθοι» dated between the 3rd and the 7th century BCE, was found. This pottery was named «Golan Ware» and was connected with settlements typical of pastoral people, because they were small, with single room houses and an enclosure for the beasts. Both this kind of

211 STERN 1982.
212 REED 2002, 35.
213 BERLIN and FRANKEL 2012, 25-78.
settlement and the pottery were referred to the population of Ituraeans, but there are no sufficient data. As Zvi Uri Ma'oz has pointed out, «the designation “Ituraean Ware” is not based on ancient inscriptions found on the pottery itself but on the assumption that the residents in the sites of northeastern Golan were Ituræans».

During the same period, a new type of pottery was created. It was firstly dubbed by Mordechai Aviam «Galilean Coarse Ware» (GCW) and associated to a social group different from Phoenicians, but still non-Jewish. This particular type of pottery was made up by large vessels, in particular big «πίθοι» and bowls. These vessels are coarse and handmade, only the rim sometimes is wheel-made. The fabric has many inclusions. It was found mostly in the mountainous settlements of Upper Galilee and in the northern part of Lower Galilee (FIG. 3).

However, at the end of 2nd century BCE most small settlements where GCW was found were abandoned and GCW was not used even elsewhere. Three different sites excavations help us to better understand what happened during the second half of the 2nd century BCE:

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214 DAR 1988, 26-44, 1993, 18. For further information, see below the chapter about the Ituræans.
215 MA’OZ 2011, 27.
217 MYERS 2010, 56.
218 AVIAM 2013, 6.
1. The preliminary report of the excavations of the temple on the top of Mount Mizpe Hayamim have shown that it worked as a regional cult centre. Here there were found many Phoenician and Egyptian statuettes, made by bronze or stone, were found, together with huge quantity of GCW in strata dated between the 4th and the 2nd century BCE, when the site was abandoned after an episode of deliberate and systematic damage, when juglets and statuettes were broken. According Andrea Berlin and Rafael Frankel, the destruction was caused by the Hasmonaeans, or later, when Judaean people moved into Galilee after the Hasmonaean conquest.219

2. Excavations carried out at Yodefat have shown the remains of the earliest settlement in three different areas: the most important is on the north-west side of the hill, where two GCW «πίθοι» were found together with a Rhodian amphora and two Hellenistic lamps, all of them dated to the 2nd century BCE. This stratum was completely covered by a destruction layer 220.

3. Kedesh is the village of Kedasa mentioned by Flavius Josephus as a village of the Tyrians where Roman army camped at the end of Jewish War 221. Recent excavations at the site uncovered the presence of a large administrative centre, built probably during the 4th century BCE and destroyed during the second half of the 2nd century BCE 222. On the floors of two rooms a large number of sealings, circa 2000, were uncovered: some of them are inscribed, one with the name Kedesh in Greek 223.

Archaeological evidence is useful to understand what happened in this period, full of political and social changes: in fact, the excavations from Mount Mizpe Hayamim, Yodefat and Kedesh have shown a clear picture on the events occurred at the end of the 2nd century BCE. During these years many sites were abandoned and destroyed: the "GCW", as seen before made by a gentile population, did not continue to be in use. The connection between the Hasmonaean conquest and the abandonment of these sites is self-evident 226. We cannot identify the population which used this pottery: Phoenicians are the main suspects, but, as clear by the distribution map (FIG. 3), GCW was not spread along the coast and was found only in the innermost area of Upper Galilee. It was probably used by indigenous population, that is not imputable to any known historical ethnic group.

220 Aviam 2013, 9; 2015, 111.
221 Joseph B/JV, 104-105: «θεοῦ δ' ἦν ἑργὸν ἀρα τοῦ σωζόντος τὸν Ἱακώβην ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰεροσολύμων ἀληθίνων τῷ μὴ μόνον πειθήναι Τίτον τῇ σήμερες τῆς ὑπερθέσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς πόλεως πορφυρείων στρατηγείδινεσθαι πρὸς Κυδασίας: μεσογείοις δὲ ἐστὶ Τυριών κάμη καρτερα, διὰ μίσους ἀεὶ καὶ πολέμου Γαλιλαίως, ἑχοῦσα πλῆθος τε οἰκιτόρων καὶ τὴν ὀψαλφάτη τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἐθνὸς διαφοράς ἐφόδωτο». 
222 Herbert and Berlin 2003; Berlin and Herbert 2015, 430-437.
223 For further information, see D. T. Ariel and J. Naveh 2003, 61-80. Moreover, these sealings suggest that there was a good amount of documentary material left there.
224 Frankel 1993.
226 Aviam 2013, 7-10.
To sum up, the surveys and the excavations have registered many changes that have occurred during the period of Hasmonaean expansion:

- The destruction and abandonment of the administrative centre at Kedesh;
- The abandonment of the pagan temple at Mizpe Hayamim;
- The damage caused to cultic figurines at Beersheba;
- The destruction layer at Yodefat and the erection of a Hasmonaean wall;
- The abandonment of many small sites where “GCW” was used;
- The foundation of new sites that were to flourish during the Early Roman Period;
- The appearance of Hasmonaean coins throughout the Galilee.

No Jewish site seems to precede the Hasmonaean conquest. It is therefore likely that before the Hasmonaeans’ coming the Galilean communities were mixed. During the Hasmonaean age there was a very big demographic growth: Uzi Leibner has analysed the settlements at the eastern part of Galilee during the Hellenistic age. The result of his analysis is that all the most important centres were at the edges of the Galilee (for example, the Decapolis cities of Scythopolis and Hippos-Sussita, or the Phoenician coastal cities). The Galilean settlements were of small and medium size, near lands exploited by agriculture, most of all in the western and central part of Galilee, at the edges of the valleys, in places where the defence against external attacks was easier.227 The period between the end of the 2nd century BCE and the first half of the 1st century CE was characterized by a huge growth of settlements: every study made in this area has given the same result. It seems clear that a sort of repopulation policy was carried out, or, at least, there was a good level of wealth and political stability228.

In a survey made in Upper Galilee, Rafael Frankel has registered a steady growth from the Persian Period to Roman Age, throughout the Hasmonaean kingdom: the number of the sites in Upper Galilee, from 82 of Persian Period, arrived to 106 in Hellenistic Times till 170 sites in Roman Age. This datum is even more meaningful if we keep in mind that 34 sites of Hellenistic Age were destroyed and abandoned with the Hasmonaean’s conquest. Leibner’s survey in Eastern Lower Galilee has shown similar results, since 21 Hellenistic sites have been recognised, but in the Early Roman Period their number increased to 36.229

In both cases the number of settlements increases more than 50%. In the lower part of Gaulanitis the data are even more striking: only 5 with Hellenistic remains have been recognised, whereas at the start of Roman period the number of the sites grew up to 33.230

As seen above, we could deduce similar results from coins: the distribution of Hasmonaean coins has shown a very strong influence of the Hasmonaean power and the almost complete exclusion of “foreign” coins in the inner part of Galilee, whereas in Huleh Valley the situation was different: even if under Hasmonaean control, the area was characterised by an intense exchange of Phoenician coins. These conditions changed

227 Leibner 2009, 318; 329.
228 In particular, about the question of the repopulation of Galilee, see the works of Frankel et al. (eds.) 2001 and Leibner 2009.
229 Many Hellenistic sites were abandoned and Roman settlements were established in new, unsettled areas.
230 Ben David 2005, 179; 183.
during the Early Roman Period, when the Phoenician influence into the Northern part of Galilee decreased. 

According to Reed, «archaeological artefacts found in the Galilean domestic space are remarkably similar to those of Judaea»\(^\text{231}\). Four are the indicators of a common identity among Galileans and Judeans. The following indicators were collected by Andrea Berlin under the term “Household Judaism”:

- The use of stone vessels;
- The appearance of stepped plastered pools (mikva’ot);
- The spread of a secondary burial with ossuary;
- The lacking of pork in the diet.

Furthermore, household vessels were now manufactured with identical typological details (in particular, they were undecorated but made carefully)

It is likely that people in the regions of Gaulanitis, Galilee, Judaea and Idumaea have started to identify themselves as «’Ιουδαῖοι». This is due to a specific policy acted by Hasmonaeans kings, but it continued throughout the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century BCE. It is clear if we look at the distribution map of two kinds of pottery:

1. **Eastern Sigillata A**, a fine pottery that appeared at the end of the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) century BCE and that was transported by Phoenician merchants, was spread throughout the south-eastern Mediterranean, from Idumaea to the cities of Tyre and Sidon, in the Jezreel valley and the Scythopolis area, in many sites of northern Transjordan area and even the Huleh valley, but it was missing in Galilee and Judaea, where Jewish manufacturers had a virtual monopoly\(^\text{232}\).

2. The «Phoenician semi-fine ware», generally undecorated and designed for table use, spread during the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century BCE from Akko-Ptolemais along the coast and in Huleh valley, but absent in Judaea and Galilee\(^\text{233}\).

After the coming of Pompey, several workshops were installed throughout the former Hasmonaean Kingdom, located on the periphery of Jerusalem (Binyanei Ha'uma), near the Dead Sea (Khirbet Qumrân), in Lower Galilee (Kefar Hananya) and near Gamla in Gaulanitis (‘el-Jumeizah). The choice of the sites is not clear, because these workshops were in different places, but was probably due to the easy access of water, good clay and road access\(^\text{234}\). These workshops started to produce a particular type of kitchen pottery, mostly open forms, with a simple rounded rim and a globular body\(^\text{235}\). Among close forms, the rim is still rounded, the neck narrow and short, the body globular\(^\text{236}\). In Galilee, the village of Kefar Hananya became the best supplier of kitchen pottery from the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century BCE to the 5\(^{\text{th}}\) century CE\(^\text{237}\). It is hard to define the beginning of the workshop at Kefar Hananya: earliest items were found at Tel Anafa, abandoned between 75 and

\(^{231}\) Reed 2002, 44.


\(^{233}\) Berlin 1997b, 81-84.

\(^{234}\) Berlin 2005, 422.

\(^{235}\) Adan-Bayewitz 1993, 87 has grouped these exemplars in forms 1-3.

\(^{236}\) Adan-Bayewitz 1993, 124 ff., forms 4-7.

64–63 BCE, which constituted a sound *terminus ante quem*. At Kefar Hananya no pre-Roman items were found, excepted for a coin: it is indeed very likely that the site was founded when the workshop started to work. Through his analysis, David Adan-Bayewitz convincingly demonstrated that a significant proportion of the common pottery spread throughout the Galilee, in great quantities in urban and rural areas of Galilee and Gaulanitis, where local workshops had to exist, but it was found even in non-Jewish sites, like Tel Anafa and Akko-Ptolemais. However, it was found in good quantity even in many cities of the Decapolis, like Gadara and Hippos, that were more close to Galilee and for a long time under the rule of Jewish kings, but even at Scythopolis and Pella. Moreover, Kefar Hananya pottery was found even in Trachonitis, probably when this region was under Herodian rule.

As in many cases, the fragments found outside Galilee and Gaulanitis were very few: so, it is interesting that a pottery made by Jews for Jews had a certain degree of distribution outside the «ethnic» borders. Probably it is because pottery is a unifying element, used for its principal function rather than religious or political meanings. The usage of a distinct type of manufacture cannot always help to understand who used it: goods can mark borders and stress the differences, but they can even modify the customs and create new cultural codes. In the contemporary world, local cultures are considered the principal operators for new ways of accommodation and assimilation of globally-spread goods, operating a process usually defined as «glocalisation» or «local globalisation»: in this way, the assimilation and the consequent transformation of foreign objects, customs or ideas helps to reassess self-identity. Indeed, adopting this kind of pottery outside Galilee can be explained in two ways, both plausible: first, there were some Jews who lived in the Decapolis area even after the revolt; second, Kefar Hananya pottery outside Galilee lost the connotations acquired among Jewish population and was bought only for its quality or its low price.

Beyond these common elements, it is also true that many differences emerged after few generations, as the outcome of a common regional differentiation: it was probably due to the fact that the development of the peripheral areas of the Hasmonaean kingdom stopped with the coming of Herod, who was particularly unpopular among Galileans, as seen above. Some archaeological evidence confirms Josephus’ accounts: at the site of Qeren Naftali, in Upper Galilee, a ritual bath made during the Hasmonaean rule was intentionally filled and used as a dump, where a number of decorated lamps and bones of animals prohibited by the Jewish law were found: these elements are clear signs of an occupation of the fortress made by non-Jewish people. Even at Gamla, the «Hasmonaean» quarter was probably abandoned at the end of the 1st century BCE or at the beginning of the 1st century CE.

238 Berlin 1997b, 84ff.
239 Ben-David 2014, 245.
240 Adan-Bayewitz 1993, 220.
241 Daszkiewicz, Liesen and Schneider 2014, 148-158; Vriezen 2015, 126-143.
242 Jolanta Młynarczyck: personal communication.
243 Sandhaus 2007, f. 6,1: 7-8; 6,2: 10-11,13-14. However, the data from Scythopolis are very incomplete.
244 Smith and Day 1989, 99-100, pl. 44, 4, 8 e pl. 45, 7.
245 Renel 2010, 527.
246 Bauman 1999, XXXI.
248 Berlin 2006, 64.
However, the population grew during this period: during the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE several sites, like Bet Shearim, Nabatein, Chorazin and Tiberias, were founded. The development of the cities in the north intensified the agricultural exploitation of the area and summoned people principally from Judaea. The number of sites with abundant 1st century BCE remains is in any case limited. The new king has never started a great building programme in the north, with the exception of the temple to Augustus of Paneas, obviously not erected for the Jews. Moreover, the policy made by Herod brought a change of life in Judaea itself: Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom remarked these changes by studying the pottery from Jerusalem, where the upper class started to buy pans from Italy, and Andrea Berlin concluded that they were used for Roman cuisine. In Galilee Roman-style paintings have been found in houses at Sepphoris, at Yodefat and at Gamla. However, foreign imports were few and absent in villages.

### 2.7 Conclusions: Galilee Between Autonomy and Integration

The region was for centuries at the periphery of major foreign kingdoms, who probably had not care about its development. It seems likely that this lack of interest on this area developed a strong sense of autonomy and independence among local populations. Apart from cultural, ethnic or religious problems, a mixed society lived there during the centuries before the Hasmonaean occupation. However, the question about who essentially were the Galileans is still open. We can reject the early hypothesis formulated by Emil Schürer: the lack of archaeological data has confirmed that they were not Ituraeans converted to Judaism. Furthermore, it appears clear that at least the Upper Galilee was inhabited by a non-Jewish population, who had strong ties with the Phoenician cities of the coast. The distribution of Galilean Coarse Ware in many sites of Galilee and its lack in Phoenician cities is somewhat significative: it probably is a mark of a different ethnic group, probably subdued to Phoenicians or, at least, in strict relationship with them.

The archaeological data let us to reject even the hypothesis of Albrecht Alt and Richard Horsley, who believed that a good part of local population survived to the Assyrian devastation and deportation: the lack of settlements for over a century after the Assyrian invasion makes this hypothesis unsustainable at the moment.

Even the third hypothesis, that Galilee was substantially Jewish, is difficult to demonstrate: there were probably few communities of Israelites, but most of the region was completely abandoned or inhabited by other populations.

Ancient ethnic and social groups cannot be considered as monolithic entities, we need to focus our attention on their social relations and interests. It is very difficult, if not
impossible trying to give a precise ethnic profile about Galileans during this big period of changes and confusions. It seems much more possible that Galilee was settled by a mixed population, that had no identity awareness because, before the Hasmonaean coming, there were no clear distinctions among its inhabitants.

A good number of people probably moved from Judaea to Galilee under Hasmonaean rule and many other went to Galilee even between the 1st century BCE and 1st century CE, but it is unlikely that all the Galileans were descendants of ancient Israelites: in most ancient rabbinic literature several norms about the trading between «Israelites» and «Gentiles» existed. The abundance of them cannot be explained with an unexpected and massive immigration of foreign people after 67 CE, because there are no proofs that it happened. The region was indeed inhabited by different people who probably used the same structures, lived in the same places and tilled the same soil.

It is likely that during the 1st century BCE many Galileans were essentially «Ἰουδαῖοι», although the meaning of this word is difficult to understand. Many scholars have seen a religious significance256, but to work out a coherent picture is much more problematic. First of all, Galileans, whether descendants of ancient Israelites or Ituraeans converted or people moved from Judaea, were in some way “obliged” to accept the orders of Hasmonaeans, who probably applied a self-sufficient policy: the new products were used firstly because cheaper and spread by the central power. The term «Ἰουδαῖοι» had not only religious, but also ethnic implications: Hasmonaean kings tried to use the card of ethnicity for unifying regions that have lost many common characteristics and probably follow in different ways the common ancestral religion. Preserving identity means closing own boundaries, looking for purity ideals. On the other hand, a variety emerged: Hasmonaean trying to recreate a unified country worked well in Galilee for three generations, but during the Herodian rule local varieties of Judaism, supported by a local elite, were freed by the power of the temple of Jerusalem. The different hypotheses probably born by the lack of clearness of ancient sources: the Books of Maccabees outlined ideal ties between Galilee and Jerusalem from Davidic tradition, but they could not represent a good model for 2nd-1st century BCE Galilee257. The use itself of the term «Γαλιλαῖοι» in Josephus is somewhat ambiguous and caused different interpretations among modern scholars: someone believed it had military connotations, someone else only geographic258.

As already affirmed by Martin Goodman, who more than 30 years ago replaced the thought of Rostovtzeff, «Galilee, then, should not be viewed as a Semitic enclave surrounded by Hellenism»259: Greek language and Hellenistic architecture crossed all the Palestinian area. As seen above, even in geographically isolated villages of Upper Galilee, like Gush Halav, Meiron and mostly Kedesh, a number of Greek «στρατακό» was found260. Although archaeological evidence is random, we cannot speak of an area strongly «Hellenised»: it is only clear that contacts were numerous. As the case of Kefar Hananya pottery has clearly shown, communities or groups that are culturally distinct may buy pottery from the same potters261.

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258 ZEITLIN 1974; FREYNE 1980b.
CHAPTER 3: THE ARABS IN SOUTHERN SYRIA

3.1 Who were the «Arabs»?

The word «Arab» is well attested in written sources since the 9th century BCE; however, its meaning is still vague. The principal problem is constituted by the fact that we have attestations of this word from outside and we do not know how the tribes collected under the name «Arabs» usually named themselves. The term «Arab» was applied to a large number of different peoples with several ways of life, in very different territories: «Arabs» were both nomads and sedentary people, both shepherds, farmers and merchants.

In the first attestations, the word was used for people more than for a place: the oldest document mentioning Arabs seems to be the Monolith Inscription of Assyrian king Shalmaneser III dated to 853 BCE. The inscription listed Gindibû the Arab among the leaders of a coalition beaten by the Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar near the Orontes. During the 8th century BCE the army of the king Tiglath Pileser III reached Transjordan and southern Palestine: at the end of the century the Assyrian administrative system included even the «Arabs», which lived in a broad area, covering the regions of the northern Sinai, southern Palestine and Transjordan, the eastern flanks of Anti-Lebanon, the Beqa’a Valley and the Syrian desert. Probably in this period nomad groups were used for protecting the southernmost borders of the Assyrian kingdom.

The inscriptions of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal seem to confirm the spread of Arabs throughout a huge area: in fact, during the half of the 7th century the king had to suppress several revolts of Arab peoples on the border of southern Syria and Transjordan, into the desert near Babylon and in the Palmyrene region.

Kings of a-ri-bi were still subdued to Babylonian kings at the beginning of the 6th century BCE. Even the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus, enlisted among his troops the Arabs before he has been defeated by Cyrus the Great, founding the Medo-Persian Achaemenid empire. According to Xenophon, the king of Arabs provided 10000 horsemen and 100 chariots: the chariot is not an armament used by nomad peoples, because it was part of a well-organised military apparatus and its usage is allowed only throughout lands without stones and with flat surfaces. Indeed, it is likely that many Arabs were sedentary and not nomads.

Numerous royal inscriptions confirmed that Arabs were among the peoples ruled by Achaemenids. The first Greek author who wrote extensively about Arabia during the

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262 Epiph. 1982, 74.
264 MacDonald 2009b, 8-10.
265 Graf 2003, 319; MacDonald 2003a, 313.
266 Epiph. 1982, 165.
267 Retsö (2003, 119-211) with exhaustive overview of all the cuneiform sources.
268 MacDonald 2009b, 14.
269 Xen. Cyrt., 2.1.5: «[…] τὸν Αράβιον δὲ Ἀραγδῶν ἱππέας τε εἰς μυρίους καὶ ἄρματα εἰς ἐκατὸν καὶ σφενδονητῶν πάμπολυ τι χρήμα […]».
270 Retsö 2003, 237-239.
Persian kingdom was Herodotus: he identified Arabia as the region between the eastern shore of the Nile Delta and the region of the city of Cadytis, in southern Palestine. Herodotus noticed that the Achaemenid Cambyses II made an alliance with the king of Arabs to conquer Egypt in 525 BCE: the historian described Arabs as very respectful to the pledges and devoted to a couple of gods; furthermore, they were involved into the commerce of spices, mostly frankincense: in fact, they were free from all taxes but brought yearly a voluntary gift of one thousand talents' weight of frankincense. Something changed when the Qedarites, the dominant Arab tribe of this period, joined the coalition with Egyptian Acoris and king Evagoras from Salamis against the Persians: the revolt was put down and a reorganisation of the territory followed. In

271 Herodotus 2.8.1: «ἀπὸ δὲ Ἡλίου πόλιος ἄνω ἰὸνι στεινὴ ἐστὶ Αἰγύπτως, τῇ μὲν γὰρ τῆς Ἀραβίης ὅρος παρατεῖται, φέρον ἀτ' ἀρκτος πρὸς μεσαμβρίην τε καὶ νότον, αἰεὶ ἂν τείνην ὡς τὴν Ἑρυθρὴν καλεόμενην θάλασσαν»;

272 Herodotus 3.5.1-2: «[..] ἀπὸ γὰρ Φοινίκης μέχρι οὐράρ τῶν Καδύπος πόλιος ἐστι Σύρων τῶν Παλαιστίνων καλεόμενων: ἀπὸ δὲ Καδύποις οὖσας πόλιος, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, Σαρδίων ὡς πολλοὶ ἔλασσονος, ἀπὸ ταύτης τὰ ἐμπορία τὰ ἐπὶ θαλάσσης μέχρι Ἰννύσου πόλιος ἐστὶ τοῦ Ἀραβίου, ἀπὸ δὲ Ἰννύσου ἅπτες Σύρων μέχρι Σαρββυνίδος λήμης, παρ᾽ ἑν δὴ τὸ Κάισιον ὅρος τείνει ὡς θάλασσαν»;

273 Herodotus 4.39.1: «αἰτία μὲν νυν ἢ ἐτέρη τῶν ἀκτῶν, ἢ δὲ δὴ ἐτέρη ἀπὸ Περσῶν ἀρξαμένη παρατεῖται ἐς τὴν Ἑρυθρὴν θάλασσαν, ἢ τε Περσική καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ἐκδεκομένη ἢ Ἀσσυρία καὶ ἀπὸ Ἀσσυρία ἢ Ἀραβία λήγει δε αὐτί, οὐ λήγουσα εἰ μὴ νόμως, ἐς τὸν κόλπον τὸν Ἀραβίον, ἐς τὸν Δαρείον ἐκ τοῦ Νείλου διώρυχα ἐστήγανεν».

According to these descriptions, it seems very likely that the city of Cadytis was Gaza. See Stern 1976, 5.

274 Herodotus 3.7.2: «τότε δὲ οὐκ ἕντος καὶ ὦδας ἑτοίμους, Καμβίως πυθόμενος τοῦ Ἀλκαρνησσέως ζείνου, πέμψας παρὰ τὸν Ἀραβίον ἄγγελος καὶ δεηθεὶς τῆς ἁσφαλείας ἑτου, πίπτες δοὺς τε καὶ δεξαμένους παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ».

275 Herodotus 3.8: «σεβόμενοι δὲ Αράβιοι πίπτες ἀνθρώπων ὥμοια τοῖς μάλιστα, ποιεύτωσι δὲ αὐτάς τρόπω τοιχά: τῶν βουλομένων τὰ πιστὰ ποιεσθαι ἄλλως ἀνήρ, ἀμφοτέρων αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίς, λίθω δεῖ τὸ ἐσοφν τῶν χειρῶν παρὰ τοὺς δικτύοις τοὺς μεγάλους ἐπιτάμηται τῶν ποιευμένων τάς πίπτες, καὶ ἔπειτα λαβῶν ἐκ τοῦ τιματοῦ εκατέρος κροκοῦδα ἀλληλεῖς τῷ αὕτατον ἐν μέσῳ κείμενος λίθοις ἐπτά: τότο δὲ ποιεύσων ἑπικαλέει τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ τὴν Οὐράνην, ἐπιτελεσάντος δὲ τούτου ταυτῆς, ὃ τάς πίπτες ποιησάμενος τοίς φίλοις παρεγγυὸν τὸν ζείνου ἢ καὶ τὸν άσταν, ἢν πρὸς αὐτόν ποιητὰ: οἱ δὲ φίλοι καὶ αὐτοὶ τάς πίπτες δικαιεῦθαι σέβεθαι. Διὸνυσος δὲ θεῶν μοῦνον καὶ τὴν Οὐράνην ἡγέονται εἰς, καὶ τῶν τριχῶν τὴν κομήθην κείρεθαι φασι κατὰ περ αὐτόν τοῦ Διόνυσου κεκάραθαι: κειρονται δὲ πεπρόκολα, ὑποζηρόντες τοὺς κροτάφους, ὁνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσου Ὀροτότα, τὴν δὲ Οὐράνην Ἀλλάται.». Actually we do not know the exact meaning of the word «πίπτες» in Herodotus, but he probably referred to a official treaty.

276 Herodotus 3.97: «[..] οἴδα δὲ φόρον μὲν οὐδένα ἐπάγησαν φέρεν, δώρα δὲ ἀγίνεν [... ] Ἀράβιοι δὲ ἥλια τάλαντα ἂγιουν λιβανωτὸ αὖ πάντω ἑτος. ταῦτα μὲν οὕτω δώρα πάρει τοῦ φόρου βασιλεί έκθυμόνων.»

277 Herodotus 3.107: «πρὸς δ᾽ αὐτῷ μεσαμβρίης ἐσχάτη Ἀραβίη τῶν οἰκεμενικῶν χωρῶν ἐστιν, ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ λιβανωτῶς τε ἐστὶ μοῦν᾽ χωρεύον τας ὅμοιον καὶ κυρίου και κασίη καὶ κιάνωμον και λήβανον. ταύτα πάντα πλην τῆς κυρίου διαντέρως κτιστοὶ οἱ Ἀράβιοι. τὸν μὲν γι λιβανωτών συλλέγουσι τὴν σπάρα ςμικτοπτες, τὴν ἑς Ἐλληνικάς Φάινεις εξάγουσι».
particular the province of Idumaea was established before 363 BCE\textsuperscript{276}. The inhabitants of Arabic Peninsula, instead, preserved a certain degree of autonomy. As already seen, Xenophon referred to Arabia, but the historian in his works \textit{Anabasis}\textsuperscript{277} and \textit{Cyropaedia}\textsuperscript{278} located the region called «Arabia» in the central part of Mesopotamia, where he spent part of his life when he joined the army of Cyrus the Younger, in the disastrous and unsuccessful campaign made to claim the Persian throne\textsuperscript{279}. The fact that the two Greek historians defined two different regions as «Arabia» is not surprising: we have already seen that Arabs lived in a wide territory and the word «Arabia» indicated the land inhabited by Arabians: it implied ethnic connotations more than geographical ones. According to David Graf, «there is virtually no area of the Near East where Arabs do not appear in the Hellenistic periods»\textsuperscript{280}.

After Alexander’s conquest, explorations of the Red Sea developed: in 323 BCE Alexander himself organised a plan to discover the Arabian Peninsula. According to Arrian, the main goal of the Macedonian king was colonising the coast because of its supposed prosperity\textsuperscript{281}, but also for his desire to be worshipped as third god among Arabs\textsuperscript{282}. Greek
historians have usually forgotten economic motivation, favouring a person-centred visual, related to Alexander’s figure: according to Strabo, in fact, the principal purpose of the king was to punish Arabs who did not send ambassadors to him in Babylon. The absence of Arab ambassadors could suggest that they were not a nation, but only a group of tribes gathered together by outside viewers.

After Alexander’s death, Arabs troops were regularly utilised by Ptolemies and Seleucids. According to Polybius, Antiochos III used them in the region of Amman. Livy has recorded the presence of Arab archers riding dromedaries among Seleucid army in 189 BCE, during the battle of Magnesia.
During the 2nd century BCE, the Jews had several conflicts with the Arabs of Transjordan: in particular, both of them were involved in the struggle for the Seleucid throne after the death of Antiochos IV between Demetrius and Alexander Balas. The latter, supported by the Jews, finally became king and reinstalled Maccabaeans, who had risen up and created their own reign few years before, on the throne of Jerusalem. However, in 145 BCE the son of Demetrius, Demetrius II, helped by Ptolemy Philometor, overthrew Alexander. Three descriptions survived on the episode: in the first book of Maccabees it is said that the chief of Arabs, Zabdielos or Zabeilos, cut off the head of Alexander and sent it to Ptolemy. In Diodorus’ account, Alexander Balas asked refuge to Diocles, τῶν Άραβων δυνάστης, but Heliadus and Casius, two Alexander’s officers, betrayed their king and murdered him.

According to Jan Retsö, the different names of Arabian chiefs is due to the fact that there were at least two different groups of Arabs in Syria, one supporting Alexander and Jonathan Maccabaeus and located in northern Syria and the other one allied with Demetrius II, probably located further south, in the Beqa’a valley. After the collapse of the Seleucid kingdom, three powers gradual emerged: the Hasmonaean in Palestine, the Ituraeans in the Anti-Lebanon and Beqa’a valley and the Nabataeans in southern Transjordan. During the period between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE several Arab groups played an important role in the history of the area. In Josephus’ Antiquities, Arabs are mentioned several times, but he projected the actual conditions backwards into Biblical times: in particular, he said that Abraham left the land of Arabs to his son Ishmael. This version was confirmed by another source: Artapanus, who was a Jewish writer who presumably lived during the 2nd century BCE.

FIG. 4 The distribution of «Arab» peoples at the time of Pompey’s conquest. Map drawn by Aaron Styba. From Fisher (ed.) 2015, 14, f. 1.1

287 Ι Mac. XI, 17-18: «καὶ ἐφυγεν Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν τοῦ σκεπασθῆναι αὐτὸν ἔκει ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαίος ὑψώθης. καὶ ἀφείλεν Ἠσαβίλη ο Ἀραψ τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τῷ Πτολεμαίῳ».

288 JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 118: «τοῦ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρου τὴν κεφαλὴν ὁ τῶν Ἀράβων δυνάστης ἀποστείλεν Πτολεμαίος, διὸ τῇ πεμπτῇ τῶν ἕμερῶν ἀνενεκές, ἐκ τῶν τραυμάτων ἀδικόν ἢ καθισμα ἢ θέαμα τὴν Ἀλέξανδρον τελευτήν ἄμω καὶ τὴν κεφαλήν ἄκομεν καὶ θεᾶτα».

289 DIOD. Sic., XXXII, 27, 9d.-10.1: «Ο δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀπό μὲν τῆς μόχης μετὰ πεντακοσίων τὴν φυγὴν ἐποίησα τῆς Ἀραβίας εἰς τὰς καλουμένας Ἀβας πρὸς Διοκλέα τὸν δυνάστην, πρὸς ὅν ἦν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ἀντίόχου προεκτεθεῖμον ὁ νοτοῖς νήπιος. εἶδ’ οὶ μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἡλίαδν καὶ Κασίον ἦγεμόνες, οἱ συνήχουν Ἀλέξανδρῳ, λάθρα διεπεσχέωσαν περὶ τῆς ἱδίας ἀσφαλείας, ἐπαγγελλόμενοι δολοφόνησθαι τοῦ Ἀλέξανδρον, συγχωρησάμενος δὲ τοῦ Δημητρίου περὶ ὧν ἦσαν, οὐ μόνον προδόται τοῦ βασιλέως ἀλλὰ καὶ φονεῖς ἐγενήθησαν. Ἀλέξανδρος μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀνερήθη»

290 RETSÖ 2003, 316-317.

291 RETSÖ 2003, 334.

292 JOSEPH. AJ II, 213: «καὶ Ἀβραμὸν μὲν μόνον ἐκ τῆς Μεσοποταμίας εἰς τὴν Ἑλλαδαν παραγενόμενον ἐφυγοκρυβήνα, ταῦτα δὲ Ἠσαβίλης ἤτοι καὶ τοῖς εἰς τούτῳ βούλησιν ἀγαθῆς πρὸς τὸν λαὸν γενομένης τεκνίσας παύσας καὶ καταλιπέν τὸν Ἰσμαήλ καὶ τοῖς ἐκ αὐτοῦ τὴν Ἀραβίαν χώραν, τοῖς δὲ Ἐτών Ἱδαμάν, Ἰσάκῳ δὲ τὴν Ἑλλάδαν». 
in Alexandria of Egypt\textsuperscript{293}, said that the Arabs were descendants of Ishmael, as reported by Eusebius\textsuperscript{294}. The identification of Arabs with Ishmael’s descendants had to have a long tradition and testify the presence of Arabs in Transjordan area already in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BCE\textsuperscript{295}. The kinship connection between Ishmael and the Arabs was relatively recent: in the account of Genesis there are no hints of such relationship, whereas it seems to be well known since the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BCE onward\textsuperscript{296}.

With the Romans’ arrival, Arabs continued to play an important role in Syria: they were allied with Parthians against Crassus\textsuperscript{297}. These Arabs had to be the ones who lived in Mesopotamia, who were tent-dwellers and divided in several groups. However, Strabo stated that the land of the Arabians extended from the west bank of the Euphrates to the bank of the Euphrates to Coele Syria and the southern part of Judaea\textsuperscript{298}.

After the annexation of Nabataean kingdom into Roman empire, the terms «Arab» and «Arabia» were confined to the inhabitants of the Provincia Arabia or of the Arabic Peninsula.

\textsuperscript{293} About Artapanus and his life, see Bombelli 1986, 42-48 and Barbieri 2009.

\textsuperscript{294} Eius. Praep. Evan. IX, 23,1: « Άρατάναυος δε φησιν εν τω Πέρι Ιουδαιων των την Αβρααμ Ιωσηφ ἀπό- γονον γενεσθαι, υίον δε Ισακου. ουσεσε δε και φασονησε παρά του ἄλλου διενεγκόντα ύπό των άδελφων ἐπιβουλευθηναι προιδόμενον δε την ἐπισσύσταις δεηθηναι των ἀστυνεπτών Άραβων εις την Αἰγυπτον αὐτὸν διακομισαι, τους δε το τενυχαχομένους ποίησαι, είναι γάρ τος των Άραβων βασιλεις ἀπογόνους Ισαρηί, υίους του Άβρααμ, Ισαάκ δε ἀδελφοὺς. Ισαρηί should be emended in Ισαμηί. See Meir 1982, 516.

\textsuperscript{295} It is likely that the identification was previous, although the documentation goes back to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century.

\textsuperscript{296} Cic. Fam. 3.8.10: « de Parthis quod quaeris, fuisse nullos puto; Arabes qui fuerunt admixto Parthico ornatu, dicuntur omnes revertisse; hostem esse in Syria negant illum ».

\textsuperscript{297} Strabo XVI, 3, 1: Υπέρκεπαι δε της Ιουδαιας και της κοιλης Συρίας μέχρι Βαβυλωνιας και της του Ευφράτου ποταμιας προς νότον Αραβια πάσα χωρις των εν τη Μεσοποταμιας σκηνητων. περὶ μεν ου της Μεσοποταμιας και των νεομολόν αυτην έθνων είρηται: τα δε πέραν του Ευφράτου τα μεν προς τας έκβολας αυτων νεμοντοι Βαβυλονιοι και το των Χαλδαιων έθνος είρηται δε περι ταυτων, τα δ’ έξης της Μεσοποταμιας μεχρι κοιλης Συριας, το μεν πλησιαζον των ποταμων και την Μεσοποταμιαν σκηνηται κατεχουσαι Αραβες, δυναστειας αποτεμμενοι μικρας εν λυπροις ποταμων δια τας άνδρες, γεωργουντες μεν ι ουδεν ι μικρα, νομας δε έχοντες παντοδαπων θρεμματων και μάλιστα καμηλων: υπερ δε ταυτων έρημως έστι παλλη: τα δε ταυτων ζη τοιωτερα έχουσιν οι την ειδαιμονα καλουμενην Αραβιαν οικουντες. ταυτης δε το μεν προαρκτων πλευρων ι λεχθεια έστιν έρημος, τα δ’ έχουν ο Περσηκος κολπος, το δε έστερων ο Αραβιος, το δε νοτιον ι μεγαλη θαλατα ι εξω των κολπων αμφοι, ήν άτασαν Ερυθρων καλουσιν».
3.2 ITURAEANS

After the decline of the Seleucid Empire, the Ituraeans started to rule the territory between southern Phoenicia and Syria. Their involvement in the events of this period is portrayed as relatively minor and their identity, their origins and even their territory still remain largely obscure.

3.2.1 LITERARY SOURCES

The Ituraeans have traditionally been seen as an Arabic population, descended from a common ancestor, Yeţūr: as tribal name, it is attested for the first time in the list of twelve sons of Ishmael, son of Abraham, in Genesis 25:15. Many scholars affirmed that this list, even in 1 Chronicles 1:31, should contain the names of twelve allied Arab tribes and derive from the eighth century BCE, with additions from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.

If 1 Chronicles 1:31 had really constituted the list of Arab tribes, it is likely that Ituraeans, the descendants of Yeţūr, were from the northern part of Arabia. There is no conclusive scientific evidence that Ituraeans were definitely Yeţūr’s descendants: first of all, the phonetic resemblance between Yeţūr and Ιτούραϊοι is not enough for identifying them as the same social or political group. Then, in 1 Chronicles 5:19 the Septuagint transcribe the word Yeţūr with the plural genitive Ιτούραϊοι, in 1 Chronicles 1:31 with Ιεττουρ. The mistake probably occurred because Chronicles was written under Ptolemaic rule in the 3rd century BCE, when Ituraeans were already settled in Transjordanian area and probably lived also in Galilee and southern Phoenicia.

According to Emil Schürer, the earliest mention of Ituraeans among Greek authors seems to be in the books of Eupolemos, who wrote his History of Jews in 158 BCE. Here, the Ituraeans are listed among the several tribes subdued by the Jewish king David, like Idumaeans and Nabataeans: actually, this text includes peoples who probably did not exist during the 10th century BCE, when David ruled the Judaean Kingdom. Eupolemus probably includes tribes he is familiar from the second century BCE. It is noteworthy that there is no reference to Arabians, although it seems likely that Eupolemus considered all these groups as Arabs.

Much more data about Ituraeans were given by Strabo. In his Geography, he described the Ituraeans as a recognizable group located in the «Massyas Plain».

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302 ΠΡΗ 723 F 2: «στρατεύεσαι δ’ αυτὸν καὶ ἐπὶ Ἰδομαιόν καὶ Ἀμμανίτας καὶ Μωαβίτας καὶ Ιτούραϊος καὶ Ναβαταίος καὶ Ναβδαίος». 303 WACHOLDER 1974.

304 MYERS 2010, 14.

305 Today the area is known under the definition of «Beqa’a valley», between the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon.
geographer asserted that the territories of Heliopolis and Chalcis were subjected to Ptolemaeus son of Menneaus, who ruled over the Massyas region and the «mountainous country» of the Ituraeans. Strabo did not visit either Syria and Palestine during his travels, therefore all his data are of second-hand: for his 16th book of Geography he probably used mainly the writings of Posidonius, Eratosthenes and Artemidoros. Nonetheless, the information he gave us about peoples and their traditions is very important. Strabo names both Ituraeans and Arabians, although there are no differences in their activities, connected with rubbery. There is maybe a hint of a distinction between Ituraeans and Arabs.

Flavius Josephus, in Antiquities of the Jews, followed the book of Genesis in his list of the sons of Ishmael, listing «Ιστουρος» among them. The first mention of a Ituraean «Εθνος» is attested in Antiquities (XIII, 319), where Josephus wrote about the conquests achieved by the Hasmonaean king Aristobulus. The word «Εθνος» was probably used as it was understood during the Hellenistic and Roman times, as referring to a group of people who lived together but separated by Graeco-Roman group. In this sense the Jewish people could be considered a «Εθνος», and in this sense even Ituraean people could be seen as a «Εθνος». The territory conquered by Hasmonaean is not mentioned, but some scholars believe it was the northern part of Galilee. We do not know which was the area ruled by Ituraeans: what we know for sure by Josephus is just that Aristobulus has taken additional territory for Judea, that he was in conflict with Ituraeans and that a part of Ituraean people was obliged to be converted through circumcision. From a detailed examination of the words of Josephus, Aryeh Kasher raised another issue, suggesting that evidence proves Josephus referred to annexation of Galilee, rather than its conquest: the act of annexation could be accompanied by limited military activity, and forced conversion on Ituraeans should be rejected.

Like Strabo, even Flavius Josephus considered Ituraeans as notorious bandits.

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306 Strabo XVI, 2,10: «ου πόρρω δ’ ούδ’ Ἡλιούπολις καὶ Χαλκίς ἡ υπὸ Πτολεμαῖος τῷ Μενναίου τῷ τὸν Μασσιαν κατέχοντι καὶ τὴν Ἰουραίαν ὀρείνην». 307 Macadam 1986, 48; Biffi 2002, 14,16. 308 Strabo XVI, 2,18: «τὰ μὲν οὐν ὀρεινά ἔχουσι πάντα Ἰουραίοι τε καὶ Ἀραβες, κακούργοι πάντες». The use of the word κακούργοι has been highly studied because Strabo used the word άρητρικοῖ for defining the Arabian Sceintae. It is not clear why Strabo used two different words. They usually were linked because of their life-style, usually not sedentary but nomadic or semi-nomadic. It is clear Strabo’s disregard on nomadic style of life. See below in the chapter. 309 Joseph A/J, 220-221. «Ιστουρος» is very close to the name «Ιστουρος», attested in Nabataean epigraphy in the form «YH». See Wuthnow 1930, 57. 310 Joseph A/J XIII, 319: «τὸ μέρος τοῦ τῶν Ιουραίων ἔθνους ὄχλοκεφαλίτο». 311 Alquist 1999-2003, 180; Myers 2010, 25. 312 Horsley 1996, 26 is sure Galilee was ruled by Ituraeans, but there are no archaeological evidences for the Ituraean expansion. See below. 313 See Freyne 2000, 129 and Myers 2010, 27 contra Horsley 1996. 314 Kasher 1988, 81-83. 315 Strabo XVI, 2, 18-20: «τὰ μὲν οὖν ὀρεινά ἔχουσι πάντα Ἰουραίοι τε καὶ Ἀραβες, κακούργοι πάντες [...] τὸ μέντοι πλέον τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐδαιμονος Ἀραβίας ἑμπόρους λεηλατοῦσιν οἱ καρπάροι: ἦτον δὲ συμβαίνει καταλύεται νυν τῶν περὶ Ζηγόνδωρον ληστῶν διὰ τὴν ἐκ τῶν Ῥωμαίων εὐνομίαν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐκ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀσφάλειαν τῶν ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ τρεφομένων»;
Among Roman sources, Pliny the Elder considered Ituraeans as associated to other people from the inner part of Syria, of which we have no evidences.\(^{316}\)

During the second century CE, Tacitus in his *Annales* reported the notice that the kingdom of Ituraea became part of the Roman Province of Syria after the death of its king Sohaemus, that is after 49 CE.\(^{317}\) Appian, in his Roman History (Ῥωμαϊκά), named Ituraea among the nations who were subdued by Mark Antony after Julius Caesar’s murder: it is noteworthy to read that there is no mention of Arabia in the list of regions mentioned by Appian.\(^{318}\)

Cassius Dio, who lived throughout the second and third century CE, in his “Roman History” affirmed that the emperor Caligula named Sohaemus as chief of Ituraeans among Arabs in the year 38 CE.\(^{319}\)

Vibius Sequester, a Latin author of a list of geographical names cited by Vergil, Lucan, Silius Italicus and Ovid, who lived during the 4\(^{th}\) and 5\(^{th}\) century CE, had enumerated Ituraeans among Syrians, not among Arab tribes, probably because of their territory, located in the area historically inhabited by Syrians.\(^{320}\)

By the analysis of ancient sources few sure data emerge: Ituraeans were a group of people ruled by a king and settled in the inner part of Syria, they were devoted to pastoralism and rubbery, but their ethnic origin is still uncertain.

### 3.2.2 Epigraphic Sources

Inscriptions dated to 1\(^{st}\) century BCE and early 2\(^{nd}\) century BCE are few and do not help us to define the ethnicity or the territory of the Ituraean population. Among the inscriptions found in the area that was probably under Ituraean rule, namely the territory between Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon and mount Hermon, a presence of Arabic names is well attested, albeit it cannot be considered a clear sign of Ituraean presence. According to Charles Clermont-Ganneau, the ethnic «Ἰτατουραίος» appeared on two inscriptions found in Hauran and related to the erection of a workshop thanks to the

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\(^{316}\) *Nat. Hist.* V,81: «İturaeorum gentem et qui ex his Baethaemi uocantur». From this passage, it seems Ituraean people was divided into more groups. We do not know anything about Baethaemians.

\(^{317}\) *Tac. Ann.*, XII, 23: «İturaeique et Iudaici delectantis regibus Sohaemo atque Agrippa provinciae Syriae additi».

\(^{318}\) *App. B Civ.*, V,1,7: «Συνιᾶν τὴν Κοίλην καὶ Παλαιστίνην καὶ τὴν Ἰουραιαν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα γένη Σύρων».

\(^{319}\) *Dio Cass.*, LIX, 12,2: «ἐν δὲ τούτῳ Σαραίμ μὲν τὴν τῶν Ἰτυραίων τῶν Ἀραβῶν. Κατού δὲ τὴν τὴν τὰς Ἀρμενίας τὴν συμπρότεραν καὶ μετὰ τούτο καὶ τῆς Ἀραβίας τινὰ, τῷ τῇ Ρυμητάλκῃ τὰ τοῦ Κότυος καὶ Πολέμων τῷ τοῦ Πολέμωνος υἱὲ τὴν πατρίμαν ἀρχὴν, ψηφισμένης δὲ τῆς βουλῆς, ἑχαρίστατο».

\(^{320}\) *Vil. Seq. Gentes* 335: «İtyraei, Syri, usu sagittae periti».

generosity of Alexandros son of Maximos: actually it seems more likely that, as claimed by Julien Aliquot, «Ιατουραίος» represented, like the most common «Ιατουρος», just a Semitic personal name, known in Nabataean under the form «ytwr». Ituraean soldiers are principally known for their epitaphs since the first part of the 1st century CE. During the following centuries, the presence of Ituraeans is best attested throughout the empire, because of the presence of at least five cohortes Ituraeorum: in any case these inscriptions did not show the presence of ethnic Ituraeans. It seems much more likely that many units preserved their name, often bound to the place of origin, even when the provenance of the soldiers was different.

3.2.3 The Origins and Distribution

It is hard to outline the area ruled by Ituraeans: the majority of sources dating between 1st century BCE and 2nd century CE, as seen, left us only hints about Ituraean territory. The Ituraean land was divided into tetrarchies: three of them are documented in ancient literary sources. The principal tetrarchy formed a small state with an administrative capital at Chalcis, which is not yet identified. Another tetrarchy occupied the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon with capital at Abila (Suk Wadi Barada). The third known tetrarchy had its capital at Herakleia-Arka (Tell ‘Arqâ): it was incorporated in the kingdom of Herod Agrippa II during the reign of Claudius.

The presence of Ituraeans in Lebanon is understood from the main chapter of Strabo, but the period during which Ituraeans came to Beqa’ valley is even uncertain: if they were one Arab tribe, they would come during the eighth century BCE, when Arabs were registered for the first time in Assyrian annals, or in the early seventh century BCE, when the collapse of the Ma’rib Dam provoked a mass migration from Arabia to the north.

As shown in the previous paragraph, in the 2nd century BCE an Ituraean «ἔθνος» is surely established in Auranitis, Trachonitis, in Massyas Plain, on the Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. Appian remembered that Mark Antony in 37/36 BCE decided to give to Cleopatra’ sons the territories of the Abilene tetrarchy, in that period under the rule of Lysanias, the Ituraean dynast who supported Parthians: these territories were in the area between Syria Coele and Palestine.
As already seen, Strabo claimed that at the end of the 1st century BCE the Syrian area ruled by Ptolemaios son of Mennaios, king of Chalcis and Heliopolis, was Massyas plain and the surrounding mounts of Ituraea. The Greek geographer has mentioned the nature of Ituraeans, who usually used their strongholds located on the Mount Lebanon as bases of operation of brigandage. These bases were destroyed by Pompey in 64 BCE. However, the above-mentioned strongholds were never identified on the ground because they left no archaeological traces.

According to Strabo, Ituraeans did not inhabit Galilee and Gaulanitis, since among populations who were settled in that area there were only Egyptians, Arabs and Phoenicians. It is hard to consider these Arabs as Ituraeans, because Strabo had before made a clear distinction between these two peoples.

In the Jewish War, Josephus has never alluded to the Ituraeans: the struggle for the power in Galilee was between Hasmonaean kings of Judaea and the Phoenicians from Tyre, who controlled Kedesh and the surrounding area in the northern Galilee. In Antiquities we read about the Hasmonaean annexation of a part of Ituraean territory, but we do not know which territory was.

Other classical sources dealt with a later period, after the reshaping of Ituraea due to Mark Antony: Ituraea continued to exist as small kingdom. In the New Testament Luke, who wrote between 70 and 85 CE, gathered together Ituraea and Trachonitis as the territories inherited by Herod Philip at his father’s death, Herod the Great, in the 5/4 BCE. For Flavius Josephus the tetrarchy of Philip consisted of more territories: Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Auranitis and some properties of Zenon, where there was the ancient site of Paneas, replaced by the new foundation of Caesarea Philippi. The area of Chalcis was never mentioned: Luke’s Ituraea was probably a small region, which surrounded the city of Chalcis and the southern and western areas of Mount Hermon. Between the third and the 4th century CE the toponym “Ituraea” was still used for a small part of the area: Eusebius of Caesarea, in fact, grouped together the regions of Ituraea and Trachonitis.

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331 Strabo XVI, 2,10. See note 308.
332 Strabo XVI, 2,18: «[…] τὰ μὲν οὖν ὤρεινα ἔχουσι πάντα Πομπήιοι τε καὶ Ἀραβὲς, κακοῦργοι πάντες, οἱ δὲ ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις γεωργοί: κακούμενοι δ’ ὑπ’ ἐκεῖνων ἄλλοτε ἄλλης βοηθείας δέονται. Ὄμηντοις δὲ ἐρυμνοῖς χρῶνται, καθάπερ οἱ τὸν Λίβανον ἔκστος ἀνών καὶ τὸ τρίτον Σιννάν καὶ Βορράμα καὶ ἄλλα τοιαύτα ἔχουσι τείχη, κατῶ δὲ Βότρυν καὶ Γιαρντ καὶ τὰ ἐπί τῆς θαλάσσης σπῆλαια καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ θεοῦ προσώπως φρούριον ἐπιπέθεν, ᾧ κατέσπασε Πομπήιος […]».
333 Μάοι 2011, 25
334 Strabo XVI,2,34: «τὰ πολλὰ δ’ ὡς ἐκκατα ἐστίν ὑπὸ φύλων οἰκοῦμενα μικτῶν ἐκ τε Αἰγυπτίων ἐθνῶν καὶ Ἀραβίων καὶ Φοινίκων».
335 Joseph BII II, 18,1 (459): «τὰ δ’ ὑποπτήρασταις ἐχώρουν ἐπί Κάδασα τῆν Τυρίων».
337 Luke III, 1,2: «καὶ τετρααρχόντος τῆς Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἄδελφον αὐτοῦ τετρααρχόντος τῆς Πομπήας καὶ Τραχωνίδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσάνῳ τῆς Ἀβεληνῆς τετρααρχόντος».
338 Joseph BII I, 6,9 (95): «Βατανέα δὲ καὶ Τράχων Αὐρανίτης τε καὶ μέρη τινὰ τοῦ Ζήνωνος οἴκον τὰ περὶ ἰνάνων, προσόδον ἔχοντα ταλάντων έκατον, ὑπὸ Φιλίππου τέτακτο».
From the source analysis it emerges that the inner part of Lebanon was the area mostly populated by Ituraeans, who probably lived mixed with other peoples, like Arabs.

3.2.4 THE COINAGE

Ituraean tetrarchs first issued coins during the final years of Seleucid era. The major part of Ituraean coins nowadays known has been found in coin markets, museums and private collections: only few of them were found during excavations. According to Wright, the numismatic evidence demonstrates that Ituraean rulers were pragmatic and saw themselves as legitimate successors to the Seleucid empire\textsuperscript{340}. Under the rule of Ptolemaios, son of Mennaios (c. 85-41/0 BCE), the tetrarchy of Chalcis achieved a great power and first coins were issued. The initial issues were dated ΛΜΣ, the year 240 according to the Seleucid era which corresponds to 73/2 BCE. The use to sign "L" to designate the word "year" was taken from the Ptolemies\textsuperscript{341}. Furthermore, the fact that Ituraean kings preferred using the Seleucid era rather than an era of autonomy, like the near Phoenician centres, suggests that Ptolemaios and his successors considered themselves as descendants of Seleucid kings\textsuperscript{342}. In this way they tried to legitimise their regime.

Several other 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE/CE independent communities in the area used a targeted iconography on their coins, usually borrowed by the Greek mythology and referred to their ancient origins\textsuperscript{343}, as happened for the figure of Melqart on the coinage of Tyre, for example.

All the Ituraean coins are in bronze. According to Herman, the Ituraean coinage used types taken by Greek pantheon, with subjects including Zeus, Artemis, Nike, Hermes, Athena and the Dioscuri. The text is almost always in Greek\textsuperscript{344}. The use of a Greek legend is one of the common features of Ituraean coins. The titles ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΣ are present on several coins of the Ituraean tetrarchs. The name of Ptolemaios did not appear on the early coinage: the absence of his name could be due to the fact that he was independent at a later stage\textsuperscript{345}. Adopting Hellenic iconography is a common feature of many Levantine cities, even that ones who chose an autonomous coinage, such as Tyre, that continued to define its identity in terms of a Phoenician past\textsuperscript{346}. The syncretistic policy of Seleucid dynasts left an intentional ambiguity in the choice of a public imagery: it is likely that the tetrarchs of Chalcis followed Seleucid ambiguity in their coinage issues and that the deities depicted on Ituraean coins were the interpretatio Graeca of indigenous gods.

\textsuperscript{340} WRIGHT 2013, 56.
\textsuperscript{341} According to SEYRIG (1950, 33), "L" preceding the date is a characteristically Ptolemaic sign, adopted also on inscriptions.
\textsuperscript{342} SCHONTROFF 1982, 138.
\textsuperscript{343} WRIGHT 2013, 59-60.
\textsuperscript{344} HERMAN 2006, 53.
\textsuperscript{345} ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 214
\textsuperscript{346} Nicolas WRIGHT (2013, 60) remembered that "Tyre employed both the head of Melkart, the vernacular patron of the city, along with the club of his interpretatio graeca, Herakles, and the eagle...".
Lysanias, the successor of Ptolemaios, decided to follow the anti-Roman policies: in fact the Ituraean tetrarch, together with the Hasmonaean Antigonos II and the Nabataean Malichos II, welcomed Parthian invasion of Syria by Pakoros. In 41/40 BCE, the year of his accession, Lysanias issued a coinage with the date “BOC”, the year 272 according to the Seleucid era: this is the only issue without the sign “L” before the year. Following the defeat of the Parthians and the capture of Antigonos II in 37 BCE, Lysanias’ future was uncertain. In the following year, 36 BCE, Lysanias was executed and Marc Antony donated the ituraean tetrarchy to Cleopatra VII of Egypt. The years of Ptolemaic sovereignty were characterised by the dissolution of tetrarchy and the diaspora of the Ituraean military elite. In 31 BCE, Zenodoros was restored by Octavian as consequence of the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. Probably in this period the economic situation of Ituraean people was very bad: the unrest among the Ituraeans led them to turn to robbery and brigandage. Zenodoros himself was obliged to sell the region of Auranitis to the neighbouring “Arabs”, probably the Nabataeans. We cannot know if part of Ituraeans chose to live as brigands even before, albeit, as seen, Strabo considered them and Arabs from the mountains as "κακοürlichου". Nevertheless, Zenodoros issued two series of coins dated according to the Seleucid era: the first one with the sign "LBΠΣ", in the year 282 of Seleucid era (31/30 BCE), and the second one with the sign "LZΠ", in the year (2)87 of Seleucid era (26/25 BCE). The bare head of Zenodoros is depicted on one type: the head of the tetrarch is paired with the bare head of Octavian on the obverse: this issue maybe was made to oppose Zenodoros to Cleopatra, which depicted herself on the coins on the obverse while the head of Mark Antony occupied the reverse. In 20 BCE Zenodoros died: the surviving territory belonging to the tetrarchy of Chalcis was given to Herod the Great and then to his son Philip who ruled with the title of tetrarch. The Ituraean coinage was indeed in use for only 47 years.

3.2.5 The Archaeological Finds

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According to Flavius Josephus, one member of the Ituraean aristocracy, named Sohaemus, took service as a general with Herod I of Judaea: JOSEPHI AJ XV, 185: "Μαριάμμην δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖκα, δυνάτον γὰρ ὦκ ἦν εν διαφορᾷ τῇ πρὸς τὴν ἀδελφήν καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν ἐκείνου διαταγὴν τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχειν, ἐν Ἀλέξανδρείᾳ σὺν Ἀλεξάνδρᾳ τῇ μητρὶ κατεστήσατο ἤσσοστον τὸν ταμαίαν καὶ τὸν Ἰουραίον Σόαιμον ἐπ’ αὐτῶν καταληψιν, πιστοτάτους μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γενομένους αὐτῷ, τότε δὲ προφασεί τιμὴς φρούρειν ἀπολειφθέντας τὰς γυναῖκας". As seen above, this name was pretty spread among Arabs, we have not to confuse him with the Sohaemus king of Ituraeans of the 1st century CE.

JOSEPHI AJ XV, 352: "ὁ γὰρ Ζηνόδωρος ἀπογεννωσκὼς ἦδη τῶν καθ’ αὐτὸν ἐφοβη τῆς ἐπαρχίας μέρος τι τὴν Ἀύραντιν αὐτοῖς ἀποδόθαι ταλάντων πεντήκοντα. ταύτης ἐμπεριεχομένης τῇ δωρεᾷ Καίσαρος ὡς μὴ δικαίως ἀφαιρούμενοι διημφισβήτουσιν, πολλάκις μὲν ταῖς καταδρομαῖς καὶ τῷ βιάζεσθαι θέλειν, ἄλλοτε δὲ καὶ πρὸς δικαιολογίαν ἱοντεῖς".

STRABO XVI, 2, 18-20. See note 308.
It is hard to identify Ituraean material culture: modern scholarship has formulated new and occasionally challenging conclusions regarding Ituraean settlement. The problems about Ituraean origin, identity or language are still problems that are far from being resolved. There is need to evaluate the extent to which archaeologists have been identified some sites as “Ituraean”.

Ernst Axel Knauf has considered Tell Hirâ, in the northern Beqa’a valley, a fortified Ituraean camp. The site was discovered by a German team of archaeologists in 1972: the remains of a big structure were found and dated to Roman-Byzantine period on the base of pottery found on the surface. This structure was firstly identified as a Roman military camp: according to Knauf, however, the architecture (a camp), as well as the name of the place (the Arabic form of Aramaic hē’īrtā, which means «enclosure, Bedouin camp»), are hints of the presence here of Ituraeans, who would have been a semi-nomadic population. This hypothesis has been rejected by Julien Aliquot, who following Stefan Wild has rightly affirmed that we cannot compare this architecture with Nabataean military architecture, neither the actual Arabic name with an Aramaic word.

Shimon Dar has tried to summarise the data collected in his surveys and field works between 1968 and 1989 on southern part of Mount Hermon, in Israel. The discovered sites numbered in total 64, but only few were excavated. According to Dar, only Ituraeans settled the mountainous areas of Lebanon, northern Galilee and Trachonitis since the third century BCE. Dar’s arguments include Arrian’s reference to the presence of Arabs in the Lebanon during Alexander the Great’s siege of Tyre and finds datable to the third century BCE were found during his excavations. However, none of the evidence shown derives from clear stratigraphic contexts and we can only affirm that the construction of stable constructions on Mount Hermon begun in the 1st century CE: therefore, the mountain was almost uninhabited during Hellenistic times, with the exception of occasional shepherds and hunters, probably nomads who seasonally went there. Since the second and first centuries BCE, textual sources revealed the presence of other peoples: furthermore, Jonathan king of Judaea, coming back from his expedition in Amathidis, fought against the Arabs called Zabadaeans, who probably lived in Beqa’a valley and Mount Anti-Lebanon.

Until now, the analysis of sites and structures has not revealed clear evidence about a specific group or ethnos. Some scholars have identified a particular type of pottery, labelled «Golan Ware», as made and used by Ituraeans. This kind of pottery is constituted principally of big handmade pithoi, with a pinkish to light-brown clay and a

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350 Myers 2010, 2.
352 Kischke, Mittmann & Müller 1976, 32-34.
354 Dar 1993.
355 Arrian, Anab. II, 20, 4: «ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἀναλαβὼν τῶν τε ἱππέων ἱλας ἔστιν ἃς καὶ τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς καὶ τοὺς Ἀργάνας τε καὶ τοὺς τοξότας ἐπὶ Ἄραβιας στέλλεται εἰς τὸν Ἀντιλίβανον καλοῦμενον τὸ ὄρος».
357 Μα’οζ 1997, 281.
358 I Mac. XII, 31: «καὶ ἐξέκλινεν ἱωναθὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἄραβας τοὺς καλοῦμένους Ζαβαδάιους καὶ ἐπιτάξεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ σκῦλα αὐτῶν».
359 Until today, Golan Ware has been discovered only in northern part of Golan.
considerable admixture of grits, maybe used to store water\textsuperscript{360}. The form is characterised by a narrow mouth, short neck and bag-shaped body\textsuperscript{361}. They seem to resemble the so called «Collar Rim» Jars dated back to the Iron Age, but after several excavations they were rightly dated to the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE\textsuperscript{362}. Sometimes Greek inscriptions are engraved on the surface. The Golan Ware was first discovered in the 1955-1958 excavations at Tel Hazor, in a stratum dated to 450-300 BCE\textsuperscript{363}. The designation «Golan Ware» was given by Clair Epstein and Shemariah Gutman, because it could not be assigned to any known pottery group\textsuperscript{364}.

\textsuperscript{360} \textit{NEAEHL} 2, 535; Ma'oz 2011, 45.
\textsuperscript{361} Hartal 2008, 213.
\textsuperscript{362} Hartal 2008, 214.
\textsuperscript{363} Yadin et al. 1958, Pl. CCLVI.
\textsuperscript{364} Epstein and Gutman 1972, Pls. 5-6.
In 1971 Dan Urman conducted a rescue excavation at the site of Khirbet Zamal, in the northern Golan. During the excavations three large pithoi, all of the Golan Ware type, were found in a rectangular room. On some sherds there were Greek words, not easy to decipher. On the basis of coin finds, Urman dated the structure from 3rd to 1st century BCE and believed that these pithoi were probably the work of Ituraean tribes who lived in the Golan.

Two years after Urman’s excavations, in 1973, Gutman suggested that these ceramics were Ituraean, being restricted to the “Ituraean” area: the distribution of this kind of pottery did not extend south of Paneas region and the northern Huleh Valley because the Ituraean expansion beyond this area was stopped by Judas Aristobulus I, intended to protect Jewish Galilee. Together with coin finds, the sites were dated to the 2nd century BCE through to the 2nd and 3rd century CE.

Gutman’s thesis was accepted by many scholars, in particular by Shimon Dar, who found Golan Ware in many sites of the Hermon region and was sure that it had been in use from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period. Dar stated Golan Ware was locally made, although no kiln was found: Urman, comparing the collected sherd material and the soils of northern Golan and Hermon area, confirmed the statement of Dar.

Between 1985 and 1987 Moshe Hartal carried out further excavations at the site of Khirbet Zemel: many handmade storage pithoi sherds, along with four complete pithoi, were unearthed. The excavators dated the site to the second half of the second century BCE, since they found Seleucid bronze coins from the reign of Antiochos III or IV and two silver tetradrachms of two Seleucid rulers, Alexander Balas and Demetrius II, minted at Tyre in 146/145 BCE. Hartal was sure that he found pottery made at the early stages of the Ituraean settlement, during the Hellenistic period.

The excavations at Tel Dan, in the northern Huleh valley, where stood the biblical city of Dan, began in 1966 and continued until 1993: on the west side of the sanctuary a large assemblage of broken vessels, both locally made and imported, was found. Biran attributed it to the Ituraeans.

For many reasons it is still impossible to determine the exact geographic boundaries from Golan Ware, but it is important to remember that beside this pottery, other types of ceramics have been found at many of these sites. Furthermore, the distribution of “Ituraean” pithoi in Roman-Byzantine period goes beyond the supposed Ituraean territory, extending southward to the central and southern Golan. The designation «Ituraean Ware» is not based on ancient inscriptions found on the pottery itself, but on the assumption that the residents in the sites of north-eastern Golan...
were Ituraeans. On the other hand, we know nothing about the pottery made in Beqa’a valley, where according to ancient sources Ituraean people lived. The results of surveys and field works in northern Lebanon are misleading: at Tell Arqa no hints of “Ituraean” pottery have been found. According to Ma’oz bases of typically handmade pithoi were found in the mountains around the valley of Nahr Ibrahim, in the area east of Beirut, but the surveyors of that area have believed that these bases were amphorae. The supposed presence of Ituraeans in the area around Banias is not itself enough to consider locally made pottery as “Ituraean”. In itself the material cannot say who fashioned it: the framework suggested by archaeologists is still fragmentary. We can only affirm with a good level of certainty that the population of the region remained there during the Hellenistic and Roman period and used their own made vessels. It is still better to preserve the name Golan Ware, which identifies the origin and location of this pottery: there are, in fact, no distinctive marker that identifies any of the material from the Golan or the Hermon as being specifically Ituraean.

### 3.2.6 Conclusions

As seen in this brief overview, the Ituraeans were more than simple robbers or bandits. They were completely involved in the political struggle occurred when Seleucid empire disappeared. The description of Strabo is negative, because he shared the common Graeco-Roman view, according to which people from mountains were nomads, shepherds and brigands, opposite to sedentary people, who were farmers. In all probability the region where they were settled was a mixture of cultures, languages and traditions: it was a complex, multilingual and multicultural society, as today. The question about the geographical origins of Ituraeans remains open, we have no clues for understanding if they were indigenous or foreign people. It is likely that Ituraeans slowly integrated themselves with other indigenous populations in Lebanon after the annexation to the Roman empire, but even before. Written sources give us much more detailed information than other evidences: the Ituraeans were supposed to be good archers, well known throughout the Roman empire. They were recruited by Caesar and became Mark Antony’s personal bodyguards. Furthermore, the coins provide names and dates of Ituraean tetrarchs: they testify that Ituraean people constituted a well-organized state. Ituraean rulers saw themselves as ideal successors of the pre-Roman past. Except the coins, the material culture has not yet given us a secure proof of Ituraean presence and it still seems inappropriate to rename Golan Ware as Ituraean Ware. This pottery, in fact, is found only in a restricted area in the northern part of Golan Heights and it is still missing in other regions ruled by Ituraeans.

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376 MA’OZ 2011, 27.
377 HARTAL (2008, 24) claimed that “these pithoi were also scattered in the Lebanon Beqa’: however, from there almost none were published”.
378 THALMANN 1978, 60-61, f. 44.
379 GATIER (et al. 2005, 166) affirmed that the new pottery found in strata dated to the end of Second century BCE was Ituraeans, but it is just a hypothesis. MA’OZ 2011, 25 has affirmed that GATIER et al. 2005, Pl. 1.18 is the typical conical base of a Golan Ware pithos.
380 MYERS 2010, 52.
381 MYERS 2010, 63.
Like Hasmonaeans, Ituraean rulers affirmed their power in the troubled period which followed the collapse of Seleucid kingdom and were active agents of complicated political situation of the second and first century BCE. Albeit their cities are not yet discovered, the urban development, testified by literary sources, suggest the complexity of their society: they were not simply devoted to nomadism and brigandage, but aimed to affirm themselves within the trouble period between the collapse of Seleucid kingdom and the complete annexation of the area made by the Romans.
3.3 The Nabataeans in Northern Transjordan Area

The Nabataeans represented the best known Arab population living in the area around and inside the Decapolis. Their origins are still obscure: our knowledge of them strongly depends on the picture drawn by Greek and Roman sources, because there is no Nabataean literature and archaeological and epigraphic evidences cannot totally fill the gap.\(^\text{382}\)

Before the 4th century BCE, we do not know anything about the Nabataeans: actually, in the book of Genesis, Nebaioth is numbered among the sons of Ishmael. However there is no secure basis to identify him as the ancestor of the Nabataeans.\(^\text{383}\)

The creation of the Persian province of Idumaea, established before 363 BCE as said above, caused the loss of a large territory for Qedarites, the most important Arabian tribe of that period. It seems likely that the Qedarites lost even their privileges of the frankincense trade, presumably replaced by the Nabataeans. It is hard to establish if Nabataeans were a subtribe of the Qedarites, as supposed by Ernst Knauf\(^\text{384}\) or not, but there are many differences between them regarding to all the aspects of life.\(^\text{385}\)

3.3.1 Literary Sources

Literary sources had not left many information about the Nabataean occupation of Auranitis, whereas several writers gave us information about their history. Diodorus Siculus\(^\text{386}\) probably for his work utilised even the report of Hieronymus of Cardia, who participated in the campaign of Athenaios, a general of Antigonos.

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\(^{382}\) Wenning 2007, 25.

\(^{383}\) Bowersock 1983, 14; Graf 1990, 45

\(^{384}\) Knauf 1985, 106-108.

\(^{385}\) Wenning 2007, 26.

\(^{386}\) Diod. Sic. II, 48, 1-6: «τούτων δ’ ἡμών διευκρινημένων μεταβιβάσαμεν τὸν λόγον ἐπὶ τὰ ἔτερα μέρη τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ μῆ τετευχότα τῆς ἀναγραφῆς, καὶ μάλιστα τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἀραβίαν. αὐτὴ γὰρ κεῖται μὲν μεταξὺ Συρίας καὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ παντοδαποὶ ἔθνες διείληπται. τὰ μὲν οὖν πρὸς τὴν ἐω μέρη κατοικούσιν ἄραβες οὗς ἀνομάζουσι Ναβαταίους, νεμόμενοι χώραν τὴν μὲν ἔρημον, τὴν δὲ ἄνυδρον, ὄλγην δὲ καρποφόρον. ἔχουσι δὲ βίον ἄστρικόν, καὶ πολλὴν τῆς ὑμέρου χώρας κατατρέχοντες ληπτεύοσιν, ὄντες δύσμαχοι κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους, κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἄνυδρον χώραν λεγομένην κατεσκευασθέντες εὐκαιρία φρέατα, καὶ ταύτα πεποιηκότες τοῖς ἀλλοεθνεῖς ἄγνωστοι, συμφεύγουσιν εἰς τὴν χώραν ταύτην αἰκινθῶν. αὐτοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰδότες τὰ κατακεκρυμμένα τῶν ὑδάτων, καὶ ταύτ᾽ ἀναγόντες, χρύνται δαμιλέσι ποτοῖς; οἱ δὲ τούτους ἐπιδιώκοντες ἀλλοεθνεῖς σπανίζοντες τῆς ὑδραίας διὰ τὴν ἄγνωσιν τῶν φρεάτων, οἱ μὲν ἀπόλουσι διὰ τὴν σπάνιν τῶν ὑδάτων, οἱ δὲ πολλὰ κακοπαθήσαντες μόνης εἰς τὴν οἰκεῖαν σωζόνται. διόπερ οἱ ταύτην τὴν χώραν κατοικούντες ἄραβες, ὄντες δυσκατοπολέμητοι, διαπερνοῦν ἄδουλώτωι, πρὸς δὲ τούτος ἐπῆλυν μὲν ὑγειόνα τὸ παράσαν, οὐ διασέξονται, διατελοῦσι δὲ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν διαφυλάττοντες ἀσάλευτον. διόπερ οὐ τοῦ Ασσυρίων τὸ παλαιόν οὐθ᾽ οἱ Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν, ἐπὶ δὲ Μακεδονῶν βασιλέως ἰδυνήθηκαν αὐτοὺς καταδιωκόσασθαι, πολλὰς μὲν καὶ μεγάλας δυνάμεις ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦς ἀγανόντες, οὐδὲποτε δὲ τῶς ἐπιβολὰς συντελέσαντες. ἦστι δὲ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ναβαταίων καὶ πέτρα καθ᾽ ύπερβολήν ὁχρά, μίαν ἀνάβασον ἔχουσα, δὴ ἂς κατ᾽ ὀλγίους ἀναβαίνοντες
Monophtalmos against Petra and the Nabataeans and was appointed to supervise the gathering of asphalt in the Dead Sea region. It was, indeed, after the coming of Alexander the Great that Nabataeans appeared: they were drawn as nomads or semi-nomads, mostly shepherds and traders, always un-enslaved and proud of their liberty.

According to Diodorus, the Nabataeans were only one of the Arabian tribes, devoted to pastoralism and nomadism. Their number was low, although they were the richest Arab tribe thanks to the commerce of frankincense and other spices. Furthermore, Diodorus reported that these Arabs gathered together for an annual festival near a certain rock, where they deposited all their goods and even their old men, women and children.

Next extensive references to the Nabataeans come from the books of Maccabees: in 168 BCE the Jewish high-priest Jason fled to the «Arabian tyrant» Arethas in Petra. The relationship between Nabataeans and Judaeans had to be good: the First Book of

ἀποπέθηκαν τὰς ἀποσκευάς: λίμνη τε μεγάλη φέρουσα πολλῆς ἄσφαλτον, εξ ἣς λαμβάνουσιν ούκ ὀλίγας προσόδους...».

387 asier. Sc. XIX, 94, 1: «Ἀντίγονος δ’ ἀκινδύνως ἀνακητησάμενος τὴν τε την Σιρίαν πάσαν καὶ Φωικην ἐπεβαλεῖστε στρατεύειν ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν τῶν Ἀράβων τῶν καλομέγνων Ναβαταίων, κρίνας γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος τούτο τῶν ἐαυτοῦ πραγμάτων ἀλλότριον εἶναι, προεχειρίζοτο τῶν αὐτοῦ φίλων Ἀθήναιοι, δοὺς δ’ αὐτῷ πεζοὺς μὲν εὐφέρονς πετακισκόλους, ἵππες δὲ τοὺς ἐπιτηδεύονς εἰς δρόμον εξακοσίους συνέταξεν ἐπιθέσας τις βαρβάρος ἄγων καὶ τὴν λείαν πάσαν ἀποτεμέμεθα».

388 Diod. Sc. XIX, 94, 4-5: «χρύσων δὲ τῷ νόμῳ τούτῳ διαλαμβάνοντες τοὺς τοῦτα κτιωμένους ἀναγκασθησάμεθα ῥαδίως ὑπὸ τῶν δυνατῶν ἔνεκα τῆς τοῦτον χρείας ποιεῖν τὸ προστασάμεθα. τρέφουσι δ’ αὐτῶν οἱ μὲν καμήλους, οἱ δ’ δὲ πρόβατα, τήν ἐρήµον ἐπιπέμποντες. οὐκ ὁλίγων δ’ ὄντων Ἀραβικῶν ἐνδῶν τῶν τῆν ἐρήµον ἐπιπεμβόντων οὕτω πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων προέχουσι ταῖς εὐπορίαις, τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντες οὐ πολὺ πλείους τῶν μυρίων; εἰῶθησαν γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ἄλλοι κατάγειν ἐπὶ θαλάσσαν λιβανωτὸν τε καὶ σύμφωνα καὶ τὰ πολυτελέστατα τῶν ἀρώματων. διαδεχομένοι παρὰ τῶν κοµζόνων ἐκ τῆς Εὐδαιμονος καλομέγνως Ἀραβίας».

389 Diod. Sc. XIX, 95, 1: «τὰ μὲν οὖν νόµια τῶν Ἀράβων τοιαῦτ’ εἶναι συµββήκεναι. ὑπογινοῦ δ’ αὐτοῦς οὐσίας πανηθέρως, εἰς ἣν εἰῶθησαν οἱ περίοικοι κατανίκειν οἱ μὲν ἀποδοξάσαντοι τῶν φορτίων, οἱ δ’ ἀγοράζοντες τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρησίμων, εἰς ταύτην ἐπιπεριδίασαν, ἀπολιπόντες ἐπὶ τινος πέτρας τὰς κτήσεις καὶ τοὺς πρεσβύτουσαν».

Albeit Arethas is just called Arabian tyrant, we know that then it was a dynastic name for Nabataean kings. Scholars have generally traduced this ruler Aretas I, placing him at the beginning of the Nabataean king list. II Mac. V, 5-8: «ευρεσίν οὐκ ἔχει τῶν πλουτῶν τῶν ἤλιων ἀρχηγὸς τῆς πόλεως ο Μενέλαος εἰς τὴν ἀκρότολον ἑπιγαίνοντα δ’ ηδονὴν καὶ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους τῆς πόλεως ὁ Ἀράβων ἀρχηγός εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἑπιγαίνοντα δ’ ἀλλὰς ἀδραπους καὶ τούτους ἀρχηγοὺς ἀναχωμένοις συνεπιλήσας διασπείρας εἰς τὴν μεγάλῃ δοκιμῇ διασπέρας εἰς τὴν ἀνάφθονα λαβών φυγαὶ πόλεως καὶ τῆς Αμμαν καὶ ἀπεθάνει περας πολλος ὄντων καὶ τοῦτο τῆς ἀκρόπολις ἐπιχειρεῖ τὸν Ἀράβων τοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀρχηγοὺς πολλοὶ εἰς τοῦ πολεμοῦς ἀρχηγοὺς καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἀρχηγοὺς εἰς τὴν ἀμάντην ἐξεββάσθη». - 68 -
Maccabees and Flavius Josephus reported in a similar way that Judas Maccabaeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan and met the Nabataeans, who greeted them peacefully. The peace between Hasmonaean and Nabataean was preserved even after 100 BCE, when Alexander Jannaeus attacked the free port city of Gaza, that asked help from the Nabataeans. Many scholars have seen in this episode the turning point from friendly to hostile relations between Jews and Nabataeans. However, that Aretas II was recalcitrant to help Gazans, would suggest that Hasmonaean conquest of the city did not influenced the Nabataean economic activities in the region: according to Jeaffrey Pearson, a defeat of Jannaeus at Gaza would have been a disaster for Nabataeans, who should have to face with the growing power of Ptolemy Lathyros, king of Egypt. The help requested by Gaza undoubtedly showed that the Nabataeans had to constitute an important force in the political framework of the area. It seems clear that the picture of a nomadic people outlined by Diodorus did not fit with the historical picture drawn by the books of Maccabees, which showed a well organised and sedentary people. From the books of Maccabees, however, Auranitis was depicted as a region with scattered fortified cities with many nomad tribes. Bosra was probably the most important settlement of the area already in the 2nd century BCE: it was fortified before 163 BCE, when Judah sacked and burned it.

Nabataeans in Strabo were depicted in a different way: they occupied the same territory described by Diodorus, but they seemed to be a sedentary people. Their capital city was an important crossroad for trading and there were many foreigners, even Romans. Furthermore, their cities had no defensive walls, the kings had an absolute power, but

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391 *Mac. V, 24-25*: «καὶ Ιουδας ὁ Μακκαβαιος καὶ ἱωναθαν ὁ ἀδελφος αὐτοῦ διέβησαν τὸν Ἰορδάνην καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν ὁδὸν τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἐν τῇ ἑρήμῳ καὶ συνήτησαν τοὺς Ναβαταῖους καὶ ἀπήνησαν αὐτοῖς εἰρήνην καὶ δηλήσαντο αὐτοῦς πάντα τὰ συμβάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ Γαλαϊδίδι»

392 *Joseph. A/ XII, 335*: «Ἰουδας δὲ ὁ Μακαβαῖος καὶ ὁ ἀδελφός αὐτοῦ ἱωνάθης διαβάντες τὸν Ἰορδάνην πετάμον καὶ ὁδὸν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τριῶν ἀνύψαστες ἡμέρας τοὺς Ναβαταῖους εἰρηνικῶς ὑπαντῶσιν περιπυγάνοισιν».

393 *Joseph. A/ XIII, 360*: «τῶν δὲ Γαζαίων ἄντεχόντων καὶ μὴς ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνδείας μήτε ὑπὸ τοῦ πλῆθους τῶν ἀναιρεομένων ἐνδείκτων, τὸν γὰρ ὅποιον ὑπέμεινον παθεῖν ἡ ὑπὸ τῷ πολεμῷ γενέσθαι, προσπετήγειρεν δ’ αὐτῶν τὴν προσφυσιν καὶ Ἀρέτας ὁ Ἀράβων Βασιλεὺς ἐπίσης ἤτοι καὶ ἀυτοὺς σύμμαχοις».  


395 *Pearson 2011, 18.*

396 *Peters 1977, 264.* *Mac. 26*: «καὶ ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν συνελημμένοι εἰςίν εἰς Βοσσορά καὶ Βοσσόν ἐν Ἀλεμοίς Ἀσσυρὶ καὶ Καρναϊ πᾶσαι αἱ πόλεις αὐτῶ ὑμεῖς καὶ μεγάλαι».  

397 *Mac. 28*: «καὶ ἀπέστρεψεν Ιουδας καὶ ἡ παρεμβολή αὐτοῦ ὅποι ἡ τὴν ἑρήμον Βοσσορά ἄφιν καὶ καταλάβετο τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν ἐν στόματι βομβαίας καὶ ἔλαβεν πάντα τὰ σκύλα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐνέστρεψεν αὐτὴν πυρὶ».  

398 *Strabo XVI, 4, 21*: «πρῶτοι δ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς Συρίας Ναβαταίου καὶ Σαβαίοι τῆν εὑδαίμονα Ἀραβίαν νέμονται, καὶ πολλάκις κατέτρεχον ἀυτῆς πρὶν ἡ Ρωμαίων γενέσθαι: νῦν δὲ κάκεινι Ρωμαίου εἰςίν ὑπῆκοι καὶ Σύροι. μητροπολίς δὲ τῶν Ναβαταίων εἰςν ἡ Πέτρα καλουμένη… γενόμενος γοῦν παρὰ τοῖς Πετραίοις Ἀθηνόδωρος, ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος καὶ ἡμῖν ἑταίρος, διηγεῖτο θαυμάζων: εὑρεν γὰρ ἐνδημοῦντας ἐφ’ ἐπολλοὺς μὲν Ρωμαίους πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἔξων: τότες μὲν ὁδός ὁρὰν κρινομένους πολλάκις καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλους καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιχωροῦς, τῶν δ’ ἐπιχωρίων οὐδένας ἀλλῆλος ἐγκαλοῦντας, ἀλλὰ τὴν πάσαν εἰρήνην ἄγοντας πρὸς ἔαυτος.»
their houses were luxurious because built with marble, the territory administered by
Nabataeans was good for agriculture and livestock. Strabo’s principal source was his
friend Athenodorus of Tarsus, a Stoic who was Augustus’ teacher of philosophy and
visited Petra, their capital city. However, Athenodorus, being a western foreign,
built not understand several tribal aspects of the Nabataean society. In his
book, Strabo seemed to combine his various sources, influenced by old and
contemporary accounts: moreover, in some way he compared two different styles of
life, the one of the Ituraeans, devoted to brigandage, and the one of the Nabataeans,
previously bandits but at his time not nomads anymore.
The Nabataeans, then, probably became sedentary during the 2nd century BCE, but it
seems likely that in their society many people continued to follow the nomadic style of
life: the abovementioned episode of Judas and his brother Jonathan is further reported
in the Second Book of Maccabees, where it is written that they were faced by a force of
5000 Arabs with 500 horsemen. These Arabs, who had to live in the Nabataean territory,
were nomads and, once defeated, made an alliance with Maccabees and went back to
their tents.

Moreover, another passage of I Maccabees described the flight of John to the Nabataeans,
who were friends of Jews, in 160 BCE: however, in Madaba the «sons of Jambri», another
Arab tribe, took John. The passage reflects a more complicated situation: together with

399 Strabo XVI, 4, 26: «σύφρονες δ’ εἰσίν οἱ Ναβαταίοι καὶ κητικοί, ὡστε καὶ δημοσία τῷ μέν μειωθαί τὴν ὀψίαν ζημία κεῖται, τῷ δ’ αὐξάσιται τιμαί. ὁλιγόδουλοι δ’ ὄντες ὑπὸ τῶν συγγενῶν διακονοῦνται τὸ πλέον ἢ ἄλληλαν ἢ αὐτοδιάκονοι, ὡστε καὶ μέχρι τῶν βασιλεῶν διατείνει τὸ ἔθος. συσσίτια δὲ ποιοῦνται κατὰ τρισκαίδεκα ανδρώτους, μουσουργοὶ δὲ δῶς τῷ συμποσίῳ ἐκάστῳ. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐν οἴκῳ μεγάλῳ πολλὰ συνέχει συμποσία: πίνει δ’ ὄοιδες πλέον τῶν ἐνδέκα ποτηρίων ἄλλῳ καὶ ἄλλῳ χρυσῷ ἐκτίμῳ. αὐτοὶ δ’ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ δημιουργός ὡστε πρὸς τῷ αὐτοδιάκονῳ καὶ ποτ’ ἀντιδιάκονον τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ αὐτῷ γίνεσθαι: πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ δήμῳ δίδωσιν εὐθύνας, ἐσθ’ ὅτα καὶ ἐξετάζοταν τὰ περὶ τὸν βίον: οἰκήσεις δὲ διὰ λίθου ποιοῦν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἀτεχνῶν δ’ εἰρήνην: εὐκαρπὸς ἢ πολλὴ πλῆθος ἐλάιου, χρύσα δὲ σημαίνων, τρύπατα λεικοτρίχα, βόες μεγάλοι, ἤπειρος ἢ χώρα: κάμηλοι δὲ τὴν ὑποφυγὴν ἀντ’ ἐκείνων παρέχονται [...]».

400 On the debits to Athenodorus and his vision of the Nabataean customs, see WRIGT 1969; DUECK 2000, 10-11; WINNING 2007, 34-36.

401 WINNING 2007, 34.

402 SAEFRAI 2006, 257-258 on the problem of the two different descriptions of Nabataea in Strabo.

403 I Mac. XII, 10-12: «εἰκεθεν δ’ ἀποσπάσαντες σταδίους ἐννέα ποιομένων τὴν πορείαν ἐπὶ τὸν Τιμόθεον προσέβαλον Ἀραβὲς αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐλάττους τῶν πεντακισχιλίων ἵππεος δὲ πεντακοσίας. γενομένης δὲ καρπεράς μάχης καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ιουδαν διὰ τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ βοήθειαν εὐμερησάντων ἐλαττωνυθέντες οἱ νομαδές ήσσον δοῦναι τὸν Ιουδαν δεξάς αὐτοῦ ὑποχομένοι καὶ βοσκήματα δίωσαν καὶ ἐν τῷ λοιπῷ ύφελθαν αὐτοῦ, Ιουδας δὲ ὑπολαβὼν ὡς λίθῳ καὶ πολλοὶ διὰ χρησίμους ἔπεχωρήσαν εἰρήνην ἄνειν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ λαβόντες δεξάς εἰς τὰς σκηνὰς ἑξωρισθήσαν».

404 I Mac. IX, 35-36: «καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἀδήλφον αὐτοῦ ὑγομένον τὸν ὅχλου καὶ παρεκάλεσεν τούς Ναβαταιοὺς φίλους αὐτοῦ τῷ παραθέσαι αὐτοῖς τὴν ὑποσκευήν αὐτῶν τὴν πολλὴν καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ ιερεὶς ἱερατεῖα καὶ συνέλαβον ἱωνικὴν καὶ πάντα ὡς ἑχειν καὶ ἀπήλθον ἑμόνευσαν». Josephus has given us the same account, even if he called this tribe «the sons of Amaias»: JOSPEH AJ XIII, 10-11: «ιουαθήσεται γνωσι τοῦ βασιλείαν εἰπ’ αὐτῶν ἥκοντα πεμπεῖ τὸν ἀδήλφον ίωινικὴν καὶ ἑγέτειν λεγόμενον πρὸς τοὺς Ναβαταιούς Ἄραβας, ἵνα παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἀποθῆκη τὴν ὑποσκευὴν ἐως ὁ πολεμήσασιν πρὸς βασιλείαν ἧσσαν γὰρ φίλοι, τὸν δὲ ίωινὴν ἀποίκα πρὸς τοὺς Ναβαταιοὺς
the Jews and the Nabataeans, there were other powerful tribes who had to control small parts of the Transjordan area, within the presumed Nabataean territory. We are relatively well informed about the foreign policy of Nabataeans, while we ignore the real structure of their government: despite the complexity of the region administered by them, the Nabataeans, under king Obodas I during the first quarter of the 1st century BCE, enlarged their kingdom obtaining the territories in Moabitis and Galaaditis previously conquered by Alexander Jannaeus, who retreated his troops because worried about a Jewish rebellion in his kingdom. However, the new Seleucid king, Antiochus XII Dionysus, launched an attack against the Nabataean kingdom, probably little after 86 BCE. He was eventually killed during a battle near the village of Cana: the power vacuum allowed Aretas III to take control in Damascus at least until 72 BCE, when Tigranes of Armenia took the city. After a period of a strong central authority, due to the retreat of Tigranes and the battle for the Judaean throne between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, in 63 BCE Pompey decided to intervene: it seems likely that the Roman general prepared an invasion of Nabataean kingdom, but he never realised it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KING</th>
<th>REIGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARETAS (ḥrrt) I</td>
<td>c. 168 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARETAS II</td>
<td>c. 120-96 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBODAS (’bdt) I</td>
<td>c. 96-85 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RABEL (rb’l) I</td>
<td>c. 85-84 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARETAS III Philhellen</td>
<td>84-62 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBODAS II</td>
<td>62-59 BCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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AJ XIII, 391: «ὁ δὲ ταύτα πάντα ἐμπρήσατο διείβαζα ταύτη τῆς δύναμιν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀραβίας. ἀναχωροῦτος δὲ τῶν Ἀραβῶν τὰ πρῶτα, ἐπεὶ μετὰ μιρίων ἱππέων εξαίρετος ἐπιφανείαν ἀναπείνας τούτοις Ἀντίοχος καρτερίῳς εἰμάχετο, καὶ δὴ νικὸν ἀπέθανεν παραβοήθῳ τῷ πολοῦντι μέρει. πεσόντος δ’ Ἀντίοχου καὶ τὸ στρατηγεία φεύγει εἰς Κανᾶ κἀκεῖνος, ἐνθα τὸ πλεύν αὐτῶν λιμῷ φθοφείρεται». 
The Nabataeans were able to preserve a sort of independence for over 170 years, although many governors of Syria planned an invasion of their country\footnote{Josephus remembered an abortive expedition of Scaurus against the Nabataeans, who paid him a sum of 300 talents: \textbf{Joseph.} A\textit{t} XIV, 80-81: \textquoteleft«Σκαύροι δ’ ἐπὶ Πέτραν τῆς Ἀραβίας στρατεύοντας καὶ διὰ τὸ δυσάλωτον εἶναι τά ἐν κόκυλῳ δηοῦντος αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ στρατεύματος λιμήνας Ἀντίπατρου κατ’ ἔντολὴν Ἕρκανοὐ σήμερον έκ τῆς Ιουδαίας καὶ τά ἄλλα, ὀσῶν ἐνέδει, παρεήνει, πεμφθεῖς δὲ πρὸς Ἀρέταν πρεσβευτῆς ὑπὸ Σκαύρου διὰ τὴν ἑπάρχουσαν ξενίαν πεῆθε αὐτὸν ἀργύρους ὑπὲρ τοῦ μη δημιουργῆσαι τὴν χώραν δοῦναι, καὶ αὐτός ἐξομηθῆς τριακοσίων ταλάντων γίνεται. καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἠλοῦ τὸν πόλεμον Σκαυρὸς ὑπὸ ἤτον αὐτοῦ ἢ συνέβαινεν Ἀρέταν ἐπιθυμεῖ τούτῳ γενέσθαι βουλόμενος».}; we do not know exactly why they tried to attack the Nabataean country, Appian reported that there were troubles with some unidentified Arabs\footnote{Appian has referred that Marcus Philippus, and then Lentulus Marcellinus, spent their tenures defending the province against some Arabs, but we do not know which Arabs were: \textit{App. Syr.} 51: \textquoteleft«Συρίας δ’ εὐθύς ὁ Πομπήιος Σκαύρον τὸν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ἐστὶν ἄρθρων γενόμενον ταμίαν ἐον ἡγεῖσαι, καὶ ἡ βουλὴ Φιλίππων ἐπὶ Σκαύρῳ τὸν Μάρκιον, καὶ Μαρκελλίνων Λένιλον ἐπὶ τῷ Φιλίππῳ, ἀμφῷ στρατηγικῷ κατ’ ἀξίωσιν. ὅλα τῶν μὲν ἐκατέρω διετῆς ἐτρίβη χρόνος, τοῦ γε τοιαῦτας ένοχλούντας Ἀραβὰς ἁμωμοῖον [...]».}, probably it was due to their richness, because the Nabataeans after Actium appear to be a good ally for the Roman Empire\footnote{Earlier, Appian specified Nabataean Arabs: the debate is still open. \textbf{Sartre} (1979, 45, \textit{Bowersock} 1983, 33), supported the thesis that Appian knew there was a difference, while \textit{Starcky} (1966,909), \textit{Schürer} (1973, 245), \textit{Sherwin-White} (1984, 271), \textit{Gatter} (1988, 163), \textit{Kasher} (1988, 119), \textit{MacDonald} (1993, 323) remembered \textit{Strabo} XVI, 4,21 in which he said that Nabataeans used to overthrive Syria: \textquoteleft«πρώτος δ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς Συρίας Ναβαταιοῦ καὶ Σαβαίου τῆς εὐδαιμονίας Ἀραβίας νέμονται, καὶ πολλάκις κατέτρεχον αὐτῆς πρὶν ἢ Ῥωμαίών γενέσθαι: νῦν δὲ κάκεινι Ρωμαίοις εἰσὶν ὑπήκοοι καὶ Σύροι [...]».}. It seems likely that there were problems on the borders, especially in the Auranitis: we have already seen that there still were nomadic populations with a certain freedom degree and it seems likely that Romans tried to impose to Nabataeans to control these nomads.

According to the author of the \textit{Bellum Alexandrinum}, Malichos, king of Nabataeans, helped Julius Caesar to struggle Pompey, sending cavalry in Alexandria\footnote{\textit{Sartre} 1979, 49-53.}; however, Flavius Josephus did not report that this king was among them who sent army to...
Caesar⁴¹². Albeit many scholars did not give importance to it⁴¹³, Josephus’ silence is noteworthy if we consider that he quoted Jamblicus and Ptolemy son of Sohaemus, but not Malichos among the Arabs chiefs. It seems likely that Malichos’ policy was different by his predecessors: he probably chose to not intervene in the war between Caesar and Pompey, and then to give support to the Parthians when they invaded Jerusalem⁴¹⁴. The disaffection from the Roman party caused the deterioration of the good relations between the Jews and the Nabataeans during the second half of the 1st century BCE: the two client kingdoms had to deal with more complex political situation, involving all the Mediterranean area.

In 31 BCE, Herod the Great, at the instigation of Antony and Cleopatra, invaded southern Syria, where Nabataean ruled: in this way he became «protector of the Nabataeans»⁴¹⁵. The Octavian’s victory at Actium and the death of Anthony and Cleopatra did not substantially change the situation: Herod, thanks to his skills, became friend of Octavianus and Agrippa. In 23 BCE the Roman princeps appointed him as protector of several regions previously ruled by Nabataeans: Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis⁴¹⁶, and in 20 BCE even the Gaulanitis⁴¹⁷. According to Robert Wenning, Romans thus created a sort of buffer zone between Syria and the Arab groups, in addition they could control the trade from the East⁴¹⁸.

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⁴¹² Josephus AJ/XIV, 127-129: «Μετὰ δὲ τὸν Πομπήιον θάνατον καὶ τὴν νίκην τὴν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ Καίσαρ πολεμοῦντι καὶ Ἀγίαντον πολλὰ χρήσιμον αὐτὸν παρέσχεν Ἀντιπατρός ὁ τῶν ἱερακίων ἐπιμελητὴς εἰς ἐντολής Ἰορκανοῦ. Μιθριδάτης τε γὰρ τὸν Περγαμηνήν καμίζοντι ἐπικουρικὸν καὶ ἀδυνάτως ἔχοντι διὰ Πελεσίου ποιήσασθαι τὴν πορείαν, περὶ δὲ Ασκάλωνα διατύβωσεν, ἤκεν Ἀντιπατρός ἄγων ἱερακίων ὁπλίτας τρισχίλιοις εἰς Ἀραβίας τοὺς συμμάχους ἠλθεῖν ἐπηράματεύσατο τούς ἐν τέλει: καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῶν οἱ κατὰ τὴν Σύριαν ἄπαντες ἐπτεκόουροι ἀπολείπεσθαι τῆς ύπὲρ Καίσαρος προθυμίας οὐ θέλοντες, ἱμβλικὸς τὸ δυνάστης καὶ Πολεμαρχὸς ὁ Σαούμι Λύβανον δρός οἰκῶν ὁ τὸ πόλης σχεδὸν ἄπτασιν».

⁴¹³ SARTRE 1979, 47; BOWERSOCK 1983, 39.

⁴¹⁴ Dio Cass. XLVIII, 41,5: «αὐτῆς ἑκοφθήσας, ἀπόνως κατέσχε. καὶ ὁ μὲν ταύτα δειχνεῖ, καὶ χρήματα πολλὰ μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὡς ἐκάστῳ, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Ἀντιγόνου τοῦ τοῦ Ἀντίοχου καὶ Μᾶλχου τοῦ Ἡβαταιοῦ, ὅπι τῷ Πακόρῳ συνήραν, ἐστέραξε [...].»

⁴¹⁵ Josephus AJ, XV, 159: «τοιαῦτα δὲ πληγῇ χρησμαίνων φρονήματος μὲν ὁ δὲ πρῶτος αὐτοῖς ἀφήνω Τράχωνις τε βεβαιωκότας δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὁικείας συμφορὰς τῆς Ἡρώδου στρατηγίαν εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν εἶξαν καὶ προστάτην ἀπεφίλησαν τοῦ ἐκάστου».

⁴¹⁶ Josephus AJ XV, 343: «[...] καὶ δίδωσι Ηρώδη τὴν βασιλείαν ὅπου βουλευταί βεβαιοῦσιν τῶν ἐς αὐτοῦ γεγονόσιν, καὶ χώραν ἐπὶ τὸν Τράχωνα καὶ Βαταναίαν καὶ Ἅφραντιν [...]».

BJ I, 20,4 (398): «Μετά δὲ τὴν πρώτην ἁκίαδα προστίθησαν αὐτοῦ τῇ βασιλείᾳ τὸν τὸν Τράχωνα καλούμενον καὶ τὴν προσεχὴ Βαταναίαν τῆς καὶ τὴν Αύραντιν χώραν εἰς αἰτίας τοιαῦτα [...]».

⁴¹⁷ Josephus AJ/XV, 360: «Καίσαρ δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦτον μοίραν οὐκ ὁλίγην ὤσπερ Ἡρώδη δίδωσιν, ὠμολογῶν τοῦ Ἡρώδου ὁ μεταξὺ τοῦ Τράχωνος ἢ καὶ τῆς Γαλαλαίας. Οὐλάθαι καὶ Παναία καὶ τὴν περίς χώρας ἐγκαταγμίσθην δ᾽ αὐτὴν ταῖς ἐπιστροφέσις τῆς Σύρας ἐνεπλήσθη μετὰ τῆς ἐκείνου γνώμης τὰ πάντα ποιεῖν».

BJ I, 20,4 (400): «ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπελεύσατο Ζηνόδωρος, προσέκυψεν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν μεταξὺ Τράχωνος καὶ τῆς Γαλαλαίας ἡγήσατο ἄπασαι [...].»

⁴¹⁸ Wenning 2007, 33. Kashier (1988, 157-160) remembered the unheard demands of Ituraeans and Nabataeans to have the control of the region.
During the reign of Obodas II, the emerged importance of Syllaios, already known around 25 BCE as guide of the unsuccessful expedition of Aelius Gallus to Arabia Felix.\(^{419}\)

**FIG. 6.** Herod’s Defence System in the North-East of his Kingdom (KASHER 1988, 161, map 15).

\(^{419}\) Dio Cass. LIII, 29,3: «ἐν ὑδε ταύτ’ ἐγίνετο, καὶ ἄλλη τις στρατεία καὶν ἀρχὴν τε ἄμα καὶ τέλος ἔσχεν: ἐπὶ γὰρ Ἀραβίαν τὴν εὐδαιμονα καλουμένην, ἣς Σαβὼς ἔβασιλευεν, Αἴλιος Γάλλος ὁ τῆς Λυγύπτου ἄρχων ἐπεστράτευσε»;

Strabo XVI, 4, 23: «ἐπὶ τούτοις μὲν οὖν ἐστειλε τὴν στρατείαν ὁ Γάλλος. ἐξετάσθη ἀδερ' αὐτὸν ὁ τῶν Ναβαταίων ἐπίτροπος Συλλαῖος, ὑποσχόμενος μὲν ἡγήσεσθαι τὴν ὅδον καὶ χορηγῆσαι ἄπαντα καὶ συμπράξειν, ἄπαντα δ' ἐξ ἐπιβολῆς πράξας, καὶ οὔτε παράπληθοι ἀσφαλῆ μηνύσων οὐχ ὅδον, ἀλλὰ ἀνοδιαὶ καὶ κυκλοπορίαι καὶ πάντων ἀπόρων χωρίοις ἢ βαρχίας ἀλμένοις παραβάλλων ἢ χοιράδων υψάλων μεσταῖσι τεναγώδεις πλείστον δὲ αἱ πλημμυρίδες ἐλύσειν ἐν τοιούτοις καὶ ταῦτα χωρίοις καὶ αἱ ἀμπύτεις, πρώτον μὲν δὴ τοῦθ’ ἄμφοτερα συνέβη τὸ μακρὰ κατασκευασσάθαι πλοῖα, μηδενὸς δ᾽ ὅντος μὴ ἐσομένου κατὰ θάλαταν πολέμου. οὔδε γὰρ κατὰ γῆν σφόδρα πολεμισταὶ εἰσιν ἀλλὰ κάτηλποι μᾶλλον οἱ Ἀραβὲς καὶ ἐμπορικοὶ, μήτη γε κατὰ θάλαταν […]»;

Nat. Hist. VI, 32,160: «Romana arma solus in eam terram adhuc intulit Aelius Gallus ex equestri ordine, nam C. Caesar Augusti filius prospevit tantum Arabiam».
Syllaios, as prime minister of Nabataean kingdom, instigated an uprising in Trachonitis in 12 BCE, when Herod visited Rome. Syllaios went to Rome at least twice to get Augustus’ endorsement against Herod: during one of his trips, Obodas died and Aretas IV ascended the throne. He accused Syllaios of poisoning the former king for securing the throne for himself. Aretas, even without the initial approval of Augustus, had a long and stable reign: he adopted a policy of good neighbourly relation and fruitful partnership. The situation seemed to worsen in 27 CE, when Herod Antipas rejected his wife, daughter of Aretas, to marry Herodias: in addition, the death of Philip, tetrarch of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis and Batanaea, in 34 CE, led to a sort of “war of succession” between Nabataeans and Jews. The Emperor Tiberius decided to annex the tetrarchy to the province of Syria, but he preserved its fiscal separation.

Some scholars have thought reliable Paul’s story: he said that he escaped from Damascus while a governor of the king Aretas was garrisoning the city. The sentence of Paul is very explicit and do not leave doubts: however, there are no proofs of a Nabataean occupation of the Damascene in that period. Aretas probably preferred to retire his army in 12 BCE, when Herod visited Rome.
when Tiberius, little before his death, asked to the new governor of *Provincia Syria* to march against Nabataeans.\(^{425}\)

Aretas died three years after Tiberius: the new king was his son, Malichos II, about whom we do not know much. The anonymous treatise on the Red Sea, the *Περίπλους τῆς Ἑρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης*, written probably during the 1st century CE, remembered Malichos, the king of Nabataeans.\(^{426}\) In addition, Malichos continued the peaceful policy of his father, helping Romans during the Jewish revolt.\(^{427}\)

The last Nabataean king was Rabbel II, for whom there are no literary sources: at his death, his kingdom became part of the Roman Empire and was transformed in the new *Provincia Arabia*. By the Roman perspective, the annexation was not a very important event, rarely remembered in the writings of Roman historians;\(^{428}\) it was considered a pacific annexation.\(^{429}\) However, some doubts emerge if we consider a passage in Ammianus Marcellinus, which suggested that there were revolts.\(^{430}\)

Furthermore, Werner Eck has underpinned the thesis of an involvement of the other regions within the Bar Kokhba revolt.\(^{431}\) Cassius Dio, in fact, clearly affirmed that the entire world was in turmoil and Hadrian was forced to send there his best generals, among them Julius Severus.\(^{432}\) We know that Haterius Nepos, the governor of Arabia probably from the end of 130 until 134/135 CE,\(^{433}\) and the *legio III Cyrenaica* were involved in the revolt and that Nepos himself was awarded by *ornamenta triumphalia* together with the governor of Syria, Publicius Marcellus, and Iulius Severus.\(^{434}\) It seems likely that at least the Judeans who lived in Transjordan area took part to the revolt.

Another proof could be represented by a letter from the so-called Bar Kokhba archive, according to the reading of Hannah Cotton: in fact, it seems likely that at least some

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Nabataeans participated to the Judaean Revolt under Hadrian rule. If this reading was right, there would be several hints of a spread and prolonged unrest among Nabataeans.

3.3.2 Epigraphic and Papyrological Sources

The Nabataeans lived in a region characterised by different languages and alphabets: furthermore, their commercial activity probably let them to have contacts with more distant people, borrowing words of different origins. In particular, the Auranitis represented the most complex region within the Nabataean territories, first of all because the Nabataean rule was intermittent and localised. In addition, in the region many languages were spoken: together with Greek and Aramaic, in fact, a different language, nowadays named Safaitic language, was spoken and written. Unfortunately, the best part of the inscriptions, both Aramaic both Safaitic, has not given us information for reconstructing the history of the territory and of communities who lived there.

The first secure reference to the Nabataeans is a text from the Zenon papyri, dated to 257 BCE (PSI 406), where a certain Herakleides, chariot driver of Zenon, reports on the activities of Drymilus and Dionysus, sellers of slave-girls. After selling a girl for 150 drachmas in Auranitis (εἰς Αὔρανον), they encountered Nabataeans (συνεσκεάσατο ὑς Αναβαταίους). We do not exactly know the nature of these Nabataeans: however, the text is of great significance because it attests their presence in Auranitis from at least the 3rd century BCE.

Recently a new papyrus (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309) was published: it seems very likely that these epigrams were written by the 3rd century BCE poet Posidippus of Pella. One long and very fragmented epigram (10 A.-B., col. II 7-16), contained in the section called «λιθικά», reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots \ldots \kappa\upsilon\upsilon\lambda\nu\delta\omicron & \quad \upsilon \\
\ldots \ldots \chi\alpha\rho\iota\acute{\alpha}\omicron\omicron & \\
10 \quad \ldots \ldots & \acute{\iota} \nu \\
\ldots \ldots \beta\alpha\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}\omicron\omicron & \\
\ldots \ldots & \upsilon \\
15 \quad \ldots \ldots & \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \\
\ldots \ldots & \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \\
\ldots \ldots & \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \\
\ldots \ldots & \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \\
\ldots \ldots & \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \upsilon \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{Ναβαταίος}\]

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436 MacDonald 2003b, 44.
437 Safaitic inscriptions are written in an ancient North Arabian dialect related to Arabic. The graffiti were carved by nomads of southern Syria and northern Jordan. For more references, see MacDonald 2000, 32-36.
438 According to Tcherikover (1937, 17), the amounts for the slaves was minimal for Ptolemaic standards.
439 For further references, see Vitelli 1917, nr 406; Tcherikover 1937, 17; Orrieux, 1983, 44-45; Graf 1990, 69-75; Hackl, Jenni and Schneider (eds.) 2003, 364-367.
440 The University of Milan purchased it in 1992. In 2001 Guido Bastianini and Claudio Gallazzi, in collaboration with Colin Austin, published the editio princeps, with 112 epigrams in 606 verses.
The word «Ναβαταῖος» is presumably related to the following line, as suggested by David Graf⁴⁴¹: if he is right, the Nabataeans would be a sedentary people already in the 3rd century CE, with a kingdom and a cavalry force. It seems relatively hard that Nabataeans reached their independence already in the 3rd century: the editors of the papyrus, followed by other scholars, have suggested that the word «βασιλεύς» meant something like «local leader», related to the still semi-nomadic nature of the Nabataeans in that period⁴⁴². Even more interesting is the integration ἵππομάχων, that the editors of the text considered an antiphrasis: Strabo, in fact, clearly declared that their land was lacking horses⁴⁴³. Furthermore, Paola Bernardini and Luigi Bravi have underlined that Arab horses had no reputation among Greeks and they were not listed among selected breeds⁴⁴⁴. However, Graf has rightly underpinned that Strabo’s account about Nabataeans and their use of camels instead of horses was probably a topos⁴⁴⁵; another proof is given by the account of the Second Book of Maccabees, in which it appears clear that there were Arabs who had horsemen in their army⁴⁴⁶. The reconstruction made by David Graf seems better than another interesting reading, given by Francesca Angió, who has completed the missing text with «οὐκ ἄμαχοι»: in her view, Posidippus considered the Arabs, according another common topos, «not invincible». In this way, the poet would both exalted the Ptolemies and denigrated the Seleucids, who were not able to subdue Nabataeans⁴⁴⁷.

In any case, this papyrus seems to confirm the presence of a Nabataean king already during the 3rd century CE. Another proof is given by a Nabataean stele found in 1985 by Joseph Milik and now preserved in the National Museum of Damascus: he dated the stele to the 3rd century BCE on the base of a paleographic analysis⁴⁴⁸. On the second line, it also named a «king of the Nabataeans» (mlk nbtw). Albeit the date of the inscription is controversial and the provenience is unknown, it seems likely that in the 3rd century there was a sort of leader of the Nabataeans, who represented an important local counterpart who faced Seleucids and Ptolemies. The presence of a king of the Nabataeans already in the 3rd century BCE can be definitely confirmed by the new Posidippus’ papyrus (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309), above analysed.

Unfortunately, it seems that we have no information about the ruler of the area during the last centuries BCE. An inscription (CIS 174), previously dated to the reign of Malichos I on the base of paleographic comparison, is now believed to be written during the reign of Malichos II⁴⁴⁹.

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⁴⁴¹ Graf 2006, 58.
⁴⁴² Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 119; Magnelli 2004, 152. However, after Graf 2006, Magnelli (2008, 49) has partially retracted his hypothesis.
⁴⁴³ Strabo XVI, 4, 26. See above, note 399.
⁴⁴⁴ Bernardini and Bravi 2002, 159; Casanova 2004, 225.
⁴⁴⁵ Graf 2006, 59.
⁴⁴⁶ II Mac. XII, 10-12: see above, note 403.
⁴⁴⁷ Angió 2007, 50.
⁴⁴⁹ Nehmé 2010, 477, n. 2.
We may regard as an earlier historical reference to Malichos an inscription published by Joseph Milik\textsuperscript{450}: it named king Malichos and was found at Mu’arribah, just 6 km from Bosra.

The idea that Malichos’ reign was a period of decline derived from the epithet readable on several inscriptions of Rabbel II, his successor: «he who brought life and deliverance to his people»\textsuperscript{451}. Moreover, we should remember that the corpus of royal epithets is very small and we could not see it as a critic to Malichos II.

Most numerous are the inscriptions which named the last Nabataean king, Rabbel II\textsuperscript{452}: this increased attestation led many scholars to believe that in this period Bosra assumed more commercial and political power\textsuperscript{453}. In particular, an inscription dated to 93 CE and found at Imtan (\textit{CIS} 218) was considered as the final proof of the change of the capital city, from Petra to Bosra\textsuperscript{454}: it referred to «Dushara, god of Rabbel our lord, who is at Bosra». The inscription alone does not provide enough evidence for being sure that Bosra was the new capital city. According to Zbigniew Fiema, the hypothesis of a decline of Petra cannot be supported: there are no proofs of a decline of trade routes passing through Petra; instead the city became an important centre of the incense-processing industry\textsuperscript{455}; moreover, the inscription could allude to Dushara who is at Bosra, and not Rabbel\textsuperscript{456}. Otherwise, the well attested increased building activity in Auranitis was perhaps linked with the insurrection of Damasi, attested in Safaitic inscriptions\textsuperscript{457}.

The Roman decision to move the capital city of the new province from Petra to Bosra cannot be considered as a proof of a previous change. it seems more likely that Romans elected Bosra as capital city because it was located in a strategic position, principally after the Jewish revolt. The city, in fact, became the seat of the \textit{legio III Cyrenaica}, as confirmed by numerous inscriptions found there\textsuperscript{458}. Undoubtedly, Bosra became an important city already during the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE: Philip had instituted there the \textit{Acta Dusaria}, agonistic festivals for commemorating both the god Dushara and the victory of Octavianus Augustus at Actium\textsuperscript{459}. Probably in the same period the city reached the status of metropolis\textsuperscript{460}.

Some textes mentioned a «war of the Nabataeans»\textsuperscript{461}: the date of the inscriptions is contested; however, Maurice Sartre has argued that it was tied with the Roman annexation in 106 CE. This hypothesis was corroborated by a number of Safaitic inscriptions which remembered «the year when the Nabataeans had revolted against the Romans»\textsuperscript{462} or «the year of the struggle between Rome and the Nabataeans» or «the year when the Banu-Rum plundered the Nabataeans»\textsuperscript{463}: the fact that the Nabataean area was \textit{redacta in formam provinciae} only in 111-112 CE\textsuperscript{464}, could suggest the presence of

\textsuperscript{450} Milik 1958, 242-243; MacDonald 2003b, n. 56.
\textsuperscript{451} Cantineau 1932, 9; Hackl, Jenni and Schneider (eds.) 2003, 402-404.
\textsuperscript{452} At least 11 Nabataean inscriptions with the name of Rabbel II were found. See Naime 2010, 477-484.
\textsuperscript{453} Sartre 1985, 54.
\textsuperscript{454} Milik 1958, 233-235; Hammond 1973, 38; Bowersock 1983, 73.
\textsuperscript{456} Wenning 1993, 94-95.
\textsuperscript{457} Winnett 1973; Graf 1989.
\textsuperscript{458} Sartre 1982b.
\textsuperscript{459} Fiema 2003, 46.
\textsuperscript{460} Bowersock 1983, 121-122.
\textsuperscript{461} CIS V, 220, 2820, 3680, 4866.
\textsuperscript{462} Winnett and Harding 1978, 406, n. 2815.
\textsuperscript{463} CIS V 3680, 4866. Lewin 2014, 127; MacDonald 2014, 150-151.
\textsuperscript{464} Bowersock 1983, 84.
turmoils for at least 5 years. Moreover, Roman coins did not reveal an uphill struggle in annexing the new territories: their legends proclaimed Arabia as *adquisita*, not *capta*\(^{465}\).

However, as already sketched out, we might suppose that several groups of rebels had to exist even among Nabataeans, at least until the revolt of Bar Kokhba. The Greek letter contained in the so-called archive of Bar Kokhba is rather famous and has been interpreted in various ways, after the first edition of Baruch Lifshitz\(^{466}\). Hannah Cotton has edited the letter solving several paleographic and linguistic *cruces* of the first publication\(^{467}\):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Σουμαίος Ιωναθη} & \\
\text{Βειανου και Μα-} & \\
\text{[c]αβαλα[i] χαιρειν.} & \\
\text{ἐπιδη ἔπεμα πρός} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

5 ύμας Ἄγρηππαν επου-
δάσατε πέμεε, οἱ
θύρῳ σου[γ] και κίτρια,
δ[ναθ] ὑπακοῆς ἐται
ἱ[τ]αι ἀρεμβολὴν ίου-

10 δ[α]ινων και μή ἄλως
π[ο]ϊς ἀνηται(*). ἐγράφη
δ[ε] Ελπνετί διὰ
τό ἡμᾶς μή εὗρη-
��[κ]ναὶ Ἐβραῖς.

15 ἐ[…] ……σι. αὐτόν
ἀπολύσαι τάχιον
δ[α] ἡν ἐρτήν
κα[π] χή ἀλλως ποῖη-
κ[ται]

20 Σουμαίος
ἔρωσο

Cotton has argued that *P. Yadin 52* was sent by a Nabataean to the Jewish rebels: in this way she has well explain the need to choose Greek instead of another Semitic writing. A Nabataean writer could not know the script used by Judaeans. Moreover, Greek language was well known in Palestine, since it had a long history in the Near East before the coming of Romans\(^{468}\). A clear proof of the spread of Greek language is given by the

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465 LEWIN 2014, 126.
466 LIFSHITZ 1962, 241;
467 For a complete list of all the editions, see COTTON 2003, 143, note 45.
468 As Fergus MILLAR (2014, 153-154) has recently well shown, Greek language spread among Jewish elites of Jerusalem. We can expect that it was widespread also among Nabataean elites.
archive of Babatha: here, in fact, several texts were written in Greek, albeit the writers were all Semitics. However, very recently Michael Owen Wise has argued that Soumaios could be compatible with a Jewish name and that there are no sufficient proofs that he was Nabataean: according to him, in fact, it is likely that the Jewish Soumaios apologised himself for not having found a scribe who knew only Greek.

Furthermore, a Safaitic inscription found in Wadi el-Hasad, in the north-eastern part of the provincia Arabia, close to the city of Gerasa, mentioned the rebellion of Hlist son of M'n for three years against Nfs, identified with Haterius Nepos, governor of Arabia. The escape of Babatha from Arabia to Judaea could be explained with the operations of Nepos in the territory that he administered. Glenn Bowersock had already believed of the possibility of an involvement of Jews who lived in Transjordan, but, according to all the evidences, it seems more likely that other peoples took part to the revolt. The Nabataeans, indeed, were not subdued as easily as Roman sources wanted us to believe in.

3.3.3 The Coinage

The supposed earliest Nabataean coinage has been recognised into a group of anonymous bronze coins, which bear the head of Athena with a crested Corinthian helmet on the obverse and a Nike with a letter Λ on the reverse. They resemble the gold staters of Alexander the Great, already imitated by Seleucids. Their datation has been questioned: while many scholars believed they were minted at the end of the 2nd century BCE, Rachel Barkay has recently divided their issues in three groups: the first one has been dated to the second half of the 3rd century BCE, in concomitance with the Third Syrian War between Ptolemies and Seleucids (246-241 BCE); the other two groups are more numerous and have circulated during the 2nd century BCE.

After these first anonymous issues, a clearer Nabataean royal coinage was minted in the 1st century BCE, after Aretas III conquered Damascus in 84 BCE. These first coins derived from Seleucid prototypes: the depiction of the portrait and the use of Tyche on the obverse were very close to Greek coins. The most impressive characteristic, however, was the legend in Greek: in fact, the king proclaimed to be ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ. These

469 Cotton (1999, 227) has claimed they were all Jews. The question is still open: about the languages of the Babatha’s archive, see also Hartman 2016, 57-64.
470 Wiest 2015, 245-251.
471 Abbadi and Zayadine 1996. See also Mor 2003, 126-127.
473 These coins were already considered to be Nabataean by Robinson 1936, 290-291, because of their spread in the Nabataean territory.
475 Barkay 2011, 71.
476 Actually the first mints were anonymous: they were alternatively attributed to Aretas II or Aretas III, but it seems much more possible they were issued during the rule of Aretas II. See Meshorer 1975, 9-12, 85-86; Bowsher 1990; Schmitt-Korte 1990, 125-126; Weiser and Cotton 1996, 268, n. 240; Schmid 2008, 361. Several examples are known to have been overstruck older Ptolemaic coins, but this does not suggest an early date: see also Hoover 2006, 109.
477 Schmid 2001a, 408.
characteristics could represent the efforts of the king to create a new strong rule in the Damascene, replacing the previous Seleucid kingdom.\textsuperscript{479} The coins issued after 63 BCE were quite different since they had much more «local» connotations. Obodas II, unknown by literary and epigraphic sources, seemed to have ruled for only three years, as the coins attested\textsuperscript{480}. Only six coins of the kingdom of Obodas II have been found\textsuperscript{481}, but they have preserved common characteristics: the language was Nabataean and the inscription «Obodas the king, king of the Nabataeans» replaced the attribute ΦΙΛΕΛΗΝΟΣ of the previous coins. This issue could be a response to the aborted tentative of Aemilius Scaurus to conquer Petra in 62 BCE: in 58 BCE Scaurus, who was at that time aedilis in Rome, minted a coin depicting Aretas kneeling down near a camel with an olive branch.\textsuperscript{482} The coin probably represented a Scaurus’ attempt to promote himself rather than a real conquest of Nabataean kingdom\textsuperscript{483}. According to Joseph Patrich, these coins represented a reaction against the Hellenistic culture: more than to the Hellenistic culture, it seems likely that the Roman invasion led Nabataeans kings to adopt an autarchic policy, spurning foreign influences.

The successors of Obodas II resumed some characteristics of Aretas III coins. Malichos I minted coins only for three years of his reign (35-33 BCE), using Greek letters for the first year and then changing to Nabataean writing. They were probably «war money», tied to the fights against Herod the Great\textsuperscript{485}. The Roman influence in the area became clear even in the coins issued by Obodas III, who started an important change in the weight of the coins: during the eighth year of his reign, Obodas decreased the weight of silver pieces one third. The reform tied with the reorganisation of the Roman coinage of 23 BCE\textsuperscript{486}. The influence of Rome was more evident during the Aretas IV rule: the king, who got the throne in delicate circumstances, issued many types of coins simultaneously. After 5 BCE, the head of the king was crowned by a laurel wreath, a Roman symbol, instead of diadems, usually used by Hellenistic kings: the adoption of the laurel wreath, now attested even on Jewish coins\textsuperscript{487}, could be seen as an acknowledgement of the new dominant regional power, represented by Romans\textsuperscript{488}. Furthermore, another important feature on one Obodas’ issue was the introduction of a new reverse motif, showing a camel, instead of the classical eagle of other issues\textsuperscript{489}. As seen above, the camel was used by Scaurus and in the later issues after the creation of the Roman province of Arabia: it was a typical motif of the conquerors for representing their new territories and its presence on coins issued by a Nabataean king represents an unicum.

Albeit the Roman influence was clear in the weight of the coins and in the use of laurel wreath, the costume of Aretas IV, Malichos II and then of Rabbel II was the one of Parthian kings: it consisted in a tunic with a V-neck, decorated with a double row of

\textsuperscript{479} However, the coin’s weight standard resembled the Phoenician rather than the Attic one, probably because there was an economic link between Nabataeans and Judeans and Phoenicians.

\textsuperscript{480} SARTRE 2001, 516; SCHWENTZEL 2005, 152.

\textsuperscript{481} MESHERER 1975, nr. 17.

\textsuperscript{482} BARKAY 2015, 437.

\textsuperscript{483} SARTRE 1979, 45; BOWERSOCK 1983, 35; Contra: WENNING 2007, 32, who claimed Scaurus subjugated Aretas.

\textsuperscript{484} PATRICH 2007, 96.

\textsuperscript{485} MESHERER 1975, nos. 12-19; SCHMITT-KÖRTE and PRICE 1994, 98.

\textsuperscript{486} SCHMITT-KÖRTE and PRICE 1994, 99-101 for further references.

\textsuperscript{487} PATRICH 1990, 133, n. 47; JENSEN 2006, 187-188.


\textsuperscript{489} BARKAY 2006, 100-101.
pearls. The hairstyle, instead, was typically Arabian\(^490\), already seen on Qedarites coins\(^491\), with a round-cut fringe and long braids on the neck.

No great changes happened during the rule of Malichos II and the last king, Rabbel II, albeit there was a cessation of coinage in the last six years of Malichos reign: Glen Bowersock tried to explain this lacuna with the Jewish War, but the same scholar has remembered that the coins of this period were not abundant\(^492\).

### 3.3.4 Archaeological Finds

Although historical sources cleared that Nabataeans were known and ruled over the major part of the nowadays Jordan at least during the 3\(^{rd}\) century BCE, no material evidences of the 3\(^{rd}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) century BCE could be assigned to them. The Nabataean material production was born during the end of the 2\(^{nd}\) and the beginning of 1\(^{st}\) century BCE. According to Stephan Schmid\(^493\), in the first stage of their settlement, the Nabataeans produced material culture, in particular coins, as seen above, and pottery. No definite remains of architecture or sculpture dated to the first half of the 1\(^{st}\) century were found\(^494\). Therefore, the Nabataeans started to produce pottery after they became more sedentary: in a first period, the pottery was just imitation of Hellenistic products, not easily identifiable\(^495\), during the second half of the 1\(^{st}\) century BCE a distinctive Nabataean style especially developed.

In this context, the Auranitis seemed to be a very eccentric area, extraneous to the great commerce and to foreign influences\(^496\). The pottery dating between the 2\(^{nd}\) century and the first half of the 1\(^{st}\) century BCE was characterised by the presence of few forms, products of the development of vases from the Iron Age\(^497\), like the neckless jars called «Holemouth Jars»\(^498\) (FIG. 7, nr. 1), or bowls and basins with a triangular lip\(^499\). Other pieces were imitations of Hellenistic pottery, spread in southern Levant region, like globular table amphorae, found in Gaulanitis, especially in Gamla\(^500\), or globular jugs, spread even in the Decapolis area\(^501\) (FIG. 7, nos. 2-6).

The period between the 1\(^{st}\) century BCE and the 1\(^{st}\) century CE was characterised by a major integration in a more global context: the importation of good increased and pottery production varied considerably. This phase was in fact characterised by a technological advance and an evident differentiation: the area of Bosra remarkably imported Nabataean pottery from the south. Bosra well represented the attempt of urbanisation made by Nabataeans, in

\(^{490}\) Wenning 2003, 148; Kropp 2011, 185-186; Kropp 2013, 68.

\(^{491}\) Mildenberg 2000, 385, nos. 71, 75, 80, 85.

\(^{492}\) Bowersock 1983, 72.


\(^{494}\) Schmid 2001b, 371.


\(^{496}\) Renel 2010, 539.

\(^{497}\) Renel 2010, 518.


\(^{499}\) Dornemann 1990, type XXIV; Greene and Amr 1992, f. 6, nr. 1.

\(^{500}\) Berlin 2006, 30, f. 2.8, nr. 3.

\(^{501}\) Lapp 1961, type 71.1. It was found in Pella (McColl 1992, pl. 78, nr. 1, pl. 81, nr. 14) and in Gerasa (Kehrberg 2004, f. 1.8).
particular under the rule of Rabbel II, in the Auranitis\textsuperscript{502}: the decorations and mouldings of the Nabataean arch can be compared with the capitals found in Petra\textsuperscript{503}.

Furthermore, a new quarter in the area east to the arch developed following a new orientation: the arch represented the limit between the Bronze Age settlement and the new Nabataean city\textsuperscript{504}. This new quarter probably followed the orientation of the sanctuary of Dushara, imposed for religious purposes\textsuperscript{505}. The use of the arch itself was an important Roman feature, spread throughout the province of Syria from the 1\textsuperscript{st} century

\textsuperscript{502} Dentzer-Feydy et alii 2007, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{503} Dentzer et alii 2010, 143.
\textsuperscript{504} Dentzer 2007, 54.
\textsuperscript{505} Dentzer 1985-1986, 406-407.
In particular, Nabataean fine vessels, dated to the reign of Aretas IV and predominantly of Rabbel II, were found. This kind of pottery belonged mostly to the sub-phases 3b and 3c of Nabataean production, as divided and analysed by Stephan Schmid: the forms became thicker; the main shapes were constituted by very sharp bowls and plates with a typical vertical rim; the painting is very characteristic, too, covering the entire body with small elements, consisting of stylized palmettes, geometric patterns and pomegranates (FIG. 8, nos. 1-4).

In Auranitis, these productions were both imported and locally imitated, together with amphorae with grey or red fabric with a superficial white slip. The presence of this pottery is an important marker, because its spread was limited in the southern part of modern Jordan: it is practically not attested in the Decapolis area or in the territories ruled by Jews. Outside the Nabataean kingdom and the Arabian Peninsula, in fact, Nabataean pottery is scarcely documented north to Madaba: few fragments were found in Egypt, at Philadelphia-Amman, at Caesarea Maritima and at Antioch on the Orontes. The scarcity of the findings, however, does not allow any conjecture about a presence of a trade of Nabataeans in these areas: much more interesting is the massive presence of Nabataean pottery at Gaza, which had to be an important place for the Nabataean trade even after the Hasmonaean conquest.

A great change has occurred during the half of the 1st century CE among the cooking pottery, perhaps related to a change of food customs: in particular, the Kefar Hananya

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506 WILL 1989, 342.
508 SCHMID 1997, 413; 2007b, 314-316.
509 GLUECK 1965, 6-7.
510 PARR 1965, 533.
511 For a complete review of all the findings, see SCHMID 2007, 62-67.
512 About the pottery at Gaza, see SACHET 2000.
513 RENEL 2010, 526-527.
type 4a was spread throughout the region\textsuperscript{514}. The presence of Herodian lamps is another confirm of the improved contacts with near regions: these lamps were then replaced by the so-called «Palestinian lamps», made in various workshops, among which Gerasa\textsuperscript{515}. From the analysis of distribution of pottery, it follows that the northern region of the Nabataean kingdom cannot be considered «culturally» Nabataean\textsuperscript{516}: this suggestion is confirmed by the study of the sculptures and monuments\textsuperscript{517}. Geneviève Bolelli’s study on local sculptures has shown that the sculptors did not respect the anatomy and the organic construction of the human figure, with a tendency to geometric forms\textsuperscript{518}. These features were probably related to the particular stone used for creating these sculptures, namely the basalt\textsuperscript{519}. The motifs, too, were often unknown in the Graeco-Roman repertoire: they were especially constituted by a number of beasts or mythological animals flanking or standing above small human figures (FIG. 9). For their strong regional character, Robert Wenning is right when says that «the sculptures should be termed Hauranite rather than Nabataean»\textsuperscript{520}. According to Geneviève Bolelli, a certain number of these statues could be compared to more ancient specimens manufactured in North Syria and Palestine between the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and the 1\textsuperscript{st} millennium BCE\textsuperscript{521}: albeit this suggestion is fascinating and intriguing, it still remains difficult to demonstrate, because of the distance in the time and space. It seems at least odd that an ancient tradition was replaced in another place after many centuries: it seems more likely that the use of the same material led the sculptors to use the same techniques utilised centuries before. Furthermore, we cannot forget that all the pieces were found in sanctuaries: the motifs of fabulous animals were common in the East under the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Kingdom and even after the Roman conquest\textsuperscript{522}. The exceptionality of the architecture of this region was already clear to the scholars who visited it at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} and the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{523}. The clearest example of Nabataean architecture is given by the monuments of the city of Bosra. The area west from the Nabataean and Roman ruins of Bosra had to be inhabited at least since the 4\textsuperscript{th} millennium BCE\textsuperscript{524}. Frank Braemer has dated to the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} millennium BCE a big reservoir\textsuperscript{525} and a rampart\textsuperscript{526}. Because of these fortifications, we can suppose that the site was very important for the area, usually dominated by small villages with no walls\textsuperscript{527}. According to various soundings, the site was probably inhabited during the 1\textsuperscript{st} millennium BCE, but no structures have been found. In this period, however, the principal roadway, running from west to east and following an old itinerary through the steppe, had to exist.

\textsuperscript{514} See previous chapter.
\textsuperscript{515} KEHRBERG 1989, nos. 15-21.
\textsuperscript{517} Contra NEGEV 1977, WENNING 1987, 35-36; NETZER 2003, 102-106.
\textsuperscript{518} BOLLELLI 1985-1986, 315.
\textsuperscript{519} For the technique used, see MOUNIF 2003, 221.
\textsuperscript{520} WENNING 2001, 312.
\textsuperscript{521} BOLLELLI 1985-1986, 336-341. KALOS (1999, 788) has claimed that the Hellenistic period was in continuity with the previous period, with no break.
\textsuperscript{522} DENTZER and DENTZER-FEYDY 1991, 121-127; DENTZER 2003a, 203.
\textsuperscript{523} DE VOGÜÉ 1865-1877, 33; BUTLER 1907, 366-369.
\textsuperscript{524} DENTZER, BLANC and FOURNET 2010, 141
\textsuperscript{525} BRAEMER 1988, 133.
\textsuperscript{526} BRAEMER 2002.
\textsuperscript{527} BRAEMER 2007, 8.
The settlement greatly developed during the second half of the 1st century CE: the first datum that has emerged after French excavations is that Bosra was not built following a pre-constituted plan, but through a series of different city planning.

FIG. 9 Nr. 1: Sphinx integrated in a base (DENTZER 2003a, Abb. 16, DUNAND 1934, nr. 274); nr. 2: altar or base from Canatha (DENTZER 2003a, Abb. 2, DUNAND 1934, nr. 166); nr. 3: statue from Seeia (DUNAND 1934, nr. 38; BOLELLI 1986, pl. XI, nr. 49); nr. 4: statue from Canatha (DUNAND 1934, nr. 64; BOLELLI 1986, pl. V, nr. 16).
During the Nabataean rule, a new district was erected in the eastern part of the modern city, that corresponds to the central part of the ancient city, too. In particular, a big structure with a portico, interpreted as a sanctuary or a palace and covered by a later church, was built. This new area of the city seems to have been geometrically planned: it was enclosed by an arch, defined «Nabataean» because of part of its decoration which resembles the decoration found at Petra. It was, in fact, built as a traditional Roman arch, but completed to the east by two pillars with Nabataean half-columns and «horned capitals». These pillars have a slightly different orientation: in this way the arch masked a change of alignment of this part of the settlement. According to the excavators, the area was substantially unaltered since the 5th century CE, as if there was a Nabataean nucleus that continued to live near the new city after the Roman annexation. However, between the 2nd and 3rd century the so called «Trajan’s Palace» was built south from the Nabataean arch. We cannot know which kind of structure was initially erected because its remains were covered by a palace during the 5th century CE.

The Nabataean city probably extended over the eastern quarter, because fragments of other horned capitals, re-utilised for later structures, and Nabataean pottery have been found in other parts of the city. Furthermore, in the central part of the city, some houses and probably small baths, dated between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, have been unearthed. Literary sources confirmed the skills of Nabataeans in the canalisation of water: the presence of baths before the Roman annexation is indeed plausible. However, later changes covered most of the ancient structures in the area and it is difficult to understand with certainty which kind of structures there were before: in particular the erection of a big thermal structure, named «thermes du Sud» by French excavators, occupied the best part of the area at the end of the 2nd century CE: it seems very likely that new baths replaced old baths on the same area, reutilising parts of the previous structures. The city knew a huge development between the 2nd and the 3rd century, when, beyond the baths in the southern area, there were erected a theatre, another thermal complex, a monumental exedra and a temple devoted to Rome and Augustus. Moreover, under the Severans, the streets were decorated with columns and workshops.

Apart from the monuments of Bosra, the most important building known in the northern part of the kingdom and recognised as Nabataean is the sanctuary of Seeia (FIG. 6). The sanctuary had a regional vocation, point of contact between the sedentary farmers and the nomadic shepherds. According to inscriptions, the sanctuary was built from 33 BCE onwards: during that period, the territory of Seeia was probably under the Egyptian rule; however, the region of Canatha was devastated during the war between Jews and Arabs.

528 BLANC, DENTZER and SODINI 2007;
529 DENTZER 2003b, 110.
530 PIRAUD-FOURNET 2007, 147.
531 DENTZER, DENTZER-FEYDY and BLANC 2001, 461.
532 DENTZER, BLANC and FOUENET 2002, 94.
536 LITTMAN 1904, 85-90; LITTMAN, MAGIE AND STUART, 1921.
After the battle of Canatha, fought briefly after the battle of Actium, Nabataeans established their rule over the area 537, though circa ten years later Herod took Auranitis.

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537 Joseph B/1, 19.2 (366-368): «Ἐρρεψεν μέντοι καθ’ Ἡρώδην τὸ βούλευμα: πρώτον μὲν γὰρ ρūσια κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἄγων καὶ πολὺ συγκροτήσας ἱππικόν ἐπαφήσαν αὐτοῖς περὶ Διόσπολιν εκράτησεν τε καὶ τοὺς καρτερὸς ἀντιπαραταξαμένων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἔτη τοῦ μὲν γίνεται κ νίμα τῶν Ἀράβων, καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς Κάναθα τῆς κούλης Συρίας ἀπειροὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ Ιουδαίους ἔμενον. ἔνθα μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως Ἡρώδης ἐπελθὼν ἐπειράτο προμηθέσετον ἀφηγέσθαι τοῦ πολέμου καὶ στρατόπεδον ἐκέλευε τειχίζειν. οὐ μὴν ὑπήκουσεν τὸ πλῆθος, ἀλλὰ τῇ προτέρᾳ νίκῃ τεθαρρηκότες ὤρμησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀραβὰς καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὴν πρώτην ἐμβολὴν τραπέντας ἐδίωκον, ἐπιβουλεύεται δὲ Ἡρώδης ἐν τῇ διώξει τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Κανάθων ἐπιχυρίους ἀνέντος Ἀθηνίων, ὡς ἢν αὐτῷ τῶν Κλεοπάτρας στρατηγῶν αἰεὶ διάφορος: πρὸς γὰρ τὴν τούτων ἐπήθεισαν ἀνασαραρηκότας οἱ Ἀραβὲς ἐπιστρέφονται καὶ συνάψαντες τὸ πλῆθος περὶ πετρώδη καὶ δύσβατα χωρὶς τοὺς Ἡρώδου τρέπονται πλείστον τε αὐτῶν φόνον εἰργάσαντο. οἱ δὲ διασωθέντες ἐκ τῆς μάχης εἰς Ὁρμίζα καταφεύγουσιν, ὅπου καὶ τοῦ στρατόπεδου αὐτῶν περισχόντες αὐτανδρόν εἶλον οἱ Ἀραβὲς»;

AJ XV, 112-119: «μετὰ δὲ ταύτα πολλὴ στραταὶ τῶν Ἀράβων εἰς Κάναθα συνήχει: χωρία δ’ ἐστὶ ταύτα τῆς κούλης Συρίας: Ἡρώδης τε προπεπυσμένος ἤκεν ἄγων ἐπὶ αὐτῶς τὸ πλείστον ἢς εἶχεν δυνάμεως, καὶ
The sanctuary proper consisted in three areas with three temples and was situated on a hill, only about 3 km from Canatha: a paved way (the so-called *via sacra*), coming from east, finished to the south-eastern arched passageway, known as the «Roman Gate»\(^{539}\). This arch open to a trapezoidal court with a temple on the south side: the entrance of the temple faces to the north, while the rear wall is integrated with the wall that encloses the entire complex. The temple was said to be «Nabataean» for its characteristically smooth capitals\(^{540}\). This area is separated by another court at north-west by a wall with another passageway called «Nabataean Gate»\(^{541}\): it opens to another irregular court, with lateral porticoes (FIG. 11)\(^{542}\); however, the French excavations have shown that Butler was wrong, because there was a unique passageway, flanked with two symmetrical buildings\(^{543}\). In the north-west part of this area a temple was erected: its western and southern side are covered by the walls of the sanctuary, the front was decorated with unusual Corinthian capitals, displaying heads protruded from the lower row of acanthus leaves: statues of humans and animals completed the decoration pattern of the façade\(^{544}\).
The cella was rectangular in shape, with the entrance on the long side\textsuperscript{545}; in this way the back wall was divided in three parts, according to a scheme recognisable in the near rural temple of Sahr al-Leja\textsuperscript{546} and in other Nabataean temples, like the ones of Qasr Rabb’a\textsuperscript{547}, Dibon\textsuperscript{548} and Qasr al-Bint\textsuperscript{549}. The temple was erroneously attributed to Dushara by Butler: starting from an inscription on a base written both in Greek and in local Aramaic, spread in Syria and Arabia. See actually the script was previously believed Nabataean for the similarities between the two scripts, but it is now recognised as a Hauranite variant of the Aramaic, spread in Syria and Arabia. See MACDONALD 2003b, 44-46, 54-55.

Klaus Shippmann linked them with the Fire temple tradition, which seemed to look more at East than at West: Franz Oelmann was the first to note a certain resemblance of certain «Nabataean» buildings of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE and 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE with the 5\textsuperscript{th}-4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE temple of Susa\textsuperscript{559}, believing a common origin in the old Syrian architecture. Klaus Shippmann linked them with the Fire temples, many of which built in the same period: according to him, the archetype of «Nabataean» temples in southern Syria was an Achaemenian model\textsuperscript{560}. Thomas Weber has pointed out

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{545} DENTZER 1990, 366 and KROPP 2010, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{546} Kalos 2003; Hauran IV.
\item \textsuperscript{547} Netzer 2003, 99-100.
\item \textsuperscript{548} Netzer 2003, 100-101.
\item \textsuperscript{549} Larché and Zayadine 2003; Netzer 2003, 68-72.
\item \textsuperscript{550} Actually the script was previously believed Nabataean for the similarities between the two scripts, but it is now recognised as a Hauranite variant of the Aramaic, spread in Syria and Arabia. See Macdonald 2003b, 44-46, 54-55.
\item \textsuperscript{551} DENTZER 1979, 326-327. The inscription was already published by LITTMANN, MAGIE and STUART (1921, nr. 767). The text is «ΣΕΕΙΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΗΝ ΑΥΠΑΝΕΙΤΙΝ ΕΞΘΚΥΙΑ» in Greek and «ΩΙ ΔΙ ΣΛΜΤΩ ΔΥΣΥΨΚΩ» in Aramaic.
\item \textsuperscript{552} contra Abdul-Hak 1951 and Sartrès 2001, 897-898, who believed it was a Mithraeum.
\item \textsuperscript{553} Freyberger 1998, 48; Kropff 2010, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{554} SEGAL 2013f, 213.
\item \textsuperscript{555} Littmann 1904, 89. It was a loan word from the Greek «Θεάτρον».
\item \textsuperscript{556} Butler 1916, 371; Masclé 1944, 36-37.
\item \textsuperscript{557} Hauran II: it was studied by a French équipe and was called «Si’ 8».
\item \textsuperscript{558} DENTZER-FEYDY 2003, 107; Kropff 2010, 11.
\item \textsuperscript{559} OELMANN 1921.
\item \textsuperscript{560} Schippmann 1971, 418 ff; Schippmann 1972, 355-356.
\end{itemize}
how the sculptures and the architecture of the temple of Sahr al-Ledja showed Mesopotamian influences, while Ehud Netzer was more inclined to believe that it was a regional type. Albeit they represented a clear regional expression, the hypothesis that they derived from Eastern prototypes cannot be excluded: in particular, an episode reported by Josephus could well explain the nature of the construction of at least some of these sanctuaries in southern Syria. In his Antiquities, in fact, Josephus remembered an episode usually forgotten by scholars: he said that Herod the Great, being eager to protect his people from the attacks of the brigands of Trachonitis, asked to a Jew from Babylon to transfer him and his family, with an army of 500 archers, into Batanaea. Moreover, Herod promised them that they would never pay tributes: persuaded by his pledges, many people went to this area. Here, Josephus specified that came even (but not only) Jews: it seems likely that the region was occupied by different people, who brought with them their costumes, traditions and different architectural styles. Rural sanctuaries in southern Syria probably recalled structures well known by the new settlers, who simply continued the same tradition.

In the past, even a particular type of tower was tentatively attributed to these «colonists» brought by Herod in the area: they were characterised by the presence of an artificial slope (the so-called «glacis») and with no entrances to the ground floor. However, as for the sanctuaries our knowledge does not permit to relate the coming of new people with a particular innovation of buildings. It is only clear that during the 1st century BCE, and in particular during its second half, this area knew a great impulse.

3.3.5 Conclusions

This brief analysis has shown that, from the 1st century BCE until the Roman annexation, southern Syria was not mostly Nabataean, as many scholars have even recently

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562 Netzer 2003, 102-115.
563 Joseph 1J/ XVII, 23-25: «Τότε δὲ Βοουλόμενος πρὸς Τραχωνίτας ἁγάλης εἶναι, κῷμην πόλεως μέγεθος οὐκ ἀποδέουσαν ἐγὼ Ἰουδαίων κίται ἐν μέσῳ, διυσμεβολόν τοι ποιεῖν τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις έξ ἐγγίονος ὑμημένος έκ τοῦ οὔξεος κακουργεῖν. Ἔπειτα οὖν Ἰουδαίον έκ τῆς Βαβυλωνίας σύν πεντακοσίων ἡπποτοξώτας πάσι καὶ συγγενικόν πλῆθες εἰς ἱκατὸν ἄνδρων τοῦ Ἑφραίμ πισχνούμενα κατὰ τούχας ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῇ ἔπ᾽ Δάφνη τῆς Συρίας διατάσαν Σατορνίνου τοῦ τότε στρατηγοῦ τοῖς ἐνοίκησιν αὐτοῦ δεδωκότας χωριόν. Οὐλαθάν όνομα αὐτοῦ, μετεπέμπτετο τούτον σύν τῷ πλῆθες τῶν ἐπομένων, παρέξειν υπασχνούμενος γίγν ἐν τοπαρχίᾳ τῇ λεγομένῳ Βαταναίᾳ, ὥριετο δὲ αὐτῇ τῇ Τραχωνίτι, βουλόμενος πρόβλημα τὴν κατοίκησιν αὐτοῦ κτάσαι, ἀποκλειόμενος γὰρ διὰ τοῦτον τὴν χώραν ἐπηγγέλλετο καὶ αὐτοῦς εἰσφοράν άπηλλαγμένους ἀπασάμενος, αἱ εἰσβολής γεγκοσκειν ἐν τῇ γῆν ἄρακτον παρασχόμενος».
564 Joseph 1J/ XVII, 26: «Τούτων πεισθεὶς ὁ Βαβυλώνιος ἁφικνεῖται καὶ λαβὼν τὴν γῆν φρούρια ώκοδομήσατο καὶ κώμην, Βαρθύραν όνομα αὐτῆς θέμενος, πρόβλημα δὲ ἐν ὁὐτὸς ὁ αὐτῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔγχριοις τὰ πρὸς τούς Τραχωνίτας καὶ Ιουδαίων τοῖς ἄΓιοι Βαβυλώνιος ἁφικομένους κατὰ θυσίαν ἔπει ἰεροσσυλώμιν τὸ ὁμι ληστείας ὑπὸ τῶν Τραχωνιτῶν κακουργεῖσαι, πολλοὶ τε ὡς αὐτῶν ἁφικοντο καὶ ἀπανταχόθεν, οἷς τὰ Ιουδαίων θεραπεύεται πάτρια».
565 Braemer et al. 1999.
566 Braemer et al. 1999, 169.
567 Kohlme 2010, 134.
believed \(^\text{568}\). Moreover, archaeological finds have not revealed a strong presence of Nabataeans also in Auranitis, except for Bosra and its surroundings: it seems likely that there was a widespread Nabataean population in the area, albeit the proofs are still weak. It remains hard to distinguish a precise ethnic group through the findings \(^\text{569}\). Dated inscriptions by the era of the Nabataean kings appeared in good quantity only about the half of the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century CE; they seem to respect the political boundaries, since the north controlled by Herodians used inscriptions dated by the Seleucid era, the tetrarchs and the Roman emperors \(^\text{570}\).

As seen, the literary sources remembered a presence of Nabataeans in the area at least since the 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) century, often mentioning them as simply Arabs; however, there is a clear distinction between Nabataeans, other Arabs and natives. Josephus several times made this difference: Antipater, for example, wanting to bring war against Malichos I crossed the Jordan and gathered an army made by Arabs and natives \(^\text{571}\); furthermore, the inhabitants of Trachonitis revolted against the Idumean garrison imposed by Herod and became brigands together with Arabs \(^\text{572}\). It appears clear that Josephus well knew that southern Syria was a melting pot of cultures. The «Arabs» could be in part nomads, who probably developed their own culture, as evident by the spread of Safaitic inscription east of Salkhad \(^\text{573}\).

Furthermore, in the region the presence of Greeks is attested: an inscription from the modern village of Dhunaibe cites the «Greeks of Danaba» \(^\text{574}\), in the territory of ancient Batanaea, in proximity to the Trachonitis. The inscription was dated to the second half of the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century CE \(^\text{575}\): according to Maurice Sartre, they were the colonists brought by Herod the Great for protecting the region or their descendants. For us it is important to have another proof of the heterogeneity of the area analysed. Moreover, it was unusual that a group designated itself in this way, instead of using its «εθνικός» \(^\text{576}\).

All these different styles of life, cultures, customs and religions influenced inexorably the region. The archaeological finds demonstrated that the models were not connected to political borders: the spread of the same kind of temple, as seen in the case of the temple of Seeia, did not allow to think that it was made by Nabataeans. Seeia well represented an example of indigenous architectural layer spread throughout the region. The pottery utilised was more probably the cheapest one: this is why Nabataean fine pottery is not very spread. It had therefore to be seen as a luxury product, not easy to find in the

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\(^{568}\) See as latest HACKL, JENNI and SCHNEIDER 2003 and NETZER 2003.

\(^{569}\) ALPASS 2013, 172-173.

\(^{570}\) STARCKY 1985-1986, 174; NEHME 2010, f. 5; ALPASS 2013, 179.

\(^{571}\) JOSEPH. AJ XIV, 277: «Επει δὲ Κάσσιος ἐκ τῆς ἱουδαίας ἀπήρεν, Μάλιχος ἐπεβούλευσεν ἀντιπάτρῳ τὴν τούτοις τέλευτην ἀσφάλειαν Ῥηγανοῦ τῆς ἁρχῆς εἶναι νομίζων. οὐ μὴν ἔλαβεν τὸν Ἀντιπάτρου ταῦτα φρονῶν, ἀλλὰ σιδῆμονος γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἐχώρει πέραν ἱορδάνου καὶ στρατὸν Ἀράβαν ἀμα καὶ ἐγχώριον συνήθοιρεν».

\(^{572}\) JOSEPH. AJ XVI, 292: «ἐπιπιθεῖται δὲ τῷ καιρῷ καὶ οἱ τὴν Ἰαχωνίτην ἐχόντες τῆς τῶν ἱουδαϊῶν φρουράς κατεξεισάσθαι καὶ ἄρσπριος χρώμηνει μετὰ τῶν Ἀράβων, οἱ ἔλεησάν τὴν ἐκείνων χώραν οὐκ ὁποί ὡφελείας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μνημοσικαίς ἀγαλμάτωρι τὰς ἁδίκιας ὀντες».

\(^{573}\) There is still a great debate about the nature of these inscriptions and of their writers. For further information, see MACDONALD 2000 and GRAF 2003.

\(^{574}\) IGLS XV, 228: «Οἱ ἐν Δαναβοίς Ἑλλήνες Μηνοφιλωί εὐνοιας ἐνεκέν».

\(^{575}\) SARTRE 1993, 133-134.

\(^{576}\) SARTRE 2009, 331.
northern part of the kingdom. Bosra, of course, was an exception, since it became one of the important cities for Nabataean kings during the 1st century CE.

A clear division of southern Syria in three parts, indeed, as well as outlined by Jacqueline Dentzer-Feydy, cannot be still accepted: the region had known many different cultures that interacted between each other, more than in the near regions, because the area was a crossroads of people. The attempt of the Nabataean kings to reinforce their influence in the region, especially during the 1st century CE, ended with a failure. According to all the evidences, it seems likely that last Nabataean king tried to give a more traditional character, stressing the centrality of his position. It was probably due to an already clear weakening of his power, which led to the creation of the province of Arabia when he died.

However, the probable direct involvement of Nabataeans in the revolt of Bar Kokhba let us believe that these attempts helped to form a strong sense of independence that was not completely suppressed with the creation of the new province of Arabia.

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577 Dentzer-Feydy 1988, 222-223.
578 Lewin 2011, 318.
CHAPTER 4: THE GREEKS (?) OF THE DECAPOLIS AREA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A group of towns that are collectively known as members of Decapolis and lie on the present territories of Jordan, Israel and Syria appear in literary sources as Greek πόλεις. Most of these cities are reported to have been founded by Hellenistic rulers, whereas most of them referred to Alexander the Great as their κτίστης or γενάρχης. Nonetheless, the archaeological evidence for these cities is rather modest in the period of Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdom: according to Fergus Millar, it is due to the fact that the area was dominated by war and political instability. Millar claimed that «we cannot expect to know much about the culture of Syria in this period, or whether there was, except along the coast, any significant evolution towards the mixed culture which came to be so vividly expressed in the Roman period, albeit an extensive expansion is clear during the Roman era, when thriving urban centres, which are based on Hellenistic-Roman culture, have emerged».

The creation of the collective term «Decapolis» was linked to Pompey's «liberation» of the «Greek» cities east of the Jordan from Hasmonean rule in 64-63 BCE. These cities probably have found a political support by Roman governors that can be explained through the attitude of the towns towards Greek culture. This is of particular interest: in fact, they were settled in an ancient cultural landscape, where many different peoples lived and where Decapolis cities had to deal with strong cultural traditions or were part of the same. It is hard to understand all the impacts that the surroundings cultures have had. However, the hypothetical unit made by Pompey was dismantled by Mark Antony and later Augustus. They abandoned Pompey's politics and favoured local client kings. Augustus for example added to the territories ruled by Herod the Great even the cities of

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579 SARTRE 2001, 82-84; BUTCHER 2003, 113; KROPP and MOHAMMED 2006, 126.
580 MILLAR 1987a, 130.
 الأمريكتين، بما في ذلك المدن كناثا ورافينوس، جدارا وحيبيس، بما في ذلك المدينة جدارا وحيبيس، بما في ذلك المدينة جدارا.:

Αυτοί αυτوύχοι έπροσθέσαν αυτούς πάλιν, και δέ βλέποντας φυλακήν του σώματος τίτλους αυτών ο Ψαλτής αυτός και Αυτός η Καίσαρας, θεωρούσαν τον όσον και ο περιπτώσεις και γεγονότων, καπάνος μέν τυγχάνει την αρχή του βασιλέως ήησαν. Κάκεινος μέν τυγχάνει της τΩν τΩν έπιμελείας ύιωλόγεις και μεριδιαρχών αυτών παρά του βασιλέως ήησαν. Κάκεινος μέν τυγχάνει της τΩν τΩν έπιμελείας ύιωλόγεις και μεριδιαρχών αυτών παρά του βασιλέως ήησαν.

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The question of what is behind the Decapolis opens the door to a large complex of problems relating to the political history of Syria and Palestine in Hellenistic and Roman times. The central question, since when a Decapolis may have existed, who were the members of that organization and for what purpose it was set up, are still not satisfactorily resolved. The hypothesis on the nature of the Decapolis ranged from a legacy of free cities that existed since the Great Pompey or even Alexander, to a common name for a geographic region with no administrative function. The objective of the rise of cities is seen to strengthen Greek-influenced culture against the indigenous peoples. For better clarifying the historical context of the Decapolis, it is therefore necessary to discuss the ancient sources even in detail. Furthermore, analysing the nature of these cities, the archaeological results and their geographical environment, in a transition area between Mediterranean and continental territories, will help us to understand if they were Greek πόλεις or just Semitic settlements with an external Greek veneer.

In the course of the 20th century, scholars have argued that the Decapolis was only a geographical term, because no literary source refers to a league or a confederation. Benjamin Isaac, however, re-discovered an inscription from Madytos, in the Thracian Chersonesos, today disappeared, in which was clearly attested that there was an equestrian official in the Decapolis district at the end of the 1st century CE. In 1992 the Aram Society held a first conference about the Decapolis at Oxford: most papers focused on single cities of the area and not on the meaning of the Decapolis itself, albeit David Graf argued that the use of the term «Decapolis» for the pre-Augustan era would be anachronistic even in a geographical sense.

The need to collect new studies on the area led the Aram Society to organise a new conference on the same theme more than 20 years later, in 2008, and recently, in 2013: although new excavations have given many results about single cities, no new proofs about the nature of the Decapolis turned up and scholars have preferred to focus their studies on peculiar aspects of life in the Decapolis area.

### 4.2 Geographical Background

As seen, for several decades scholars have defined the Decapolis as a geographical area located especially in nowadays south-western Syria and northern Jordan, from Damascus to Amman. The only exception was represented by the territory of the ancient city of Scythopolis, today Bet Shean in Israel, on the western shore of the Jordan river. The cities of the Decapolis are located in a Mediterranean semi-arid and sub-humid bioclimatic zone. David Kennedy, quoting Horden and Purcell’s book on the Mediterranean

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585 Isaac 1981, 73.
history, has defined the region as a «virtual island», isolated from geographical environment: in fact, several cities of the Decapolis are located in an area well delimited on all sides. In the north the Wadi Yarmouk flows through it; in the west by the highlands overlooking the Jordan Valley; in the south by Wadi Wala and Wadi Mujib, which both flow into the Dead Sea; in the eastside is bordered by the desert. The long depression of the Jordan Valley runs north to the south, in a line parallel to the Mediterranean coast. During the past, this plateau has allowed the development of trades.

There is no doubt that water was the most important factor for agriculture and other activities, such as trade: precipitations represent the most significant resource of water, although the region comprises many plateaux divided by water courses, which supply the surrounding area. The presence of streams and wadis was important in the past because it made communications accessible: the direction of water courses run from east to west, which suggests a natural route.

Another crucial factor in human use of the area was the soil. The land consists mostly of a red and yellow Mediterranean soil, easily adapted to agricultural use, supporting various crops (cereals, grapes, olives, figs). Almost one third of the region is desert, with limited nutrients.

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588 KENNEDY 2007.
589 KENNEDY 2007, 52-55.
The principal kind of stone in this area is limestone: this makes a striking contrast to the lava fields which lie to the north, in the Hauran, in southern Syria, where basalt is the principal rock.

It is difficult to reconstruct the ancient climate, albeit Bernhard Lucke’s recent studies have shown that the character of the landscape of the northern Jordan did not change significantly since the Bronze Age.590

4.3 LITERARY SOURCES

The earliest mentions of Decapolis are in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Mark, written by 70 CE, and in the Gospel of Matthew, written by 90 CE.591 They report on events from the life of Jesus, who travelled in its territories.

In the gospel of Mark592 we read that Jesus casted demons out from the body of a man and drove them into a herd of pigs that plunged into the Sea of Galilee - an event that played on the east side of the lake in the territory of Gerasa or Gadara.593 Afterwards Mark talked about the travel of Jesus throughout the territory of the Decapolis after leaving the region of Tyre and the city of Sidon.594 Decapolis is designated as an area east of the Tiberias lake.

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591 Schnelle 1999, 218-219, 238.
592 Mark 8: «ἐλέγεν γάρ αὐτῷ, Ἑξέλθε τὸ πνεύμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [...] Ἡν δὲ ἐκεῖ πρὸς τῷ ὀρεί ἀγέλη χοίρων μεγάλη βοσκομένη· καὶ παρεκάλεσαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Πέμψον ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὺς χῶρους, ἵνα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσέλθωμεν. καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἐξέλθοντο τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χῶρους, καὶ ὤμησαν ἡ ἀγέλη κατ’ αὐτὸν κρημνὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὡς δισχίλιοι, καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ [...] καὶ ἐμβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ὁ δαιμόνιος ἵνα μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἦ. καὶ οὐκ ἀρπήκην αὐτὸν, ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ὡπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκον σου πρὸς τοὺς σους, καὶ ἀπάγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριος σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησαν σε. καὶ ἀπήλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει διὰ ἑποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἱησοῦς, καὶ πάντες ἔβαιναν».

593 Mark 1: «Καὶ ἤλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν». The location on the east side of the Sea of Galilee and in the territory of Gerasa is hard to understand, because the city of Jerash was not contiguous to the lake. In Luke we can find a parallel tradition, who claims that it was the territory of Gadara, albeit in some manuscripts Gerasa replaces Gadara. Luke VIII, 26: «καὶ κατέπλευσαν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν, ἵνα ἠσθήναι αὐτοῖς τῆς Γαλιλαίας». However, in Matthew VIII, 28 Gadara is the best reading: «καὶ ἔλθον αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν ὑπῆρχεν αὐτῶν δύο δαιμονίζομενοι εἰς τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποί λίαν, ὡστε μὴ ἴσχυεν τινὰ παρελθὲν διὰ τῆς οὐδοῦ ἐκείνης». Gadara’s territory is not limited to the lake, but it was closer to it than Gerasa.

594 Mark VII, 31: «Καὶ πάλιν ἔξελθον εἰς τῶν ὀρίων Τῦρου ἤλθεν διὰ Σιδώνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ὀρίων Δεκαπόλεως». 
The region is therefore marked as not Jewish: it is characterized by herds of pigs and populated by gentile people. Although it is unclear what exactly was the itinerary followed by Jesus, we have to exclude the city of Tyre and Sidon from the Decapolis. According to Dietrich-Alex Koch\textsuperscript{595}, Mark’s account does not imply cultural aspects: it generally designates an area around the lake Kinneret. The use of the term Decapolis in the New Testament is unclear: nothing is said about members of a possible organization. Decapolis seems to be a common name for the area.

Pliny the Elder in his \textit{Naturalis Historia}, after describing the geographical nature of the region of Judaea, claimed that Decapolis was part of proper Syria, adjacent to Galilee\textsuperscript{596}. After outlining Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, Pliny mentioned again the Decapolis\textsuperscript{597}. He was the first author who has given us a list of the cities: the name derives from the number ten, although the Latin author admitted that not all the writers agreed with the number\textsuperscript{598}. The region is separated by Batanaea and Trachonitis, which belonged to the Judean kingdom of Agrippa II, as well as Paneas, Arca and Abila: previously these centres were part of Ituraean tetrarchy. We are not sure when this list was set up.

According to S. Thomas Parker, followed recently by Achim Lichtenberger\textsuperscript{599}, the term «regio» used by Pliny does not imply a political meaning, but a geographical area: however, the Decapolis does not seem to belong to the surrounding tetrarchies, because Pliny distinguished it from them.

Flavius Josephus gave us some information about southern Levant: according to him the Hellenistic cities in Palestine and in its environment were freed by Pompey, who incorporated them into the province of Syria\textsuperscript{600}. The term «Decapolis» is in use before the end of the Jewish war, in 70 CE, when the author described the movement of Roman troops from Caesarea Maritima to Scythopolis, known as the largest city of the Decapolis and contiguous to Tiberias, where the uprising erupted\textsuperscript{601}. The proximity to Tiberias probably has been referred to the χώρα of the two cities, more than the two cities themselves: the large χώρα of Scythopolis could be the reason that let Josephus to claim that it was the largest city of the Decapolis. According to Lichtenberger, this statement appears to be realistic, because the settlement area of the city would be approximately 110 ha\textsuperscript{602}.

In his \textit{Life}, written presumably after 100 CE, Josephus reported the raids made by the rebels in Tiberias to the cities of the Decapolis and the complains of their inhabitants to

\textsuperscript{595} KOCH 1983, 150 ff.
\textsuperscript{596} \textit{Nat. Hist.} V, 16 (74): «Iungitur ei latere Syriae Decapolitana regio a numero oppidorum, in quo non omnes eadem observant, plurimi tamen Damascum epoto riguis amne Chrysorroa fertilem, Philadelphiam, Raphanam (omnia in Arabiam recedentia), Scythopolim (antea Nysam, a Libero Patre sepulta nutrice ibi) Scythis deductis, Gadara Hieromice praefluente, et iam dictum Hippon, Dion, Pellam aquis divitem, Galasam, Canatham. Intercurrent cinguntque has urbes tetrarchiae, regnorum instar singulae, et in regna contribuuntur, Trachonitis, Panias (in qua Caesarea cum supra dicto fonte), Abila, Arca, Ampleoessa, Gabe».
\textsuperscript{597} \textit{Nat. Hist.} V, 17 (77): «Post eum introrsus Decapolitana regio praedictaeque cum ea Tetrarchiae et Palaestinæs tota laxitas».
\textsuperscript{598} There is, therefore, no need to believe that a fixed list existed.
\textsuperscript{599} PARKER 1975, 438; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 10. Pliny did not use significantly the term foedus or societas.
\textsuperscript{600} JOSEPH. \textit{AJ} XVI, 76: «πάσας ὁ Πομπήιος αφήνει ἔλευθέρας καὶ προσέπεμεν τῇ ἐπάρχῃ». These sentence only means that these cities were freed from Jewish domination, because most of them, if not all, were subjected to Roman governor.
\textsuperscript{601} JOSEPH. \textit{BJ} III, 9,7 (446): "πέμπει δὲ τὸν ἵππον Τιτον εἰς Καισαρείαν μετέξοντα τὴν ἐκείθεν στρατιάν εἰς Σκυθόπολιν: ὡς ἐστὶν μεγίστη τῆς δεκαπόλεως καὶ γεώπων τῆς Τιβεριάδος".
\textsuperscript{602} LICHTENBERGER 2003, 11.
Vespasian: in fact, they asked him to punish Tiberias.603 Josephus mentioned attacks to Syrian villages and their neighbouring cities: among them there were many cities which belonged to the Decapolis (Philadelphia, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara and Hippos).604 The raids against these cities and their territories can be explained as the reaction against the pagan character and the friendship with Rome that these cities had developed. Flavius Josephus was ambiguous in describing how the auditions worked. He records that the chief men (πρῶτοι) of the Decapolis went to Vespasian to denounce Justus’ actions against them.605 We do not know the real meaning of the term πρῶτοι: Josephus may have used it to indicate those «respected citizens» sent by the cities as their delegates in an embassy or to indicate the officials of the Decapolis cities. However it seems unlikely to believe that there was a sort of institution among πρῶτοι.

During the second century CE, the geographer Claudius Ptolemy provided another list of Decapolis members, with the addition of nine new cities.606 In his list, Ptolemy had not given further information. In Ptolemy the terms «Coele Syria» and «Decapolis» are practically equated. «Coele Syria» was a broader term: according to Getzel Cohen, it had two different meanings, designating, namely, all Syria or just Southern Syria.607 The earliest mention of the term is found in the fourth century BCE in Ctesias’ fragments, where it is written that Ninus conquered Egypt, Phoenicia and Coele Syria.608 The Greek term κοίλη was used to indicate a depression: in Syria there is a hollow, which extends from the northern part of the area, namely from the territory of the city of Antioch, to the city of Aila, in the south. According to E. Bickerman, the Greeks had divided Phoenicia,
the coastal region, and Syria Coele, the interior part.\textsuperscript{609} A. Shalit, followed by M. Sartre, has given another interpretation: «Coele» would derive from the Aramaic word «Koh», which means «entirely, all», suggesting all the region west to the Euphrates river.\textsuperscript{610} After the division of Syria between Seleucids and Ptolemites, the northern part of the area was under the Seleucid power, the southern part was ruled by Ptolemites. During the Ptolemaic period, the province was officially called «Syria and Phoenicia»\textsuperscript{611}, although the term «Coele Syria» was used in the Seleucid chancellery and in modern historiography as referred to formerly Ptolemaic possessions subjected to Seleucid power since the third century BCE. During the second century the region was known as «Coele Syria and Phoenicia», often shortened to «Coele Syria»\textsuperscript{612}. As for the term «Decapolis», the exact meaning of the definition «Coele Syria» is still unknown: the collapse of Seleucid Empire brought to the emergence of small independent communities, such as the Hasmonean kingdom in Judaea or the Ituraeans in Lebanon; parts of the territory were occupied by Nabataeans. In addition, there were local and regional tyrants who led southern Syria into anarchy. For these reasons, the so-called «Coele Syria» had been shrinking more and more, since being used only for the territories east of Jordan River and the southeast of Lebanon and Mount Hermon.\textsuperscript{613}

According to Cohen, the term was officially used just for a limited period of the Seleucid hegemony: the names related to the area south of the Eleutheros River in the Hellenistic period, as well as Palestine and Coele Syria, were used differently at different times by different authors, and sometimes by the same author in different ways.\textsuperscript{614} Nonetheless the term was later re-used in many cities of the Decapolis, especially during the second half of the 2nd century CE.\textsuperscript{615}

Coming back to the Decapolis, further references are dated to the fourth century and later: Eusebius has mentioned it in a geographical sense, saying that the Decapolis was situated near Perea around Hippos, Pella and Gadara.\textsuperscript{616} In Epiphanius it is just said that

\textsuperscript{609} Bickerman 1947, 256-266.


\textsuperscript{611} «ἡ Συρία και Φοινίκη»: Sartre 1988, 21, 35 has convincingly suggested that the Ptolemies used this expression for indicating the claim to all of Syria.

\textsuperscript{612} Many sources often mentioned simply «Coele Syria»: see 1 Macc. X, 69: «καὶ κατέστησαν Δημήτριος Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν ὄντα ἐπὶ Κοίλης Συρίας καὶ συνήγαγαν δύναμιν μεγάλην καὶ παρενέβαλεν ἐπὶ ἰάμνειαν καὶ ἀπέστειελα πρὸς ἱωνάθαν τὸν ἀρχερέα».

\textsuperscript{613} Polyb. V, 1,5: «Ἀντίοχος δὲ καὶ Πτολεμαῖος, ἀπεγνωκότες τὰς πρεσβείας καὶ τὸ λόγω διεξάγαν τὴν ὑπὲρ Κοίλης Συρίας ἀμφισβήτησιν, ἐνηρχόντο πολεμεῖν ἀλλήλοις».

\textsuperscript{614} Polyb. 29,8: «Ἀντίοχος δὲ τὰ πλέοντα μέρη Κοίλης Συρίας κατεστραμμένος αὐτῆς εἰς παραχειμασίαν ἀνέλυε, Λυκούργος δὲ ὡς βασιλέως τῶν Ἱλασταμονίων εἰς Ἀιτωλίαν ἔφυγε, καταπλαγείς τοὺς ἐφόρους».

\textsuperscript{615} Lichtenberger (2003, 13) says that the area was confined to the territories of Damascus and the cities in Transjordan.

\textsuperscript{616} Cohen 2006, 41.

\textsuperscript{617} In particular, see the inscriptions on the coins of Abila, Dion, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia and Scythopolis (Spierkman 1978).

\textsuperscript{618} Euseb. Onom. s. v. Δεκάπολις: «αὐτῆς ἐστὶν ἢ ἐπὶ τῇ Περαγῇ κείμενε ἄμφι τὴν Ἱππον καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Γαδάραν».
Pella was a city of the Decapolis. In his work, a geographical dictionary named «Ἐθνικά», Stephanus of Byzantium has stated that Gerasa was «a city of Coele-Syria, of the Decapolis».

4.4 The Cities

Making a list means making a choice, and every choice can be disputed and criticised. As seen above, there was no agreement about the cities belonging to the Decapolis. Even the number of them has been under discussion. In the analysis that follows down, I have chosen that cities which had a similar improvement and grew in comparable conditions. The most striking item is constituted by the absence of the city of Damascus. These choice has been made for several reasons: first of all, Damascus had its own particular history; it was an important centre before, during and after the rising up of the other cities of the Decapolis. Whereas all the other settlements in the lists of Pliny and Ptolemy seemed to be just small towns or villages during the Hellenistic rules, Damascus had an important development before the coming of Pompey: for example, there was an active mint already in the second half of the 3rd century BCE and its merchants were attested travelling in the Mediterranean during the 2nd century BCE. Furthermore, the city preserved the Seleucid era dated to 312 BCE rather than adopt Pompey's era, like other Decapolis' cities were supposed to have done. Damascus seems to be the only city belonging to the Decapolis that had received favours from Herod the Great, who built here a gymnasium and a theatre: if we take in mind the other Greek cities outside his kingdom where Herod built monuments, like the Phoenician cities of Tripolis, Byblos, Sidon and Tyre, we can easily recognise that he chose richest places that probably had already known a certain degree of urbanistic development.

Therefore, it is likely that Damascus was already a city whereas other centres included in the Decapolis lists were just small settlements. Obviously, the fact that Damascus was an important centre before the Roman intrusion in the area is not a proof that it did not belong to the Decapolis. However, other reasons let us to exclude it from the following list: first of all, the geographical collocation of the city. Even from a geographical point of view, in fact, Damascus is rather far from other cities of the Decapolis: the steppe and the

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617 EPIPH. Adv. Haer. XXIX, 7, 7-8: «Ἐστιν δὲ αὐτὴ η ἀντέχεις ἢ Ναζωραῖων ἐν τῇ Βεροιαίῳ περὶ τὴν Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει περὶ τὰς Πέλλης μέρη καὶ ἐν τῇ Βασανίτιδι ἐν τῇ λεγομένη Κωκάβῃ. Χωσάβῃ δὲ Ἐβραίστι λεγομένη [...]».

618 STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Γέρασα: «πόλις τῆς Κοίλης Συρίας, τῆς Δεκαπόλεως».


621 In a very recent article, Kenneth SILVER (2016) has disputed this theory and he has outlined that the cities of Canatha, Gadara and Scythopolis started their era from the foundation of the cities, happened under Gabinius' government.

622 JOSEPH BJ I, 21, 11 (422): «Τοσσαύτα συγκτίας πλείσταις καὶ τῶν ἐξω πόλεων τὸ μεγαλόψυχον ἐπεδείξατο. Τριπόλει μὲν γὰρ καὶ Δαμασκῷ καὶ Πτολεμαΐδι γυμνᾶσια, Βύβλῳ δὲ τείχος, ἐξέδρας τε καὶ στοὰς καὶ ναοὺς καὶ ἄγορὰς Βηρυτῷ κατασκευάσας καὶ Τύρῳ. Σιδώνι νε γὰρ καὶ Δαμασκῷ θέατρα, Λαοδικείᾳ δὲ τοῖς παραλίοις ὑδάτων εἰσαγωγῆς, Ἀσκαλονίταις δὲ βαλανεία καὶ κρήνας πολυτελές, πρὸς δὲ περίστυλα θαυμαστὰ τὴν τέργασιν καὶ τὸ μέγεθος: εἰσὶ δ᾿ οἷς ἄλος καὶ λειψάνως ἀνέθηκε». 

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volcanic area of southern Syria even today constitutes a natural frontier. Furthermore, in these areas the communications had to be difficult also because they were often inhabited by brigands.

Someone has assumed that Damascus had a sort of supervisory role on the other smaller cities\textsuperscript{623}. If this hypothesis is true, Damascus might have been included in the account of Pliny, but it never belonged to the Decapolis: a proof could be found in Josephus' account. As seen above, in fact, Josephus considered Scythopolis as the greatest city of the Decapolis\textsuperscript{624}. From archaeological and literary sources, however, it seems unlikely that Scythopolis developed much more than Damascus. Instead, it seems more probable that Damascus was included in the lists for its position of political and commercial prominence in the entire region.

Consequently, we have decided to exclude it from our following list, which includes the cities of Canatha, Adraha, Dion, Raphana, Hippos, Gadara, Capitolias, Abila, Scythopolis, Pella, Gerasa and Philadelphia. We have to underpin that these cities had to not constitute a homogeneous group: their own history and urban development was very different and peculiar. For these reasons, it has been necessary to analyse each single city and to study their proper development, which was caused by singular events which affected only a group or one of these cities. Grouping them under the label of the Decapolis is just a way to facilitate our works.

Obviously, the lack of many data about a number of cities has not allowed me to make a uniform analysis for each site. A paragraph has been devoted to the history of the research for every singular city for better understanding the development of the studies about it. Whenever possible, then, a history of the urban development has been traced, focusing principally on the span between the 64-63 BCE and the first half of the second century CE.

\textsuperscript{623} Burns 2005, 48.

\textsuperscript{624} Josephus BJ III, 9,7 (446). See note 601.
4.5 Canatha/Qanawat

The modern city of Qanawat is located in the fertile region of the Jabal al-Arab, in the eastern Hauran, nowadays in southern Syria: it is identified with the ancient Kenath, in the Transjordan territory conquered by the Israelite Nobah, who recalled it by his name. Both the Aramaic «Canatha» and the Arabic «Qanawat» mean «canals»: it is probably due to the abundance of water in this area; the place in fact has had a long settlement tradition because of a convenient location in a fertile soil suitable for agriculture and rich in water resources, with many springs in the southern suburb of the city.

Before the arrival of Pompey, the history of the city is almost completely obscure. The first settlement was established probably during the Early Bronze Age or even earlier. In the area around Bosra studies about pre-classical periods have shown signs of settlements from the second millennium BCE. During the Hellenistic times the area of Auranitis came under the rule of the Ptolemies.

After the establishment of the Roman province of Syria, the urban landscape was equipped with large buildings and facilities according to the latest technical and formal standards of the Hellenistic-Roman city culture.

The name of the city was included in both lists of Pliny the Elder and Claudius Ptolemy. Flavius Josephus in his War of the Jews affirmed that Canatha was a city of Coele Syria, not mentioning it belonged to the Decapolis. From his words, it appears clear that the city of Canatha, or at least its territory, was inhabited by a great number of Arabs, which is a phenomenon not mentioning it also Flavius Josephus in his War of the Jews.

625 Num.XXII, 42. In I Chron II, 23 the town of Kenath is located in the region of Gilead.

626 *Josephus* BJ I, 12, 366: «'Ερρεψαν μέντοι καθ' Ἡρώδην τὸ βουλεύμα: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ρόσια κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἀγών καὶ πολὺ συγκροτήσας ἤπικον ἐποφήσαν αὐτοῖς περὶ Διόπτολιν ἐκράτησαν τε καὶ καρπῆρός ἀνικαταζωμένων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἔτην μέγα γίνεται κίνημα τῶν Ἀραβῶν, καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς Κάναθα τῆς κοιλῆς Συρίας ἀπειροί τοῦ πλῆθος τοὺς ἱουδαίους ἔμενον».

627 *Josephus* AJ XV, 111-116: «τούτων αὐτὸ παρ᾽ Ἀντωνίου λεχθέν εὐστρεπόσει Ἡρώδης συνειέν τὸ στρατιστικὸν ὡς εὐθὺς εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἐμβάλον, καὶ παρασκευασθέντος ἤπικος καὶ πεζῆς δυνάμεως εἰς Διόπτολιν ἀφικνεῖται τῶν Ἀραβῶν ἐκεί συναντώντων: ὦ γὰρ ἐλελήθη τὰ περὶ τὸν πολέμον αὐτοῖς: καὶ μάχης καρπήρας γενομένης ἐκράτησαν οἱ ἱουδαίοι. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πολὺ στρατᾶ τῶν Ἀραβῶν εἰς Κάνατα συνήνε : χωρία δ′ ἐστι ταῦτα τῆς κοιλῆς Συρίας. Ἡρώδης τε προπεπεκυμένος ἦκεν ἄγων ἐπὶ αὐτοὺς τὸ πλείστον ἄγεν δυνάμως, καὶ πλησίας ἐν καλῷ στρατοπεδεύεσθαι διεγνύκε χάρακα τε βαλόμενος ἡ ἐν γεωργίᾳ ταῖς μάχαις ἐπιχειρεῖν. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ διαστάτων εἴδοι τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἱουδαίων παρελόμενον τῆς τρίβης ἄγεν ἐπὶ τῶν Ἀραβῶν: ὥρμητο δὲ καὶ τῷ συντεθάματι πιστεύει καλῶς καὶ ταῖς προθυμίαις ἁμεῖον ἐχόντων ὁσὶν τὴν πρώτην μάχην γενικήσασαν οὐδὲ εἰς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν ἐτπρέπεσται τοῖς ἐναντίοις. ὑποβαθμίων ὁνὶς καὶ πᾶσαν ἐπειδικμιμένων σπουδὴν ἔγνω τῇ προσμία τοῦ πλῆθους ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποχρησθᾶ πρῶτον, καὶ προειάτω όσὶ εἰς τῇ ἐκείνης ἄρετῆς, πρῶτον εἰς τοῦ ὁπλοῦ ἡγησάτου πάντων κατ᾽ ὀικεία τέλη συνακολουθήσαντων. ἐκπλήξει δ′ εὐθὺς ἐμπύťτει τοῖς Ἀραβίων: ἀντιπάλους γάρ ἐς ὄλον ὄφως ἄμαχος ὁνὶς καὶ μεστὸς φρονήματος, ἐφευγον οἱ πλεῖοι ἐγκλίναντες κάν διεφθάρησαν Ἀθηνίων μὴ κακώσαντος Ἡρώδην καὶ τοὺς ἱουδαίους. οὕτως γάρ ἐν τῷ στρατηγῷ μὲν Κλεοπάτρας ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκεί, διάφορος δὲ Ἡρώδης, τὸ μέλλον οὐκ ἀπαρασκεύως ἔσκοπε, δρασάντων μὲν τα λαμπρῶν τῶν Ἀραβῶν ἐγνωκῶς ἔσκυψαν ἄγεν, ἠπωμένων δὲ, ὁ καὶ σύνεβη, τοῖς ἀπὸ
According to a very recent analysis, the city might have started to mint coins from the Gabinius period\textsuperscript{628}: in fact, the governor of Syria restored the city, that received the name of «Gabinia», according to the coins of the period of Commodus, when its inhabitants were defined as Γαβειν(ιε) Καναθ(ηνοί)\textsuperscript{629}. Stephanus of Byzantium\textsuperscript{630}, followed by Eusebius\textsuperscript{631}, affirmed that the city was in Arabia, close to Bosra.

4.5.1 History of the Research

This city was excavated by the 19\textsuperscript{th} century: after the first descriptions of de Laborde\textsuperscript{632}, who referred about the state of preservation of the ruins at his time, the city was studied by Emmanuel Guillame Rey\textsuperscript{633} and Melchior de Vogüé\textsuperscript{634}, who documented the buildings and surveyed them. At the start of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the works of Rudolf Ernst Brünnow, in collaboration with Alfred von Domaszewski\textsuperscript{635}, and of Howard Crosby Butler\textsuperscript{636} were published: they not only described the monuments, but also tried to date them by inscriptions and stylistic analysis of decorative forms. During the 1980s Robert Donceel published the results of his explorations of the site\textsuperscript{637}. Since 1997 the German Archaeological Institute in Damascus has started a project in cooperation with the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Syria, the Archaeological Department of the University of Cologne, the Institute of Geodesy and the Institute of photogrammetry of the Technical University of Munich. This project was focused on the urban organisation and the way of life of the inhabitants of Kanatha during the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Period. It ended in 2004\textsuperscript{638}.

4.5.2 Urban Landscape

As already said, the history of the city is almost completely unknown until the Late Hellenistic period. Archaeological finds of pre-Hellenistic times are few and scattered: we cannot claim if a remarkable settlement was established before the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE\textsuperscript{639}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{628} Silver 2016, 68. For the coinage of Canatha, see also Spijkerman 1978, 90-95; Mesherer 1985, 76-77.
\item \textsuperscript{629} Spijkerman 1978, 92-95, nos. 6-10; 13; 14.
\item \textsuperscript{630} Stephanus Byz. s.v. Kánaâ: «πόλις πρός τῇ Βόστρα Ἀραβίας. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Καναθηνὸς. έν τισι δὲ καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἱ γράφεται».
\item \textsuperscript{631} Euseb. Onom. s.v. Kánaâ: «κώμη τῆς Ἀραβίας εἰς ἐπὶ νῦν Καναθά καλουμένη, ἣν ἐλών ὁ Ναβαώ ϊνόμασεν Ναβώθ, καὶ γέγονε φυλῆς Μανασσῆ. κεῖται δὲ εἰς καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ Τραχά θὴν πλησίον Βόστρων».
\item \textsuperscript{632} de Laborde 1837, pls. 54-55.
\item \textsuperscript{633} Rey 1860, 120, 129, 150-153, pls. 5, 7, 8, 15, 20.
\item \textsuperscript{634} de Vogüé 1865-1877, pls. 19-20.
\item \textsuperscript{635} Brünnow and Domaszewski 1909, 102-144, figs. 1000-1038.
\item \textsuperscript{636} Butler 1903, 351-361.
\item \textsuperscript{637} Donceel 1983; 1987.
\item \textsuperscript{638} Freyberger 2000, 144; 2010, 239; 2013, 150-151.
\item \textsuperscript{639} Freyberger 2013, 149.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The city was built along the wadi: for this reason, it had an unusual and oblong plan. The main street run in east-west direction, dividing the city in two parts: the northern sector, which constituted the lower city and contained several dwellings and churches during the Byzantine period; the southern sector, instead, was the acropolis and was characterised by a sacral area. South of the main street, another street was found, which linked the south-western gate with a monumental square. From this square a perpendicular street started, going to the north. The best preserved monuments are religious: a powerful priesthood class had probably held the power of the community. The sanctuaries represented large interaction centres, linking religious, economic, political and social processes. According to the excavators, the entire religious complex was planned at least during the 1st century BCE, albeit it is likely that the best part of the remains is from the 1st century CE, when an earlier theatre was also built. A renovation of the buildings happened during the 3rd century CE, when the temple of Zeus Megistos, the temple of Rabbou and the theatre were rebuilt.

The main complex was named «Serail» for the first time by Melchior de Vogüé. It was constituted by a series of buildings with a rather complicated architectural history: the entire complex was built during the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE in the southern part of the city as a sanctuary, later its buildings were converted into huge Christian religious area. Many of the original features of the city were preserved in Byzantine modifications.

A huge building is the «western temple», already known as «temple C», also surveyed during the 19th century. It is a rectangular building oriented towards the city, to the north. The façade was constituted by three entrances: inside the space was presumably divided in three naves by two rows of columns. The southern wall had the form of a monumental apse with three niches, where cult statues stood, flanked by two smaller chambers on both sides. The central niche is slightly bigger than the other two, having probably the function of an ádútvov. It is likely that three divinities were worshipped.

Klaus Stefan Freyberger has recently attested that the structure has numerous accesses, an underground aisle and a circular staircase which leads to a flat roof, probably used for ritual activities. The structure was built during the 1st century CE and restored during the Severan rule, when the entrance hall was decorated with six columns in the Corinthian order. More recently, during the campaign of 2003, Klaus Freyberger has identified another temple inside the «Serail» complex, in a structure today used as deposit for storing stone finds: it is located in the south-eastern part of the courtyard and was named «east temple». Parts of the ναός were already visible during the 19th century CE: two rows of seven Doric columns were aligned with the colonnades into the courtyard which worked as joining link between the two temples. The monumental

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640 Freyberger 2000, 144.
641 For a detailed description of the sanctuaries of Kanatha, see Freyberger et alii 2016.
642 deVogüé 1865-1877, pls. 19-20.
643 Ball 2000, 187.
644 Freyberger (2013, 152) dated the complex on the base of stylistic comparison with the near sanctuary of Seeia.
645 Butler 1903, 357-361 called it a «temple-like structures»; see also Amer et alii 1982, 258-263;
646 Segal 2013f, 200.
647 Freyberger 2010, 243; contra Segal 2008, 124 who has stated that there was no roof.
648 Freyberger 2000, 146.
649 Freyberger 2010, 244; 2015, 288.
650 de Vogüé 1865-1877, pl. 19.
atrium north of the temple suggests that this sanctuary was connected with a large market district. A close link between the economic and religious function had a long tradition in the Eastern Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{651}

\textsuperscript{651} See for example the Herodian temple of Jerusalem or the sanctuary of Zeus in Damascus.
From the market area on the lowest terrace, the pilgrims moved up to the second terrace to the holiest site of the highest temple, on the highest point of the acropolis. It was dedicated to Zeus Megistos, the supreme god of the city. The building was largely hidden to the viewer through the fortress-like walls, accessed only after passing through the exhibition areas. The original building dated to the second half of the 1st century CE and was rebuilt during the early 3rd century. The temple stood on a podium and was oriented to the north, as the western temple. A portico of four columns stood at the entrance. The external appearance of the structure is like some religious buildings of the Late Republic Period, such as the so-called Fortuna Virilis temple in Rome. It is the largest temple erected in the area of Auranitis and Trachonitis under the Roman rule. Under the sanctuary there lays a crypt that led to a lower level in the western side chamber. Although the function of the crypt is not known, its close link with the dynamic suggests a cultic purpose. On the base of the excavations, during which many tiles were found, Klaus Freyberger has suggested the presence of a roof of wood covered by tiles and probably used for religious rituals.

On the terrace below the temple of Zeus Megistos, an almost square temple stood in the centre of the southern wall: according to Christine Ertel reconstruction, this temple had one dōtov, flanked by two smaller chambers and an ante-cella surrounded by a corridor on three sides. Its ground plan is similar to Seeia’s «temple of Dushara», while the mouldings and other architectural elements resembled the ones found during the excavations of the temple of Baalshamin at Seeia. For these connections, the excavators believed that the temple was erected during the second half of the 1st century BCE. Furthermore, Klaus Freyberger has claimed that it was the ritual building of the city goddess of Kanatha, but neither inscriptions nor statues of cult were found.

Outside the ancient settlement, the temple of Rabbou was built. Already known as «temple of Helios» or «Peripteral Temple», the structure was finally identified as the temple of Rabbou thanks to the finding of an inscription into the temple. According to the style and the technique utilised, the inscription was dated to the 2nd century AD, albeit Klaus Freyberger dated it to the third quarter of the 1st century BCE. The building has the appearance of a ἀπέρτατος, although it is arranged in an unusual

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652 Two inscriptions were engraved on the bases of two columns of the front of the temple. They tell us about two local dignitaries, both members of the municipal council of Kanatha, who financed the temple construction. Waddington 1870, no. 2339: «Πούπλιος Αἰλίος Γξέμανός βουλευτής, Πούπλιου Αἰλίου Φιλίππου υίος, τῶν Βεννάθης, φιλοτειμήσαντες Δίι μεγίστω ἐκ τῶν ἱδίων εὑσεθον ἀνέστησεν». Waddington 1870, no. 2340: «Τιγ(ράνης) Ἀντίοχος φιλοτειμήσανς Δύι μεγίστω ἐκ τῶν ἱδίων ἀνέστησεν».

653 Freyberger 1910, 242-249.
656 Freyberger 2010, 241.
657 Laxander 2003, 145-152.
658 Freyberger 2015, 289.
659 Freyberger 1993; Ertel 2000.
660 Augier and Sartre 2002, 125. The text of the inscription is: «Φιλίππος Αλεξάνδρου βο(λευτής), Νασσαθη γυνή καὶ Αλεξάνδρου υἱὸς τὸ πρόναοι σιδεοδιστάντες ἐφερέσαν Θεῷ Ραββου».
661 Augier and Sartre 2002, 128.
662 Freyberger 2015, 285.
way: the entrance, which lied towards east, was ornated by six Corinthian columns, but the span between the two central columns was extraordinarily wide. Instead, on the western side stood seven columns. The remains of the temple can be dated to the first part of the 3rd century CE, even though the whole complex is older: parts of the precinct built with «cyclopean» stonework, characteristic of Late Hellenistic structures of the area, are still visible, as well as Doric capitals and architectural elements of a Doric prostyle.

The whole complex, erected on a terrace over the slopes of Djabal al-Arab, let a view over the plain of the Auranitis.

On the other side of the city, namely on the eastern slope of the wadi in the deep valley of Wadi Ghar, a small theatre (which the foundation inscription calls ὑδεῖον) and a nymphaeum were discovered: the entire structure of the theatre was made of local basalt stone. Several water channels can be observed inside the theatre: immediately before the foundations of the scaenae frons, an ancient water channel has been fed by a canal, which runs for 70 m to the southern nymphaeum. This elaborate canal system was probably built during the 1st century BCE. The ὑδεῖον instead was unanimously dated to the Late Antonine—Early Severan period on the base of the letters of a large inscription which states that Marcus Ulpius Lysias, son of Ikauros, who held the office of πρόεδρος, offered 10000 denars for the construction of the cavea. Judging from the name «Ulpios», an ancestor of him probably received Roman citizenship during the reign of Emperor Trajan. Nevertheless, on the basis of the archaeological and architectural comparisons with other urban structures of this region the first stage of the building of the theatre was recently dated to the 1st century CE. During the Antonine Period, it was probably restored and fitted out a new façade.

The city wall was built including the temple of Zeus, which lost its religious meanings and became a fortress. It is likely that the defensive system was erected during the first part of the 4th century CE, as shown by ceramics and glasses of this period found at the layers of the foundation of the walls.
4.6 Adraha/Deraa

Adraha (Deraa), in southern Syria, is not mentioned by Pliny the Elder, although it is in the Claudius Ptolemy’s list of the cities of the Decapolis and Coele Syria\(^672\).

The modern Deraa has developed during the 20\(^\text{th}\) century, following the creation of a railway station on the northern side of the Wadi al-Zeidi. The old city, south of the Wadi, was rapidly covered by the growth of the new city.

During the 19\(^\text{th}\) century, European explorers had already identified the city with Edrei, the capital of the kingdom of Bashan, as reported by Biblical sources\(^673\).

The city was in the middle of the region of Batanaea, near the Wadi al-Zeidi. Adraha is located at the intersection between two important routes: one which started from the north crossing Dion (Tell al-Ash’ari) and went to Gerasa; the second road went from Tiberias to Bosra, passing by Gadara, Capitolias and Adraha itself\(^674\).

Archaeological works have shown that the city knew a huge growth during the 2\(^\text{nd}\) and 3\(^\text{rd}\) century CE. This development was maybe linked with other activities involved in the region since Publius Geminius Marcianus became the governor of the Provincia Arabia in 162 CE\(^675\).

According to Maurice Sartre, the corpus of Greek and Roman inscriptions records 216 pieces, many of them unpublished. The best part of these inscriptions is constituted by aniconic stele with few information about the dead. On these inscriptions, 303 names have been identified: more than 53% of these names is constituted by Semitic names, 26% by Latin names and 15% by Greek names\(^676\).

Although in the territory of the Decapolis, the silence of Pliny, the scarcity of Greek and Roman names on the inscriptions and the starting era of the city with the creation of the Provincia Arabia could prove that Adraha played an important role much more later than other cities of the area, when Nabataean kingdom was completely absorbed into Roman Empire\(^677\).

4.6.1 History of the Research

The first European explorer who visited the north-western area of Hauran was the German traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen in 1805, who understood that Deraa was the ancient city of Adraha. In 1818 William John Bankes copied Greek and Roman inscriptions and depicted what he saw: he noticed the presence of baths, a reservoir (birket), parts of the aqueduct/bridge and a theatre\(^678\).

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\(^{672}\) It is noteworthy that the city is not mentioned by Pliny the Elder: it is likely that the city had a later development, dated to the 2\(^\text{nd}-3\(^\text{rd}\) century CE.

\(^{673}\) Seetzen 1854-1859, 184-185; Dt I,4 and Jos XII,4 have reported that Og, king of Bashan, lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei; in Dt III, 10 Edrei is said to be the capital city of Bashan. On the name tradition of Deraa, see also Kettohenfen 1991, 83-85.

\(^{674}\) Mittmann 1964, 113-136; Fournet and Weber 2010, 177.

\(^{675}\) Fournet and Weber 2010, 193.

\(^{676}\) Sartre 1992, 152.

\(^{677}\) Sartre 1992, 151 ff.

\(^{678}\) Sartre-Fouriart 2004.
G. Robinson, who firstly published a description of this area, had visited the city in 1830 and described columns, capitals and sarcophagi reemployed in the modern buildings. The publication of G. Wetzstein in 1860 revealed the presence of an underground city, with its numerous roads, houses and shops. He was the first to suppose that the aqueduct, which served Adraha, had been arrived to Gadara, and encouraged the American Palestine Exploration Society to completely survey these remains in 1875-1877.

Göttlieb Schumacher has described in detail the monuments he visited in Deraa: the aqueduct/bridge across the Wadi al-Zeidi; two big reservoirs seemingly linked with the aqueduct; the mosque and its minaret; the hammam Siknany, identified with the Roman baths; the governor's office and part of an ancient fortification, at the north-eastern limits of the city. He examined also the underground city: thanks to his drawings, we can detect seven rooms connected among them. The German scholar reports that these rooms had no ornamentations, albeit he found pieces of columns. Furthermore, he identified store-places for grain and a cistern for water, claiming that this «subterranean city» was probably used by local population in times of danger.

In 1940s a team under the direction of Joseph Nasrallah revealed the traces of a site dated to the Bronze Age.

In 1978 archaeological excavations in the centre of the city started: the theatre was restored and the surrounding area was under investigation. At east of the theatre the Syrian team, directed by Kh. Al-Moukdad and Q. al-Mohammed, in collaboration with a French team headed by Th. Fournet, have surveyed the area and unearthed the remains of what was called «petit temple» (small temple). Further excavations were not allowed, since the modern city has almost totally covered the earlier settlement.

### 4.6.2 Urban Landscape

Despite the modern growth of Deraa has not allowed to establish the ancient urban plan, French archaeologists have suggested three main phases related to the development of the old city: during the Bronze Age an earlier settlement was established on the Tell al-Karak, expanding to the southern area. Probably a reservoir was already built in this period: in the region the presence of big reservoirs is common, as evident in Bosra, Capitolias and Gadara.

A new trend took place during the period between the Hellenistic domination of the region and the Roman conquest, when the «new» city was created following a plan based on two axes: the first one, going north-south, linked itself to the route to Gerasa; the second one seems to be the limit between the Bronze Age city and the new city. In a

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679 Robinson 1837, 196-197.
680 Wetzstein 1860, 47-48.
681 Kern (2004) has recently got back this hypothesis.
682 Merrill 1881, 348-353.
683 Schumacher 1886, 121-149.
684 Schumacher 1886, 142-143.
685 Schumacher 1886, 145.
687 Fournet and Weber 2010, 176-177.
688 Fournet and Weber 2010, 183: the Authors have found many cases of this juxtaposition, as well as Damascus, Beroea, Emesa or Bosra. For Gerasa walls see the discussion below.
third stage, dated to the 2nd and 3rd century CE, the urban plan was changed again. It was probably due to fact that Adraha obtained the status of city during the Antonine period. This change may be connected to the role of Publius Geminus Marcianus, governor of the Provincia Arabia since 162 CE. During this period big public buildings were probably erected.

We have no traces of the defensive walls seen by Wetzstein and Schumacher, but it seems likely that the building of the fortifications is dated to the 3rd century CE, when they were built also in Gadara, Gerasa and Scythopolis. The best preserved monument is the theatre, of relatively small size. On the base of the analysis of the remains, it was supposed to be made during the Severan period. East to the theatre, are visible the ruins of the so called «small temple», which is not well preserved and, therefore, real function is not really clear: in fact, only a small part of the southern wall is preserved.

Another building seen and described by many explorers is the Hammam Siknany, identified as Roman baths by Göttlieb Schumacher and today partially hidden by modern facilities.

It is likely that, during the 3rd century, Adraha represented an important strategic point.

Fournet and Weber 2010, 189. In Gadara earlier fortifications were erected since the 2nd century BCE and the re-built. In Gerasa the discussion about the dating of the walls is still in progress. See below.
The site is mentioned five times by Flavius Josephus: it appears for the first time in the early 1st century BCE, when Alexander Jannaeus conquered the city. It was surely situated on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem, since Pompey crossed Dion, Pella and Scythopolis to go to Judaea. During the struggle against the Nabataean king Malichos, Herod the Great won a battle close to Dion. Indeed, Josephus informed us that Dion was in the hands of Hasmonean kings before Pompey’s coming since it was taken by Alexander Jannaeus and that later it was in a contested territory between Judaea and Nabataea.

Under the name «Δίον», Stephanus of Byzantium quoted several cities, among which a city in Coele Syria founded by Alexander the Great. Furthermore, Stephanus affirmed...
that the water of this city was unhealthy, quoting an epigram\textsuperscript{696}. The city is even cited by the philosopher Damascius in the early 6\textsuperscript{th} century CE: the writer remembered that the water that was said to be Stygian (because was thought to be poisonous) flowed in a plain in Arabia close to the abandoned city of Dia\textsuperscript{697}.

The precise location of Dion is still unknown: according to Emil Schürer, there are no reasons for believing that the city was north of Yarmouk river, as suggested by Claudius Ptolemy, who placed Dion close to the city of Pella\textsuperscript{698}. Two sites south of the Yarmouk were taken into account: one is Tell al-Husn, at 10 km south of Irbid, the other one is 'Edun, 5 km southwest of Mafraq. For some scholars one of these two sites could have been Dion, though the archaeological research has shown that they are very unlikely suggestions\textsuperscript{699}. Among the localisation proposals, for the first time Eduard Schwartz had suggested the site of Tell al-Ash'ari, just few kilometres east from Tafas, in southern Syria\textsuperscript{700}, Tell al-Ash'ari seems to be the best candidate and the positioning of Dion in this place has been favoured by many scholars\textsuperscript{701}: the site, in fact, correspond to the description made by Damascius, since it is in a plain crossed by the affluents of the Yarmouk. Furthermore, Maurice Sartre called attention to the discovery of a number of funerary stelae at the near village of Tafas: these stelae were dated, apparently, by an era beginning in 64 BCE\textsuperscript{702}. The last inhabitants left the Tell in the 1950s and moved to neighbouring villages of Tafas and Mzerib, reusing reliefs, inscriptions and architectural remains for building the new towns: nowadays on the Tell ancient monumental remains are nearly disappeared, but some explorers during the 19\textsuperscript{th} and the first part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century have referred to some of the ancient ruins.

The most conspicuous remains still visible on the Tell are the massive blocks of the fortification dated to the Bronze Age. Traces of a tower are evident on the south-eastern side. The gate had three portal frames, resembling a standardised type of structure datable to the second millennium BCE in the Levant\textsuperscript{703}. In this early stage, Tell al-Ash'ari seemed to have reached its maximum portions, since two further fortifications were built later for defending a smaller area.

However, judging from the large quantity of remains, during the Roman times the extent of this Tell had to be relevant.

\section*{4.7.1 History of the Research}

Since the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, many blocks, column drums and capitals were seen by

\textsuperscript{696} Stefhi, Byz. s.v. Διον: «νάμα τὸ Διηνὸν γλυκερὸν ποτόν, ἢ δε γε τιπής, ἵπτασι μὲν δίσως, εὔδθι δε καὶ βιότου».

\textsuperscript{697} Dam. Isid. Φ195: «Λέγεται δε και τωτο τὸ ὕδωρ εἶναι Στύγιον. Τὸ δε χωρίον, ἐν ὑ ἐστὶ, πεδίον τῆς Ἀραβίας, αὐτηπελμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ἔω μέχρι Διὰ τῆς ἑρήμου πόλεως».


\textsuperscript{699} Müttemann 1964, 134 proved that the road from Gerasa to Adraha, which crossed the ancient Dion, passed further east from Tell al-Husn. Glueck 1951, 81 noted that the Tell called 'Edun, located near Mafraq, was a natural formation. See a summary in Kropp and Mohammad 2006, 125.

\textsuperscript{700} Schwartz 1906, 359-361.


\textsuperscript{702} Sartre 1992, 153.

\textsuperscript{703} Kropp and Mohammad 2006, 131.
several explorers\textsuperscript{704}. In a survey made throughout the Hauran, George Adam Smith saw the remains of the houses built with a series of arches at a short distance connected by beams of basalt\textsuperscript{705}. Moreover, Smith identified parts of the seats of a theatre: the presence of a theatre was confirmed by Schumacher, who noted the presence of its Roman remains on the eastern side of the Tell\textsuperscript{706} and previously registered the ruins of the so called «bahret al-Ash'ari» (pool of al-Ash'ari), interpreted as a naumachy, fed by the numerous springs around it\textsuperscript{707}. Nowadays it is impossible to establish a date for these buildings, because they were completely dismantled.

As for later periods, recent investigations on the surface of the Tell have detected the remains of not well preserved Late Roman houses, dated to the 4th century CE. At a upper layer of occupation mostly a large quantity Mamluk pottery was found at the corresponding layers\textsuperscript{708}.

![FIG 14 Possible location of ancient city of Dion (from Kropp and Mohamad 2006, fig. 2).](image)

\textsuperscript{704} Schumacher 1886, 204; Albright 1925, 16.
\textsuperscript{705} Smith 1901, 352; Kropp and Mohamad 2006, 133.
\textsuperscript{706} Schumacher 1914, 125.
\textsuperscript{707} Schumacher 1897, 167.
\textsuperscript{708} Kropp and Mohamad (2006, 137-138), have reported the results of the excavations, which were registered on the unpublished reports at the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of Damascus.
4.8 RAPHAHNA

Raphana was among the cities listed by Pliny, although Claudius Ptolemy ignored it. Ἡράφανεια, in the Syrian region of Cassiotsis, is cited by Josephus, but it is another city. Probably, we have to identify Raphana with the biblical city of Ἡράφων, which was located not far from Karnaim, on the Yarmouk river, or with the Arab fortress of Ράεππα in Trachonitis who fought against Herod the Great. As outlined by Maurice Sartre, the identification with these two cities is still uncertain, although the

709 JOSEPHIL/II, I, 3 (18): «μεμημένος δὲ τὸ διδακτικὸν τάγματος, ὅτι Καστίου στρατηγοῦντος ἐνέδωκαν τοῖς ἱουδαίοις, τῆς μὲν Συρίας αὐτὸ παντάπασιν ἐξήλασεν, ἤν γὰρ τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν Ραφανᾶς, εἰς δὲ τὴν Μελιτῆν καλούμενην ἀπέστειλε: παρὰ τὸν Εὐφρατήν ἐν μεθορίᾳ τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἐστὶ καὶ Καππαδοκίας»; BJ VII, V, 1 (96-97): «Τίτος δὲ Καίσαρ χρόνον μὲν τινα διέτριβεν ἐν Βηθουτῷ, καθά προερήκαμεν, ἐκείθεν δὲ ἀναζεύξας καὶ δι᾽ ὧν ἦν πόλεων τῆς Συρίας ἐν πάσας θεωρίας τε συντελόν πολυτελεῖς καὶ τῶν ἱουδαίων τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἐστιν ἀπωλείας αποχρώμενος, θεάτα καὶ τὴν πορείαν ποταμοῦ φύον δεδόξασθαι καὶ ἀνοίξας τοιοῦτον Βηθουτῷ τοῖς Ἀρχαῖοι διαδίκεται καὶ Ραφανᾶς, ἔχει δὲ ἄρᾳ καὶ οὐκ ἔκατον εἰς ὑπηκοόν τοῦτον Μελιτῆν οὐκ ἀναπέπλησθο». 

710 I MACC. V, 37: «μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα συνήγαγεν Τιμόθεος παρεμβολὴν ἀλλήν καὶ παρενέβαλεν κατὰ πρόσωπον Ραφων ἐκ πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου». 

711 SCHÖRER (1973, vol. II, 137) claimed Karnaim could be Sehil Sa’al, fifteen kilometres west of er-Rafe, maybe the ancient Raphana. 

712 JOSEPHIL/XII, 342 cited Ῥομφῶν, which probably was the same city: «Χρόνῳ δ’ ὕστερον οὐ πολλῷ Τιμόθεος δύναμιν μεγαλουσόμενος καὶ συμμάχους ἄλλους τα παραλαβών καὶ Ἀραβίων τινὰς μισθοὺ πείσας αὐτὸ συστατείεσθαι ἦκεν ἀγῶν τὴν στρατιάν πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου Ρομφῶν ἀντίκρυ: πόλις δ’ ἦν αὐτῆ: καὶ παρεκκελέστε τοὺς στρατιῶτας, τα ἑσυμβάλουν εἰς μάχην τοῖς ἱουδαίοις, προθύμως ἀγωνιζότας καὶ κωλύσεις ἀυτοὺς διαβαίνειν τὸν χειμάρρον: διαβαίνεις ἀγωνίῳ πόλις εἰς πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου: διαβάνεις τὸν χειμάρρον». 

713 JOSEPHIL/XVI, 282-283: «Διελθοῦσας δὲ τὴς προθέσεως Συλλαίοις οὐδὲν τῶν δικαίων πεποιηκώς εἰς Ρώμην ἀνέρχεται. ῥύσια δὲ τῶν χριστίων καὶ τῶν παρ’ ἑκείνοις ἱεροῦ Ἡρώδης ἐποίησε, καὶ τῶν περὶ τόν Σατορνῖνον καὶ Οὐσίλαμνον ἐπιτρέποντάς ἀγνωμονώντας ἐπιτευγνά τοι στρατιάν τας ἐχων προήγαγεν εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν τρισάρην ἡμέρας ἐπτα σταθμίως διανύσας, καὶ γενόμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ φρουρίου τοῦ τῶν ἱερ τός ἐχόντος αἱρεί μὲν εὶς ἔρθεον πάντας αὐτοὺς, κατασκάπτει δὲ τὸ χωρὶον Ράεππα καλοῦμενον: τῶν δὲ ἄλλων οὐδέν εὐλήπτησαν». 

714 SARTRE 1992, 147.
connection Raphana-Raphon-Romphon is possible: Ἄφων was on a river, probably in Hauran, while Ὄμφων was cited by Flavius Josephus as a city.

The city of Raphana was sometimes identified with Capitoliyas, although this identification is probably wrong. It is still unknown the exact place where the ancient Raphana layed: the city seems to not exist during the Roman period and there are no archaeological proofs of its existence.

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4.9 HIPPOS/SUSSITA

The site of Sussita, known in Arabic as Qal‘at el Husn, is situated on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, about 350m above the level of the lake, on the top of a flat mountain sloping down gradually from east to west, but almost entirely disconnected from its surroundings. It is isolated by its surroundings and almost entirely encircled by the Golan heights. The Sussita plan is rectangular in shape, long about 650m East-West and 220m North-South.

The site is composed mostly of limestone and its uppermost parts are covered with a thin layer of basalt, measuring 10-20 m in depth. These two types of rock served as the main raw building material for the city. Two roads lead to the site: the western road starts from the Lake Kinneret across the fields of Kibbutz Ein Gev and climbs by a difficult route. The second road passes towards the east side of the mountain, rising gradually upwards.

«Sussita» is an Aramaic word, which means «horse» or «mare». Several scholars have assumed that the name derives from the shape of the high mountain rising on the east side of Lake Kinneret that reminded to figure of a noble horse and was therefore given this name. During the Hellenistic and Roman times, Sussita was known by its Greek name «Antiochia-Hippos»: this name dates back to the first half of the second century BCE and was probably given by the Seleucid kings. The Greek word «'Ippos» is simply the translation of the name «Sussita», which means «horse» in Aramaic language. The name of a settlement called Sussita, which is known only from the days of the Second Temple, may testify that there was a large tract of land for raising horses.

The image of a horse became the symbol of the city on its coins. Sometimes the horse stood near Tyche, the city's goddess of fortune, which seems to be the most prominent deity of Sussita. On many coins only the horse is portrayed, and it is usually shown in a standing position or only showing its head. On some coins its shape is more mythological; it is portrayed with wings, sometimes while galloping in flight or standing with its wings spread wide.

The first historical occurrence in which the city is mentioned is linked with the conquest

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716 For Greeks the choice of the word «Hippos» was common for many other cities: Hipponium in Boeotia; Hippos in Caria; Hippocoronium in Crete; Hippo Regius and Hippo Diarrhybus in North Africa; Hippon in Italy; Hippuros and Hippocura in India.

717 According to Estée Dvorjetski (2013, 43), «The link between the city and horse is reflected in its Seleucid army inhabitants, who belonged to the cavalry units or to the horseman rank that formed the founding members of Sussita-Hippos». E. Dvorjetski is wrong when cites Flavius Josephus as proof that in Golan there were many horsemen and horses: Josephus, in fact, spoke about horses from Auranitis, Batanaea and Trachonitis, but not from Hippos or from Gaulanitis (Joseph BJ II, 17,4 (420-421): «Φλώρι μὲν οὖν δείνου εὐσυγέλιον ἤν, καὶ προηρήμενος ἔξαπτεν τὸν πόλεμον οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο τοῖς πρεσβευταῖς; Ἀγρίππας δὲ κηδομένος ἐπίσης τῶν ἀφικταμένων καὶ πρὸς οὓς ὁ πόλεμος ἤγειρε, βουλόμενος τὸ ῥωμαῖον μὲν ιουδαίους συμζητεῖ, Ιουδαῖος δὲ τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ τὴν μητρόπολιν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἐαυτῷ λυσιτελέσθησαν τὴν ταραχὴν ἐπιστάμενος, ἐπεμπέν τοὺς ἐπαμυνοῦντας τῷ δήμῳ δισχιλίους ἱππεῖς, Αυράνιτας τε καὶ Βαταναίους καὶ Τραχωνίτας, ὑπὸ Δαρείου μὲν ἱππάρχη, στρατηγῶς δὲ τῷ ἱερίκῳ Φιλίππων». For the coins of Hippos, see SPIJKERMAN 1978, 168-169; MESHORER 1985, 75.

719 LICHTENBERGER 2004a, 9.
of Alexander Jannaeus\textsuperscript{720}: the city was later «freed» by Pompey\textsuperscript{721}. Augustus bestowed the city and its territory to Herod the Great\textsuperscript{722}: when the king of Judea died, the city became part of the Roman Province of Syria\textsuperscript{723} and during the outbreak of the Jewish revolt its territory was ravaged by Justus of Tiberias\textsuperscript{724}. As revenge, the inhabitants of Hippos killed or imprisoned the Jews who lived there\textsuperscript{725}.

\textsuperscript{720} Sync. Chron. ed. Dindorf, I, 559: «ἀρξήμενος ἀπὸ τῶν πέραν Ἰορδάνου πόλεων καὶ Ἐσεβοῦντα καταλαβόμενος, Ἀμμοὺνίνῃ τε καὶ Μωσάβιν ἐπελθοῦν, Δώρα, τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀραμί Πέλλαν, Γάδαιρα τὴν πρὸς θερμοὺς ὠδαίν, Ἀβίλα, Ἰππον, Λιαν [Διαν], Φιλοτέριαν, Μακεδώνων ἀποκίας, καὶ Βασάν τὴν νῦν Σκυθόπολιν, Μάλλεαν Σαμαρεία, Θαβώς ὀρος, Γάβαν».

\textsuperscript{721} Joseph BJ I, 7,7 (155): «Ἀφελόμενος δὲ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τὰς ἐν κοιλὶ Συρία πόλεις, ὡς εἰλὼν, ὑπέταξεν τῷ κατ ἐκεῖνο Ρωμαίων στρατηγῷ κατασβαμένῳ καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἰδίοις ὀροῖς περιεκλείσεν. ἀνακιζεὶ δὲ καὶ Γάδαιρα ὑπὸ Ιουδαίου κατεσταμενην Γαδαιρεῖ τιν τῶν ἱδίων ἀπελευθέρων Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος»;

\textsuperscript{722} Joseph BJ I, 20,3 (396): «διὰ τούτῳ, ώς ἦκεν εἰς Αἰγύπτον ἡδὴ Κλεοπάτρας καὶ Αντωνίου τεθνεώτων, οὐ μόνον αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἄλλαις ταις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ προσέθηκεν τὴν τι ὑπὸ Κλεοπάτρας ἀπομηνευσα γνώρω καὶ ἐξωθεν Γάδαρα καὶ Ἰππον καὶ Σαμαρεῖαν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τῶν παραλίων Γαζαν καὶ Ανθηδόνα καὶ λοπτην καὶ Στράτωνος πύργων»;

\textsuperscript{723} Joseph BJ II, 6,3 (97): «πόλεις δ᾽ ὑπηκοος παρέλαβεν Στράτωνος πύργων καὶ Σεβαστῆν καὶ λοπτῆν καὶ Ιεροσόλυμα: τάς γάρ Ἐλληνιδας Γαζαν καὶ Γάδαιρα καὶ Ἰππον ἀποτεμοιών τῆς βασιλείας προσέθηκεν Συρια. πρόσοδος ἡς τῆς Ἀρχελαώς δοθέεσις χώρας τετρακοσίων ταλάντων»;

\textsuperscript{724} Joseph BJ II, 18,5 (478): «καὶ Τύρσιοι συχνοί μὲν διεχεύρισαν, πλείστους δ᾽ αὐτῶν δεσμώτας ἐφοίρουν, Ἰππονοι τε καὶ Γαδαρεῖς ὁμοῖοι τοὺς μὲν θρασυτέρους ἀπεσκευασαν, τοὺς δὲ φοβερούς διὰ φυλακής εἰχον, αἰ τε λοιπαί πόλεις τῆς Συριας, ὡςκώ εκάστη πρὸς τὸ Ιουδαϊκὸν ἢ μίας ὡς δέους εἰχον».
The name of Hippos was supposed to appear epigraphically for the first time on a Latin diploma granted to a Roman auxiliary who was in Egypt\textsuperscript{726}. On the coins issued by the city during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century CE\textsuperscript{727} and on a long inscription dated to the reign of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, it was claimed that Antioch-Hippos was considered a holy city where refugees could find asylum\textsuperscript{728}.

In the Byzantine period, Hippos was the seat of a bishop, being one see of Palaestina Secunda. Like many other towns in the same period, it enjoyed great prosperity, and many churches and public buildings were erected. The city was probably abandoned after the Arab conquest at the beginning of the 7th century. Isolated buildings were erected on its ruins in later times\textsuperscript{729}.

\subsection*{4.9.1 History of the research}

The first European researcher who has given us information about Hippos was Göttlieb Schumacher: he conducted a trip in the Golan area during 1885 and published a report three years later\textsuperscript{730}. The American explorer identified the site as Gamla but did not changed his ideas although he was aware of the existence of the old city of Hippos and that the name of the site he visited, Qa'at el-Husn, means «fortress of the horse». Schumacher recognized the perimeter wall around the city and the tower of the West Gate; in the centre of the city he had noticed a large water reservoir and a structure identified as a synagogue or as a place of justice.

When the kibbutz of Ein Gev was founded in 1937, a number of kibbutz members started to participate to the surveys and excavations of the site and its surroundings for several years\textsuperscript{731}. Compared to the urban plan of the city drawn up by Schumacher, they had detected a major number of streets and had identified the large structure with the niche in the centre of the city as a \textit{nymphaeum}\textsuperscript{732}. The Israel Department of Antiquities has taken several small excavations on the city in the fifties of the twentieth century. In 1952 A. Schulmann worked in the eastern area and found the gate and the round tower\textsuperscript{733}.

These excavations were the last until the first half of 1990s, when a joint research project of the Archaeology Institute of Tel Aviv University and of the Fachhochschule of Lübeck, in Germany started a new investigation of the course of the aqueduct of Hippos\textsuperscript{734}. Since the year 2000, a Polish team from Warsaw, headed by Jolanta Młynarczyck and Mariusz Burdajewicz, together with a Israeli team from Haifa, with Arthur Segal and Michael Eisenberg, started the excavations that are still done nowadays. The Polish team ended his work in Hippos during the Summer 2008, with the final exposure of the Northwest Church Complex (NWC)\textsuperscript{735}. From the summer of 2002 the Israeli and Polish team were

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{726} According to PFLAUM (1967, 340-342), followed by SCHÜRER (1973, Vol. II, 132), the city was Hippos of the Decapolis: «M(ARCO) SPEDIO M(ARCI) F(ILIO) CORBVLONI HIPPO»

\textsuperscript{727} BERNMAN 2013, 283, nr. 20.

\textsuperscript{728} The inscription says: «Πόλις Ἀντιοχείων τῶν προς Ἱππος ἱερὰ καὶ ἁγίος». See DVORJETSKI 2013, 44.

\textsuperscript{729} NEAEHL 2, s.v. Hippos.

\textsuperscript{730} SCHUMACHER 1888a, 194-206, f. 82-100.

\textsuperscript{731} NUN 1989.

\textsuperscript{732} NEAEHL 2, s.v. Hippos.

\textsuperscript{733} SEGAL 2013a, 15.

\textsuperscript{734} BEN DAVID 2002, TSUK \textit{et alii} 2002.

\textsuperscript{735} SEGAL \textit{et alii} 2009.}
flanked by the American team of the Department of Religion and Theology of Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota, headed by Prof. Mark Schuler who focused his work on the Northeast Church Complex (NEC).

4.9.2 Urban Landscape

According to Arthur Segal, Hippos was a planned city, built during the reign of Alexander the Great\(^{736}\). Albeit this sentence might be true, it is far from to be proved. It was a small city, if compared with other cities built in the same area, like Philadelphia or Gerasa\(^{737}\). The mountain was an ideal site for founding a city: in fact, it had a plain top, excellent for a settlement, and was very close to the lake. Numismatic evidence points to economic exchanges in this area during the third century BCE\(^{738}\), albeit oldest remains of buildings were dated to the second half of the second century BCE: a sanctuary was in fact erected in this period and was used until the fourth century CE\(^{739}\).

The city seemed to have been founded on a planned scheme: a long thoroughfare crossed the city from east to west, this principal street was called by excavators «decumanus maximus» and ended into the principal plaza, the so-called «forum». Along the decumanus most of the public buildings were erected.

It seems likely that the urban plan was established between the end of the 1\(^{st}\) century and the beginning of the 2\(^{nd}\) century CE, when the main street and the forum were paved\(^{740}\). The urban complex was enclosed by a solid a wall, 1550m long, which followed the line of the natural cliffs surrounding the entire mountain top. According to the excavators, this wall was built by the 2\(^{nd}\) century BCE\(^{741}\); indeed, it is probable that the urban plan of the Roman period replaced a previous plan.

It is uncertain if this road was colonnaded on both sides: the evidence of a stylobate in the north site of the street has suggested that, at least in the western section, it had columns\(^{742}\). The topography of the site does not show room for a great street perpendicular to the main axis, although three smaller perpendicular streets were unearthed in the area to the north of the main road.

One of the most impressive remains dated to the 2\(^{nd}\) century BCE is the sanctuary, the earliest and largest of all the building complexes of the city\(^{743}\). The course of the decumanus probably overlapped a so-called via sacra that once led to the sanctuary. The courtyard of the temple was limited by a wall on all its four sides: the best preserved is the southern wall. It was carefully paved of rectangular limestone slabs\(^{744}\). Most of the courtyard area was then occupied by a church (the so called «Northwest Church») and

\(^{736}\) Segal 2013b, 65a.
\(^{737}\) The area of Hippos is about 86000 m\(^2\), Philadelphia had an area of 276000 m\(^2\), Gerasa of 847000m\(^2\).
\(^{738}\) The earliest sporadic coin was minted in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy I. Other coins of the 3\(^{rd}\) century BCE were found: see Berman 2013, 289.
\(^{739}\) As confirmed by Łynarczyk 2011, 583-584, a greatest number of pottery finding were from the late 2\(^{nd}\) and the 1\(^{st}\) century BCE.
\(^{740}\) Mesistrate 2009, 16.
\(^{741}\) Eisenberg (2013, 100), has based his chronological conclusions on a typological analysis.
\(^{742}\) Heinzellmann 2004, 137 has claimed that there is no evidence for a portico on both sides of the street, but he does not exclude the possibility that a late wall closed a previous portico.
\(^{743}\) In the first annual excavation reports it was called «Hellenistic Compound», only later it was decided to use the word «sanctuary» (Segal 2013c, 130).
\(^{744}\) We cannot affirm if a temple was erected at the earlier stages: probably there was an altar.
other Byzantine and Umayyad structures. The temple is not well preserved: all that remains of it are two steps of the stairway. The temple was not exactly erected in the middle of the courtyard: in fact, the sanctuary was elongated and the area in front of the entrance was larger than the area back. The bigger size of the area in front of the temple was probably utilised to celebrate sacrifices and to allow pilgrims to attend to the ceremonies.

Architectural pieces of the temple were embedded in the walls of the Byzantine church, that was built upon the walls of the podium, preserving several wall sections of the previous structure. It is hard to establish the exact plan of the temple: the interior space of the podium was divided into two units, the smaller one in the southern part. The temple entrance front is a porticus of four columns. According to Arthur Segal, this division does not prove that the temple surely had a πρόναος, but just a ναός preceded by a porticus. The columns had capitals made in Corinthian style: furthermore, the excavators have found several stucco fragments which probably covered the columns. The altar was presumably constructed in median alignment with the temple, as in most cases of the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

We do not know what divinity this sanctuary was dedicated to, because there is no information in historical sources. Segal has assumed that it was dedicated to Zeus: on one coin minted in Hippos, a temple with four columns in front and a gable roof is depicted. Inside it, it is quite easy to distinguish a male figure with the inscription bearing the name Ζεύς Αρωμήνος. Another bears a temple with an arched pediment and the image of Τύχη. Since the sanctuary in Hippos was not designed with an arched gable, Segal has claimed that the sanctuary was dedicated to Zeus, the most important god into the Seleucid dynastic pantheon. Furthermore, according to Achim Lichtenberger, Τύχη was depicted as cult image of a temple with four columns only since Elagabalus coinage, while Ζεύς Αρωμήνος has been appeared on coins of the period of Marcus Aurelius. It seems likely that a new temple was built in this period, but we cannot exclude the existence of a previous sanctuary of Zeus Olympios.

The forum of Hippos is surrounded on three sides (north, east and south) by porticos: the portico on the west side of the forum was probably missing because of those buildings erected in this part of the plaza. During the excavations, in fact, was found a monumental structure made of basalt ashlars in opus quadratum. This structure was

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745 According to the Polish team excavations into the Northwest Church, the remains of the Hellenistic period are very few, but the upper floor of the temple was dated to the period of Augustus of Tiberius, calling it «Early Roman Temple» (MLEYNARCZYK AND BURDAJEWicz 2004, 67-68; idem 2005, 45-48, ff. 16-17, 77). According to the excavators, it seems likely that Hippos, already included within the Herod’s kingdom in 30 BCE, was involved in Herod’s large architectural programme, although Flavius Josephus never mentioned Hippos among the cities which have benefited from Herod’s initiative and no other city in the area appears to have been implicated into Herod’s activity.

746 The typology is that of one of a tetrastylus-prostylus temple, as coins have confirmed (SPIJKERMAN 1978, 249-179, pls. 36-38).

747 SEGLE 2013c, 138.

748 According to MLEYNARCZYK AND BURDAJEWicz (2005, 48-49, f. 19), several architectural elements were found in the debris of the Northwest Church, re-used as spolia. In particular, fragments of high quality stucco mouldings were found.

749 SEGAL 2013d, 149, no. 49. Only the lowest course of the base was found.

750 MESHORER 1985, 75, no. 205; LICHTENBERGER 2004b, 106-122, ff. 1-8; N. BELAYCHE (2001, 275, no. 137) has suggested that a better translation of the term would be «Zeus of ploughing and sowing».

751 SPIJKERMAN 1978, 168-179, pls. 36-38; MESHORER 1985, 74-75.

752 LICHTENBERGER 2003, 50-51.
considered to be a καλύβε, a temple devoted to the imperial cult\textsuperscript{753}, but we cannot affirm it with certainty. As suggested by Arthur Segal, the purpose of this kind of particular structure «was to serve for the worship of the Emperor... The chief architectural characteristic... is that of their being open structures – that is, their central space, be it rectangular (like a room), or semi-circular (like an apse), was left open»\textsuperscript{754}. The term καλύβε is itself doubtful, since only two inscriptions found in a village named Umm Iz-Zetun tell us that the inhabitants of the village erected a «ἱερά καλύβε» in honour of the Emperor Probus\textsuperscript{755}. Another common characteristic of this kind of temples is that they were built in the same area (that is a small portion of the territory between Trachonitis and Auranitis) and in the same period (between the second part of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century and the first half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century). The building of Hippos is very far from the other so called «καλύβε» temples and its dating is uncertain.

On the west side of the forum, adjacent to the north portico, a semi-circular structure is preserved. It is probably a nymphaeum, partially covered by a later wall: the eastern façade was maybe decorated with columns\textsuperscript{756}. As suggested by excavators, it seems likely that the forum was paved at the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE or at the beginning of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century CE, although only later it was surrounded by columns\textsuperscript{757}.

\textsuperscript{753} MESISTRANO 2013, 152, ff. 175, 178-179.
\textsuperscript{754} SEGAL 2001, 109.
\textsuperscript{755} The only Greek source which mentions the term is Hesychius of Alexandria, who probably lived in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century CE and composed a Lexicon of rare Greek terms. For him, the term means «hall» or «room».
\textsuperscript{756} HIPPOS 2002, ff. 14, 19. According to LICHTENBERGER 2003, 29, since water systems are missing, an identification as the Nymph sanctuary is difficult; we can only affirm that it was a monumental fountain (see also HIPPOS 2001, 7).
\textsuperscript{757} MESISTRANO 2013, 156 affirms that it is likely that previous colonnades were erected and then replaced. Furthermore, the author has dated the columns found during the excavations on the base of the construction materials, in particular the granite, that were imported at the end of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century and mostly in the first part of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, during the reign of Septimius Severus.
In the southern area of the plaza, behind the southern portico, a kiln with several fragments of clay masks and statuettes were found. On the base of the findings, in particular of a «southern lamp» and of the style of the statuettes this kiln was dated between the 1st and the 2nd century CE\(^758\). Furthermore, the plaza was paved at the end of the 1st century CE, when the kiln fell probably in disuse\(^759\). Throughout small trial pits, the excavators were able to date the forum pavement to the Hellenistic-Early Roman period\(^760\). It seems likely that the *decumanus maximus* and the forum were paved in the same period\(^761\).

The *basilica* was located at the northern side of the forum, creating a single building complex with the sanctuary: the two structures have also a wall in common. It was probably erected during the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century CE, above a basalt surface eastward the Hellenistic sanctuary. It was not built on a virgin soil, since few remains of two previous walls were found in the southern part of the nave. These two walls have been dated to the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE on the base of ceramic finds\(^762\). It is not possible to determine the nature of this building, although it has probably had a public function because of its central position.

As for the sanctuary, the access of the *basilica* from the forum was allowed by a stairway. The main entrance is on the short side of the building: it is very rare, since it is usually

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759 The function of this kiln is still under debate, even because a later wall destroyed part of it.
760 During the campaign of 2009, a first trial pit was excavated into the forum (Segal 2009).
761 Another trial pit dug in the eastern section of the forum, near the *decumanus maximus*, has given the same results. See Mlynarczyk 2009, 111-112, nos. 94-98.
762 Segal 2013d, 180.
on its long wall. On the southern wall there are three doorways: the main doorway was located in the centre, leading directly to the nave; the two secondary entrances led to the lateral aisles. According to the excavators, it is not possible to establish whether or not a tribunal was located on the short wall opposite the entrance, as in Pompeii, even if it seems likely.

During the period between the second half of the 1st century CE and the first half of the 2nd century CE the citizens of Hippos probably reached a well-established economic status: as seen above, in fact, the forum and the decumanus were paved and the basilica was erected. Furthermore, the ωδείον was erected approximately within the same period of time. The ωδείον is located in the western part of the city, not very far from the forum, probably on one of the cardines. The building was constructed of high quality ashlars of basalt and limestone and was in use for three centuries, since its dismantling during the 4th century CE, when an earthquake destroyed other buildings of the city, like the basilica.

Last excavations have unearthed a theatre on the eastern part of the site, outside the city walls. It has been dated to the first part of the 2nd century CE, but more investigations need.

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763 It was probably due to the particular conditions of the urban plan and the necessity to make an entrance on the forum.
764 SEGAL 2013d, 169, no. 13.
765 This building was unearthed during the ninth till the eleventh season of excavations in Hippos. See HIPPOS 2008, 26-35; HIPPOS 2009, 32-52; HIPPOS 2010, 9-23: the structure was identified as ωδείον because faces eastward: it is reasonable to assume that a unroofed building, such as a theatre, would be built northward or westward, as was common for Greek and Roman theatres. Furthermore, the encompassing wall is solid enough to support a roof and the lack of a drainage system into the orchestra suggests the presence of a roof. The fact that the building has a stage and that is distant from the forum let the excavators be incline to a ωδείον rather than a βουλευτήριον.
766 SEGAL 2013e, 190.
767 The results are still unpublished: I really thank Dr Eisenberg for this information.
The town of Umm Qais lays between the Golan Heights at north and the Ajlun Mountains at south, on the south-eastern shore of the Lake Kinneret. The area is characterized by a very fertile soil and warm springs.

The name of Gadara has Semitic origins: the word «gadar» in fact means «wall», especially «vineyard-terrace wall», probably referring to agricultural terracing spread in that area. Archaeological excavations have attested that the site was occupied at least since the 14th-13th century BCE, like other places of the Decapolis. Reports from classical historians are concerned mostly with military aspects. Gadara had to be an important fortress already by the time of Antiochos the Great, who, according to Polybios, conquered the site for the first time during his first invasion of Palestine, in 218 BCE. Antiochos lost the city after a while: however, he finally took Gadara in 200 BCE, when he defeated the Ptolemaic general Scopas at Panias. The settlement was founded by the Ptolemies as a military colony and re-founded as a city under Antiochos III or Antiochos IV during the first half of the second century BCE.

According to Stephanus of Byzantium, under the Seleucid rule the city had assumed the names of Αντιόχεια and Σελεύκεια, but very few are the proofs that the Byzantine writer was right. Another proof that the city would have at least had the name of Σελεύκεια is given by a fragmentary inscription dated to 85-84 BCE which was found in the southern wall of the acropolis. The inscription mentions the Seleukeians ruled by Philotas, probably a local leader of the city.

768. Mershen and Knauf, 1988, 129. According to Lichtengerber (2003, 84), the name of Spanish city of Gades, a Phoenician colony, has the same roots. Abel (1938 II, 323) has claimed that the Macedonian name was given to a site already known as «Gadar» or «Gedor»; Avi-Yonah in EJ s.v. Gadara has reported that the city was named Gadara «after a Macedonian city». According to Getzel Cohen (2006, 284, no. 1) there are no evidences of a Macedonian city named Gadara, although Stephanus of Byzantium affirmed there is a village in Macedonia that has the same name.


770. The excavations of the sites of Pella, Gerasa and Abila have shown an occupational history starting from Late Bronze Age.

771. Polyb. V, 71,3: «καταλειμμένων δ' ἐπὶ τῶν Γαδάρων, ὁ δοκεῖ τῶν καὶ ἕκεν τῶν τόπων ὑμερότητι διαφέρειν, προστρατοπεδεύσας αὐτοῖς καὶ συστησάμενος ἔργα ταχέως καταπληξάτο καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν πόλιν».

772. Polyb. XVI, 39,3: τοῦ Σκόπτα νικηθέντος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τὴν μὲν Βασανέαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἀβίλα καὶ Γάδαρα παρελάβεν Αντίοχος».

773. Joseph. AJ XII, 136: «ὡς τοῦ Σκόπτα νικηθέντος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τὴν μὲν Βασανέαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἀβίλα καὶ Γάδαρα παρελάβεν Αντίοχος, μετ' ὁλίγον δὲ προσεχώρησαν αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν ίουδαίων οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ προσαγορεύμονον ἱεροσόλυμα κατακόμματες, ύπερ οὐ καὶ πλεῖον λέγειν ἔχοντο καὶ ἦλπίστα περὶ τῆς γενομένης περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπιφανείας, εἰς ἔτερον καιρὸν ἔπεισθηςεπεθέα τὴν διήγησιν' ».


775. Steph. Byz. s.v. Γάδαρα: «πόλις Κοίλης Συρίας, ἤτις καὶ Ἀντιόχεια καὶ Σελεύκεια ἐκλήθη. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Γαδαρέως, καὶ Γαδαρίς καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ἡ χώρα. ἐντεύθεν ἢ Μενιππος ὁ σπουδαολίος, ἐστὶ καὶ Γάδαρα κώμη Μακεδονίας».

776. Woude 2000: «ηκο' Φιλώτας | καὶ Σελεύκειών | τῶν ἐν Μεσ — ca. 4 - | ἢ πόλις». 
Getzel Cohen argues that it seems unlikely that a city would have changed its name while still under the same dynasty rule: furthermore, the city never adopted these names for common use, as clear on the city coin issue of Gadara during the Roman period. Even the poet Meleager, who was born there, referred to Gadara with its Semitic name

In the same area, other cities were called with the name of Gadara: this homonymy had provoked confusion among many writers. Strabo, for example, mentioning Гадафрий (Gezer), has affirmed that it was the homeland of the Epicurean Philodemus, who was a contemporary of Cicero; the epigrammatist poet Meleager, who lived in the first half of the 1st century BCE; the satirical poet Menippus, who was active during the 3rd century BCE and the rhetorician Theodorus, tutor of the future emperor Tiberius. The city was even the birthplace of the cynic Oenomaus, who lived during the reign of Hadrian, and the rhetorician Apsines, who worked during the 3rd century CE. Josephus, depicting the operations made by Vespasian during the revolt, mentioned another city, Gezer, capital of the region of Peraea, which clearly is not the city of the Decapolis. According to Daniela Dueck, Hugh Lindsay and Sarah Pothecary, the confusion was due to the fact that the Hebrew letter «זايın» ('z') was transliterated as «daleb» ('d') in Aramaic language: Strabo used a source who transliterated the Hebrew into Aramaic and from Aramaic to Greek.

The city was part of Seleucid Empire until the arrival of Alexander Jannaeus: Flavius Josephus has reported that the Hasmonean king needed ten months of siege for subduing the city. After the conquest of Alexander Jannaeus, Gadara and its territory followed the same history of the near city of Hippos: it belonged to the Jewish kingdom for a short period, until Pompey freed the city. To make a pleasure to his freedman Demetrius, born

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776 COHEN 2006, 282.
777 The inscriptions on coins are usually referred to the name «Gadara» (SPIJKERMAN 1978, 126-155; MESHORE 1985, 80-83).
778 MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 130.
779 STRABO XVI, 2,29: «Ἐν δὲ τῷ μεταξὺ καὶ ἡ Γαδαρὰς ἐστὶν, ἥν καὶ αὐτὴν ἐξεδίονην οἱ Ιουδαῖοι: εἶτε Αζυτός καὶ Ἀσκάλων. ἀπὸ δὲ Ιαμνίας εἰς Αζυτόν καὶ Ἀσκάλωνα εἶσιν ὄσοι δικαστόι στάδιοι. κρομμυῶν τὸ ἀγαθὸς ἐστὶν ἡ χώρα τῶν Ἀσκαλωνίτων, πόλισμα δὲ μικρὸν. ἐνετέθη ἦν Ἀντίοχος ὁ φίλοσοφος μικρὸν πρὸ ἦμων γεγονός. ἐκ δὲ τῶν Γαδάρων Φιλόδημος τὸ ἐπικούρειον καὶ Μελέαγρος καὶ Μενίππος ὁ σπουδογελοίος καὶ Θεοδώρος ὁ καθ ἡμᾶς ῥήτωρ». It is once again clear that Strabo never visited these places.
780 JOSEPH. BJ IV, 7,3 (413): «ἐδείκεν μὲν προκαταστρέψαται τὰ λειτύμενα καὶ μηδὲν ἐξευθέν ἐμπόδιον τῇ πολυκρίας καταλιπτείν: ἐλθὼν οὖν ἐπὶ τὰ Γάδαρα μητρόπολιν τῆς Περαιάς κατερρέαν πετράδι Δώστρου μηνὸς εὐεισίων εἰς τὴν πόλιν».
781 DUECK, LINDSAY and POTHECARY 2006, 254, n. 10.
782 JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 356: «Ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἐκ Πτολεμαίου φοβῶν ἐλευθερωθεῖσα γραπτεύεται μὲν εὔθυς ἐπὶ τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν, ἀιρεῖ δὲ Γαδαρὰ πολιορκήσας δοκεὶ μην ὡς, ἀιρεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀμαθόντας μέγιστον ἔρμα τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατωκημένων, ἔνθα καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξιος Θεοδὼρος ὁ Ζήνωνος εἶχεν. ὅσος προσδοκώσιν ἐπιπέσων τοῖς Ιουδαῖοις μιρῖσαν αὐτῶν ἀποκτείνει καὶ τὴν ἀποσκοπήν Ἀλεξάνδρου διαιράται». Josephus here has referred also that Alexander took Amathus, the strongest fortress above the river Jordan, as he already said in BJ I, 4,2 (86): «Γίγνεται δ’ αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς τὸν Λάθουρον ἐπέκληθέν ταῦτα Πτολεμαῖον συμβόλη πόλιν Ἀσσιών ζηροῦτα, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν ἀνέκλεν τῶν πολεμίων, ἢ δ’ ἡκία πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον ἐρρεπεῖν. ἐπεὶ δ’ ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Κλεοπάτρας διωχθῆνε εἰς Αἰγύπτου ανεχώρησεν, Ἀλεξάνδρος Γαδάρων τε πολυκρίας κρατεῖ καὶ Αμαθόντος, δ’ δὲ μέγιστον μὲν ἐρμα τῶν ὑπὲρ Ἰορδάνην, τὰ τμῆματα δὲ τῶν Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ζήνωνος κτιμάτων ἢν εν αὐτῷ».
in Gadara, Pompey rebuilt the settlement, that was destroyed during the war. The event had to be particularly important in the civic history of Gadara, if numerous coins of the city, dating from Augustus to Gordian, used the Pompeian era as starting point for its chronology, like many other cities of the area.

In the year 30 BCE, Herod the Great was gifted the territories of several cities, including Gadara, in appreciation of his efforts to weaken Nabataean control over the region’s trade routes: according to Flavius Josephus, the citizens of Gadara, unsatisfied of Herod’s rule, went to Mitylene to accuse the Jewish king in the presence of Agrippa, who was sent there by Augustus. Then, they explained their reasons to Augustus, when he visited Syria in 21-20 BCE, but both these complaints went unheard.

Like Hippos, after Herod’s death Gadara was part of Roman Province of Syria and during the first Jewish revolt it was devastated by Justus: its citizens decided to kill or

783 JOSEPH B/I, 7,7 (155): «Ἀφελόμενος δὲ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τὰς ἐν κοιλή Συρία πόλεις, ὡς εἷν, ὑπέταξεν τῷ κατ’ἐκείνο Ρωμαίων στρατηγῷ καταταγέμενῳ καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῦς τοῖς ἱδίοις ὤροις περιέκλειεν. ἀναίκιζε δὲ καὶ Γαδαρὰ ὑπὸ οὐδακίων κατεστραμμένην Γαδαρεῖ τινὶ τῶν ἱδίων ἀπελευθέρως Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος»;


785 JOSEPH B/I, 20,3 (396) and AJ/XV, 217. See above, note 722;

786 JOSEPH A/XV, 351: «Γαδαρέων δὲ τίνες ἐπὶ Αγρίππαν ἴδιον κατηγοροῦντες αὐτοῦ, καὶ τούτους ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲ λόγον αὐτοῦ διὰ ἀναίκιζε τῷ βασιλεί δεσμίως. [...]».

787 JOSEPH A/XV, 354-359: «Ἡδὴ δ’ αὐτοῦ τῆς βασιλείας ἐπτακαίδεκατο προελθόντος ἐτοσι Καίσαρ εἰς Συρίαν ἀφίκετο. καὶ τότε τῶν Γαδαρα κατοικούντων ἰππεῖστοι κατεβὸν Ηρώδου βαρὰν αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐπτάγμασι καὶ τυραννικῶν ἐναι, ταῦτα δὲ ἀπετάλομα μάλιστα μὲν ἐγκεχυμένα καὶ διαβάλλόντος αὐτῶν Ζηνοδώρου καὶ παρασχόντος ὀρκοῦ, ὡς οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπει μὴ πάντα τρόπον ἀπελέσασί μὲν ἡς Ἡρώδου βασιλείας, προσήκει δὲ τῇ διοικήσει τῇ Καίσαρος, τούτους ἀναπτεθένας οἱ Γαδαρεῖς οὐκ μικρά καταβολὴ ἐποίησαν θράσει τοῦ μηδὲ τούτος ἐπὶ Αγρίππα παραδοθέντος ἐν τιμωρία γενεσθαι διενός Ἡρώδου καὶ μηδὲν κακὸν εἰργασμένον: καὶ ἄρα εἰς τῆς καὶ ἀλλὸς ἐδόκει δυσταραπήτης μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς σφετερίοις, μεγαλύφως δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἀμαρτῶντας ἀφίνεται. κατηγοροῦντων οὖν ὦρεις καὶ ἀρπαγῆς καὶ κατασκαφάς ἰερών οЦентр τῆς Ἡρώδου ἄταρακτῆς ἐτοίμῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίαν. ἐδειξότο δὲ Καίσαρ αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ἐν τῇ ταραχῇ τοῦ πλῆθους μεταβαλὼν τῆς εὐνοίας, καὶ μέν τοῦ παρὰ τούτων ἐρρέθησεν λόγοι, ταῖς δ’ ἐξής οὐ προῆλθεν ἡ διάνοιας: οἱ γὰρ Γαδαρεῖς ὦρκουν τὴν ροπὴν αὐτοῦ τῇ Καίσαρος καὶ τοῦ συνεδρίου καὶ προσδοκήσαντες ὅπερ ἐν εἰκὸς ἐκδοθήσεσί τῷ βασιλεί, κατὰ φόβον αἰκὸς οἱ μὲν ἀπέφασσαν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ νυκτί, τινὲς δὲ καθ’ ὄψιν ἤφηςαν, ἀλλοὶ δ’ ἐπὶ τὸν τοπαμόν ἐμπίπτοντες ἐκοινὸν διεφθείροντο. ταῦτα δὲ ἐδόκει κατάγνυσι τῆς προπετείας καὶ ἁμαρτίας. ἐνθὲν οὔδὲν μελλόσια ὁ Καίσαρ ἀπέλευεν τῶν αὕτων Ἡρώδην. ἐπισυμπέπεται δὲ οὐ μέτριον εὐχήματος τῖς ἱδίῃ γεγονόσι: ὁ γὰρ Ζηνοδώρους βαγέντος αὐτῷ τῷ σταλάγκοι καὶ πολλοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀσθενείαν ὑποχωροῦντος αἰμάτος ἐν Αντιοχεία τῆς Συρίας ἐκείλεπε τὸν βίον».

788 JOSEPH B/I, 6,3 (97) and AJ/XVII, 320. See above, note 722.

789 JOSEPH B/I, 18,1 (459): «ἐπεῖτα Γαδάρας καὶ Ἰππο καὶ τῇ Γαυλανίτιδι προσπέσαντες τὰ μὲν καταστρεψάμενοι, τὰ δ’ ὑποπρήσαντες ἐχύρωσαν ἐπὶ Κάδασα τῆς Τυριῶν καὶ Πιλοτεμίδα Γάβαν τε καὶ Καισάρειαν».
capture the Jews living there\textsuperscript{790}. The city has continued to be important during the Byzantine period, becoming seat of a bishop\textsuperscript{791}. First Christian burials are dated to the 4\textsuperscript{th} century CE\textsuperscript{792}. During the 7\textsuperscript{th} century Gadara was conquered by Muslims, who defeated Byzantine army not far from there\textsuperscript{793}. It seems likely that the city was abandoned after the earthquake of 748/749 CE\textsuperscript{794}. Gadara seems to be a well «Hellenised» city: as already said, Strabo listed many Greek poets and philosophers born in Gadara and Flavius Josephus called it πόλις Ἐλληνίς\textsuperscript{795}. The poet Meleager himself told he was born in an Attic city which lay among Syrians\textsuperscript{796}. One epitaph of the Gadarene Apion, found in the village of Saffure, south-east of Hippos, defined Gadara «χρηστομούσια»\textsuperscript{797}, an unclear definition variously interpreted: Charles Clermont-Ganneau, who published the inscription, proposed that the meaning was «with beautiful mosaics»\textsuperscript{798}; according to Paul Perdrizet, instead, the real meaning is «learned city»\textsuperscript{799}, full of culture. This inscription seems to confirm that the city was strongly characterised by a Greek nature, more than other cities in the area\textsuperscript{800}.

4.10.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

During the 19th century, the German traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen rediscovered the site, identifying it as the ancient city of Gadara\textsuperscript{801}. Gottlieb Schumacher, during his works as engineer of the Akko-Damascus railway, carefully described the place with the support of plans and drawings\textsuperscript{802}. In 1965, the German Evangelical Institute (DEI) for the Archaeology of the Holy land in Jerusalem surveyed a late antique bath complex in this city\textsuperscript{803}. Systematic excavations started in 1974 under the direction of Ute Wagner. There were other seasons of excavations in 1976-1980, 1992 and 1997 in collaboration with the Theological Faculty of Utrecht University. Since 1987, the German

\textit{Vita} 42: «τότε δὲ πέθανε ὁ ἱερός τοὺς πολίτας ἀναλαβέν τά ὁπλα πολλώς δὲ καὶ μὴ θελήσαντας ἀναγκάσας, ἔξελθων σὺν πάσιν τούτοις ἐξεπέμψαν τάς τε Γαδαρηνίν καὶ Ἰππηνίν κώμας, οἱ δὲ μεθόριοι τῆς Τιβεριάδος καὶ τῆς τῶν Σκυθοπολίτων γῆς ἐσύγχαν κείμεναι».

\textsuperscript{790} \textit{Joseph. B.J. II}, 18,5 (478): «καὶ Τύριοι συχνοὺς μὲν διεχείρισαν, πλείστους δ᾽ αὐτῶν δεσμωτας ἐφροίρουσιν, Ἰππηνίοι τε καὶ Γαδαρεῖς ὁμοίως τοὺς μὲν θρασυτέρους ἀπεσκευάσαντο, τοὺς δὲ φοβεροὺς διὰ φυλακῆς εἰχόν, οἱ καὶ λοιπὴ πόλεις τῆς Συρίας, ὅπως εκάστη πρὸς τὸ ἰοδαίκιον ἢ μίσους ἢ δέους εἶχόν».

\textsuperscript{791} Abel 1938, 1, 323.
\textsuperscript{792} Hoffmann 2002, 102.
\textsuperscript{793} In 636 CE the battle of Yarmouk was fought there.
\textsuperscript{794} NEAEHL Supp. s.v. Gadara.
\textsuperscript{795} \textit{Joseph. B.J. II}, 6,3 (97) and \textit{AJ XVII}, 320. See note 721.
\textsuperscript{796} \textit{Ant. Pal. VII} 417: «Νάσος ἐμό βρέπτεται πάτρα δὲ με τεκνοι | Ασθες ἐν Ασισυρίας ναιομένα Γάδαρα».  
\textsuperscript{797} Clermont-Ganneau 1897, 142: «Ἡν μου πατὴρ Κοίνος, ἦν μήτηρ Φιλούς | Τι[δ] δ᾽ οὖνοι ἐστίν Ἀπειών, πατρὶς δὲ μου, | Καὶ πάσι κοίνη, Γάδαρα χρηστομούσια. | Σοφῆς δ᾽ ἄφ’ ἱπποῦ ἐστίν ἢ μήτηρ Φιλούς».  
\textsuperscript{798} Clermont-Ganneau 1898, 399: «aux belles mosaïques».
\textsuperscript{799} Perdrizet 1899, 49-50: «ou les Muses sont cultivées».
\textsuperscript{800} Pierobon 1995, 260-261.
\textsuperscript{801} Seetzen 1854, 368 ff.
\textsuperscript{802} Schumacher 1890, 46 ff.
\textsuperscript{803} Vriezen and Wagner-Lux 2015, XI.
Archaeological Institute (DAI) also cooperated. Thomas Weber published an important monograph in 2002, summarizing the results achieved. In 2007 a Japanese archaeological team from Kokushikan University of Tokyo started excavations in the lower city north of the *decumanus maximus*, discovering a residential area. In 2015, Karel Vriezen and Ute Wagner-Lux have published a book, particularly focused on the twin churches on the Byzantine terrace and a more detailed study of the material findings.

4.10.2 Urban Landscape

Although the most ancient evidence of human occupation seems to be dated to Bronze Age, the earliest settlement activities are dated to the second half of the 3rd century BCE: the presence of many common and imported wares have confirmed the existence of a small town on the hilltop. Around 200 BCE a fortification, still in part visible today, was probably erected: it seems likely that the site worked as a stronghold on the border area between the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic Empires. Adolf Hoffmann supposed that the walls had probably formed a closed circle and that the Hellenistic city plan was more or less orthogonal, as indicated by the orientation of the building complex from the early 20th century, which probably has followed the older orientation.

According to the excavators, the solid framework of the walls replaced the tradition of 5th-4th century BCE fortifications, although the regular sequence of gates and towers, like the pentagonal shape of the towers, was very unusual. The quality of the fortifications induces us to think that a Seleucid king, presumably Antiochos III, played an important role in building the city. It is hard to understand if Gadara reached already the status of πόλις or it was only a garrison of the Seleucid army. The wall was destroyed at the beginning of the 1st century BCE, probably after Alexander Jannaeus besieged the city for 10 months: the two phases are easily recognizable because they significantly differ in construction technique and quality.

During the first half of the 2nd and the early 1st century BCE, the Hellenistic community extended to the northeast of the hill: at a first phase of the urban development, a sanctuary was built on a levelled area, bordered by walls. The entrance to the first temple

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805 Matsumoto and Telfah 2009.
806 Vriezen and Wagner-Lux 2015.
808 Böhlig and Liesen 2007, 526; Böhlig 2011, 286.
809 Hoffmann (2000, 228; 2001, 394) has assumed that it was constructed by Seleucids because the oldest layers of the wall go back to the early 2nd century BCE, when Antiochos III is said to have conquered the town: Polyb. V, 71,3 (See note 768).
810 Hoffmann 2001, 394.
811 Böhlig 2011, 287.
812 Hoffmann 2000, 229. The Hellenistic examples are too few and bad preserved for comparisons, albeit we can find parallels in Samos and Oenoanda (Turkey), respectively built around 300 and 200 BCE. For more information, see McNicoll 1997, 125-126.
813 Hoffmann 2002, 105.
814 Böhlig 2009 has subdivided the urban development of Gadara in 5 phases.
faced south, towards the hilltop settlement. It was a prostyle, with two columns in antis\textsuperscript{815}. The northern end of the temple stood directly on the bedrock. Stairways led to the basement, made by three barrel-vaulted rooms, of which two are parallel and one is transverse to them.

As already outlined by Claudia Bührig\textsuperscript{816}, the location of the sanctuary on a different level in relation to the settlement had emphasized the separation of the two urban areas, like in other sites near Gadara\textsuperscript{817}.

At the beginning of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE, a theatre was erected on the south side of the sanctuary, in front of the temple. An open square divided the northern façade of the scaena (which was even the main façade of the theatre) from the sanctuary complex. This square was on the main street of the city, conventionally defined «decumanus maximus», which run in an east-west direction and represented the backbone of the city. Because of its topographic and geomorphologic conditions, the city expanded towards west, following its main axis: the city was enclosed by a new, bigger fortification and the urban layout was much more linear\textsuperscript{818}. The so-called «Tiberias Gate» was built at the new western city’s entrance: it was a free door, with no defence purposes, although framed by two rounded towers\textsuperscript{819}. The period of building of the gate is still uncertain: it was maybe constructed for affirming the rule of Rome after the Jewish revolt. VEDERE ADAJ 45 2001

This development was suddenly interrupted by the outbreak of the Jewish revolt: the sanctuary with the Hellenistic temple was destroyed, while the North theatre was apparently unharmed\textsuperscript{820}. There is no evidence of a rebuilding of the temple, although several chambered structures were built on the south side of the sanctuary; they were probably used both for trade and commerce and for better defining the northern boundary of the square. This side of the square was monumentalised by the creation of a new πρόπυλον\textsuperscript{821}.

\textsuperscript{815} For the first stage of the temple, we do not know which divinity was worshipped. During the Roman period, the temple was dedicated to Zeus Nikephoros: Hoffmann (2001, 396) alluded to a statuette found in 1974 and discovered in the area of the sanctuary.

\textsuperscript{816} Bührig 2011, 287.

\textsuperscript{817} See, for example, the sanctuaries of Gerasa or Seeia.

\textsuperscript{818} Bührig 2011, 288.

\textsuperscript{819} Weber 2002, 103-108; 2006, 467-469: the closest parallel to this gate is the arched monument in Tiberias.

\textsuperscript{820} Bührig 2013, 148.

\textsuperscript{821} Hoffmann 1999, 802-803. This new πρόπυλον was slightly shifted respect of the oldest πρόπυλον.
During the 2nd century CE, a new temple was erected in Corinthian order, towards the north and the square was probably surrounded by walls in the east and west: its importance as trading and cultic centre was further accentuated. On the western slope of the acropolis hill a smaller theatre was built by black basalt stone. Its construction is a remarkable evidence of the very active civic cultural life: it was maybe used even as βουλευτήριον. The theatre was supported on the west by vaulted structures used as shops, which overlooked a secondary street perpendicular to the decumanus: at the crossing point between these two paved streets, between the West Theatre and the decumanus maximus, during the 2nd century a large, elongated terrace was built. The most conspicuous archaeological remains have testified a 6th century building phase, during which a twin church was erected. The building was constituted by an octagonal church with a smaller basilica, with two peristyle courtyards, one to the north, another to the south. According to Ute Wagner-Lux, during the Roman period a basilica was most-likely erected: on the south side of the terrace was a row of vaulted rooms. On the base of Corinthian capitals, re-used during the Byzantine period, the building was dated to the 2nd half of the 2nd century AD. Opposite to the basilica, on the northern side of the decumanus, the remains of a monumental exedra were uncovered: it consisted in a magnificent nymphaeum.

In the early 3rd century, the decumanus was stretched out towards west: it was flanked on its southern side by chambered structures which enclosed a hippodrome and at the westernmost point of the settlement the «Monumental Gate extra muros» was erected. It probably served as representative marker of the city’s entrance and exit and as limit of a new commercial area between the gate and the hippodrome. According to Adolf Hoffmann, this gate was probably connected with the propaganda and erected with a

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822 BÜHRIG 2011, 290.
823 HOFFMANN 2002, 120.
824 VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX 2015, 9-18;
826 HOFFMANN 2002, 121.
827 For further information about this structure, see BÜHRIG 2001.
view to a future urban development\textsuperscript{828}. The creation of a second market place was due to the increased importance Gadara reached during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} century CE as trading point\textsuperscript{829}. The main axis was probably a sort of «linear forum», surrounded by shops\textsuperscript{830}. The 4\textsuperscript{th} century represented a period of prosperity: the sanctuary probably lost its centrality and the North Theatre was enlarged, becoming an amphitheatre. Furthermore, baths and a huge church complex were built\textsuperscript{831}. A period of re-building started during the 5\textsuperscript{th} century, when several churches were constructed.

\textsuperscript{828} Hoffmann 2002, 116.
\textsuperscript{829} Böhrig 2011, 291.
\textsuperscript{830} Hoffmann 2002, 119.
\textsuperscript{831} Böhrig 2011, 293.
4.11 Capitolias/Beit Ras

The site of the old city of Capitolias is identified with the small village of Beit Ras, nowadays located in northern Jordan, five kilometres north of the city of Irbid. Here the Romans founded the city of Capitolias during the 1st century CE. Compared to other cities of this area, Capitolias is covered almost entirely by the modern city, and no space has been reserved for archaeological research or tourist development. By oral traditions, we know that a modern population have settled the site and founded a town in 1820s. According to Cherie Lenzen, for the archaeological investigations the fact that the modern settlement of Beit Ras covered the old city brought also some advantage: in fact, there was the possibility to combine the oral tradition with the archaeological facts for the reconstruction of the history of the place. The oral information has helped to interpret the archaeological results: the stories of the village elders were particularly important for understanding the late Ottoman settlement remains.

The biggest disadvantage for the archaeological work was obviously characterised by the modern settlement activity, characterized by an uninterrupted expansion of the city which destroyed the remains of the ancient centre. As seen above, Capitolias was not mentioned in the list of Pliny the Elder. However, the city was included in the list of Claudius Ptolemy. Since the coinage of the city started in 97 or 98 CE, the absence in Pliny’s list may point to a city settlement during the reign of Nerva or Trajan. Presumably the city was founded on the territory former divided among the cities of Abila, Pella and Dion. Because of the lack of written sources, we cannot explain why a new city was founded in the middle of an already prosperous landscape. According to Cherie Lenzen, it was due to the will of a group of people, who gained wealth and power within the Roman arrival, to build a new city; otherwise, it would have been a sort of compensation for some of the Nabataeans, who helped Rome during the Jewish revolt. There is no other explanation for the establishment of another city in close proximity to the existing cities of Gadara and Abila, and five kilometres south of Arbela, (modern Irbid). It is clear that, following the foundation of Capitolias, the settlement of Arbela lost its earlier influence on the area.

The original name of the site, Beit Ras, shows clearly its Aramaic origins, predating the Roman conquest. It is the name still used today. The preference for the Aramaic name suggests a duality: the ruling Romans probably called this place Capitolias in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus, but for indigenous peoples it was always Beit Ras. Archaeological interest focused on Beit Ras during 1983, when the Irbid/Beit Ras project started to work.

832 LENZEN 2002, 37.
833 LENZEN 2002, 37.
834 LICHTENBERGER 2003, 115.
835 LENZEN 1992, 300.
837 MITTMANN (1970, 26-29) has claimed that excavations in ancient city of Arbela have shown that there were important remains dated to the Iron Age and Bronze Age.
838 It means «settlement (literally «house»), on the hilltop (literally «head»).
839 LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 21.
We know very little about the pre-Roman settlement and archaeological evidence is very scanty; some tombs are dated to the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3200 2000 BC.), and pottery dated to Bronze Age, Iron Age and Early Hellenistic period was found on the highest point of the hill (Tell el-Khudr, the so-called «Ras»). The substantial absence of a pre-Roman settlement could be due to the difficulties to build directly on the rock or to the proximity to Arbeia/Irbid. It seems likely that the site was used as watchtower during the Hellenistic era. According to Henri Seyrig, the Hellenistic presence in this area is associated to the activities of Perdicca, one of the Macedonian generals, who was sent here by Alexander the Great.

The city flourished during the Roman occupation and developed for many centuries thanks to its importance as producer of wine and its strategic position. The coins minted in the city during the second half of 2nd century CE had the inscription ΚΑΠΙ(ΤΩΛΙΕΩΝ) ΑΛΕΞ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚΕ(ΔΩΝ) ΓΕΝΑΡ(ΧΗΣ); it is clear the effort of the citizens of Capitolias to elevate their past, claiming Alexander was their γενάρχες.

It is likely that the citizens during second century CE represented them as Greeks or Romans; further evidence is given by a Greek inscription found on a tombstone dated between 180 and 192 CE. This inscription records the names of two brothers who had Latin names: Julius Antonius Valens and Marcus Arrius Sabinus, whereas their father had a Semitic name: Abdaios, in Aramaic 'Abday. On the other hand, other evidence points to a non-Greek population: a Nabataean funeral text was reused as a lintel in a collapsing building known to the inhabitants as «the mosque». The names of the author and his father are Arabic. Unfortunately, it is not known when this inscription was written, during the rule of Nabataeans or later. If this text dates to the period of the Nabataean rule, it would have pre-date the establishment of a city in the area, which would have attracted Arab merchants or landlords to live there. According to C.J. Lenzen and E. A. Knauf, however, it is more likely that the inscription derives from the second or third centuries CE: the Nabataean alphabet and the Aramaic language were still in use until the fourth century CE, when people from this area started to write in Arabic.

4.11.1 History of the Research

The first known European traveller of modern times was Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, who visited the village of Beit Ras in the 1806. He had noticed ancient remains, but did not identified what city was. The earliest identification of the site with the old city of Capitolias was made by Cornelius van de Velde during his travels in the mid of 19th century. The hypothesis of van de Velde was confirmed by Selah Merrill, who recorded...
a number of architectural remains of public buildings and Nabataean and Greek inscriptions, he also argued that indigenous people remembered the presence of many «written stones» on the way towards Umm Qais. Göttlieb Schumacher in 1890 wrote the first detailed description of the site. In the 1930s C.C. McCown explored the area around the city, which was surveyed by Nelson Glueck and then by Siegfried Mittmann. Further archaeological researches were carried out in 1984 by Cherie Lenzen. Recently, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan began a more extensive excavation, discovering the theatre.

4.11.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE

Hellenistic remains seem to be missing, so that it is questionable whether there was at this time an urban settlement. According to Lenzen and McQuitty, the first occupation of the area was on the so called «Ras», the hill dominating the entire site: here pottery dated to 100 BCE was found.

During the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, nothing is known about the urban development: it was supposed that on the «Ras» there was a sanctuary, because an altar stone, which could belong to it, has been found in a modern farm, albeit it has been destroyed.

As seen above, the Roman Capitolias was found only at the end of the 1st century CE. The city seems to have some of the architectural and urban features, which normally characterize a planned city: perpendicular roads, a surrounding wall, a monumental entrance, a cemetery, a municipal centre, a market and a well-developed water system. Little is known about the main construction phases of the city, however it seems likely that Capitolias developed during the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century CE, little after its foundation: during this century the construction of the city of Capitolias on the hills shows remarkable abilities. The city was bounded by a peripheral wall of basalt and limestone: the built-up limestone came from the immediate vicinity. The city wall defined the city boundary, linking the downtown area with the environment: in the south and east were built two cemeteries, while the major route went from Abila, at north, towards Arbela, to the south.

The city walls and streets were visible during the 19th century CE, when Selah Merrill and Göttlieb Schumacher visited the place: they recognised the entire wall that was destroyed mainly in the 20s and 50s of the last century and used the material for house construction. The original wall was built with well-wrought ashlar, typical of 2nd century constructions.

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849 Merrill 1881, 296-298.
850 Schumacher 1890, 154 ff.
851 McCown 1932; 1936.
852 Glueck 1951, 115-116.
855 Karasneh, Al-Rousan and Telfah 2002.
856 Lenzen and McQuitty 1988, 269.
858 Lenzen and Knauf 1987, 28.
860 Merrill 1881, 296-297; Schumacher 1890, 154-155.
Schumacher notably described a monumental gate on the eastern part of the city\textsuperscript{861}, probably erected together with the wall circuit and today completely lost\textsuperscript{862}. It was the main access to the east-west main street, which divided the city into two areas. This road was paved by basalt stones and was partially visible until 50 years ago. According to Schumacher’s map, the east-west street extended to the Ras, which still represented the urban centre of the city.

On the northern part of the city, there was probably a public space: here nine vaulted chambers, disposed in a row, were erected\textsuperscript{863}; they were probably shops. Little further north, a theatre was erected during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century: its main façade was made of seven doorways\textsuperscript{864}.


\textsuperscript{861} SCHUMACHER 1890, 155.
\textsuperscript{862} LENZEN 2002, 41.
\textsuperscript{863} LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 28-30; LENZEN 1995, 330.
\textsuperscript{864} AL-SHAMI 2005, 511-512.
A large cistern system was probably built when the city was at its first stages: it was reported by Schumacher and Glueck\textsuperscript{865}, but no evidence connected to the presence of an aqueduct have been found\textsuperscript{866}.

In its second phase of life, during the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} century CE, the city was reconstructed: the circuit wall was still used\textsuperscript{867}, the vaulted structures were re-built\textsuperscript{868} and all the entrances of the theatre were blocked by a wall\textsuperscript{869}.

The analysis of the results of excavations has shown that the wall was built in Roman times and restored several times later, during the Byzantine and Abbasid period, like other structures, which were in use until the 1950s.

\textsuperscript{865} Schumacher 1890, 155; Glueck 1951, 116.
\textsuperscript{866} Lenzen and Knauf 1987, 28.
\textsuperscript{867} Lenzen 1995, 330.
\textsuperscript{868} Lenzen and Knauf 1987, 28-30.
\textsuperscript{869} Al-Shami 2005, 512.
The ancient city of Abila is nowadays identified with the site of Quwailbah, located in the Irbid plateau, along the Wadi Quwailbah which flows into the Yarmouk river. The old city stayed in a valley, between two Tells: the northern one has been known as Tell Abil, the southernmost called Tell Umm el Amad. The area is characterized by a fertile soil and good seasonal rainfall.

The site was identified with absolute certainty after the discovery of a local inscription, dated to the late 2nd century CE, that included the name ABILA, which was used both in Arabic and Hebrew language. The meaning of this term was under debate: according to an old tradition, supported by Harold Mare, it indicates a «green» or «lush» vegetation; John Wineland refers to another translation, that one of «place of perennial stream».

The name of Abila could derive from the Semitic word «abel», which was used in the Bible: Abel Shittim, Abel Keramim, Abel Meholah and Abel Beth Maacah. It is very difficult to identify the city of Abila in someone of this different Abel cited in the Bible: Abel Shittim, Abel Keramim, Abel Meholah and Abel Beth Maacah. It is very difficult to identify the city of Abila in someone of this

4.12 ABILA/QUWAILIBAH

This settlement is in the Moab territory. Num 33:49: «καὶ παρενέβαλον παρὰ τὸν Ιορδάνην ἀνὰ μέσον Αἰσιμωθ ἐως τὴν Δεσμον κατὰ δυσμᾶς Μωαβ». It is one of the cities into the 5th Salomon’s district. I Kgs 4: 12: «Βασιπεδεῖ αὐτός Ἄρτους Σαντορίνα καὶ Μεμέλη καὶ πάς ὁ ὅκος Σαν ὁ παρὰ Σασακάν ὑποκάτω τοῦ Ἐσσαρα καὶ ἐκ Βασισσαφοῦς Ἐμπιστίσεως, ἐως Μασεβέρ Λουκαμ ἐκύψα». I Kgs 19: 16: «καὶ τὸν ίον οὐν Νεμέσει χρίσεις εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ καὶ τὸν Ἐλισαίο υἱὸν Σαφατ ἀπὸ Ἐμπιστίσεωςς χρίσεις εἰς προφητὴν ἀντὶ σου». It is one of the cities in the 5th Salomon’s district. I Kgs 4: 12: «Βασική αὐτός Ἀρτοῦς Σαντορίνα καὶ Μεμέλη καὶ πάς ὁ ὅκος Σαν ὁ παρὰ Σασακάν ὑποκάτω τοῦ Ἐσσαρα καὶ ἐκ Βασισσαφοῦς Ἐμπιστίσεως, ἐως Μασεβέρ Λουκαμ ἐκύψα». I Kgs 19: 16: «καὶ τὸν ίον οὐν Νεμέσει χρίσεις εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ καὶ τὸν Ἐλισαίο υἱὸν Σαφατ ἀπὸ Ἐμπιστίσεωςς χρίσεις εἰς προφητὴν ἀντὶ σου».

This settlement is in the territory of Nephtali, north of Kinneret Lake. II Sam 20:14-15: «καὶ διήλθεν ἐν πᾶσιν Φυλαὶ Ἰσραήλ τῆς Ἁβέλ καὶ τῆς Βασιλείας καὶ πάντες ἐν Ἰσραία καὶ ἐξεκκλησίασθεν καὶ ἔδωκαν κατοικοῦν· καὶ παρενέβαλαν αὐτούς καὶ παρεγενήθησαν καὶ έπολύσθησαν επ᾽ αὐτόν τὴν Ἁβέλ καὶ τὴν Βασιλεία καὶ ἔζεχαν πρόασμα έπ᾽ αὐτόν τής Ἰσραία καὶ έστη ἐν τῷ προεξόμενῳ καὶ πάς ὁ λαός ὁ μετὰ Ἰωαβ ἐνοούσαν καταβάλειν τὸ τείχος».

I Kgs 15:20: «καὶ ἠκουσαν αὐτοῖς Ἄσα καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς ἀρχοντας τῶν δυνάμεων τῶν αὐτοῦ τας πόλεις τοῦ Ἰσραήλ καὶ ἠπέσταζεν τὴν Ἁν καὶ τὴν Δαν καὶ τὴν Ἁβέλα καὶ τᾶς τῆς Χέραθ ἐως τῆς γῆς Νεφεθάλ».

I Kgs 15:29: «ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Φακες βασιλέως Ισραήλ ἠλέηθεν Θαγλαθφελλασαρ βασιλέως Ασσυρίων καὶ ἐλαβεν τὴν Ἁν καὶ τὴν Ἁβελβαθμασαχα καὶ τὴν Ιανωκ καὶ τὴν Κενεζ καὶ τὴν Ασωρ καὶ τὴν Ιανωκ καὶ τὴν Γαλααδ καὶ τὴν Παλαιανσκον γῆν Νεφεθαλι καὶ ἀπότυκεν αὐτοὺς εἰς Ακαντοῦρων».

I Chron 16:4: «καὶ ἠκουσαν αὐτοῖς Ἄσα τοῦ βασιλέως Ασα καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς ἀρχοντας τῆς δυνάμεως
sites\(^{879}\): it seems likely that the city was part of Israelite territory and was attacked by the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser, although there are no clear archaeological signs of destruction.

Polybius remembered that Antiochos III captured two times the city together with Gadara during the Syrian wars\(^{880}\), taking it definitely after the battle of Panias in 200 BCE, as reported by Josephus\(^{881}\). As other nearby cities, Abila was renamed during this period as Σελέουσκα Άββλα, a name which is clearly shown on the legends of the coins minted from the 2\(^{nd}\) century CE\(^{882}\).

The city was under Hasmonean rule after Alexander Jannaes conquered the area\(^{883}\) and probably freed by Pompey.

Pliny the Elder did not mention Abila in his list of the Decapolis cities, probably because in the same chapter he numbered Abila among the Tetrarchies: it seems likely that Pliny omitted Abila because he considered a mistake the presence of two cities with the same name\(^{884}\). Claudius Ptolemy listed an Ἄββλα, which probably was Abila\(^{885}\). An inscription found in a small village near Palmyra, called Tayibeh, confirmed that Abila was a city of the Decapolis\(^{886}\).

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Eusebius had defined the city of Ἄβελ, twelve miles from Gadara, as «fertile of wine» (οἰνοφόρος), as reflected on several reverse coins the city minted with a bunch of grapes.

### 4.12.1 History of the Research

As many cities of the Decapolis, Ulrich Seetzen re-discovered Abila in 1806, describing the site as located on the angle of a mountain with two bases and full of caverns on its slopes. The city was deserted, but Seetzen was able to see the remains of city walls and several arches and columns. Few years after Seetzen, the Swiss John Louis Burkhardt visited Tell Abil, but he affirmed to have found no traces of the city: probably he never reached Abila.

Gottlieb Schumacher was the author of the first major publication about Abila during the late 19th century; the German explorer reported the presence of a castle on the top of Tell Abil, but it is difficult today to understand what he saw. He also noticed a bridge used to connect the two Tells. On Tell Umm el Amad he recognised a temple because of the large number of fragments of columns and capitals, but later excavations have shown it was a Christian basilica. Schumacher hypothesised the presence of an amphitheatre for the configuration of the slope of the north face of Tell Umm el Amad and for the presence of few seats, which are not visible today. At the centre of the city he described the ruins of a rectangular building with a cistern inside and of a Christian basilica.

During his survey in Transjordan during the 1930s and 1940s, Nelson Glueck visited also Abila: although he found only pottery from the Roman period, Glueck was rightly convinced that the site was inhabited during the Bronze and Iron Age.

In 1959 the Department of Antiquities of Jordan started the first excavation work at Abila under the direction of Hassan Awad Qutshan, who discovered twenty tombs, among them several were from Bronze Age, confirming Glueck’s hypothesis.

Between 1981 and 1983 a French team headed by Alix Barbet and Claude Virbet-Guigue worked on several tombs found around the city.

In 1980 Harold Mare of the Covenant Theological Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri, began archaeological excavations and surveys that have conclusively shown that the site was occupied by humans since the Neolithic Age (8000-4000 BCE). Excavations have

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887 EUSEB. Onom. s.v. Ἄβελ: «Ἄβελ ἀμπελώνων. ἔνθα ἐπολέμησεν Ἰερόθαι. ης υἱῶν Αμμών. Καὶ ἐστὶν εἰς ἐπὶ νόν χῶμι ἀμπελόφορος Ἄβελα οἰνοφόρος καλουμένη, διεστάσα Γαδάρον σημείος ἰβ´τος τῆς Φοινίκης μεταζ Δαμασκοῦ καὶ Πανεάδος».
888 SPIJKERMAN 1978, 50-51, nos. 5-6; MARE 1984, 52, no. 262; MESHOKER 1985, 78, nos. 211-211a.
889 SEETZEN 1854, 371-375.
890 BURKHARDT 1983, 251-265.
891 SCHUMACHER 1989.
892 SCHUMACHER 1989, 22.
894 FULLER 1987, 168.
895 SCHUMACHER 1989, 30.
896 SCHUMACHER 1989, 32.
897 GLUECK 1951, 126.
exposed the ruins of five Byzantine basilicas built at different locations of the site. After the death of Harold Mare in 2004, Dr. David Chapman, then Dr. David Vila conducted the excavations.

4.12.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE

As suggested by David Chapman, the postulations on the presence of Hellenistic and Roman structures have thus far not been verified\textsuperscript{899}. According to Harold Mare, a Hellenistic temple preceded the 6\textsuperscript{th} century basilica on the Tell Abil: the discovery of a statue of Artemis seemed to confirm this idea\textsuperscript{900}. The stylistic comparison dated back the statue to the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, but Mare also assumed it could be a later Roman copy\textsuperscript{901}.

\textsuperscript{899} CHAPMAN 2011, 15.
\textsuperscript{900} MARE 2002, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{901} MARE 1997, 280-281.
However, further excavations conducted by John Wineland have given no conclusive evidence of the presence of a temple, although some Roman capitals were found. On the coins, minted from the reign of Marcus Aurelius to Elagabalus, three different temples are depicted, while the central cult figures were Herakles, Tyche and Athena. It seems that Artemis was never depicted on the coins.

902 CHAPMAN 2011, 17.
Into the area of the so-called theatre cavea, already seen by Schumacher, no remains of the theatre itself have been unearthed. During the 2004 excavations, the excavators found the remains of a hypocaust system on the eastern slopes of Tell Abil\textsuperscript{904}; until now we are not able to date the structure, and the only coin found is from Byzantine period\textsuperscript{905}. Tombs give more information about Roman Abila, although the best part of them was from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century CE\textsuperscript{906}: deceased people were buried into multiple \textit{loculi} or \textit{sarcophagi} carved into the stone or in simple graves. The tombs had usually one chamber and the (few) inscriptions are written in Greek\textsuperscript{907}. The frescoes suggest that the citizens of Abila reached a certain grade of wealth.

\textsuperscript{904} Chapman et alii 2006, 66.
\textsuperscript{905} Chapman 2011, 16.
4.13 SCYTHOPOLIS/BETH SHEAN

The Tel Bet-Shean (in Arabic Tell el-Husn) is located on a hill on the southern bank of Nahal Harod (in Arabic Wadi Jalud), a small tributary that flows into Jordan river. The site is in a fertile, water-rich valley. It was occupied almost continuously from Late Neolithic to the Islamic Period.

The modern city preserved the ancient Semitic name of Beth Sean, which is attested in Egyptian New Kingdom sources and some Books of the Bible: the city and its territory seemed to have never been conquered by Israelites, albeit Beth Shean was included in the list of administrative districts established under the kingdom of Salomon. Whereas it became a domain of the kings of Israel, its inhabitants appeared to have preserved a sort of independence. According to Michael Avi-Yonah, it was proved by the fact that Tiglath Pileser III spared them, unlike their Israelite neighbours.

The name «Beth Sean» maybe derived from the Semitic word «sha’an», which means «tranquillity, peaceful, quiet».

The site preserved its ancient name also during the Hellenistic Age, albeit it was flanked by the new Greek name of Scythopolis (Σκυθόπολις), appeared in the 3rd century BCE, when the city was under the Ptolemies, and preferred by «Hellenised» circles. Byzantine writers, like Syncellus, have connected its name to the Scythian invasion towards the end of the 7th century BCE. Herodotus had already remembered this

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908 Beth Sean was under Egyptian rule in this period: it was included in the list of Canaanites cities of Thutmose III and in the lists of Seti I and Ramses II.

909 In several books is claimed that the tribe of Manasseh received some Canaanite territories, albeit Beth Sean was, but it did not conquer them. See Jos 11:17:11-12 («καὶ ἔσται Μανασσητὴς ἐν Ἰσσαχαρ καὶ ἐν Ασηρ Βασιλείῳ καὶ οἱ κύωμα αὐτῶν […] καὶ οὓς ἤδυνάσθησαν οἱ ίου Μανασσητής ἐξολεθρεύσας τὰς πόλεις ταύτας καὶ ἤρεμοτῷ ὁ Χαναναῖος κατοικεῖν ἐν τῇ γῇ ταύτῃ»), 1 Sg 1:27 («καὶ οὐκ ἤξερεν Μανασσητής τὴν Βαΐσαν ἡ ἐστὶν Σκυθῶν πόλις οὐδὲ τὰς θυγατέρας αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τὰ περιοχὰς αὐτῆς […] καὶ ἤρεμοτῷ ὁ Χαναναῖος κατοικεῖν ἐν τῇ γῇ ταύτῃ»). Furthermore, in 1 Sm 3:1:10 («καὶ ἀνέθηκαν τὰ σκεῦα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ Ἀσσορτεῖον καὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ κατέπηξαν ἐν τῷ τέχει Βαΐσαν») and 2 Sm 21:12 («καὶ ἔπορεύθη Δαυὶ καὶ ἐλαβέν τὸ ὡστὰ Σαουλ καὶ τὰ ὡστὰ Ἰωναθαν τοῦ ὦν αὐτοῦ παρὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὑών Ιαβγς Γαλαδος οἱ ἔκλεψαν αὐτῶς ἐκ τῆς πλατείας Βαΐσαν ὅπως ἔστησαν αὐτούς ἐκεῖ οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι ἐν ἡμέρα ἡ ἐπαύτονται οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι τὸν Σαουλ ἐν Γέλβους») is affirmed that Philistines killed Saul and his sons and then hung their bodies up to the wall of Beth Sean.

910 1 Kgs 4:7-12: «καὶ τῷ Σαλμωμῳ δώδεκα καθεσταμένοι ἐπὶ πάντα Ισραηλ χορηγεῖν τῷ βασιλείῳ καὶ τῷ οίκῳ αὐτοῦ μήνα ἐν τῷ ἑναυτῶν ἐγκατέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν ἑνα χορηγεῖν […] Βασχα υῶς Αχιλῆς Θααναχ καὶ Μεκεδω καὶ τὰς οίκος Σαν ὁ παρὰ Σεσαθαν ὑποκάτω τοῦ Εσραής καὶ ἕκα Βασισαφουδ Εβελμαωλα ἐως Μασεβρ λουμα εἰς».

911 AVI-YONAH 1962, 128.

912 SMITH 1894, 363.

913 The site is still called Bethsean in 1 Mac 5, 52 («καὶ διέβησαν τὸν ἱρόδανν ἐκ τὸ πεδίον τὸ μέγα κατὰ πρόσωπον Βαΐσαν») and 1 Mac XII, 40 («καὶ ἐκλαβήθη μῆτπτε οὐκ ἔσασα αὐτῶν Ἰωναθαν καὶ μῆτπτε πολέμησθι πρὸς αὐτῶν καὶ ἔχετι συλλαβεῖν αὐτῶν τοῦ ἀπολέσαι καὶ ἀπάρας ἠλθεν εἰς Βαΐσαν»).

invasion, saying that the Scythians defeated the Medes and ruled Asia for 28 years: after this period, the Medes took their territories back\textsuperscript{915}.

Many scholars accepted the hypothesis that a group of Scythians founded the settlement and lived there from the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BCE onwards\textsuperscript{916}, only Victor Tcherikover rejected this hypothesis although he did not found a good explanation to the question of the name\textsuperscript{917}.

Pliny included Scythopolis in his list of the cities of the Decapolis and gave another explanation about its uncommon name, linked with Dionysos and with another name of the city, that one of Nysa (Νύσσα)\textsuperscript{918}. The name of Nysa appears on several coins dated to Roman Imperial times\textsuperscript{919}. It is worth that in the official usage, this term always ἱἱὸς ἔμενος ὑμῖν to the question of the auctorem dabo. Liber pater cum humo nutricem tradidisset, ἵππων δὲ Σκυθῶν παρεξελθόντων ἀπικνεομένως τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Σκυθίας. Pliny included Scythopolis in his list of the cities of the Decapolis and gave another explanation about its uncommon name, linked with Dionysos and with another name of the city, that one of Nysa (Νύσσα)\textsuperscript{918}. The name of Nysa appears on several coins dated to Roman Imperial times\textsuperscript{919}. It is worth that in the official usage, this term always precedes the one of Scythopolis: according to Kent Rigsby, Scythopolis was the original Greek name and Nysa was a dynastic name, introduced probably by Antiochos IV for his daughter\textsuperscript{920}. However, Nysa became a common name only since the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century onward\textsuperscript{921}. In this case, the cult of Dionysos had nothing to do with the foundation of the city. Instead, the tradition of Dionysos and his nurse, Nysa, appeared only later, during the Roman occupation\textsuperscript{922}.

Felix Marie Abel\textsuperscript{923}, followed by Michael Avi-Yonah\textsuperscript{924}, reported another theory about the name of Scythopolis: Scythian soldiers served in the armies of Alexander the Great and

\textsuperscript{915} Hüb. I, 104-106: «[…] Σκύθαι […] τὴν κατύπερθε ὁδὸν πολλῷ μακροτέρῳ ἐκτραπόμενοι, ἐν δεξῇ ἔχοντες τὸ Καυκάσιον ὄρος, ἐνθαῦτα οἱ μὲν Μῆδοι συμβαλόντες τοῖς Σκύθης καὶ ἑσσωθέντες τῇ μάχῃ τῆς ἀρχῆς κατελυθήσαν, οἱ δὲ Σκύθαι τὴν Αἰσιόν πᾶσαν ἐπέσχον. ἐνθεύτεν δὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ Ἀγίπτων, και ἐπέτει ἐγένοντο ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ Ἑπίρῳ, ἦσαν ἀντίς Αἰγύπτου βασιλείας αὐτῶν ὑπωνομοῦντες τῇ προσωτέρῳ. Ἡ ἕματι περιελαύνει τοὺς πολεοδόμους τοῖς ἔθεσι ἐπιτάχθηκεν».

\textsuperscript{916} Felix Marie Abel\textsuperscript{921} and his nurse, Nysa, a probably a daughter of king Antiochos wed to Pharnaces I of Pontus. See Rigsby 1980, 240.

\textsuperscript{917} BÉLAYCHE (2009, 174-179) well analyses Scythopolis' foundation myths.

\textsuperscript{918} ICHTENBERGER 2004a, 24-25

\textsuperscript{919} ABEI 1952, Vol. II, 57.

\textsuperscript{920} AVI-YONAH 1962, 127.
his successors, among which Ptolemies were. They believed that a group of veterans of the Scythian units was settled in the Beth Sean area, but, according to Shimon Applebaum, this hypothesis does not explain when Scythopolis was founded as a πόλις.\footnote{Applebaum 1989, 1.}

Flavius Josephus knew both this names of the city, but he affirmed that in his days the city was called Scythopolis\footnote{Joseph J.V, 83: «[…] τῆς τε Μανασσήποδος οἱ ημίσεις ἀπὸ μὲν Ιορδάνου μέχρι Δώρων πόλεως, πλάτος δὲ ἐπὶ Βηθσαβάνων, ή νῦν Σκυθόπολις καλεῖται».}, mostly by Greeks\footnote{Stephanus of Byzantium stated that Nysa Scythopolis was called «Baison» by the barbarians.\footnote{Polybius wrote that it was free at least from 218 BCE, when Antiochus III captured the settlement of Philoteria and its successors, among which Ptolemies were. They believed that a group of veterans of the Scythian units was settled in the Beth Sean area, but, according to Shimon Applebaum, this hypothesis does not explain when Scythopolis was founded as a πόλις.\footnote{Applebaum 1989, 1.}}

According to Flavius Josephus, the city was in Coele Syria, albeit Flavius Josephus knew both of these names of the city was called Scythopolis\footnote{Joseph J.VI, 374: «Τῇ δ’ ἐποίησε σκυλεύσαντες οί Παλαιστῖνοι τοὺς τῶν πολεμίων νεκροὺς ἐπιτυγχάνουσι τοῖς Σαουλου καὶ τῶν παιδῶν αὐτοῦ σώμασι καὶ σκυλεύσαντες ἀποτείμουσιν αὐτῶν τὰς κεφαλὰς, καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν παρέγγειλαν τὴν χώραν πέμυμαν, ὅτι πεπτώκασιν οἱ πολέμιοι: καὶ τὰς μὲν πανοπλίας αὐτῶν ἀνέθηκαν εἰς τὸ Ἀστάρτειον ἱερὸν, τὰ δὲ σώματα ἀνεσταύρωσαν πρὸς τὰ τείχη τῆς Βηθσαβάν πόλεως, ή νῦν Σκυθόπολις καλεῖται».}}. Additionally, the Scythian units was settled in the Beth Sean area, but, according to Shimon Applebaum, this hypothesis does not explain when Scythopolis was founded as a πόλις.\footnote{Steve Byz. s.v. Σκυθόπολις: «Παλαιστῖνης πόλις. ἢ Νῦσα Κοίλης Συρίας Σκυθῶν πόλις, πρότερον Βαἰσούν λεγόμενη ὑπὸ τῶν Βαρβάρων. ο πολίτης Σκυθοπολίτης.»}

According to Flavius Josephus, the city was in Coele Syria, albeit Flavius Josephus knew both of these names of the city was called Scythopolis\footnote{Joseph J.VI, 374: «Τῇ δ’ ἐποίησε σκυλεύσαντες οί Παλαιστῖνοι τοὺς τῶν πολεμίων νεκροὺς ἐπιτυγχάνουσι τοῖς Σαουλου καὶ τῶν παιδῶν αὐτοῦ σώμασι καὶ σκυλεύσαντες ἀποτείμουσιν αὐτῶν τὰς κεφαλὰς, καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν παρέγγειλαν τὴν χώραν πέμυμαν, ὅτι πεπτώκασιν οἱ πολέμιοι: καὶ τὰς μὲν πανοπλίας αὐτῶν ἀνέθηκαν εἰς τὸ Ἀστάρτειον ἱερὸν, τὰ δὲ σώματα ἀνεσταύρωσαν πρὸς τὰ τείχη τῆς Βηθσαβάν πόλεως, ή νῦν Σκυθόπολις καλεῖται».}.
Scythopolis itself. However, the city was not hostile to the Jews, even after Alexander Jannaeus conquered it and Pompey separated it from Jewish territories. Gabinius restored the city, which was independent even during the Hasmonean rule. The city was included in both lists of Pliny and Claudius Ptolemy, Josephus knew Scythopolis as the «greatest city of the Decapolis».

The city was prosperous during the Roman Period and partially destroyed by an earthquake in 363 CE: nevertheless, the city was rapidly rebuilt and flourished again. In 409 CE, the city became capital of Palaestina Secunda, a province comprising the northern part of Galilee and western Transjordan area.
During the Islamic period, Scythopolis lost its Greek name and its position as capital of the province, replaced by Tiberias, and took a rural appearance. The earthquake in 749 CE razed completely the city, with the collapse of all the buildings.

### 4.13.1 History of the Research

The first European scholar who recorded evidence from Scythopolis after his visit to the old city was Hadrian Reland during the 18th century\(^{939}\), but he focused his analysis on the ancient writers who wrote about this city.

After the brief accounts made by Jasper Ulrich Seetzen\(^{940}\) and later by John Lewis Burckhardt\(^{941}\), Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangeles surveyed the area of the theatre and the necropolis, to north-east of the acropolis\(^{942}\). In 1852 Edward Robinson saw the same ruins\(^{943}\). During the second half of the century, between 1874 and 1877, the Palestine Exploration Fund assigned a survey of the area of the Western Palestine to the soldier and explorer Claude Reignier Conder, later flanked by Horatio Herbert Kitchener: their work provided the first detailed map of the site with the theatre and the amphitheatre\(^{944}\).

During the 20s and 30s of the 20th century the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia carried out first excavations on the mound's summit, directed consecutively by Clarence S. Fisher (1921-1923), Alan Rowe (1925-1928) and Gerald M. Fitzgerald (1930-1933), collecting many objects from the 2nd millennium BCE, the most important ones from 15th to 12th century. The American expedition extended its work towards north, where some 230 tombs dating from Middle Bronze Age I to the Roman Period were excavated\(^{945}\).

Throughout 50s and 60s, the Israel Antiquities Department conducted numerous surveys and excavations in the area. During the years 1960-1961 Simon Applebaum excavated the theatre\(^{946}\); in 1962 Abraham Negev continued the excavations. From 1986 the «Bet She’an Archaeological Project» started: the Israel Antiquity Authority conducted wide-scale excavations into the southern part of the city centre under the direction of Gabriel Mazor and Rachel Bar-Nathan, revealing the agora, the Caesareum, the ὡδεῖον and both the western and eastern thermae. These works were flanked by the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, directed by Gideon Foerster and Yoram Tsafir: they excavated the northern civic centre, including the agora, Monuments Street, Valley Street, eastern thermae and the amphitheatre.
4.13.2 Urban Landscape

The earliest remains of the settlement were discovered on the south site of Tel Beth Sean, dating to the 5th millennium BCE. The site was sparsely populated during the Middle Bronze Age: the inhabitants probably lived in a semi-nomadic status. From the Late Bronze Age several temples were founded. Probably permanent constructions were limited only to administrative and military buildings: in 12th century BCE a mansion for the Egyptian governor was built for replacing a previous administrative centre, brutally destroyed.

The settlement was destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser III in 723 BCE and it seems to have been practically uninhabited until the 3rd century BCE. During the 2nd or 1st century CE a temple was erected on the tell. This temple was probably dedicated to Zeus Akraios, on the base of a dedication of an altar discovered in secondary use947.

During the Hellenistic and Roman Period, the city extended at the foot of Tel Beth Sean. The Hellenistic settlement developed in the northern area, northward to what is now Tel Iztabba: only pottery sherds were found here and there are no signs of buildings948, probably because of the destruction of the city caused by the conquest of Alexander Jannaeus. It seems likely that before the 1st century CE the population of Scythopolis had not settled the Nahal Amal valley949.

When Pompey conquered Judaea in 63 BCE, Scythopolis started a new prosperous period of building deal: archaeologists found various remains of structures dating to the 1st century CE, when the urban plan was outlined. On the Tel Bet-Shean, a temple was found in the 1920s. It has been firstly dated to Ptolemaic period, but it seems likely it was built later, during the 2nd century CE. However, an earlier shrine probably stood there950.

947 See Tsafrir 1989 for further information.
948 Foerster and Tsafrir 2002, 73.
950 Mazor 2016, 358.
It is difficult to define which god was worshipped in this temple: two inscriptions dated to the mid-2nd century CE mention Zeus Akraios, whereas a third alludes to Zeus Bacchus. In the valley, a temple dedicated to Demeter and Kore was built near the theatre, while another one was dedicated to Dyonisos.

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The most important building dated to this period was the basilica, located on the south bank of the Nahal Amal, northeast to the Byzantine agora. The basilica was built in Corinthian style with local basalt stones in its lower courses, while it was made of local soft limestone in its upper part. The city knew a huge development mostly during the 2nd century CE: at the north, the so-called «valley street», running from north-east towards south-west, was paved and had on both sides sidewalks with shops lined by monolithic columns. The road ended to a small square, where there was the watershed between Nahal Amal and Nahal Harod. Here a columnar monument («central monument») and a nymphaeum were built. The temple was erected in the centre of the city and had no τέμενος, a very unusual phenomenon among Roman cities. At this stage there is not enough evidence for determining the identity of the local worship, albeit the first excavators conjectured it was dedicated to Dionysus. The temple had a four columns façade and stood on a high podium. The exact plan of the ναός has not been clarified. The nymphaeum was made by basalt and covered with marble: its façade had a row of niches. Opposite of this building, a monument dedicated to Antonius son of Antoninus was erected. During the 4th century, the entire area was re-designed. A temple was erected 14 meters above the street: it was presumably dedicated to the imperial cult and dated back to the kingdom of Marcus Aurelius, because of a Greek inscription which mentioned the Emperor. The columns, with Corinthian capitals, fell down during the earthquake of 749 CE. The so-called «Sylvanus street» (from Sylvanus, a lawyer who initiated the renovation works of the street), flanked by columns, started from the temple towards the valley of Nahal Harod, to the north-west: on its eastern side, few remains of a gateway were found. It probably led to the temple of Zeus on the Tel Bet Shean. Opposite to it, another πρόπυλον led into a great quadriporticus, which laid on a high plateau, rectangular in shape and surrounded by porticoes in Ionic order. The southern side opened onto an ωδεῖον, used probably as θωμετήριον, which went out of use during the 6th century, when a semi-circular plaza (called «sigma») was created. It was flanked by the so-called «Palladius street» (from Palladius, a Byzantine governor of the city who renovated the street). This quadriporticus was identified as a Caeraeum, dedicated to the Emperor cult. The Palladius street led to the bathhouse, to the south-west, built firstly during the 1st century CE and replaced by a Byzantine building, and to the southern theatre, presumably built during the first stages of the 1st century CE (possibly under the reign of Tiberius) and enlarged at the second half of the 1st century CE, during the Flavian period. It was rebuilt during the Severan Age. Its scenae frons had to be very impressive, with columns made of marble from Asia Minor and with a rich floral decoration. Far from the main civic area, a large amphitheatre, built probably in the 2nd century CE, stood in the southern part of the city: its plan (a rectangle rounded on its short sides) lets us to think that it was originally intended for use as a hippodrome. It collapsed...
during the earthquake of 749 CE and its stones were reused in later periods. The Crusaders used the seats for building a fortress nearby.

FIG. 20 Scythopolis city plan, 2nd century CE, based on MAZOR and ATRASH 2014, fig. 10.10.
4.14 PELLA/TABAQAT FAHL

On the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, the modern village of Tabaqat Fahl is located at the southern end of an extended plateau. Near this village there are the remains of the ancient city of Pella, which extended over two hills separated by a small alluvial valley, called «Wadi Jirm». The site has an important advantage of a powerful perennial spring: in various ways and at different times, Pella worked as a passage point, providing lodging, food and other facilities for travellers. The central feature of the site is a great mound of earth, called «central mound». The central mound is flattened on the top and is the major occupational area of the old city, while a natural hill, called «Tell al-Husn», lies at south-east. Favourable climatic conditions led colonisation of the area since Palaeolithic. A first settlement on the site of the Hellenistic city of Pella was dated to Late Neolithic. The original Semitic name was presumably «Fahil», which became «Pella» after the conquest of Alexander the Great, as happened for Dion. Pella is mentioned in about a hundred early historical documents: the city name is firstly attested in some Egyptian execration texts dated to 19th century BCE, which mentioned a Semitic settlement called «Pihilum». According to the results of the excavations, the city had to develop throughout the centuries as a trade and craft centre: during the Middle and Late Bronze Age Pella was a city-state, with its own kings, as shown into the Amarna letters. It seems likely that the city was in the list of the Palestinian sites conquered by the Egyptian king Sethos I. After 1200 BCE, there are no written records about this city, even in the Bible there are no mentions of it. During the Hellenistic period, the city was re-founded: Stephanus of Byzantium, referring to Dion, reported that Alexander the Great founded Pella. The suggestion could derive from the sound of the Semitic word «Pihilum/Pehel», which resembles the birthplace of the Macedonian king. However, no sources have remembered a visit of Alexander in Transjordan area. Stephanus has been also the only author who affirmed that Pella was even known as Berenike and Boutis. According to Victor Tcherikover, the name of Berenike is a clear proof that the city was founded by Ptolemy III: Ptolemaic rule in southern Syria.

962 SMITH 1973, 1.
963 WALMSLEY et alii 1993, 169.
964 BOURKE 1997, 96-98.
965 NEAEHL 3, s.v. Pella
966 SMITH 1968, 134; SCHÜRER II 1979, 146; WEBER 1993, 12; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 170.
967 MORAN 1992, 309, EA 256: there is a mention of the city of Philu, whose prince Mut-Bahlu was accused of wanting to leave the city.
969 STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Δίον: «πόλις […] κοίλης Συρίας. Κύπρας Αλεξάνδρου, και Πέλλα ἡ τὸ ὕδωρ νασηρόν».
970 STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Βερενίκαι: «[…] ἐστὶ καὶ ἅλη περὶ Συρίαν, ἢν Πέλλαν καλοῦσιν».
971 According to R. H. SMITH (1973, 36), the name of Boutis is apparently an Egyptian appellation. STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Πέλλα: «πόλις […] Κοίλης Συρίας, ἢ Βούτης λεγομένη».
972 TCHERIKOVER 1959, 99.
began after the battle of Ipsos, in 301 BCE. Berenike was a common name among the women of the Egyptian court. However, Polybius, talking about the conquests of Antiochos III in 218 BCE, reported just the name of Pella. Appian, instead, claimed that the city was founded by Seleucus I. According to Flavius Josephus, Alexander Jannaeus conquered and destroyed the city

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973 Berenike, in fact, was the name of the wife of Ptolemy I, the daughter of Ptolemy II and the wife of Ptolemy III. 
974 Polyb. V, 70,12: «άσφαλισάμενος δὲ καὶ τὸ Ἀταβύριον ἄνεζευξε, καὶ προάγας παρέλαβε Πέλλαν…». 
975 Appian, instead, claimed that the city was founded by Seleucus I.
because it was not expected to adopt Jewish customs. As for other cities of the area, Pompey freed Pella, which became to be part of the Decapolis. Later Christian authors, such as Epiphanius, confirmed that the city belonged to the Decapolis.

Another evidence comes from the coins minted by the city, where the Pompeian era was used, like other cities freed by Pompey.

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976 JOSEPH. BJ I, 4, 8 (104): «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Πέλλαν ἐλών ἐπὶ Γέρασαν ἤτα πάλιν τῶν Θεοδώρου κτημάτων γλυκάμουν, καὶ τρισὶ τοὺς φρουροὺς περιβόλους ἀποτείχίσας διὰ μάχης τὸ χώριον παραλαμβάνει»; AJ/XIII, 392-397: «Βασιλεῖευ δὲ μετ᾽ αὐτὸν τῆς κοίλης Συρίας Αρέτας κληθείς εἰς τὴν ἁρχήν ὑπὸ τῶν τὴν Δαμασκὸν ἐγκάλης διὰ τὸ πρὸς Πολεμαζόν τὸν Μενναίου μίσος, στρατεύσας δ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν ἐπὶ τὴν ίουκαίαν καὶ περὶ Ἀδιδα χωρίον μάχη νικήσας Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπὶ συνθήκας ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκ τῆς ίουκαίας. Ἀλέξανδρος δ᾽ ἔλασας αὐτὸς ἐπὶ Διαν πάλιν αἱρεῖ ταὐτην, καὶ στρατεύσας ἐπὶ Ἑσσαν, οὐ τὰ πλέοντα ἄεία Ζήνωνι συνεβαίνειν εἶναι, τρισὶν μὲν περιβάλλει τείχεσιν τὸ χώριον, ἁμαρτὶ δὲ λαβὼν τὴν πᾶλιν ἐπὶ Γαύλαν καὶ Σελέκειαν ἐξώρυμησεν. παραλαβὼν δὲ καὶ ταύτας προσεξελέγει καὶ τὴν Αντίχαυ νεομένην φάραγγα καὶ Γάμαλα τὸ φρουριον. ἐγκαλοὶ δὲ πολλὰ Δημητρίῳ τῆς τῶν τόπων ἄρχοντες περὶ διαπέσαν αὐτῶν, καὶ τριτὸν ἢδη πεπληρωκὼς ἄτος τῆς στρατεύσεις εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ὑπέστρεψαν προθύμως αὐτῶν τῶν ίουκαίων διὰ τὴν ἐνυπαρχαν δεχομένων. Κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἥδη τῶν Σύρων καὶ Ἰδουμαίων καὶ Φωκίνων πόλεις ἔχον οἱ ίουκαίαι πρὸς θαλάσσης μὲν Στράτωνος πύργων Ἀπολλωνιᾶν Ἰῶτην ἴμιειν Ἀζωτον Γάζαν Ανδηδόνα Ράφηειν Ρινοκόροουρα, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ κατὰ τὴν Ἰδουμαίαν Ἀδώρα καὶ Μάριαν καὶ ὅλην Ἰδουμαίαν, Σαμάρειαν Καρυμήλιον ὅρος καὶ τὸ Ἱαβύριον ὅρος Σκυθόπολιν Γάδαρα, Γαυλανίτιδας Σελέκειαν Γάβαλα, Μωαβίτιδας Ησιεών Μηδαβα Λεμβα Ορωνισμελέθων Ζώαρα Κλίκων αὐλώνα Πέλλαν, ταύτην κατέσκαψαν ὑποσχομένων τῶν ἐνοικούντων ἐς πάρτα τῶν ίουκαίων ἐθνείς ἐπεξελέσαθα, ἄλλας τὸ πόλεις πρωτεύουσας τῆς Συρίας ἴαινα καταστράφησαν».

977 JOSEPH. BJ I, 7, 156: «ἤλευθερωσεν δὲ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ μεσογαίᾳ πόλεις, ὅσας μὴ θεσάντας κατέσκαψαν, ἤππον Σκυθόπολιν τε καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ ἴμιειν καὶ Μάριαν Ἀζωτον τε καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν, ὅμως δὲ καὶ τὰς παραλίους Γάζαν Ἰῶτην Δώρα καὶ τὴν πᾶλιν μὲν Στράτωνος πύργων καλουμένην, ὑπέρον δὲ μετακινθεῖσαν τῇ ὑψ. Ἡρώδου βασιλέως λαμπροτάτος κατασκευάζαμεν καὶ μετονομασθέασαν Καιςαρείαν»;

AJ XIV, 75: «καὶ Γαδαρα μὲν μικρὸν ἐμπροσθίων καταστράφεισαν ἀνέκτισαν Δημητρίῳ χαρίζομένου τῷ Γαδαρεῖ ἀπελευθέρωσαν αὐτοὺς; τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς ἤππον καὶ Σκυθόπολιν καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Διον καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἔτι τὰς Μάριαν καὶ Ἀζωτον καὶ ἴμιειν καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν τοις οἰκητοῖς ἄπεδωκεν».

978 The city is mentioned in both the lists of Pliny and of Claudius Ptolemy.

979 EPIPH. Adv. Haeres. XIX, 7, 8: «Εὐστιν δὲ αὐτῇ ἡ αἰρέσις ἡ Ναζωραίων ἐν τῇ Βεροαίᾳ περὶ τὴν Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει περὶ τὰς τῆς Πέλλης μέρη καὶ ἐν τῇ Βασανίδι ἐν τῇ λεγομένῃ Κωκάβη. Χωκάβη δὲ ἔβραστι λεγομένη [...].

EPIPH. Adv. Haeres. XXX, 2, 7-8: «Γέγονε δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴ τούτων μετὰ τὴν τῶν Ἑρωσόλουμ ἄλωσιν. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πάντες οἱ εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότες τὴν Περαιάν καὶ ἴκενον καφροῦ κατηκοῦσαν, τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν Πέλλῃ τὶν πάλιν καλουμένη τῆς Δεκαπόλεως τῆς ἐν τῷ ἑυαγγελίῳ γεγραμμένης πλησίον τῆς Βασανίας καὶ Βασανίδος χώρας [...].

At the beginning of the Jewish war the city was ravaged by riots together with other cities981. Eusebius982 remembered that a community of Christians fled to Pella983 from Jerusalem during the revolt984. The city reached its maximum population and prosperity during the 6th century CE, when there was an extensive trade with Syria, Egypt and other areas of the Byzantine world. The city was also a bishopric and possibly some forces were stationed here in order to monitor traffic on the route between Jerusalem and Damascus985, as the presence of a fort on the top of Tell al-Husn would confirm986. During the 7th century the city rapidly declined and probably finished to exist when an earthquake destroyed most of its surviving buildings in 747.

4.14.1 History of the Research

The first explorers who have visited the site were Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles: they said to have seen the ruins in 1818, speaking of a modern village on the top of the central mound. They recognised a square building surrounded by columns, but did not offer any suggestion about which ancient city was987.

981 Joseph. BJ I, 7,7 (156): “πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγήν ὅλων τὸ ἐθνὸς ἐξαγριώτευτα, καὶ διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κύμας τῶν Σύρων καὶ τὰς προσεχούσας ἐπισκόπους πόλεις. Φιλαδέλφειαν τα καὶ Ἐσεβωνίνην καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν”.

982 EusEB. Hist. Eccl. III 5.3-4: “μου’, οὐ μὴν ἁλλὰ καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς ἐν Ιεροσολύμων ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τινὰ χρησμὸν τοὺς αὐτοὺς δοκίμων διὶ ἀποκαλυμμένωι ἐκδοθέντα πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου μεταναστήνῃ τῆς πόλεως καὶ τινὰ τῆς Περαιάς πόλιν ὅεικεν κεκελευσμένου, Πέλλαν αὐτὴν ὅνομαζον, ἐν ἕ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ μετακινομένας, ἡς ἐν παντελῶς ἐπιπλοιστῶν ἀγίων ἀνδρῶν αὐτὴν τὰ τῆς Ιουδαίας βασιλικὴν μητρόπολιν καὶ σύμπασαν τὴν Ἱουδαίαν γήν. ἕκ τε θεοῦ δίκη λοιπῶν αὐτοὺς ἄτε τοσάυτα εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους αὐτοῦ παρηνομικότας μετή, τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀρδὴν τὴν γενέαν αὐτὴν ἔκεινην ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίζουσα”.

983 The Christian author talked about Pella in Peraea, but it is probably a mistake, since there were no cities with this name in that region.

984 The episode in confirmed by Epiphanius, see note 972. Furthermore, the presence of a Christian community seems to be confirmed by the fact that here lived Aristo, a Christian writer of the 2nd century. EusEB. Hist. Eccl. IV 6.3-4: “[...] ἀκαμάντος δὲ τοῦ πολέμου ἐτοὺς ὀκτώκαιδεκάτου τῆς ἡμεραίας κατὰ Βηθθηρά ἐπιλίθην τις ἐν ὅχυρωτάτῃ, τῶν Ἰεροσόλυμων οὐ σφόδρα πόρρω διεστῶσα τῆς τε ἐξωθέν πολιορκίας χρονίου γενομένης λιμνὶς τε καὶ διήμε τῶν νεωτεροτοπίων ἔξω χατοῦν ὄλεθρου περιελθέντων καὶ τοῦ ἀποσιαίος αὐτοῖς αἰτία τῆς ἐξάειν ἐκπίπτοντος δικῆν, τὸ πᾶν ἐθνὸς ἐξ ἔκεινου καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ Ἰεροσόλυμα γῆς πᾶσαν ἐπιβαίνειν ἐφεύρετο νόμου δοξάμα καὶ διατάξας Ἀδρανοῦ, ὡς ο ἐν ἐξ ἀπόπτου θεωροῦν τὸ πατρίδος ἐδαφος, ἐγκελαδεμένου: Ἀρίστων ὁ Πελλαῖος ἤιστοεί. οὕτω δὴ τῆς πέλεως εἰς ἐρμίναν τού ἰουδαίων ἐθνὸς παντελῆ τὶ φθοράν τῶν πάλαι οἰκτηρῶν ἔλθουσης εἰς ἀλλοφυλοῦς τέν γενόσιαν κυκλοβοσίας, καὶ μετέπειτα συστάσα Ρωμαϊκὴ πόλις τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἀμείασα, εἰς τὴν τοῦ κατούχαν Αἰλίου Ἀδρανοῦ τήμα τῆς Αἰλία προσαγορεῦται. καὶ δὴ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησίας ἐξ ἐθνῶν συγκροτηθείσας, πρώτος μετὰ τούτος ἐκ περιτομῆς ἐπισκόπους τὴν τῶν ἐκεῖσε λεπτορίγιαν ἐγχειριζέται Μάρκασ”.

985 Walsmley 2007, 244.
986 Watson and Tidmarsh 1996.
987 Irby and Mangles 1823, 92-93.
The first explorer who identified the site as the ancient Pella was Edward Robinson, who visited the site together with Eli Smith in 1852: he spent only fifteen minutes for visiting the site and did not see any village on the central mound or the ruins described by Irby and Mangles. The French Victor Guérin published a more detailed description of the site: he was the first visitor who noted that the «ancient Christian basilica», already seen by first explorers, was paved by mosaic. He accepted the identification of the site with Pella. Selah Merrill visited the area several times: in 1881 he wrote to have seen some newly opened tombs, describing the hills in the surroundings as full of tombs. In 1887 the German scholar Gottlieb Schumacher began the most exhaustive survey, writing his results in a small book: he saw the so-called «Roman Temple», noting the presence of Christian symbols on some columns. In the western part of the Wad Jirm, Schumacher explored caves and identified them as monastic habitations; hereafter, he described the Church already seen by previous explorers as «a great Christian basilica» and then the central mound, which consisted of «innumerable heaps of building stones». The German explorer described many sarcophagi, but unfortunately he did not draw them.

In 1933 John Richmond of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine began to produce the first precise large-scale topographical plan of the central mound: he focused his work on the cemeteries around the city, stating that the bulk of the pottery was Byzantine, with also a good number of Roman sherds.

In 1967 Robert Houston Smith, from Wooster College in Ohio, conducted the first systematic excavations in Pella. An international team, headed by R. H. Smith, Basil Hennessy and Anthony McNicoll of the University of Sydney, resumed the works only in 1979, until 1985: since this year only the Australian team worked in Pella, focusing in particular on the pre-Classical and late antique periods.

### 4.14.2 Urban Landscape

Very little is known about the city during the late 4th and early 3rd century BCE: there were found few signs of an Early Hellenistic presence and there are no stratified...
remains before the Seleucid conquest\textsuperscript{1000}. According to John Tidmarsh, the best part of Hellenistic material belongs almost exclusively to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and early 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE\textsuperscript{1001}.

\textsuperscript{1000} Watson 2002, 62.
\textsuperscript{1001} Tidmarsh 2004, 459.
By contrast, Late Hellenistic remains are much more numerous at Pella and in its surroundings: two fortresses were found on Jebel Sartaba\textsuperscript{1002} and on Tell Hammeh\textsuperscript{1003}, while the city itself seems to have had no fortifications, unlike other Decapolis cities, which were delimited by walls, as well as Gadara\textsuperscript{1004} or Gerasa\textsuperscript{1005}. The results of excavations have shown that Pella flourished in this period and the houses reached a certain level of wealth and prosperity, with decorated walls and imported goods\textsuperscript{1006}.

Wherever Hellenistic remains were found, the archaeologists were able to note clear signs of destruction, like fire or debris layers. Among the remains of the destruction layers, a coin of Antiochos XII, dated to 88-84 BCE, was found. It is very likely that the story of the destruction of the city reported by Josephus was true\textsuperscript{1007}.

Albeit freed by Pompey, the city has only remains from the Augustan period: according to Robert Houston Smith, when the reconstruction took place, Hellenistic imported pottery was suddenly replaced by predominantly local ceramics, sometimes influenced by Roman designs\textsuperscript{1008}.

It is likely that the central mound was occupied in this period, even if the cultural and commercial centre may have moved into the Wadi Jirm, between the two hills\textsuperscript{1009}. The excavations into the Wadi were difficult because of the flow of ground water at the base of the mound. Nonetheless, some remains were found. Among public buildings, the most ancient remains were of a όδειον, probably used for political assemblies: it is in a poor state of preservation, because during the Byzantine period it was robbed for building new structures. The western part has almost entirely disappeared, like the best part of the eastern side: the design is quite conventional, the cavea had nine rows of slab bench seats from white limestone and was probably roofed\textsuperscript{1010}.

Beside the όδειον, just to west of the staircase of the Civic Complex Church, a semi-circular wall had been discovered in 1981. The archaeologists believed it was the remnant of the nympheum depicted on several coins minted into the 3rd century CE\textsuperscript{1011}: this complex building had three floors and a richly decorated façade with columns and statues\textsuperscript{1012}. Actually the exedra was identified as a remnant of city’s baths\textsuperscript{1013}.

Other structures are known only from coins issued by the city: they were probably located into the Wadi Jirm, where it is possible to suppose the presence of a forum\textsuperscript{1014}.

\textsuperscript{1002} McNicol, Smith, Hennessy 1982, 65-67.
\textsuperscript{1003} McNicol\textsuperscript{+} et alii 1992, 103-107.
\textsuperscript{1004} Hoffmann 2000.
\textsuperscript{1005} Kennedy 1998, 56.
\textsuperscript{1006} Watson 2002, 63.
\textsuperscript{1007} Joseph BJ I, 4,8 (104) and AJ XIII, 392-397: see note 969.
\textsuperscript{1008} Smith 1987, 56.
\textsuperscript{1009} McNicol, Smith, Hennessy 1982, 77.
\textsuperscript{1010} McNicol, Smith, Hennessy 1982, 78-82.
\textsuperscript{1011} Spijkeerman 1978, 214-215, nos. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{1012} Meshorer 1985, 92.
\textsuperscript{1013} McNicol\textsuperscript{+} et alii 1992, 122.
\textsuperscript{1014} McNicol\textsuperscript{+} et alii 1992, 120.
On the Roman coins a temple is depicted on a high mount, surrounded by a wall and a
colonnaded street: the temple stands on a large platform \textsuperscript{1015}. According to Pamela
Watson, the hill resembles the south of Tell al-Husn \textsuperscript{1016}. Archaeological excavations unearthed remains of well-built walls dated to late Roman
period (3\textsuperscript{rd}-4\textsuperscript{th} century CE), which are a clear sign of a reorganization of a domestic area
in the south-eastern area of the city \textsuperscript{1017}. The later 3\textsuperscript{rd} century was a period of difficulty
for trade, the city seemed to decline, although some imported goods were still imported \textsuperscript{1018}. The Byzantine reorganisation of the city and the following spoliation of Roman remains, together with the difficulties to dig into the Wadi Jirm, give us no further information about the urban arrangement during the Roman period.

\textsuperscript{1015} SPIJKERMAN 1978, 214-215; MESHORER 1985, 92, no. 250.
\textsuperscript{1016} WATSON 2002, 65.
\textsuperscript{1017} WATSON 2002, 69.
\textsuperscript{1018} The contents of the tombs, where the best part of Late Roman evidences have been found, confirmed the economic decline.
The city of Jerash is located in the northern part of the kingdom of Jordan, 48 km north of the capital city, Amman. The modern city lays on the east bank of the Wadi Jerash, called Chrysorrhoas in the past, covering parts of the ancient city’s remains. It is surrounded by hills and arable lands and has a good supply of water.

Although scattered Neolithic remains were found in various areas of the site\(^{1019}\) and of its surroundings\(^{1020}\), a stable settlement during the Bronze and then Iron Age occupied the hill south-western the oval plaza\(^{1021}\), where the Archaeological Museum nowadays lies\(^{1022}\).

The territory of Gerasa was presumably part of the area ruled by Ammonites from the 12th to the 7th century BCE\(^{1023}\); however, the settlement was small and not powerful, since it seemed to not exist before the Hellenistic period.

The earliest attestation of the Semitic name is presumably constituted by a votive inscription from Cos dating to 200 BCE: it was dedicated by a Kasmia from Ger(asa)\(^{1024}\). Another attestation is a Nabataean inscription dating to the 1st century BCE and found at Petra. On this inscription the name «Garshu» is registered\(^{1025}\).

A late tradition ascribed the foundation of the city to Alexander the Great, who settled a group of old men (γερόντες) at the site\(^{1026}\). This late tradition has been confirmed by some coins minted at Gerasa during the reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla\(^{1027}\) and of Elagabulus\(^{1028}\). It seems likely that the link between the inhabitants of Gerasa and a group of Macedonians, presumably guided by Alexander, was created during the second half of the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century CE, according to two inscriptions found in the city\(^{1029}\). According to Arnold Jones, a group of aristocratic élite

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\(^{1019}\) The last findings were unearthed during the excavations of the North-western Quarter of the city. See LICHENBERGER and RAJA 2015, 486.

\(^{1020}\) KENNEDY (2000, 448) has identified 6 Neolithic sites.

\(^{1021}\) KENNEDY 1998, 55. NELSON GLUECK (1939, 28) had already identified an Iron Age site on a hill north of Jerash.

\(^{1022}\) The so-called «Camp Hill» of the Anglo-American expedition. See KRAELING 1938, 28 and SEIGNE 1992, 332.

\(^{1023}\) KRAELING 1938, 28.

\(^{1024}\) EISSFELDT 1941, 434; SEYRIG 1965, 26 n. 2; LICHENBERGER 2003, 192, n. 1671: «ἐς Τοχ(πτο)ν --- Κασμαίος Ἀβδαῖον Γερ(ασηνός) τὸν βωμὸν Ἡλιώ καὶ θε[οίς τοίς] συμβύῳοις».

\(^{1025}\) STARKY 1965, 95-96.

\(^{1026}\) According to the author of the Etymologicon Magnum s.v. Γερασηνός. Alexander killed the young men of the settlement and discharged the veterans of his army, who founded the city: «Ἀλέξανδρος […] ἐν ἡλίῳ πάντας κτείνας, ἀπέλυσε τοὺς γέροντες, οἱ εἰλθόντες, κιϊζοσι πόλν […]».\(^{1027}\) These coins have a bust of Alexander and the legend «ἈΛΕΞ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚ(ΕΔΩΝ) ΚΤΙ(ΣΤΗΣ) ΓΕΡΑΣΩΝ» on the reverse. For further information, see SEYRIG 1965, 25-28; SPIJKERMAN 1978, 164-165, nos. 29, 31.

\(^{1028}\) On these coins the legend on the reverse is «ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΩΝ». SPIJKERMAN 1978, 166-167, nos. 34-35.

\(^{1029}\) WELLES 1938, 410, no. 78: «Μακε[δόνων]: this inscription is dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD. WELLES 1938, 423, no. 137. It is possible that Alexander ordered Perdiccas to found a city: SEYRIG (1942, 25-28) had rightly dated the erection of the statue of Perdiccas at the 3rd century CE. Contra SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 150, who wrote about the erection of a statue during the second half of the 1st century BCE.\(^{1027}\)
of the city called himself «Macedonians» 1030, creating a legendary tradition. A similar situation is registered in various cities in Asia Minor, like Eumeneia in Phrygia 1031. We have no proofs about a foundation of a city during the Ptolemaic period: the only findings in the area are a coin of Ptolemy I, found on the surface near the northern theatre 1032, and a coin of Ptolemy II, found at Birkeitein, north of Gerasa 1033. According to Carl H. Kraeling 1034, followed by Jacques Seigne 1035, Antiochos IV was the founder of the city, probably limited to the tell of the «Camp Hill».

The site had surely a strategic importance during the war fought by Alexander Jannaeus, king of Judaea, against Zeno and Theodorus, tyrants of Philadelphia: Josephus, in fact, claimed that the tyrants of Philadelphia hid part of their treasure in this city 1036. It is very likely that in this period the sanctuary dedicated to Zeus Olympios arose: in fact the practice of depositing treasures in sanctuaries was very common 1037. The sanctuary was erected outside the village, on a high place, oriented towards North-West, where the Hellenistic settlement was located. According to Kraeling, the cult of Zeus replaced a previous Semitic worship when the Semitic town was re-founded as a Greek city 1038. Furthermore, Seleucid kings promoted the cult of Zeus Olympios 1039.

As proof that Gerasa acquired importance during the 2nd century BCE, Josephus underlines that the city had its own territory, by saying that Alexander Jannaeus died during the siege of Ragaba, a fortress situated in the territory of the Gerasenes 1040. Although the Semitic name was always used, Gerasa was also known with the name «Antioch on the Chrysorrhoas»: this name clearly derived from the Seleucid period and was well attested on inscriptions dating to the Roman times. The inscriptions are dated from the Trajan kingdom and the early 3rd century 1041. The coins which attested the name were all dated to the Marcus Aurelius’ principate 1042.

1030 JONES 1937, 238-239
1031 COHEN 2006, 250-251; 404.
1032 CLARK, BOWSHER and STEWART 1986, 255.
1033 BELLINGER 1938, 500.
1034 KRAELING 1938, 30-32.
1036 JOSSEPH B/1 4,8 (104): «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Πέλλαν ἐλών ἐπὶ Γέρασαν ἤ̊ ἤ̊ παλγόν τὸν Θεοδώρου κτημάτων γλαύμους, καὶ τρισὶ τοὺς φρούρους περιβόλοις ἀποτείχισας διὰ μάχης τὸ χωρίον παραλαμβάνειν».

Α/ΧΙΙΙ, 393: «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐλάζας αὐθίς ἐπὶ Διαν πόλιν ἀείρι ταύτην, καὶ στρατεύσας ἐπὶ 'Εσσαν, οὗ τα πλείστου ἄξια Ζήνωνι συνεβαίνει εἰναι, τρισὶν μὲν περιβάλλει τείχεσιν τὸ χωρίον, ἀμαχὶ δὲ λαβὼν τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ Γαύλαναι καὶ Σελεύκειαιν εξώβρυσεν».

According to SCHÜRER (1973, vol. II, 150, n. 345), we have no information about a city named 'Εσσαν and it is more plausible the version of the Bellum Judaicum.

1038 KRAELING 1938, 31.
1040 JOSSEPH. Α/ΧΙΙΙ, 398: «Μέτα δὲ ταύτα ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος ἐκ μέθης εἰς νόσον καταπεσόν καὶ τρισὶν ἔσεσιν τεταρταίῳ πυρετῷ συσχεθεῖς οὐκ ἀπέστη τῶν στρατευμῶν, ἐξος οὖ τοὺς πόνους ἐξαναλωθεῖς ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς Γερασηνῖν ὄροις πολυρκῶν Ράγαβα φρούριον πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου».

1041 The oldest mention of the name «Antioch of the Chrysorrhoas» is a dedication from Pergamum (IGR IV 374): «Ἀντιοχέων τῶν [πρὸς τῷ Χρυσόρος ἢ 𝜽 θύλα] καὶ ὁ δήμος», dated to 102-104 CE.

1042 SPIJKERMAN (1978, 160-161, nos. 9-12). The inscription was always the same: «ἈΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ ΤΩ(Ν) ΠΡ(ΟΣΩ) ΧΡ(ΥΣΟΡΟΣ) ΤΩ(Ν) ΠΡ(ΟΤΕΡΟΝ) ΓΕ(ΡΑΣΗΝΩΝ)». 
Pliny listed a city named *Galasa* instead of *Gerasa* among the cities of the Decapolis\textsuperscript{1043}, but he was possibly wrong. The city was inserted in the list of Ptolemy\textsuperscript{1044} and Stephanus of Byzantium remembered the city as member of the Decapolis\textsuperscript{1045}. Like the other cities of the Decapolis, Gerasa started its own local era from 62 BCE, when Pompey invaded this area, even after Trajan created the new province of Arabia in 106 BCE\textsuperscript{1046}.

During the Jewish revolt, the rebels attacked the city\textsuperscript{1047}: however, the Jews who lived there were spared by other inhabitants\textsuperscript{1048}. Josephus reported also that Vespasian sent Lucius Annius for conquering Gerasa, which was sacked and about a thousand of young people killed\textsuperscript{1049}.

During his travels, Hadrian visited the city, as many dedications and the erection of a triumphal Arch showed\textsuperscript{1050}. We assume from inscriptions that the city became a colony with the name «Colonia Aurelia Antoniniana\textsuperscript{1051}», but we do not know exactly when. In the 4\textsuperscript{th} century CE Gerasa seemed to reach the peak of its history: it was a bishopric and its bishops took part to the Council of Seleucia (359 CE) and to the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)\textsuperscript{1052}. Furthermore, Ammianus Marcellinus said it was one of the best

\textsuperscript{1043} Nat. Hist. V, 16 (74).
\textsuperscript{1044} Ptol. Geog. V, 14.22.
\textsuperscript{1045} Steph. Byz. s.v. Γέρασα: «πόλις τῆς Καλῆς Συρίας, τῆς Δεκαπόλεως, ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἀριστων ῥήτωρ ἀστείος ἐστίν, ὡς Φίλιον, καὶ Κήρυκος σοφιστῆς καὶ Πλάτων νομικὸς ῥήτωρ, πάσαν παίδευσιν ὡς μίαν ἀποστοματίζων καὶ ἐν συνγνώμης καὶ παρεδρευτὰς καὶ θρόνοις τὴν ὀρθότητα τῶν νόμων ἐπιπήδεων. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Γερασηνίον, ὡς Μηδαμα Μηδαμηνός».
\textsuperscript{1046} For inscriptions, see Welles 1938; for coins, see Spinkerman 1978, 156-167.
\textsuperscript{1047} Joseph. B.VII 18,1 (458): «πρῶς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγην ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἔσχηροιται, καὶ διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κώμας τῶν ᾿Ομορίσοις τὰς τοῦ Ἱεροσολύμοις, τοῦ Λούκου καὶ τῶν περὶ Ἰεροσολύμοις νέων, Φιλάδελφειάν τε καὶ Ἐσεβυνίν καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν».
\textsuperscript{1048} Joseph. B.VII 18,5 (480): «Γερασηνοί τε οὔτε εἰς τοὺς ἐμμείναντας ἐπελμέλησαν καὶ τοὺς ἐξελθέν ἐκληρόσας πρώτευσαν μέχρι τῶν ὄρων».
\textsuperscript{1049} Joseph. B./IV 9,1 (486-490): «Ο δὲ Οὐσεπτασιανὸς πανταχόθεν περιπενίζων τούς ἐν τοῖς ἱεροσολύμοις ἔν τε τῇ Ἱεριχώι καὶ ἐν ᾿Αδίδοις ἐγέρει στραπότεθη καὶ φρουροὺς ἀμφότερας ἐγκαθίστησιν ἐκ τοῦ Ῥωμαίου καὶ συμμαχικοῦ συντάγματος. πέμπει δὲ καὶ εἰς Γέρασα Λούκιοι Ἀννιν παραδοὺς ἑνόμαν ἰππέως καὶ συνόντας πεζούς. δὲ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἐφόδου τῆς πολύν ἔλεγαν ἀποκτείνει μὲν χλῖδος τῶν νέων, ὅσοι μὴ διαφυγεν ἔφθασσαν, γενέας δὲ ἐκμαλωτίσατο καὶ τὰς κτήσεις διαρπάσα τοῦ στρατιώτας ἑπέτευσεν: ἠπετὰ τὰς Ῥωμαίας ἐμπρόδες ἑπὶ τὰς περὶ κώμας ἐχώρει. φυγαὶ δ᾽ ἤσαν τῶν δυνατῶν καὶ φθορὰ τῶν ἁθενεστέρων, τὸ καταλαύθην δὲ τὸν ἐνεπιμπράτο καὶ διεισῆκε τὸν πολέμοι τὴν τῶν ἡπείρην ὅλην καὶ τὴν πεδιάδα πάσας οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροσολύμοις τὰς ἔξοδους ἀφήγησαν: τοὺς μὲν γε αὐτομολην παρασκευοῦσαν οἱ ζηλωταὶ παρεφυλάσσοντο, τοὺς δὲ οὕτω τὰ Ῥωμαίων φρονούντας εἴρην ἔπραπται πανταχόθεν τὴν πολύν περιέχουσαν. Kraeling (1938, 46) believed Lucius Annius’ expedition was against Jewish villages in the land of Gerasa, while Schürer (1973, vol. II, 150) has claimed that this Gerasa was not the same city of the Decapolis, friend of Romans.
\textsuperscript{1050} According to Kraeling (1938, 57), followed by Browning (1982, 51), it is likely that Caracalla gave the new status to Gerasa, albeit in Digesta, L, 15 the city was not listed among the cities which became colonies during the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla.
\textsuperscript{1052} They were Exeresius and Plancus. See Kraeling 1938, 64, n. 212 and Browning 1982, 53.
defended cities together with Bosra and Philadelphia because of its walls and Eusebius alluded to it as one of the most eminent πόλεις of Arabia.

It is uncertain when the city was abandoned, albeit when William of Tyre visited the city in 1122 CE, it was already reduced to a mass of ruins but still inhabited.

**4.15.1 History of the Research**

In modern times the site of Jerash was re-discovered by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, who visited the city in 1806: in addition to the temple of Artemis, he saw the colonnaded street and the oval plaza and identified the city as the ancient Gerasa. Furthermore, he was able to read and copy some inscription and claimed that several buildings were erected during the 2nd century CE.

Six years after Seetzen, John Lewis Burkhardt saw the same buildings, although he spent only few hours in the city.

In 1878 a group of Circassian refugees settled the east bank of the Wadi Jerash and, progressively, modified the old city’s outlook: the new settlers started to use ancient stones for building their own constructions, as Göttlieb Schumacher testified. The German explorer visited the city many times, providing many drawings and pictures of the site.

With the beginning of the 20th century, a German expedition working at Baalbeck and directed by Otto Puchstein began a detailed study of Jerash, staying there for a month. The German team published only some drawings.

The first systematic works in the old city were carried out by George Horsfield, who started to restore the South Theatre in 1925 and continued for several years, until 1931, working on the court of the temple of Zeus, the nymphaeum, the προπύλαια and the main colonnaded street. Since 1928 the work of restoration was flanked by the excavations carried out by the joint expedition of Yale University, under the direction of Benjamin Wisner Bacon, and the British School of Archaeology, directed by John Winter.
Crowfoot\textsuperscript{1064}. These works were collected into the fundamental study «*Gerasa. City of the Decapolis*», edited by Carl H. Kraeling in 1938.

The Jordan Department of Antiquities started its activities during the half of the century, albeit at their first stages they were limited to the restoration of the main street.

In 1977 an Italian expedition began excavation and restoration works in the area of the Temple of Artemis\textsuperscript{1065} and in 1981 the Jerash Archaeological project was launched: it consisted in a long term cooperative project aimed to uncover and restore the principal monuments of the city. The project has included many foreign expeditions, from Italy, France, Great Britain, United States of America, Poland, Spain and Australia, each one with particular focus on specific monuments: in particular, Italians have hitherto continued to work in the area of the sanctuary of Artemis, while the French expedition still works in the area of the sanctuary of Zeus\textsuperscript{1066}.

From 2001 to 2003, the «Jerash City Walls Project» started the investigation of the city wall foundations\textsuperscript{1067} and in 2002 the Islamic Jarash Project was carried out by a joint expedition of the University of Copenhagen and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, unearthing an early Islamic mosque and the shops and baths around its area\textsuperscript{1068}. Since 2011, a Danish-German project has been conducted in the Northwest Quarter of the ancient city\textsuperscript{1069}.

**4.15.2 Urban Landscape**

The earlier history of the site is not well known: pottery of the Bronze and Iron Age has been found, but there are no evidences for a continuous nature of the settlement: the area inhabited would be the northern one, on the so-called «Camp Hill»\textsuperscript{1070}.

The only archaeological evidence of a 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE phase is constituted by the so-called «ναός» in the lower terrace of the Sanctuary of Zeus\textsuperscript{1071}: there are no proofs of a city foundation or of a stable settlement. As already seen, the tradition of a foundation made by Alexander the Great or Perdiccas is later, and archaeological and epigraphic data until now do not confirm it.

No structures of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE were found: the main indirect indicators for the size of the city in this period are from the necropolis\textsuperscript{1072}: beyond the best preserved ruins of the South theatre and the lower terrace of the Sanctuary of Zeus, a round tomb was found under the Hadrianic Arch on the northern part of the city\textsuperscript{1073}. It is hard to establish how big was the city in this period and the size of its population: it was supposed that the city grew up from a central nucleus in the southern part of the area that spread to the north\textsuperscript{1074}; however, it is more likely that the northern area was already inhabited during

\textsuperscript{1064} Several preliminary reports appeared from 1928 to 1931, the works were all collected into *Kraeling* 1938.

\textsuperscript{1065} Gullini 1983-1984, 5-134;

\textsuperscript{1066} Zayadine 1986 and 1989.

\textsuperscript{1067} Kehrberg 2003, 2011.

\textsuperscript{1068} Blanke et alii 2007.

\textsuperscript{1069} Lichtenberger and Raja 2015 and 2016.

\textsuperscript{1070} Braemer 1987, 525.

\textsuperscript{1071} Seigne 1992, 333; Raja 2012, 148.

\textsuperscript{1072} Kehrberg and Manley 2001; 2002, 7-8.

\textsuperscript{1073} Seigne 2002, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{1074} Seigne 1992, 336-337.
the 1st century. According to three inscriptions\textsuperscript{1075}, a temple of Artemis has already existed\textsuperscript{1076}, as well as the so-called «Temple C»\textsuperscript{1077}. Furthermore, various structures, destroyed during the 1st century CE, were found under the «cathedral».

Raffaella Pierobon, following the data collected by Pierre Briant for the cities of the Near Eastern communities\textsuperscript{1078}, has rightly deemed that at Gerasa happened a «synoikistic phenomenon» (emphasis in the original text) comparable to other settlements like Alexandria, Antioch or Palmyra, where more centres formed the entire cities\textsuperscript{1079}. More recently, Achim Lichtenberger, analysing principally the evidences on the inscriptions and on the coins, has confirmed that it was very likely the presence of two cities\textsuperscript{1080}.

\textsuperscript{1075} Welles 1938, 388-390, nos. 27-29.
\textsuperscript{1076} Parapetti 1986.
\textsuperscript{1077} The remains of this small temple were found during the excavations of the 1930s under the church of St. Theodore. See Fischer and Kraeling 1938, 139-148.
\textsuperscript{1078} Briant 1982, in particular 88-89.
\textsuperscript{1079} Pierobon 1983-1984a, 32.
\textsuperscript{1080} Lichtenberger 2008, 150-151.
Kraeling attributed to the 1st century CE also the so-called «oval Plaza», connected with the enlargement of the Sanctuary of Zeus\textsuperscript{1081}. However, Roberto Parapetti has claimed that the plaza was built only during the Trajan's reign, connected with the South Gate\textsuperscript{1082}; actually, the hypothesis of Parapetti seems to be more likely, because during the early

\textsuperscript{1081} KRAELING (1938, 42) has wrongly identified the Oval Plaza as the forum of the city.

\textsuperscript{1082} PARAPETTI 1984, 56.
stages of the 2nd century a re-organisation of the city plan was probably realised. The
dating of the grid, for example, although it is still under discussion, was probably the
beginning of the 2nd century CE: some scholars have related the urban layout with the
construction of the Northwest Gate, dated to the 2nd century CE on the base of an
inscription, while others have questioned this chronology by a comparison of the
architectural pattern, principally of the doors, thinking that the walls were erected only
during the late 3rd or early 4th century CE. The investigations carried out by the Jerash
City Walls Project (JCWP) have confirmed that the construction of the walls was probably
started in the first half of the 2nd century. The grid seems to be based on a main north-
south thoroughfare (the so-called «cardo maximus»), crossed by perpendicular
streets: actually, even at a cursory review it appears clear that several streets are not
really perpendicular and that oldest buildings did not follow the same orientation.

As said above, the first enlargement of the Sanctuary dedicated to Zeus was carried out
during the 1st century CE: the local architect Diodoros built a large terrace during 27/28
CE. The lower part of the rock was filled in and supported by a sort of cryptoporticus. With the enlargement of the terrace, a monumental entrance at north
was added to the old entrance at south, changing the orientation of the old complex.

In 69/70 CE Theon, son of Demetrios, financed the reconstruction of the temple, of
which not much is known: another inscription dated to 22/23 CE mentioned Zabdion,
priest of Tiberius, who gave funds for a temple, presumably that of Zeus although it is
still designated with no certainty. Furthermore, another inscription remembered
Ariston, the brother of Zabdion, who made a dedication for the new temple in 42/43
CE. On the base of these inscriptions, the construction of the temple had to cover a
long period: the new complex monumentalised the previous Hellenistic structures, in
particular the altar, with a portico of columns with Corinthian capitals.

During the first half of the 2nd century, in particular during the Hadrianic period, other
structures were built, like the macellum, an octagonal courtyard surrounded by a
peristyle of twenty-four Corinthian columns with a fountain at its centre. Beyond the
peristyle, four semi-circular exedrae stood, interchanged with at least three entrances
and surrounded by tabernae. The dating of the structure to the 2nd century was
supported by architectural and decorative style of the building and especially by two
inscriptions bearing the name of Tiberius Iulius Iulianus Alexandros, Roman governor of

1083 Welles 1938, 397-398, no. 50.
1084 Seigne (1992, 335). Furthermore, the finding of a house dated 165/170 CE under the so-called «decumanus sud» has constituted a terminus post quem for the creation of the city plan (Gawlikowski 1986, 109-110).
1085 Kehrberg and Manley 2001, 440; 2003, 86.
1086 The grid is obviously incomplete, because the eastern part of the old city is covered by the modern city.
1088 Seigne 1985, 291.
1091 Welles 1938, 375-378, nos. 5-6.
1092 Seigne 1985, 289
1093 Welles 1938, 373-374, no. 2.
1094 Welles 1938, 374-375, no. 3.
1095 Seigne 1997, 999.
1096 Olavarri-Góicoechea 1986: earlier excavators identified the structure as the ἀγορά according to two inscriptions on two columns (Welles 1938, 411, nos. 80-81).
1098 Martín Bueno 1989, 188.
the Roman province of Arabia, who probably contributed to the erection of the *macellum*\(^{1099}\). In the southern sector of the city, the South Gate and the hippodrome were built: the hippodrome is the smallest one in the Roman world. It had a very short life, because it was destroyed during the 3rd century and its stones were used in other parts of the city\(^{1100}\).

During the second half of the 2nd century, many other buildings were erected: in the northern sector a small theatre\(^{1101}\), which had to stay in the same area, and that a. The trapezoidal square: the presence of a \(\betaουλευτήριον\)\(^{1103}\), as proved by an inscription found on the eastern part of the \(cuneus\): in fact, it can be read τόπο[\(c\] βουλής\(^{1104}\). The fascinating hypothesis of the presence of an \(\alphaγορά\) on the other side of the street was formulated by Rostovtzeff\(^{1105}\); the presence of a \(\betaουλευτήριον\) could reinforce this idea, but more excavations need to be made.

During the same period even the «West Baths» were built, although the lack of stratigraphic surveys does not allow us to define the earlier plan and the exact chronology of the complex\(^{1106}\).

During the Antonine period the erection of the Sanctuary of Artemis started in an area previously used as a burial area\(^{1107}\). However, several inscriptions referred to a previous temple\(^{1108}\), which had to stay in the same area\(^{1109}\), albeit its remains were not yet discovered\(^{1110}\). The new complex was aligned to the grid of the city: it developed along the main axis of the city. The so-called *via sacra* started from the eastern \(\piροπόλα\), giving access to a rectangular square flanked by columns and crossed by a street parallel to the main thoroughfare\(^{1111}\). The first part of the *via sacra* ended in two fountains with niches framed by columns which created a little trapezoidal square\(^{1112}\): according to an inscription, this part of the complex was built in 150 CE\(^{1113}\). The trapezoidal square ended on the main street, opening the main part of the Sanctuary of Artemis, on the other side of the street: crossing the western \(\piροπόλα\) and moving towards west, a first terrace, named «intermediate terrace», was reached through a monumental stairway\(^{1114}\). The temple was reached by another stairway: it had 6x11 columns and was built on a *podium* supported by vaulted rooms directly on the rock. Even the altar was found in the large \(τέμενος\); it was not exactly aligned with the temple.

\(^{1099}\) Martín Bueno 1992, 319; Uscatescu and Martín Bueno 1997, 72-73. Tiberius left Arabia between 125 and 127 (Sartre 1982a, 81).

\(^{1100}\) Ostrasz 1995 for the history of the monument.

\(^{1101}\) It was named «North Theatre». See Seigne and Agusta-Boularot 2005.

\(^{1102}\) Welles 1938, 405, no. 65.

\(^{1103}\) Raja 2012, 162.

\(^{1104}\) Agusta-Boularot and Seigne 2005, 302.

\(^{1105}\) Rostovtzeff 1932, 82.

\(^{1106}\) Lepaon 2008, 52-57.

\(^{1107}\) Seigne (1992, 338) believed that the temple was built \textit{ex nihilo} in an area outside the city, and that a previous temple was erected on the «Camp hill» (Seigne 1999, 836).

\(^{1108}\) Welles 1938, 388-390, nos. 27-29. Inscription no. 28, in particular, has attested the presence of a \(στοά\) and a pool for the cult of Artemis in 79/80 CE.

\(^{1109}\) Kraeling 1938; Parapetti 1982, 255.

\(^{1110}\) For the results of the excavations, see in particular Piazza 1983-1984; Pierobon 1983-1984b and Fontana 1986. For an account of the development of the Sanctuary, Parapetti 2002.

\(^{1111}\) Parapetti (1982, 256) has noted that this street is even larger than the main street.

\(^{1112}\) Brizzolapio and Baldoni 2010, 347-349.

\(^{1113}\) Welles 1938, 404, no. 63.

\(^{1114}\) We still do not know what the function of this terrace was.
According to an inscription\textsuperscript{1115}, in 163 a new temple to Zeus was even erected on a new upper terrace: it was an octastyle peripteral temple, built in Corinthian order, and overlooked the entire southern part of the city. As evident in this brief account, the importance of the two sanctuaries had to be remarkable. During the Byzantine period, the city layout was not completely altered, although the urbanistic face changed: numerous churches were built, covering previous structures. For several centuries Gerasa continued to have a thriving life.

\textsuperscript{1115} Welles 1938, 380, no. 11.
4.16 PHILADELPHIA/AMMAN

The modern city of Amman, capital city of the reign of Jordan, is located on the Transjordanian Plateau, with three wadis running through it. It was amrich and prosperous centre because of its agriculture and international trade. The earliest remains of the human presence date back to the Palaeolithic Period (250000-100000 BCE): the site was then almost continuously occupied during the Bronze and Iron Ages. The settlement seemed to pass under silence into the Egyptian itineraries from the time of the New Kingdom.

The modern city is undoubtedly identified with the ancient site called Rabbath-Ammon, mentioned in the biblical sources as the «royal city» of the Ammonites. The Ammonites were one of the tribes that came from the Syro-Arabian desert during the 2nd millennium BCE and settled along the area of the upper and central Jabbok River. According to biblical sources, this river had to represent the northern boundary of their territory. However, the area ruled by Ammonites was not a static entity and the Ammonites tried to extend their kingdom attacking the Israelites.

At the beginning of the 10th century BCE, king David conquered the site and proclaimed himself king of both Israel and Ammon, but after the division of the kingdom of Israel...
into the kingdom of Judah at south and kingdom of Israel at north, Ammonites obtained independence and Rabbath Ammon was their capital city. Until the 7th century, Rabbath Ammon became one of the vassals of the Assyrian and then of the Babylonian kings. After Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BCE, the name Rabbath Ammon is no longer recorded and the settlement probably lost its importance until the coming of Ptolemy the II Philadelphus gave to Amman the official dynastic name «Philadelphion», and remembered that the city was also called «Astarte». However, the 3rd and 2nd century BCE sources used the pre-Ptolemaic name of «Rabbatammana». According to Henry Innes MacAdam, the name seemed to have been only propagandistic and probably the settlement did not receive the status of polis. When Antiochus besieged Amman, it appeared as a huge fortification and passed in his hands only through the treason of a prisoner, who showed an underground passageway throughout a cistern. Under
Seleucid power, Rabbatammana lost its importance, especially when Hyrcanus, a descendant of the Jewish family of Tobiads, established a small kingdom in the Transjordan region, building his fortress at the site of Iraq el-Amir in 187 BCE,

according to the studies of Ernest Will. It is likely that the territory of Amman was somehow independent: in 2 Maccabees Jason, who failed an uprising against Seleucids in Jerusalem, was forced to run out to Ammanitis and was imprisoned by the tyrant Aretas.

άνδρῶν, ἐώς οὗ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων τινὸς ὑποδείξαντος τὸν ἀντίομον, δι` οὗ κατέβαινον ἐπὶ τὴν ὕδρειαν οἱ πολιορκούμενοι, τούτον ἀναφέρθησαν ἐνεφραζόν ὑλή καὶ λίθος καὶ παντὶ τῷ τοιούτῳ γένει. τότε δὲ συνείδοντες οἱ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν διὰ τὴν ἀνυδρίαν παρέδοσαν αὐτούς, οὗ γενομένου κυριεύσας τῶν Ραββαταμμάνων ἐπὶ μέν τοῖς ἀπέλυτοι Νικάρχον μετὰ φιλακῆς τῆς ἀρμοζούσης».

1130 Joseph. A/ΧΙΙ, 229-233: «[…] ὥδε Ἠρκάνος ἐπανειλθεὶν μὲν οὐκέτι ἔγεν ἐς Ἰεροσόλυμα, προοκαθίασας δὲ τοῖς πέραν τού Ιορδάνου συνεχῶς ἐπολέμει τοὺς Ἀραβας, ὡς πολλοὺς αὐτῶν καὶ ἀποκτείνας καὶ λαβείς αἰχμαλώτους, ὑφοδήμησαν δὲ βάριν ἰσχυρὰν εἰς λίθο λευκοῦ κατασκεύασας πάσαν μέχρι καὶ τῆς στέγης ἐγγύλης ἃ παμμεγενεθετάτα, περιήγαγεν δ` αὐτῇ εὔρισκον μὲν καὶ βαθόν. ἐκ δὲ τῆς καταντικρά τοῦ ὄρους πέτρας διατείμων αὐτῆς τὸ προέχον σπῆλασα πολλῶν σταθῶν τὸ μήκος κατασκεύασεν. ἕπεται οίκους ἐν αὐτῇ τοὺς μὲν εἰς συμπόσια τοὺς δ` εἰς ὑπόν καὶ διάπαν ἐποίησεν, ὑδαίνων δὲ διαθεδόνων πλήθος, ὥδε καὶ τέρμας ἤν καὶ κόσμος τῆς αὐλῆς. εἰσῆγαγεν. τὰ μέντοι στάμα τῶν σπῆλαιας ὡσε ἐνα δι` αὐτῶν εἰσέδων καὶ μὴ τλείους βραχύτερα ἦνοι. καὶ ταῦτ` ἐπιτιθέμεν ἀσφαλείας ἔνεκα τοῦ μὴ πολιορκηθῆς ὑπό τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ κινδυνεύσας ληφθῆς κατασκεύασεν. προσωκαθίασεν δὲ καὶ αὐλάς τῷ μεγέθει διαφεροῦσας καὶ παραδείσσαις ἐκόσμησε παρμήκης. καὶ τοιούτοι ἀπεργασάμενοι τοῦ τόπου Τύρων ὑπόμονεν. οὗτος δ` τόπος ἐστι μεταξὶ τῆς Ἀραβίας καὶ τῆς Ιουδαίας πέραν τού Ἰορδάνου οὗ πάρρω τῆς Ἐσσαβωνίνδος».

1131 Will. 1982.

1132 He was probably king Aretas I, the earliest known Nabataean king. If right, at that time Nabataeans probably ruled over Ammanitis. See II Macc 5, 6–8: «Ο` δ` ἔσχατον ἐπηρείον σφαγὰς τῶν πολιτῶν τῶν ἴδιων ἀϕείδως οὐ συννόμω τὴν εἰς τοὺς συγγενεῖς ὑπερήφανοι δύσμεροι εἶναι τὴν μεγίστην δοκὰς καὶ πολέμων καὶ οὐχ ὁμοθετῶν τρόπως καταβάλλεσθαι. τῆς μὲν ἀρχῆς οὐκ ἐκράτησεν τὸ δ` τέλος τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς αἰσχύνειν λαβῶν φυγὰς πάλιν εἰς τὴν Ἀμμαπάνν παθῆκεν. πέρας οὐκ ἐκκαθαρθηθῆς ἐτυχεν ἐγκλητείς πρὸς Ἀρέαν τῶν Ἀράβων τύραννον πάλιν ἐκ πόλεως φεύγων διωκόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων στιγμούμενος ως τῶν νόμων ἀποστάσης καὶ βδελυσσόμενος ως πατριοδὸς καὶ πολιτῶν δήμοις εἰς Αὔγουστον ἐξεβράζθη». 

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According to Flavius Josephus, during the second half of the 2nd century BCE Zenon Cotylas and his son Theodorus were the rulers of Philadelphia and conquered the territory of Gerasa, Gadara and Amathus.

Alexander Jannaeus, who conquered and destroyed several Transjordanian cities, never subdued Amman, which almost surely belonged to the reign of Nabataeans until the coming of Pompey. During the 1st century BCE, Philadelphia stood at the periphery of the events in which the area of Southern Levant was involved. Hasmonaeans and Nabataeans had good relations until the coming of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in the region. Herod brought war against the Nabataean king Malichos I, and encamped near Philadelphia.

We know nothing about the history of the city during the period between the coming of Herod and the first Jewish revolt: Philadelphia was one of the cities plundered and destroyed by Jewish insurgents after the citizens of Caesarea Maritima killed all the Jews of the city. However, the city was not involved in the later events. Pliny the Elder and Claudius Ptolemy have included the city in their lists of the cities of the Decapolis.

We cannot establish with certainty the ethnic identity of Zenon And Theodorus, but Nabataean commanders with Hellenised names were well-attested.

Reading Josephus (B) I,6,3 (129), it seems clear that the city was integral part of the reign of Aretas III: «ἀνεχώρει δέ έκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν Αρέτας καταπληγεῖσαν, καὶ πάλιν εἰς Δαμασκόν Σκαύρος».

We cannot establish with certainty the ethnic identity of Zenon And Theodorus, but Nabataean commanders with Hellenised names were well-attested.
After the creation of Roman Province of Arabia in 106 CE, the city lost its political importance, but it laid along the *via nova Traiana*, which linked the new capital city of Bosra and the ancient port of Aqaba on the Red Sea and was probably an important trade centre. However, on the coins issued during the 2nd and 3rd centuries the legend was «Φιλαδέλφεια Κοίλης Συρίας»1139 and the city continued to use a local era linked with Pompey’s arrival instead of the era of the province of Arabia.

During the Late Antiquity, the city was prosperous and peaceful, but was almost totally neglected by literary sources of the Late Roman and Byzantine period, albeit Ammianus Marcellinus and Eusebius considered it one of the most important cities of the province of Arabia 1140. Furthermore, the city was represented on the Peutinger map as an important trade station.

### 4.16.1 History of the research

During the 18th century, Adrian Reland visited the area of Philadelphia, already identified with the biblical city of Rabbath Ammon, and its surroundings1141.

Ulrich Jasper Seetzen visited Amman in 1806 and among its remains he claimed to have seen the ancient aqueduct, a palace, one amphitheatre, a temple with several columns and other ruins1142. Furthermore, the German explorer wrote a brief history of the city based on ancient writers1143.

Few years later, James Silk Buckingham wrote a more detailed description of the ruins, describing the castle of the city, on the top of a small hill, the aqueduct, and, in Wadi Amman, a great plaza and the theatre1144.

Towards the end of the century, in 1889, Claude Reignier Conder made the first scientific survey of the city, with photographs and drawings of the ancient city remains1145.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Princeton University (New Jersey) started an expedition into the area with pictures and reconstructions1146, but only in 1920s and 1930s an Italian Expedition, directed by Giacomo Guidi and then by Renato Bartoccini, started the excavations in the area of citadel and below1147.

After the World War II, the Jordan Department of Antiquities carried out several excavations in the area of the citadel and the Roman forum1148.

In 1980s and 1990s a Spanish expedition made excavations and restoration works in the Umayyad palace on the citadel1149, while a Joint Franco-Jordanian Expedition, directed

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1140 Amm. Marc. XIV, 8,13: «Haec Arabia est conserta, ex alio latere Nabataeis contigua, opima varietate commerciorum castrisque oppleta validis et castellis, quae ad repellendos gentium vicinarum excursus, sollicitudo pervigil veterum per opportunos saltus erexit et cautos. Haec quoque civitates habet inter oppida quaedam ingentes, Bostram et Gerasam atque Philadelphiam, murorum firmitate cautissimas».
1141 Reland 1714, 521.
1142 Seetzen 1859, 211.
1143 Seetzen 1859, 212-215.
1144 Buckingham 1825, 66-78.
1145 Conder 1889, 19-65.
1146 Butler 1907.
1147 Bartoccini 1932, 1933-1934; Almagro 1983.
by Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Fauzi Zayadine focused its work on the defence systems, the Ammonite palace and a water reservoir in the lower city of the citadel.

4.16.2 Urban Landscape

Except for the tombs cut in the rocks dated to Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Age, the oldest building was a Late Bronze Age temple. It was accidentally discovered in the area of the airport and consisted of one central courtyard surrounded by six rectangular rooms. The building was dated to the end of the 14th century and early 13th century BCE, and many imported pottery sherds from Egypt and Cyprus were found. However, much more remains have been found on the so-called citadel, on a hill at the centre of the modern city: in addition to a reservoir, a huge defensive system, dating between the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age, was erected. Furthermore, parts of a 7th century palace were unearthed.

The area of the citadel was completely transformed during the Roman period: three terraces were built there and a wall, dated to the 2nd century CE, had to surround all the upper area. On the south-western side of the acropolis, the podium and the remains of columns and of architectural decoration of a temple still stand up on the lower terrace. The building was built during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE) and it probably replaced an older temple. It seems likely it was dedicated to Heracles, one of the most important deities of the city, as shown on coins: it lays on the rock, which Renato Bartoccini considered «sacred» for Ammonites because he thought there was also a temple dedicated to Ishtar or Hathor. A fragmentary inscription from the 9th century attested the presence of a cult to the Ammonite god Milcom or Molech/Moloch, who probably was later assimilated to the Phoenician Melqart and finally to Heracles. Other archaeologists asserted that the temple was a tetrastyls prostyle.

Instead, modern researchers have believed it had six columns on the front. Other important buildings on the citadel are related to later periods: during the Byzantine period a large residential complex was built near the τέμενος of the Roman temple and during the Umayyad period a great palace was erected into the northern part, probably combining the residential quarters of the governor of Amman with administrative offices.

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1151 HENNESSY 1966, 155
1152 NEAEHL 4, s.v. Philadelphia.
1153 HUMBERT and ZAYADINE 1992, 249.
1154 NAJJAR 2002, 94.
1155 EL FAKHARANI 1975, 553.
1156 SPIKERMAN 1978, 243 ff.
1157 BARTOCCINI 1932, 16. This theory is today rejected: see BOWSHER 1992, 136.
1158 HORN 1967, 2.
1159 ALMAGRO 1983, 608-617.
1160 BOWSHER 1992, 132.
Another part of the Roman city was found in the lower part of Amman. Contrary to the acropolis, the remains of this area are better preserved. At the foot of the southern side of the acropolis, a monumental façade stood: it presumably consisted of six columns with Corinthian capitals, but it is hard to reconstruct it.\textsuperscript{1161}

\textsuperscript{1161} KANELLOPOULOS 1994, 3.
To the south of the Wadi 'Amman and of the acropolis, a theatre was erected: the cavea is still preserved, but the scenae frons had been destroyed at the close of the 19th century. According to an inscription, the theatre was built during the reign of Antoninus Pius. Three meters north of the theatre, the forum was surrounded by a portico on three sides (east, south and west), while on the north it opened to a colonnaded cardo which finished in front of the southern monumental façade of the acropolis.

On the eastern side of the plaza a small theatre, identified with an ἀξεδέλτος, was erected: it had five entrances on its western side and two towers were built on either side of the eastern wall.

The complex of the forum and the two theatres was probably planned at the same time and finished during the 2nd century CE.

The last structure found was in the western part of the lower city, circa 200 m from the forum and located close to the intersection between the decumanus maximus and the cardo maximus: during the last century the wall stones were re-used elsewhere. It consisted in a huge structure shaped like an open exedra, with a large central niche. It was characterised by semi-circular niches on both sides of the central niche. On the façade, 18 columns with Corinthian capitals stood parallel to the walls, creating a portico. Early remains of the structure dated back to the end of the 2nd century CE.

Conder identified the structure as a bath, albeit Butler was the first one who identified it as a nymphaeum: no pools, that usually were built in front of this kind of structures, seemed to be found until the excavations made by Mohammad Waheeb and Raed AlGhazawi, who recently have discovered the presence of a large water basin. Arthur Segal has recently claimed that it could be a small temple dedicated to the imperial cult instead of nymphaeum, like that one seen at Hippos-Sussita, but the new discoveries led us to think that his hypothesis is not sound.

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1163 NEAEHL 4, s.v. Philadelphia.
1165 SEGAL 2013, 265.
1166 WAHEEB and ALGHAZAWI 2012, 133.
1167 CONDER 1889, 41.
1168 BUTLER 1907, 59.
1169 WAHEEB and ALGHAZAWI 2012, 134.
1170 SEGAL 2013, 266.
4.17 Conclusions

4.17.1 Urban Development

The nature and the characteristics of each city of the so-called «Decapolis» are the outcome of a multiform urban development, which was caused by many factors which make a city unique: in addition to the traditional needs, such as the proximity to water or to a sanctuary, we should take into account other features, like politic and topographic ones. At the same time, it is necessary to study the history of each city starting from each site and its localization. When we look out the eastern part of the Roman Empire, many questions arise: can we define the exact nature of these cities? Was there a difference between «Greek» and indigenous settlements? Did Rome add new architectonical and urbanistic elements? Which was the role of the sanctuaries and other local religious associations? In the light of these considerations, can we continue to speak of «Greek and Roman cities»?

Michael Rostovtzeff saw Eastern Jordan cities as an «iron ring of Hellenism»1171, which was first created by the Seleucids and later by the Romans after having defeat the kingdoms of Jews and Nabataeans. This seemed also confirmed by archaeological records: because of the lack of Nabataean pottery in northern Transjordan, Nelson Glueck suggested that the Decapolis had constituted a sort of «boundary» area for the Nabataeans, through which the trade routes between the Arabian Peninsula and Syria were interrupted1172.

Robert Wenning, instead, focused on the Semitic character of the area, clearly visible from the non-urban layout of the cities, the architecture of the temples and the names of the worshipped gods1173.

Hellenistic cities in Palestine were in most cases erected on the foundations of earlier cities. Their supposed Hellenisation during the Seleucid and Ptolemaic rules was mainly political and they became «πόλεις» in a political sense. The new rulers tried to endow the cities with greater importance and pride of their supposed Greek origins.

Scholars investigating about the Decapolis area looked at the town arrangement as part of the urban development in the rest of the Graeco-Roman world1174: the coming of the Macedonians in the Near East generally caused the spread of new cultural and social phenomena that had significant effects upon cultural and social development of the East. Among these transformations, even Syrian urban forms changed.

The character of the urban development was multiform rather than uniform, born by the contrast between Western and Eastern influences. In particular, Oriental religious tendencies were in sharp contrast to the principles of the Greek and Roman life. If we compare Greek and Roman temples with the Syrian ones, this contrast becomes clear. Leo Oppenheim has emphasized the importance of the religion in the Orient, where the sanctuaries of deities were located in the same place, while for the Greeks it was possible

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1171 ROSTOVZEF 1932, 67.
1172 GLUECK 1937-1939, 139 ff.
1173 WENNING 1992, 82. See also LEWIN 2014, 114.
1174 BARGHOUTI 1982, 209.
to replace the oldest sanctuaries in the acropolis by new temples in the lower cities.\textsuperscript{1175}
In some instances, old temple communities survived during the Roman rule, while in others they developed in cities.

It was what probably happened to some of the Decapolis cities, like Gerasa or Hippos: in fact, both cities seemed to develop from an old sanctuary. However, the models above shown were not static and they were often part of a network of cities and settlements. The foundation of a new city did not imply an afresh creation at a previously uninhabited place: it often happened that cities were founded close to existing indigenous settlements and sometimes the new institutions absorbed one or more small villages. Strabo remembered that Antioch was divided in four parts, each one independent from the others.\textsuperscript{1176} Probably something similar happened also at Gerasa, that seemed to develop from at least two different settlements, the Greek and the local one.\textsuperscript{1177}

The distinction between city and village was administrative rather than physical: some settlements were large and big as some cities, but they had not the same status.

Furthermore, not all the city foundations and re-foundations under Hellenistic and Roman rulers have been characterised by the same features. For example, many cities have not an overall grid pattern, such as Sephoris, Scythopolis or Philadelphia. It seems unlikely to establish if the layouts are Greek or Syrian.\textsuperscript{1178}

One of the first external signs of the conformity of Eastern cities to the Hellenistic era and the accommodation of the Greek immigrants to the Eastern world was the conversion or adaptation of Greek names. In these cases, names of kings, founders, or Greek gods were given to these «new» cities. Instead, sometimes the Greek names were adapted solely on the basis of their etymological association with Eastern names, as happened for Pella (from Pehel). In other cases, the ancient names remained, and were only adapted to the Greek form of pronunciation. We can report some instances: Ashkelon became Ascalon (Άσκαλών), Ashdod became Azotos (Άζωτος), Jaffa or Yafo became Joppe (Τόπη), Gader became Gadara ((Γάδαρα), Abel became Abila (Αβιλα), and thus Sussita became Hippos ("Ιππος). In any case, renaming a city was a violent display of power made by new rulers.

In this cultural dispute played an important role also the hostility between Ptolemies and Seleucids: the formers had usually confined the urban arrangement to a restricted area holding full command on the surroundings, with fortifications forming geometrical lines.\textsuperscript{1179} The Ptolemies founded very few new cities and preferred to not interfere on the organisation of the κόμας.

For Seleucids, the πόλεις provided stable criteria for establishing Greek identities of its citizens, the Romans continued to use πόλεις system for governing. Rather, city became the economic, social, religious, cultural centre, often the place where local political

\textsuperscript{1175} Oppenheim 1965, 131.

\textsuperscript{1176} Strabo XVI 2,4: « [...] ἢ καὶ ταύτα τετράπολεῖς, ἐκ τετάρτων συνεστῶσα μερῶν: τετείχισται δὲ καὶ κοινῆ τείχει καὶ ἱδίω καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τὸ κτίσμα: τὸ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον αὐτῶν ὁ Νικάτωρ συνάξασε μεταγαγόν ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιγόνειας τοὺς οἰκήτορας, ἂν πλησίον ἤτειχος Αντίγονος ὁ Φιλίππου μικρὸν πρότερον, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον τὸν πλῆθους τῶν οἰκήτων ἐστὶ κτίσμα, τὸ δὲ τρίτον Σελεύκου τοῦ Καλλινίκου, τὸ δὲ τέταρτον Αντίγονος τοῦ Ἐπιφανοῦς». \textsuperscript{1177} See the chapter about Gerasa above.

\textsuperscript{1178} Ball 2000, 255.

\textsuperscript{1179} Barghouti 1982, 213.
activity had to develop\textsuperscript{1180}. However, the situation was much more fluid than in the previous period: it allowed to many natives to reach the status of citizens preserving other ethnic affiliations. The distinction between Greeks and others became much less marked, creating cases of hybridity. Near Eastern ethnics increasingly joined Greek civic life.

On the other hand, Seleucids founded many cities in their territory: it is still hard to identify a precise organisation of all the spaces of the city. According to Jean-Marie Dentzer, it seems likely that the Eastern cities were born from a «synoecism» of different centres earlier separated, as already seen\textsuperscript{1181}: in this view, the development of the colonnaded streets could be seen as an attempt to connect the different parts and to give a sort of monumental unity\textsuperscript{1182}.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to define exactly the original form of the cities built throughout the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdom, since they changed in the course of centuries, especially during the Roman period\textsuperscript{1183}. When Rome extended its hegemony in the East, contrasting tendencies were more evident. Oriental features were revitalised, like the orientation of the city toward a focus, like sanctuaries. The religious centres took on monumental settings and constituted an important element in the urban scheme, where major thoroughfares oriented with traffic towards them. In the classic form, the main thoroughfare consists of an east-west \textit{decumanus} intersecting a north-south \textit{cardo} at right angles.

However, Rome did not usually dismantle former structures and preferred to exercise control through native social institutions: they favoured a hierarchical organization for establishing the order. This kind of organization can be bound within the urban hierarchy: the hinterlands of the Syrian cities were extensive and could support large populations. During the Roman occupation, the number of the cities in the area increased, but there were very few new foundations attributed to imperial initiative. As pointed out by Maurice Sartre, the Roman period constituted the apogee of the Greek city\textsuperscript{1184}. The number of cities increased because villages raised to cities, and old settlements, which had been previously abandoned, were resettled and developed during the Roman rule.

In some cases, a settlement was founded by Greek communities prompted by Hellenistic rulers, who endowed the new cities with institutions or titles. In other cases, local communities reached the status of Greek city, becoming part of the new hegemonic system. On the other hand, their previous features did not disappear at all, but persisted in new forms that created a new type of Greekness\textsuperscript{1185}.

\section*{4.17.2 The nature of the Decapolis Cities}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1180} This illusory independence let \textsc{rostovtzeff} (1957, 131) to consider the Roman Empire as a federation of self-governing cities.
\textsuperscript{1181} \textsc{dentzer} 2000, 160.
\textsuperscript{1182} \textsc{dentzer} 2000, 161.
\textsuperscript{1183} \textsc{leriche} 2000, 124.
\textsuperscript{1184} \textsc{sartre} 2001, 640.
\textsuperscript{1185} \textsc{andrade} 2013, 23-24.
\end{flushleft}
It is hard to define what was and which function had the «Decapolis». The area covered by the analysed cities is not homogeneous, and every city had its own peculiarities. The «Greekness» itself of all these cities is only presumed by modern scholars, since ancient sources referring to the Decapolis in Syria, never clarified if there were common characteristics or a strong feeling of membership. If we look at the literary sources, no one wrote about a «Greek» Decapolis, but only about the Decapolis in Syria. Could the definition itself be a proof of the Greek identity claimed by the cities of the area or is it only a definition given by outer writers?

We do not know the answer; however, we could try to understand what actually the Decapolis has represented and if its inhabitants felt themselves as «Greek» or not.

First of all, we should understand what the Decapolis was: as seen, the evidence of the existence of a sort of league comes from 1st century CE onwards, although these sources did not specify what it really was\(^{1186}\). The lack of any type of source from a previous period, together with the silence of authors like Strabo, who seemed to ignore the presence of any political or administrative institution in the same area, are significative arguments *e silentio*. In 1981 Benjamin Isaac revisited an inscription from Madytos, in Thrace: it describes the career of an equestrian officer who received a role in the «Decapolis of Syria»\(^{1187}\) around 90 CE. The Decapolis, indeed, would have been an administrative unity attached to Syria at the end of the 1st century. Many scholars have affirmed that this confederation has been created since the Augustan period; however, throughout the analysis of the history of the cities, it appears clear that the Roman emperor did not take into account the supposed unity of the Decapolis cities: in particular, we have seen that Augustus added to Herod’s kingdom the cities of Gadara and Hippos. Likewise, when Trajan created the new *Provincia Arabia* in 106, some cities of the Decapolis, like Adraha, Gerasa and Philadelphia, were included into the new administrative unit, while Gadara, Pella and Scythopolis have been assigned to Judaea\(^{1188}\). It seems likely that, if an administrative league of ten cities existed, it had a short life, ended during the first years of the 2nd century. It was created during the Principate of Nero or more probably Vespasian, maybe for facing out the rebels and brigands in the area. Vespasian indeed created a sort of league, taking advantage by the common features of a number of cities, which declared themselves to be «Greek» and considered the year of Pompey’s coming, or the one of Gabinius’ reconstruction, as the year of their freeing and re-birth. The foundation of the city of Capitolias in 97 or 98 CE was maybe another attempt to control the area before the conquest of the Nabataean kingdom and the creation of the new province.

However, if there was effectively a league\(^{1189}\), it had no strong political power and administrative aims: the term «Decapolis» suddenly became a geographical name. Since the 2nd century CE onwards, it was often combined to «Syria Coele», indicating a wider area in the southern part of Syria. The confusion of the two terms is one of the reasons of the quickly disappearing of the term «Decapolis», remembered only by few learned writers: the expression «Coele Syria», in fact, seems to have replaced the term «Decapolis», but we do not still know the reasons of this change.

\(^{1186}\) There are not descriptions of it as a league or confederation. See *Parker* 1975
\(^{1187}\) *Isaac* 1981, 68: «ἡγησαμένω Δεκαπόλεως τῆς ἐν Συρίᾳ».
\(^{1188}\) *Bowersock* 1983, 91.
\(^{1189}\) *Tsafir* 2011, 3.
The cities themselves seemed to give no importance to their membership to the Decapolis: for instance, on the coins the term never has appeared, even if they proudly affirmed their belonging to Coele Syria. In particular, on the coins of the cities of Abila, Dion, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia and Scythopolis the inscriptions «Κ(ΟΙ)Ϲ(YΡ)» were engraved, especially at the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century CE. According to Maurice Sartre, the eparchy for the imperial cult of Coele Syria was earlier attached to the eparchy of Phoenicia and then became autonomous under Hadrian in 117-119.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Walls</th>
<th>Spectacle Buildings</th>
<th>Administrative Buildings</th>
<th>Baths</th>
<th>Religion Buildings</th>
<th>Commercial Buildings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capitolas</td>
<td>II CE</td>
<td>II CE (Theatre)</td>
<td></td>
<td>II CE</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippos</td>
<td>II BCE</td>
<td>I-II CE (ψόδευον)</td>
<td>II CE (Theatre)</td>
<td>II BCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dion</td>
<td>III CE</td>
<td>III CE (theatre)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adraha</td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>I CE (Theatre)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I-II CE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadara</td>
<td>II BCE</td>
<td>I CE (Theatre)</td>
<td>II CE (ψόδευον)</td>
<td>II BCE</td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>II CE (macellum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abila</td>
<td>II-I BCE (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pella</td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>(ψόδευον)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scythopolis</td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>I CE (Theatre)</td>
<td>II CE (ψόδευον and «Amphitheatre»)</td>
<td>I CE Basílica</td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>II-I BCE I CE; II CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>II CE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>II CE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerasa</td>
<td>II or IV CE</td>
<td>I CE (Theatre)</td>
<td>II CE (ψόδευον and Hippodrome)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I CE</td>
<td>II CE (macellum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TAB. 3 Buildings chronology according to the excavation reports.

Furthermore, Sartre has added an inscription from Didyma, dated to the first decade of the 2nd century, which would represent an important clue: Tyrians have dedicated a monument to Caius Julius Quadratus, who was governor of the province of Syria under Trajan, writing «ἡ βουλή καὶ Τυρίων τῆς ἱερᾶς καὶ ἀσύλου καὶ αὐτονόμου μητροπόλεως Φοινείκης καὶ τῶν κατὰ Κόιλην Συρίαν καὶ ἄλλων πόλεων». Further evidence is provided by an inscription from Eumeneia in Phrygia, written in Latin: «Μ(arcus) Iulius

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1191 Spijkerman 1978, 118-121, nos. 1-3, 10; Augee 1988, 325.
1192 Spijkerman 1978, 136-151, nos. 31-61, 73-74, 76-77, 80, 83.
1194 For Philadelphia, the inscription «ΚΟΙΑΗ ΚΥΡΙΑ» appeared already sporadically during the 1st century CE and frequently since the 2nd century CE. Spijkerman 1978, 244-257, nos. 3, 8, 11-17, 19, 23-28, 31-33; 34-47.
1197 Sartre 2010, 177.
1198 Habicht 1960 dated it to 102 CE, contra Sartre (2010, 175) who has considered that the Tyrians erected the monument between 105 and 109 CE.
1199 Rehm and Wiegand 1958, no. 151.
The suggestion of the evidence of a new eparchy under Hadrian, even if fascinating, cannot be proved by solid bases because of the lack of epigraphic material. Furthermore, we have no information about some cities like Hippos, Canatha, Capitolias or Gerasa.

As said above, the feature which has attracted many scholars was the alleged «Greek character» of these cities: since the 19th century, the ruims of several Decapolis sites shocked the first western visitors, who attributed them a Greek character. This belief, conscious or not, was the base of many theories about the real nature of the cities of the area. However, with a more detailed look the Greek feature is much less evident: from archaeological data, before the arrival of Pompey all the «πόλεις» seemed to be small sites, located at the periphery of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms. Several towns of the area flourished from a religious site on a hilltop, with sanctuaries built not much before the coming of Pompey: they probably were previously devoted to Semitic divinities. The Semitic deity often associated with a High Place was Baalshamin, identified with Zeus by Greeks. It is very possible that the sanctuaries represented a sort of attraction points for nomads. With the growing of these sanctuaries, people started to settle the area. For both Macedonians and then Romans, the religious institutions had to constitute a good medium for interacting with local population.

The cult of Zeus indeed spread throughout the area, and his cult was worshipped in many cities: archaeological and numismatic data attested the presence of temples dedicated to Zeus at Canatha, Capitolias, Dion, Gadara, Gerasa, Hippos. Seleucid kings promoted the cult of Zeus and it seems likely that they «exploited» ancient cults encouraging a sort of interpretatio Graeca of Semitic divinities. The phenomenon of interpretatio Graeca was used even for other deities, in particular for Heracles/Melqart, worshipped at least in Abila, Gadara and Philadelphia.

Even borrowing Greek names, many of these deities preserved epithets which suggested their «local» essence.

However, we need to bear in mind that all these cities developed during the 1st and especially the 2nd century CE, and that our hypothesis about previous periods are only conjectural. It is also true that many cities may have had a certain grade of prosperity and a large size during the 2nd and 1st century BCE, but several of them were destroyed or, at least, underwent many damages during the first Jewish revolt, albeit clear archaeological signs of a destruction datable to the 1st century appear only at Scythopolis.

Another common aspect, hidden under a «Greek veneer», is the erection of colonnaded streets: for long time (and sometimes even now) considered a classical feature, they

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1200 BUCKLER, CALDER and COX 1926, 74-75, no. 20.
1201 See in particular the cases of Gadara, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Hippos, Canatha, and maybe Abila.
1202 In the Decapolis area, the temple on the top of a hill were built at Pella, Philadelphia, Scythopolis, Gadara, Gerasa.
1204 Actually the cult of Zeus is attested in many cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, especially in Asia Minor, but even in Judaea and Syria. See RIEDEL 2011, 351-352.
1206 LICHTENBERGER 2011, 562-565.
1207 LICHTENBERGER 2003, 67-72; RIEDEL 2005, 42-47;
1208 LICHTENBERGER 2003, 89-95; RIEDEL 2005, 127-132;
1209 LICHTENBERGER 2003, 244-277; RIEDEL 2005, 250-287;
1210 I am talking about the epithet of «Arotesios» given to the Zeus from Hippos or of «Megistos» for Zeus from Canatha.
were erected only in the Near East and Asia Minor, where the most important public space was indeed the street. Furthermore, many of them (if not all) replaced an older processional road (*via sacra*), that brought to a sanctuary. As Michal Sommer has pointed out, «when Rome conquered the Near East from 64 BC onwards, the ‘great tradition’ carried by the Empire began to affect the many local ‘little’ traditions present in the area. It changed and overgrew, but did not completely replace them»; the most important consequence of the coming of the Romans was not the survival of the Near Eastern traditions, but the changing of these traditions and the creations of a new culture, that remained unique. Under the domination of Rome the Mediterranean became an interconnected system, under many points of view: the best way for interacting with the new rulers was to find common ancestors and origins. In this sense, going back to Alexander or his generals as founders of the cities was a helpful way to share the connection of the Decapolis with other parts of the Empire. Like nowadays, the traditions were continuously re-invented and re-formulated, following the political winds. The terms «Greek» or «Syrian» or even «Arab» were social more than ethnic categories: the inhabitants of Syrian or in Arabian regions conceived themselves as a different kind of Greeks. In the Hellenistic era the Eastern Mediterranean world became somewhat «global», developing its own culture: with Rome the interconnectivity accelerated the process. This common feeling was strengthened by the rising of local kingdoms into the nearby areas after the fall of the Seleucid kingdom: Ituraeans, Nabataeans and Hasmoneans threatened and sometimes conquered several cities. The echoes of the foreign cultures influenced the everyday life and sometimes emerged: the presence of cultic places devoted to Nabataean divinities in Canatha, Gerasa and maybe in Hippos could suggest the presence or at least the passage of Nabataeans in the area. Furthermore, Josephus remembered that many cities hosted a good number of Jews and that protected them during the disorders caused by the revolt of 66 CE. During the same revolt, it happened an episode that has been usually ignored: Vespasian ordered to Lucius Annius to destroy and sack Gerasa. The attack is very interesting because we do not recognise why the city was destroyed; instead, we know that the best part of Gerasenes was not constituted by Jews and that rioters sacked the villages in the Gerasene territory. Ancient sources have not even reported how Gerasa reacted to this episode: from an archaeological point of view the city seemed to know a greater development only during the second part of the 2nd century CE and we do not know too much about the previous history of the city. However, Gerasa, like Scythopolis or Hippos, has represented a good example of cohabitation precisely during the revolt: their inhabitants felt themselves not Syrians, Jews or Greeks, because they were first of all Gerasenes, Scythopolitans and so on. In this perspective we face a «stratified» character of the sense of belonging: the inhabitants of the Decapolis were interconnected with the other parts of the Mediterranean and with their neighbours, but they were firstly citizens of their cities. As proud citizens they were able to live in this interconnected world, before Hellenistic and

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1211 See *contra* Burns 2011, 463, who believed that the colonnaded street was «a way in which many cities... paid tribute to Roman values... It became the indicator of cities' levels of prosperity... Finally they were a gesture through which an Emperor could convey his particular favour toward a city».


1213 Millar 1987b, 154.

1214 Andrade 2013, 119.

1215 For Hippos, the evidence is very poor, as well underpinned by Nicole Belayche (2001, 276).
then Roman. In this sense we can better understand the words of Meleager of Gadara, who felt himself as Syrian and did not found anything of unusual, because the world was his own country

4.17.3 The Spread of Spectacles Buildings

As already seen, one of the most impressive features of almost all the cities of the area is the contemporary construction of theatres during the 1st century CE: it is more interesting because the theatres are usually one of the first buildings erected after the coming of Pompey. We have no traces of such structures during the 3rd or 2nd century BCE.

After all, there are no archaeological evidences for theatrical activity in all the Syrian region, and generally in almost all the Seleucid kingdom, until Roman rule of the area.

We have to take in account that it was very hard to modify the function of a complex structure such a theatre: it could therefore be likely that during Roman rule some theatres were re-built, but unfortunately we have no traces of previous structures.

However, the lack of evidences seems to suggest that, before the arrival of Romans, theatres or other edifices for spectacles were not built in Syrian area, while in Asia Minor, in particular throughout the Ionian coast, we have many evidences of the presence of theatres. It seems very unlikely that theatres were built in perishable material, since the lack of wood in the region.

The epigraphic and literary sources are almost completely silent and cannot help us: only Plutarch gave us some indications about the presence of a theatre in Ecbatana where Alexander the Great and his physician Glaucus have spent their time.

It seems therefore that, except for Greece and Asia Minor, all the Eastern Mediterranean had no theatres or other edifices for spectacle since the 1st century BCE, when Herod for

1216 _ANTI. PAL. VII 417: «Νάσος ἐμόθετεπερα πάτρα δὲ μὲ τεκνοΐ | Ἀτρις ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ναιομένα Γάδαρα...εἰ δὲ Συρος, τί τὸ βαθύμα; μίαν, ξένε, πατρίδα κόσμον | ναίομεν». 

1217 MILLAR 1987a, 117-118; SEAR 2006, 106. FRÉZIOUX (1982, 415-416) tried to explain this anomaly by remarking that theatre design was in an earlier experimental phase, but he seemed to forget that during the 3rd century, Hellenistic rulers built theatres both in Greece and in Asia Minor. Furthermore, in the eastern part of the Seleucid kingdom, namely at Seleucia on the Tigris and Aï Khanoum, some theatres, dated to the 2nd century BCE, have been discovered. For a first hypothesis about the presence of a theatre in Seleucia, see HOPKINS 1972, 26-27 and DOWNEY 1988, 60-63. However, Invernizzi has more convincingly supposed another collocation for the theatre (For a complete bibliography, see MESSINA 2010, 122-160). For Aï Khanoum, see BERNARD 1976, 314-322; Id. 1978 429-441.

1218 FRÉZIOUX 1959, 205.

1219 FRÉZIOUX 1959, 207.

1220 Joseph Patrich (2002, 232-233; 2009, 190-192) has claimed that the theatre of Jerusalem was a wooden structure, because of the lack of archaeological evidences and because the best part of contemporary theatres in the Roman world were built in wood. However, Herod built theatres in stone, as clear in Caesarea Maritima. In addition, REICH and BILLIG (2000) have found theatre seats in secondary use in the excavations near Robinson arch in Jerusalem, but we do not know if they were from the Herod’s theatre or the Hadrian’s theatre.

1221 PLUT. _VIT. ALEX._ LXXII, 1: « ὡς δὲ ἤκεν εἰς Ἐκβάτανα τῆς Μηδίας καὶ διώκησε τὰ κατεπείγοντα, πάλιν ἐν ἑν θέατρος καὶ πανηγύρεσιν, ἄτε δὲ τρισχιλῶν αὐτῷ τεχνητῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀφιγμένων. ἐτυχε δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡμέρας ἑκείνας Ἡφαιστίων πυρέσσων: οία δὲ νέος καὶ στρατιωτικὸς οὐ φέρων ἀκριβῆ διαίταν, ὅμω τῶν ιατρῶν Γαλακτὸν ἀπελθείν εἰς τὸ θέατρον περὶ άριστον γενόμενος καὶ καταφαγῶν ἀλεξιμόνα ἐφθόνον καὶ ψυκτήρα μέγαιν ἐκποιήσει καὶ μικρῶν διαλιπῶν ἀπέθανε». 

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the first time started to build even permanent edifices for spectacles: in fact, according to Flavius Josephus, Herod the Great provided a big impulse to the spread of spectacles and to the construction of entertainment buildings throughout the area.

The king of Judaea visited Rome for three times: he probably attended the ludi saeculares in 17 BCE, held at the 10th anniversary of the Principate, and other games organised by the Emperor in 13 BCE for celebrating the consecration of the Ara Pacis, donating to Augustus 300 talents.

Furthermore, he was gymnasiarch on the Aegean island of Cos and built gymnasium at Tripolis of Phoenicia, Damascus and Ptolemais. Then, he was named president (agonothetes) of the Olympic games. For his experiences, it seems obvious that Herod had promoted games even in his kingdom. First of all, the Judaean king established a quinquennial festival with athletic contests every fifth years in honour of Augustus, building a theatre and an amphitheatre in Jerusalem for the exhibition of not traditional spectacles, like gymnastic games, music plays, «θυμελικοῖ» and even animal-baitings.

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1223 JOSEPH. AJ XVI, 128: «Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ύστεραις ἡμέραις Ῥωμαίους μὲν εὐδωρεῖτο Καίσαρα ἑταοσκποσιας ταλάντος θέας τε καὶ διαδομάς ποιούμενον τῷ Ρωμαίων δήμῳ, Καίσαρ δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ μετάλου τοῦ Κυπρίων χαλκοῦ τὴν ἡμίσεαν πρόσοδον καὶ τῆς ἡμίσειας τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἔδωκεν καὶ τάλλα ξενίας καὶ καταγωγικὰς ἐτύμησεν».

1224 We do not know the exact nature of the term itself. It early was referred to musicians, whereas later it was used also for actors and dancers who played in the theatre. The reference to θυμελικοἷς PATRICK (2009, 192) to think that the nature of the spectacles was Hellenistic much more Roman, because the performance of them was played in the orchestra and not on the stage. The absence of gladiatorial combats, the most typical Roman feature, could be considered another proof of the «Greeko» nature of these games.

1225 JOSEPH. AJ XV, 267-275: «Διὰ τούτοι καὶ μάλλον ἐξεβαίνει τῶν πατρίων ἐθνῶν καὶ ξένων ἐπηρεασμένων ὑποδειθηεθῶν τὴν πάλαι κατάστασιν ἀπαρεγχειρητὸν οὕτως, ἐς ὃν οὐκ αἱρέσι καὶ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ χρόνον ἠδικήθημεν ἀμεληθέντων ὁσα πρότερον ἐπὶ τὴν εὐεργείαν ἢν τοὺς ὑπόλοιπους πρῶτον μὲν γάρ ἀγώνα πενταετηρικῶν ἥθημάτων κατέστησεν Καίσαρι καὶ θέατρον ἐν Ιεροσόλυμος ὕσκοδομήσας, αὐθίς τ᾽ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μεγιστὸν ἀμφιθέατρον, περισσὰ μὲν ἄμφω τῇ τοπολογεία, τοῦ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς λουκαιδίους ἔθους ἀλλότρια: χρήσεις τε γάρ αὐτῶν καὶ θεαμάτων τοιούτων ἐπιδείξεις ὡς παραδίδοτο, την μέντοι πανηγυρίν ἑκείνου ἐπιφανεστάτην τὴν τῆς πενταετηριδος συνετέλει καταγείρασα της τοῖς πέρι καὶ συγκαλῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς ἔθνους, οἱ δ′ αθληταὶ καὶ τὰ λοιπά τῶν αγωνισμάτων ἀπὸ πάσης γῆς ἐκαλουθοῦν κατ’ ἑπίδαι τῶν προκειμένων καὶ τῆς νίκης εὐθυγέ, συνελόγωσα τοιος ὡς κομφατοστάτων τῶν ἐπηρεασμένων: οὐ γάρ μόνον τοῖς περὶ τὰς γυμνικὰς ἀσκήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἔν τῇ μουσική διαγωνιμοῖς καὶ θυμελικοῖς καλούμενοις προτείνει μέγατα νικηθήκας: καὶ διεσπουδάστω τῶν παντὰς τοῖς ἐπηρεασμένως ἐλέεις ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμαν, προύθηκεν δὲ καὶ τεθρίππως καὶ συνωρίζοντας καὶ κέλευσαν ὡς μικρὰς δωρέας, καὶ πάνθρος, ὡς κατὰ πολυτελέσαν ἡ συμπροτέρεαν παρ᾽ ἑκάστος ἐπιστοῦδαστος φιλονήμι τοῦ δίασπροι αὐτῷ γενέσαθα τὴν ἐπείδειξιν ἐξεμμυματο. τὸ γε μὴν θέατρον ἐπεγραφαί κύκλω περειχέν Καίσαρος καὶ πρῶται τῶν ἐθνῶν, ἡ πολημήσας ἑκείνου ἐκθέτησε, χρυσοῦ, τοις ἀπέθιος καὶ ἀργυροῦ πάντων αὐτῶ πολημώνων. τὰ δ´ εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς οὐτ᾽ ἑσθής τίμιον οὐτε σκευῆς λίθων, ὡς τοῖς ἀρμώνως ἀγωνισμάσιν συνεπεδείκνυτο. παρασκεύη δὲ καὶ θηρίων ἔγεντευ λεόντων τε πλείστων αὐτῶ συναχθέντων καὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν, ὡς καὶ τὰς ἀλκές ὑπερβαλλόύσας ἔχει καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶν σπανιώτερα: τοῖς αὐτῶς τε πρός
Other quinquennial games in honour of Augustus were held in Caesarea Maritima, with a great number of gladiatorial combats, which were absent in the description of the games of Jerusalem1226.

Since Herod onwards, the population of Judean kingdom and of surrounding areas started to change gradually its cultural habits and to accept foreign spectacles: Josephus claimed that Herod himself promoted the erection of theatres outside his reign, at Sidon and Damascus1227. However, Herod did not financed any construction within the Decapolis area: this datum is very interesting because, as seen above, some of these cities, like Gadara and Pella, had to belong to his reign. The real question here is: how much these cities were considered to be Greek by Herod? Taken for granted that the penetration of Greek customs and way of life took roots even in Judaea1228, it seems at least odd that the Judaean king supported only Damascus in the construction of gymnasium and a theatre1229.

During the 1st century CE the erection of theatres was peculiar of the northern part of the reign of Judaea and of the southern part of the province of Syria. In the same period even the most important city of the Nabataeans, Petra, was provided with a theatre1230. In the first half of the 1st century CE even numerous cities of the Decapolis started to build edifices for spectacle: Canatha, Gadara and Scythopolis provided themselves of a theatre. After a little break, during the second half of the 1st century Gerasa and Philadelphia erected their own theatre, while Canatha, Hippos and Pella constructed an amphitheatre, and at Scythopolis an amphitheatre was built, starting an ongoing process of construction of buildings for mass entertainment, which involved in particular the cities of Galilee, Coele Syria, Auranitis and northern part of the province of Arabia, ended only

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1226 JOSEPH B/I, 21,8 (415-416): «Τά ἐν μήν λοιπά τῶν ἔργων, ἀμφιθέατρον καὶ θέατρον καὶ ἄγοράς, δέχθω τῆς προσηγορίας εἰνώδισατο. καὶ πενταετηρικοὺς ἀγώνας κατασκευάσασθαι ὑπὸ χρώμως ἐκάλεσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καίσαρος, πρώτος αὐτὸς άθλη μέγιστα προβάς ἐπὶ τῆς ἑκατοστῆς ἐνενήκησθης δευτέρας ολυμπιάδος, ἐν οίς οὐ μόνον οἱ νικώτες, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ μετ᾽ αὐτούς καὶ οἱ τρίτοι τοῦ βασιλικοῦ πλούτου μεταλάβαναν. ἄνακτος δὲ καὶ Ανδρέα τὴν παράλοιπον καταρριφθέειν ἐν πολέμῳ Αγρίππειον προσηγόρευε: τοῦ δ’ αὐτοῦ φίλου δι’ ὑπερβολὴν εὐνοίας καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς πύλης ἐχάραξεν τὸ όνομα, ἢ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ κατεσκέυασεν»;

AJ XVI, 136-137: «Περὶ δὲ τὸν χρόνον τούτον συντέλεσαν ἔλαβεν ἡ Καίσαρεα Σεβαστή, ἢ ὕκωδεμε δεκάτῳ μὲν ἐτες πρὸς τέλος ἐλθούσης αὐτῶ τῆς ὅλης κατασκευὴς, ἐκπευσόσως δὲ τῆς προφθομίας εἰς ὑγίαν καὶ εἰκόσιαν ἐτὸς τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπ᾽ ἐλομπίας δευτέρας καὶ ἐνενήκησθης πρὸς ταῖς ἐκατον. ἢ οὖν εὖθυς ὡς καθιερώσω μείζονες εορτάθη τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ παρασκευασμένα τών οὐχὶ πολεμώσαν τῶν ἡρώων καὶ παρασκευασμένα τῶν ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ καὶ παρ᾽ ἄλλος ποιὼν ἐπιτηδευμάτων»

1227 JOSEPH B/I, 21,11 (422). See above, note 622.

1228 MOMIGLIANO 1994, 22.

1229 As said above, Damascus cannot be considered a city belonging the Decapolis.

1230 HAMMOND 1965, 545-549; McLKENZIE 1990, 143-144.
in the mid-3rd century\textsuperscript{1231}. It seems likely that, according to Edmond Frézouls, local population, at first stage scarcely interested in Greek and Roman spectacles, was continuously exposed and changed its feelings toward them: local rulers, aware of their populations’ happiness, fund performances and competitions, in addition to build structures\textsuperscript{1232}. One of the causes of the break of construction policy between the beginning and the latter part of the 1st century was probably due to the drastic decrease of funds: with the changes of political situation, at a first stage local notables could not afford the costs.

What seems much more relevant is the unexpected boom of this kind of structures during the first two centuries of our era. As already seen, the Seleucids in particular seemed to do not give importance to the receptive structures for the spectacles, even if many of their cities possessed γυμνάσια which became tools for reinforcing a Greek identification of the local elites.

Unlike Ptolemies and Attalids, the Seleucids had no tried to spread their cultural practises in a systematic way\textsuperscript{1233} and no Seleucid city achieved the cultural eminence of Alexandria or Pergamon. Actually, albeit Seleucids attempted to not interfere into many aspects of everyday life of local communities, they were considered as foreign conquerors: it is clear reading Jewish sources, which saw them as dominators who started a new era, the Greek one\textsuperscript{1234} and their occupation was seen as a violent occurrence which brought a trouble period of war and turbulence.

Indeed, one of the causes of the lack of theatres or other edifices generally related to the classical view of Greek cities could be the scarce interest of Seleucids to promote a common culture and their preference to leave broad autonomy to local communities. This fact, in addition to the high cost of this kind of buildings, let the cities focus their attention to other structures. Local elites, where possible, preferred to attend γυμνάσια and compete to regional contests, showing ties of kinship derived from a presumed common origins\textsuperscript{1235}. According to Michel Austin, the fragmentation of the Empire was one of the causes of the strength of Seleucid power\textsuperscript{1236}; at the same time, it allowed the development of local traditions in many aspects of life\textsuperscript{1237}.

However, it is still hard to understand why a stable theatre lacks even in Seleucid foundations, like Antioch on the Orontes, where the first stable theatre was built by Julius Caesar in 47 BCE\textsuperscript{1238}. It seems likely that only γυμνάσια and ἑφηβεία represented clearer markers of «Greekeness»\textsuperscript{1239}. To practice sport in heroic or athletic nudity had to be an

\textsuperscript{1231} Weiss 2014, 70.
\textsuperscript{1232} Frézouls 1961, 59-60.
\textsuperscript{1233} Andrade 2013, 40.
\textsuperscript{1234} I Macc 1, 10: «καὶ ἔξηλθεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ῥίζα ἀμαρτωλός Ἀντίοχος Ἑπιφάνης υἱὸς Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως ὃς ἦν ὄμηρα ἐν Ρώμῃ καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν ἐτεί ἐκατοστώ καὶ τριακοστώ καὶ ἐβδόμῳ βασιλείας Ἑλληνῶν».
\textsuperscript{1235} Giovannini 1993, 278. For a full list of gymnastic institutions in Greek cities, see Kennell 2006.
\textsuperscript{1236} Austin 2003, 131.
\textsuperscript{1237} It has been clearly shown in Hannestad 2011 and 2012.
\textsuperscript{1238} Actually it is not clear if he built a new theatre or re-built an older one. Malalas made just a list of the structures Caesar built. Mal. Chron. 9, 279: «[…] ἔκτεσε δὲ ἐκεί ἄνω καὶ μονομάχου καὶ θεάτρων. ἀνένεωσε δὲ καὶ τὸ Πανεπέν, μελλόντα συμπίπτειν, ἀνεγείρας τὸν βωμὸν [...]».
It was then enlarged by Agrippas. Mal. Chron. 9, 288: «προσεθῆκε δὲ κτίσας ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ Ἀντιοχείας ἄλλην ζῷον ἐπάνω τῆς πράτης διὰ τὸν πολὺν δῆμον ὁ Ἀγριππᾶς […]».
\textsuperscript{1239} Andrade (2013, 43, n. 31) had already noticed that in many cities under Antiochos IV many gymnastic institutions developed, but not civic councils.
important feature that distinguished Greeks from others. The theatre, instead, like many other structures usually considered typical of a Greek city, was not considered useful for Seleucid propaganda. As seen in the case of Antioch on the Orontes, the Romans well understood the powerful opportunities given by the erection of theatres. Inasmuch as theatrical performances and athletic games were often associated with festivals and religious activities, participation as spectators or players to the spectacles would be against Jewish orthodoxy, but also against other local religions. However, a Jew of the Diaspora like Philo of Alexandria seemed to know very well athletic games and to not consider them as totally opposite to the Torah. Furthermore, Philo recommended that Shabbath should not be spent to attend to sports or other shows: it probably means that these activities were allowed and common among Jews during the other days of the week.

The growing Roman influence and power into the region after the Jewish revolt of 70 CE led to a massive construction of urban facilities, among which even theatres, hippodromes and amphitheatres: local people had to change their attitude towards entertainments and recreation activities. The prohibition of attending games held by tannaitic sources was a direct consequence of this change among Jewish people. According to Zeev Weiss, «permission (to attend public entertainment) was granted only if it would bring benefit to the general public or those specifically undergoing mortal danger». However, even among Rabbinic sources a clear change happened: while tannaitic sources, dating from the 1st to the 2nd century CE, were much more determined to condemn foreign practises, Amoraic sources, dated from the 3rd to the 5th century CE, tried to persuade their communities to not see Roman shows more than to attack them directly.

It seems likely that Jewish population was attracted by spectacles, in particular the gladiatorial ones, and attending them became a common practice during the 2nd and 3rd century CE. If we look to the New Testament, Jesus never used parables connected to the world of spectacles: it is another proof that during the first part of the 1st century Galilean people knew little about Greek and Roman entertainments. The themes used by rabbis and Jesus were not casual: they were taken by daily life, by the reality known by their audience.

As seen, we have little more information about Jewish attitude, while we do not completely know what is the behaviour of other Semitic peoples. Judging from the sources, there are no particular restrictions for some specific kind of game: they were all condemned and Rabbis have prohibited them.

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1240 SARTRE 2009, 205.
1241 PHILO, De Vita Mos. II, 39 (211): «Ταύτης ἕνεκα τῆς αἵτιας ὁ πάντα μέγας Μωυσῆς ἐδικαίωσε τοὺς ἐγγραφέντας αὐτοῦ τῇ ἱερᾷ πολιτείᾳ θεσμοῖς φύσεως ἐπομένους πανηγυρίζειν, ἐν ἱλαρός διάγοντας εὐτυμίας, ἀνέχοντας μὲν ἔργων καὶ τεχνῶν τῶν εἰς πορισμόν καὶ πραγματείαν ὡς κατὰ βίου ζήτησιν, ἀγνοῦντας δὲκεχειρίαν καὶ διαφειμένους πάσης ἐπιτόπου καὶ καμαρτράς φρονίδος, σχολάζουσι πόλεως ἐνιαίως καὶ παθιασθὲν ὑπὸ τάδε νήματα ἔργων καὶ ταὐτίας ἐκτὸς ἡγέσως ἐπιδείξεσιν, περὶ ἓς κηραιοῦσαν καὶ δυσθανατοῦσιν να τῶν φυσικῶν καὶ μισθίων καὶ ἀρχηγῶν ἐπιτείγεσιν, περὶ ἓς κηραιοῦσαν καὶ δυσθανατοῦσιν να τῶν φυσικῶν καὶ μισθίων καὶ ἀρχηγῶν ἐπιτείγεσιν».
1242 FELDMAN 1993, 61.
1243 WEISS 2014, 205.
1244 WEISS 2014, 205.
However, many scholars have pointed out that, even if accepted, gladiatorial games were less popular than in the Western part of the Empire. Because of their foreign origin, their diffusion could be well represent an interesting case-study for analysing the acceptance of a Roman custom in the area of the southern Levant. According to Michael Carter, gladiatorial combat were a significant cultural institution which helped to maintain a Roman sense of identity. Greek literature has rarely mentioned gladiators and their games were hardly staged among Hellenistic kings: one exception is constituted by Antiochos IV at Daphne in 166 BCE, when 240 pairs of gladiators participated to the festival held by the Seleucid king. Some scholar believed that gladiators were not included in the original text written by Polybius; however, considering the Antiochos’ enthusiasm for gladiators reported by Livy, it seems likely that the Seleucid king wanted to introduce this kind of games in the Hellenistic East.

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1245 CARTER 2010, 152.
1246 POLYB. XXX, 25.1-9 (=ATIL 194d-e): «ο δ´ αὐτὸς οὔτος βασιλεύς ἀκούσας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ συντελεσμένους ἀγῶνας ὑπὸ Αἰμιλίου Παῦλου τοῦ Ρωμαίων στρατηγοῦ, βουλόμενος τῇ μεγαλοργίᾳ ύπεράρχαν τὸν Παῦλον ἐξέπεμψε πρέσβεις καὶ θεωροῦσιν ἐς τὰς πόλεις καταγγελοῦντις τοὺς ἐσομένους ἀγῶνας ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Δάφνης: ὡς πολλή γενέσθαι τῶν Ελλήνων σπουδῆς εἰς τὴν ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφιξε. ἄρχην δ´ ἐποίησατο τὴς πανηγύρεως τὴν πομπεῖαν οὔτως ἐπιτελεσθέοισαν. καθηγοῦντο τινες Ρωμαἰκῶν ἑορτεῖς καθολικῶν ἐν χωραξὶν ἀλυσιδωτοῖς, ἄνδρες ἀκμάζοντες ταῖς ἡλικίαις πεντακισχιλίοι: μεθ´ οὖς Μυται πεντακισχίλιοι. συνεχεῖς δ´ ἦσαν Κίλικες εἰς τὸν τῶν εὐξένων τρόπον καθωπλισμένοι τρισχιλιοί, χρυσοὺς ἑορτεῖς στεφάνους. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτως Ὁράκες τρισχιλιοί καὶ Παυλοί πεντακισχιλιοί. τούτως ἐπέβαλλεν Μακεδόνες δισμύριοι, χρυσάσπιδες μὲν μύριοι καὶ χαλκάσπιδες πεντακισχιλίοι, οἱ δ´ ἄλλοι ἄργυρασπίδες; οῖς ἑπτακούσθει λυσιδωτοὶ λεγόμενοι τρισχιλιοί. τούτως κατόπιν ἦσαν ἰππεῖς Νισαίοι μὲν χίλιοι, πολικοὶ δὲ τρισχιλιοί, ὥς οἱ μὲν πλεῖοι ἦσαν χρυσοφάλαροι καὶ χρυσοστέφανοι, οἱ δ´ ἄλλοι ἄργυροφάλαροι. μετὰ δὲ τούτως ἦσαν οἱ λεγόμενοι ἐταῖροι ἰππεῖς: οὐτοὶ δὲ ἦσαν εἰς χίλιους, πάντες χρυσοφάλαροι. τούτως συνεχεῖς ἦν τὸν τῶν φίλων σύνταγμα, ἦσαν καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος καὶ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτως ἐπιελέκτοι χίλιοι, οῖς ἑπτακούσθει τὸ καλούμενον ἁγήμα, κράτιστον εἶναι δοκοῦν σύστημα περὶ χίλιους».

1247 GÜNTHER 1989.
1248 LIVY XL, 20: «...spectaculorum quoque omnis generis magnificentia superiores reges vicit, reliquorum sui moris et copia Graecorum artificum; gladiatorium manus, Romanae consuetudinis, primo maiore cum terrore hominum, insuetorum ad tale spectaculum, quam valutate dedit; deinde saepius dando et modo volneribus tenus, modo sine missione, etiam familiare oculis gratu.tum id spectaculum fecit, et armorum studium plerisque iuvenum accendit. itaque qui primo ab Roma magnis pretiis paratos gladiatores accersere solitus erat».

1249 MANN 2010, 128.
CONCLUSIONS

BLOOD MATTERS

The first datum that clearly emerges from the analysis conducted in this study is well known among scholars: Near East seems to have poor Hellenistic remains. My analysis confirms that archaeological evidences continue to be scarce until the 1st century CE, albeit several studies are shedding more light on the centuries of Ptolemaic and Seleucid rules, in particular for Palestine. Although several explanations have been thought, we do not still know why. However, it is clear that a great urban development involved the first centuries of our era. According to the archaeological evidences, it seems likely that only the impact of Roman power quickened urbanisation and brought a certain degree of homogenisation. However, if we look carefully, it appears clear that this homogenisation was only a veneer.

Among scholars of Western Mediterranean, the idea that Rome had a fundamental role into the improvement of local civilizations is still well rooted, even if nowadays local people are considered have been an active part of the process of integration. As we have seen above, the Roman Empire has constituted a precedent for the nation state, as well as for the European Union. Nonetheless, we often forget that all started with conquest, with a violent act. The concept itself of Empire is different by the one of nation: the former, in fact, imply diversity and cohabitations among different people subjected.

What undoubtedly the Roman Empire favoured was the circulation of ideas and objects: however, affirming that there is a clear and undisputed correlation between objects and ethnic identities is untrue. As in the cases seen above, it seems more likely that local people appropriated of foreign customs, traditions and objects and reformulated them in a new way. Furthermore, it is very hard to understand if what we label as Greek element really was! For many decades, people living in the cities of the Decapolis were considered to be Greek, or at least different from their neighbours. It appears now clear that they were not Greek in the common meaning of the term: there was not only a «classic» Greekness, but something different. Their Greekness, if they had one, was a way to differentiate themselves and to classify as inferior other populations, who were constituted principally by countrymen or nomads.

On the other hand, some clues of an inclination to independence or of a resistance to new predominant culture occurred. These signs were more clear in the case of Jews of Galilee, as seen in the second chapter: the presence of the so called Galilean Coarse Ware has been interpreted as a clear sign of an undefined ethnic group, probably in strict relations with Phoenicians, as well as the use of Kefar Hananya pottery, together with the adoption of ritual baths and stone vessels, the spread of a secondary burial with ossuary and the lacking of pork in the diet were clear signs of a presence of Jews. On the other side, in

1251 See, in particular, TAL 2008 and 2009. However, the author himself is conscious that there are not «Greek» buildings (TAL 2011, 252).
1252 NAEREBOUR 2014, 268.
1253 ANDRADE 2013, 343.
northern Transjordan, especially in Auranitis, a particular civilisation developed, with many Nabataean characteristics, but often with a different taste in sculptural and architectonical fields. The inhabitants of Auranitis, in fact, seemed to develop their figurative arts from different sources. The motifs, in detail, differed from the Graeco-Roman tradition because their repertoire were constituted by a number of beasts or mythological animals flanking or standing above small human figures. Furthermore, a tendency to geometric forms was probably due to the fact that they were made of basalt, a particular stone hard to work.

The area of Southern Levant was culturally very active in the period under analysis, albeit the historical events did not allow a development of strong nations, able to face Romans for a long time. Nonetheless, the concentration of new monarchies was remarkable if we take in mind the width of the territory analysed: Judaeans, Ituraeans and Nabataeans had to fight and to coexist. The collapse of Seleucid and Ptolemaic rule in the area led to a sudden rising of this local monarchies, dear sign that under Hellenistic kings no efforts to destroy diversities were made. However, the new powers had to struggle for pacify their territories. The Roman Near East represented a set of geographical areas that have been interdependent many centuries before and after the Roman rule. As Glen Bowersock highlighted some years ago, Greek culture, language and mythology probably worked as a sort of medium among local inhabitants 1254: nonetheless, it was not the only instrument used by local populations to interact. Local populations applied what John Barclay has defined a «resistant adaption» or «conflictual fusion»: the complexity of the phenomenon involved elements of both convergence and resistance1255. The study of identity has indeed produced paradoxes: dominated cultures rebelled against dominant cultures, but doing it they attained some foreign elements1256.

The case of Jews is exemplar, in particular for what concerns the conquest of Galilee: as seen, Hasmonaeans started a real occupation of the north, imposing their religion and customs. However, Hasmonaeans and later Herodians had to continually negotiate their Jewishness according to the dominant culture1257. In particular, the Jews used the instrument of mythology, usually adopted by Greeks, for creating kinship ties that never existed before. Foundation stories supplied links by cities, locating them in a religious community. The prominence of descent did not imply that Greeks thoughts themselves only in terms of a group sharing common descendent, but it was surely one important criterion1258.

In this sense, the figure of Abraham became fundamental for Jews: like a Greek hero, Abraham, through his son Ishmael, had descendants among Semitic populations, in particular Nabataeans and Ituraeans, who were the most threatening neighbours for Jews. Furthermore, the imperialistic ideology of Judaeans let to create improbable ties even with Greek cities, in particular with Sparta. Biblical traditions were still strong in Palestine under Hellenistic rulers: Greek legends were not accepted at all but adapted to a different reality represented by Jewish circles. The Spartan system became an example among Greeks and other populations for its military discipline and respect of laws and institutions: therefore, Jews were comparable to Spartans and maybe even better,

1254 BOWERSOCK 2008, 22.
1255 BARCLAY 2002, 17.
1257 MOMIGLIANO (1975, 114) has claimed that Jews under Hasmonaeans were more Hellenised than before.
1258 WOOLF 1994, 129.
according to the words of Flavius Josephus\textsuperscript{1259}. Finally, the entire Greek system of kinship relations was completely absorbed and overturned, underlining a Jewish prominence. The Jews, indeed, did not try to separate themselves from the rest of the world: globalising attitudes and unifying will become evident in the course of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE. Galilee was one of the region mainly involved in this process: here there was no need to create mythological kinship ties, because Galilee was inhabited by ancient Israelites before the coming of Alexander the Great. Nevertheless, during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BCE Galileans did not constitute a monolithic ethnic entity, because their territory was inhabited by mixed population. Despite the efforts made by Hasmonaeans, probably the Galileans considered themselves divergent from Judaeans: it appeared clear during the First Revolt, when Josephus was sent into the north to persuade the Galileans to participate to the revolt more than to organise the defence. In fact, the Jewish author remembered that many towns were hesitant to start a war against Romans and many debates came to light among civic communities. This happened even during the Bar Kokhba Revolt, when the Galileans were not involved.

Therefore, it seems likely that Hasmonaeans tried to create a real Empire: for doing it, they embraced the same tools that Hellenistic kings usually adopted. Herod and his descendant proceeded on the same path, although their aspirations were moderated by Romans. Anyway, Jews appear to be the only nation that had a clear imperialistic ambition: this is obviously due to the fact that we have more information about them and our lack of evidences about other civilisations does not allow us to be sure that other kingdoms, like the Nabataeans, were less aggressive. After the coming of Pompey, the Nabataeans sounded less aggressive and active: they intervened in international questions with less vigour than Judaeans. It seems likely that Nabataeans started a self-sufficient policy, leaving the northern part of their territories into the hands of Romans and preserving only the territory of Bosra, as enlightened by archaeological evidences. However, what really was Nabataean culture is still under investigation\textsuperscript{1260}: as seen above, the northern part of the kingdom was rather autonomous, albeit in certain aspects it was similar to the southern part. People from Auranitis developed a proper, different culture which is hard to define «Nabataean». Like Galileans, they seemed to have been part of a local different community, that probably was controlled by Nabataeans but remained rather separate.

Moreover, Nabataeans cannot be considered as spineless subjected people, without any specific political significance. Some clues let us think they tried to resist to the Roman forces: first of all, the annexation had to happen during the 106 CE, but we have no inscriptions or coins before 111 CE that celebrate the annexation of Rabbel's kingdom\textsuperscript{1261}; furthermore, Safaitic inscriptions could remember a rebellion against Rome. Other proofs are given by the papyrus Yadin 52 and by the Babatha archive, in which it seems clear that at least some Nabataeans participated to the Bar Kokhba revolt. Were them allied to Jews in the name of ancient kinship connections? We cannot answer it. However, it is very likely that, like Jews, even Arab populations tried to take political advantages from presumed blood ties.

In this intricate situation, Decapolis cities had to play an important and active role for their location. Whatever Decapolis was, we can assume that their population was mixed

\textsuperscript{1260} \textit{Peacock} 2013, 189.
\textsuperscript{1261} \textit{Bowersock} 1983, 82; \textit{Fiema} 1987, 29.
and their communities acted interacting with other nations, simplifying the commerce and constituting a base for military operations. The inhabitants of the Decapolis were interconnected not only with their neighbours, but also with the other parts of the Mediterranean. Rome applied its common government line, preserving a formal independence to the cities and giving them administrative burdens. Their presumed Greekness and the status of «πόλεις» let them to benefit of the coming of Rome. However, more than Greeks or Romans, they were firstly citizens of their cities and as proud citizens they were able to live in an interconnected world.

TOWARD HOMOGENISATION?

The Roman conquest led to an «increased connectivity», that favoured movements of people and things. Integration meant not only that a territory was incorporated within the Empire, but also that it was better interconnected with other territories, principally with that areas much closer to it. Interconnections, already clear before the coming of Roman troops, became much stronger. However, being better interconnected did not mean losing own identity or becoming Roman, because it was much more related to a political, legal and social status. The ethnicity was untouched and citizenship of local towns still remained the cornerstone of single identities.

There was no choice: all the people within the limes were part of the Empire, as well as we live in a globalised world. However, as well as for us, the inhabitants of Roman Empire had an active role in adapting, rejecting or accepting the new customs. On a cultural point of view, everybody was free to choose: if on one side the Romans favoured the homogeneity and the interconnections, on the other side they were conscious of the differences among the people subjected and never forced to change local customs and traditions. Jews, but also Arabs, never totally adhered to the new cultural programme, albeit we know that some commodities were well accepted, like the spectacle buildings, the baths and the improvement of the commercial routes.

Ongoing processes of cultural translation were in action throughout the Roman Near East. Rome managed to obtain the co-operation of the subjected local elites, giving them benefits like citizenship, but Jews appeared to be no attracted to them; however, probably there were conflicts within Jewish communities, as clear in the case of the first revolt: as reported by Josephus, not all the Galileans wanted to rebel against Rome. It was probably due firstly to economic reasons, but also to the fact that many Jews had to collaborate with Romans and to join their army.

The area was clearly a crossroad of interactions, adaptations and negotiations born in reaction to the new ideologies spread by the Romans, who had an ambiguous attitude toward Semitic people. This manner was well interpreted by Herod the Great, who perfectly embodied the puzzling situation of the area. For these reasons, he financed many Graeco-Roman buildings only in the cities, where he would not have found opposition. In his kingdom, instead, he preferred to not hurt the susceptibility of people.

1262 Belayche 2001, 70.
1263 Naberbou 2014, 278.
1264 Terrenato 2005, 66.
1265 Cotton 2007, 405.
1266 About the presence of Jews in the Roman Army, see Roth 2007.
However, during the 1st century and mostly the 2nd century CE the impact of Roman power became more evident: in particular, the spread of spectacular buildings, mostly theatres, involved all the local population for a long time: we have seen that late antique Jewish and Christian sources tried to persuade their worshipper to not attend spectacles. The impact of Rome was probably slower than in other regions, because here it found several difficulties to settle in. However, among diversities, some common traits started to be shared. Hellenistic culture had already penetrated ethnic barriers and left material traces. However, as well outlined by Greg Woolf, we do not know which were considered clear symbols of ethnic identity.1267

The Greek cities did not simply transmit their culture: they became important nucleuses in Roman political economy, acted to subjugate non-Greek peoples. After the annexation of Arabia and the Bar Kokhba revolt, the role of the Decapolis had to improve greatly: its cities knew a development never seen before, and started to assume the urban layout that we see still today. Their previous (presumed) unity was dismantled, because it was not useful anymore. After the creation of provincia Arabia in 106 CE, Transjordanian area was reconstituted as a nodal point of the Roman Empire. Bosra became the capital city, at the expense of Petra. We do not know if this transfer happened already under the last Nabataean king Rabbel II, or if it was made for Roman purposes. Above all, we do not know why. It is clear that Bosra knew an urban development already before the institution of the new province, but Petra had to preserve a more important role. It is possible that the capital was relocated for merely economic questions, because Bosra was closer to Syria and in a more fertile territory.

Local identities were re-negotiated: the province was only a geographical expression used to mark arbitrary limits. However, it assumed importance and in many cases created a new identity, that did not exist before, assuming de facto the same relationships that were at the base of the national state.1268

Greek creation of a unique barbarian «other» was the response of an ethnic group, itself divided in several small entities, to define its own identity and acquire self-consciousness. After the conquests of Alexander the Great and then of the Romans, in the Near East many different kinds of Greekness emerged. Contemporaneously, local ethnicities arose and demarcated their characteristics within the Hellenistic cultural milieu.

In their political game, Romans continuously redefined local identities, creating new connections and ties. However, among Semitic populations, more than thousand years old traditions and customs did not disappear. They simply changed, adsorbing some traits of the cultures of their rulers, becoming something new and reformulating their own identities.

1267 WoOLF 1994, 130.
1268 Le ROUX 2011, 14.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA Archäologischer Anzeiger
AAAS Annales Arabes Archéologiques Syriennes
ADAJ Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AncW The Ancient World
ANRW Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ASCS The Australian Society for Classical Studies
ASNP Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa
AWE Ancient West & East
BA Biblical Archaeologist
BAAL Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises
BAIAS Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
BASOR Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research
BASP The Bulletin of American Society of Papyrologist
BN Biblische Notizen
CIG Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum, Berlin, 1828-1877
CIL Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin, 1856-
CIS Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Paris, 1881-1962
CRAI Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
DM Damaszener Mitteilungen
ESI Excavations and Surveys in Israel
FGrH JACOBY, F. (ed.), Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Leiden: Brill
GGA Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen
HIPPOS 2002
SEGAL, A. et alii (eds.), Hippos-Sussita. Third Season of Excavations, Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa

HIPPOS 2004
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SEGAL, A. et alii (eds.), Hippos-Sussita. Sixth Season of Excavations (July 2005), Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa

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HIPPOS 2013

HTR
Harvard Theological Review

HTS/TS
Hervorm de Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies

IEJ
Israel Exploration Journal

IG
Inscriptiones Graecae

IGLS
Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie

ILS
Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae

INS
Israel Numismatic Journal

JAA
Journal of Anthropological Archaeology

JAOS
Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBL
Journal of Biblical Literature

JJS
Journal of Jewish Studies

JQR
The Jewish Quarterly Review

JRA
Journal of Roman Archaeology

JRS
Journal of Roman Studies

MAA
Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry

NC
The Numismatic Chronicle

NEAEHL
STERN, E. (ed.), New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land

NTS
New Testament Studies

PEQ
Palestine Exploration Quarterly

QUCC
Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica

REA
Revue des Études Anciennes

SCI
Scripta Classica Israelica

SHAJ
Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan

TAPha
Transactions of the American Philological Association

ZDPV
Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

ZPE
Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ABBREVIATIONS OF ANCIENT SOURCES

2 Cor. Paul, 2nd Letter to Corinthians
AMM. MARC. Ammianus Marcellinus
ANTH. PAL. Anthologia Palatina
APP. B civ. Appian, Bella civilia
APP. SYR. Appian, Συριακή
ARR. ANAB. Arrian, Anabasis
ATH. Athenaeus
AUGUST. DE CIV. D. Augustine, De Civitate Dei
BAlex. Bellum Alexandrinum
CHRON. Book of Chronicles. Cited as I CHRON, II CHRON
CIC. FAM. Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiarres
CIC. FLACC. Cicero, Pro Flacco
CIC. PROV. CONS. Cicero, De provinciis consularibus
CIC. QFR. Cicero, Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem
DAM. ISID. Damascius, Vita Isidori
DIO CASS. Dio Cassius, Historia Romana
DIOD. SIC. Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca historica
DION. HAL. ANT. ROM. Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Antiquitates Romanae
DT Book of Deuteronomy
EPIPH. ADV. HAERES. Epiphanius, Adversos Haereses, ed. F. Williams
EUSEB. HIST. ECCL. Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica
EUSEB. ONOM. Eusebius, Onomasticon
EUSEB. PRAEP. EVAN. Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica
EZRA Book of Ezra
GEN Book of Genesis
HDT. Herodotus
IS Book of Isaiah
JDT Book of Judith
JOSEPH. AJ Josephus, Antiquitates Judaicae
JOSEPH. AP. Josephus, Contra Apionem
JOSEPH. BJ Josephus, Bellum Judaicum
JOSEPH. VITA Josephus, Vita
JOSH Book of Joshua
KGS Book of Kings. Cited as I KGS, II KGS
LIV. Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Libri
MACC Book of Maccabees. Cited as I MACC, II MACC
MAL. CHRON. John Malalas, Chronographia
NAT. HIST. Pliny, Naturalis Historia
NEH Book of Nehemiah
NUM Book of Numbers
PERIPLUS Periplus Maris Erythraei
PHILO DE VITA MOS. Philo, De vita Mosis
PHOT. BIBL. Photius, Bibliotheca
PLUT. VIT. ALEX. Plutarch, Vitae parallelae. Alexander
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>POLYB.</td>
<td>Polybius, <em>Historiae</em></td>
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<td>PTOLE. Geog.</td>
<td>Ptolemy, <em>Geographia</em></td>
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<td>QUINT. Inst.</td>
<td>Quintilian, <em>Institutio oratoria</em></td>
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<td>SAM</td>
<td><em>Book of Samuel</em>. Cited as I SAM, II SAM</td>
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<td>SEN.</td>
<td>Seneca (the younger)</td>
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<td>STEPH. BYZ.</td>
<td>Stephanus Byzantius, <em>Ethnika</em></td>
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<td>STRABO</td>
<td>Strabo, <em>Geographia</em></td>
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<td>SYNC. Chron.</td>
<td>Syncellus, <em>Chronographia</em></td>
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<td>TAC. Agr.</td>
<td>Tacitus, <em>Agricola</em></td>
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<td>TAC. Ann</td>
<td>Tacitus, <em>Annales</em></td>
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<td>TAC. Hist.</td>
<td>Tacitus, <em>Historiae</em></td>
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<td>Tb</td>
<td><em>Book of Tobit</em></td>
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<td>TERT. De pallio</td>
<td>Tertullian, <em>De pallio</em></td>
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<td>VIB. SEQ. Gentes</td>
<td>Vibius Sequester, <em>de gentibus per litteras libellus</em></td>
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<td>XEN. An.</td>
<td>Xenophon, <em>Anabasis</em></td>
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<td>XEN. Cyr.</td>
<td>Xenophon, <em>Cyropedia</em></td>
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