



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI  
**FEDERICO II**



**DOTTORATO IN  
SCIENZE STORICHE, ARCHEOLOGICHE  
E STORICO-ARTISTICHE**

Coordinatore prof. Francesco Caglioti

XXIX ciclo

Dottorando: Paolo Cimadomo

Tutor: prof.ssa Raffaella Pierobon; cotutor: prof. Mauro de Nardis

Tesi di dottorato:

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

2017



# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	6
<b>CHAPTER 1: GLOBALISING ATTITUDES</b>	
1.1 THE ROMANISATION DEBATE	9
1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW APPROACHES	12
1.3 GLOBALISATION AND THE ROMAN WORLD	14
1.4 IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY	16
1.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TOWARD ETHNICITY	18
1.6 ROMAN ETHNICITIES	20
1.7 INTEGRATION AND PREJUDICES	23
1.8 COMMON ANCESTORS	25
1.9 CONCLUSIONS	28
<b>CHAPTER 2: THE GALILEANS</b>	
2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND	29
2.2 GALILEE BEFORE THE HASMONAEANS	29
2.3 FROM THE HASMONAEANS TO THE BAR KOKHBA REVOLT	32
2.4 EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES	38
2.5 THE COINAGE	39
2.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS	40
2.7 CONCLUSIONS: GALILEE BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND INTEGRATION	46
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE ARABS IN SOUTHERN SYRIA</b>	
3.1 WHO WERE THE «ARABS»?	48
3.2 ITURAEANS	
3.2.1 LITERARY SOURCES	54
3.3.2 EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES	56
3.3.3 THE ORIGINS AND DISTRIBUTION	57
3.3.4 THE COINAGE	58
3.3.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS	60
3.3.6 CONCLUSIONS	64

3.4 THE NABATAEANS IN NORTHERN TRANSJORDAN AREA	
3.4.1 LITERARY SOURCES	65
3.4.2 EPIGRAPHIC AND PAPHYROLOGICAL SOURCES	73
3.4.3 THE COINAGE	77
3.4.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS	79
3.4.5 CONCLUSIONS	88

## CHAPTER 4: THE GREEKS (?) OF THE DECAPOLIS AREA

4.1 INTRODUCTION	91
4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND	93
4.3 LITERARY SOURCES	95
4.4 THE CITIES	98
4.5 CANATHA/QANAWAT	100
4.5.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	101
4.5.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	103
4.6 ADRAHA/DERAA	106
4.6.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	106
4.6.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	107
4.7 DION	109
4.7.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	110
4.8 RAPHANA	112
4.9 HIPPOS/SUSSITA	113
4.9.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	115
4.9.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	115
4.10 GADARA/UMM QAIS	120
4.10.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	123
4.10.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	126
4.11 CAPITOLIAS/BEIT RAS	127
4.11.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	128
4.11.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	129
4.12 ABILA/QUWAILIBAH	132
4.12.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	133
4.12.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	134
4.13 SCYTHOPOLIS/BETH SHEAN	137

4.13.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	140
4.13.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	141
4.14 PELLA/TABAQAT FAHL	145
4.14.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	147
4.14.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	148
4.15 GERASA/JERASH	152
4.15.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	155
4.15.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	156
4.16 PHILADELPHIA/AMMAN	161
4.16.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH	164
4.16.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE	165
4.17 CONCLUSIONS	
4.17.1 URBAN DEVELOPMENT	168
4.17.2 THE NATURE OF THE DECAPOLIS CITIES	170
4.17.3 THE SPREAD OF SPECTACLE BUILDINGS	175
CONCLUSIONS	
5.1 BLOOD MATTERS	181
5.2 TOWARD HOMOGENISATION?	184
ABBREVIATIONS	186
ABBREVIATIONS OF ANCIENT SOURCES	188
BIBLIOGRAPHY	190

# 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<sup>1</sup>. 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<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>: 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<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> HINGLEY 2005, 29.

<sup>2</sup> ROSELAAR 2015b, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> HINGLEY 2005, 37.

<sup>4</sup> LULIĆ 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.

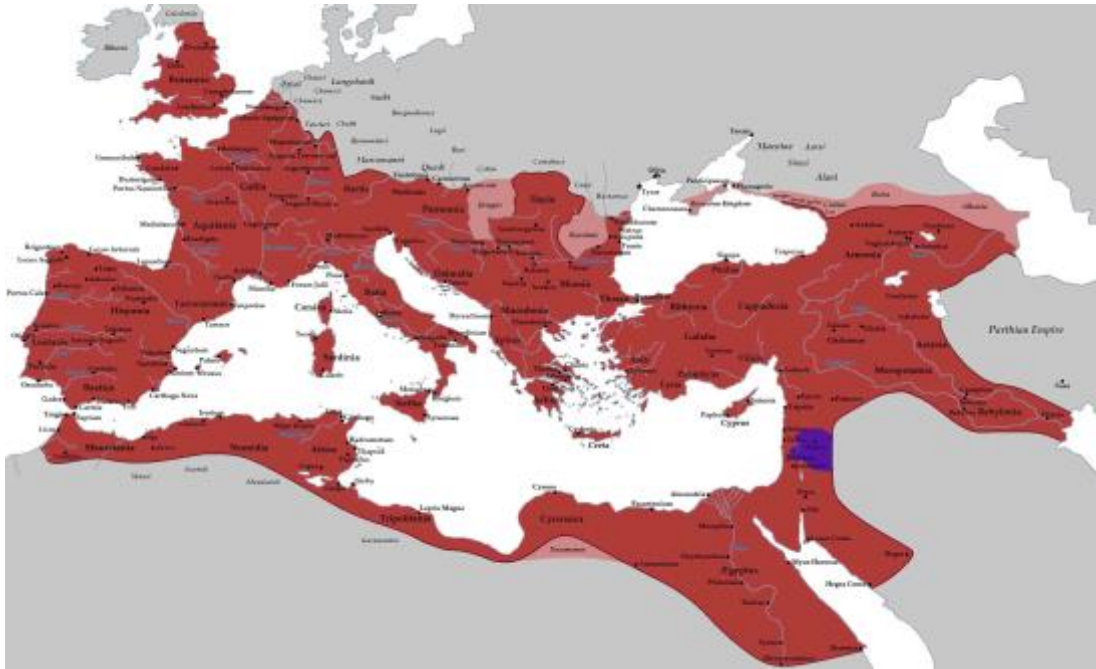


FIG. 1. The Roman Empire under Trajan rule. The area investigated is in blue. From [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ARoman\\_Empire\\_Trajan\\_117AD.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ARoman_Empire_Trajan_117AD.png)

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

dwelt Transjordanian area that it is very difficult to reconstruct precise borders of such nations that emerged during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, like Ituraeans, Nabataeans or Judaeans. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 world<sup>5</sup>. Some of these visions are still popular, albeit they have been subjected to a continuous redefinition throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>6</sup>. 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 itself<sup>7</sup>. In addition, Rome's unification of Italy had to represent a good model for German unification<sup>8</sup>. 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 humans<sup>9</sup>.

Haverfield, indeed, developed Mommsen's ideas, encouraged by the political situation of Britain at the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>: Britannic imperialism, in fact, found an excellent explanation of its actions with the will to «civilise» third world countries<sup>11</sup>. 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»<sup>12</sup>. 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 regions<sup>13</sup>.

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 provincials<sup>14</sup>. 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

---

<sup>5</sup> WOOLF 1998, 5.

<sup>6</sup> HAVERFIELD 1923.

<sup>7</sup> On his idea of «Romanising», see, for example MOMMSEN 1886, 193.

<sup>8</sup> FREEMAN 1997, 30.

<sup>9</sup> HODOS 2010, 5.

<sup>10</sup> For a complete review of Haverfield's work on Romanisation in the context of British imperial discourse, see HINGLEY 2000, 111ff.

<sup>11</sup> WALLACE-HADRILL 2012, 111.

<sup>12</sup> HAVERFIELD 1923, 5.

<sup>13</sup> TERRENATO 2005, 64.

<sup>14</sup> HAVERFIELD 1923, 18.

first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century: both ideas developed from the same cultural framework<sup>15</sup>. 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<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup>. 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<sup>18</sup>. 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»<sup>19</sup>. For him, some natives had never embraced Roman culture and, instead, many country villages were romanised at a very low degree<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup>, albeit other scholars were more sceptical about its use<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup>. 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

---

<sup>15</sup> JONES 1997, 40ff.

<sup>16</sup> HAVERFIELD 1923, 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> HINGLEY 2000, 124; 2005, 39.

<sup>18</sup> HAVERFIELD 1923, 22; WEBSTER 2001, 211; HINGLEY 2005, 35.

<sup>19</sup> COLLINGWOOD 1932, 92.

<sup>20</sup> WEBSTER 2001, 212.

<sup>21</sup> WELLES 1965, 44.

<sup>22</sup> BOWERSOCK 1965, 72.

<sup>23</sup> WEBSTER 2001, 213; CURCHIN 2004, 9-10.

primitive<sup>24</sup>. 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»<sup>25</sup>. 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<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup>. 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<sup>28</sup>. 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<sup>29</sup>.

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»<sup>30</sup>.

From this brief analysis, it is clear that the term Romanisation assumed varied forms during the 20<sup>th</sup> 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»<sup>31</sup>: this assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that Continental scholarship, unlike Anglo-

---

<sup>24</sup> SAID 1978.

<sup>25</sup> MILLETT, ROYMANS and SLOFSTRA 1995, 2-3.

<sup>26</sup> ZANKER 1990, 316.

<sup>27</sup> MILLETT 1990.

<sup>28</sup> WEBSTER 2001, 216.

<sup>29</sup> MORLEY 2010, 112-113.

<sup>30</sup> MATTINGLY 2011, 206-207.

<sup>31</sup> VERSLUYS 2014, 9

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 not taken in account the different identities that archaeological evidences show<sup>32</sup>. As John Moreland has pointed out, «objects were actively used in the production and transformation of identities»<sup>33</sup>. 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<sup>34</sup>: indeed, the use of Roman materials did not mean a complete acceptance 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<sup>35</sup>. Native people were not merely assimilated into an already constituted order: instead, they actively participated to create a new one<sup>36</sup>. 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<sup>37</sup>. Susan Alcock, who completely avoided the use of the term in her valuable volume about the Roman Greece<sup>38</sup>, 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

---

<sup>32</sup> WHITTAKER 2009, 199.

<sup>33</sup> MORELAND 2001, 84.

<sup>34</sup> WOOLF 1998, 239.

<sup>35</sup> WOOLF 1997, 341.

<sup>36</sup> WOOLF 1997, 347.

<sup>37</sup> WOOLF 1994, 116-117.

<sup>38</sup> ALCOCK 1993.

consequences of Roman actions<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup>: 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<sup>41</sup>. 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<sup>42</sup>. 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<sup>43</sup>. 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<sup>44</sup>. 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

---

<sup>39</sup> ALCOCK 1997, 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> WEBSTER 2001, 218.

<sup>41</sup> MATTINGLY 2011, 41.

<sup>42</sup> MATTINGLY 1997b, 12-13; 2011, 216

<sup>43</sup> 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 DOMMELEN 1997.

<sup>44</sup> GOSDEN 2004, 31-32.

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<sup>45</sup>.

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»<sup>46</sup>: 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<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup>.

### 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 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>49</sup>. His claiming has been then challenged by Andre Gunder Frank and Barry Gills, who dated the phenomenon of World Systems back to 5000 years<sup>50</sup>. 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<sup>51</sup>. 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»<sup>52</sup>. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century of the common

---

<sup>45</sup> SHAW 2000, 374.

<sup>46</sup> TERRENATO 2005, 70.

<sup>47</sup> PAPAIOANNOU 2016, 39.

<sup>48</sup> GARDNER 2013, 6.

<sup>49</sup> WALLERSTEIN 1974.

<sup>50</sup> FRANK and GILLS 1993. For a full analysis about Globalisation, see PITTS and VERSLUYS 2015b, 8-10;

<sup>51</sup> JENNINGS 2011, 13.

<sup>52</sup> HOPKINS 2006b, 3.

era, but thousands of years ago»<sup>53</sup>. 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<sup>54</sup>.

For Martin Pitts and Miguel John Verluys, the Roman empire was a perfect model of the interconnected world<sup>55</sup>, 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 of 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<sup>56</sup>. 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<sup>57</sup>. 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<sup>58</sup>. 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<sup>59</sup>. 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<sup>60</sup>. 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<sup>61</sup>. Zygmunt Bauman at the end of 1990s already noted that «globalization divides as much as it unites»<sup>62</sup>: the introduction of new features

---

<sup>53</sup> CASTELLS 2006, 158.

<sup>54</sup> HORDEN and PURCELL 2000.

<sup>55</sup> PITTS and VERSLUYS 2015b, 17.

<sup>56</sup> SOMMER 2015, 176.

<sup>57</sup> NAEREBOUT 2014, 278.

<sup>58</sup> DOWNS 2000, 209; HINGLEY 2005, 115.

<sup>59</sup> NEDERVEEN PIETERSE 2015, 233. See also HINGLEY 2010 about the dichotomy of cultural diversity and unity between Rome and its provinces.

<sup>60</sup> HITCHNER 2008, 3-4.

<sup>61</sup> PITTS 2008, 494.

<sup>62</sup> 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<sup>63</sup>. 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<sup>64</sup>: if we look at an economic level, it appears clear that a single world market emerged only at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>65</sup>. 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<sup>66</sup>, globalisation is a characteristic of all human societies, because social, cultural and economic systems have always been present in human societies: however, Friedrich 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<sup>67</sup>.

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»<sup>68</sup>. 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<sup>69</sup>.

## 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

---

<sup>63</sup> NAEREBOUT 2014, 276-277.

<sup>64</sup> PITTS 2008, 494.

<sup>65</sup> NAEREBOUT 2006-2007, 156; GREENE 2008, 80.

<sup>66</sup> VANDKILDE 2004, HINGLEY 2005.

<sup>67</sup> NAEREBOUT 2006-2007, 165-167.

<sup>68</sup> NEDERVEEN PIETERSE 2015, 233.

<sup>69</sup> SCHULZ 1934, 96 ff.



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<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup>. «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<sup>72</sup>.

Ethnicity involves even tradition: the alleged authority of its «roots» makes a group stronger<sup>73</sup>. 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<sup>74</sup>. For these reasons, identities can be multiple, as the result of the intersection between different types of identities<sup>75</sup>. 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<sup>76</sup>: on the contrary, collective identities seem to emerge for expressing resistance and opposition to cultural homogenisation<sup>77</sup>. In addition, the practice of classifying groups has re-emerged in several countries<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup>. 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

---

<sup>70</sup> EMBERLING 1997, 300.

<sup>71</sup> KNAPP 2008, 31.

<sup>72</sup> HARLAND 2009, 6.

<sup>73</sup> On the problem of roots and traditions, see BETTINI 2016.

<sup>74</sup> AIME 2004, 103.

<sup>75</sup> DIAZ-ANDREU and LUCY 2005, 2.

<sup>76</sup> WEBER 1980.

<sup>77</sup> CASTELLS 2010, 56-63.

<sup>78</sup> MATEOS 2014, 10.

<sup>79</sup> 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<sup>80</sup>.

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 19<sup>th</sup> and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seems to be definitely faded, but it has been replaced by the concept of identity<sup>81</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>80</sup> HARLAND 2009, 10-11

<sup>81</sup> 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<sup>82</sup>. 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<sup>83</sup>. 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<sup>84</sup>. 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<sup>85</sup>.

During the 1980s, post-processual archaeologists looked with interest on the ethnicity theme, trying to connect anthropological and archaeological studies<sup>86</sup>. 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<sup>87</sup>. 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,

---

<sup>82</sup> KOSSINNA 1911.

<sup>83</sup> DIAZ-ANDREU and LUCY 2005, 3.

<sup>84</sup> BARTH 1969, 11.

<sup>85</sup> JONES 2007, 48.

<sup>86</sup> See in particular the books of HODDER 1982 and SHENNAN 1989.

<sup>87</sup> BOURDIEU 1977.

considering literary and epigraphic evidences much more relevant<sup>88</sup>. 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<sup>89</sup>.

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»<sup>90</sup>. 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<sup>91</sup>, while others are more optimistic, believing that it is possible to reconstruct part of ethnic processes<sup>92</sup>. 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<sup>93</sup>: 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<sup>94</sup>: 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<sup>95</sup>.

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

---

<sup>88</sup> HALL 1997, 142. These concepts were more recently reiterated (HALL 2002).

<sup>89</sup> RUBY 2006, 44-45;

<sup>90</sup> JONES 2010, 226.

<sup>91</sup> JONES 1997, MACSWEENEY 2009.

<sup>92</sup> 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, TAMAR and HODOS 2010, REHER and FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ 2015.

<sup>93</sup> KNAPP 2008, 63.

<sup>94</sup> MATTINGLY 2011, 210.

<sup>95</sup> 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<sup>96</sup>. 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<sup>97</sup>, 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<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> and later by Dionysius of Halicarnassus<sup>100</sup>: 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

---

<sup>96</sup> GRUEN 2013, 3

<sup>97</sup> LIV. I, 2, 4: «*Aeneas, adversus tanti belli terrorem ut animos Aboriginum sibi conciliaret, nec sub eodem iure solum sed etiam nomine omnes essent, Latinos utramque gentem appellavit*».

<sup>98</sup> DENCH 2005, 244-245.

<sup>99</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 543; *IG IX. 2.* 517, 30-38: «[...] νομίζω μὲν οὐδ' ὑμῶν οὐθένα ἂν ἀν- | τειπεῖν, ἔξεστι δὲ καὶ τοὺς  
λοιποὺς τοὺς ταῖς ὁμοίαις πολιτογραφίαις χρωμένους θεωρεῖν ὧν καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαῖ- | οἱ εἰσιν, οἱ καὶ τοὺς  
οἰκέτας ὅταν ἐλευθερώσωσιν, προσδεχόμενοι εἰς τὸ πολίτευμα καὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων με- | [ταδ]ιδόντες, καὶ διὰ  
τοῦ τοιοῦτου τρόπου οὐ μόνον τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα ἐπηυξήκασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποικίας <σ>χεδὸν | [εἰς  
ἐβ]δομήκοντα τόπους ἐκπετόμφασιν. πλὴν ἔτι γε καὶ νῦν παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς ἀφιλοτίμως προσελθεῖν | [πρὸς  
τὸ] πρᾶγμα καὶ τοὺς μὲν κεκριμένους ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν ἀποκαταστήσαι εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν, εἰ δὲ | [τινες  
ἀ]νήκεστον τι πεπράχασιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν ἢ τὴν πόλιν ἢ δι' ἄλλην τινὰ αἰτίαν μὴ ἄξιοι εἰσιν | [μετέχ]ειν  
τῆς στήλης ταύτης, περὶ τούτων τὴν ὑπέρθεσιν ποιήσασθαι, ἕως ἂν ἐγὼ ἐπιστρέψας ἀπὸ τῆς | [στρατ]είας  
διακούσω [...]».

<sup>100</sup> DION. HAL. *Ant. Rom.* I, 9,4: «Ῥωμύλου δὲ τὴν ἐπώνυμον αὐτοῦ πόλιν οἰκίσαντος ἐκκαίδεκα γενεαῖς τῶν  
Τρωικῶν ὕστερον, ἦν νῦν ἔχουσιν ὀνομασίαν μεταλαβόντες, ἔθνος τε μέγιστον ἐξ ἐλαχίστου γενέσθαι σὺν  
χρόνῳ παρεσκεύασαν καὶ περιφανέστατον ἐξ ἀδηλοτάτου, τῶν τε δεομένων οἰκίσεως παρὰ σφίσι  
φιλανθρώπῳ ὑποδοχῇ καὶ πολιτείας μεταδόσει τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ γενναίου ἐν πολέμῳ κρατηθεῖσι, δούλων τε  
ἄσσοι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐλευθερωθεῖεν ἄσσοις εἶναι συγχωρήσει, τύχης τε ἀνθρώπων οὐδεμιᾶς εἰ μέλλοι τὸ  
κοινὸν ὠφελεῖν ἀπαξιώσει: ὑπὲρ ταῦτα δὲ πάντα κόσμῳ τοῦ πολιτεύματος, ὃν ἐκ πολλῶν κατεστήσαντο  
παθημάτων, ἐκ παντὸς καιροῦ λαμβάνοντές τι 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<sup>101</sup>. 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»<sup>102</sup>, 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»<sup>103</sup>. 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<sup>104</sup>. 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<sup>105</sup>. 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<sup>106</sup>.

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

---

<sup>101</sup> WOOLF 2001, 316.

<sup>102</sup> DENCH 2005, 35.

<sup>103</sup> DENCH 2005, 31.

<sup>104</sup> WOOLF 1994, 119.

<sup>105</sup> CIC. *QFr.* I, 1,27: «*quapropter incumbere toto animo et studio omni in eam rationem qua adhuc usus es, ut eos quos tuae fidei potestatique senatus populusque Romanus commisit et credidit diligas et omni ratione tueare et esse quam beatissimos velis. quod si te sors Afris aut Hispanis aut Gallis praefecisset, immanibus ac barbaris nationibus, tamen esset humanitatis tuae consulere eorum commodis et utilitati salutique servire; cum vero ei generi hominum praesimus, non modo in quo ipsa sit sed etiam a quo ad alios pervenisse putetur humanitas, certe iis eam potissimum tribuere debemus a quibus accepimus*».

<sup>106</sup> *Nat. Hist.* III, 39: «*Nec ignoro ingrati ac segnis animi existimari posse merito, si obiter atque in transcurso ad hunc modum dicatur terra omnium terrarum alumna eadem et parens, numine deum electa quae caelum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia ritusque molliret et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad conloquia et humanitatem homini daret breviterque una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret*».

context<sup>107</sup>. 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<sup>108</sup>. The difficulty to study Roman identity is due even to the fact that Rome has often represented 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<sup>109</sup>. During the imperial period, Tacitus reported the hope of the Britannic king Calgacus that Germans, Gauls and Britons would abandon Roman army<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup>

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

---

<sup>107</sup> 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.

<sup>108</sup> DENCH 2005, 30.

<sup>109</sup> 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 urbem Romanam venit! nec Tarentini modo ora que 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 bello. **numquam isti populi, nisi cum deerit, ad quem desciscant, ab nobis non deficient***».

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

<sup>111</sup> 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<sup>112</sup>, 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»<sup>113</sup>. 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<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup>; Livy<sup>116</sup> 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<sup>117</sup>.

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

---

<sup>112</sup> WOOLF 1994, 121.

<sup>113</sup> ISAAC 2004, 2006.

<sup>114</sup> ISAAC 2004, 493.

<sup>115</sup> Cic. *Prov. Cons.* 5, 10: «*iam vero publicanos miseros—me etiam miserum illorum ita de me meritorum miseriis ac dolore!—tradidit in servitutum Iudaeis et Syris, nationibus natis servituti*».

<sup>116</sup> 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*».

Liv. XXXVI, 17, 5: «*quippe illic Macedones Thracesque et Illyrii erant, ferocissimae omnes gentes, hic Syri et Asiatici Graeci sunt, vilissima genera hominum et servituti nata*».

<sup>117</sup> Tac. *Hist.* IV. 17: «*[...] servirent Syria Asiaque et suetus regibus Oriens: multos adhuc in Gallia vivere ante tributa genitos [...]*»



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<sup>118</sup>, Seneca<sup>119</sup>, Tacitus<sup>120</sup> and Quintilian<sup>121</sup>. 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<sup>122</sup>.

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 not clear if it had any cultural connotation: sometimes it has indicated the great part of the Near East, sometimes only small portions<sup>123</sup>. Flavius Josephus, mentioning the population of Aramaeans, affirmed that Greeks called them Syrians<sup>124</sup>:

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<sup>125</sup> 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<sup>126</sup>, named Βιβλιοθήκη or Μυριόβιβλος, a note made by a scholiast

<sup>118</sup> CIC. *Flacc.* 67: «

<sup>119</sup> SEN. in AUGUST. *De civ. D.* VI. 11: «*De illis sane Iudaeis cum loqueretur, ait: "Cum interim usque eo sceleratissimae gentis consuetudo convaluit, ut per omnes iam terras recepta sit; victi victoribus leges dederunt".*».

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

<sup>120</sup> TAC. *Hist.* V. 8: «*Magna pars Iudaeae vicis dispergitur, habent et oppida; Hierosolyma genti caput. illic immensae opulentiae templum, et primis munimentis urbs, dein regia, templum intimis clausum. ad fores tantum Iudaeo aditus, limine praeter sacerdotes arcebantur. dum Assyrios penes Medosque et Persas Oriens fuit, despectissima pars servientium: postquam Macedones praepolluere, rex Antiochus demere superstitionem et mores Graecorum dare adnisis, 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 readers» (GRUEN 2011, 195).

<sup>121</sup> QUINT. *Inst.* III. 7.21: «*Et parentes malorum odimus: et est conditoribus urbium infame contraxisse aliquam perniciosam ceteris gentem, qualis est primus Iudaicae superstitionis auctor*».

<sup>122</sup> TAC. *Hist.* V. 5: «*Hi ritus quoquo modo inducti antiquitate defenduntur: cetera instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate valere. nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patriis tributa et stipes illuc congerebant, unde auctae Iudaeorum res, et quia apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium. separati epulis, discreti cubilibus, proiectissima ad libidinem gens, alienarum concubitu abstinent; inter se nihil illicitum. circumcidere genitalia instituerunt ut diversitate noscantur*».

<sup>123</sup> BUTCHER 2003, 270-271.

<sup>124</sup> JOSEPH. *AJI*, 144: «[...] Ἀραμαίους δὲ Ἄραμος ἔσχεν, οὓς Ἕλληνας Σύρους προσαγορεύουσιν [...]»

<sup>125</sup> SARTRE 2008, 28.

<sup>126</sup> Photius was a Byzantine bibliographer who lived during the 9<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>127</sup>.

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.

In 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<sup>128</sup>. 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<sup>129</sup>.

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 developed 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 συγγένεια were locally adapted and used<sup>130</sup>. 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<sup>131</sup>, whereas Lee Patterson has seen them as facilitators of Greek political action to bring different people into a shared heritage<sup>132</sup>. 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<sup>133</sup>. 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 ἔθνη<sup>134</sup>.

---

<sup>127</sup> PHOT. *Bibl.* 94, 40, n. 1: «Οὗτος ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος Σύρος ἦν γένος πατρόθεν καὶ μητρόθεν. Σύρος δὲ οὐχὶ τῶν ἐπωκηκῶτων τὴν Συρίαν Ἑλλήνων, ἀλλὰ τῶν αὐτοχθόνων, γλώσσαν δὲ σύραν εἰδῶς καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνων ἔθεσι ζῶν ἕως αὐτὸν τροφεύς».

<sup>128</sup> STAVRIANOPOULOU 2013b, 182.

<sup>129</sup> 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.

<sup>130</sup> MUSTI 1963 is still a fundamental work about the συγγένεια.

<sup>131</sup> ERSKINE 2002, 110.

<sup>132</sup> PATTERSON 2010, 3; 163.

<sup>133</sup> ANDRADE 2013, 8.

<sup>134</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,2: «μέρη δ' αὐτῆς τίθεμεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κιλικίας ἀρξάμενοι καὶ τοῦ Ἄμανοῦ τὴν τε Κομμαγηνὴν καὶ τὴν Σελευκίδα καλουμένην τῆς Συρίας, ἔπειτα τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν, τελευταίαν δ' ἐν μὲν τῇ παραλίᾳ τὴν Φοινίκην, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν. ἔνιοι δὲ τὴν Συρίαν ὅλην εἰς τε Κοιλοσύρους καὶ Σύρους καὶ Φοινίκας διελόντες τούτοις ἀναμεμίχθαι φασὶ τέτταρα ἔθνη, Ἰουδαίους Ἰδομαίους Γαζαίους Ἀζωτίους, γεωργικούς μὲν, ὡς τοὺς Σύρους καὶ Κοιλοσύρους, ἐμπορικούς δὲ, ὡς τοὺς Φοινίκας».

It seems very likely that many people knew at least two languages. Most textual evidences testify that there was a high degree of bilingualism<sup>135</sup>. 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<sup>136</sup>.

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<sup>137</sup>. It happened something similar to what occurred to Rome's construction of her myths and origins<sup>138</sup>.

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 Judaeans and Spartans were improved because both peoples were descendant of Abraham. The Spartan king Areus would have sent a letter to the Judaeans High Priest Onias, claiming to have discovered that Spartans and Judaeans were brothers<sup>139</sup>. 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<sup>140</sup>. According to Eric Gruen, it seems likely that Judaeans tried to assimilate Greeks in their

---

<sup>135</sup> DE JONG 2007, 11.

<sup>136</sup> COTTON 2006, 145-146. See discussion below, chapter 3.

<sup>137</sup> STAVRIANOPOULOU 2013b, 181.

<sup>138</sup> See above.

<sup>139</sup> I *Macc.* XII, 20-22: «Ἄρειος βασιλεὺς Σπαρτιατῶν Ονία ἱερεὶ μεγάλῳ χαίρειν. εὐρέθη ἐν γραφῇ **περὶ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ Ἰουδαίων ὅτι εἰσὶν ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ὅτι εἰσὶν ἐκ γένους Ἀβρααμ** καὶ νῦν ἀφ' οὗ ἔγγνωμεν ταῦτα καλῶς ποιήσετε γράφοντες ἡμῖν περὶ τῆς εἰρήνης ὑμῶν».

JOSEPH. *AJ* XII, 225-226: «Τελευτήσαντος δὲ καὶ τούτου ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ διάδοχος τῆς τιμῆς Ὀνίας γίνεται, πρὸς ὃν ὁ Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλεὺς Ἄρειος πρεσβείαν τε ἔπεμψεν καὶ ἐπιστολάς, ὧν τὸ ἀντίγραφόν ἐστι τοιοῦτο: **ἄρχιεὺς Λακεδαιμονίων Ἄρειος Ὀνία χαίρειν. ἐντυχόντες γραφῇ τι εὐρομεν, ὡς ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶεν γένους Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Ἀβρααμ οἰκειότητος.** δίκαιον οὖν ἐστὶν ἀδελφοὺς ὑμᾶς ὄντας διαπέμπεσθαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς περὶ ὧν ἂν βούλησθε.

<sup>140</sup> JOSEPH. *Ap.* II, 225-235: «ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν Πλάτωνος λόγους τινὲς εἶναι κενούς νομίζουσι κατὰ πολλὴν ἐξουσίαν κεκαλλιγραφημένους, **μάλιστα δὲ τῶν νομοθετῶν Λυκούργου τεθαυμάκασιν καὶ τὴν Σπάρτην ἅπαντες ὑμνοῦσιν, ὅτι τοῖς ἐκείνου νόμοις ἐπὶ πλείστον ἐνεκαρτέρησαν.** οὐκοῦν τοῦτο μὲν ὠμολογήσθω τεκμήριον ἀρετῆς εἶναι τὸ πείθεσθαι τοῖς νόμοις: οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι θαυμάζοντες τὸν ἐκείνων χρόνον ἀντιπαραβαλλέτωσαν τοῖς πλείοσιν ἢ δισχιλίους ἔτεσι τῆς ἡμετέρας πολιτείας, καὶ προσέτι λογιζέσθωσαν, ὅτι Λακεδαιμόνιοι ὅσον ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν χρόνον εἶχον τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀκριβῶς ἔδοξαν τοὺς νόμους διαφυλάττειν, ἐπεὶ μέντοι περὶ αὐτοὺς ἐγένοντο μεταβολαὶ τῆς τύχης, μικροῦ δεῖν ἀπάντων ἐπελάθοντο τῶν νόμων. **ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν τύχαις γεγονότες μυριάς διὰ τὰς τῶν βασιλευσάντων τῆς Ἀσίας μεταβολὰς οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις τῶν δεινῶν τοὺς νόμους προὔδομεν οὐκ ἀργίας οὐδὲ τρυφῆς αὐτοὺς χάριν περιέποντες, ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἐθέλοι σκοπεῖν, πολλῶ τι τῆς δοκούςσης ἐπιτετάχθαι Λακεδαιμονίοις καρτερίας μείζονας ἀθλοῦ καὶ πόνου ἡμῖν ἐπιτεθέντας [...]** ἡμῖν δὲ πάλιν ἐκ τοῦ περὶ ταῦτα τῷ νόμῳ πειθαρχεῖν ἠδέως κάκει περιέστιν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι τὸ γενναῖον».

own tradition, instead of becoming part of Greek mythology<sup>141</sup>. 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<sup>142</sup>. 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<sup>143</sup>.

## 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<sup>144</sup>. Previous fictitious kinship bonds helped new communities to find common ancestors: as revealed by Nicole Belayche for Palestinian cities<sup>145</sup>, 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<sup>146</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> 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.

---

<sup>141</sup> GRUEN 1996, 268-269.

<sup>142</sup> About Galilee, see next chapter.

<sup>143</sup> MATTINGLY 2011, 26.

<sup>144</sup> ANDRADE 2013, 16.

<sup>145</sup> BELAYCHE 2009.

<sup>146</sup> See above.

# 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<sup>147</sup>. The Egyptian term «*k-r-r*» could be originated by the word «*GLL*», indicating «cylinder» or «ring» and, for extension, «circumscribed district»<sup>148</sup>. In this sense the Jewish expression «*ha-galil*», found in a number of biblical sources, could be a secondary abbreviation of «*g<sup>e</sup>lil ha-gojim*», meaning «circle of heathens»: indeed, the Galilee was considered as a territory inhabited by foreign people<sup>149</sup>, for centuries subjected to the pressure of its neighbours.

---

<sup>147</sup> SIMONS 1937, list I, 80.

<sup>148</sup> Hypothesis sustained by ALT 1953, 263-274, and then by HORSLEY 1995, 38.

<sup>149</sup> *Is.* VIII, 23: «καὶ οὐκ ἀπορηθήσεται ὁ ἐν στενοχωρίᾳ ὢν ἕως καιροῦ τοῦτο πρῶτον ποίει ταχὺ ποίει χώρα Ζαβουλων ἢ γῆ Νεφθαλιμ ὁδὸν θαλάσσης καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ τὴν παραλίαν κατοικοῦντες καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν τὰ μέρη τῆς Ἰουδαίας»;

*I Macc.* V, 15: «λέγοντες ἐπισυνήχθαι ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐκ Πτολεμαίδος καὶ Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος καὶ πᾶσαν Γαλιλαίαν ἀλλοφύλων τοῦ ἐξαναλώσαι ἡμᾶς»;

The region was also known as the «country of Naphtali»<sup>150</sup>, 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 sea 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<sup>151</sup>, and the village of Kedesh<sup>152</sup>. The central mountainous area was scarcely populated, unlike the surrounding valleys<sup>153</sup>.

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-Pileser destroyed Damascus and defeated Pekah, king of Israel<sup>154</sup>.

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<sup>155</sup>: 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<sup>156</sup>.

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

---

*MATTHEW* IV,15: «γῆ ζαβουλῶν καὶ γῆ νεφθαλίμ, ὁδὸν θαλάσσης, πέραν τοῦ ἰορδάνου, γαλιλαία τῶν ἔθνῶν».

<sup>150</sup> *II KGS* XV, 29: «ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Φακεε βασιλέως Ἰσραὴλ ἦλθεν Θαυλαθφελλασαρ βασιλεὺς Ἀσσυρίων καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν Αἰν καὶ τὴν Αβελβαιθμααχα καὶ τὴν Ἰανωχ καὶ τὴν Κενεζ καὶ τὴν Ἀσωρ καὶ τὴν Γαλααδ καὶ τὴν Γαλιλαίαν πᾶσαν γῆν Νεφθαλί καὶ ἀπώκισεν αὐτοὺς εἰς Ἀσσυρίους».

<sup>151</sup> *I KGS* IX, 11: «Χιραμ βασιλεὺς Τύρου ἀντελάβετο τοῦ Σαλωμων ἐν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις καὶ ἐν ξύλοις πευκίνοις καὶ ἐν χρυσίῳ καὶ ἐν παντὶ θελήματι αὐτοῦ τότε ἔδωκεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ Χιραμ εἴκοσι πόλεις ἐν τῇ γῆ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ».

<sup>152</sup> *JOSH*. XX, 7: «καὶ διέστειλεν τὴν Καδης ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ Νεφθαλί [...]».

*JOSH*. XXI, 32: «καὶ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Νεφθαλί τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἀφωρισμένην τῷ φονεύσαντι τὴν Καδες ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ καὶ τὰ ἀφωρισμένα αὐτῇ».

*I CHRON*. VI, 61: «καὶ ἀπὸ φυλῆς Νεφθαλί τὴν Κεδες ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ».

<sup>153</sup> FRANKEL *et alii* 2001, 141.

<sup>154</sup> *II KGS* XV, 29. See note 150.

<sup>155</sup> *JDT* I, 7-8: «καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ναβουχοδοноσορ βασιλεὺς Ἀσσυρίων ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν Περσίδα καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας πρὸς δυσμαῖς τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν Κιλικίαν καὶ Δαμασκὸν καὶ τὸν Λίβανον καὶ Ἀντιλίβανον καὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας κατὰ πρόσωπον τῆς παραλίας καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι τοῦ Καρμήλου καὶ Γαλααδ καὶ τὴν ἄνω Γαλιλαίαν καὶ τὸ μέγα πεδῖον Εσδρηλων καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ταῖς πόλεσιν αὐτῆς καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ἕως Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ Βατανῆ καὶ Χελους καὶ Καδης καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ Αἰγύπτου καὶ Ταφνας καὶ Ραμεσση καὶ πᾶσαν γῆν Γεσεμ».

<sup>156</sup> AVIAM 2004b, 42.

people that not helped him, including Judaea, which appears in the list of the enemies of the Babylonian king<sup>157</sup>.

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 «judaized» 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<sup>158</sup> and Nehemia<sup>159</sup>: 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<sup>160</sup>.

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

1. at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>161</sup>. The process of integration of Galileans with Judaeans was stopped by the two Babylonian invasions of Jerusalem in 598 and 587 BCE.

---

<sup>157</sup> In *Jdt* I, 12 it is explicitly written that all the cited countries refused to help Nebuchadnezzar: «καὶ ἐθυμώθη **Ναβουχοδοноσορ** ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ταύτην σφόδρα καὶ ὤμοσε κατὰ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴν ἐκδικήσῃεν πάντα τὰ ὄρια τῆς Κιλικίας καὶ Δαμασκηνῆς καὶ Συρίας ἀνελεῖν τῆ ῥομφαίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐν γῆ Μωαβ καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἀμμων καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν **Ιουδαίαν** καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρια τῶν δύο θαλασσῶν».

<sup>158</sup> *EZRA* IV, 1-2: «*Audierunt autem hostes Judæ et Benjamin, quia filii captivitatis ædificarent templum Domino Deo Israel: et accedentes ad Zorobabel, et ad principes patrum, dixerunt eis: aedificemus vobiscum, quia ita ut vos, quærimus Deum vestrum: ecce nos immolavimus victimas a diebus Asor Haddan regis Assur, qui adduxit nos huc*».

<sup>159</sup> *NEH* IV, 1: «*Factum est autem, cum audisset Sanaballat quod aedificarem murum, iratus est valde: et motus nimis subsannavit Judæos*».

<sup>160</sup> *TB* I, 4-6: «καὶ ὅτε ἤμην ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ μου ἐν τῇ γῆ Ἰσραὴλ νεωτέρου μου ὄντος πᾶσα φυλὴ τοῦ Νεφθαλιμ τοῦ πατρός μου ἀπέστη ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου Ἱεροσολύμων τῆς ἐκλεγεῖσης ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν φυλῶν Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ θυσιάζειν πάσας τὰς φυλάς καὶ ἡγιάσθη ὁ ναὸς τῆς κατασκηνώσεως τοῦ ὑψίστου καὶ ὠκοδομήθη εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ αἱ συναποστᾶσαι ἔθουον τῇ Βααλ τῇ δαμάλει καὶ ὁ οἶκος Νεφθαλιμ τοῦ πατρός μου κἀγὼ μόνος ἐπορευόμην πλεονάκις εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς καθὼς γέγραπται παντὶ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐν προστάγματι αἰωνίῳ τὰς ἀπαρχὰς καὶ τὰς δεκάτας τῶν γεννημάτων καὶ τὰς πρωτοκουρίας ἔχων».

<sup>161</sup> *II Kgs* XXIII, 15-16: «καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἐν Βαιθηλ τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὃ ἐποίησεν Ἱεροβοαμ υἱὸς Ναβατ ὃς ἐξήμαρτεν τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ γε τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὸ ὑψηλὸν κατέσπασεν καὶ συνέτριψεν τοὺς λίθους αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλέπτυνεν εἰς χοῦν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ ἄλσος καὶ ἐξένευσε Ἰωσίας καὶ εἶδεν τοὺς τάφους τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέστειλεν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ ὀστᾶ ἐκ τῶν τάφων καὶ κατέκαυσεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ ἐλάλησεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐστάναι Ἱεροβοαμ ἐν τῇ ἐορτῇ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐπιστρέψας ἤρην τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ λαλήσαντος τοὺς λόγους τούτους»

2. At the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the king Cyrus of Persia re-established the Judaeian state, which was weakened by internal fights among the priestly class<sup>162</sup>. The instability of the government of Judaea, that persisted until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Maccabean 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<sup>163</sup>, together with other three hyparchies in Palestine (Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea)<sup>164</sup>. In one of the Zenon papyri, in fact, the word «Γαλιλα» appears for the first time in Greek, albeit only once<sup>165</sup>: 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 HASMONAEOANS 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<sup>166</sup>. 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

---

<sup>162</sup> STERN 1984, 87.

<sup>163</sup> AVI-YONAH 1966, 36.

<sup>164</sup> FREYNE 1980a, 28.

<sup>165</sup> WESTERMANN and HASENOEHL 1934, *Pap.* 2, 6-8.

<sup>166</sup> *1 MAC* V, 16-23: «ὡς δὲ ἤκουσεν Ἰουδᾶς καὶ ὁ λαὸς τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐπισυνήχθη ἐκκλησία μεγάλη βουλευσασθαι τί ποιήσωσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτῶν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν θλίψει καὶ πολεμουμένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ εἶπεν Ἰουδᾶς Σιμωνι τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπίλεξον σεαυτῷ ἄνδρας καὶ πορευοῦ καὶ ῥύσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς σου τοὺς ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ Ἰωνᾶθαν ὁ ἀδελφός μου πορευσόμεθα εἰς τὴν Γαλααδίτην [...] καὶ ἐπορεύθη Σιμων εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ συνήψεν πολέμους πολλοὺς πρὸς τὰ ἔθνη καὶ συνεντρίβη τὰ ἔθνη ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ [...] καὶ παρέλαβεν τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐν Ἀρβατοῖς σὺν ταῖς γυναῖξιν καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἦν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἤγαγεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν μετ' εὐφροσύνης μεγάλης».



them to live according to the Jewish laws and to adopt circumcision<sup>167</sup>: 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<sup>nd</sup> century BCE Galilee was ruled by foreign people and inhabited by a mixed population: if these rulers were Ituraeans, it is hard to say<sup>168</sup>.

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 Hasmonaean kings at the end of second century BCE<sup>169</sup>. 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 Hasmonaean conquests, but mostly because Hasmonaean colonised and repopulated these territories driving there people from Judaea<sup>170</sup>. 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>171</sup>.

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»<sup>172</sup>. Even after the conquest of Aristobulus, some Galilean tradition and

---

<sup>167</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 318-319: «ταὐτ' εἰπὼν ἐπαποθνήσκει τοῖς λόγοις βασιλεύσας ἐνιαυτὸν, χρηματίσας μὲν Φιλέλλην, πολλὰ δ' εὐεργετήσας τὴν πατρίδα, **πολεμήσας Ἰτουραίους καὶ πολλὴν αὐτῶν τῆς χώρας τῆ Ἰουδαίᾳ προσκτησάμενος ἀναγκάσας τε τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας, εἰ βούλονται μένειν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ, περιπέμνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίων νόμους ζῆν.** φύσει δ' ἐπιεικὴς κέχρητο καὶ σφόδρα ἦν αἰδοῦς ἥπτων, ὡς μαρτυρεῖ τοῦτω καὶ Στράβων ἐκ τοῦ Τιμαγένους ὀνόματος λέγων οὕτως: 'ἐπιεικὴς τε ἐγένετο οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ πολλὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις χρήσιμος: χώραν τε γὰρ αὐτοῖς προσεκλήσατο καὶ τὸ μέρος τοῦ τῶν Ἰτουραίων ἔθνους ὠκειώσατο δεσμῶ συνάψας τῆ τῶν αἰδοίων περιτομῆ».

<sup>168</sup> See the chapter about Ituraeans.

<sup>169</sup> E. SCHÜRER 1973, 216-218; 561-573.

<sup>170</sup> 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.

<sup>171</sup> ALT 1953; HORSLEY 1995.

<sup>172</sup> CROMHOUT 2008, 1287.

particular customs were probably preserved, as well as it happened for Idumaeans, always considered as a different «ἔθνος» by Judaeans<sup>173</sup>. It is possible that the Hasmonaeans supported the immigration in Galilee of a number of people from Judaea: 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 Judaeans<sup>174</sup>.

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<sup>175</sup>.

<b>KING</b>	<b>REIGN</b>
-------------	--------------

<sup>173</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 253-255: «Κοστόβαρος ἦν γένει μὲν Ἰδουμαῖος, ἀξιώματος τῶν πρώτων παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ προγόνων ἱερατευσάντων τῷ Κωζαί: θεὸν δὲ τοῦτον Ἰδουμαῖοι νομίζουσιν. Ὑρκανοῦ δὲ τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνη καὶ νόμιμα μεταστήσαντος [...] Κοστόβαρος δὲ τούτων τυχῶν ἀσμένως καὶ παρὰ δόξαν ἤρθη μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τῆς εὐτυχίας καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν ἐξέβαινε, οὐθ' αὐτῷ καλὸν ἠγούμενος ἄρχοντας Ἡρώδου τὸ προσταπτόμενον ποιεῖν οὔτε τοῖς Ἰδουμαῖοις τὰ Ἰουδαίων μεταλαβοῦσιν ὑπ' ἐκείνοις εἶναι».

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

<sup>175</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 4,6 (97-98): «προύκοψεν δὲ αὐτῷ δι' ὑπερβολὴν ὀργῆς εἰς ἀσέβειαν τὸ τῆς ὠμότητος: τῶν γὰρ ληφθέντων ὀκτακοσίους ἀνασταυρώσας ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλει γυναῖκας τε καὶ τέκνα αὐτῶν ἀπέσφαζεν ταῖς ὄψεσι: καὶ ταῦτα πίνων καὶ συγκατακείμενος ταῖς παλλακίσιν ἀφεώρα. τοσαύτη δὲ κατάπληξις ἔσχεν τὸν δῆμον, ὥστε τῶν ἀντιστασιαστῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιούσαν νύκτα φυγεῖν ὀκτακισχιλίους ἔξω Ἰουδαίας ὅλης, οἷς ὄρος τῆς φυγῆς ὁ Ἀλεξάνδρου θάνατος κατέστη. τοιοῦτοις ἔργοις ὅπερ καὶ μόλις ἠσυχίαν τῇ βασιλείᾳ πορίσας ἀνεπαύσατο τῶν ὀπλων»;

*AJ* XIII, 372-383: «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τῶν οἰκείων πρὸς αὐτὸν στασιασάντων, ἐπανεστῆ γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ ἔθνος ἐορτῆς ἀγομένης καὶ ἐστῶτος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ θύειν μέλλοντος κιτρίοις αὐτὸν ἔβαλλον [...] ἐπὶ τοῦτοις ὀργισθεῖς κτείνει μὲν αὐτῶν περὶ ἑξακισχιλίους, δρύφακτον δὲ ξύλινον περὶ τὸν βωμὸν καὶ τὸν ναὸν βαλόμενος μέχρι τοῦ θριγκοῦ, εἰς ὃν μόνοις ἐξῆν τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν εἰσεῖναι, τούτῳ τὴν τοῦ πλήθους ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀπέφραπτεν εἴσοδον. [...] καὶ πρὸς τὴν κακοπραγίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπιθεμένου τοῦ ἔθνους πολεμήσας πρὸς αὐτὸ ἔτεσιν ἕξ ἀναιρεῖ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὐκ ἔλαπτον πέντε μυριάδας. παρακαλοῦντος δὲ παῦσαι τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν δυσμένειαν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐμίσουν αὐτὸν διὰ τὰ συμβεβηκότα. πυνθανομένου δ' αὐτοῦ τί βούλονται, πάντες γενέσθαι ἐβόησαν ἀποθανεῖν αὐτόν, καὶ πρὸς Δημήτριον τὸν Ἄκαιρον ἔπεμψαν παρακαλοῦντες ἐπὶ συμμαχίαν. [...] Φεύγοντος δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου εἰς τὰ ὄρη κατὰ οἶκτον τῆς μεταβολῆς συλλέγονται παρ' αὐτὸν Ἰουδαίων ἑξακισχιλίοι. καὶ τότε μὲν δεῖσας ὑποχωρεῖ Δημήτριος. μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐπολέμουν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ νικώμενοι πολλοὶ ἀπέθνησκον ἐν ταῖς μάχαις. [...] ἐστῶμενος γὰρ ἐν ἀπόπτῳ μετὰ τῶν παλλακίδων ἀνασταυρώσας προσέταξεν αὐτῶν ὡς ὀκτακοσίους, τοὺς δὲ παῖδας αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἔτι ζώντων παρὰ τὰς ἐκείνων ὄψεις ἀπέσφαπτεν [...] ἀλλ' οὖν οὐκ ἐπιτηδεῖως δοκεῖ ταῦτα δρᾶσαι, ὥστε διὰ τὴν τῆς ὠμότητος ὑπερβολὴν ἐπικληθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων Θρακίδαν. οἱ δ' ἀντιστασιῶται αὐτοῦ τὸ πλήθος ὄντες περὶ ὀκτακισχιλίους φεύγουσιν νυκτὸς καὶ παρ' ὃν ἔζη χρόνον Ἀλέξανδρος ἦσαν ἐν τῇ φυγῇ. καὶ οὗτος μὲν ἀπηλλαγμένος τῆς ἐκ τούτων ταραχῆς μετὰ πάσης τὸ λοιπὸν ἡρεμίας ἐβασίλευσεν».

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

TAB. 1 List of the Hasmonaean rulers

In his Antiquities, Flavius Josephus reported that John Hyrcanus sent his youngest son Alexander Jannaeus to live in Galilee<sup>176</sup>. Samuel Klein, who was the first to assume that Galilee was inhabited by Jews<sup>177</sup>, affirmed that John sent his son in Galilee, where learned men lived<sup>178</sup>. On the contrary, Mordechai Aviam has claimed John was afraid of Alexander and sent him to the very far end of his kingdom<sup>179</sup>, 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<sup>180</sup>.

The coming of the Romans did not change the political situation: for political and economic purposes Galileans and Idumaeans were considered Judaeans 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

<sup>176</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 322: «[...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τοὺς τούτου χαρακτήρας δεῖξαντος, λυπηθεὶς ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν αὐτοῦ πάντων οὗτος ἔσται κληρονόμος, γενόμενον εἶασεν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ τρέφεσθαι [...]».

<sup>177</sup> KLEIN 1928, FREYNE 1980, 43-44 and 1988.

<sup>178</sup> KLEIN 1977, 15.

<sup>179</sup> AVIAM 2004b, 45.

<sup>180</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 405-406: «Ἡ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρα τὸ φρούριον ἐξελοῦσα κατὰ τὰς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ὑποθήκας τοῖς τε Φαρισαίοις διελέχθη καὶ πάντα ἐπ' ἐκείνοις θεμένη τὰ τε περὶ τοῦ νεκροῦ καὶ τῆς βασιλείας, τῆς μὲν ὀργῆς αὐτοῦς τῆς πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ἔπαυσεν, εὖνους δ' ἐποίησεν καὶ φίλους. οἱ δ' εἰς τὸ πλήθος παρελθόντες ἐδημηγόρουν τὰς πράξεις τὰς Ἀλεξάνδρου διηγούμενοι, καὶ ὅτι δίκαιος αὐτοῖς ἀπόλοιτο βασιλεὺς, καὶ τὸν δῆμον εἰς πένθος καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ κατήφειαν ἐξεκαλέσαντο τοῖς ἐπαίνοις, ὥστε καὶ λαμπρότερον ἢ τινα τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλέων αὐτὸν ἐκήδευσαν».

installation of a colony of cavalymen at Gaba for monitoring Galilee<sup>181</sup>. Herod policy was probably oriented to respect local customs, as clear in the episode of Costobar the Idumaeon<sup>182</sup>: 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<sup>183</sup>. Furthermore, Herod left them to follow their own traditions, surely different from Judaeans. Nevertheless, Herod had to fight for controlling the Galilee: Josephus remembered the clash with the brigands at Arbela<sup>184</sup> and in Upper Galilee<sup>185</sup>. 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 Peraea, who came in the capital city for protesting and not for celebrating the Jewish feast of Pentecost<sup>186</sup>. Undoubtedly the decision to go to

---

<sup>181</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* III, 3,1 (36): « ὧ προσίσχει Γαβαά, πόλις ἰππέων, οὕτω προσαγορευομένη διὰ τὸ τοὺς ὑφ' Ἡρώδου βασιλέως ἀπολυομένους ἰππεῖς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικεῖν»;

*AJ* XV, 294: « ἐν τε τῷ μεγάλῳ πεδίῳ τῶν ἐπιλέκτων ἰππέων περὶ αὐτὸν ἀποκληρώσας χωρίον συνέκτισεν ἐπὶ τε τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ Γάβα καλούμενον καὶ τῇ Περαίᾳ τὴν Ἑσεβωνίτιν».

<sup>182</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 255. See note 173.

<sup>183</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVII, 25-26. See next chapter for further information.

<sup>184</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 16,2-3 (305-307): «**προπέμψας δὲ πεζῶν τρία τέλη καὶ μίαν ἴλην ἰππέων πρὸς Ἄρβηλα κώμην αὐτὸς μετὰ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας ἐπήλθεν μετὰ τῆς λοιπῆς δυνάμεως.** οὐ μὴν πρὸς τὴν ἔφοδον ἔδεισαν οἱ πολέμιοι, μετὰ δὲ τῶν ὄπλων ἀπήντων ἐμπειρίαν μὲν πολεμικὴν ἔχοντες, τὸ δὲ θράσος ληστρικόν [...]. Ὁ δὲ ἕως Ἰορδάνου κτείνων εἶπετο καὶ πολὺ μὲν αὐτῶν μέρος διέφθειρεν, οἱ λοιποὶ δ' ὑπὲρ τὸν ποταμὸν ἐσκεδάσθησαν, ὥστε τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἐκκεκαθάρθαι φόβων, πλὴν καθόσον οἱ τοῖς σπηλαίοις ἐμφωλεύοντες ὑπελείποντο: κάπτι τούτοις ἔδει διατριβῆς».

<sup>185</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 17,3 (329-330): «καὶ διανύσας ἐπὶ τὸν Λίβανον ὀκτακοσίους μὲν τῶν περὶ τὸ ὄρος προσλαμβάνει συμμάχους, Ῥωμαίων δὲ ἐν τάγμα ταύτῃ συνήμην. μεθ' ὧν οὐ περιμείνας ἡμέραν **εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἐνέβαλεν** τοὺς τε πολέμιους ὑπαντίασαντας εἰς ὃ καταλελοίπεσαν χωρίον τρέπεται. καὶ προσέβαλλεν μὲν συνεχῶς τῷ φρουρίῳ, πρὶν δὲ ἐλεῖν χειμῶνι βιασθεῖς χαλεπωτάτῳ ταῖς πλησίον ἐνστρατοπεδεύεται κώμαις. ἐπεὶ δ' αὐτῷ μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας καὶ τὸ δεύτερον παρὰ Ἀντωνίου τάγμα συνέμιξεν, δεῖσαντες τὴν ἰσχὺν οἱ πολέμιοι διὰ νυκτὸς ἐξέλιπον τὸ ἔρυμα».

<sup>186</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 3,1 (42-44): «**ἐνστάσης δὲ τῆς πεντηκοστῆς,** οὕτω καλοῦσιν τινα ἑορτὴν Ἰουδαῖοι παρ' ἐπιτά γινομένην ἐβδομάδας καὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἡμερῶν προσηγορίαν ἔχουσαν, **οὐχ ἡ συνήθης θρησκεία συνήγαγεν τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλ' ἡ ἀγανάκτησις.** συνέδραμεν γοῦν πλῆθος ἄπειρον ἐκ τε τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἰδουμαίας Ἰεριχοῦντός τε καὶ τῆς ὑπὲρ Ἰορδάνην Περαίας, ὑπερεῖχεν δὲ πλήθει καὶ προθυμίαις ἀνδρῶν ὁ γνήσιος ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἰουδαίας λαός. διανείμαντες δὲ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς εἰς τρία μέρη τριχῆ στρατοπεδεύονται, πρὸς τε τῷ βορείῳ τοῦ ἱεροῦ κλίματι καὶ πρὸς τῷ μεσημβρινῷ κατὰ τὸν ἵππόδρομον, ἡ δὲ τρίτη μοῖρα πρὸς τοῖς βασιλείοις κατὰ δύσιν. περικαθεζόμενοι δὲ πανταχόθεν τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ἐπολιόρκουν»;

*AJ* XVII, 254-255: «**Ἐνστάσης δὲ τῆς πεντηκοστῆς,** ἑορτὴ δὲ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν πάτριος τοῦτο κεκλημένη, οὕτι κατὰ τὴν θρησκείαν μόνον παρήσαν, ἀλλ' ὀργῇ φέροντες τὴν παροιμίαν τῆς Σαβίνου ὕβρεως μυριάδες συνηθροίσθησαν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάνυ πολλοὶ Γαλιλαίων τε καὶ Ἰδουμαίων, Ἰεριχοῦντίων τε ἦν πλῆθους καὶ ὅποσοι περάσαντι Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν οἰκοῦσιν, αὐτῶν τε Ἰουδαίων πλῆθος πρὸς πάντας συνειλέχασθαι καὶ πολὺ προθυμότεροι τῶν ἄλλων ἐπὶ τιμωρίᾳ τῆς Σαβίνου ὠρμήκεσαν. καὶ τρία μέρη νεμηθέντες ἐπὶ τοσῶνδε στρατοπεδεύονται χωρίων, οἱ μὲν τὸν ἵππόδρομον ἀπολαβόντες, καὶ τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν δύο μερῶν οἱ μὲν τῷ

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<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup>, 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 Judaeans<sup>189</sup>. Herod Antipas continued his activity founding Tiberias, a new capital city on the Kinneret Lake. He principally acted as a «client king»<sup>190</sup>: 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<sup>191</sup>. 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.

---

βορείω τοῦ ἱεροῦ πρὸς μεσημβρίαν τετραμμένοι, οἱ δὲ ἑώαν μοῖραν εἶχον, μοῖρα δὲ αὐτῶν ἡ τρίτη τὰ πρὸς δυόμενον ἥλιον, ἔνθα καὶ τὸ βασιλεῖον ἦν. **ἐπράσσετο δὲ τὰ πάντα αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ πολιορκία τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπανταχόθεν αὐτοῖς ἀποκεκλεισμένων».**

<sup>187</sup> HORSLEY 1995, 94.

<sup>188</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVIII, 27: «[...] αἱ Ἡρώδης Σέπφωριν τειχίσας πρόσχημα τοῦ Γαλιλαίου παντὸς ἠγόρευεν αὐτὴν Αὐτοκρατορίδα [...]».

<sup>189</sup> The reasons 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 JOSEPH. *Vita* 38: «[...] ἄρξαι γὰρ εὐθύς τὴν μὲν Σέπφωριν, ἐπειδὴ Ῥωμαίοις ὑπήκουσεν, τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καταλυθῆναι δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς τὴν τε βασιλικὴν τράπεζαν καὶ τὰ ἀρχεῖα»;

*Vita* 104: « Οἱ δὲ τὴν πόλιν ταύτην κατοικοῦντες ἄνδρες κεκριότες τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐμμεῖναι πίστει, δεδιότες δὲ τὴν ἐμὴν ἄφιξιν, ἐπειράθησαν ἑτέρω με πράξει περισπᾶσαντες ἀδεεῖς εἶναι περὶ ἑαυτῶν»;

*Vita* 346: «τῶν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ πόλεων αἱ μέγιστα Σέπφωρις καὶ Τιβεριάς ἡ σὴ πατρίς, ὧ Ἰουστε. **ἀλλὰ Σέπφωρις** μὲν ἐν τῷ μεσαιπάτῳ τῆς Γαλιλαίας κειμένη καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν κώμας ἔχουσα πολλάς καὶ τι καὶ θρασύνεσθαι δυναμένη πρὸς Ῥωμαίους εἴπερ ἠθέλησεν εὐχερῶς, διεγνωκυῖα τῇ πρὸς τοὺς δεσπότας ἐμμεῖναι πίστει κάμει τῆς πόλεως αὐτῶν ἐξέκλεισε καὶ **στρατεύσασθαί τινα τῶν πολιτῶν Ἰουδαίους ἐκώλυσεν».**

<sup>190</sup> About client kings in the Near East, see PALTIEL 1991; SARTRE 2001, 498-527; BUTCHER 2003, 87-98; KROPP 2013.

<sup>191</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVIII, 36: «Ἡρώδης δὲ ὁ τετράρχης, ἐπὶ μέγα γὰρ ἦν τῷ Τιβερίῳ φιλίας προελθῶν, οἰκοδομεῖται πόλιν ἐπώνυμον αὐτῷ Τιβεριάδα τοῖς κρατίστοις ἐπικτίσας αὐτὴν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ λίμνη τῇ Γεννησαρίτιδι [...]».

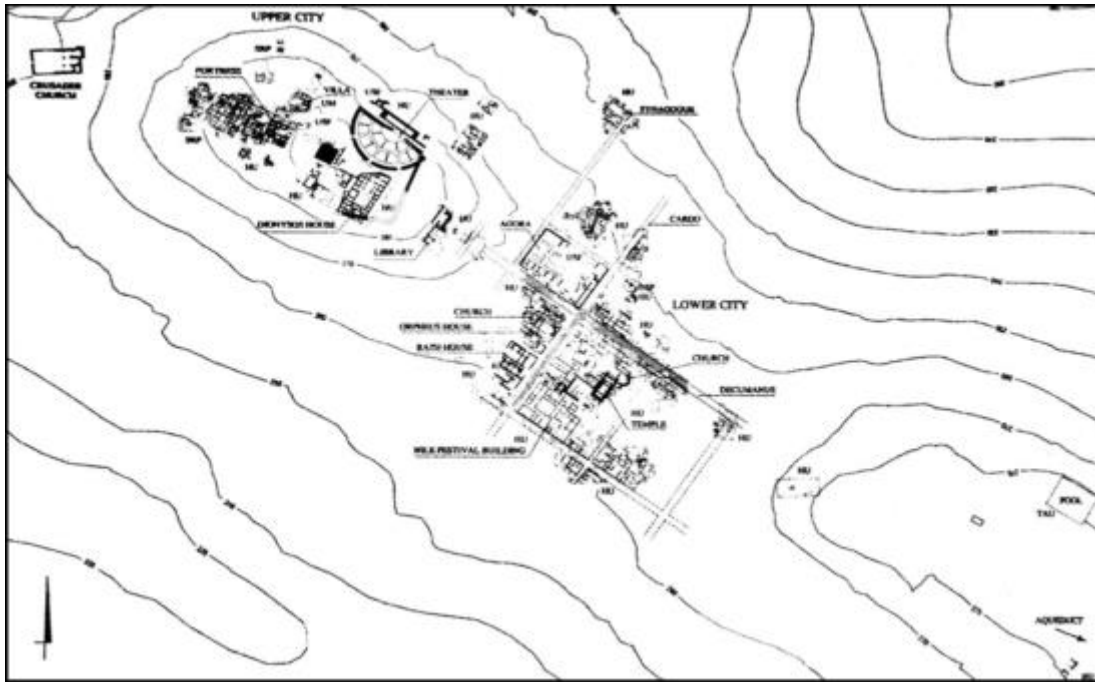


FIG. 2 Sepphoris city plan. From FIENSY and STRANGE 2015, 60, fig. E.

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<sup>192</sup>.

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<sup>193</sup>. He tried to gather together the countryside dwellers and the citizens. As confirmed in *Life*, in fact, Galilee had not entirely rebelled against Rome, whereas several internal contrasts emerged: Sepphoris and Tiberias fought for supremacy<sup>194</sup>; Tiberias and Taricheae

<sup>192</sup> JENSEN 2006, 99-100

<sup>193</sup> BILDE 1988, 45-46.

<sup>194</sup> JOSEPH. *Vita* 39: «ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἕτερα πολλὰ κατὰ βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα λέγων ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὸν δῆμον εἰς τὴν ἀπόστασιν ἐρεθίσαι, προσετίθει νῦν εἶναι καιρὸν ἀραμένους ὄπλα καὶ Γαλιλαίους συμμάχους προσλαβόντας, ἄρξαι γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐκόντων διὰ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς Σεπφωρίτας μῖσος ὑπάρχειν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πίστιν διαφυλάσσουσιν, μεγάλη χειρὶ πρὸς τὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τιμωρίαν τραπέσθαι».

challenged for the control of the Lake<sup>195</sup>; the major cities opposed people from countryside, called by Josephus «οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι»<sup>196</sup>.

In *Life*, the term «Γαλιλαῖοι» recurs 45 times and is always referred to people from small villages in opposition to the big cities<sup>197</sup>. 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 Judaeans settled: with farmers and workers, even priests and rabbis moved there. The rabbinic movement was so strong that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>198</sup>. 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<sup>199</sup>.

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<sup>200</sup>.

---

<sup>195</sup> JOSEPH *BJ* II, 21,4 (608): «Ἐπὶ τούτοις οἱ Ταριχεῶται μὲν αὐτὸν ἀνευφήμουν, οἱ δ' ἀπὸ τῆς Τιβεριάδος σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐκάκιζον καὶ διηπέλουσαν: καταλιπόντες δ' ἑκάτεροι τὸν ἴωσηπον **ἀλλήλοισι διεφέροντο**. κάκεινος θαρρῶν ἤδη τοῖς ὤκειωμένοις, ἦσαν δὲ εἰς τετρακισμυρίουσ Ταριχεᾶται, παντὶ τῷ πλήθει παρρησιαστικώτερον ὠμίλει».

*Vita* 143: «δαπανωμένων εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομίαν αὐτῶν.» πρὸς ταῦτα παρὰ μὲν τῶν Ταριχεωτῶν καὶ ξένων ἐγείρεται φωνὴ χάριν ἔχειν ὁμολογούντων καὶ θαρρεῖν προτροπομένων, Γαλιλαῖοι δὲ καὶ Τιβεριεῖς τοῖς θυμοῖς ἐπέμενον, καὶ **γίνεται στάσις πρὸς ἀλλήλους** τῶν μὲν κολάσειν ἀπειλούντων με τῶν δὲ καταφρονεῖν».

<sup>196</sup> JOSEPH. *Vita* 383-384: «τοῦτον κομίσαντα τὰ γράμματα γνωρίσαντες **οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι** καὶ συλλαβόντες ἄγουσιν ἐπ' ἐμέ. τὸ δὲ πᾶν πλήθος, ὡς ἤκουσεν, παροξυνθὲν ἐφ' ὄπλα τρέπεται. συναχθέντες δὲ πολλοὶ πολλαχόθεν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιούσαν ἦκον εἰς Ἄσωχιν πόλιν, ἔνθα δὴ τὴν κατάλυσιν ἐποιούμην, καταβοήσεις τε σφόδρα ἐποιοῦντο, προδοτὶν ἀποκαλοῦντες τὴν Τιβεριάδα καὶ βασιλέως φίλην, ἐπιτρέπειν τε ἡξίουσαν αὐτοῖς καταβάσιν ἄρδην ἀφανίσαι: καὶ γὰρ **πρὸς τοὺς Τιβεριεῖς εἶχον ἀπεχθῶς, ὡς πρὸς τοὺς Σεπφωρίτας**».

<sup>197</sup> MASON 2001, 38, n. 136.

<sup>198</sup> MEYERS 1976, 97

<sup>199</sup> CHANCEY 2006, 88.

<sup>200</sup> 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 Hasmonaeen 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<sup>201</sup>. Throughout the coins' distribution, it seems clear that the area under control of Hasmonaeans was limited to the territory of Sepphoris 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<sup>202</sup>: after the capture of the city, Hasmonaeen coins were attested in the territory of the city and in the city itself<sup>203</sup>. Hippos-Sussita represented an anomalous situation: the city was probably under Hasmonaeen rule but excavations have revealed the presence of only two Hasmonaeen coins on 26 in circulation in this period<sup>204</sup>: 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<sup>205</sup>. 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<sup>206</sup>. 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<sup>207</sup>; however, Danny Syon rightly claimed that Galilee exported agricultural product and especially oil, that not leave archaeological evidence<sup>208</sup>.

---

<sup>201</sup> SYON 2012, fig. 1

<sup>202</sup> FINKIELSZTEJN 1998, 50-51

<sup>203</sup> SYON 2015, 159.

<sup>204</sup> BERMAN 2013, 289; SYON 2015, 159.

<sup>205</sup> SYON 2015, 62.

<sup>206</sup> SYON 2015, 171.

<sup>207</sup> ROOT 2014, 180.

<sup>208</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE.

## 2.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

In a survey conducted during the early 1990s, Zvi Gal has shown that in Galilee between 8<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE there were no settlements with continuity of life. Some data confirm his conclusions: first of all, during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, several cities and villages were completely destroyed and abandoned<sup>209</sup>; 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE<sup>210</sup>. 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<sup>211</sup>. 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<sup>212</sup>.

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 Yammim, in Upper Galilee: here the visitors were Phoenicians, according to the discoveries of an inscription and the vessels<sup>213</sup>. Around the Mount Hermon and in the northern Golan Heights, instead, a particular type of pottery, principally «πίθοι» dated between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> 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

---

<sup>209</sup> GAL 1992, 82, 108-109; REED 2002, 29.

<sup>210</sup> GAL 1992, 79-83.

<sup>211</sup> STERN 1982.

<sup>212</sup> REED 2002, 35.

<sup>213</sup> BERLIN and FRANKEL 2012, 25-78.

settlement and the pottery were referred to the population of Ituraeans, but there are no sufficient data<sup>214</sup>. 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 Itur»<sup>215</sup>.

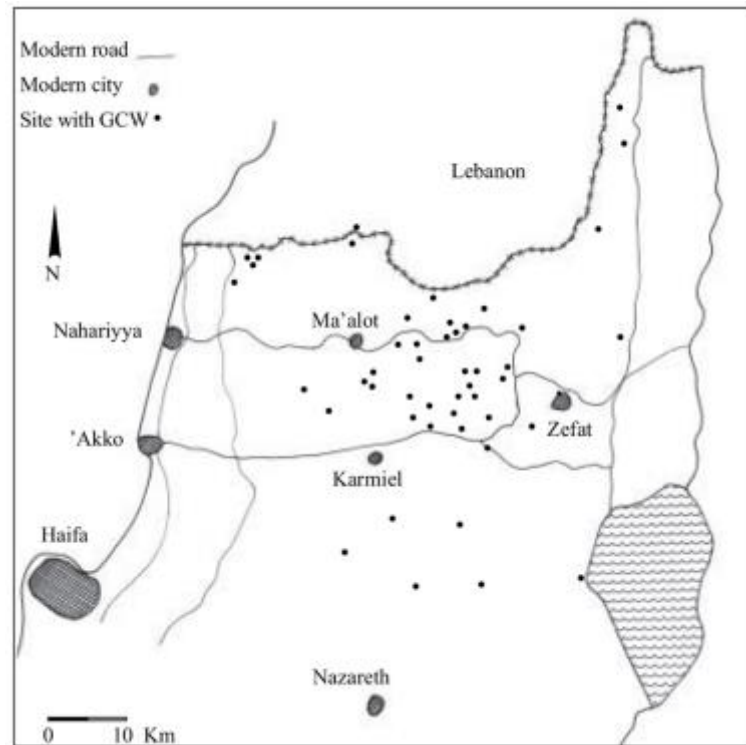


FIG. 3 Distribution map of GCW. From AVIAM 2006, 116, map 1.

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<sup>216</sup>. This particular type of pottery was made up by large vessels, in particular big «πίθοι» and bowls<sup>217</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE most small settlements where GCW was found were abandoned and GCW was not used even elsewhere<sup>218</sup>. Three different sites excavations help us to better understand what happened during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE:

<sup>214</sup> DAR 1988, 26-44, 1993, 18. For further information, see below the chapter about the Ituraeans.

<sup>215</sup> MA'OZ 2011, 27.

<sup>216</sup> FRANKEL *et alii* (eds.) 2001, 106-110.

<sup>217</sup> MYERS 2010, 56.

<sup>218</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Judaeans moved into Galilee after the Hasmonaean conquest<sup>219</sup>.
2. Excavations carried out at Yodefath 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. This stratum was completely covered by a destruction layer<sup>220</sup>.
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<sup>221</sup>. Recent excavations at the site uncovered the presence of a large administrative centre, built probably during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE and destroyed during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>222</sup>. 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<sup>223</sup>.

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<sup>224</sup>, Yodefath<sup>225</sup> and Kedesh have shown a clear picture on the events occurred at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>226</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>219</sup> BERLIN and FRANKEL 2012, 68-69.

<sup>220</sup> AVIAM 2013, 9; 2015, 111.

<sup>221</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* IV, 104-105: «θεοῦ δ' ἦν ἔργον ἄρα τοῦ σώζοντος τὸν Ἰωάννην ἐπὶ τὸν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ὄλεθρον τὸ μὴ μόνον πεισθῆναι τίτον τῇ σκῆψει τῆς ὑπερθέσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς πόλεως πορρωτέρω στρατοπεδεύσασθαι πρὸς Κυδασοῖς: μεσόγειος δέ ἐστι Τυρίων κώμη καρτερά, διὰ μίσους αἰεὶ καὶ πολέμου Γαλιλαίοις, ἔχουσα πλῆθος τε οἰκητόρων καὶ τὴν ὀχυρότητα τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἔθνος διαφορᾶς ἐφόδια».

<sup>222</sup> HERBERT and BERLIN 2003; BERLIN and HERBERT 2015, 430-437.

<sup>223</sup> 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.

<sup>224</sup> FRANKEL 1993.

<sup>225</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ and AVIAM 1997, 137.

<sup>226</sup> 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 Yodefath 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 Hasmonaean conquest 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<sup>227</sup>.

The period between the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 stability<sup>228</sup>.

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<sup>229</sup>.

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<sup>230</sup>.

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

---

<sup>227</sup> LEIBNER 2009, 318; 329.

<sup>228</sup> In particular, about the question of the repopulation of Galilee, see the works of FRANKEL *et al.* (eds.) 2001 and LEIBNER 2009.

<sup>229</sup> Many Hellenistic sites were abandoned and Roman settlements were established in new, unsettled areas.

<sup>230</sup> 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»<sup>231</sup>. Four are the indicators of a common identity among Galileans and Judaeans. 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 Hasmonaean kings, but it continued throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>232</sup>.
2. The «*Phoenician semi-fine ware*», generally undecorated and designed for table use, spread during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE from Akko-Ptolemais along the coast and in Huleh valley, but absent in Judaea and Galilee<sup>233</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup>. These workshops started to produce a particular type of kitchen pottery, mostly open forms, with a simple rounded rim and a globular body<sup>235</sup>. Among close forms, the rim is still rounded, the neck narrow and short, the body globular<sup>236</sup>. In Galilee, the village of Kefar Hananya became the best supplier of kitchen pottery from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE to the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>237</sup>. It is hard to define the beginning of the workshop at Kefar Hananya: earliest items were found at Tel Anafa, abandoned between 75 and

---

<sup>231</sup> REED 2002, 44.

<sup>232</sup> BERLIN 1997a, 25-26.

<sup>233</sup> BERLIN 1997b, 81-84.

<sup>234</sup> BERLIN 2005, 422.

<sup>235</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ 1993, 87 has grouped these exemplars in forms 1-3.

<sup>236</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ 1993, 124 ff., forms 4-7.

<sup>237</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ 1993, 2003.

64-63 BCE<sup>238</sup>, 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<sup>239</sup>, but it was found even in non-Jewish sites, like Tel Anafa and Akko-Ptolemais<sup>240</sup>. However, it was found in good quantity even in many cities of the Decapolis, like Gadara<sup>241</sup> and Hippos<sup>242</sup>, that were more close to Galilee and for a long time under the rule of Jewish kings, but even at Scythopolis<sup>243</sup> and Pella<sup>244</sup>. Moreover, Kefar Hananya pottery was found even in Trachonitis, probably when this region was under Herodian rule<sup>245</sup>.

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<sup>246</sup>. 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 Hasmonaeen 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 Hasmonaeen 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<sup>247</sup>: these elements are clear signs of an occupation of the fortress made by non-Jewish people. Even at Gamla, the «Hasmonaeen» quarter was probably abandoned at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE or at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>248</sup>.

---

<sup>238</sup> BERLIN 1997b, 84ff.

<sup>239</sup> BEN DAVID 2014, 245.

<sup>240</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ 1993, 220.

<sup>241</sup> DASZKIEWICZ, LIESEN and SCHNEIDER 2014, 148-158; VRIEZEN 2015, 126-143.

<sup>242</sup> Jolanta Młynarczyck: personal communication.

<sup>243</sup> SANDHAUS 2007, f. 6,1: 7-8; 6,2: 10-11-13-14. However, the data from Scythopolis are very incomplete.

<sup>244</sup> SMITH and DAY 1989, 99-100, pl. 44, 4, 8 e pl. 45, 7.

<sup>245</sup> RENEL 2010, 527.

<sup>246</sup> BAUMAN 1999, XXXI.

<sup>247</sup> AVIAM 2004b, 59-89.

<sup>248</sup> BERLIN 2006, 64.

However, the population grew during this period: during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE several sites, like Bet Shearim, Nabratein, Chorazin and Tiberias, were founded<sup>249</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>250</sup>. 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<sup>251</sup>, and Andrea Berlin concluded that they were used for Roman cuisine<sup>252</sup>. In Galilee Roman-style paintings have been found in houses at Sepphoris, at Yodefath and at Gamla<sup>253</sup>. However, foreign imports were few and absent in villages<sup>254</sup>

## 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<sup>255</sup>. The distribution of *Galilean Coarse Ware* in many sites of Galilee and its lack in Phoenician cities is somewhat significant: 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

---

<sup>249</sup> REED 2002, 41.

<sup>250</sup> AVIAM 2004a, 15.

<sup>251</sup> ROSENTHAL-HEGINBOTTOM 2003, 209, 214-217.

<sup>252</sup> BERLIN 2005, 442.

<sup>253</sup> REED 2002, 126; BERLIN 2005, 449 and 2006, 152; MAGNESS 2011, 57.

<sup>254</sup> BERLIN 2005, 451.

<sup>255</sup> FRANKEL *et al.* 2001, 109-110; LEIBNER 2009, 321.

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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE many Galileans were essentially «Ἰουδαῖοι», although the meaning of this word is difficult to understand. Many scholars have seen a religious significance<sup>256</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BCE Galilee<sup>257</sup>. 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 geographic<sup>258</sup>.

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»<sup>259</sup>: 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 «ὄστρακα» was found<sup>260</sup>. 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 potters<sup>261</sup>.

---

<sup>256</sup> COHEN 1999, 70-136; FREYNE 1999, 54.

<sup>257</sup> SCHWARTZ 1991.

<sup>258</sup> ZEITLIN 1974; FREYNE 1980b.

<sup>259</sup> GOODMAN 1983, 65-66.

<sup>260</sup> MEYERS 1985.

<sup>261</sup> GIBBON 1984, 223; EDWARDS 1992, 72.



# CHAPTER 3: THE ARABS IN SOUTHERN SYRIA

## 3.1 WHO WERE THE «ARABS»?

The word «Arab» is well attested in written sources since the 9<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>262</sup>. The inscription listed Gindibū the Arab among the leaders of a coalition beaten by the Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar near the Orontes.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>263</sup>, southern Palestine and Transjordan<sup>264</sup>, the eastern flanks of Anti-Lebanon, the Beqa'a Valley and the Syrian desert<sup>265</sup>. 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>266</sup>.

Kings of *a-ri-bi* were still subdued to Babylonian kings at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>267</sup>. 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<sup>268</sup>. According to Xenophon, the king of Arabs provided 10000 horsemen and 100 chariots<sup>269</sup>: 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<sup>270</sup>. The first Greek author who wrote extensively about Arabia during the

---

<sup>262</sup> EPH'AL 1982, 74.

<sup>263</sup> EPH'AL 1982, 107-108; MACDONALD 2009a, 281.

<sup>264</sup> MACDONALD 2009b, 8-10.

<sup>265</sup> GRAF 2003, 319; MACDONALD 2003a, 313.

<sup>266</sup> EPH'AL 1982, 165.

<sup>267</sup> RETSÓ (2003, 119-211) with exhaustive overview of all the cuneiform sources.

<sup>268</sup> MACDONALD 2009b, 14.

<sup>269</sup> XEN. *Cyr.*, 2.1.5: «[...] τὸν Ἀράβιον δὲ Ἄραγδον ἰππέας τε εἰς μυρίους καὶ ἄρματα εἰς ἑκατὸν καὶ σφενδονητῶν πάμπολύ τι χρῆμα [...]».

<sup>270</sup> RETSÓ 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<sup>271</sup>.

Herodotus noticed that the Achaemenid Cambyses II made an alliance with the king of Arabs to conquer Egypt in 525 BCE<sup>272</sup>: the historian described Arabs as very respectful to the pledges and devoted to a couple of gods<sup>273</sup>; 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's weight of frankincense<sup>274</sup>. 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<sup>275</sup>: the revolt was put down and a reorganisation of the territory followed. In

---

<sup>271</sup> HDt. 2.8.1: «ἀπὸ δὲ Ἡλίου πόλιος ἄνω ἰόντι στερινή ἐστι Αἴγυπτος. τῇ μὲν γὰρ τῆς Ἀραβίης ὄρος παρατέταται, φέρον ἀπ' ἄρκτου πρὸς μεσαμβρίην τε καὶ νότον, αἰεὶ ἄνω τείνον ἐς τὴν Ἐρυθρὴν καλομένην θάλασσαν»;

HDt. 3.5.1-2: «[...] ἀπὸ γὰρ Φοινίκης μέχρι οὖρων τῶν Καδύτιος πόλιος ἐστὶ Σύρων τῶν Παλαιστίνων καλομένων: ἀπὸ δὲ Καδύτιος εὐούσης πόλιος, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, Σαρδίων οὐ πολλῶ ἐλάσσονος, **ἀπὸ ταύτης τὰ ἐμπόρια τὰ ἐπὶ θαλάσσης μέχρι Ἰηνύσου πόλιος ἐστὶ τοῦ Ἀραβίου**, ἀπὸ δὲ Ἰηνύσου αὐτὶς Σύρων μέχρι Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, παρ' ἣν δὴ τὸ Κάσιον ὄρος τείνει ἐς θάλασσαν»;

HDt. 4.39.1: «αὕτη μὲν νυν ἡ ἐτέρη τῶν ἀκτέων, ἡ δὲ δὴ ἐτέρη ἀπὸ Περσέων ἀρξαμένη παρατέταται ἐς τὴν Ἐρυθρὴν θάλασσαν, ἢ τε Περσικὴ καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ἐκδεκομένη ἡ Ἀσσυριὴ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἀσσυρίας ἡ Ἀραβίη: **λήγει δὲ αὕτη, οὐ λήγουσα εἰ μὴ νόμῳ, ἐς τὸν κόλπον τὸν Ἀράβιον, ἐς τὸν Δαρεῖος ἐκ τοῦ Νείλου διώρυχα ἐσήγαγε**».

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

<sup>272</sup> HDt. 3.7.2: «τότε δὲ οὐκ ἐόντος κω ὕδατος ἐτοίμου, Καμβύσης πυθόμενος τοῦ Ἀλικαρνησέος ξείνου, πέμψας παρὰ τὸν Ἀράβιον ἀγγέλους καὶ δεηθείς τῆς ἀσφαλείης ἔτυχε, πίστις δούς τε καὶ δεξάμενος παρ' αὐτοῦ».

<sup>273</sup> HDt. 3.8: «**σέβονται δὲ Ἀράβιοι πίστις ἀνθρώπων ὅμοια τοῖσι μάλιστα**, ποιεῦνται δὲ αὐτὰς τρόπῳ τοιῶδε: τῶν βουλομένων τὰ πιστὰ ποιέεσθαι ἄλλος ἀνὴρ, ἀμφοτέρων αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ ἐστεῶς, λίθῳ ὀξεί τὸ ἔσω τῶν χειρῶν παρὰ τοὺς δακτύλους τοὺς μεγάλους ἐπιτάμνει τῶν ποιευμένων τὰς πίστις, καὶ ἔπειτα λαβὼν ἐκ τοῦ ἱματίου ἐκατέρου κροκύδα ἀλείφει τῷ αἵματι ἐν μέσῳ κειμένους λίθους ἐπτά: **τούτου δὲ ποιέων ἐπικαλεῖ τε τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ τὴν Οὐρανίην**. ἐπιτελέσαντος δὲ τούτου ταῦτα, ὁ τὰς πίστις ποιησάμενος τοῖσι φίλοισι παρεγγυᾷ τὸν ξεῖνον ἢ καὶ τὸν ἀσπὸν, ἢν πρὸς ἀσπὸν ποιήηται: οἱ δὲ φίλοι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰς πίστις δικαιοῦσι σέβεσθαι. **Διόνυσον δὲ θεῶν μόνον καὶ τὴν Οὐρανίην ἡγέονται εἶναι**, καὶ τῶν τριχῶν τὴν κουρὴν κείρεσθαι φασὶ κατὰ περ αὐτὸν τὸν Διόνυσον κεκάρθαι: κείρονται δὲ περιπρόχала, ὑποξυρώντες τοὺς κροτάφους. **ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον Ὀροτάλτ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην Ἀλιλάτ**». Actually we do not know the exact meaning of the word «πίστις» in Herodotus, but he probably referred to a official treaty.

<sup>274</sup> HDt. 3.97: «[...] οἶδε δὲ φόρον μὲν οὐδένα ἐτάχθησαν φέρειν, δῶρα δὲ ἀγίνεον [...] **Ἀράβιοι δὲ χίλια τάλαντα ἀγίνεον λιβανωτοῦ ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος**. ταῦτα μὲν οὗτοι δῶρα πάρεξ τοῦ φόρου βασιλεῖ ἐκόμιζον».

HDt. 3.107: «πρὸς δ' αὖ μεσαμβρίας ἐσχάτη Ἀραβίη τῶν οἰκομενῶν χωρέων ἐστὶ, **ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ λιβανωτός τε ἐστὶ μούνη χωρέων πασῶν φυόμενος καὶ σμύρνη καὶ κασίη καὶ κινάμμων καὶ λήδανον**. ταῦτα πάντα πλὴν τῆς σμύρνης δυσπετέως κτῶνται οἱ Ἀράβιοι. τὸν μὲν γε λιβανωτὸν συλλέγουσι τὴν στύρακα θυμιῶντες, τὴν ἐς Ἑλλήνας Φοίνικες ἐξάγουσι».

<sup>275</sup> DIOD. SIC. XV, 2, 3-4: «ὁ δ' Εὐαγόρασπρὸς μὲν τὸν Ἄκοριν τὸν Αἰγυπτίων βασιλέα, πολέμιον ὄντα Περσῶν, συμμαχίαν ἐποιήσατο καὶ δύναμιν ἀξίολογον παρ' αὐτοῦ προσελάβετο, παρ' Ἐκατόμνου δὲ τοῦ Καρίας δυνάστου, λάθρα συμπράπτοντος αὐτῷ, χρημάτων ἔλαβε πλῆθος εἰς διατροφήν ξενικῶν

particular the province of Idumaea was established before 363 BCE<sup>276</sup>. 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 *Anabasis*<sup>277</sup> and *Cyropaedia*<sup>278</sup> 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<sup>279</sup>.

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 period»<sup>280</sup>.

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<sup>281</sup>, but also for his desire to be worshipped as third god among Arabs<sup>282</sup>. Greek

---

δυνάμεων: ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς ἀλλοτρίως ἔχοντας πρὸς Πέρσας, τοὺς μὲν λαθραίως, τοὺς δὲ καὶ φανερώς ἐπεσπάσατο κοινωνήσοντας τοῦ Περσικοῦ πολέμου. [4] ἐκυρίευε δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὴν Κύπρον τῶν πόλεων σχεδὸν τι πασῶν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν Φοινίκην Τύρου καὶ τινῶν ἐτέρων. εἶχε δὲ τριήρεις μὲν ἐνενήκοντα, καὶ τούτων ὑπήρχον Τύρια μὲν εἴκοσι, Κύπρια δ' ἑβδομήκοντα, στρατιώτας δ' ἰδίου μὲν ἑξακισχιλίους, παρὰ δὲ τῶν συμμάχων πολλῶ τούτων πλείους. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις μισθοφόρους πολλοὺς ἐξενολόγει, ἔχων χρημάτων δαψίλειαν. **ἔπεμψε δ' αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἀράβων βασιλεὺς στρατιώτας οὐκ ὀλίγους** καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ ἐν ὑποψίαις ὄντες τῷ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεῖ.

<sup>276</sup> Aramaic ostraca helped us to indicate a *terminus ante quem*. See LEMAIRE 1999, 17-18.

<sup>277</sup> XEN. *An.* 1.5,1-2: «**ἐντεῦθεν ἐξελαύνει διὰ τῆς Ἀραβίας τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν ἐν δεξιᾷ** ἔχων σταθμοὺς ἐρήμους πέντε παρασάγγας τριάκοντα καὶ πέντε. ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ τόπῳ ἦν μὲν ἡ γῆ πεδῖον ἅπαν ὁμαλὲς ὡσπερ θάλαττα, ἀσπινθίου δὲ πλήρες: εἰ δὲ τι καὶ ἄλλο ἐνῆν ὕλης ἢ καλάμου, ἅπαντα ἦσαν εὐώδη ὡσπερ ἀρώματα: δένδρον δ' οὐδὲν ἐνῆν, θηρία δὲ παντοῖα, πλείστοι ὄνοι ἄγριοι, πολλοὶ δὲ στρουθοὶ αἱ μεγάλα: ἐνῆσαν δὲ καὶ ὠτίδες καὶ δορκάδες».

<sup>278</sup> XEN. *Cyr.* 7.4.16: «**προῖὼν δὲ τὴν ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνος κατεστρέψατο μὲν Φρύγας τοὺς ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ Φρυγίᾳ, κατεστρέψατο δὲ Καππαδόκας, ὑποχειρίους δ' ἐποίησατο Ἀραβίους.** ἐξώπλισε δὲ ἀπὸ πάντων τούτων Περσῶν μὲν ἵππείας οὐ μείον τετρακισμυρίους, πολλοὺς δὲ ἵππους τῶν αἰχμαλώτων καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς συμμάχοις διέδωκε: καὶ πρὸς Βαβυλῶνα ἀφίκετο παμπόλλους μὲν ἵππείας ἔχων, παμπόλλους δὲ τοξότας καὶ ἀκοντιστάς, σφενδονήτας δὲ ἀναριθμήτους».

<sup>279</sup> RETSÖ 1990 (*contra* DONNER 1986) has persuasively explained why we cannot question on accuracy of Xenophon's account.

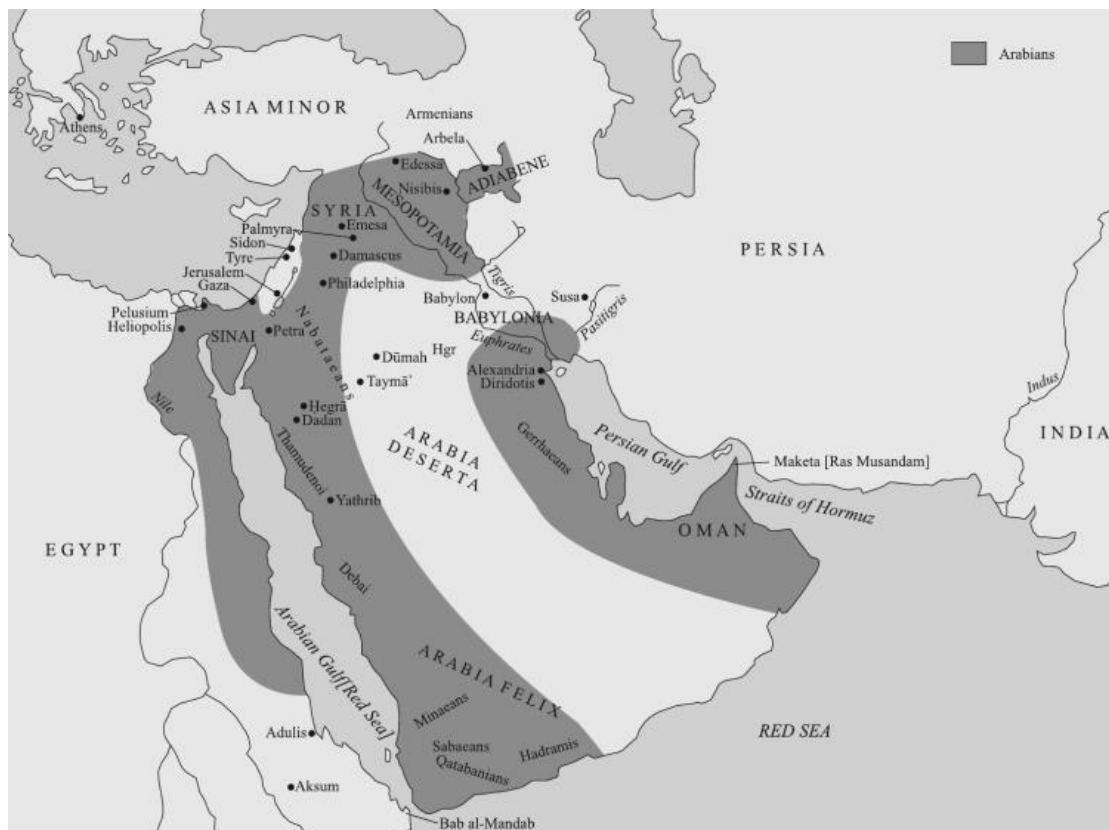
<sup>280</sup> GRAF 2003, 322.

<sup>281</sup> ARR., *Anab.* VII, 19, 5-6: «[...] τὴν τε γὰρ παραλίαν τὴν πρὸς τῷ κόλπῳ τῷ Περσικῷ κατοικίζειν ἐπενόει καὶ τὰς νήσους τὰς ταύτη. ἐδόκει γὰρ αὐτῷ οὐ μείον ἂν Φοινίκης εὐδαίμων ἢ χώρα αὕτη γενέσθαι. ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἢ παρασκευὴ ὡς ἐπὶ Ἄραβας τοὺς πολλοὺς, πρόφασιν μὲν, ὅτι μόνον τῶν ταύτη βαρβάρων οὔτε πρεσβείαν ἀπέστειλαν οὔτε τι ἄλλο ἐπιεικὲς ἢ ἐπὶ τιμῇ ἐπέπρακτο Ἄραβιν ἐς αὐτόν: τὸ δὲ ἀληθές, ὡς γέ μοι δοκεῖ, ἀπληστος ἦν τοῦ κτᾶσθαι τι αἰεὶ Ἀλέξανδρος».

<sup>282</sup> ARR., *Anab.* VII, 20, 1: «λόγος δὲ κατέχει ὅτι ἤκουεν Ἄραβας δύο μόνον τιμᾶν θεοῦς, τὸν Οὐρανὸν τε καὶ τὸν Διόνυσον, τὸν μὲν Οὐρανὸν αὐτόν τε ὀρώμενον καὶ τὰ ἄστρα ἐν οἷ ἔχοντα τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ τὸν ἥλιον, ἀφ' ὅτου μεγίστη καὶ φανοτάτη ὠφέλεια ἐς πάντα ἦκει τὰ ἀνθρώπεια, Διόνυσον δὲ κατὰ δόξαν τῆς ἐς Ἰνδοὺς στρατιάς. οὐκ οὐκ ἀπαξιοῦν καὶ αὐτόν τρίτον ἂν νομισθῆναι πρὸς Ἀράβων θεόν, οὐ φαυλότερα

historians have usually forgotten economic motivation, favouring a person-centred visual, related to Alexander's figure: according to Strabo<sup>283</sup>, 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<sup>284</sup>. According to Polybius, Antiochos III used them in the region of Amman<sup>285</sup>. Livy has recorded the presence of Arab archers riding dromedaries among Seleucid army in 189 BCE, during the battle of Magnesia<sup>286</sup>.



ἔργα Διονύσου ἀποδειξάμενον, εἴπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀράβων κρατήσας ἐπιτρέψειεν αὐτοῖς, καθάπερ Ἴνδοις, πολιτεύειν κατὰ τὰ σφῶν νόμιμα».

<sup>283</sup> STRABO, XVI, 1,11: «[...] σκήψασθαι μὲν οὖν αἰτίαν τοῦ πολέμου φησίν, ἐπειδὴ μόνοι τῶν ἀπάντων οὐ πρεσβεύσαιντο οἱ Ἄραβες ὡς αὐτόν, τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς ὀρεγόμενον πάντων εἶναι κύριον».

<sup>284</sup> RETSÓ 2003, 300-311.

<sup>285</sup> POLYB. V, 71,4: «μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πυνθανόμενος εἰς τὰ Παμβατάματα τῆς Ἀραβίας καὶ πλείους ἠθροισμένους τῶν πολεμίων πορθεῖν καὶ κατατρέχειν τὴν τῶν προσκεχωρηκότων Ἀράβων αὐτῷ χώραν, πάντ' ἐν ἐλάττονι θέμενος ὥρμησε καὶ προσεστρατοπέδευσε τοῖς βουνοῖς, ἐφ' ᾧ κείσθαι συμβαίνει τὴν πόλιν».

<sup>286</sup> LIVY XXXVII, 40,12: «ante hunc equitatum falcatae quadrigae et cameli. quos appellant dromadas. his insidebant Arabes sagittarii, gladios tenuis habentes longos quaterna cubita, ut ex tanta altitudine contingere hostem possent».

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

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 reinstated 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<sup>287</sup> and in Josephus' Antiquities<sup>288</sup> 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<sup>289</sup>, Alexander Balas asked refuge to Diocles, τῶν Ἀράβων 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<sup>290</sup>.

After the collapse of the Seleucid kingdom, three powers gradual emerged: the Hasmonaeans in Palestine, the Ituraeans in the Anti-Lebanon and Beqa'a valley and the Nabataeans in southern Transjordan. During the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>291</sup>: in particular, he said that Abraham left the land of Arabs to his son Ishmael<sup>292</sup>. This version was confirmed by another source: Artapanus, who was a Jewish writer who presumably lived during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE

---

<sup>287</sup> I Mac. XI, 17-18: «καὶ ἔφυγεν Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν τοῦ σκεπασθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος ὑψώθη. καὶ ἀφείλεν Ζαβδιηλ ὁ Ἄραψ τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τῷ Πτολεμαίῳ».

<sup>288</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 118: «τοῦ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν κεφαλὴν ὁ τῶν Ἀράβων δυνάστης ἀποτεμὼν Ζάβειλος ἀπέστειλεν Πτολεμαίῳ, ὃς τῇ πέμπτῃ τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνενεγκὼν ἐκ τῶν τραυμάτων καὶ φρονήσας ἡδιστον ἄκουσμα καὶ θέαμα τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τελευτὴν ἄμα καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀκούει καὶ θεᾶται».

<sup>289</sup> DIOD. SIC., XXXII, 27, 9d.-10.1: «Ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς μάχης μετὰ πεντακοσίων τὴν φυγὴν ἐποίησατο τῆς Ἀραβίας εἰς τὰς καλουμένας Ἄβας πρὸς Διοκλέα τὸν δυνάστην, πρὸς ὃν ἦν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ἀντίοχον προεκτεθειμένος ὄντα νήπιον. εἶθ' οἱ μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἡλιάδην καὶ Κάσιον ἡγεμόνες, οἱ συνήσαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, λάθρᾳ διεπρεσβεύσαντο περὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἀσφαλείας, ἐπαγγελλόμενοι δολοφονήσειν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον· συγχωρήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Δημητρίου περὶ ὧν ἤξιουν, οὐ μόνον προδοταί τοῦ βασιλέως ἀλλὰ καὶ φονεῖς ἐγενήθησαν. Ἀλέξανδρος μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀνῆρέθη»

<sup>290</sup> RETSÖ 2003, 316-317.

<sup>291</sup> RETSÖ 2003, 334.

<sup>292</sup> JOSEPH. AJ II, 213: «καὶ Ἄβραμον μὲν μόνον ἐκ τῆς Μεσσοποταμίας εἰς τὴν Χαναναίαν παραγενόμενον εὐδαιμονῆσαι τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτῷ πρὸς γονὴν ἀκάρπως ἐχούσης πρότερον ἔπειτα κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ βούλησιν ἀγαθῆς πρὸς τοῦτο γενομένης τεκνῶσαι παιδας καὶ καταλιπεῖν μὲν Ἰσμαῆλ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὴν Ἀράβων χώραν, τοῖς δ' ἐκ Κατούρας τὴν Τρωγλοδύτιν, Ἰσάκω δὲ τὴν Χαναναίαν».

in Alexandria of Egypt<sup>293</sup>, said that the Arabs were descendants of Ishmael, as reported by Eusebius<sup>294</sup>. 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<sup>rd</sup> century BCE<sup>295</sup>. 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<sup>nd</sup> century BCE onward<sup>296</sup>.

With the Romans' arrival, Arabs continued to play an important role in Syria: they were allied with Parthians against Crassus<sup>297</sup>. 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 Coele Syria and the southern part of Judaea<sup>298</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>293</sup> About Artapanus and his life, see BOMBELLI 1986, 42-48 and BARBU 2009.

<sup>294</sup> EUS. *Praep. Evan.* IX, 23,1: «Ἀρτάπανος δὲ φησιν ἐν τῷ *Περὶ Ἰουδαίων* τῷ Ἀβραάμ Ἰωσήφ ἀπόγονον γενέσθαι, υἱὸν δὲ Ἰακώβου. συνέσει δὲ καὶ φρονήσει παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους διενεγκόντα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπιβουλευθῆναι προἰδόμενον δὲ τὴν ἐπισύστασιν δεηθῆναι τῶν ἀστυγεϊτόνων Ἀράβων εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον αὐτόν διακομίσει, τοὺς δὲ τὸ ἐντυγχανόμενον ποιῆσαι, εἶναι γὰρ τοὺς τῶν Ἀράβων βασιλεῖς ἀπογόνους Ἰσραήλ, υἱοὺς τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, Ἰσαάκ δὲ ἀδελφοῦς». Ἰσραήλ should be emended in Ἰσμαήλ. See MRAS 1982, 516.

<sup>295</sup> It is likely that the identification was previous, although the documentation goes back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

<sup>296</sup> GRUEN 2011, 299-302.

<sup>297</sup> 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 ullum*».

<sup>298</sup> STRABO XVI, 3, 1: «**Ὑπέρεκται δὲ τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τῆς κοίλης Συρίας μέχρι Βαβυλωνίας καὶ τῆς τοῦ Εὐφράτου ποταμίας πρὸς νότον Ἀραβία πᾶσα χωρὶς τῶν ἐν τῇ Μεσοποταμίᾳ σκηνητῶν.** περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς Μεσοποταμίας καὶ τῶν νεμομένων αὐτὴν ἐθνῶν εἰρηται: τὰ δὲ πέραν τοῦ Εὐφράτου τὰ μὲν πρὸς ταῖς ἐκβολαῖς αὐτοῦ νέμονται Βαβυλώνιοι καὶ τὸ τῶν Χαλδαίων ἔθνος εἰρηται δὲ περὶ τούτων, τὰ δ' ἐξῆς τῆς Μεσοποταμίας μέχρι κοίλης Συρίας, τὸ μὲν πλησιάζον τῷ ποταμῷ καὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν σκηνηταὶ κατέχουσιν Ἄραβες, δυναστείας ἀποτετημένοι μικρὰς ἐν λυπροῖς χωρίοις διὰ τὰς ἀνυδρίας, γεωργοῦντες μὲν ἢ οὐδὲν ἢ μικρά, νομάς δὲ ἔχοντες παντοδαπῶν θρεμμάτων καὶ μάλιστα καμήλων: ὑπὲρ δὲ τούτων ἔρημος ἐστὶ πολλή: τὰ δὲ τούτων ἐπι νοτιώτερα ἔχουσιν οἱ τὴν εὐδαίμονα καλουμένην Ἀραβίαν οἰκοῦντες. ταύτης δὲ τὸ μὲν προσάρκτιον πλευρὸν ἢ λεχθεῖσά ἐστιν ἔρημος, τὸ δ' ἔωον ὁ Περσικὸς κόλπος, τὸ δὲ ἐσπέριον ὁ Ἀράβιος, τὸ δὲ νότιον ἢ μεγάλη θάλαττα ἢ ἕξω τῶν κόλπων ἀμφοῖν, ἦν ἅπασαν Ἐρυθρὰν καλοῦσιν».

## 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, Yeṭūr: 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<sup>299</sup>. 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 Yeṭūr, were from the northern part of Arabia<sup>300</sup>.

There is no conclusive scientific evidence that Ituraeans were definitely Yeṭūr's descendants: first of all, the phonetic resemblance between Yeṭūr and «Ἰτουραῖοι» is not enough for identifying them as the same social or political group. Then, in 1 *Chronicles* 5:19 the Septuagint transcribe the word Yeṭūr with the plural genitive «Ἰτουραίων», in 1 *Chronicles* 1:31 with «Ἰεττουρ». The mistake probably occurred because *Chronicles* was written under Ptolemaic rule in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, when Ituraeans were already settled in Transjordanian area and probably lived also in Galilee and southern Phoenicia.

According to Emil Schürer<sup>301</sup>, 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<sup>302</sup>: actually, this text includes peoples who probably did not exist during the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when David ruled the Judaean Kingdom. Eupolemos probably includes tribes he is familiar from the second century BCE<sup>303</sup>. It is noteworthy that there is no reference to Arabians, although it seems likely that Eupolemos considered all these groups as Arabs<sup>304</sup>.

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»<sup>305</sup>. The Greek

---

<sup>299</sup> GEN XXV, 15: «καὶ Χοδδαδ καὶ Θαϊμαν καὶ Ἰεττουρ καὶ Ναφες καὶ Κεδμα».

<sup>300</sup> I CHRON I, 31: «Ἰεττουρ Ναφες καὶ Κεδμα οὗτοί εἰσιν υἱοὶ Ἰσμαηλ». See BEER 1914-1916; DUSSAUD 1955, 173-9; SCHÜRER 1973, 561-2; SCHOTTRUFF 1982, 134-6; KNAUF 1998, 269-71; SARTRE 2001, 52-8; ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 167.

<sup>301</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, 561-2.

<sup>302</sup> FGtH 723 F 2: «στρατεύσαι δ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπὶ Ἰδουμαίους καὶ Ἀμμανίτας καὶ Μωαβίτας καὶ Ἰτουραίους καὶ Ναβαταίους καὶ Ναβδαίους».

<sup>303</sup> WACHOLDER 1974.

<sup>304</sup> MYERS 2010, 14.

<sup>305</sup> 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 Mennaues, who ruled over the Massyas region and the «mountainous country» of the Ituraeans<sup>306</sup>.

Strabo did not visit either Syria and Palestine during his travels, therefore all his data are of second-hand: for his 16<sup>th</sup> book of *Geography* he probably used mainly the writings of Posidonius, Eratosthenes and Artemidoros<sup>307</sup>. 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<sup>308</sup>. 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 «Ἰετουῖρος» among them<sup>309</sup>.

The first mention of a Ituraean «ἔθνος» is attested in *Antiquities* (XIII, 319), where Josephus wrote about the conquests achieved by the Hasmonaean king Aristobulus I<sup>310</sup>. The word «ἔθνος» 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 «ἔθνος», and in this sense even Ituraean people could be seen as a «ἔθνος»<sup>311</sup>. The territory conquered by Hasmonaean is not mentioned, but some scholars believe it was the northern part of Galilee<sup>312</sup>. 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<sup>313</sup>. 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<sup>314</sup>.

Like Strabo, even Flavius Josephus considered Ituraeans as notorious bandits<sup>315</sup>.

---

<sup>306</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,10: «οὐ πόρρω δ' οὐδ' Ἡλιοῦπολις καὶ Χαλκίς ἢ ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Μενναίου τῷ τὸν Μασσῦαν κατέχοντι καὶ τὴν Ἰτουραίων ὄρεινὴν».

<sup>307</sup> MACADAM 1986, 48; BIFFI 2002, 14-16.

<sup>308</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,18: «τὰ μὲν οὖν ὄρεινὰ ἔχουσι πάντα Ἰτουραῖοι τε καὶ Ἄραβες, κακοῦργοι πάντες». The use of the word κακοῦργοι has been highly studied because Strabo used the word ληστροικοί for defining the Arabian Scenitae. 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.

<sup>309</sup> JOSEPH. AJ I, 220-221. «Ἰετουῖρος» is very close to the name «Ἰατουρος», attested in Nabataean epigraphy in the form *ytwr*. See WUTHNOW 1930, 57.

<sup>310</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 319: «τὸ μέρος τοῦ τῶν Ἰτουραίων ἔθνους ᾠκειώσατο».

<sup>311</sup> ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 180; MYERS 2010, 25

<sup>312</sup> HORSLEY 1996, 26 is sure Galilee was ruled by Ituraeans, but there are no archaeological evidences for the Ituraean expansion. See below.

<sup>313</sup> See FREYNE 2000, 129 and MYERS 2010, 27 *contra* HORSLEY 1996.

<sup>314</sup> KASHER 1988, 81-83.

<sup>315</sup> STRABO XVI, 2, 18-20: «τὰ μὲν οὖν ὄρεινὰ ἔχουσι πάντα Ἰτουραῖοι τε καὶ Ἄραβες, κακοῦργοι πάντες [...] τὸ μέντοι πλέον τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐδαίμονος Ἀραβίας ἐμπόρους λεηλατοῦσιν οἱ βάρβαροι: ἦπτον δὲ συμβαίνει καταλυθέντων νυνὶ τῶν περὶ Ζηνόδωρον 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<sup>316</sup>.

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<sup>317</sup>. 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<sup>318</sup>.

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<sup>319</sup>.

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

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<sup>st</sup> century BCE and early 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>321</sup>, albeit it cannot be considered a clear sign of Ituraean presence. According to Charles Clermont-Ganneau, the ethnic «Ἰατουραίος» appeared on two inscriptions found in Hauran and related to the erection of a workshop thanks to the

---

JOSEPH. *BJI*, 5,3 (115): «Ἀλεξάνδρα δὲ ἐκπέμψασα ἐπὶ Δαμασκὸν στρατιάν, πρόφασις δ' ἦν Πτολεμαῖος αἰεθλίβων τὴν πόλιν, ταύτην μὲν ὑπεδέξατο μηθὲν ἀξιόλογον ἐργασασμένην.»;

*AJ* XV, 344: «Ζηνόδωρός τις ἐμεμίσθωτο τὸν οἶκον τὸν Λυσανίου. τούτῳ τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὰς προσόδους οὐκ ἤρκει, τὰ ληστήρια δὲ ἔχων ἐν τῷ Τράχωνι πλείω τὴν πρόσσοδον ἔφερον: οἰκοῦσι γὰρ ἄνδρες ἐξ ἀπονοίας ζῶντες τοὺς τόπους, οἱ τὰ Δαμασκηῶν ἐλήζοντο, καὶ Ζηνόδωρος οὐτ' εἶργεν αὐτὸς τε τῶν ὠφελειῶν ἐκοινώνει».

<sup>316</sup> *Nat. Hist.* V,81: «*Ituraeorum 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.

<sup>317</sup> *TAC. Ann.*, XII, 23: «*Ituraei que et Iudaei defunctis regibus Sohaemo atque Agrippa provinciae Syriae additi*».

<sup>318</sup> *APP. B Civ.*, V,1,7: «Συρίαν τὴν Κοίλην καὶ Παλαιστίνην καὶ τὴν Ἰτουραϊαν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα γένη Σύρων».

<sup>319</sup> *DIO CASS.*, LIX, 12,2: «ἐν δὲ τούτῳ Σοαίμῳ μὲν τὴν τῶν Ἰτουραίων τῶν Ἀράβων, Κότυϊ δὲ τὴν τε Ἀρμενίαν τὴν μικροτέραν καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῆς Ἀραβίας πινά, τῷ τε Ῥυμητάλκῃ τὰ τοῦ Κότυος καὶ Πολέμωνι τῷ τοῦ Πολέμωνος υἱεὶ τὴν πατρῶαν ἀρχὴν, ψηφισαμένης δὴ τῆς βουλῆς, ἐχαρίσατο».

<sup>320</sup> *VIB. SEQ. Gentes* 335: «*Ityraei, Syri, usu sagittae periti*».

<sup>321</sup> *ALIQOT* 1999-2003, 185.

generosity of Alexandros son of Maximos<sup>322</sup>: actually it seems more likely that, as claimed by Julien Aliquot, «Ἰατουραίος» represented, like the most common «Ἰατουρος», just a Semitic personal name, known in Nabataean under the form «ytwr»<sup>323</sup>.

Ituraean soldiers are principally known for their epitaphs since the first part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>324</sup>. During the following centuries, the presence of Ituraeans is best attested throughout the empire, because of the presence of at least five *cohortes Ituraeorum*<sup>325</sup>: 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>326</sup>. 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<sup>327</sup>.

The presence of Ituraeans in Lebanon is understood from the main chapter of Strabo<sup>328</sup>, but the period during which Ituraeans came to Beqa'a 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 Maarib Dam provoked a mass migration from Arabia to the north<sup>329</sup>. As shown in the previous paragraph, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>330</sup>.

---

<sup>322</sup> CLERMONT-GANNEAU 1901, 118-119, ns. 42-43: «Τὸ ἐργαστήρ(ιον) ἐκ φιλοτειμίας Ἀλεξάνδρου Μαξιμίου Βουλευτοῦ Ἰατουραίου Α[.ρ]ανουῦ» and «[Ἐκ φιλοτειμίας Α]λεξάνδρου Παύ[δου Βου]λλευτοῦ Ἰατουρα[ίου Α.]ραηνοῦ τὸ ἐργασ[τήριον]».

<sup>323</sup> ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 193.

<sup>324</sup> DABROWA 1986, 226-227; ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 183; MYERS 2010, 115-117.

<sup>325</sup> DABROWA 1986, 230. *contra* SCHOTTROF (1982, 150-152), who instead remembered seven *cohortes Ituraeorum*.

<sup>326</sup> WRIGHT 2013, 57, n. 8.

<sup>327</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIX, 275: «καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ὡς ὀφειλόμενα τῇ οἰκειότητι τοῦ γένους ἀπεδίδου: Ἄβιλαν δὲ τὴν Λυσανίου καὶ ὀπόσα ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ ὄρει ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ προσετίθει, ὄρκια τε αὐτῷ τέμνεται πρὸς τὸν Ἀγρίππαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς μέσης ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων πόλει».

<sup>328</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,18. See note 306.

<sup>329</sup> MA'UZ 2011, 14

<sup>330</sup> APP. *B civ.*, V,1,7. See note 318.

As already seen, Strabo claimed that at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>331</sup>. 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<sup>332</sup>. However, the above-mentioned strongholds were never identified on the ground because they left no archaeological traces<sup>333</sup>.

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<sup>334</sup>. 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.<sup>335</sup> In *Antiquities* we read about the Hasmonaean annexation of a part of Ituraean territory, but we do not know which territory was<sup>336</sup>.

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.<sup>337</sup> 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*<sup>338</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>339</sup>.

---

<sup>331</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,10. See note 308.

<sup>332</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,18: «[...] τὰ μὲν οὖν ὄρεινὰ ἔχουσι πάντα Ἰτουραῖοί τε καὶ Ἄραβες, κακοῦργοι πάντες, οἱ δ' ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις γεωργοί: κακούμενοι δ' ὑπ' ἐκείνων ἄλλοτε ἄλλης βοηθείας δεόνται. ὄρημητρίοις δ' ἐρυμνοῖς χρώνται, καθάπερ οἱ τὸν Λίβανον ἔχοντες ἄνω μὲν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σιννᾶν καὶ Βορραμὰ καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἔχουσι τείχη, κάτω δὲ Βότρυν καὶ Γίγαρτον καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάττης σπήλαια καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ Θεοῦ προσώπῳ φρούριον ἐπιτεθέν, ἃ κατέσπασε Πομπήϊος [...]».

<sup>333</sup> ΜΑ'ΟΖ 2011, 25

<sup>334</sup> STRABO XVI,2,34: «τὰ πολλὰ δ' ὡς ἕκαστα ἐστὶν ὑπὸ φύλων οἰκούμενα μικτῶν ἐκ τε Αἰγυπτίων ἐθνῶν καὶ Ἀραβίων καὶ Φοινίκων».

<sup>335</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,1 (459): «τὰ δ' ὑποπρήσαντες ἐχώρουν ἐπὶ Κάδασα τὴν Τυρίων».

<sup>336</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 318-319. See note 167.

<sup>337</sup> LUKE III, 1-2: «καὶ τετραρχοῦντος τῆς Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ τετραρχοῦντος τῆς Ἰτουραίας καὶ Τραχωνίδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσανίου τῆς Ἀβειληνῆς τετραρχοῦντος».

<sup>338</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 6,3 (95): «Βατανέα δὲ καὶ Τράχων Αὐρανίτις τε καὶ μέρη τινὰ τοῦ Ζήνωνος οἴκου τὰ περὶ ἰνάνω, πρόσδοον ἔχοντα ταλάντων ἑκατόν, ὑπὸ Φιλίππῳ τέτακτο».

<sup>339</sup> EUS., *Onom.* 110, 27-28: «Ἰτουραία ἢ καὶ Τραχωνίτις χώρα, ἧς ἐτετράρχει Φίλιππος, ὡς ἐν Εὐαγγελίοις; 166, 1-2: «Τραχωνίτις χώρα ἢ καὶ Ἰτουραία, ἧς ἐτετράρχει Φίλιππος κατὰ τὸν εὐαγγελιστὴν Λουκᾶν».

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<sup>340</sup>.

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<sup>341</sup>. 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<sup>342</sup>. In this way they tried to legitimise their regime.

Several other 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>343</sup>, 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<sup>344</sup>. 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<sup>345</sup>.

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<sup>346</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>340</sup> WRIGHT 2013, 56.

<sup>341</sup> According to SEYRIG (1950, 33), “L” preceding the date is a characteristically Ptolemaic sign, adopted also on inscriptions.

<sup>342</sup> SCHONTROFF 1982, 138.

<sup>343</sup> WRIGHT 2013, 59-60.

<sup>344</sup> HERMAN 2006, 53.

<sup>345</sup> ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 214

<sup>346</sup> 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<sup>347</sup>.

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<sup>348</sup>. 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 «κακοῦργοι»<sup>349</sup>.

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 opposite 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

---

<sup>347</sup> According to Flavius Josephus, one member of the Ituraean aristocracy, named Sohaemus, took service as a general with Herod I of Judaea: JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 185: «Μαριάμμην δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖκα, δυνατὸν γὰρ οὐκ ἦν ἐν διαφορᾷ τῇ πρὸς τὴν ἀδελφὴν καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν ἐκείνου δίαιταν τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχειν, ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείῳ σὺν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῇ μητρὶ κατεστήσατο ἰώσηπον τὸν ταμιαῖον καὶ τὸν Ἰτουραῖον Σόαιμον ἐπ’ αὐτῶν καταλιπὼν, πιστοτάτους μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γενομένους αὐτῷ, τότε δὲ προφάσει τιμῆς φρουρεῖν 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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

<sup>348</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 352: «ὁ γὰρ Ζηνόδωρος ἀπογινώσκων ἤδη τῶν καθ’ αὐτὸν ἔφθη τῆς ἐπαρχίας μέρος τι τὴν Αὐρανίτιν αὐτοῖς ἀποδόσθαι ταλάντων πενήτηκοντα. ταύτης ἐμπεριεχομένης τῇ δωρεᾷ Καίσαρος ὡς μὴ δικαίως ἀφαιρούμενοι διημφισβήτουν, πολλάκις μὲν ταῖς καταδρομαῖς καὶ τῷ βιάζεσθαι θέλειν, ἄλλοτε δὲ καὶ πρὸς δικαιολογίαν ἰόντες».

<sup>349</sup> 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<sup>350</sup>. 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 Hîra, in the northern Beqa'a valley, a fortified Ituraean camp<sup>351</sup>. 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<sup>352</sup>: according to Knauf, however, the architecture (a camp), as well as the name of the place (the Arabic form of Aramaic *hē(')rtā*, 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<sup>353</sup>.

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<sup>354</sup>. 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<sup>355</sup> and finds datable to the third century BCE were found during his excavations. However, none of the evidence shown derives from clear stratigraphic contexts<sup>356</sup> and we can only affirm that the construction of stable constructions on Mount Hermon begun in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE: therefore, the mountain was almost uninhabited during Hellenistic times, with the exception of occasional shepherds and hunters<sup>357</sup>, 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<sup>358</sup>, 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»<sup>359</sup>, 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

---

<sup>350</sup> MYERS 2010, 2.

<sup>351</sup> KNAUF 1983; 1998, 276.

<sup>352</sup> KUSCHKE, MITTMANN & MÜLLER 1976, 32-34.

<sup>353</sup> WILD 1973, 162; ALIQUOT 1999-2003, 201-202.

<sup>354</sup> DAR 1993.

<sup>355</sup> ARRIAN, *Anab.* II, 20, 4: «ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἀναλαβῶν τῶν τε ἰππέων ἴλας ἔστιν ἃς καὶ τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς καὶ τοὺς Ἀγριανὰς τε καὶ τοὺς τοξότας ἐπ' Ἀραβίας στέλλεται εἰς τὸν Ἀντιλίβανον καλούμενον τὸ ὄρος».

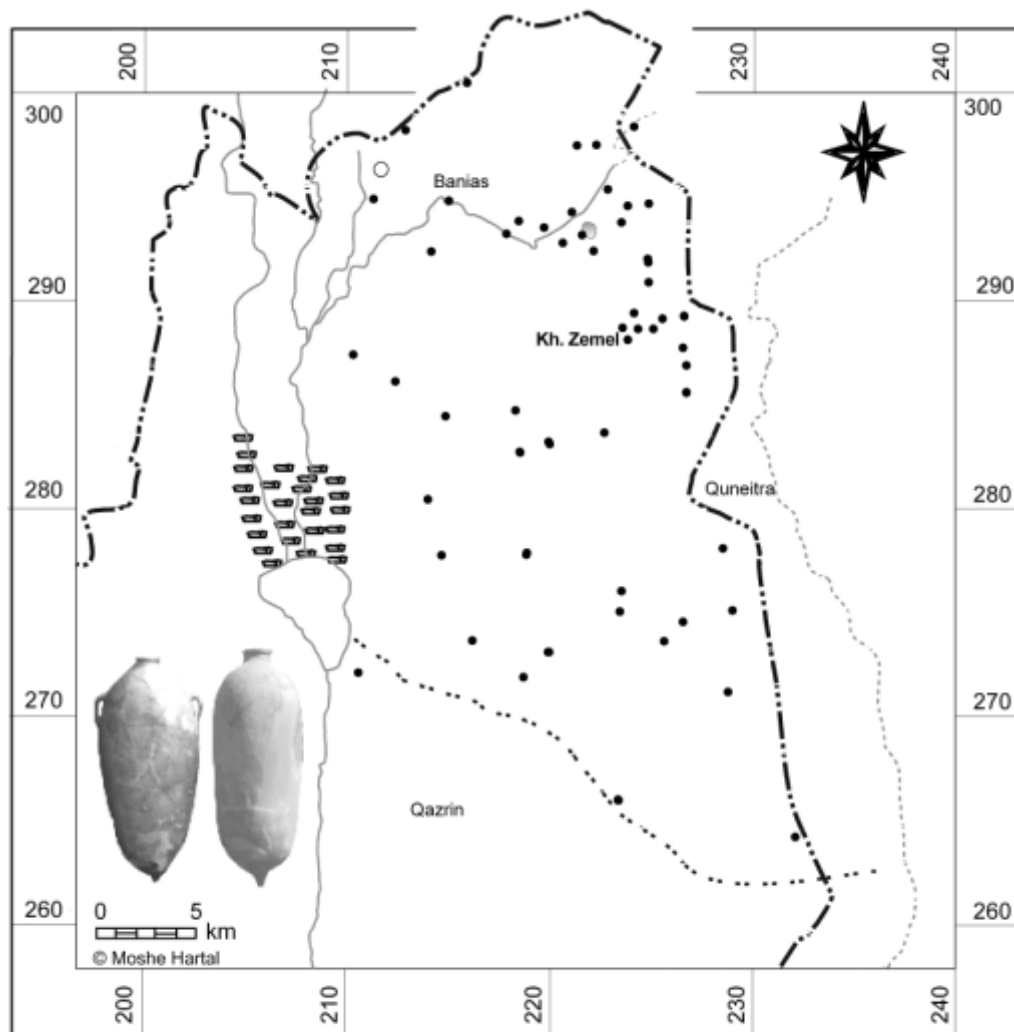
<sup>356</sup> MA'OZ 1997, 280.

<sup>357</sup> MA'OZ 1997, 281.

<sup>358</sup> *I Mac.* XII, 31: «καὶ ἐξέκλινεν Ἰωναθαν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἄραβας τοὺς καλουμένους Ζαβαδαίους καὶ ἐπάταξεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ σκῦλα αὐτῶν».

<sup>359</sup> Until today, Golan Ware has been discovered only in northern part of Golan.

considerable admixture of grits, maybe used to store water<sup>360</sup>. The form is characterised by a narrow mouth, short neck and bag-shaped body<sup>361</sup>. 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<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>362</sup>. 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<sup>363</sup>. The designation «Golan Ware» was given by Clair Epstein and Shemariah Gutman, because it could not be assigned to any known pottery group<sup>364</sup>.



• Hellenistic and Early Roman Golan Ware

••••• The border between the provinces      -.-.- International border

<sup>360</sup> NEAEHL 2, 535; Ma'oz 2011, 45.

<sup>361</sup> HARTAL 2008, 213.

<sup>362</sup> HARTAL 2008, 214.

<sup>363</sup> YADIN *et al.* 1958, Pl. CCLVII.

<sup>364</sup> EPSTEIN and GUTMAN 1972, Pls. 5-6.

FIG. 5 Distribution map of Golan Ware. From HARTAL 2008, 213, map 2.

In 1971 Dan Urman conducted a rescue excavation at the site of Khirbet Zamal, in the northern Golan<sup>365</sup>. During the excavations three large pithoi, all of the Golan Ware type, were found in a rectangular room<sup>366</sup>. On some sherds there were Greek words, not easy to decipher. On the basis of coin finds, Urman dated the structure from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and believed that these pithoi were probably the work of Ituraean tribes who lived in the Golan<sup>367</sup>.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE through to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE<sup>368</sup>.

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<sup>369</sup>. 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<sup>370</sup>.

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<sup>371</sup>. 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<sup>372</sup>. 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<sup>373</sup>.

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.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, the distribution of "Ituraean" pithoi in Roman-Byzantine period goes beyond the supposed Ituraean territory, extending southward to the central and southern Golan<sup>375</sup>.

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

---

<sup>365</sup> Modern Zemel. See MYERS 2010, 48.

<sup>366</sup> URMAN 1985,

<sup>367</sup> *EAEHL* II, 464.

<sup>368</sup> GUTMAN 1973, 204-205: references from KASHER 1988, 81-83.

<sup>369</sup> References from URMAN 1985, 163, nn. 79-80.

<sup>370</sup> URMAN 1985, 163.

<sup>371</sup> HARTAL 1987, 270.

<sup>372</sup> HARTAL 1987, 271.

<sup>373</sup> BIRAN 1994, 224.

<sup>374</sup> MYERS 2010, 50.

<sup>375</sup> *NEAEHL* 2, 535.



were Ituraeans<sup>376</sup>. On the other hand, we know nothing about the pottery made in Beqa'a valley, where according to ancient sources Ituraean people lived<sup>377</sup>. The results of surveys and field works in northern Lebanon are misleading: at Tell Arqa no hints of "Ituraean" pottery have been found<sup>378</sup>. 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<sup>379</sup>. 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<sup>380</sup> 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<sup>381</sup>.

### 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.

---

<sup>376</sup> MA'OZ 2011, 27.

<sup>377</sup> HARTAL (2008, 214) claimed that «these pithoi were also scattered in the Lebanon Beqa': however, from there almost none were published».

<sup>378</sup> THALMANN 1978, 60-61, f. 44.

<sup>379</sup> 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.

<sup>380</sup> MYERS 2010, 52.

<sup>381</sup> 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<sup>382</sup>.

Before the 4<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>383</sup>.

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<sup>384</sup> or not, but there are many differences between them regarding to all the aspects of life<sup>385</sup>.

#### 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<sup>386</sup> probably for his work utilised even the report of Hieronymus of Cardia, who participated in the campaign of Athenaios, a general of Antigonos

---

<sup>382</sup> WENNING 2007, 25.

<sup>383</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 14; GRAF 1990, 45

<sup>384</sup> KNAUF 1985, 106-108.

<sup>385</sup> WENNING 2007, 26.

<sup>386</sup> DIOD. SIC. II, 48, 1-6: «τούτων δ' ἡμῖν διευκρινημένων μεταβιβάσομεν τὸν λόγον ἐπὶ τὰ ἕτερα μέρη τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ μὴ τετευχότα τῆς ἀναγραφῆς, καὶ μάλιστα τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἀραβίαν. αὕτη γὰρ κεῖται μὲν μετὰ Συρίας καὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου, πολλοῖς δὲ καὶ παντοδαποῖς ἔθνεσι διείληπται. **τὰ μὲν οὖν πρὸς τὴν ἕω μέρη κατοικοῦσιν Ἄραβες οὓς ὀνομάζουσι Ναβαταίους**, νεμόμενοι χώραν τὴν μὲν ἔρημον, τὴν δὲ ἄνυδρον, ὀλίγην δὲ καρποφόρον. **ἔχουσι δὲ βίον ληστρικόν, καὶ πολλὴν τῆς ὁμόρου χώρας κατατρέχοντες ληστεύουσιν**, ὄντες δὺσμαχοὶ κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους. κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἄνυδρον χώραν λεγομένην κατεσκευακότες εὐκαιρα φρέατα, καὶ ταῦτα πεπιοηκότες τοῖς ἀλλοεθνεῖσι ἄγνωστα, συμφεύγουσιν εἰς τὴν χώραν ταύτην ἀκινδύνως. αὐτοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰδότες τὰ κατακεκρυμμένα τῶν ὑδάτων, καὶ ταῦτ' ἀνοίγοντες, χρῶνται δαψιλῆσι ποτοῖς: οἱ δὲ τούτους ἐπιδιώκοντες ἀλλοεθνεῖς σπανίζοντες τῆς ὑδρείας διὰ τὴν ἄγνωσιν τῶν φρεάτων, οἱ μὲν ἀπόλλυνται διὰ τὴν σπάνιν τῶν ὑδάτων, οἱ δὲ πολλὰ κακοπαθήσαντες μόγις εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν σώζονται. **διόπερ οἱ ταύτην τὴν χώραν κατοικοῦντες Ἄραβες, ὄντες δυσκαταπολέμητοι, διατελοῦσιν ἀδοῦλωτοι**, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἐπηλυὸν μὲν ἡγεμόνα τὸ παράπαν οὐ προσδέχονται, διατελοῦσι δὲ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν διαφυλάττοντες ἀσάλευτον. διόπερ οὐτ' Ἀσσύριοι τὸ παλαιὸν οὐθ' οἱ Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν, ἔτι δὲ Μακεδόνων βασιλεῖς ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτοὺς καταδουλώσασθαι, πολλὰς μὲν καὶ μεγάλας δυνάμεις ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἀγαγόντες, οὐδέποτε δὲ τὰς ἐπιβολὰς συντελέσαντες. ἔστι δ' ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ναβαταίων καὶ πέτρα καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὄχυρά, μίαν ἀνάβασιν ἔχουσα, δι' ἧς κατ' ὀλίγους ἀναβαίνοντες

Monophthalmos 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<sup>387</sup>, 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<sup>388</sup>. 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<sup>389</sup>.

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» Aretas in Petra<sup>390</sup>. The relationship between Nabataeans and Judeans had to be good: the First Book of

---

ἀποτίθενται τὰς ἀποσκευάς: λίμνη τε μεγάλη φέρουσα πολλὴν ἄσφαλτον, ἐξ ἧς λαμβάνουσιν οὐκ ὀλίγας προσόδους...».

<sup>387</sup> Diod. Sic. XIX, 94, 1: «Ἀντίγονος δ' ἀκινδύνως ἀνακτησάμενος τὴν τε Συρίαν πᾶσαν καὶ Φοινίκην ἐπεβάλετο στρατεύειν ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν τῶν Ἀράβων τῶν καλουμένων Ναβαταίων. κρίνας γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος τοῦτο τῶν ἑαυτοῦ πραγμάτων ἀλλότριον εἶναι, προεχειρίσατο τῶν αὐτοῦ φίλων Ἀθηναίων, δούς δ' αὐτῶ πεζοὺς μὲν εὐζώνους τετρακισχιλίους, ἵππεις δὲ τοὺς ἐπιτηδεῖους εἰς δρόμον ἑξακοσίου συνέταξεν ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖς βαρβάροις ἄφνω καὶ τὴν λείαν πᾶσαν ἀποτεμέσθαι».

<sup>388</sup> Diod. Sic. XIX, 94, 4-5: «χρῶνται δὲ τῷ νόμῳ τούτῳ διαλαμβάνοντες τοὺς ταῦτα κτωμένους ἀναγκασθήσασθαι ῥαδίως ὑπὸ τῶν δυνατῶν ἔνεκα τῆς τούτων χρείας ποιεῖν τὸ προστασώμενον. τρέφουσι δ' αὐτῶν οἱ μὲν καμήλους, οἱ δὲ πρόβατα, τὴν ἔρημον ἐπιπέμοντες. οὐκ ὀλίγων δ' ὄντων Ἀραβικῶν ἔθνων τῶν τὴν ἔρημον ἐπιπεμόντων οὗτοι πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων προέχουσι ταῖς εὐπορίαις, τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντες οὐ πολὺ πλείους τῶν μυρίων: εἰώθασιν γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι κατάγειν ἐπὶ θάλασσαν λιβανωτὸν τε καὶ σμύρναν καὶ τὰ πολυτελέστατα τῶν ἀρωμάτων, διαδεχόμενοι παρὰ τῶν κομιζόντων ἐκ τῆς Εὐδαίμονος καλουμένης Ἀραβίας».

<sup>389</sup> Diod. Sic. XIX, 95, 1: «τὰ μὲν οὖν νόμιμα τῶν Ἀράβων τοιαῦτ' εἶναι συμβέβηκεν. ὑπογύου δ' αὐτοῖς οὕσης πανηγύρεως, εἰς ἣν εἰώθασιν οἱ περιόικοι καταντᾶν οἱ μὲν ἀποδωσόμενοι τῶν φορτίων, οἱ δ' ἀγοράσοντες τι τῶν αὐτοῖς χρησίμων, εἰς ταύτην ἐπορεύθησαν, ἀπολιπόντες ἐπὶ τινος πέτρας τὰς κτήσεις καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους».

<sup>390</sup> Albeit Aretas is just called Arabian tyrant, we know that then it was a dynastic name for Nabataean kings. Scholars have traditionally labelled this ruler Aretas I, placing him at the beginning of the Nabataean king list. II *Mac.* V, 5-8: «γενομένης δὲ λαλιᾶς ψευδοῦς ὡς μετῆλλαχότος Ἀντιόχου τὸν βίον παραλαβῶν ὁ ἴασων οὐκ ἐλάττους τῶν χιλίων αἰφνιδίως ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν συνετελέσατο ἐπίθεσιν τῶν δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ τείχει συνασθέντων καὶ τέλος ἤδη καταλαμβανομένης τῆς πόλεως ὁ Μενέλαος εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἐφυγάδευσεν ὁ δὲ ἴασων ἐποίητο σφαγὰς τῶν πολιτῶν τῶν ἰδίων ἀφειδῶς οὐ συννοῶν τὴν εἰς τοὺς συγγενεῖς εὐημερίαν δυσημερίαν εἶναι τὴν μεγίστην δοκῶν δὲ πολεμίων καὶ οὐχ ὁμοεθνῶν τρόπαια καταβάλλεσθαι τῆς μὲν ἀρχῆς οὐκ ἐκράτησεν τὸ δὲ τέλος τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς αἰσχύνην λαβῶν φυγὰς πάλιν εἰς τὴν Ἀμμανίτιν ἀπῆλθεν πέρας οὖν κακῆς καταστροφῆς ἔτυχεν ἐγκληθεὶς πρὸς Ἀρέταν τὸν τῶν Ἀράβων τύραννον πόλιν ἐκ πόλεως φεύγων διωκόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων συγούμενος ὡς τῶν νόμων ἀποστάτης καὶ βδελυσσόμενος ὡς πατρίδος καὶ πολιτῶν δῆμιος εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐξεβράσθη».

Maccabees<sup>391</sup> and Flavius Josephus<sup>392</sup> 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 Hasmonaeans and Nabataeans was preserved even after 100 BCE, when Alexander Jannaeus attacked the free port city of Gaza, that asked help from the Nabataeans<sup>393</sup>. Many scholars have seen in this episode the turning point from friendly to hostile relations between Jews and Nabataeans<sup>394</sup>. However, that Aretas II was recalcitrant to help Gazans, would suggest that Hasmonaean conquest of the city did not influence 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 Lathyrus, king of Egypt<sup>395</sup>. 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<sup>396</sup>. Bosra was probably the most important settlement of the area already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE: it was fortified before 163 BCE, when Judah sacked and burned it<sup>397</sup>.

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<sup>398</sup>. Furthermore, their cities had no defensive walls, the kings had no an absolute power, but

---

<sup>391</sup> I *Mac.* V, 24-25: «καὶ Ἰουδᾶς ὁ Μακκαβαῖος καὶ Ἰωνᾶθαν ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ διέβησαν τὸν Ἰορδάνην καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν ὁδὸν τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ συνήνητησαν τοῖς Ναβαταίοις καὶ ἀπήνητησαν αὐτοῖς εἰρηνικῶς καὶ διηγῆσαντο αὐτοῖς πάντα τὰ συμβάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ Γαλααδίτιδι»

<sup>392</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XII, 335: «Ἰούδας δὲ ὁ Μακαβαῖος καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ Ἰωνάθης διαβάντες τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν καὶ ὁδὸν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τριῶν ἀνύσαντες ἡμερῶν τοῖς Ναβαταίοις εἰρηνικῶς ὑπαντῶσιν περὶ τυγχάνουσιν».

<sup>393</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 360: «τῶν δὲ Γαζαίων ἀντεχόντων καὶ μήτε ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνδεΐας μήτε ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἀναιρουμένων ἐνδιδόντων, πᾶν γὰρ ὅτι οὖν ὑπέμενον παθεῖν ἢ ὑπὸ τῷ πολεμῶ γενέσθαι, προσεπήγειρεν δ' αὐτῶν τὴν προθυμίαν καὶ Ἀρέτας ὁ Ἀράβων βασιλεὺς ἐπίδοξος ὧν ἤξειν αὐτοῖς σύμμαχος».

<sup>394</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 23; ROCHE 1996, 74; HACKL, JENNI and SCHNEIDER 2003, 469-470.

<sup>395</sup> PEARSON 2011, 18.

<sup>396</sup> PETERS 1977, 264. I *Mac.* 26: «καὶ ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν συνειλημμένοι εἰσὶν εἰς Βοσορρα καὶ Βοσορ ἐν Ἀλεμοῖς Χασφῳ Μακεδ καὶ Καρναῖν πᾶσαι αἱ πόλεις αὗται ὄχυραι καὶ μεγάλαι».

<sup>397</sup> I *Mac.* 28: «καὶ ἀπέστρεψεν Ἰουδᾶς καὶ ἡ παρεμβολὴ αὐτοῦ ὁδὸν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον Βοσορρα ἄφνω καὶ κατελάβετο τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἀπέκτεινε πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν ἐν στόματι ῥομφαίας καὶ ἔλαβεν πάντα τὰ σκῦλα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐνέπρησεν αὐτὴν πυρὶ».

<sup>398</sup> STRABO XVI, 4, 21: «πρῶτοι δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς Συρίας Ναβαταῖοι καὶ Σαβαῖοι τὴν εὐδαίμονα Ἀραβίαν νέμονται, καὶ πολλάκις κατέτρεχον αὐτῆς πρὶν ἢ Ῥωμαίων γενέσθαι: νῦν δὲ κάκεινοι Ῥωμαίοις εἰσὶν ὑπήκοοι καὶ Σύροι. μητρόπολις δὲ τῶν Ναβαταίων ἐστὶν ἡ Πέτρα καλουμένη... γενόμενος γοῦν παρὰ τοῖς Πετραίοις **Ἀθηνόδωρος, ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος καὶ ἡμῖν ἐταῖρος, διηγείτο θαυμάζων: εὐρεῖν γὰρ ἐπιδημοῦντας ἔφη πολλοὺς μὲν Ῥωμαίων πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ξένων:** τοὺς μὲν οὖν ξένους ὄραν κρινομένους πολλάκις καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους, τῶν δ' ἐπιχωρίων οὐδένας ἀλλήλοις ἐγκαλοῦντας, ἀλλὰ τὴν πᾶσαν εἰρήνην ἄγοντας πρὸς ἑαυτοῦς».

their houses were luxurious because built with marble, the territory administered by Nabataeans was good for agriculture and livestock<sup>399</sup>. Strabo's principal source was his friend Athenodorus of Tarsus, a Stoic who was Augustus' teacher of philosophy and visited Petra, their capital city<sup>400</sup>. However, Athenodorus, being a western foreigner, probably did not understand several tribal aspects of the Nabataean society<sup>401</sup>. In his book, Strabo seemed to combine his various sources, influenced by old and contemporaneous 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<sup>402</sup>.

The Nabataeans, then, probably became sedentary during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>403</sup>.

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<sup>404</sup>. The passage reflects a more complicated situation: together with

---

<sup>399</sup> STRABO XVI, 4, 26: «σώφρονες δ' εἰσὶν οἱ Ναβαταῖοι καὶ κτητικοί, ὥστε καὶ δημοσίᾳ τῷ μὲν μειώσαντι τὴν οὐσίαν ζημία κείται, τῷ δ' αὐξήσαντι τιμαί. ὀλιγόδουλοι δ' ὄντες ὑπὸ τῶν συγγενῶν διακονοῦνται τὸ πλέον ἢ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἢ αὐτοδιάκονοι, ὥστε καὶ μέχρι τῶν βασιλέων διατείνειν τὸ ἔθος. συσσίτια δὲ ποιοῦνται κατὰ τρισκαίδεκα ἀνθρώπους, μουσουργοὶ δὲ δύο τῷ συμποσίῳ ἐκάστω. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐν οἴκῳ μεγάλῳ πολλὰ συνέχει συμπόσια: πίνει δ' οὐδεὶς πλέον τῶν ἑνδεκα ποτηρίων ἄλλῳ καὶ ἄλλῳ χρυσῷ ἐκπώματι. οὕτω δ' ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ δημοτικὸς ὥστε πρὸς τῷ αὐτοδιακόνῳ καὶ ποτ' ἀντιδιάκονον τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ αὐτὸν γίνεσθαι: πολλὰκις δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ δήμῳ διδῶσιν εὐθύνας, ἔσθ' ὅτε καὶ ἐξετάζεται τὰ περὶ τὸν βίον: οἰκήσεις δὲ διὰ λίθου πολυτελεῖς, αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἀτειχίστοι δι' εἰρήνην: **εὐκαρπος ἢ πολλὴ πλὴν ἐλαίου, χρώνται δὲ σησαμίνῳ. πρόβατα λευκότεριχα, βόες μεγάλοι, ἵππων ἄφορος ἢ χώρα:** κάμηλοι δὲ τὴν ὑπουργίαν ἀντ' ἐκείνων παρέχονται [...]

<sup>400</sup> On the debits to Athenodorus and his vision of Nabataean customs, see WRIGHT 1969; DUECK 2000, 10-11; WENNING 2007, 34-36.

<sup>401</sup> WENNING 2007, 34.

<sup>402</sup> SAFRAI 2006, 257-258 on the problem of the two different descriptions of Nabataea in Strabo.

<sup>403</sup> II *Mac.* XII, 10-12: «ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἀποσπάσαντες σταδίους ἑννέα ποιουμένων τὴν πορείαν ἐπὶ τὸν Τιμόθεον προσέβαλον Ἄραβες αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐλάττους τῶν πεντακισχιλίων ἵππεις δὲ πεντακόσιοι. γενομένης δὲ καρτερᾶς μάχης καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἰουδαν διὰ τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ βοήθειαν εὐημερησάντων ἐλαττωνθέντες **οἱ νομάδες ἤξιον δοῦναι τὸν Ἰουδαν δεξιὰς αὐτοῖς ὑπισχνόμενοι καὶ βοσκήματα δώσειν καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ὠφελήσειν αὐτούς.** Ἰουδας δὲ ὑπολαβὼν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν πολλοῖς αὐτοῦς χρησίμους ἐπεχώρησεν εἰρήνην ἄξειν πρὸς αὐτούς καὶ λαβόντες δεξιὰς εἰς τὰς σκηνὰς ἐχωρίσθησαν».

<sup>404</sup> I *Mac.* IX, 35-36: «καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἠγουμένον τοῦ ὄχλου καὶ παρεκάλεσεν τοὺς Ναβαταίους φίλους αὐτοῦ τοῦ παραθέσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀποσκευὴν αὐτῶν τὴν πολλὴν καὶ **ἐξήλθον οἱ υἱοὶ Ιαμβρι οἱ ἐκ Μηδαβα** καὶ συνέλαβον Ἰωάννην καὶ πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἀπήλθον ἔχοντες».

Josephus has given us the same account, even if he called this tribe «the sons of Amariot»: JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 10-11: «Ἰωνάθης δὲ γνοὺς τὸν Βακχίδην ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἤκοντα πέμπει τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καὶ Γάδδην λεγόμενον πρὸς τοὺς Ναβαταίους Ἄραβας, ἵνα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀποθῆται τὴν ἀποσκευὴν ἕως οὗ πολεμήσουσι πρὸς Βακχίδην: ἦσαν γὰρ φίλοι. τὸν δὲ Ἰωάννην ἀπίοντα πρὸς τοὺς Ναβαταίους

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<sup>405</sup>: despite the complexity of the region administered by them, the Nabataeans, under king Obodas I during the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>406</sup>. However, the new Seleucid king, Antiochos 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<sup>407</sup>: 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 Judaeian 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.

KING	REIGN
ARETAS ( <i>hrtt</i> ) I	c. 168 BCE
ARETAS II	c. 120-96 BCE
OBODAS ( <i>'bdt</i> ) I	c. 96-85 BCE
RABEL ( <i>rb'l</i> ) I	c. 85-84 BCE
ARETAS III Philhellen	84-62 BCE
OBODAS II	62-59 BCE

ἐνεδρεύσαντες ἐκ Μηδάβας πόλεως οἱ Ἀμαραίου παῖδες αὐτόν τε συλλαμβάνουσι καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ, καὶ διαρπάσαντες ὅσα ἐπεκομίζετο κτείνουσι τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ τοὺς ἐταίρους αὐτοῦ πάντας. δίκην μέντοι γε τούτων ὑπέσχον τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀσίαν, ἣν μετ' οὐ πολὺ δηλώσομεν».

<sup>405</sup> FIEMA 1989, 29.

<sup>406</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 382: «ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀλλοφύλους ἐπαγόντων καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον εἰς τοῦτο ἀνάγκης ἀγαγόντων, ὥστε ἦν κατεστρέψατο γῆν ἐν Γαλααδίτιδι καὶ Μωαβίτιδι καὶ τὰ χωρία τῶν Ἀράβων τῷ βασιλεῖ παραδοῦναι, ὅπως ἂν μὴ ξυνάρηται σφίσι τὸν κατ' αὐτοῦ πόλεμον, ἄλλα τε μυρία ἐς ὕβριν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπήρειαν πραξάντων».

<sup>407</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 4,7 (101-102): «[...] καρτερὰς δὲ μάχης γενομένης ἕως μὲν περιῆν Ἀντίοχος ἀντεῖχεν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ καίπερ ἀνέδην ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀράβων φονευόμενοι: πεσόντος δέ, καὶ γὰρ προεκινδύνευσεν αἰετοῖς ἠττωμένοις παραβοηθῶν, ἐγκλίνουσιν πάντες, καὶ τὸ μὲν πλεῖστον αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς παρατάξεως κἀν τῇ φυγῇ διαφθείρεται, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς καταφυγόντας εἰς Κανὰ κώμην σπάνει τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἀναλωθῆναι συνέβη πλὴν ὀλίγων ἅπαντας»;

*AJ* XIII, 391: «ὁ δὲ ταῦτα πάντα ἐμπρήσας διεβίβαζε ταύτην τὴν δύναμιν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀραβίαν. ἀναχωρῶντος δὲ τοῦ Ἄραβος τὰ πρῶτα, ἔπειτα μετὰ μυρίων ἵππέων ἐξαίφνης ἐπιφανέντος ὑπαντήσας τούτοις Ἀντίοχος καρτερῶς ἐμάχετο, καὶ δὴ νικῶν ἀπέθανεν παραβοηθῶν τῷ πονοῦντι μέρει. πεσόντος δ' Ἀντιόχου καὶ τὸ στράτευμα φεύγει εἰς Κανὰ κώμην, ἔνθα τὸ πλεῖον αὐτῶν λιμῷ φθείρεται».

MALICHOS ( <i>mlkw</i> ) I	59-30 BCE
OBODAS III	30-9 BCE
ARETAS IV Philodemos	9 BCE-40 CE
MALICHOS II	40-70 CE
RABEL II	70-106 CE

TAB. 2 List of the Nabataean kings

The Nabataeans were able to preserve a sort of independence for other 170 years, although many governors of Syria planned an invasion of their country<sup>408</sup>: we do not know exactly why they tried to attack the Nabataean country, Appian reported that there were troubles with some unidentified Arabs<sup>409</sup>, probably it was due to their richness, because the Nabataeans after Actium appear to be a good ally for the Roman Empire<sup>410</sup>. 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 *Bellum Alexandrinum*, Malichos, king of Nabataeans, helped Julius Caesar to struggle Pompey, sending cavalry in Alexandria<sup>411</sup>: however, Flavius Josephus did not report that this king was among them who sent army to

<sup>408</sup> Josephus remembered an abortive expedition of Scaurus against the Nabataeans, who paid him a sum of 300 talents: JOSEPH. *AJ* XIV, 80-81: «Σκαύρου δ' ἐπὶ Πέτραν τῆς Ἀραβίας στρατεύσαντος καὶ διὰ τὸ δυσάλωτον εἶναι τὰ ἐν κύκλῳ δηρῶντος αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ στρατεύματος λιμήναντος Ἀντίπατρος κατ' ἐντολὴν Ὑρκανοῦ σίτον ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσων ἐνέδει, παρεῖχεν. πεμφθεὶς δὲ πρὸς Ἀρέταν πρεσβευτῆς ὑπὸ Σκαύρου διὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ξενίαν πειθεῖ αὐτὸν ἀργύριον ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ δηρωθῆναι τὴν χώραν δοῦναι, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγγυητῆς τριακοσίων ταλάντων γίνεται. καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔλυσε τὸν πόλεμον Σκαῦρος οὐχ ἦπτον αὐτὸς ἢ συνέβαινεν Ἀρέταν ἐπιθυμῆναι τοῦτο γενέσθαι βουλόμενος».

<sup>409</sup> Appian has referred that Marcius Philippus, and then Lentulus Marcellinus, spent their tenures defending the province against some Arabs, but we do not know which Arabs were: APP. *Syr.* 51: «Συρίας δ' εὐθύς ὁ Πομπήιος Σκαῦρον τὸν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ἑαυτῷ γενόμενον ταμίαν ἔταξεν ἠγεῖσθαι, καὶ ἡ βουλή Φιλίππων ἐπὶ Σκαῦρῳ τὸν Μάρκιον, καὶ Μαρκελλῖνον Λέντλον ἐπὶ τῷ Φιλίππῳ, ἄμφω στρατηγικούς κατ' ἀξίωσιν. ἀλλὰ τῶνδε μὲν ἑκατέρῳ διετῆς ἐτρίφθη χρόνος, τοὺς γείτονας ἐνοχλοῦντας Ἀραβας ἀμυνομένῳ [...]». Earlier, Appian specified Nabataean Arabs: the debate is still open. SARTRE (1979, 45), BOWERSOCK (1983, 33), supported the thesis that Appian knew there was a difference, while STARCKY (1966, 909), SCHÜRER (1973, 245), SHERWIN-WHITE (1984, 271), GATIER (1988, 163), KASHER (1988, 119), MACDONALD (1993, 323) remembered STRABO XVI, 4,21 in which he said that Nabataeans used to overrun Syria: «πρῶτοι δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς Συρίας Ναβαταῖοι καὶ Σαβαῖοι τὴν εὐδαίμονα Ἀραβίαν νέμονται, καὶ πολλάκις κατέτρεχον αὐτῆς πρὶν ἢ Ῥωμαίων γενέσθαι: νῦν δὲ κάκεινοι Ῥωμαῖοις εἰσὶν ὑπήκοοι καὶ Σύροι [...]».

<sup>410</sup> SARTRE 1979, 49-53.

<sup>411</sup> *BAlex* 1.1: «*Bello Alexandrino conflato Caesar Rhodo atque ex Syria Ciliciaque omnem arcessit; Creta sagittarios, equites ab rege Nabataeorum Malcho evocat [...]*».



Caesar<sup>412</sup>. Albeit many scholars did not give importance to it<sup>413</sup>, 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 Jerusalem<sup>414</sup>.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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»<sup>415</sup>.

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 Auranitis<sup>416</sup>, and in 20 BCE even the Gaulanitis<sup>417</sup>. 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 East<sup>418</sup>.

---

<sup>412</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIV, 127-129: «Μετὰ δὲ τὸν Πομπηίου θάνατον καὶ τὴν νίκην τὴν ἐπ' αὐτῷ Καίσαρι πολεμοῦντι κατ' Αἴγυπτον πολλὰ χρήσιμον αὐτὸν παρέσχεν Ἀντίπατρος ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπιμελητὴς ἐξ ἐντολῆς Ὑρκανοῦ. Μιθριδάτη τε γὰρ τῷ Περγαμηνῷ κομίζοντι ἐπικουρικὸν καὶ ἀδυνάτως ἔχοντι διὰ Πηλουσίου ποιήσασθαι τὴν πορείαν, περὶ δὲ Ἀσκάλωνα διατρίβοντι, ἦκεν Ἀντίπατρος ἄγων Ἰουδαίων ὀπίλας τρισχιλίουσιν ἐξ Ἀραβίας τε συμμάχους ἐλθεῖν ἐπραγματεύσατο τοὺς ἐν τέλει: καὶ δι' αὐτὸν οἱ κατὰ τὴν Συρίαν ἅπαντες ἐπεκούρουν ἀπολείπεσθαι τῆς ὑπὲρ Καίσαρος προθυμίας οὐ θέλοντες, Ἰάμβλιχος τε ὁ δυνάστης καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Σοαίμου Λίβανον ὄρος οἰκῶν αἱ τε πόλεις σχεδὸν ἅπασαι».

<sup>413</sup> SARTRE 1979, 47; BOWERSOCK 1983, 39.

<sup>414</sup> DIO CASS. XLVIII, 41,5: «αὐτῆς ἐκφοβήσας, ἀπόνως κατέσχε. καὶ ὁ μὲν ταῦτά τε διήγε, καὶ χρήματα πολλὰ μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὡς ἐκάστων, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Ἀντιγόνου τοῦ τε Ἀντιόχου καὶ Μάλχου τοῦ Ναβαταίου, ὅτι τῷ Πακόρω συνήρανο, ἐσέπραξε [...]».

<sup>415</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 159: «τοιαύτη δὲ πληγὴ χρησαμένων φρονήματος μὲν ὅσον ἦν πρότερον αὐτοῖς ἀφήρητο, τεθαυμακότες δὲ ἐν ταῖς οἰκείαις συμφοραῖς τὴν Ἡρώδου στρατηγίαν εἷς τε τὸ λοιπὸν εἶξαν καὶ προστάτην ἀπεφήναντο τοῦ ἔθνους».

<sup>416</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 343: «[...] καὶ δίδωσιν Ἡρώδῃ τὴν βασιλείαν ὅτω βούλεται βεβαιοῦν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγονόντων, καὶ χώραν ἐπι τὸν τε Τράχωνα καὶ Βαταναίαν καὶ Αὐρανίτιν [...]».

*B/I*, 20,4 (398): «Μετὰ δὲ τὴν πρώτην ἀκτιάδα προστίθησιν αὐτοῦ τῇ βασιλείᾳ τὸν τε Τράχωνα καλούμενον καὶ τὴν προσεχὴ Βαταναίαν τε καὶ τὴν Αὐρανίτιν χώραν ἐξ αἰτίας τοιαύσδε [...]».

<sup>417</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 360: «Καῖσαρ δὲ καὶ τὴν τούτου μοῖραν οὐκ ὀλίγην οὖσαν Ἡρώδῃ δίδωσιν, ἢ μεταξὺ τοῦ Τράχωνος ἦν καὶ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, Οὐλάθαν καὶ Πανιάδα καὶ τὴν πέριξ χώραν. ἐγκαταμίνγυσιν δ' αὐτὴν τοῖς ἐπιτροπεύουσιν τῆς Συρίας ἐντειλάμενος μετὰ τῆς ἐκείνου γνώμης τὰ πάντα ποιεῖν».

*B/I*, 20,4 (400): «ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐτελεύτα Ζηνόδωρος, προσένειμεν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν μεταξὺ Τράχωνος καὶ τῆς Γαλιλαίας γῆν ἅπασαν [...]».

<sup>418</sup> WENNING 2007, 33. KASHER (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<sup>419</sup>.

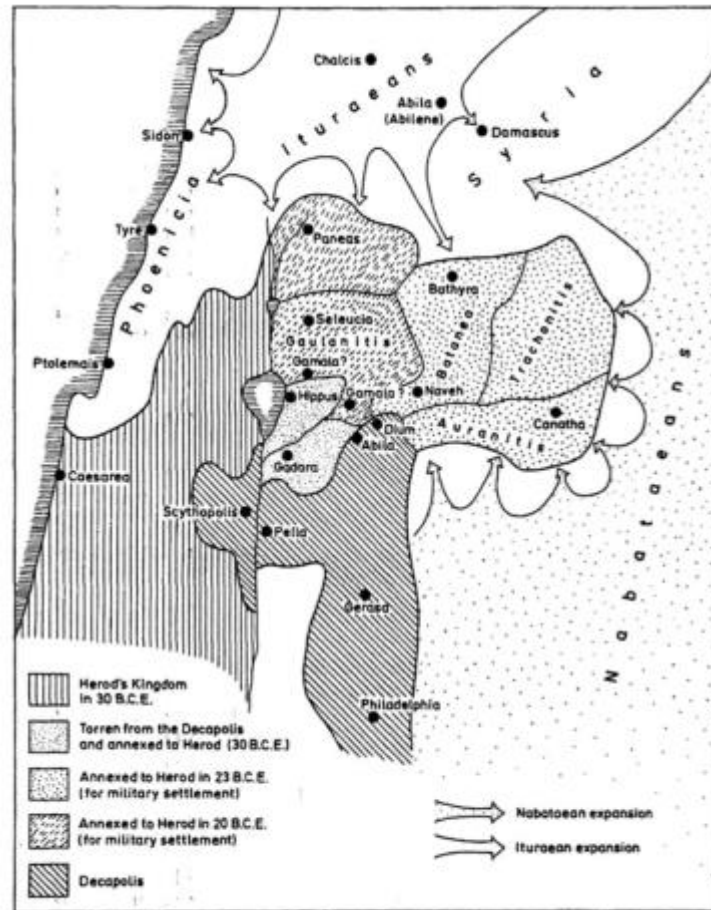


FIG. 6. Herod's Defence System in the North-East of his Kingdom (KASHER 1988, 161, map 15).

<sup>419</sup> DIO CASS. LIII, 29,3: «έν ᾧ δὲ ταῦτ' ἐγίνετο, καὶ ἄλλη τις στρατεία καινὴ ἀρχὴν τε ἅμα καὶ τέλος ἔσχεν: ἐπὶ γὰρ Ἀραβίαν τὴν εὐδαίμονα καλουμένην, ἧς Σαβῶς ἐβασίλευεν, Αἴλιος Γάλλος ὁ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἄρχων ἐπεστράτευσεν»;

STRABO XVI, 4, 23: «ἐπὶ τούτοις μὲν οὖν ἔστειλε τὴν στρατείαν ὁ Γάλλος. ἐξηπάτησε δ' αὐτὸν ὁ τῶν Ναβαταίων ἐπίτροπος Συλλαῖος, ὑποσχόμενος μὲν ἠγήσασθαι τὴν ὁδὸν καὶ χορηγήσειν ἅπαντα καὶ συμπράξειν, ἅπαντα δ' ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς πράξας, καὶ οὔτε παράπλου ἀσφαλῆ μηνύων οὔθ' ὁδόν, ἀλλὰ ἀνοδίας καὶ κυκλοπορίας καὶ πάντων ἀπόροις χωρίοις ἢ ραχίαις ἀλιμένοις παραβάλλον ἢ χοιράδων ὑφάλων μεσταῖς ἢ τεναγῶδεσι: πλείστον δὲ αἱ πλημμυρίδες ἐλύτουν ἐν τοιούτοις καὶ ταῦτα χωρίοις καὶ αἱ ἀμπῶταις. πρῶτον μὲν δὴ τοῦθ' ἀμάρτημα συνέβη τὸ μακρὰ κατασκευάσασθαι πλοῖα, μηδενὸς ὄντος μηδ' ἐσομένου κατὰ θάλατταν πολέμου. οὐδὲ γὰρ κατὰ γῆν σφόδρα πολεμισταὶ εἰσιν ἀλλὰ κάπηλοι μᾶλλον οἱ Ἄραβες καὶ ἐμπορικοὶ, μῆτι γε κατὰ θάλατταν [...]]»;

Nat. Hist. VI, 32,160: «Romana arma solus in eam terram adhuc intulit Aelius Gallus ex equestri ordine, nam C. Caesar Augusti filius prospexit tantum Arabiam».

Syllaios, as prime minister of Nabataean kingdom, instigated an uprising in Trachonitis in 12 BCE, when Herod visited Rome<sup>420</sup>. 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<sup>421</sup>. 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<sup>422</sup>: 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<sup>423</sup>.

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<sup>424</sup>. 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

---

<sup>420</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 273-275: «πλεύσαντος δ' εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην, ὅτε καὶ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου κατηγορεῖ καὶ παραθησόμενος Ἀντίπατρον τὸν υἱὸν παρεληλύθει Καίσαρι, λόγον ὡς ἀπολωλὼς εἶη διασπείροντες οἱ τὸν Τράχωνα νεμόμενοι τῆς τε ἀρχῆς ἀπέστησαν καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ συνήθη τοὺς πλησιοχώρους ἀδικεῖν ἐτρέποντο. τότε μὲν οὖν αὐτοὺς οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπόντος ἐχειρώσαντο. περὶ τετταράκοντα δὲ τινες ἀρχιληστὰι κατὰ δέος τῶν ἠλωκότων ἐξέλιπον μὲν τὴν χώραν, εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἀφορμήσαντες Συλλαίου δεξαμένου μετὰ τὴν ἀποτυχίαν τοῦ Σαλώμης γάμου, τόπον τε ἐρυμνὸν ἐκείνου δόντος ὤκησαν καὶ κατατρέχοντες οὐ μόνον τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν ἄπασαν ἐλήζοντο, παρέχοντες ὀρηπήρια τοῦ Συλλαίου καὶ κακῶς ποιοῦσιν ἄδειαν».

<sup>421</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 294-296: «[...] ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ὀβόδας ἐτεθνήκει, παραλαμβάνει δὲ τὴν τῶν Ἀράβων ἀρχὴν Αἰνείας ὁ μετονομασθεὶς αὐθις Ἀρέτας. τοῦτον γὰρ ἐπεχειρεῖ διαβολαῖς παρωσάμενος αὐτὸς ἀναλαμβάνειν τὴν ἀρχὴν, χρήματα μὲν πολλὰ διδούς τοῖς περὶ τὴν αὐλήν, πολλὰ δὲ Καίσαρι δώσειν ὑπισχνούμενος. ὁ δὲ τῷ μὴ τὸν Ἀρέταν ἐπιστείλαντα πρότερον αὐτῷ βασιλεύειν ὠργίζετο. πέμπει δὲ κάκεινος ἐπιστολὴν καὶ δῶρα τῷ Καίσαρι στέφανόν τε χρυσοῦν ἀπὸ πολλῶν ταλάντων: **ἡ δὲ ἐπιστολὴ κατηγορεῖ Σύλλαιον ὄντα πονηρὸν δοῦλον Ὀβόδαν τε φαρμάκοις διαφθεῖραι** καὶ ζῶντος ἔτι κρατεῖν αὐτὸν τὰς τε τῶν Ἀράβων μοιχεύοντα καὶ χρήματα δανειζόμενον, ὥστ' ἐξιδιώσασθαι τὴν ἀρχὴν».

<sup>422</sup> His daughter, probably Phasalis (KOKKINOS 1998, 230-231; KRAEMER 2006, 324, n. 4; PEARSON 2011, 56, 54, n. 285) married Herod Antipas, solidifying a renewed political link between his kingdom and the Jews: JOSEPH. *AJ* XVIII, 109-110: «[...] Ἡρώδης ὁ τετράρχης γαμει τὴν Ἀρέτα θυγατέρα καὶ συνὴν χρόνον ἦδη πολὺν. στελλόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ Ῥώμης κατάγεται ἐν Ἡρώδου ἀδελφοῦ ὄντος οὐχ ὁμομητρίου: ἐκ γὰρ τῆς Σίμωνος τοῦ ἀρχιερέως θυγατρὸς Ἡρώδης ἐγεγόνει. **ἐρασθεὶς δὲ Ἡρωδιάδος τῆς τούτου γυναικός**, θυγάτηρ δὲ ἦν Ἀριστοβούλου καὶ οὗτος ἀδελφὸς αὐτῶν, Ἀγρίππου δὲ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ μεγάλου, **τολμᾷ λόγων ἄπρασθαι περὶ γάμου**. καὶ δεξαμένης συνθηκαὶ γίνονται μετοικίσασθαι παρ' αὐτόν, ὅποτε ἀπὸ Ῥώμης παραγένοιτο. ἦν δὲ ἐν ταῖς συνθήκαις ὥστε καὶ τοῦ Ἀρέτα τὴν θυγατέρα ἐκβαλεῖν».

<sup>423</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVIII, 108: «τελευτᾷ δ' ἐν Ἰουλιάδι καὶ αὐτοῦ κομισθέντος ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, ὃ ἔτι πρότερον ὠκοδόμησεν αὐτός, ταφαὶ γίνονται πολυτελεῖς. τὴν δ' ἀρχὴν, οὐ γὰρ κατελίπετο παῖδας, Τιβέριος παραλαβὼν προσθήκην ἐπαρχίας ποιεῖται τῆς Σύρων, τοὺς μέντοι φόρους ἐκέλευσε συλλεγομένους ἐν τῇ τετραρχίᾳ τῇ ἐκείνου γενομένη κατατίθεσθαι».

<sup>424</sup> 2 *Cor.* 11, 32-33: «ἐν δαμασκῶ ὁ ἐθνάρχης ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ».

when Tiberius, little before his death, asked to the new governor of *Provincia Syria* to march against Nabataeans<sup>425</sup>.

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 Ἐρυθρᾶς Θαλάσσης*, written probably during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, remembered Malichos, the king of Nabataeans<sup>426</sup>. In addition, Malichos continued the peaceful policy of his father, helping Romans during the Jewish revolt<sup>427</sup>.

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<sup>428</sup>: it was considered a pacific annexation<sup>429</sup>. However, some doubts emerge if we consider a passage in Ammianus Marcellinus, which suggested that there were revolts<sup>430</sup>.

Furthermore, Werner Eck has underpinned the thesis of an involvement of the other regions within the Bar Kokhba revolt<sup>431</sup>. 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<sup>432</sup>. We know that Haterius Nepos, the governor of *Arabia* probably from the end of 130 until 134/135 CE<sup>433</sup>, 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<sup>434</sup>. It seems likely that at least the Judaeans 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<sup>435</sup>: in fact, it seems likely that at least some

---

<sup>425</sup> This attack never happened because of Tiberius' death. See JOSEPH. *AJ* XVIII, 124: «τῇ τετάρτῃ δὲ γραμμάτων αὐτῷ παραγενομένων, ἃ ἐδήλου τὴν Τιβερίου τελευτήν, ὤρκισεν τὴν πληθύν ἐπ' εὐνοίᾳ τῇ Γαίῳ. ἀνεκάλει δὲ καὶ τὸ στράτευμα ἐπὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐκάστου χειμαδιᾶν πόλεμον ἐκφέρειν οὐκέθ' ὁμοίως δυνάμενος διὰ τὸ εἰς Γάιον μεταπεπτωκέναι τὰ πράγματα».

<sup>426</sup> *Periplus*, ch. 19: «εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων».

<sup>427</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* III, 4,2 (68): «Ἀντιόχου μὲν καὶ Ἀγρίππα καὶ Σοαίμου παρασχομένων ἀνά δισχιλίους πεζοῦς τοξότας καὶ χιλίους ἵππεις, τοῦ δὲ Ἄραβος Μάλχου χιλίους πέμψαντος ἵππεις ἐπὶ πεζοῖς πεντακισχιλίους, ὧν τὸ πλεόν ἦσαν τοξόται».

<sup>428</sup> DIO CASS. LXVIII, 14,5: «...κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον χρόνον καὶ Πάλμας τῆς Συρίας ἄρχων τὴν Ἀραβίαν τὴν πρὸς τῇ Πέτρᾳ ἐχειρώσατο καὶ Ῥωμαίων ὑπήκοον ἐποίησατο».

<sup>429</sup> BRÜNNOW and DOMASZEWSKI 1909, 250; NEGEV 1977, 640; BOWERSOCK 1983, 79-80.

<sup>430</sup> AMM. MARC. XIV, 8,13: «*Huic 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. Hanc provinciae imposito nomine, rectoreque adtributo, obtemperare legibus nostris Traianus compulit imperator, incolarum tumour saepe contunso, cum glorioso Marte Mediam urgere Parthos*».

<sup>431</sup> ECK 1999, 83-84.

<sup>432</sup> DIO CASS. LXIX, 13,2: «φανερῶς ἐνεδείκνυντο, πολλοὶ τε ἄλλοι καὶ τῶν ἄλλοφύλων ἐπιθυμίᾳ κέρδους σφίσι συναλαμβάνοντο, καὶ πάσης ὡς εἰπεῖν κινουμένης ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῆς οἰκουμένης, τότε δὴ τότε τοὺς κρατίστους τῶν στρατηγῶν ὁ Ἄδριανὸς ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπεμψεν, ὧν πρῶτος Ἰούλιος Σεουήρος ὑπῆρχεν, ἀπὸ Βρετανίας ἧς ἦρχεν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους σταλείς».

<sup>433</sup> ECK 1999, 84.

<sup>434</sup> ECK 2003, 166-168.

<sup>435</sup> See below.

Nabataeans participated to the Judaeen 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 PAPHYROLOGICAL 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<sup>436</sup>. 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<sup>437</sup>. 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<sup>438</sup> in Auranitis (εἰς Αὔρανα), they encountered Nabataeans (συνεσκεάσατο τοὺς 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE<sup>439</sup>.

Recently a new papyrus (*P. Mil. Vogl. VIII* 309) was published<sup>440</sup>: it seems very likely that these epigrams were written by the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:

. . . . . κ]ύλινδον  
 . . . . . ] . ν  
 . . . . . χαρ]άδρης  
 10 . . . . . ]ων  
 . . . . . βαν]αύσου  
 . . . . . ]ν  
 . . . . . ] δι' αὐτῶν  
 . . . . . ].ιον  
 15 . . . . ] . [ . ] . Ναβαταίος

<sup>436</sup> MACDONALD 2003b, 44.

<sup>437</sup> 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.

<sup>438</sup> According to TCHERIKOVER (1937, 17), the amounts for the slaves was minimal for Ptolemaic standards.

<sup>439</sup> 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.

<sup>440</sup> 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.

μ[ . . ]ν Ἀράβω[ν ἵππο]μάχων βασιλεύς

The word «Ναβαταῖος» is presumably related to the following line, as suggested by David Graf<sup>441</sup>: if he is right, the Nabataeans would be a sedentary people already in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, with a kingdom and a cavalry force. It seems relatively hard that Nabataeans reached their independence already in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 period<sup>442</sup>.

Even more interesting is the integration ἵππο]μάχων, that the editors of the text considered an antiphrasis: Strabo, in fact, clearly declared that their land was lacking horses<sup>443</sup>. Furthermore, Paola Bernardini and Luigi Bravi have underlined that Arab horses had no reputation among Greeks and they were not listed among selected breeds<sup>444</sup>. However, Graf has rightly underpinned that Strabo's account about Nabataeans and their use of camels instead of horses was probably a *topos*<sup>445</sup>: 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 army<sup>446</sup>. The reconstruction made by David Graf seems better than another interesting reading, given by Francesca Angiò, who has completed the missing text with «οὐκ ἀ]μάχων»: 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 Nabataeans<sup>447</sup>.

In any case, this papyrus seems to confirm the presence of a Nabataean king already during the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE on the base of a paleographic analysis<sup>448</sup>. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 II<sup>449</sup>.

---

<sup>441</sup> GRAF 2006, 58.

<sup>442</sup> BASTIANINI and GALLAZZI 2001, 119; MAGNELLI 2004, 152. However, after GRAF 2006, MAGNELLI (2008, 49) has partially retracted his hypothesis.

<sup>443</sup> STRABO XVI, 4, 26. See above, note 399.

<sup>444</sup> BERNARDINI and BRAVI 2002, 159; CASANOVA 2004, 225.

<sup>445</sup> GRAF 2006, 59.

<sup>446</sup> II *Mac.* XII, 10-12: see above, note 403.

<sup>447</sup> ANGIÒ 2007, 50.

<sup>448</sup> STARCKY 1985-1986, 167-168; MILIK 2003, 275.

<sup>449</sup> NEHMÉ 2010, 477, n. 2.

We may regard as an earlier historical reference to Malichos an inscription published by Joseph Milik<sup>450</sup>: it named king Malichos and was found at Mu'arrabah, 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»<sup>451</sup>. 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<sup>452</sup>: this increased attestation led many scholars to believe that in this period Bosra assumed more commercial and political power<sup>453</sup>. In particular, an inscription dated to 93 CE and found at Imtan (*CIS* 218) was considered as the final proof of the change of the capital city, from Petra to Bosra<sup>454</sup>: 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<sup>455</sup>; moreover, the inscription could allude to Dushara who is at Bosra, and not Rabbel<sup>456</sup>. Otherwise, the well attested increased building activity in Auranitis was perhaps linked with the insurrection of Damasi, attested in Safaitic inscriptions<sup>457</sup>.

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 *legio III Cyrenaica*, as confirmed by numerous inscriptions found there<sup>458</sup>. Undoubtedly, Bosra became an important city already during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE: Philip had instituted there the *Acta Dusaria*, agonistic festivals for commemorating both the god Dushara and the victory of Octavianus Augustus at Actium<sup>459</sup>. Probably in the same period the city reached the status of metropolis<sup>460</sup>.

Some texts mentioned a «war of the Nabataeans»<sup>461</sup>: 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»<sup>462</sup> or «the year of the struggle between Rome and the Nabataeans» or «the year when the Banu-Rum plundered the Nabataeans»<sup>463</sup>: the fact that the Nabataean area was *redacta in formam provinciae* only in 111-112 CE<sup>464</sup>, could suggest the presence of

---

<sup>450</sup> MILIK 1958, 242-243; MACDONALD 2003b, n. 56.

<sup>451</sup> CANTINEAU 1932, 9; HACKL, JENNI and SCHNEIDER (eds.) 2003, 402-404.

<sup>452</sup> At least 11 Nabataean inscriptions with the name of Rabbel II were found. See NAHMÉ 2010, 477-484.

<sup>453</sup> SARTRE 1985, 54.

<sup>454</sup> MILIK 1958, 233-235; HAMMOND 1973, 38; BOWERSOCK 1983, 73.

<sup>455</sup> FIEMA 2003, 41-43. *Contra* SARTRE 1985, 55-56.

<sup>456</sup> WENNING 1993, 94-95.

<sup>457</sup> WINNETT 1973; GRAF 1989.

<sup>458</sup> SARTRE 1982b.

<sup>459</sup> FIEMA 2003, 46.

<sup>460</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 121-122.

<sup>461</sup> CIS V, 220, 2820, 3680, 4866.

<sup>462</sup> WINNETT and HARDING 1978, 406, n. 2815.

<sup>463</sup> CIS V 3680, 4866. LEWIN 2014, 127; MACDONALD 2014, 150-151.

<sup>464</sup> 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*<sup>465</sup>. 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<sup>466</sup>. Hannah Cotton has edited the letter solving several paleographic and linguistic *cruces* of the first publication<sup>467</sup>:

Κου[μαι]ος Ιωναθη  
 Βειανου και Μα-  
 [c]αβαλα[ι] χαιρειν.  
 ἐπιδὴ ἔπεμσα πρὸς  
 5 ὑμᾶς Ἀ[γ]ρίππαν σπου-  
 δ[άca]τε πέμce μοι  
 θ[ύ]ρρου[c] και κίτρια,  
 ὄ[cον] δυνασθήcεται,  
 ic [π]αρεμβολὴν Ἰου-  
 10 δ[αί]ων και μὴ ἄλλωc  
 π[οι]ήcηται(\*). ἐγράφη  
 δ[έ] Ἑληνεcτι διὰ  
 τ[ὸ] ἡμᾶc μὴ εὐρη-  
 κ[έ]ναι Ἑβραεcτι.  
 15 ἐ[.]......αι. αὐτὸν  
 ἀπ[ο]λῦcαι τάχιον  
 δι[ὰ] τ[ὴ]ν ἐορτὴν  
 κα[ὶ] μ[ὴ] ἄλλωc ποιή-  
 cη[ται]  
 20 Κουμαίoc  
 ἔρωcο

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<sup>468</sup>. A clear proof of the spread of Greek language is given by the

<sup>465</sup> LEWIN 2014, 126.

<sup>466</sup> LIFSHITZ 1962, 241;

<sup>467</sup> For a complete list of all the editions, see COTTON 2003, 143, note 45.

<sup>468</sup> 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<sup>469</sup>. 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<sup>470</sup>. 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 *Hlst* son of *M'n* for three years against *Nfs*, identified with Haterius Nepos, governor of *Arabia*<sup>471</sup>. 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<sup>472</sup>, 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<sup>473</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, Rachel Barkay has recently divided their issues in three groups: the first one has been dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, in concomitance with the Third Syrian War between Ptolemies and Seleucids (246-241 BCE)<sup>474</sup>; the other two groups are more numerous and have circulated during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>475</sup>. After these first anonymous issues, a clear Nabataean royal coinage was minted in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE<sup>476</sup>, after Aretas III conquered Damascus in 84 BCE. These first coins derived from Seleucid prototypes<sup>477</sup>: 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<sup>478</sup>. These

---

<sup>469</sup> 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.

<sup>470</sup> WISE 2015, 245-251.

<sup>471</sup> ABBADI and ZAYADINE 1996. See also MOR 2003, 126-127.

<sup>472</sup> BOWERSOCK 1980, 108.

<sup>473</sup> These coins were already considered to be Nabataean by ROBINSON 1936, 290-291, because of their spread in the Nabataean territory.

<sup>474</sup> BARKAY 2011, 70; 2015, 436.

<sup>475</sup> BARKAY 2011, 71.

<sup>476</sup> 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; BOWSER 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.

<sup>477</sup> SCHMID 2001a, 408.

<sup>478</sup> SCHMITT-KORTE and PRICE 1994, 93-94.

characteristics could represent the efforts of the king to create a new strong rule in the Damascene, replacing the previous Seleucid kingdom<sup>479</sup>.

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<sup>480</sup>. Only six coins of the kingdom of Obodas II have been found<sup>481</sup>, but they have preserved common characteristics: the language was Nabataean and the inscription «Obodas the king, king of the Nabataeans» replaced the attribute ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ 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<sup>482</sup>. The coin probably represented a Scaurus' attempt to promote himself rather than a real conquest of Nabataean kingdom<sup>483</sup>. According to Joseph Patrich, these coins represented a reaction against the Hellenistic culture<sup>484</sup>: 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<sup>485</sup>.

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<sup>486</sup>. 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<sup>487</sup>, could be seen as an acknowledgement of the new dominant regional power, represented by Romans<sup>488</sup>. 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<sup>489</sup>. 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

---

<sup>479</sup> However, the coin's weight standard resembled the Phoenician rather than the Attic one, probably because there was an economic link between Nabataeans and Judaeans and Phoenicians.

<sup>480</sup> SARTRE 2001, 516; SCHWENTZEL 2005, 152.

<sup>481</sup> MESHORER 1975, nr. 17.

<sup>482</sup> BARKAY 2015, 437.

<sup>483</sup> SARTRE 1979, 45; BOWERSOCK 1983, 35; *Contra*: WENNING 2007, 32, who claimed Scaurus subjugated Aretas.

<sup>484</sup> PATRICH 2007, 96.

<sup>485</sup> MESHORER 1975, nos. 12-19; SCHMITT-KORTE and PRICE 1994, 98.

<sup>486</sup> SCHMITT-KORTE and PRICE 1994, 99-101 for further references.

<sup>487</sup> PATRICH 1990, 133, n. 47; JENSEN 2006, 187-188.

<sup>488</sup> SCHWENTZEL 2005, 160; SCHMID 2008, 367.

<sup>489</sup> BARKAY 2006, 100-101.

pearls. The hairstyle, instead, was typically Arabian<sup>490</sup>, already seen on Qedarites coins<sup>491</sup>, 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<sup>492</sup>.

### 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<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, no material evidences of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE could be assigned to them. The Nabataean material production was born during the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE. According to Stephan Schmid<sup>493</sup>, 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<sup>st</sup> century were found<sup>494</sup>. 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<sup>495</sup>. during the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>496</sup>. The pottery dating between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE was characterised by the presence of few forms, products of the development of vases from the Iron Age<sup>497</sup>, like the neckless jars called «Holemouth Jars»<sup>498</sup> (FIG. 7, nr. 1), or bowls and basins with a triangular lip<sup>499</sup>. Other pieces were imitations of Hellenistic pottery, spread in southern Levant region, like globular table amphorae, found in Gaulanitis, especially in Gamla<sup>500</sup>, or globular jugs, spread even in the Decapolis area<sup>501</sup> (FIG. 7, nos. 2-6).

The period between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> 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

---

<sup>490</sup> WENNING 2003, 148; KROPP 2011, 185-186; KROPP 2013, 68.

<sup>491</sup> MILDENBERG 2000, 385, nos. 71, 75, 80, 85.

<sup>492</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 72.

<sup>493</sup> SCHMID 2001a, 409-410; SCHMID 2001b, 373; SCHMID 2008, 386-387.

<sup>494</sup> SCHMID 2001b, 371.

<sup>495</sup> SCHMID 1996, 130, n. 17; Schmid 2001a, 409; SCHMID 2001b, 371-372.

<sup>496</sup> RENEL 2010, 539.

<sup>497</sup> RENEL 2010, 518.

<sup>498</sup> STERN 1978, f. 4, nos. 13-15.

<sup>499</sup> DORNEMANN 1990, type XXIV; GREENE and AMR 1992, f. 6, nr. 1.

<sup>500</sup> BERLIN 2006, 30, f. 2.8, nr. 3.

<sup>501</sup> LAPP 1961, type 71.1. It was found in Pella (McNICOLL 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<sup>502</sup>: the decorations and mouldings of the Nabataean arch can be compared with the capitals found in Petra<sup>503</sup>.

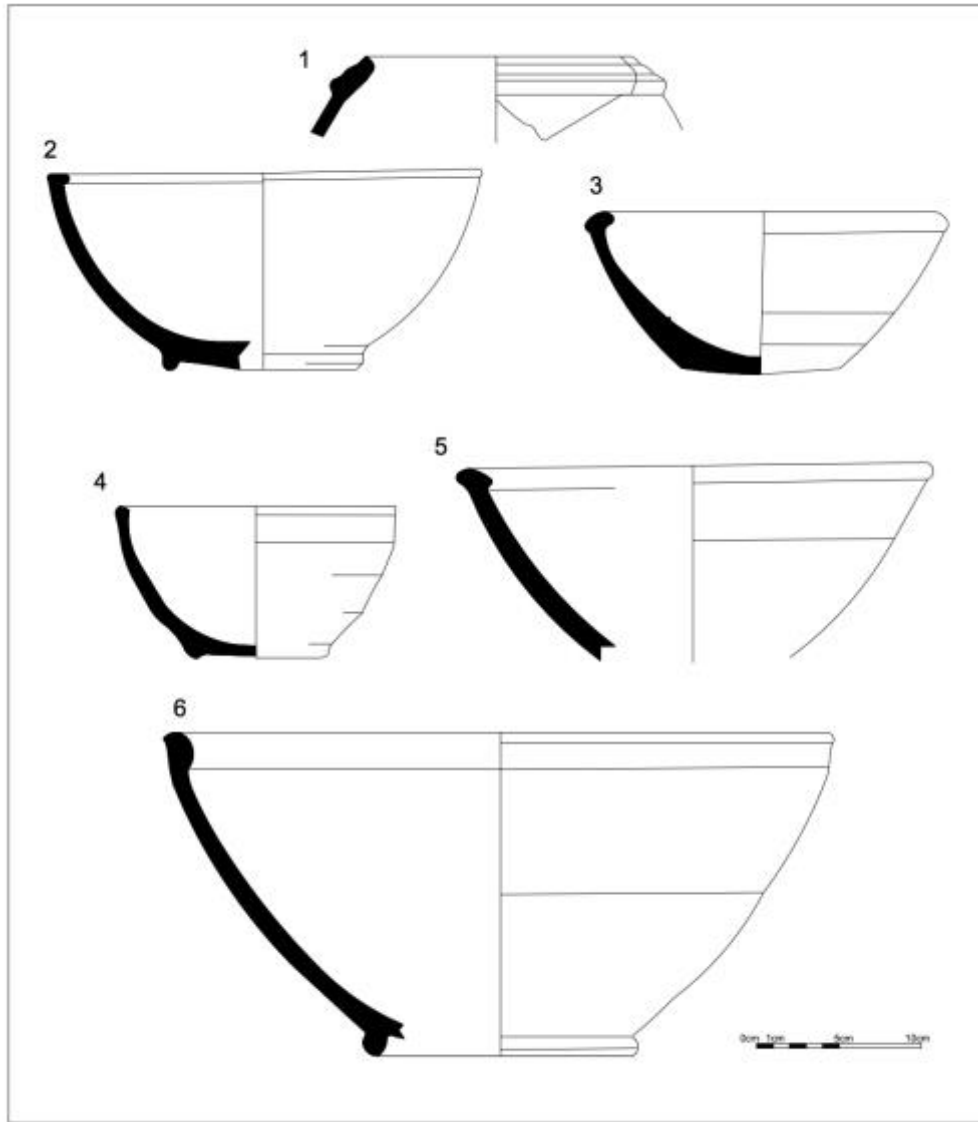


FIG. 7 Pottery of the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE in Auranitis. From RENEL 2010.

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<sup>504</sup>. This new quarter probably followed the orientation of the sanctuary of Dushara, imposed for religious purposes<sup>505</sup>. The use of the arch itself was an important Roman feature, spread throughout the province of Syria from the 1<sup>st</sup> century

<sup>502</sup> DENTZER-FEYDY *et alii* 2007, 14-15.

<sup>503</sup> DENTZER *et alii* 2010, 143.

<sup>504</sup> DENTZER 2007, 54.

<sup>505</sup> DENTZER 1985-1986, 406-407.

CE<sup>506</sup>. In particular, Nabataean fine vessels, dated to the reign of Aretas IV and predominantly of Rabbel II, were found<sup>507</sup>. This kind of pottery belonged mostly to the sub-phases 3b and 3c of Nabataean production, as divided and analysed by Stephan Schmid<sup>508</sup>: 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<sup>509</sup>: few fragments were found in Egypt, at Philadelphia-Amman<sup>510</sup>, at Caesarea Maritima and at Antioch on the Orontes<sup>511</sup>. 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<sup>512</sup>.

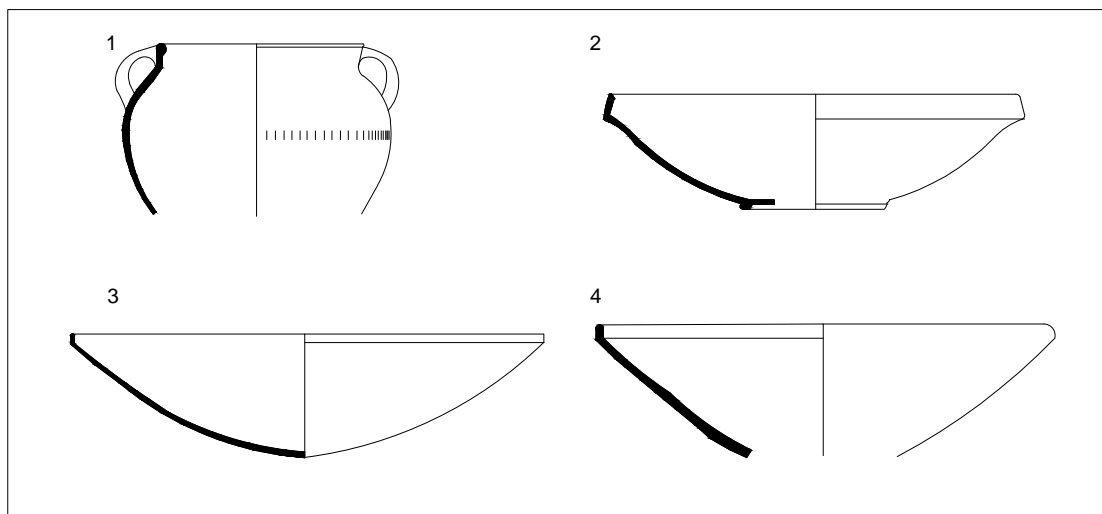


FIG. 8 Nabataean pottery from the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. From SCHMID 2001, fig. 11.22

A great change has occurred during the half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE among the cooking pottery, perhaps related to a change of food customs<sup>513</sup>: in particular, the Kefar Hananya

<sup>506</sup> WILL 1989, 342.

<sup>507</sup> DENTZER, DENTZER-FEYDY and BLANC 2001, 459.

<sup>508</sup> SCHMID 1997, 413; 2007b, 314-316.

<sup>509</sup> GLUECK 1965, 6-7.

<sup>510</sup> PARR 1965, 533.

<sup>511</sup> For a complete review of all the findings, see SCHMID 2007, 62-67.

<sup>512</sup> About the pottery at Gaza, see SACHET 2000.

<sup>513</sup> RENEL 2010, 526-527.

type 4a was spread throughout the region<sup>514</sup>. 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<sup>515</sup>. From the analysis of distribution of pottery, it follows that the northern region of the Nabataean kingdom cannot be considered «culturally» Nabataean<sup>516</sup>: this suggestion is confirmed by the study of the sculptures and monuments<sup>517</sup>.

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<sup>518</sup>. These features were probably related to the particular stone used for creating these sculptures, namely the basalt<sup>519</sup>. 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»<sup>520</sup>. 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<sup>rd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE<sup>521</sup>: 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<sup>522</sup>.

The exceptionality of the architecture of this region was already clear to the scholars who visited it at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>523</sup>. 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<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE<sup>524</sup>. Frank Braemer has dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE a big reservoir<sup>525</sup> and a rampart<sup>526</sup>. Because of these fortifications, we can suppose that the site was very important for the area, usually dominated by small villages with no walls<sup>527</sup>. According to various soundings, the site was probably inhabited during the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

---

<sup>514</sup> See previous chapter.

<sup>515</sup> KEHRBERG 1989, nos. 15-21.

<sup>516</sup> DENTZER 1985-1986, 407-420; DENTZER 2007, 48.

<sup>517</sup> *Contra* NEGEV 1977, WENNING 1987, 35-36; NETZER 2003, 102-106.

<sup>518</sup> BELELLI 1985-1986, 315.

<sup>519</sup> For the technique used, see MOUNIF 2003, 221.

<sup>520</sup> WENNING 2001, 312.

<sup>521</sup> BELELLI 1985-1986, 336-341. KALOS (1999, 788) has claimed that the Hellenistic period was in continuity with the previous period, with no break.

<sup>522</sup> DENTZER and DENTZER-FEYDY 1991, 121-127; DENTZER 2003a, 203.

<sup>523</sup> DE VOGÜÉ 1865-1877, 33; BUTLER 1907, 366-369.

<sup>524</sup> DENTZER, BLANC and FOURNET 2010, 141

<sup>525</sup> BRAEMER 1988, 133.

<sup>526</sup> BRAEMER 2002.

<sup>527</sup> BRAEMER 2007, 8.

The settlement greatly developed during the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>528</sup>. 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»<sup>529</sup>. 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 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, as if there was a Nabataean nucleus that continued to live near the new city after the Roman annexation. However, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>530</sup>.

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<sup>531</sup>. Furthermore, in the central part of the city, some houses and probably small baths, dated between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, have been unearthed<sup>532</sup>. 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<sup>533</sup> at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>534</sup>. Moreover, under the Severans, the streets were decorated with columns and workshops<sup>535</sup>.

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<sup>536</sup>, 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.

---

<sup>528</sup> BLANC, DENTZER and SODINI 2007;

<sup>529</sup> DENTZER 2003b, 110.

<sup>530</sup> PIRAUD-FOURNET 2007, 147.

<sup>531</sup> DENTZER, DENTZER-FEYDY and BLANC 2001, 461.

<sup>532</sup> DENTZER, BLANC and FOURNET 2002, 94.

<sup>533</sup> BROISE AND FOURNET 2007, 219.

<sup>534</sup> DENTZER, BLANC and FOURNET 2007, 31.

<sup>535</sup> DENTZER, BLANC and FOURNET 2002, 145.

<sup>536</sup> LITTMANN 1904, 85-90; LITTMANN, MAGIE and STUART, 1921.



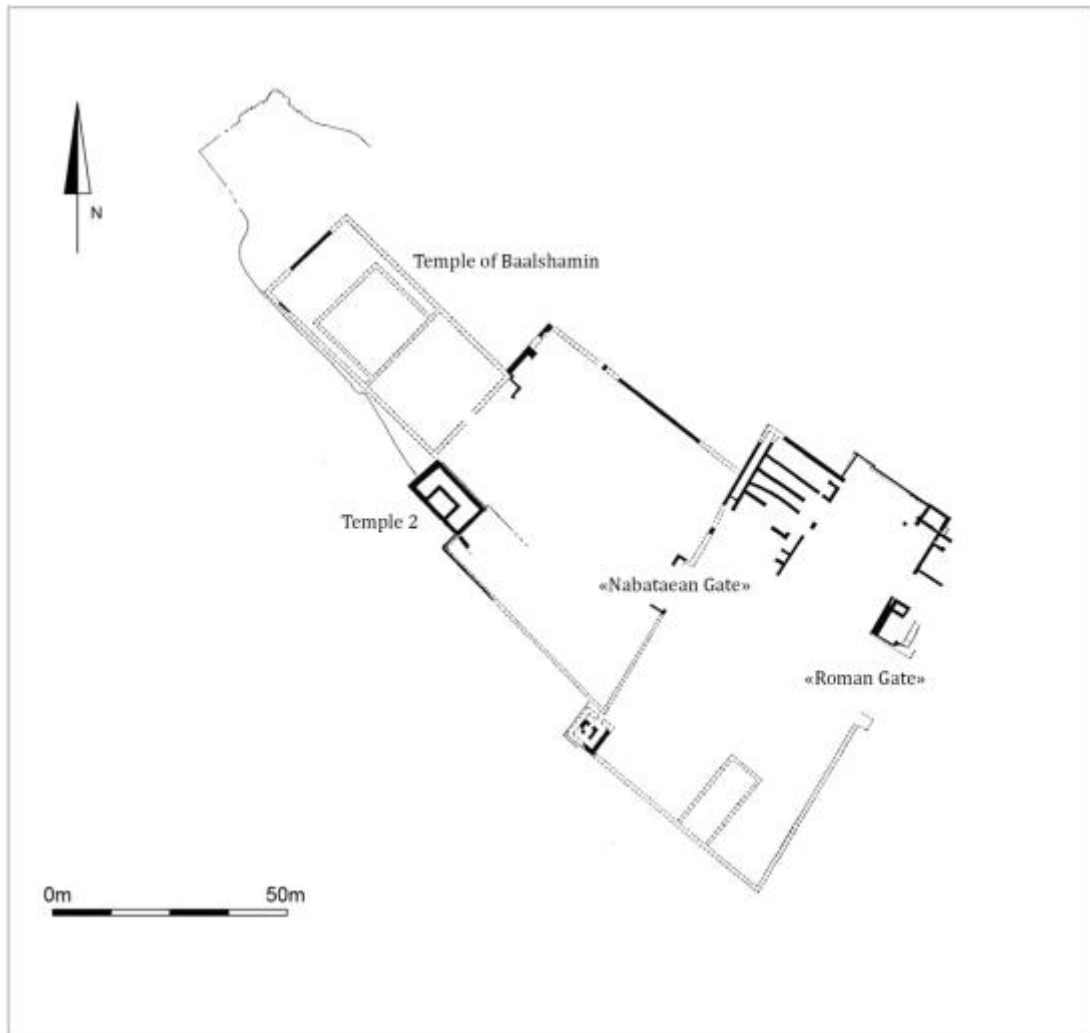


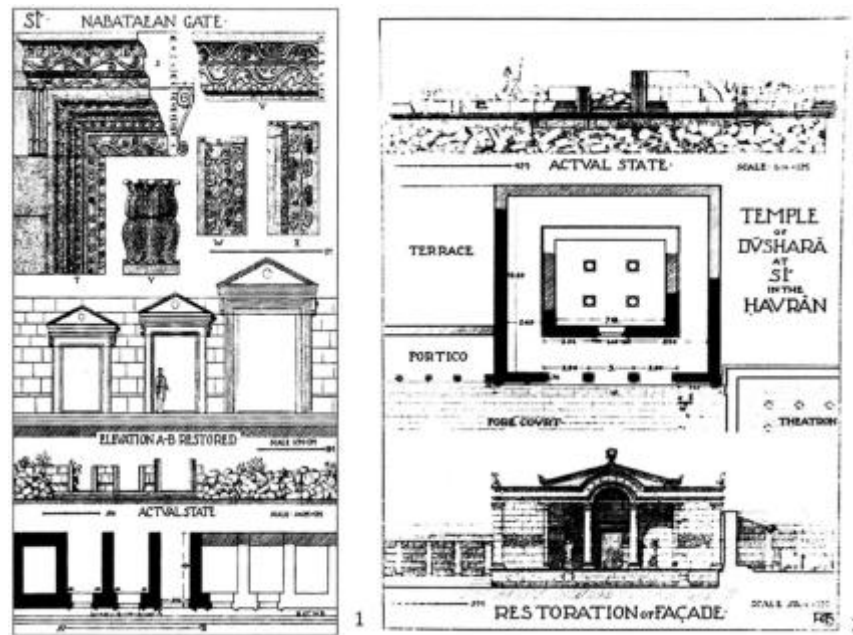
FIG. 10 Sanctuary of Seeia after the reconstruction in HAURAN II, pl. 86.

After the battle of Canatha, fought briefly after the battle of Actium, Nabataeans established their rule over the area<sup>537</sup>, though circa ten years later Herod took Auranitis

<sup>537</sup> JOSEPH. *BJI*, 19,2 (366-368): «Ἐρρεψεν μέντοι καθ' Ἡρώδην τὸ βούλευμα: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ρύσια κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἄγων καὶ πολὺ συγκροτήσας ἰππικὸν ἐπαφήσιν αὐτοῖς περὶ Διόσπολιν ἐκράτησέν τε καίτοι καρτερώς ἀντιπαραραξαμένων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἦταν μέγα γίνεται κίνημα τῶν Ἀράβων, καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς Κάναθα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας ἄπειροι τὸ πλῆθος τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἔμενον. ἔνθα μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως Ἡρώδης ἐπελθὼν ἐπειρᾶτο προμηθέστερον ἀφηγεῖσθαι τοῦ πολέμου καὶ στρατόπεδον ἐκέλευε τειχίζειν. οὐ μὴν ὑπήκουσεν τὸ πλῆθος, ἀλλὰ τῇ προτέρᾳ νίκῃ τεθαρρηκότες ὤρμησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἄραβας καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὴν πρώτην ἐμβολὴν τραπέντας ἐδίωκον, ἐπιβουλεύεται δὲ Ἡρώδης ἐν τῇ διώξει τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Κανάθων ἐπιχωρίους ἀνέντος Ἀθηνίωνος, ὃς ἦν αὐτῶ τῶν Κλεοπάτρας στρατηγῶν αἰεὶ διάφορος: πρὸς γὰρ τὴν τούτων ἐπίθεσιν ἀναθαρρήσαντες οἱ Ἄραβες ἐπιστρέφονται καὶ συνάψαντες τὸ πλῆθος περὶ πετρῶδη καὶ δῦσβατα χωρία τοὺς Ἡρώδου τρέπονται πλείστον τε αὐτῶν φόνον εἰργάσαντο. οἱ δὲ διασωθέντες ἐκ τῆς μάχης εἰς Ὀρμιζα καταφεύγουσιν, ὅπου καὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον αὐτῶν περισχόντες αὐτανδρον εἶλον οἱ Ἄραβες»;

*AJ* XV, 112-119: «μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πολλὴ στρατιὰ τῶν Ἀράβων εἰς Κάνατα συνήει: χωρία δ' ἐστὶ ταῦτα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας: Ἡρώδης τε προπετυσμένος ἦκεν ἄγων ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τὸ πλείστον ἧς εἶχεν δυνάμεως, καὶ

back<sup>538</sup>. 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»<sup>539</sup>. 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<sup>540</sup>. This area is separated by another court at north-west by a wall with another passageway called «Nabataean Gate»<sup>541</sup>: it opens to another irregular court, with lateral porticoes (FIG. 11)<sup>542</sup>: however, the French excavations have shown that Butler was wrong, because there was a unique passageway, flanked with two symmetrical buildings<sup>543</sup>. 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<sup>544</sup>.



πλησιάσας ἐν καλῷ στρατοπεδεύεσθαι διεγνώκει χάρακά τε βαλόμενος ἐξ εὐκαίρου ταῖς μάχαις ἐπιχειρεῖν... ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης ἀπεγνωκῶς τὰ κατὰ τὴν μάχην ἀφιππάζεται βοήθειαν ἄξων: οὐ μὴν ἔφθη καίτερ ἐσπουδακῶς ἐπαρκεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν στρατόπεδον ἦλω τῶν Ἰουδαίων, οἱ δ' Ἄραβες οὐδὲ μετρίως εὐτυχήκεσαν ἐκ παραλόγου νίκην τε ἧς πλείστον ἀπεδέησαν ἀνελιφότες καὶ πολλὴν τῶν ἐναντίων ἀφηρημένοι δύναμιν».

<sup>538</sup> For an attempt to summarise all the evidences about the rulers of Seeia, see THOLBECQ 2007, 302-304.

<sup>539</sup> BUTLER 1916, 365-402.

<sup>540</sup> DE VOGÜÉ 1865-1877, 32, f. 3; BUTLER 1916, 393-395.

<sup>541</sup> BUTLER 1916, 391, f. 339.

<sup>542</sup> According to Howard Butler, this gate had three doors opening at the same level and decreasing in size from north to south.

<sup>543</sup> DENTZER-FEYDY 2015, 318-319. The gate, for stylistic similarities with the small sanctuary of Si'8, is dated to the first years of reign of Rabbel II.

<sup>544</sup> BUTLER 1903, 414-422; FREYBERGER 1998, 51-53, taf. 32; DENTZER-FEYDY 1985-1986, 265-269.

FIG.11 No. 1: The Nabataean Gate, from BUTLER 1916, f. 339.  
No. 2: The «Temple of Dushara», from BUTLER 1916, f. 355.

The cella was rectangular in shape, with the entrance on the long side<sup>545</sup>: 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<sup>546</sup> and in other Nabataean temples, like the ones of Qasr Rabb'a<sup>547</sup>, Dibon<sup>548</sup> and Qasr al-Bint<sup>549</sup>.

The temple was erroneously attributed to Dushara by Butler: starting from an inscription on a base written both in Greek and in local Aramaic<sup>550</sup>, Jacqueline Dentzer-Feydy has brilliantly shown it was dedicated to Seeia, a goddess of the mountain on which the sanctuary was built<sup>551</sup>. However, this interpretation is debated<sup>552</sup>. On the north-western side of the courtyard the Baalshamin temple was erected: it was surrounded by an elongated rectangular *τέμενος* with a cella in the centre surrounded by a corridor. The entrance front of the temple was reached by a great façade with a pediment flanked by two square towers, which probably gave the access to a flat roof<sup>553</sup> and closed the entrance to left and right<sup>554</sup>. The access of the cella was preceded by a square paved rectangular courtyard, the so-called «Theatron» after an Aramaic inscription found during the earlier excavations<sup>555</sup>: it was very carefully paved with basalt flagstones and surrounded with benches.

One further small structure, before interpreted as a tomb<sup>556</sup>, is a small temple situated near the processional way leading up to the temple of Baalshamin<sup>557</sup>. The sanctuary consisted of a courtyard surrounded by three rows of benches and porticoes, limited on its western side by a monumental façade with a central grandiose opening, flanked by two smaller ones. The façade of *Sī' 8* limited one side of the courtyard in its entirety, a feature common in several temples of the southern Syria<sup>558</sup>.

The temple of Baalshamin and the so-called «temple of Dushara» belonged to an ancient 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<sup>st</sup> century BCE and 1<sup>st</sup> century CE with the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE temple of Susa<sup>559</sup>, believing a common origin in the old Syrian architecture. Klaus Schippmann 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<sup>560</sup>. Thomas Weber has pointed out

---

<sup>545</sup> DENTZER 1990, 366 and KROPP 2010, 8.

<sup>546</sup> KALOS 2003; HAURAN IV.

<sup>547</sup> NETZER 2003, 99-100.

<sup>548</sup> NETZER 2003, 100-101.

<sup>549</sup> LARCHÉ and ZAYADINE 2003; NETZER 2003, 68-72.

<sup>550</sup> 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.

<sup>551</sup> DENTZER 1979, 326-327. The inscription was already published by LITTMANN, MAGIE and STUART (1921, nr. 767). The text is «ΣΕΕΙΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΓΗΝ ΑΥΠΑΝΕΙΤΙΝ ΕΣΤΗΚΥΙΑ» in Greek and «D' SLMT' DYS'Y'W» in Aramaic.

<sup>552</sup> *Contra* ABDUL-HAK 1951 and SARTRE 2001, 897-898, who believed it was a Mithraeum.

<sup>553</sup> FREYBERGER 1998, 48; KROPP 2010, 5.

<sup>554</sup> SEGAL 2013f, 213.

<sup>555</sup> LITTMANN 1904, 89. It was a loan word from the Greek «θέατρον».

<sup>556</sup> BUTLER 1916, 371; MASCLE 1944, 36-37.

<sup>557</sup> HAURAN II: it was studied by a French *équipe* and was called «*Sī' 8*».

<sup>558</sup> DENTZER-FEYDY 2003, 107; KROPP 2010, 11.

<sup>559</sup> OELMAN 1921.

<sup>560</sup> SCHIPPMMANN 1971, 418 ff; SCHIPPMMANN 1972, 355-356.

how the sculptures and the architecture of the temple of Sahr al-Ledja showed Mesopotamian influences<sup>561</sup>, while Ehud Netzer was more inclined to believe that it was a regional type<sup>562</sup>. 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<sup>563</sup>. Here, Josephus specified that came even (but not only) Jews<sup>564</sup>: 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<sup>565</sup>: they were characterised by the presence of an artificial slope (the so-called «*glacis*») and with no entrances to the ground floor<sup>566</sup>. However, as for the sanctuaries our knowledge does not permit to relate the coming of new people with a particular innovation of buildings<sup>567</sup>. It is only clear that during the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE until the Roman annexation, southern Syria was not mostly Nabataean, as many scholars have even recently

---

<sup>561</sup> WEBER 2003, 358-360.

<sup>562</sup> NETZER 2003, 102-115.

<sup>563</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVII, 23-25: «Τότε δὲ βουλόμενος πρὸς Τραχωνίτας ἀσφαλῆς εἶναι, κώμην πόλεως μέγεθος οὐκ ἀποδέουσιν ἔγνω Ἰουδαίων κτίσαι ἐν μέσῳ, δυσέμβολόν τε ποιεῖν τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐξ ἐγγίονος ὀρμώμενος ἐκ τοῦ ὀξέος κακουργεῖν. καὶ ἐπιστάμενος ἄνδρα Ἰουδαῖον ἐκ τῆς Βαβυλωνίας σὺν πεντακοσίοις ἵπποτοξόταις πᾶσι καὶ συγγενῶν πλήθει εἰς ἑκατὸν ἀνδρῶν τὸν Εὐφράτην διαβεβηκότα κατὰ τύχας ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῇ ἐπὶ Δάφνῃ τῆς Συρίας διαιτᾶσθαι Σατορνίνου τοῦ τότε στρατηγούτου εἰς ἐνοίκησιν αὐτῷ δεδωκότος χωρίον, Οὐλαθαῖ ὄνομα αὐτῷ, μετεπέμπετο τοῦτον σὺν τῷ πλήθει τῶν ἐπομένων, παρέξεν ὑπισχνούμενος γῆν ἐν τοπαρχίᾳ τῇ λεγομένη Βαταναία, ὠρίζετο δὲ αὐτῇ τῇ Τραχωνίτιδι, βουλόμενος πρόβλημα τὴν κατοίκησιν αὐτοῦ κτᾶσθαι, ἀτελῆ τε τὴν χώραν ἐπηγγέλλετο καὶ αὐτοῦς εἰσφορῶν ἀπηλλαγμένους ἀπασῶν, αἱ εἰωθυῖαι ἐγκατοικεῖν τὴν γῆν ἄπρακτον παρασχόμενος».

<sup>564</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVII, 26: «Τούτοις πεισθεὶς ὁ Βαβυλώνιος ἀφικνεῖται καὶ λαβὼν τὴν γῆν φρούρια ὤκοδομήσατο καὶ κώμην, Βαρθύραν ὄνομα αὐτῇ θέμενος. πρόβλημά τε ἦν οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις τὰ πρὸς τοὺς Τραχωνίτας καὶ Ἰουδαίων τοῖς ἐκ Βαβυλώνας ἀφικνουμένοις κατὰ θυσίαν ἐπὶ Ἱεροσολύμων τοῦ μὴ ληστείαις ὑπὸ τῶν Τραχωνιτῶν κακουργεῖσθαι, πολλοὶ τε ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφίκοντο καὶ ἀπανταχόθεν, οἷς τὰ Ἰουδαίων θεραπεύεται πάτρια».

<sup>565</sup> BRAEMER *et al.* 1999.

<sup>566</sup> BRAEMER *et al.* 1999, 169.

<sup>567</sup> ROHMER 2010, 134.

believed<sup>568</sup>. 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<sup>569</sup>. Dated inscriptions by the era of the Nabataean kings appeared in good quantity only about the half of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>570</sup>.

As seen, the literary sources remembered a presence of Nabataeans in the area at least since the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>571</sup>; furthermore, the inhabitants of Trachonitis revolted against the Idumaeen garrison imposed by Herod and became brigands together with Arabs<sup>572</sup>. 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<sup>573</sup>.

Furthermore, in the region the presence of Greeks is attested: an inscription from the modern village of Dhunaibe cites the «Greeks of Danaba»<sup>574</sup>, in the territory of ancient Batanaea, in proximity to the Trachonitis. The inscription was dated to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>575</sup>: 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»<sup>576</sup>.

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

---

<sup>568</sup> See as latest HACKL, JENNI and SCHNEIDER 2003 and NETZER 2003.

<sup>569</sup> ALPASS 2013, 172-173.

<sup>570</sup> STARCKY 1985-1986, 174; NEHMÉ 2010, f. 5; ALPASS 2013, 179.

<sup>571</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIV, 277: «Ἐπει δὲ Κάσσιος ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀπήρην, Μάλιχος ἐπεβούλευσεν Ἀντίπατρω τὴν τοῦτου τελευτήν ἀσφάλειαν Ὑρκανοῦ τῆς ἀρχῆς εἶναι νομίζων. οὐ μὴν ἔλαθεν τὸν Ἀντίπατρον ταῦτα φρονῶν, ἀλλ' αἰσθόμενος γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἐχώρει πέραν Ἰορδάνου καὶ στρατὸν Ἀράβιον ἅμα καὶ ἐγχώριον συνήθροισεν».

<sup>572</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 292: «ἐπιτίθενται δὲ τῷ καιρῷ καὶ οἱ τὴν Τραχωνίτιν ἔχοντες τῆς τῶν Ἰδουμαίων φρουρᾶς κατεξαναστάντες καὶ λησθηρίοις χρώμενοι μετὰ τῶν Ἀράβων, οἱ ἐλεηλάτου τὴν ἐκείνων χώραν οὐκ ἀπὸ ὠφελείας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μνησικακίας χαλεπώτεροι τὰς ἀδικίας ὄντες».

<sup>573</sup> 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.

<sup>574</sup> *IGLS* XV, 228: «Οἱ ἐν Δαναβοῖς Ἑλληνας Μηνοφίλωι εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν».

<sup>575</sup> SARTRE 1993, 133-134.

<sup>576</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

A clear division of southern Syria in three parts, indeed, as well as outlined by Jacqueline Dentzer-Feydy<sup>577</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>578</sup>. 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*.

---

<sup>577</sup> DENTZER-FEYDY 1988, 222-223.

<sup>578</sup> 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 γενάρχη<sup>579</sup>.

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<sup>580</sup>. 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<sup>581</sup>. Augustus for example added to the territories ruled by Herod the Great even the cities of

---

<sup>579</sup> SARTRE 2001, 82-84; BUTCHER 2003, 113; KROPP and MOHAMMED 2006, 126.

<sup>580</sup> MILLAR 1987a, 130.

<sup>581</sup> MILLAR 1993, 29-43; SARTRE 2001, 469-480.

Gadara and Hippos<sup>582</sup> and later the areas of Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis, including the cities of Canatha and Raphana<sup>583</sup>.

<sup>582</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 215-217: «κἄν εὐθύς ἐπράχθη τι τῶν ἀνηκέστων: νῦν δὲ Καίσαρος ἀγγελθέντος κρατεῖν τῷ πολέμῳ καὶ τεθνηκότων Ἀντωνίου καὶ Κλεοπάτρας ἔχειν Αἴγυπτον, ἐπειγόμενος εἰς τὸ Καίσαρι ἀπαντᾶν κατέλιπεν ὡς εἶχεν τὰ περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν. ἐξίοντι δὲ Μαριάμμη παρασησομένη τὸν Σόαιμον πολλὴν τε χάριν τῆς ἐπιμελείας ὠμολόγει καὶ μεριδαρχίαν αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἤτήσατο. κάκεῖνος μὲν τυγχάνει τῆς τιμῆς. Ἡρώδης δὲ γενόμενος ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Καίσαρι τε μετὰ πλείονος παρρησίας εἰς λόγους ἦλθεν ὡς ἤδη φίλος καὶ μεγίστων ἠξιώθη: τῶν τε γὰρ Κλεοπάτραν δορυφορούντων Γαλατῶν τετρακοσίοις αὐτὸν ἔδωρήσατο καὶ τὴν χώραν ἀπέδωκεν αὐτῷ πάλιν, ἦν δι' ἐκείνης ἀφηρέθη. προσέθηκεν δὲ καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἔτι δὲ τῆς παραλίου Γάζαν καὶ Ἀνθηδόνα καὶ Ἰόππην καὶ Στράτωνος πύργον»;

*BJI*, 20,3 (396-397): «διὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἦκεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἤδη Κλεοπάτρας καὶ Ἀντωνίου τεθνεώτων, οὐ μόνον αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἄλλαις τιμαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ προσέθηκεν τὴν τε ὑπὸ Κλεοπάτρας ἀποτημηθεῖσαν χώραν καὶ ἐξωθεν Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον καὶ Σαμάρειαν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τῶν παραλίῳ Γάζαν καὶ Ἀνθηδόνα καὶ Ἰόππην καὶ Στράτωνος πύργον: ἔδωρήσατο δ' αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς φυλακὴν τοῦ σώματος τετρακοσίους Γαλάτας, οἱ πρότερον ἔδορυφόρου Κλεοπάτραν. οὐδὲν δὲ οὕτως ἐνήγεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὰς δωρεὰς ὡς τὸ μεγαλόφρον τοῦ λαμβάνοντος».

<sup>583</sup> JOSEPH. *BJI*, 20,4 398-400: «Μετὰ δὲ τὴν πρώτην ἀκτιάδα προστίθησιν αὐτοῦ τῇ βασιλείᾳ τὸν τε Τράχωνα καλούμενον καὶ τὴν προσεχῆ Βαταναίαν τε καὶ τὴν Αὐρανίτιν χώραν ἐξ αἰτίας τοιαύτης: Ζηνόδωρος ὁ τὸν Λυσανίου μεμισθωμένος οἶκον οὐ διέλειπεν ἐπαφείας τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ Τράχωνος ληστὰς Δαμασκηνοῖς. οἱ δ' ἐπὶ Οὐάρρωνα τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῆς Συρίας καταφυγόντες ἐδεήθησαν δηλώσαι τὴν συμφορὰν αὐτῶν Καίσαρι: Καίσαρ δὲ γνοὺς ἀντεπέστελλεν ἐξαιρεθῆναι τὸ ληστήριον. στρατεύσας οὖν Οὐάρρων καθαίρει τε τῶν ἀνδρῶν τὴν γῆν καὶ ἀφαιρεῖται Ζηνόδωρον: ἦν ὕστερον Καίσαρ, ὡς μὴ γένοιτο πάλιν ὀρμητήριον τοῖς λησταῖς ἐπὶ τὴν Δαμασκὸν, Ἡρώδῃ δίδωσιν. κατέστησεν δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ Συρίας ὅλης ἐπίτροπον ἔτι δεκάτω πάλιν ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν ἐπαρχίαν, ὡς μηδὲν ἐξεῖναι δίχα τῆς ἐκεῖνου συμβουλίας τοῖς ἐπιτρόποις διοικεῖν. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐτελεύτα Ζηνόδωρος, προσένειμεν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν μεταξὺ Τράχωνος καὶ τῆς Γαλιλαίας γῆν ἅπασαν. ὁ δὲ τούτων Ἡρώδῃ μεῖζον ἦν, ὑπὸ μὲν Καίσαρος ἐφιλείτο μετ' Ἀγρίππαν, ὑπ' Ἀγρίππα δὲ μετὰ Καίσαρα. ἐνθεν ἐπὶ πλείστον μὲν εὐδαιμονίας προύκοπεν, εἰς μεῖζον δ' ἐξήρθη φρόνημα καὶ τὸ πλεον τῆς μεγαλονοίας ἐπέτεινεν εἰς εὐσέβειαν»;

*AJ* XV, 343-348: «τούτοις ἀνελοῦσιν καταγωγὴ μὲν ἦν Πολλίωνος οἶκος ἀνδρὸς τῶν μάλιστα σπουδασάντων περὶ τὴν Ἡρώδου φιλίαν, ἐφείτο δὲ κἄν τοῖς Καίσαρος κατάγεσθαι: καὶ γὰρ ἐξεδέξατο μετὰ πάσης φιλανθρωπίας τοὺς παῖδας: καὶ δίδωσιν Ἡρώδῃ τὴν βασιλείαν ὅτω βούλεται βεβαιοῦν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγονότων, καὶ χώραν ἔτι τὸν τε Τράχωνα καὶ Βαταναίαν καὶ Αὐρανίτιν: ἔδωκεν δὲ διὰ τοιαύτην αἰτίαν παραλαβὼν. Ζηνόδωρός τις ἐμεμίσθωτο τὸν οἶκον τὸν Λυσανίου. τούτῳ τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὰς προσόδους οὐκ ἤρκει, τὰ ληστήρια δὲ ἔχων ἐν τῷ Τράχωνι πλείω τὴν πρόσσδον ἔφερεν: οἰκοῦσι γὰρ ἄνδρες ἐξ ἀπονοίας ζῶντες τοὺς τόπους, οἱ τὰ Δαμασκηνῶν ἐλήζοντο, καὶ Ζηνόδωρος οὐτ' εἶργεν αὐτὸς τε τῶν ὠφελειῶν ἐκοινώνει. κακῶς δὲ πάσχοντες οἱ πλησιόχωροι Οὐάρρωνος κατεβῶν τοῦ τότε ἡγεμονεύοντος καὶ γράφειν ἤξιον Καίσαρι τοῦ Ζηνοδώρου τὴν ἀδικίαν. Καίσαρ δὲ ἀνερχθέντων τούτων ἀντέγραφεν ἐξελεῖν τὰ ληστήρια τὴν τε χώραν Ἡρώδῃ προσένειμεν, ὡς διὰ τῆς ἐπιμελείας τῆς ἐκεῖνου μηκέτ' ἂν ὄχληρῶν τῶν περὶ τὸν Τράχωνα γενησομένων τοῖς πλησίον: οὐδὲ γὰρ ῥᾶδιον ἦν ἐπισχεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἔθει τὸ ληστεύειν πεπονημένους καὶ βίον οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἔχοντας: οὔτε γὰρ πόλεις αὐτοῖς οὔτε κτήσεις ἀγρῶν, ὑποφυγαὶ δὲ κατὰ τῆς γῆς καὶ σπήλαια καὶ κοινὴ μετὰ τῶν βοσκημάτων δίατα. μεμηχάνηται δὲ καὶ συναγωγὰς ὑδάτων καὶ προπαρασκευὰς σιτίων αἱ δύνανται πλείστον ἐξ ἀφανοῦς αἱ γὰρ μὴν εἴσοδοι στεναὶ καὶ καθ' ἓνα παρερχομένων, τὰ δ' ἔνδον ἀπίστως μεγάλα πρὸς εὐρυχωρίαν ἐξειργασμένων: τὸ δ' ὑπὲρ τὰς οἰκήσεις



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 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars have argued that the Decapolis was only a geographical term<sup>584</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>585</sup>. 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<sup>586</sup>.

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

---

ἔδαφος οὐχ ὑψηλόν, ἀλλ' οἶον ἐξ ἐπιπέδου. πέτρα δὲ τὸ σύμπαν σκληρὰ καὶ δύσοδος, εἰ μὴ τρίβῃ χρωτό τις ἐξ ὁδηγίας: οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐταὶ κατ' ὀρθὸν ἀλλὰ πολλὰς ἔλικας ἐξελίπτονται. τούτοις ἐπειδὴ τῶν εἰς τοὺς πλησίον κακουργημάτων ἐκωλύοντο, καὶ κατ' ἀλλήλων ἦν ὁ τῆς ληστείας τρόπος, ὡς μηδὲν ἀνομίας ἐν τοῦτ' ἠλεῖσθαι. λαβὼν δὲ τὴν χάριν Ἡρώδης παρὰ Καίσαρος καὶ παρελθὼν εἰς τὴν χώραν ὁδηγῶν ἐμπειρίᾳ τοῦ τε πονηρευομένου αὐτῶν κατέπαυσεν καὶ τοῖς πέριξ ἀδεῆ τὴν εἰρήνην παρέσχεν».

<sup>584</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, Vol. II, 126; PARKER 1975, 440-441.

<sup>585</sup> ISAAC 1981, 73.

<sup>586</sup> GRAF 1992, 34-35.

history<sup>587</sup>, has defined the region as a «virtual island», isolated from geographical environment<sup>588</sup>: 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<sup>589</sup>. 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.



FIG. 12 Cities of the Decapolis.

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.

---

<sup>587</sup> HORDEN AND PURCELL 2000.

<sup>588</sup> KENNEDY 2007.

<sup>589</sup> 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<sup>590</sup>.

### 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<sup>591</sup>. They report on events from the life of Jesus, who travelled in its territories.

In the gospel of Mark<sup>592</sup> 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<sup>593</sup>. 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<sup>594</sup>. Decapolis is designated as an area east of the Tiberias lake.

---

<sup>590</sup> LUCKE 2008, 182; 2011, 591.

<sup>591</sup> SCHNELLE 1999, 218-219, 238.

<sup>592</sup> MARK V, 8 ff: «Ἐλεγεν γάρ αὐτῷ, Ἐξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [...] Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πρὸς τῷ ὄρει ἀγέλη χοίρων μεγάλη βοσκομένη· καὶ παρεκάλεσαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Πέμψον ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, ἵνα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσέλθωμεν. καὶ ἐπέτρεπεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἐξελθόντα τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, καὶ ὠρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὡς δισχίλιοι, καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ [...] καὶ ἐμβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ὁ δαιμονισθεὶς ἵνα μετ' αὐτοῦ ᾗ. καὶ οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς, καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε. **καὶ ἀπήλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς**, καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον».

<sup>593</sup> MARK V, 1: «Καὶ ἦλθον 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**, ἧτις ἐστὶν ἀντιπέρα τῆς Γαλιλαίας». However, in MATTHEW VIII, 28 Gadara is the best reading: «καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πέραν **εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν** ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ δύο δαιμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχύειν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκείνης». Gadara's territory is not limited to the lake, but it was closer to it than Gerasa.

<sup>594</sup> MARK VII, 31: «Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὁρίων Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνά μέσον τῶν ὁρίων 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<sup>595</sup>, 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 *Naturalis Historia*, after describing the geographical nature of the region of Judaea, claimed that Decapolis was part of proper Syria, adjacent to Galilee<sup>596</sup>. After outlining Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, Pliny mentioned again the Decapolis<sup>597</sup>. 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<sup>598</sup>. 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<sup>599</sup>, 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<sup>600</sup>. 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<sup>601</sup>. The proximity to Tiberias probably has been referred to the χώραι 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<sup>602</sup>.

In his *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

---

<sup>595</sup> KOCH 1983, 150 ff.

<sup>596</sup> *Nat. Hist. V, 16 (74)*: «*lungitur ei latere Syriae Decapolitana regio a numero oppidorum, in quo non omnes eadem observant, plurimi tamen Damascus epoto riguis amne Chrysorroa fertilem, Philadelphiam, Rhabanum (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. Intercurrunt cinguntque has urbes tetrarchiae, regnorum instar singulae, et in regna contribuuntur, Trachonitis, Panias (in qua Caesarea cum supra dicto fonte), Abila, Arca, Ampeloessa, Gabes.*

<sup>597</sup> *Nat. Hist. V, 17 (77)*: «*post eum introrsus Decapolitana regio praedictaeque cum ea Tetrarchiae et Palaestines tota laxitas.*

<sup>598</sup> There is, therefore, no need to believe that a fixed list existed.

<sup>599</sup> PARKER 1975, 438; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 10. Pliny did not use significantly the term *foedus* or *societas*.

<sup>600</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ XVI, 76*: «πάσας ὁ Πομπήιος ἀφῆκεν ἐλευθέρους καὶ προσένειμεν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ». These sentence only means that these cities were freed from Jewish domination, because most of them, if not all, were subjected to Roman governor.

<sup>601</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ III, 9,7 (446)*: «πέμπει δὴ τὸν υἱὸν Τίτον εἰς Καισάρειαν μετὰξοντα τὴν ἐκεῖθεν στρατιὰν εἰς Σκυθόπολιν: ἢ δ' ἐστὶν μεγίστη τῆς δεκαπόλεως καὶ γείτων τῆς Τιβεριάδος».

<sup>602</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 11.

Vespasian: in fact, they asked him to punish Tiberias<sup>603</sup>. 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)<sup>604</sup>. 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<sup>605</sup>. 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<sup>606</sup>. 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<sup>607</sup>. 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<sup>608</sup>. 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,

---

<sup>603</sup>JOSEPH. *Vita* 341-342: «πρότερον γὰρ ἢ ἐμὲ τῆς Γαλιλαίας στρατηγὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν χειροτονηθῆναι σὺ καὶ πάντες Τιβεριεῖς οὐ μόνον ἀνελήφατε τὰ ὄπλα, **ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ δέκα πόλεις ἐπολεμήτε: σὺ γοῦν τὰς κώμας αὐτῶν ἐνέπρησας** καὶ ὁ σὸς οἰκέτης ἐπὶ τῆς παρατάξεως ἐκείνης ἔπεσεν. ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἐγὼ λέγω μόνος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ὑπομνήμασιν οὕτως γέγραπται, καὶ τίνα τρόπον ἐν Πτολεμαῖδι Οὐεσπασιανοῦ κατεβόησαν οἱ τῶν δέκα πόλεων ἔνοικοι τιμωρίαν ὑποσχεῖν σε τὸν αἴτιον ἀξιοῦντες».

<sup>604</sup>JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,1 (458-459): «πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγὴν ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἐξαγριούται, καὶ **διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κώμας τῶν Σύρων καὶ τὰς προσεχούσας ἐπόρθουν πόλεις, Φιλαδέλφειάν τε καὶ Ἑσεβωνίτιν καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν. ἔπειτα Γαδάρους καὶ Ἴππω καὶ τῇ Γαυλανίπιδι προσπεσόντες τὰ μὲν καταστρεψάμενοι, τὰ δ' ὑποπρήσαντες** ἐχώρουν ἐπὶ Κάδασα τὴν Τυρίων καὶ Πτολεμαῖδα Γάβαν τε καὶ Καισάρειαν».

<sup>605</sup>JOSEPH. *Vita* 410: «ἐπεὶ δὲ Οὐεσπασιανὸς εἰς Πτολεμαῖδα παρεγένετο, **οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν τῆς Συρίας δέκα πόλεων** κατεβόων Ἰούστου τοῦ Τιβεριέως, ὅτι τὰς κώμας αὐτῶν ἐμπρήσειεν». The mention of τῆς Συρίας δέκα πόλεων let us think that Josephus referred to the Roman province, with administrative relation between Syria and the Decapolis.

<sup>606</sup>PTOL. *Geog.* V, 14,22: «Κοίλης Συρίας Δεκαπόλεως πόλεις αἶδε· Ἡλίου πόλις, Ἄβιλα ἐπικληθεῖσα Λυσανίου, Σάανα, Ἴνα, Δαμασκός, Σαμουλῖς, Ἄβιδα, Ἴππος, Καπιτωλίας, Γάδαρα, Ἄδρα. Σκυθόπολις, Γέρασα, Πέλλα, Δίον, Γαδώρα, Φιλαδελεφία, Κάναθα».

<sup>607</sup>COHEN 2006, 35. See also GRAF 2016, 1-5 for a complete review of the ancient and modern sources referring about the term.

<sup>608</sup>DIOD. *Sic.* II, 2,2-3: «τὰς μὲν οὖν καθ' ἕκαστα μάχας ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἀπάντων τῶν καταπολεμηθέντων οὐδεὶς τῶν συγγραφέων ἀνέγραψε, τὰ δ' ἐπισημότερα τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀκολουθῶς Κτησίᾳ τῷ Κνιδίῳ πειρασόμεθα συντόμως ἐπιδραμεῖν. κατεστρέψατο μὲν γὰρ τῆς παραθαλαπτίου καὶ τῆς συνεχοῦς χώρας τὴν τε Αἴγυπτον καὶ Φοινίκην, ἐπὶ δὲ Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν καὶ Παμφυλίαν καὶ Λυκίαν [...]».

the coastal region, and Syria Coele, the interior part<sup>609</sup>. A. Shalit, followed by M. Sartre, has given another interpretation: «Coele» would derive from the Aramaic word «Kol», which means «entirely, all», suggesting all the region west to the Euphrates river<sup>610</sup>. After the division of Syria between Seleucids and Ptolemies, the northern part of the area was under the Seleucid power, the southern part was ruled by Ptolemies. During the Ptolemaic period, the province was officially called «Syria and Phoenicia»<sup>611</sup>, 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»<sup>612</sup>.

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<sup>613</sup>.

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<sup>614</sup>. Nonetheless the term was later re-used in many cities of the Decapolis, especially during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>615</sup>.

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 Peraea around Hippos, Pella and Gadara<sup>616</sup>. In Epiphanius it is just said that

---

<sup>609</sup> BICKERMAN 1947, 256-266.

<sup>610</sup> SHALIT 1954, 64-77; Sartre 1988, 15-40, and 2001, 154-155.

<sup>611</sup> «ή Συρία και Φοινίκη»: SARTRE 1988, 21, 35 has convincingly suggested that the Ptolemies used this expression for indicating the claim to all of Syria.

<sup>612</sup> Many sources often mentioned simply «Coele Syria»: see *I MACC.* X, 69: «καὶ κατέστησεν Δημήτριος Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν ὄντα ἐπὶ Κοίλης Συρίας καὶ συνήγαγεν δύναμιν μεγάλην καὶ παρενέβαλεν ἐπὶ Ἰάμνεια καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς Ἰωνάθαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα».

*POLYB.* V, 1,5: «Ἄντιοχος δὲ καὶ Πτολεμαῖος, ἀπεγνωκότες τὰς πρεσβείας καὶ τὸ λόγῳ διεξάγειν τὴν ὑπὲρ Κοίλης Συρίας ἀμφισβήτησιν, ἐνήρχοντο πολεμεῖν ἀλλήλοις».

*POLYB.* 29,8: «Ἄντιοχος δὲ τὰ πλείστα μέρη Κοίλης Συρίας κατεστραμμένος αὐτὶς εἰς παραχειμασίαν ἀνέλυσε, Λυκοῦργος δ' ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων εἰς Αἰτωλίαν ἔφυγε, καταπλαγεὶς τοὺς ἐφόρους».

<sup>613</sup> LICHTENBERGER (2003, 13) says that the area was confined to the territories of Damascus and the cities in Transjordan.

<sup>614</sup> COHEN 2006, 41.

<sup>615</sup> In particular, see the inscriptions on the coins of Abila, Dion, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia and Scythopolis (SPIJKERMAN 1978).

<sup>616</sup> EUSEB. *Onom. s. v.* Δεκάπολις: «αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπὶ τῇ Περαιᾷ κειμένη ἀμφὶ τὴν Ἴππον καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Γαδάραν».

Pella was a city of the Decapolis<sup>617</sup>. In his work, a geographical dictionary named «Ἐθνικά», Stephanus of Byzantium has stated that Gerasa was «a city of Coele-Syria, of the Decapolis»<sup>618</sup>.

## 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.

This 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE<sup>619</sup> and its merchants were attested travelling in the Mediterranean during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>620</sup>. 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<sup>621</sup>. 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<sup>622</sup>.

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

---

<sup>617</sup> EPIPH. *Adv. Haer.* XXIX, 7, 7-8: «Ἔστιν δὲ αὐτὴ ἡ αἵρεσις ἡ Ναζωραίων ἐν τῇ Βεροιαίων περὶ τὴν Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει περὶ τὰ τῆς Πέλλης μέρη καὶ ἐν τῇ Βασανίτι ἐν τῇ λεγομένη Κωκάβη, Χωχάβη δὲ Ἑβραϊστὶ λεγομένη [...]».

<sup>618</sup> STEPH. BYZ. *s.v.* *Γέρασα*: «πόλις τῆς Κοίλης Συρίας, τῆς Δεκαπόλεως».

<sup>619</sup> COHEN 2006, 242.

<sup>620</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, Vol. II, 130.

<sup>621</sup> 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.

<sup>622</sup> JOSEPH *BJ* I, 21,11 (422): «Τοσαῦτα συγκτίσας πλείσταις καὶ τῶν ἔξω πόλεων τὸ μεγαλόψυχον ἐπεδείξατο. Τριπόλει μὲν γὰρ καὶ Δαμασκῶ καὶ Πτολεμαῖδι γυμνάσια, Βύβλω δὲ τεῖχος, ἐξέδρας τε καὶ στοὰς καὶ ναοὺς καὶ ἀγορὰς Βηρυτῶ κατασκευάσας καὶ Τύρω, Σιδῶνι γε μὴν καὶ Δαμασκῶ θέατρα, Λαοδικεῦσι δὲ τοῖς παραλίοις ὑδάτων εἰσαγωγὴν, Ἀσκαλωνίταις δὲ βαλανεῖα καὶ κρήνας πολυτελεῖς, πρὸς δὲ περίστυλα θαυμαστά τὴν τε ἐργασίαν καὶ τὸ μέγεθος: εἰσι δ' οἷς ἄλση καὶ λειμῶνας ἀνέθηκεν».

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<sup>623</sup>. 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<sup>624</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>623</sup> BURNS 2005, 48.

<sup>624</sup> JOSEPH. *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<sup>625</sup>. Both the Aramaic «*Kanatha*» 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<sup>626</sup>: Canatha, in fact, was openly aligned against Herod the Great and his army<sup>627</sup>.

---

<sup>625</sup> NUM XXII, 42. In I CHRON II, 23 the town of Kenath is located in the region of Gilead.

<sup>626</sup> JOSEPH. BJ I, 19,2 (366): «Ἐρρεψεν μέντοι καθ' Ἡρώδην τὸ βούλευμα: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ῥύσια κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἄγων καὶ πολὺ συγκροτήσας ἵππικὸν ἐπαφίησιν αὐτοῖς περὶ Διόσπολιν ἐκράτησέν τε καίτοι καρτερῶς ἀντιπαραραξαμένων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἦταν μέγα γίνεται κίνημα τῶν Ἀράβων, καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς Κάναθα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας ἄπειροι τὸ πλῆθος τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἔμενον».

<sup>627</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XV, 111-116: «τούτων αὐτῷ παρ' Ἀντωνίου λεχθέντων ὑποστρέψας Ἡρώδης συνεῖχεν τὸ στρατιωτικὸν ὡς εὐθύς εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἐμβάλων, καὶ παρασκευασθέντος ἵππικοῦ καὶ πεζῆς δυνάμεως εἰς Διόσπολιν ἀφικνεῖται τῶν Ἀράβων ἐκεῖ συναντώντων: οὐ γὰρ ἐλελήθει τὰ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον αὐτοῦς: καὶ μάχης καρτερᾶς γενομένης ἐκράτησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πολλὴ στρατιὰ τῶν Ἀράβων εἰς Κάναθα συνήει: χωρία δ' ἐστὶ ταῦτα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας: Ἡρώδης τε προπετυσμένος ἤκεν ἄγων ἐπ' αὐτοῦς τὸ πλεῖστον ἧς εἶχεν δυνάμεως, καὶ πλησιάσας ἐν καλῷ στρατοπεδεύεσθαι διεγνώκει χάρακά τε βαλόμενος ἐξ εὐκαίρου ταῖς μάχαις ἐπιχειρεῖν. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ διατάπτοντος ἐβόα τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων παρελόμενον τῆς τριβῆς ἄγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀραβας: ὠρμητο δὲ καὶ τῷ συντετάχθαι πιστεύειν καλῶς καὶ ταῖς προθυμίαις ἄμεινον ἔχόντων ὅσοι τὴν πρώτην μάχην νενικήκεσαν οὐδ' εἰς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν ἐπιτρέψαντες τοῖς ἐναντίοις. θορυβούντων οὖν καὶ πάσαν ἐπιδεικνυμένων σπουδῆν ἔγνω τῇ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ πλήθους ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποχρήσασθαι, καὶ προειπών, ὡς οὐ λελείπεται τῆς ἐκείνων ἀρετῆς, πρῶτος ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἠγήσατο πάντων κατ' οἰκεία τέλη συνακολουθησάντων. ἐκπληξίς δ' εὐθύς ἐμπίπτει τοῖς Ἀραβῶσι: ἀντιστάντες γὰρ εἰς ὀλίγον ὡς ἐώρων ἀμάχους ὄντας καὶ μεστοὺς φρονήματος, ἔφευγον οἱ πλείους ἐγκλίναντες κἂν διεφθάρησαν Ἀθηνίωνος μὴ κακώσαντος Ἡρώδην καὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους. οὗτος γὰρ ὢν στρατηγὸς μὲν Κλεοπάτρας ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ, διάφορος δὲ Ἡρώδη, τὸ μέλλον οὐκ ἀπαρασκευῶς ἐσκόπει, δρασάντων μὲν τι λαμπρὸν τῶν Ἀράβων ἐγνωκῶς ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, ἠττωμένων δέ, ὃ καὶ συνέβη, τοῖς ἀπὸ

According to a very recent analysis, the city might have started to mint coins from the Gabinius period<sup>628</sup>: 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(ιείς) Καναθ(ηνοί)<sup>629</sup>.

Stephanus of Byzantium<sup>630</sup>, followed by Eusebius<sup>631</sup>, affirmed that the city was in Arabia, close to Bosra.

#### 4.5.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

This city was excavated by the 19<sup>th</sup> century: after the first descriptions of de Laborde<sup>632</sup>, who referred about the state of preservation of the ruins at his time, the city was studied by Emmanuel Guillame Rey<sup>633</sup> and Melchior de Vogüé<sup>634</sup>, who documented the buildings and surveyed them. At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the works of Rudolf Ernst Brünnow, in collaboration with Alfred von Domaszewski<sup>635</sup>, and of Howard Crosby Butler<sup>636</sup> 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<sup>637</sup>.

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<sup>638</sup>.

#### 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<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>639</sup>.

---

τῆς χώρας συνεληλυθόσι τῶν οἰκείων παρεσκευασμένος ἐπιτίθεσθαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις». In this passage is itself clear that the city represented a sort of *unicum* among the cities of the Decapolis, with a high percentage of Arab people.

<sup>628</sup> SILVER 2016, 68. For the coinage of Canatha, see also SPIJKERMAN 1978, 90-95; MESHORER 1985, 76-77.

<sup>629</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 92-95, nos. 6-10; 13; 14.

<sup>630</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Κάναθα: «πόλις πρὸς τῇ Βόστρα Ἀραβίας. τὸ ἔθνικὸν Καναθηνός. ἔντισι δὲ καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἰ γράφεται».

<sup>631</sup> EUSEB. *Onom.* s.v. Κάναθ: «κώμη τῆς Ἀραβίας εἰς ἔτι νῦν Καναθὰ καλουμένη, ἣν ἐλὼν ὁ Ναβαῦ ὠνόμασεν Ναβῶθ, καὶ γέγονε φυλῆς Μανασσῆ. κεῖται δὲ εἰς ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ Τραχῶνι πλησίον Βόστρων».

<sup>632</sup> DE LABORDE 1837, pls. 54-55.

<sup>633</sup> REY 1860, 120, 129, 150-153, pls. 5, 7, 8, 15, 20.

<sup>634</sup> DE VOGÜÉ 1865-1877, pls. 19-20.

<sup>635</sup> BRÜNNOW and DOMASZEWSKI 1909, 102-144, figs. 1000-1038.

<sup>636</sup> BUTLER 1903, 351-361.

<sup>637</sup> DONCEEL 1983; 1987.

<sup>638</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 144; 2010, 239; 2013, 150-151.

<sup>639</sup> FREYBERGER 2013, 149.

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<sup>640</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, albeit it is likely that the best part of the remains is from the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>641</sup>, when an earlier theatre was also built. A renovation of the buildings happened during the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>642</sup>. It was constituted by a series of buildings with a rather complicated architectural history<sup>643</sup>: the entire complex was built during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>644</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>645</sup>. 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 ἄδυτον. It is likely that three divinities were worshipped<sup>646</sup>. 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<sup>647</sup>. The structure was built during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and restored during the Severan rule, when the entrance hall was decorated with six columns in the Corinthian order<sup>648</sup>. 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»<sup>649</sup>. Parts of the ναός were already visible during the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>650</sup>: 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

---

<sup>640</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 144.

<sup>641</sup> For a detailed description of the sanctuaries of Kanatha, see FREYBERGER *et alii* 2016.

<sup>642</sup> DE VOGÜÉ 1865-1877, pls. 19-20.

<sup>643</sup> BALL 2000, 187.

<sup>644</sup> FREYBERGER (2013, 152) dated the complex on the base of stylistic comparison with the near sanctuary of Seeia.

<sup>645</sup> BUTLER 1903, 357-361 called it a «temple-like structure»; see also AMER *et alii* 1982, 258-263;

<sup>646</sup> SEGAL 2013f, 200.

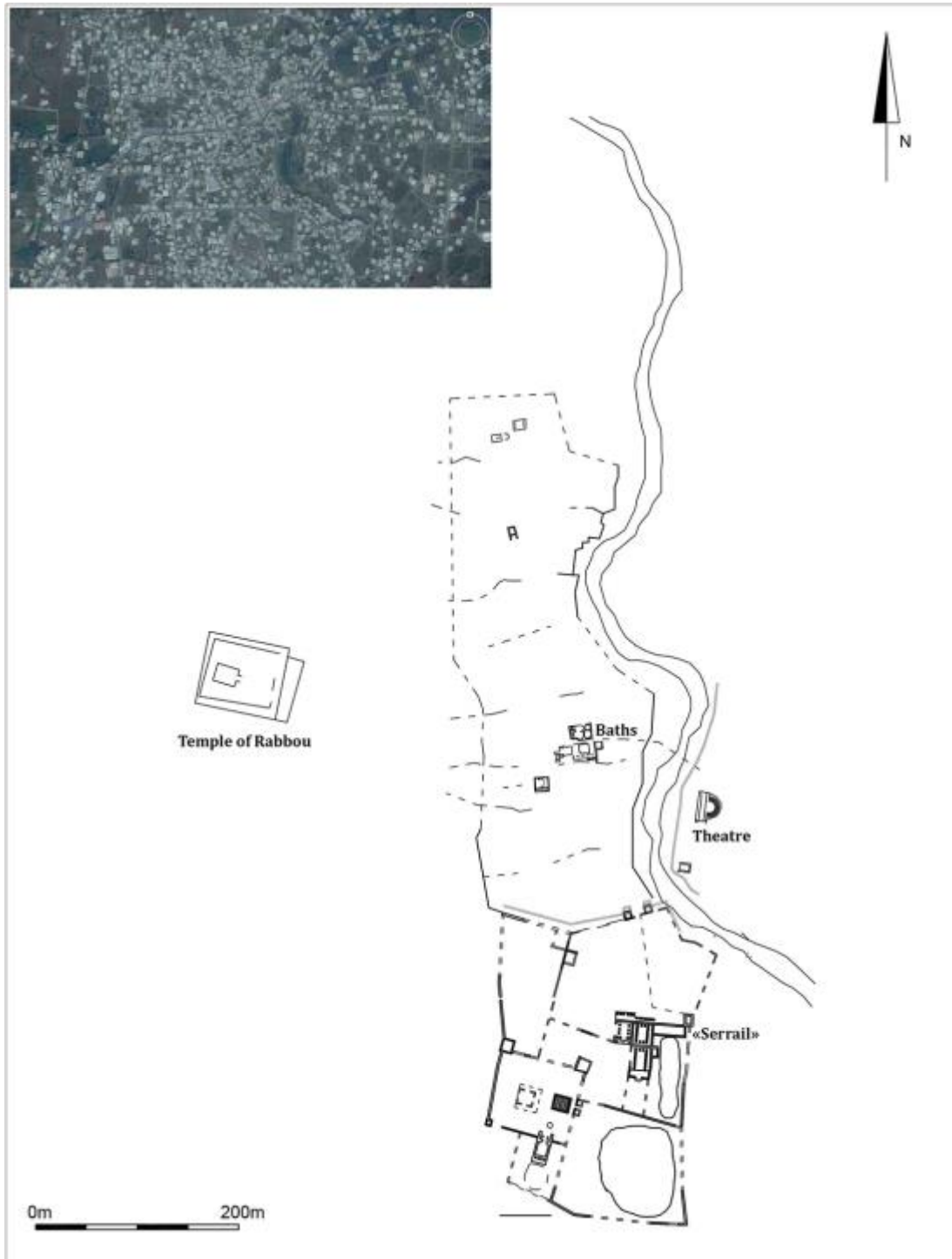
<sup>647</sup> FREYBERGER 2010, 243; *contra* SEGAL 2008, 124 who has stated that there was no roof.

<sup>648</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 146.

<sup>649</sup> FREYBERGER 2010, 244; 2015, 288.

<sup>650</sup> 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<sup>651</sup>.



<sup>651</sup> See for example the Herodian temple of Jerusalem or the sanctuary of Zeus in Damascus.

FIG. 13 City plan of Roman Kanatha, from FREYBERGER *et alii* 2016, plan 1a. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

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<sup>652</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and was rebuilt during the early 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>653</sup>. It is the largest temple erected in the area of Auranitis and Trachonitis under the Roman rule<sup>654</sup>. 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 ἄδυτον 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<sup>655</sup> 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 ἄδυτον, flanked by two smaller chambers and an ante-cella surrounded by a corridor on three sides<sup>656</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE<sup>657</sup>. Furthermore, Klaus Freyberger has claimed that it was the ritual building of the city goddess of Kanatha<sup>658</sup>, 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»<sup>659</sup>, the structure was finally identified as the temple of Rabbou thanks to the finding of an inscription into the temple<sup>660</sup>. According to the style and the technique utilised, the inscription was dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD<sup>661</sup>, albeit Klaus Freyberger dated it to the third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE<sup>662</sup>.

The building has the appearance of a περίπτερος, although it is arranged in an unusual

---

<sup>652</sup> 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 Αἴλιος Γ[ε]ρμανός βουλευτής, Πουπλίου Αἰλίου Φιλίππου υἱός, τῶν Βεννάθης, φιλοτειμησάμενος Διῖ μεγίστῳ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων εὐσεθῶν ἀνέστησεν». WADDINGTON 1870, no. 2340: «Τιγ(ράνης) Ἀντίοχος φιλοτιμησάμενος Διῖ μεγίστῳ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέστησεν».

<sup>653</sup> FREYBERGER 2010, 242-249.

<sup>654</sup> SEGAL 2008, 107; SEGAL 2013f, 195.

<sup>655</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 148.

<sup>656</sup> FREYBERGER 2010, 241.

<sup>657</sup> LAXANDER 2003, 145-152.

<sup>658</sup> FREYBERGER 2015, 289.

<sup>659</sup> FREYBERGER 1993; ERTEL 2000.

<sup>660</sup> AUGIER and SARTRE 2002, 125. The text of the inscription is: «Φίλιππος Ἀλεξάνδρου βο(υλευτής), Νασεαθη γυνή καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος υἱός τὸ πρόναιον οἰκοδομήσαντες ἐφίερωσαν Θεῷ Ραββου».

<sup>661</sup> AUGIER and SARTRE 2002, 128.

<sup>662</sup> 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<sup>663</sup>. The remains of the temple can be dated to the first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, even though the whole complex is older<sup>664</sup>: 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<sup>665</sup>. 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 ὠδεῖον<sup>666</sup>) 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 to the southern *nymphaeum*. This elaborate canal system was probably built during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE<sup>667</sup>. The ὠδεῖον 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<sup>668</sup>. Judging from the name «Ulpios», an ancestor of him probably received Roman citizenship during the reign of Emperor Trajan<sup>669</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. During the Antonine Period, it was probably restored and fitted out a new façade<sup>670</sup>.

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 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, as shown by ceramics and glasses of this period found at the layers of the foundation of the walls<sup>671</sup>.

---

<sup>663</sup> SEGAL 2013f, 198.

<sup>664</sup> FREYBERGER 2013, 156.

<sup>665</sup> For a closer examination, see ERTEL 2000, 196-197; 209-213.

<sup>666</sup> WADDINGTON 1870, no. 2341: «Ἀγαθῆ Τύχη. Μάρκος Οὐλπίος Λυσίας Ἰκαύρου πρόεδρος ἐφιλοτειμήσατο τῆ γλυκυτάτῃ πατρίδι [ἐκ] τῶν ἰδίων εἰς τὸ κτίσμα τοῦ θεατροειδοῦς ὠδείου δ[η]ν[α]ρία μύρια, \* M, εὐτυχῶς καὶ καλῶς».

<sup>667</sup> FREYBERGER 2004, 17.

<sup>668</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 150: the inscription is compared with another inscription on a base of a statue from Qanawat. This text date back to the reign of the emperor Alexander Severus.

<sup>669</sup> *Contra* DENTZER-FEYDY 1985-1986, 291, who thinks that this kind of structures are dated to the Antonine period on the base of architectonic style.

<sup>670</sup> FREYBERGER 2004, 17-19.

<sup>671</sup> FREYBERGER 2000, 151.

## 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<sup>672</sup>.

The modern Deraa has developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> century, European explorers had already identified the city with Edrei, the capital of the kingdom of Bashan, as reported by Biblical sources<sup>673</sup>.

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<sup>674</sup>.

Archaeological works have shown that the city knew a huge growth during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. This development was maybe linked with other activities involved in the region since *Publius Geminus Marcianus* became the governor of the *Provincia Arabia* in 162 CE<sup>675</sup>.

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<sup>676</sup>.

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<sup>677</sup>.

### 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<sup>678</sup>.

---

<sup>672</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.

<sup>673</sup> SEETZEN 1854-1859, 184-185; *Dt* I,4 and *JOSH* 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 KETTENHOFEN 1991, 83-85.

<sup>674</sup> MITTMANN 1964, 113-136; FOURNET and WEBER 2010, 177.

<sup>675</sup> FOURNET and WEBER 2010, 193.

<sup>676</sup> SARTRE 1992, 152.

<sup>677</sup> SARTRE 1992, 151 ff.

<sup>678</sup> SARTRE-FOURIAT 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<sup>679</sup>. The publication of G. Wetzstein in 1860 revealed the presence of an underground city, with its numerous roads, houses and shops<sup>680</sup>. He was the first to suppose that the aqueduct, which served Adraha, had been arrived to Gadara<sup>681</sup>. and encouraged the American Palestine Exploration Society to completely survey these remains in 1875-1877<sup>682</sup>.

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<sup>683</sup>. 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<sup>684</sup>, claiming that this «subterranean city» was probably used by local population in times of danger<sup>685</sup>.

In 1940s a team under the direction of Joseph Nasrallah revealed the traces of a site dated to the Bronze Age<sup>686</sup>.

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)<sup>687</sup>. 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<sup>688</sup>. In a

---

<sup>679</sup> ROBINSON 1837, 196-197.

<sup>680</sup> WETZSTEIN 1860, 47-48.

<sup>681</sup> KERNER (2004) has recently got back this hypothesis.

<sup>682</sup> MERRILL 1881, 348-353.

<sup>683</sup> SCHUMACHER 1886, 121-149.

<sup>684</sup> SCHUMACHER 1886, 142-143.

<sup>685</sup> SCHUMACHER 1886, 145.

<sup>686</sup> NASRALLAH 1948, 1950; SARTRE-FAURIAT 2001, 61.

<sup>687</sup> FOURNET and WEBER 2010, 176-177.

<sup>688</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Geminius 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, when they were built also in Gadara, Gerasa and Scythopolis<sup>689</sup>.

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 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Adraha represented an important strategic point.

---

<sup>689</sup> 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.

## 4.7 DION

The site is mentioned five times by Flavius Josephus: it appears for the first time in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, when Alexander Jannaeus conquered the city<sup>690</sup>. It was surely situated on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem, since Pompey crossed Dion, Pella and Scythopolis to go to Judaea<sup>691</sup>. During the struggle against the Nabataean king Malichos, Herod the Great won a battle close to Dion<sup>692</sup>. Indeed, Josephus informed us that Dion was in the hands of Hasmonean kings before Pompey's coming since it was taken by Alexander Jannaeus<sup>693</sup> and that later it was in a contested territory between Judaea and Nabataea<sup>694</sup>.

Under the name «Δίον», Stephanus of Byzantium quoted several cities, among which a city in Coele Syria founded by Alexander the Great<sup>695</sup>. Furthermore, Stephanus affirmed

---

<sup>690</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 393: «Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ἐλάσας αὐθις ἐπὶ Δίαν πόλιν αἰρεῖ ταύτην, καὶ στρατεύσας ἐπὶ Ἔσσαν, οὗ τὰ πλείστου ἄξια Ζήνωνι συνέβαινεν εἶναι, τρισὶν μὲν περιβάλλει τείχεσιν τὸ χωρίον, ἀμαχί δὲ λαβῶν τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ Γαύλαναν καὶ Σελεύκειαν ἐξώρμησεν».

<sup>691</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 6, 4-5 (132-134): «οὐ μὴν οὐδ' Ἀριστόβουλος ὑστέρει πεπειθῶς τῇ Σκαύρου δωροδοκίᾳ παρῆν τε καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς οἶόν τε βασιλικώτατα κεκοσμηκῶς ἑαυτὸν. ἀδοξήσας δὲ πρὸς τὰς θεραπείας καὶ μὴ φέρων δουλεύειν ταῖς χρεῖαις ταπεινότερον τοῦ σχήματος ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου πόλεως χωρίζεται. Πρὸς ταύτ' ἀγανακτήσας Πομπήιος πολλὰ καὶ τῶν περὶ Ὑρκανὸν ἰκετευόντων ὥρμησεν ἐπ' Ἀριστόβουλον, ἀναλαβῶν τὴν τε Ῥωμαϊκὴν δύναμιν καὶ πολλοὺς ἐκ τῆς Συρίας συμμάχους. ἐπεὶ δὲ παρελαύνων Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν ἦκεν εἰς Κορέας. ὅθεν ἡ Ἰουδαίων ἀρχαία χώρα κατὰ τὴν μεσόγειον ἀνιόντων, ἀκούσας συμπεφευγέναι τὸν Ἀριστόβουλον εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειον, τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν φρούριον τῶν πάντων φιλοτίμως ἐξησκημένων ὑπὲρ ὄρους ὑψηλοῦ κείμενον, πέμψας καταβαίνειν αὐτὸν ἐκέλευσεν»;

*AJ* XIV, 47: «ἔτυχεν μέντοι τοῦτο ἐξ Ἀριστοβούλου γενόμενον: οὐ γὰρ ἀναμείνας οὐδὲν ὦν διελέχθη πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Πομπήιος εἰς Δειλον πόλιν ἦλθεν κάκειθεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἀπῆρεν. Ὀργίζεται δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ Πομπήιος, καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ναβαταίους ἀναλαβῶν στρατιὰν ἔκ τε Δαμασκού καὶ τῆς ἄλλης Συρίας ἐπικουρικᾶ σὺν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτῷ Ῥωμαίων τάγμασιν ἐστράτευσεν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀριστόβουλον. ὡς δὲ παραμειψάμενος Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν εἰς Κορέας ἦκεν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τῆς Ἰουδαίας διεξιόντι τὴν μεσόγειον, ἐνταῦθα εἰς τι περικαλλὲς ἔρυμα ἐπ' ἄκρου τοῦ ὄρους ἰδρυμένον Ἀλεξάνδρειον Ἀριστοβούλου συμπεφευγῶτος, πέμψας ἐκέλευσεν ἦκειν πρὸς αὐτόν».

<sup>692</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 111: «τούτων αὐτῷ παρ' Ἀντωνίου λεχθέντων ὑποστρέψας Ἡρώδης συνεῖχεν τὸ στρατιωτικὸν ὡς εὐθύς εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἐμβαλῶν, καὶ παρασκευασθέντος ἵππικου καὶ πεζῆς δυνάμεως εἰς Διόσπολιν ἀφικνεῖται τῶν Ἀράβων ἐκεῖ συναντώντων: οὐ γὰρ ἐλελήθει τὰ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον αὐτούς: καὶ μάχης καρτερᾶς γενομένης ἐκράτησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι» and *BJ* I, 19,2 (366): «Ἐρρεψεν μέντοι καθ' Ἡρώδην τὸ βούλευμα: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ῥύσια κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἄγων καὶ πολὺ συγκροτήσας ἵππικὸν ἐπαφίησιν αὐτοῖς περὶ Διόσπολιν ἐκράτησέν τε καίτοι καρτερῶς ἀντιπαραταξαμένων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἦταν μέγα γίνεται κίνημα τῶν Ἀράβων, καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς Κάναθα τῆς κοίλης Συρίας ἄπειροι τὸ πλῆθος τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἔμενον».

<sup>693</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 393. See above, note 690.

<sup>694</sup> KROPP and MOHAMMAD 2006, 129.

<sup>695</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Δίον: «πόλις [...] κοίλης Συρίας, κτίσμα Ἀλεξάνδρου». It is possible that the name derives from one of the cities of Macedonia with the same name. The Alexander's foundation could be the proof of the existence of a great Hellenistic settlement. Alexander did not really found Dion, but he could have sent one of his generals for establish a military colony in that area. See also SARTRE 2001, 116.

that the water of this city was unhealthy, quoting an epigram<sup>696</sup>. The city is even cited by the philosopher Damascius in the early 6<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>697</sup>.

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<sup>698</sup>. 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<sup>699</sup>. 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<sup>700</sup>. Tell al-Ash'ari seems to be the best candidate and the positioning of Dion in this place has been favoured by many scholars<sup>701</sup>: 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<sup>702</sup>. 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<sup>th</sup> and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>703</sup>. 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.

#### 4.7.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

Since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many blocks, column drums and capitals were seen by

---

<sup>696</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Δίων: «νᾶμα τὸ Διηνὸν γλυκερὸν ποτόν, ἦν δε γε πίησ,|παύση μὲν διψης, εὐθὺ δὲ και βίότου».

<sup>697</sup> DAM. *ISID.* Φ195: «Λέγεται δὲ και τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ εἶναι Στύγιον. Τὸ δὲ χωρίον, ἐν ᾧ ἐστί, πεδίον τῆς Ἰραβίας, ἀνηπλωμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ἕω μέχρι Δίας τῆς ἐρήμου πόλεως».

<sup>698</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 148.

<sup>699</sup> MITTMANN 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.

<sup>700</sup> SCHWARTZ 1906, 359-361.

<sup>701</sup> ABEL 1938 II, 306-307; BIETENHARD 1963, 27; AUGÉ 1988, 337; REY-COQUAIS 1992, 117; SARTRE 1992, 149-152; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 51; KROPP and MOHAMMAD 2006.

<sup>702</sup> SARTRE 1992, 153.

<sup>703</sup> KROPP and MOHAMMAD 2006, 131.

several explorers<sup>704</sup>. 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<sup>705</sup>. 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<sup>706</sup> 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<sup>707</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. At a upper layer of occupation mostly a large quantity Mamluk pottery was found at the corresponding layers<sup>708</sup>.

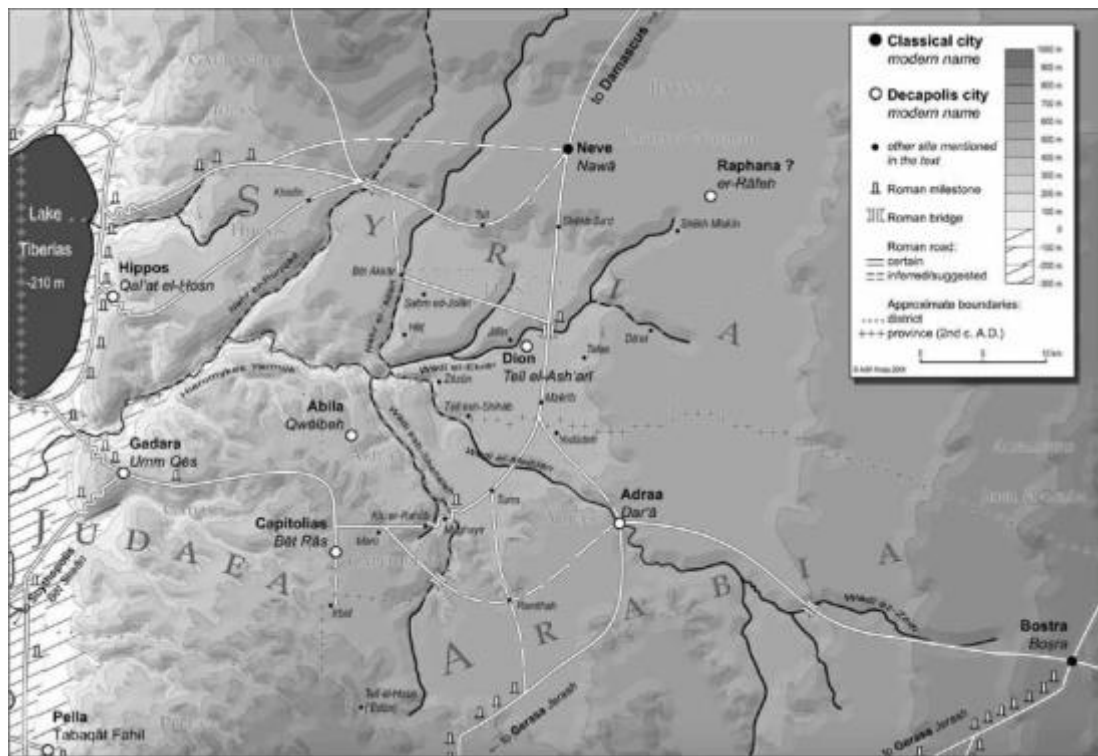


FIG 14 Possible location of ancient city of Dion (from KROPP and MOHAMMAD 2006, fig. 2).

<sup>704</sup> SCHUMACHER 1886, 204; ALBRIGHT 1925, 16.

<sup>705</sup> SMITH 1901, 352; KROPP and MOHAMMAD 2006, 133.

<sup>706</sup> SCHUMACHER 1914, 125.

<sup>707</sup> SCHUMACHER 1897, 167.

<sup>708</sup> KROPP and MOHAMMAD (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 RAPHANA

Raphana was among the cities listed by Pliny, although Claudius Ptolemy ignored it. 'Ραφάνεια, in the Syrian region of Cassiotis, is cited by Josephus, but it is another city<sup>709</sup>. Probably, we have to identify Raphana with the biblical city of 'Ραφών<sup>710</sup>, which was located not far from Karnaim<sup>711</sup>, on the Yarmouk river<sup>712</sup>, or with the Arab fortress of 'Ράεπτα in Trachonitis who fought against Herod the Great<sup>713</sup>. As outlined by Maurice Sartre<sup>714</sup>, the identification with these two cities is still uncertain, although the

---

<sup>709</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* VII, 1,3 (18): «μεμνημένος δὲ τοῦ δωδεκάτου τάγματος, ὅτι Κεστίου στρατηγούντος ἐνέδωκαν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, τῆς μὲν Συρίας αὐτὸ παντάπασι ἐξήλασεν, ἦν γὰρ τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν Ῥαφανείαις, εἰς δὲ τὴν Μελιτηνὴν καλουμένην ἀπέστειλε: παρὰ τὸν Εὐφράτην ἐν μεθορίοις τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἐστὶ καὶ Καππαδοκίας»; *BJ* VII, V,1 (96-97): «Τίτος δὲ Καῖσαρ χρόνον μὲν τινα διέτριβεν ἐν Βηρυτῶ, καθὰ προειρήκαμεν, ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἀναζεύξας καὶ δι' ὧν ἦεν πόλεων τῆς Συρίας ἐν πάσαις θεωρίας τε συντελών πολυτελεῖς καὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπωλείας ἀποχρώμενος, θεᾶται κατὰ τὴν πορείαν ποταμοῦ φύσιν ἀξίαν ἱστορηθῆναι. ῥεῖ μὲν γὰρ μέσος Ἀρκέας τῆς Ἀγρίππα βασιλείας καὶ Ῥαφανέας, ἔχει δὲ θαυμαστὴν ἰδιότητα».

<sup>710</sup> *I Macc.* V, 37: «μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα συνήγαγεν Τιμόθεος παρεμβολὴν ἄλλην καὶ παρενέβαλεν κατὰ πρόσωπον Ῥαφῶν ἐκ πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου».

<sup>711</sup> SCHÜRER (1973, vol. II, 137) claimed Karnaim could be Seih Sa'al, fifteen kilometres west of er-Rafe, maybe the ancient Raphana.

<sup>712</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XII, 342 cited Ῥομφῶν, which probably was the same city: «Χρόνῳ δ' ὕστερον οὐ πολλῶ Τιμόθεος δύναντιν μεγάλην παρασκευασάμενος καὶ συμμάχους ἄλλους τε παραλαβὼν καὶ Ἀράβων τινὰς μισθῶ πείσας αὐτῶ συστρατεύειν ἤκεν ἄγων τὴν στρατιὰν πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου Ῥομφῶν ἀντικρυς: πόλις δ' ἦν αὕτη: καὶ παρεκελεύετο τοὺς στρατιώτας, εἰ συμβάλοιεν εἰς μάχην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, προθύμως ἀγωνίζεσθαι καὶ κωλύειν αὐτοὺς διαβαίνειν τὸν χειμάρρον: διαβάντων γὰρ ἦσαν αὐτοῖς προύλεγεν».

<sup>713</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 282-283: «Διελθούσης δὲ τῆς προθεσμίας Σύλλαιος οὐδὲν τῶν δικαίων πεποιηκῶς εἰς Ῥώμην ἀνέρχεται. ῥύσια δὲ τῶν χρημάτων καὶ τῶν παρ' ἐκείνοις ληστῶν Ἡρώδης ἐποιεῖτο, καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Σατορνίνον καὶ Οὐολόμνιον ἐπιτρεπόντων ἀγνωμονοῦντας ἐπεξίεναι στρατιὰν τε ἔχων προήγαγεν εἰς τὴν Ἀραβίαν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἑπτὰ σταθμούς διανύσας, καὶ γενόμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ φρουρίου τοῦ τοὺς ληστὰς ἔχοντος αἰρεῖ μὲν ἐξ ἐφόδου πάντας αὐτούς, κατασκάπτει δὲ τὸ χωρίον Ῥάεπτα καλούμενον: τῶν δὲ ἄλλων οὐδὲν ἐλύπησεν».

<sup>714</sup> SARTRE 1992, 147.

connection Raphana-Raphon-Romphon is possible: Ῥαφών was on a river, probably in Hauran, while Ῥομφών was cited by Flavius Josephus as a city.

The city of Raphana was sometimes identified with Capitolias, although this identification is probably wrong<sup>715</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>715</sup> BIETENHARDT 1963, 29, SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 137, SARTRE 1992, 147.

## 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 «ἵππος» is simply the translation of the name «Sussita», which means «horse» in Aramaic language<sup>716</sup>.

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<sup>717</sup>.

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<sup>718</sup>. 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<sup>719</sup>.

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

---

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

<sup>717</sup> 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 Hippus or from Gaulanitis (JOSEPH. *B/J* II, 17,4 (420-421): «Φλώρω μὲν οὖν δεινὸν εὐαγγέλιον ἦν, καὶ προηρημένος ἐξάπτειν τὸν πόλεμον οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο τοῖς πρεσβευταῖς: Ἀγρίππας δὲ κηδόμενος ἐπίσης τῶν τε ἀφισταμένων καὶ πρὸς οὓς ὁ πόλεμος ἠγείρετο, βουλόμενός τε Ῥωμαίοις μὲν Ἰουδαίους σώζεσθαι, Ἰουδαίους δὲ τὸ ἱερόν καὶ τὴν μητρόπολιν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἑαυτῷ λυσιτελήσειν τὴν παραχρῆν ἐπιστάμενος, ἔπεμπεν τοὺς ἐπαμυνοῦντας τῷ δήμῳ δισχιλίους ἵππεῖς, Αὐρανίτας τε καὶ Βαταναίους καὶ Τραχωνίτας, ὑπὸ Δαρειῷ μὲν ἱππάρχῃ, στρατηγῷ δὲ τῷ Ἰακίμου Φιλίππῳ».

<sup>718</sup> For the coins of Hippus, see SPIJKERMAN 1978, 168-169; MESHORER 1985, 75.

<sup>719</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2004a, 9.

of Alexander Jannaeus<sup>720</sup>: the city was later «freed» by Pompey<sup>721</sup>. Augustus bestowed the city and its territory to Herod the Great<sup>722</sup>: when the king of Judaea died, the city became part of the Roman Province of Syria<sup>723</sup> and during the outbreak of the Jewish revolt its territory was ravaged by Justus of Tiberias<sup>724</sup>. As revenge, the inhabitants of Hippos killed or imprisoned the Jews who lived there<sup>725</sup>.

---

<sup>720</sup> SYNC. *Chron.* ed. Dindorf, I, 559: «ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῶν πέραν Ἰορδάνου πόλεων καὶ Ἑσεβουτα καταλαβόμενος, Ἀμμωνίτιν τε καὶ Μωαβίτιν ἐπελθὼν, Δῶρα, τὴν πρὸς τοῖς Ἰρασι Πέλλαν, Γάδαρα τὴν πρὸς θερμοῖς ὕδασι, Ἄβιλα, Ἴππον, Λιαν [Διαν], Φιλοτερίαν, Μακεδόνων ἀποικίας, καὶ Βασάν τὴν νῦν Σκυθόπολιν, Μάλλεαν Σαμαρείας, Θαβῶς ὄρος, Γάβασαν».

<sup>721</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 7,7 (155): «Ἀφελόμενος δὲ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τὰς ἐν κοίλῃ Συρίᾳ πόλεις, ἃς εἶλον, ὑπέταξεν τῷ κατ' ἐκεῖνο Ῥωμαίων στρατηγῷ κατατεταγμένῳ καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἰδίῳις ὄροις περιέκλεισεν. ἀνακτίζει δὲ καὶ Γάδαρα ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατεστραμμένην Γαδαρεῖ τινὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἀπελευθέρων Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος»;

*AJ* XIV, 74-75: «καὶ τὰ μὲν Ἱεροσόλυμα ὑποτελῆ φόρου Ῥωμαίοις ἐποίησεν, ἃς δὲ πρότερον οἱ ἔνοικοι πόλεις ἐχειρώσαντο τῆς κοίλης Συρίας ἀφελόμενος ὑπὸ τῷ σφετέρῳ στρατηγῷ ἔταξεν καὶ τὸ σύμπαν ἔθνος ἐπὶ μέγα πρότερον αἰρόμενον ἐντὸς τῶν ἰδίων ὄρων συνέστειλεν. καὶ Γάδαρα μὲν μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν καταστραφεῖσαν ἀνέκτισεν Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος τῷ Γαδαρεῖ ἀπελευθέρῳ αὐτοῦ».

<sup>722</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 20,3 (396): «διὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἦκεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἤδη Κλεοπάτρας καὶ Ἀντωνίου θευνεῶτων, οὐ μόνον αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἄλλαις τιμαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ προσέθηκεν τὴν τε ὑπὸ Κλεοπάτρας ἀποτμηθεῖσαν χώραν **καὶ ἔξωθεν Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον** καὶ Σαμάρειαν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τῶν παραλίῳν Γάζαν καὶ Ἀνθηδόνα καὶ Ἰόππην καὶ Στράτωνος πύργον»;

*AJ* XV, 217: «Ἡρώδης δὲ γενόμενος ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Καίσαρι τε μετὰ πλείονος παρρησίας εἰς λόγους ἦλθεν ὡς ἤδη φίλος καὶ μεγίστων ἡξιώθη: τῶν τε γὰρ Κλεοπάτραν δορυφορούντων Γαλατῶν τετρακοσίοις αὐτὸν ἐδωρήσατο καὶ τὴν χώραν ἀπέδωκεν αὐτῷ πάλιν, ἣν δι' ἐκείνης ἀφηρέθη. **προσέθηκεν δὲ καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον** καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἔτι δὲ τῆς παραλίῳ Γάζαν καὶ Ἀνθηδόνα καὶ Ἰόππην καὶ Στράτωνος πύργον».

<sup>723</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 6,3 (97): «πόλεις δ' ὑπηκόους παρέλαβεν Στράτωνος πύργον καὶ Σεβαστὴν καὶ Ἰόππην καὶ Ἱεροσόλυμα: τὰς γὰρ Ἑλληνίδας Γάζαν καὶ Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον ἀποτεμόμενος τῆς βασιλείας προσέθηκεν Συρίᾳ. πρόσσοδος ἦν τῆς Ἀρχελάῳ δοθείσης χώρας τετρακοσίων ταλάντων»;

*AJ* XVII, 320: «καὶ ἦσαν πόλεις αἱ Ἀρχελάῳ ὑπετέλου Στράτωνός τε πύργος καὶ Σεβαστὴ σὺν Ἰόππῃ καὶ Ἱεροσολύμοις: Γάζαν γὰρ καὶ Γάδαρα καὶ Ἴππον, Ἑλληνίδες εἰσὶν πόλεις, ἀπορρήξας αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀκροάσεως Συρίας προσθήκη ποιεῖται. προσήει δὲ Ἀρχελάῳ φορὰ χρημάτων τὸ κατ' ἑνιαυτὸν εἰς τάλαντα ἑξακόσια ἐξ ἧς παρέλαβεν ἀρχῆς». As underlined by SCHÜRER (1973, Vol. II, 131), Hippos was explicitly defined as a Greek city.

<sup>724</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,1 (459): «ἔπειτα Γαδάρῳι καὶ Ἴππῳ καὶ τῇ Γαυλανίτιδι προσπεσόντες τὰ μὲν καταστρεψάμενοι, τὰ δ' ὑποπρήσαντες ἐχώρουν ἐπὶ Κάδασα τὴν Τυρίων καὶ Πτολεμαῖδα Γάβαν τε καὶ Καισάρειαν».

*Vita* 42: «τότε δὲ πείσας ὁ Ἰούστος τοὺς πολίτας ἀναλαβεῖν τὰ ὄπλα πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ μὴ θελήσαντας ἀναγκάσας, ἐξελθὼν σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις ἐμπύπρησιν τὰς τε Γαδαρηνῶν καὶ Ἰππηνῶν κώμας, αἱ δὲ μεθόριοι τῆς Τιβεριάδος καὶ τῆς τῶν Σκυθοπολιτῶν γῆς ἐτύγχανον κείμεναι».

<sup>725</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,5 (478): «καὶ Τύριοι συχνοὺς μὲν διεχειρίσαντο, πλείστους δ' αὐτῶν δεσμώτας ἐφρούρουν, Ἰππηνοὶ τε καὶ Γαδαρεῖς ὁμοίως τοὺς μὲν θρασυτέρους ἀπεσκευάσαντο, τοὺς δὲ φοβεροὺς διὰ φυλακῆς εἶχον, αἱ τε λοιπαὶ πόλεις τῆς Συρίας, ὅπως ἐκάστη πρὸς τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν ἢ μίσους ἢ δέους εἶχον».



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<sup>726</sup>. On the coins issued by the city during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>727</sup> 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<sup>728</sup>.

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<sup>729</sup>.

#### 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<sup>730</sup>. The American explorer identified the site as Gamla but did not change his ideas although he was aware of the existence of the old city of Hippos and that the name of the site he visited, Qal'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<sup>731</sup>. 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 *nymphaeum*<sup>732</sup>. 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<sup>733</sup>. 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<sup>734</sup>. 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)<sup>735</sup>. From the summer of 2002 the Israeli and Polish team were

---

<sup>726</sup> 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) CORBV(LONI) HIPPO»

<sup>727</sup> BERMAN 2013, 283, nr. 20.

<sup>728</sup> The inscription says: «Πόλις Ἀντιοχέων τῶν πρὸς Ἴππων ἱερὰ καὶ ἄσυλος». See DVORJETSKI 2013, 44.

<sup>729</sup> NEAEHL 2, s.v. Hippos.

<sup>730</sup> SCHUMACHER 1888a, 194-206, f. 82-100.

<sup>731</sup> NUN 1989.

<sup>732</sup> NEAEHL 2, s.v. «Hippos».

<sup>733</sup> SEGAL 2013a, 15.

<sup>734</sup> BEN DAVID 2002, TSUK *et alii* 2002.

<sup>735</sup> SEGAL *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<sup>736</sup>. 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<sup>737</sup>. 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<sup>738</sup>, 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<sup>739</sup>.

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<sup>st</sup> century and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, when the main street and the *forum* were paved<sup>740</sup>. The urban complex was enclosed by a solid 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<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>741</sup>: 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<sup>742</sup>. 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<sup>nd</sup> century BCE is the sanctuary, the earliest and largest of all the building complexes of the city<sup>743</sup>. 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<sup>744</sup>. Most of the courtyard area was then occupied by a church (the so called «Northwest Church») and

---

<sup>736</sup> SEGAL 2013b, 65a.

<sup>737</sup> The area of Hippos is about 86000 m<sup>2</sup>, Philadelphia had an area of 276000 m<sup>2</sup>, Gerasa of 847000m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>738</sup> The earliest sporadic coin was minted in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy I. other coins of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE were found: see BERMAN 2013, 289.

<sup>739</sup> As confirmed by MŁYNARCZYK 2011, 583-584, a greatest number of pottery finding were from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

<sup>740</sup> MESISTRANO 2009, 16.

<sup>741</sup> EISENBERG (2013, 100), has based his chronological conclusions on a typological analysis.

<sup>742</sup> HEINZELMANN 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.

<sup>743</sup> In the first annual excavation reports it was called «Hellenistic Compound», only later it was decided to use the word «sanctuary» (SEGAL 2013c, 130).

<sup>744</sup> 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<sup>745</sup>. 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<sup>746</sup>. According to Arthur Segal, this division does not prove that the temple surely had a *πρόναος*, but just a *ναός* preceded by a *porticus*<sup>747</sup>. The columns had capitals made in Corinthian style: furthermore, the excavators have found several stucco fragments which probably covered the columns<sup>748</sup>. The altar was presumably constructed in median alignment with the temple, as in most cases of the Hellenistic and Roman periods<sup>749</sup>.

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 *Ζεὺς Ἀροτήσιος*<sup>750</sup>. Another bears a temple with an arched pediment and the image of *Τύχη*<sup>751</sup>. 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 *Ζεὺς Ἀροτήσιος* 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<sup>752</sup>.

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 ashlar in *opus quadratum*. This structure was

---

<sup>745</sup> 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 or Tiberius, calling it «Early Roman Temple» (MŁYNARCZYK 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.

<sup>746</sup> The typology is that one of a *tetrastylus-prostylos* temple, as coins have confirmed (SPIJKERMAN 1978, 168-179, pls. 36-38).

<sup>747</sup> SEGAL 2013c, 138.

<sup>748</sup> According to MŁYNARCZYK 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.

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

<sup>750</sup> 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».

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

<sup>752</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 50-51.

considered to be a *καλύβε*, a temple devoted to the imperial cult<sup>753</sup>, 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»<sup>754</sup>. 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<sup>755</sup>. 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<sup>rd</sup> century and the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>756</sup>.

As suggested by excavators, it seems likely that the *forum* was paved at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE or at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, although only later it was surrounded by columns<sup>757</sup>.

---

<sup>753</sup> MESISTRANO 2013, 152, ff. 175, 178-179.

<sup>754</sup> SEGAL 2001, 109.

<sup>755</sup> The only Greek source which mentions the term is Hesychius of Alexandria, who probably lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and composed a Lexicon of rare Greek terms. For him, the term means «hall» or «room».

<sup>756</sup> 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).

<sup>757</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> century and mostly in the first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, during the reign of Septimius Severus.

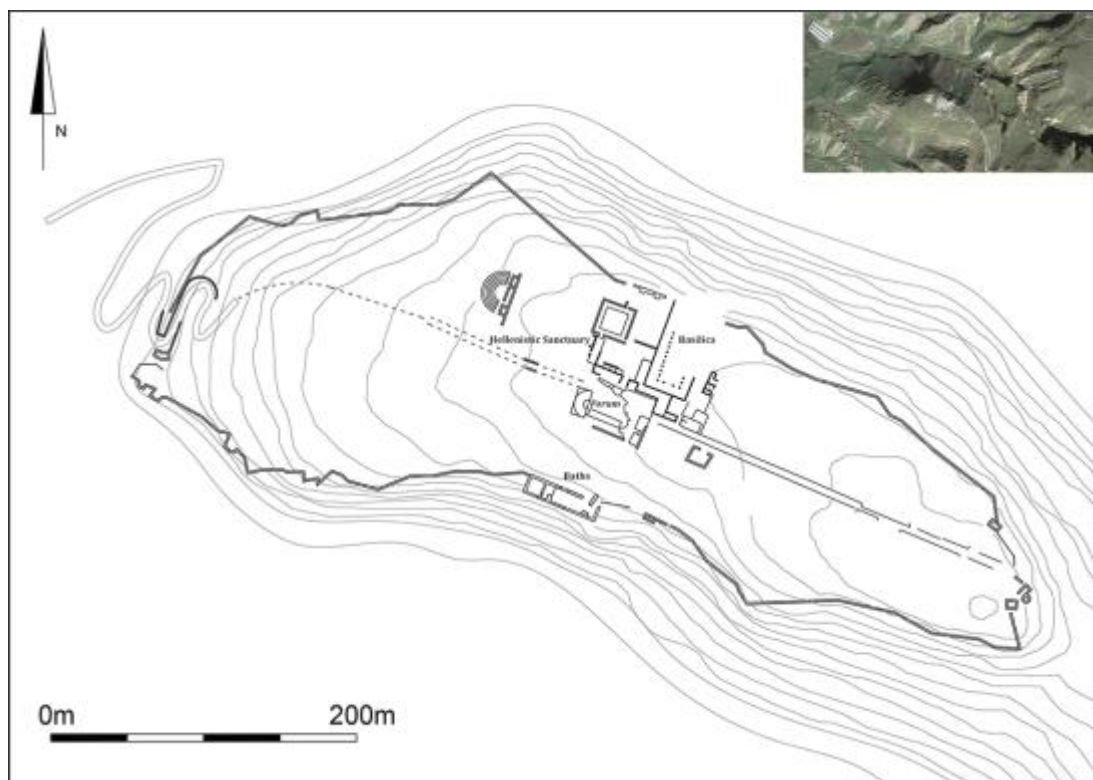


FIG. 15 Hippus remains of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Plan re-elaborated from HIPPOS 2010, fig. 3. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

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 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>758</sup>. Furthermore, the plaza was paved at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, when the kiln fell probably in disuse<sup>759</sup>.

Throughout small trial pits, the excavators were able to date the *forum* pavement to the Hellenistic-Early Roman period<sup>760</sup>. It seems likely that the *decumanus maximus* and the *forum* were paved in the same period<sup>761</sup>.

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 1<sup>st</sup> or the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE on the base of ceramic finds<sup>762</sup>. 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

<sup>758</sup> SEGAL 2009, 13; ERLICH 2009, 53-62.

<sup>759</sup> The function of this kiln is still under debate, even because a later wall destroyed part of it.

<sup>760</sup> During the campaign of 2009, a first trial pit was excavated into the *forum* (SEGAL 2009).

<sup>761</sup> Another trial pit dug in the eastern section of the *forum*, near the *decumanus maximus*, has given the same results. See MEYNARCZYK 2009, 111-112, nos. 94-98.

<sup>762</sup> SEGAL 2013d, 180.

on its long wall<sup>763</sup>. 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<sup>764</sup>.

During the period between the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 ὄδειον was erected approximately within the same period of time<sup>765</sup>. The ὄδειον 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 ashlar of basalt and limestone and was in use for three centuries, since its dismantling during the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>766</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, but more investigations need<sup>767</sup>

---

<sup>763</sup> It was probably due to the particular conditions of the urban plan and the necessity to make an entrance on the *forum*.

<sup>764</sup> SEGAL 2013d, 169, no. 13.

<sup>765</sup> 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 ὄδειον 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 inclined to a ὄδειον rather than a βουλευτήριον.

<sup>766</sup> SEGAL 2013e, 190.

<sup>767</sup> The results are still unpublished: I really thank Dr Eisenberg for this information.

## 4.10 GADARA/UMM QAIS

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<sup>768</sup>.

Archaeological excavations have attested that the site was occupied at least since the 14<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>769</sup>, like other places of the Decapolis<sup>770</sup>. 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 Polybius, conquered the site for the first time during his first invasion of Palestine, in 218 BCE<sup>771</sup>. Antiochos lost the city after a while: however, he finally took Gadara in 200 BCE, when he defeated the Ptolemaic general Scopas at Panias<sup>772</sup>. 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<sup>773</sup>.

According to Stephanus of Byzantium<sup>774</sup>, under the Seleucid rule the city had assumed the names of Ἀντιόχεια 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<sup>775</sup>.

---

<sup>768</sup> MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 129. According to LICHTENBERGER (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.

<sup>769</sup> MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 129; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 83.

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

<sup>771</sup> POLYB. V, 71,3: «καταλειπομένων δ' ἐπι τῶν Γαδάρων, ἃ δοκεῖ τῶν κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς τόπους ὄχυρότητι διαφέρειν, προσστρατοπεδεύσας αὐτοῖς καὶ συσπηράμενος ἔργα ταχέως κατεπλήξατο καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν πόλιν».

<sup>772</sup> POLYB. XVI, 39,3: «τοῦ Σκόπα νικηθέντος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τὴν μὲν Βατανέαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἄβιλα καὶ Γάδαρα παρέλαβεν Ἀντίοχος».

JOSEPH. AJ XII, 136: «ὡς τοῦ Σκόπα νικηθέντος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τὴν μὲν Βατανέαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἄβιλα καὶ Γάδαρα παρέλαβεν Ἀντίοχος, μετ' ὀλίγον δὲ προσεχώρησαν αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ προσαγορευόμενον Ἱεροσόλυμα κατοικοῦντες, ὑπὲρ οὗ καὶ πλείω λέγειν ἔχοντες καὶ μάλιστα περὶ τῆς γενομένης περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπιφανείας, εἰς ἕτερον καιρὸν ὑπερθησόμεθα τὴν διήγησιν.»

<sup>773</sup> MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 130.

<sup>774</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Γάδαρα: «πόλις Κοίλης Συρίας, ἣτις καὶ Ἀντιόχεια καὶ Σελεύκεια ἐκλήθη. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Γαδαρεύς, καὶ Γαδαρίς καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ἡ χώρα. ἐντεῦθεν ἦν Μένιππος ὁ σπουδογελοῖος. ἔστι καὶ Γάδαρα κώμη Μακεδονίας».

<sup>775</sup> WÖRRLE 2000: «ηκσ' Φιλώτας | καὶ Σελε[υκέ]ων | τῶν ἐν Μεσ – ca. 4 - | ἡ πόλις.».

Getzel Cohen argues that it seems unlikely that a city would have changed its name while still under the same dynasty rule<sup>776</sup>: furthermore, the city never adopted these names for common use, as clear on the city coin issue of Gadara during the Roman period<sup>777</sup>. Even the poet Meleager, who was born there, referred to Gadara with its Semitic name<sup>778</sup>.

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 Γαδαρίς (Gezer), has affirmed that it was the homeland of the Epicurean Philodemus, who was a contemporary of Cicero; the epigrammatic poet Meleager, who lived in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE; the satirical poet Menippus, who was active during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and the rethorician Theodorus, tutor of the future emperor Tiberius<sup>779</sup>. The city was even the birthplace of the cynic Oenomaus, who lived during the reign of Hadrian, and the rethorician Apsines, who worked during the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>780</sup>. According to Daniela Dueck, Hugh Lindsay and Sarah Pothecary, the confusion was due to the fact that the Hebrew letter «zayin» ('z') was transliterated as «dalet» ('d') in Aramaic language: Strabo used a source who transliterated the Hebrew into Aramaic and from Aramaic to Greek<sup>781</sup>.

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<sup>782</sup>. 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

---

<sup>776</sup> COHEN 2006, 282.

<sup>777</sup> The inscriptions on coins are usually referred to the name «Gadara» (SPIJKERMAN 1978, 126-155; MESHORER 1985, 80-83).

<sup>778</sup> MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 130.

<sup>779</sup> STRABO XVI, 2,29: «ἔν δὲ τῷ μεταξὺ καὶ ἡ Γαδαρίς ἔστιν, ἣν καὶ αὐτὴν ἐξειδίασαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι: εἴτ' Ἀζωτὸς καὶ Ἀσκάλων. ἀπὸ δὲ Ἰαμνείας εἰς Ἀζωτὸν καὶ Ἀσκάλωνά εἰσιν ὅσον διακόσιοι στάδιοι. κρομμυῶν τ' ἀγαθὸς ἔστιν ἡ χώρα τῶν Ἀσκαλωνιτῶν, πόλις δὲ μικρὸν. ἐντεῦθεν ἦν Ἀντίοχος ὁ φιλόσοφος μικρὸν πρὸ ἡμῶν γεγονώς. ἐκ δὲ τῶν Γαδάρων Φιλόδημος τε ὁ Ἐπικούρειος<sup>1</sup> καὶ Μελέαγρος καὶ Μένιππος ὁ σπουδογέλοιος καὶ Θεόδωρος ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς ῥήτωρ». It is once again clear that Strabo never visited these places.

<sup>780</sup> JOSEPH. BJ IV, 7,3 (413): «ἔδει μὲν προκαταστρέψασθαι τὰ λειπόμενα καὶ μηδὲν ἔξωθεν ἐμπόδιον τῇ πολιορκίᾳ καταλιπεῖν: ἐλθὼν οὖν ἐπὶ τὰ Γάδαρα μητρόπολιν τῆς Περαιᾶς καρτερὰν τετράδι Δύστρου μηνὸς εἴσεισιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν».

<sup>781</sup> DUECK, LINDSAY and POTHECARY 2006, 254, n. 10.

<sup>782</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 356: «Ὁ δὲ τῶν ἐκ Πτολεμαίου φόβων ἐλευθερωθεὶς στρατεύεται μὲν εὐθύς ἐπὶ τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν, αἰρεῖ δὲ Γάδαρα πολιορκήσας δέκα μηνσίν, αἰρεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀμαθοῦντα μέγιστον ἔρυμα τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατωκημένων, ἔνθα καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξια Θεόδωρος ὁ Ζήνωνος εἶχεν. ὃς οὐ προσδοκῶσιν ἐπιπεσῶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις μυρίους αὐτῶν ἀποκτείνει καὶ τὴν ἀποσκευὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου διαρπάζει». 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): «Γίνεται δ' αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς τὸν Λάθουρον ἐπικληθέντα Πτολεμαῖον συμβολὴ πόλιν Ἀσωχίν ἡρηκότα, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν ἀνείλεν τῶν πολεμίων, ἡ δὲ νίκη πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον ἔρρεψεν. ἐπεὶ δ' ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Κλεοπάτρας διωχθεὶς εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀνεχώρησεν, Ἀλέξανδρος Γαδάρων τε πολιορκία κρατεῖ καὶ Ἀμαθοῦντος, ὃ δὴ μέγιστον μὲν ἦν ἔρυμα τῶν ὑπὲρ Ἰορδάνην, τὰ τιμωτάτα δὲ τῶν Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ζήνωνος κτημάτων ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ».



in Gadara, Pompey rebuilt the settlement, that was destroyed during the war<sup>783</sup>. 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<sup>784</sup>.

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<sup>785</sup>: 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<sup>786</sup>. Then, they explained their reasons to Augustus, when he visited Syria in 21-20 BCE, but both these complaints went unheard<sup>787</sup>.

Like Hippos, after Herod's death Gadara was part of Roman Province of Syria<sup>788</sup> and during the first Jewish revolt it was devastated by Justus<sup>789</sup>: its citizens decided to kill or

---

<sup>783</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 7,7 (155): «Ἀφελόμενος δὲ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τὰς ἐν κοίλῃ Συρίᾳ πόλεις, ἃς εἶλον, ὑπέταξεν τῷ κατ'ἐκεῖνο Ῥωμαίων στρατηγῷ κατατεταγμένῳ καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἰδίῳις ὄροις περιέκλεισεν. ἀνακτίζει δὲ καὶ Γάδαρα ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατεστραμμένην Γαδαρεῖ τινὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἀπελευθέρων Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος»;

*AJ* XIV, 74-75: «καὶ τὰ μὲν Ἱεροσόλυμα ὑποτελῆ φόρου Ῥωμαίοις ἐποίησεν, ἃς δὲ πρότερον οἱ ἔνοικοι πόλεις ἐχειρώσαντο τῆς κοίλης Συρίας ἀφελόμενος ὑπὸ τῷ σφετέρῳ στρατηγῷ ἔταξεν καὶ τὸ σύμπαν ἔθνος ἐπὶ μέγα πρότερον αἰρόμενον ἐντὸς τῶν ἰδίων ὄρων συνέστειλεν. καὶ Γάδαρα μὲν μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν καταστραφεῖσαν ἀνέκτισεν Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος τῷ Γαδαρεῖ ἀπελευθέρῳ αὐτοῦ».

<sup>784</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 128-155; MESHORER 1985, 80-83; SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 134.

<sup>785</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 20,3 (396) and *AJ* XV, 217. See above, note 722;

<sup>786</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 351: «Γαδαρέων δὲ τινες ἐπ' Ἀγρίππαν ἦλθον κατηγοροῦντες αὐτοῦ, καὶ τούτους ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲ λόγον αὐτοῖς δοῦς ἀναπέμπει τῷ βασιλεῖ δεσμίους. [...]».

<sup>787</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 354-359: «Ἦδη δ' αὐτοῦ τῆς βασιλείας ἑπτακαίδεκάτου προελθόντος ἔτους Καῖσαρ εἰς Συρίαν ἀφίκετο. καὶ τότε τῶν Γάδαρα κατοικούντων οἱ πλεῖστοι κατεβῶν Ἡρώδου βαρὺν αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐπιπάγμασι καὶ τυραννικὸν εἶναι. ταῦτα δὲ ἀπετόλμων μάλιστα μὲν ἐγκειμένου καὶ διαβάλλοντος αὐτὸν Ζηνοδώρου καὶ παρασχόντος ὄρκους, ὡς οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψει μὴ πάντα τρόπον ἀφελῆσθαι μὲν τῆς Ἡρώδου βασιλείας, προσθήσειν δὲ τῇ διοικήσει τῇ Καίσαρος. τούτοις ἀναπεισθέντες οἱ Γαδαρεῖς οὐ μικρὰν καταβολὴν ἐποίησαντο θράσει τοῦ μηδὲ τοὺς ὑπὸ Ἀγρίππα παραδοθέντας ἐν τιμωρίᾳ γενέσθαι διέντος Ἡρώδου καὶ μηδὲν κακὸν εἰργασμένου: καὶ γὰρ εἴ τις καὶ ἄλλος ἐδόκει δυσπαραίτητος μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς οἰκείοις, μεγαλόψυχος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἀμαρτύνοντας ἀφίνα. κατηγορούντων οὖν ὕβρεις καὶ ἀρπαγὰς καὶ κατασκαφὰς ἱερῶν ὁ μὲν Ἡρώδης ἀταρακτῆσας ἔτοιμος ἦν εἰς τὴν ἀπολογία, **ἐδεξιοῦτο δὲ Καῖσαρ αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ὑπὸ τῆς παραχῆς τοῦ πλήθους μεταβαλὼν τῆς εὐνοίας.** καὶ κατὰ μὲν τὴν πρώτην ἡμέραν οἱ περὶ τούτων ἐρρέθησαν λόγοι, ταῖς δ' ἐξῆς οὐ προήλθεν ἡ διάγνωσις: οἱ γὰρ Γαδαρεῖς ὄρωντες τὴν ῥοπήν αὐτοῦ τε Καίσαρος καὶ τοῦ συνεδρίου καὶ προσδοκήσαντες ὅπερ ἦν εἰκὸς ἐκδοθήσεσθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ, κατὰ φόβον αἰκίας οἱ μὲν ἀπέσφατον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ νυκτί, τινὲς δὲ καθ' ὕψους ἠφίεσαν, ἄλλοι δ' εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν ἐμπίπτοντες ἔκοντι διεφθείροντο. ταῦτα δὲ ἐδόκει κατὰ γνώσιν τῆς προπετείας καὶ ἀμαρτίας, **ἔνθεν οὐδὲ μελλήσας ὁ Καῖσαρ ἀπέλυεν τῶν αἰπῶν Ἡρώδην.** ἐπισυμπίπτει δὲ οὐ μέτριον εὐτύχημα τοῖς ἤδη γεγονόσιν: ὁ γὰρ Ζηνοδῶρος ῥαγέντος αὐτῷ τοῦ σπλάγχνου καὶ πολλοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν ὑποχωροῦντος αἵματος ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῆς Συρίας ἐκλείπει τὸν βίον».

<sup>788</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 6,3 (97) and *AJ* XVII, 320. See above, note 722.

<sup>789</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,1 (459): «ἔπειτα Γαδαροῖς καὶ Ἴππῳ καὶ τῇ Γαυλανίτιδι προσπεσόντες τὰ μὲν καταστρεψάμενοι, τὰ δ' ὑποπρήσαντες ἐχώρουν ἐπὶ Κάδασα τὴν Τυρίων καὶ Πτολεμαῖδα Γάβαν τε καὶ Καισάρειαν».

capture the Jews living there<sup>790</sup>. The city has continued to be important during the Byzantine period, becoming seat of a bishop<sup>791</sup>. First Christian burials are dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>792</sup>. During the 7<sup>th</sup> century Gadara was conquered by Muslims, who defeated Byzantine army not far from there<sup>793</sup>.

It seems likely that the city was abandoned after the earthquake of 748/749 CE<sup>794</sup>.

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 Ἑλληνίς<sup>795</sup>. The poet Meleager himself told he was born in an Attic city which lay among Syrians<sup>796</sup>. One epitaph of the Gadarene Apion, found in the village of Saffure, south-east of Hippos, defined Gadara «χρηστομούσια»<sup>797</sup>, an unclear definition variously interpreted: Charles Clermont-Ganneau, who published the inscription, proposed that the meaning was «with beautiful mosaics»<sup>798</sup>; according to Paul Perdrizet, instead, the real meaning is «learned city»<sup>799</sup>, 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<sup>800</sup>.

#### 4.10.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen rediscovered the site, identifying it as the ancient city of Gadara<sup>801</sup>. Göttlieb Schumacher, during his works as engineer of the Akko-Damascus railway, carefully described the place with the support of plans and drawings<sup>802</sup>. 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<sup>803</sup>. Systematic excavations started in 1974 under the direction of Ute Wagner-Lux. 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

---

*Vita* 42: «τότε δὲ πείσας ὁ Ἰούστος τοὺς πολίτας ἀναλαβεῖν τὰ ὄπλα πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ μὴ θελήσαντας ἀναγκάσας, ἐξελθὼν σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις ἐμπύπρησιν τὰς τε Γαδαρηνῶν καὶ Ἰππηνῶν κώμας, αἱ δὲ μεθόριοι τῆς Τιβεριάδος καὶ τῆς τῶν Σκυθοπολιτῶν γῆς ἐτύγχανον κείμεναι».

<sup>790</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 18,5 (478): «καὶ Τύριοι συχνοὺς μὲν διεχειρίσαντο, πλείστους δ' αὐτῶν δεσμώτας ἐφρούρουσαν, Ἰππηνοὶ τε καὶ Γαδαρεῖς ὁμοίως τοὺς μὲν θρασετέρους ἀπεσκευάσαντο, τοὺς δὲ φοβεροὺς διὰ φυλακῆς εἶχον, αἱ τε λοιπαὶ πόλεις τῆς Συρίας, ὅπως ἐκάστη πρὸς τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν ἢ μίσους ἢ δέους εἶχον».

<sup>791</sup> ABEL 1938, I, 323.

<sup>792</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 102.

<sup>793</sup> In 636 CE the battle of Yarmouk was fought there.

<sup>794</sup> NEAEHL *Supp.* s.v. Gadara.

<sup>795</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II, 6,3 (97) and *AJ* XVII, 320. See note 721.

<sup>796</sup> *ANTH. PAL.* VII 417: «Νᾶσος ἐμὰ θρέππειρα πάτρα δὲ με τεκνοῖ | Ἀθίς ἐν Ἀσσυριοῖς ναιομένα Γάδαρα».

<sup>797</sup> CLERMONT-GANNEAU 1897, 142: «Ἦν μου πατὴρ Κοίντος, ἦν μήτηρ Φιλοῦς | Τ[ὸ] δ' οὐνομ' ἐστὶν Ἀπείων, πατρίς δε μου, | Καὶ πᾶσι κοινή, Γάδαρα χρηστομούσια. | Σοφῆς δ' ἀφ' Ἰππου ἐστὶν ἡ μήτηρ Φιλοῦς».

<sup>798</sup> CLERMONT-GANNEAU 1898, 399: «aux belles mosaïques».

<sup>799</sup> PEDRIZET 1899, 49-50: «où les Muses sont cultivées».

<sup>800</sup> PIEROBON 1995, 260-261.

<sup>801</sup> SEETZEN 1854, 368 ff.

<sup>802</sup> SCHUMACHER 1890, 46 ff.

<sup>803</sup> VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX 2015, XI.

Archaeological Institute (DAI) also cooperated. Thomas Weber published an important monograph in 2002, summarizing the results achieved<sup>804</sup>.

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<sup>805</sup>.

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<sup>806</sup>.

#### 4.10.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE

Although the most ancient evidence of human occupation seems to be dated to Bronze Age<sup>807</sup>, the earliest settlement activities are dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE: the presence of many common and imported wares have confirmed the existence of a small town on the hilltop<sup>808</sup>.

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<sup>809</sup>. Adolf Hoffmann supposed that the walls had probably formed a closed circle and that the Hellenistic city plan was more or less orthogonal<sup>810</sup>, as indicated by the orientation of the building complex from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which probably has followed the older orientation<sup>811</sup>.

According to the excavators, the solid framework of the walls replaced the tradition of 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE fortifications, although the regular sequence of gates and towers, like the pentagonal shape of the towers, was very unusual<sup>812</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>813</sup>.

During the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the early 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, the Hellenistic community extended to the northeast of the hill: at a first phase of the urban development<sup>814</sup>, a sanctuary was built on a levelled area, bordered by walls. The entrance to the first temple

---

<sup>804</sup> WEBER 2002.

<sup>805</sup> MATSUMOTO and TELFAH 2009.

<sup>806</sup> VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX 2015.

<sup>807</sup> MERSHEN and KNAUF 1988, 129; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 83. *Contra* VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX (2015, 71) in their recent monograph show remains from Iron Age.

<sup>808</sup> BÜHRIG and LIESEN 2007, 526; BÜHRIG 2011, 286.

<sup>809</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, when Antiochos III is said to have conquered the town: POLYB. V, 71,3 (See note 768).

<sup>810</sup> HOFFMANN 2001, 394.

<sup>811</sup> BÜHRIG 2011, 287.

<sup>812</sup> 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.

<sup>813</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 105.

<sup>814</sup> BÜHRIG 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*<sup>815</sup>. 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<sup>816</sup>, 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<sup>817</sup>.

At the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>818</sup>. 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<sup>819</sup>. 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<sup>820</sup>. 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<sup>821</sup>.

---

<sup>815</sup> 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.

<sup>816</sup> BÜHRIG 2011, 287.

<sup>817</sup> See, for example, the sanctuaries of Gerasa or Seeia.

<sup>818</sup> BÜHRIG 2011, 288.

<sup>819</sup> WEBER 2002, 103-108; 2006, 467-469: the closest parallel to this gate is the arched monument in Tiberias.

<sup>820</sup> BÜHRIG 2013, 148.

<sup>821</sup> HOFFMANN 1999, 802-803. This new πρόπυλον was slightly shifted respect of the oldest πρόπυλον.

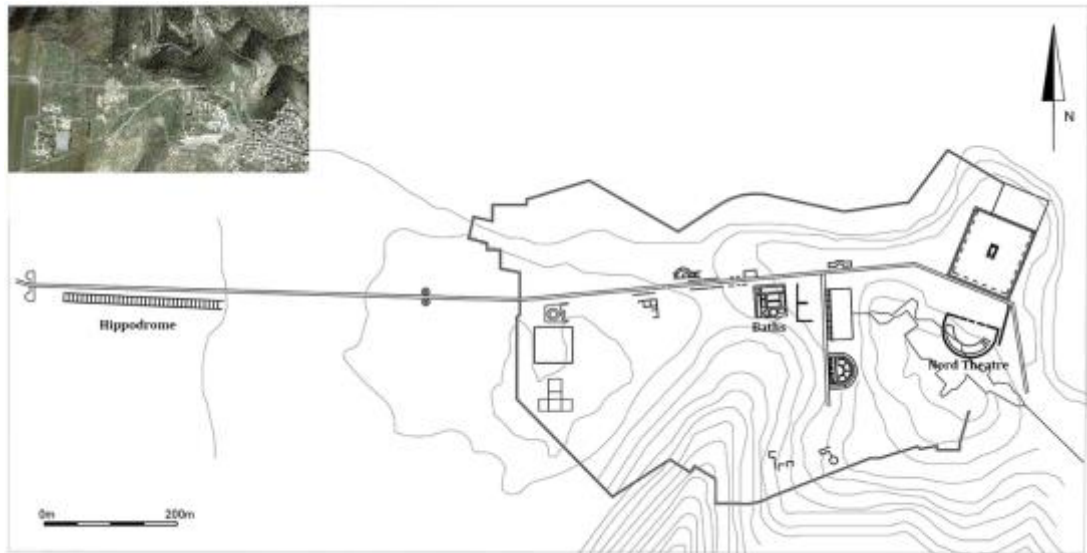


FIG. 16 Gadara city plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>822</sup>. 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*<sup>823</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century a large, elongated terrace was built. The most conspicuous archaeological remains have testified a 6<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>824</sup>. According to Ute Wagner-Lux, during the Roman period a *basilica* was most-likely erected<sup>825</sup>: 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 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD<sup>826</sup>. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>827</sup>. 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

<sup>822</sup> BÜHRIG 2011, 290.

<sup>823</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 120.

<sup>824</sup> VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX 2015, 9-18;

<sup>825</sup> WAGNER-LUX 1997, 7.

<sup>826</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 121.

<sup>827</sup> For further information about this structure, see BÜHRIG 2001.

view to a future urban development<sup>828</sup>. The creation of a second market place was due to the increased importance Gadara reached during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE as trading point<sup>829</sup>. The main axis was probably a sort of «linear *forum*», surrounded by shops<sup>830</sup>. The 4<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>831</sup>. A period of re-building started during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when several churches were constructed.

---

<sup>828</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 116.

<sup>829</sup> BÜHRIG 2011, 291.

<sup>830</sup> HOFFMANN 2002, 119.

<sup>831</sup> BÜHRIG 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>832</sup>. 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<sup>833</sup>.

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<sup>834</sup>.

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<sup>835</sup>; otherwise, it would have been a sort of compensation for some of the Nabataeans, who helped Rome during the Jewish revolt<sup>836</sup>. 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)<sup>837</sup>. 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<sup>838</sup>. 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<sup>839</sup>.

---

<sup>832</sup> LENZEN 2002, 37.

<sup>833</sup> LENZEN 2002, 37.

<sup>834</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 115.

<sup>835</sup> LENZEN 1992, 300.

<sup>836</sup> LENZEN 2002, 37-38.

<sup>837</sup> 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.

<sup>838</sup> It means «settlement (literally «house»), on the hilltop (literally «head»).

<sup>839</sup> 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»)<sup>840</sup>. 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 Arbela/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<sup>841</sup>.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE had the inscription ΚΑΠΙ(ΤΩΛΙΕΩΝ) ΑΛΕΞ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚΕ(ΔΩΝ) ΓΕΝΑΡ(ΧΗΣ)<sup>842</sup>: it is clear the effort of the citizens of Capitolias to elevate their past, claiming Alexander was their γενάρχης<sup>843</sup>. 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<sup>844</sup>.

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»<sup>845</sup>. 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<sup>846</sup>.

#### 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<sup>847</sup>. He had noticed ancient remains, but did not identify 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 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>848</sup>. The hypothesis of van de Velde was confirmed by Selah Merrill, who recorded

---

<sup>840</sup> LENZEN 2002, 39.

<sup>841</sup> SEYRIG 1965, 26. The continuous use of Nabataean language for inscriptions was a common feature of the cities of the area: see below.

<sup>842</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 102-105, nos. 15-20.

<sup>843</sup> Alexander is represented as the ancestor of the people of Capitolias much more than the founder of the city.

<sup>844</sup> MITTMANN 1970, 169-171, nr. 6; LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 27.

<sup>845</sup> CIS II 94 = RES 1098

<sup>846</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 27.

<sup>847</sup> SEETZEN 1810.

<sup>848</sup> VAN DE VELDE 1858.



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<sup>849</sup>. Göttlieb Schumacher in 1890 wrote the first detailed description of the site<sup>850</sup>. In the 1930s C.C. McCown<sup>851</sup> explored the area around the city, which was surveyed by Nelson Glueck<sup>852</sup> and then by Siegfried Mittmann<sup>853</sup>. Further archaeological researches were carried out in 1984 by Cherie Lenzen<sup>854</sup>. Recently, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan began a more extensive excavation, discovering the theatre<sup>855</sup>.

#### 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<sup>856</sup>.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>857</sup>, albeit it has been destroyed<sup>858</sup>.

As seen above, the Roman Capitolias was found only at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE<sup>859</sup>, 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>860</sup>. The original wall was built with well-wrought ashlar, typical of 2<sup>nd</sup> century constructions.

---

<sup>849</sup> MERRILL 1881, 296-298.

<sup>850</sup> SCHUMACHER 1890, 154 ff.

<sup>851</sup> MCCOWN 1932; 1936.

<sup>852</sup> GLUECK 1951, 115-116.

<sup>853</sup> MITTMANN 1970, 169 ff.

<sup>854</sup> LENZEN 1995; 2002; LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987; LENZEN AND MCQUITTY 1983; 1988.

<sup>855</sup> KARASNEH, AL-ROUSAN AND TELFAH 2002.

<sup>856</sup> LENZEN AND MCQUITTY 1988, 269.

<sup>857</sup> LENZEN 2002, 41.

<sup>858</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 28.

<sup>859</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 26.

<sup>860</sup> MERRILL 1881, 296-297; SCHUMACHER 1890, 154-155.

Schumacher notably described a monumental gate on the eastern part of the city<sup>861</sup>, probably erected together with the wall circuit and today completely lost<sup>862</sup>. 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<sup>863</sup>: they were probably shops. Little further north, a theatre was erected during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century: its main façade was made of seven doorways<sup>864</sup>.



FIG. 17 Remains of ancient Capitolia, based on LENZEN 2002, Abb. 51. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

<sup>861</sup> SCHUMACHER 1890, 155.

<sup>862</sup> LENZEN 2002, 41.

<sup>863</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 28-30; LENZEN 1995, 330.

<sup>864</sup> 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<sup>865</sup>, but no evidence connected to the presence of an aqueduct have been found<sup>866</sup>.

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

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.

---

<sup>865</sup> SCHUMACHER 1890, 155; GLUECK 1951, 116.

<sup>866</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 28.

<sup>867</sup> LENZEN 1995, 330.

<sup>868</sup> LENZEN AND KNAUF 1987, 28-30.

<sup>869</sup> AL-SHAMI 2005, 512.

## 4.12 ABILA/QUWAILIBAH

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<sup>870</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, that included the name ABILAA<sup>871</sup>.

The name of Abila could derive from the Semitic word «*abel*», 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<sup>872</sup>; John Wineland refers to another translation, that one of «place of perennial stream»<sup>873</sup>. The literary references to Abila are scanty and reconstructing a history of this city is hard. At Abila there is ceramic evidence from the Chalcolithic period (4250-3300 BCE); several Egyptian lists have mentioned the settlement of Abel<sup>874</sup> and there were several different Abel cited in the Bible: Abel Shittim<sup>875</sup>, Abel Keramim<sup>876</sup>, Abel Meholah<sup>877</sup> and Abel Beth Maacah<sup>878</sup>. It is very difficult to identify the city of Abila in someone of this

---

<sup>870</sup> Umm el Amad means «mother of the columns», referring to the presence of important byzantine church remains.

<sup>871</sup> WINELAND 2001, 75-76; COHEN 2006, 277.

<sup>872</sup> MARE 2002, 46.

<sup>873</sup> WINELAND 2001, 2.

<sup>874</sup> WINELAND 2001, 47-50.

<sup>875</sup> In the Moab territory. *NUM* 33:49: «καὶ παρενέβαλον παρὰ τὸν Ἰορδάνην ἀνὰ μέσον Αἰσιμωθ ἕως **Βελασπιμ** κατὰ δυσμὰς Μωαβ».

<sup>876</sup> In the area of Ammonites. *Jdg* 11: 33: « καὶ ἐπάταξεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ Ἀρορη ἕως ἐλθεῖν ἄχρῖς Ἀρνων ἐν ἀριθμῷ εἴκοσι πόλεις καὶ ἕως **Εβελχαρμιν** πληγὴν μεγάλην σφόδρα καὶ συνεστάλησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἀμμων ἀπὸ προσώπου υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ».

<sup>877</sup> It is one of the cities into the 5<sup>th</sup> Salomon's district. *I Kgs* 4: 12: «Βακχα υἱὸς Ἀχιλῖδ Ὁσαναχ καὶ Μεκεδω καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκος Σαν ὁ παρὰ Σεσαθαν ὑποκάτω τοῦ Ἐσραε καὶ ἐκ Βαισαφοῦ **Εβελμαωλα** ἕως Μαεβερ Λουκαμ εἶς»; *I Kgs* 19: 16: «καὶ τὸν Ἰου υἱὸν Ναμεσσι χρίσεις εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ καὶ τὸν Ἐλῖσαιε υἱὸν Σαφατ ἀπὸ **Αβελμαουλα** χρίσεις εἰς προφῆτην ἀντὶ σοῦ».

<sup>878</sup> This settlement is in the territory of Nephtali, north of Kinneret Lake. *II SAM* 20:14-15: «καὶ διήλθεν ἐν πάσαις φυλαῖς Ἰσραηλ εἰς **Αβελ** καὶ εἰς Βαιθμαχα καὶ πάντες ἐν Χαρρι καὶ ἐξεκκλησιάσθησαν καὶ ἦλθον κατοπίσθεν αὐτοῦ καὶ παρεγενήθησαν καὶ ἐπολιόρκουν ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὴν **Αβελ** καὶ τὴν Βαιθμαχα καὶ ἐξέχεαν πρόσχωμα πρὸς τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἔστη ἐν τῷ προτειχίσματι καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁ μετὰ Ἰωαβ ἐνοοῦσαν καταβαλεῖν τὸ τεῖχος».

*I Kgs* 15:20: « καὶ ἤκουσεν υἱὸς Ἀδερ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀσα καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν δυνάμεων τῶν αὐτοῦ ταῖς πόλεσιν τοῦ Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἐπάταξεν τὴν Αἰν καὶ τὴν Δαν καὶ τὴν **Αβελμαα** καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν Χεζραθ ἕως πάσης τῆς γῆς Νεφθαλι»;

*II Kgs* 15:29: «ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Φακεε βασιλέως Ἰσραηλ ἦλθεν Θαγλαθφελλασαρ βασιλεὺς Ἀσσυρίων καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν Αἰν καὶ τὴν Αβελβαιθμασαχα καὶ τὴν Ἰανωχ καὶ τὴν Κενεζ καὶ τὴν Ἀσωρ καὶ τὴν Γαλααδ καὶ τὴν Γαλιλαίαν πᾶσαν γῆν Νεφθαλι καὶ ἀπώκισεν αὐτοὺς εἰς Ἀσσυρίους»;

*II CHRON* 16:4: «καὶ ἤκουσεν υἱὸς Ἀδερ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀσα καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῆς δυνάμεως

sites<sup>879</sup>: 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<sup>880</sup>, taking it definitely after the battle of Panias in 200 BCE, as reported by Josephus<sup>881</sup>. As other nearby cities, Abila was renamed during this period as Σελεύκεια Ἄβιλα, a name which is clearly shown on the legends of the coins minted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>882</sup>.

The city was under Hasmonean rule after Alexander Jannaeus conquered the area<sup>883</sup> 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<sup>884</sup>. Claudius Ptolemy listed an Ἄβιδα, which probably was Abila<sup>885</sup>. An inscription found in a small village near Palmyra, called Tayibeh, confirmed that Abila was a city of the Decapolis<sup>886</sup>

---

αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὰς πόλεις Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπάταξεν τὴν Ἰων καὶ τὴν Δαν καὶ τὴν Ἀβελμαῖν καὶ πάσας τὰς περιχώρους Νεφθαλί».

<sup>879</sup> For further information, see WINELAND 2001, 100 ff.

<sup>880</sup> POLYB. V, 71,2: «προσλαβὼν δὲ καὶ τὴν παρὰ τούτων ἐλπίδα καὶ χορηγίαν προῆγε, καὶ κατασχὼν εἰς τὴν Γαλατίν γίνεται Ἀβίλων καὶ τῶν εἰς αὐτὰ παραβεβηθηκότων, ὧν ἠγεῖτο Νικίας, ἀναγκαῖος ὧν καὶ συγγενῆς Μεννέου».

<sup>881</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XII, 135-136: «παραθήσομαι δὲ τὰς ἐπιστολάς τὰς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς περὶ αὐτῶν γραφείσας προδιελθὼν, ὡς μαρτυρεῖ τούτοις ἡμῶν τοῖς λόγοις Πολύβιος ὁ Μεγαλοπολίτης: ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἐξκαιδεκάτῃ τῶν ἱστοριῶν αὐτοῦ φησιν οὕτως: 'ὁ δὲ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου στρατηγὸς Σκόπας ὀρμήσας εἰς τοὺς ἄνω τόπους κατεστρέψατο ἐν τῷ χειμῶνι τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος.' λέγει δὲ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ βίβλῳ, 'ὡς τοῦ Σκόπα νικηθέντος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τὴν μὲν Βατανέαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἄβιλα καὶ Γάδαρα παρέλαβεν Ἀντίοχος, μετ' ὀλίγον δὲ προσεχώρησαν αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ προσαγορευόμενον Ἱεροσόλυμα κατοικοῦντες, ὑπὲρ οὗ καὶ πλείω λέγειν ἔχοντες καὶ μάλιστα περὶ τῆς γενομένης περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐπιφανείας, εἰς ἕτερον καιρὸν ὑπερθησόμεθα τὴν διήγησιν».

<sup>882</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 48-57. The abbreviations «CE», «CEΛ», «CEΛEY», «CEΛEYK» usually precede the names of «ABIIA» and «ABIIENΩΣ».

<sup>883</sup> SYNC. Chron. Ed. Dindorf, I, 559: «ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῶν πέραν Ἰορδάνου πόλεων καὶ Ἑσεβουντα καταλαβόμενος, Ἀμμωνίτιν τε καὶ Μωαβίτιν ἐπελθὼν, Δῶρα, τὴν πρὸς τοῖς Ἄρασι Πέλλαν, Γάδαρα τὴν πρὸς θερμοῖς ὕδασι, Ἄβιλα, Ἴππον, Λιαν [Διαν], Φιλοτερίαν, Μακεδόνων ἀποικίας, καὶ Βασάν τὴν νῦν Σκυθόπολιν, Μάλλεαν Σαμαρείας, Θαβῶς ὄρος, Γάβασαν».

<sup>884</sup> Nat. Hist. V, 16 (74): «[...] *intercurrunt cinguntque has urbes tetrarchiae, regnorum instar singulae, et in regna contribuuntur, Trachonitis, Panias (in qua Caesarea cum supra dicto fonte), Abila, Arca, Ampeloessa, Gabe*». See LICHTENBERGER 2003, 63.

<sup>885</sup> PTOL. Geog. V, 14,22: «Κοίλης Συρίας Δεκαπόλεως πόλεις αἶδε· Ἡλίου πόλις, Ἄβιλα ἐπικληθεῖσα Λυσανίου, Σάανα, Ἴνα, Δαμασκός, Σαμουλῖς, Ἄβιδα, Ἴππος, Καπιτωλιάς, Γάδαρα, Ἄδρα. Σκυθόπολις, Γέρασα, Πέλλα, Δῖον, Γαδῶρα, Φιλαδελεφία, Κάναθα».

<sup>886</sup> It is a bilingual inscription written both in Palmyrene and in Greek, which dates to 134 CE. WADDINGTON 1870, no. 2631: «Διὶ μεγίστῳ κεραυνίῳ, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Τρα(ιανοῦ) Ἀδριανοῦ Σεβ(αστοῦ) τοῦ κυρίου, Ἀγαθάνγγελος Ἀβιληνός τῆς Δεκαπόλεως τὴν καμέραν ὤκοδόμησεν καὶ τὴν κλίνη[ν] ἐξ ἀνέθηκεν, ἔτους ἐμυ', μηνός Λῶου».

Eusebius<sup>887</sup> had defined the city of Ἄβελ, twelve miles from Gadara, as «fertile of wine» (οἴνοφόρος), as reflected on several reverse coins the city minted with a bunch of grapes<sup>888</sup>.

#### 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<sup>889</sup>. Few years after Seetzen, the Swiss John Louis Burkhardt visited Tell Abil, but he affirmed to have found no traces of the city<sup>890</sup>: probably he never reached Abila.

Gottlieb Schumacher was the author of the first major publication about Abila during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>891</sup>: 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<sup>892</sup>. 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<sup>893</sup>, but later excavations have shown it was a Christian basilica<sup>894</sup>. 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<sup>895</sup>, 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<sup>896</sup>.

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<sup>897</sup>.

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<sup>898</sup>

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

---

<sup>887</sup> EUSEB. *Onom. s.v.* Ἄβελ: «Ἄβελ ἀμπελώνων. ἐνθα ἐπολέμνησεν Ἰεφθαέ. γῆς υἰῶν Ἀμμών. Καὶ ἔστιν εἰς ἐπι νῦν χώμη ἀμπελόφορος Ἄβελὰ οἴνοφόρος καλουμένη, διεστῶσα Γαδάρων σημείοις ἰβ' τοῖς πρὸς ἀνατολαῖς, καὶ τρίτη τις αὐτῆ Ἄβελὰ τῆς Φοινίκης μεταξύ Δαμασκοῦ καὶ Πανεάδος».

<sup>888</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 50-51, nos. 5-6; MARE 1984, 52, no. 262; MESHORER 1985, 78, nos. 211-211a.

<sup>889</sup> SEETZEN 1854, 371-375.

<sup>890</sup> BURKHARDT 1983, 251-265.

<sup>891</sup> SCHUMACHER 1989.

<sup>892</sup> SCHUMACHER 1989, 22.

<sup>893</sup> SCHUMACHER 1989, 23-24.

<sup>894</sup> FULLER 1987, 168.

<sup>895</sup> SCHUMACHER 1989, 30.

<sup>896</sup> SCHUMACHER 1989, 32.

<sup>897</sup> GLUECK 1951, 126.

<sup>898</sup> BARBET and VIBERT-GUIGUE 1988-1994.

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<sup>899</sup>.

According to Harold Mare, a Hellenistic temple preceded the 6<sup>th</sup> century basilica on the Tell Abil: the discovery of a statue of Artemis seemed to confirm this idea<sup>900</sup>. The stylistic comparison dated back the statue to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, but Mare also assumed it could be a later Roman copy<sup>901</sup>.

---

<sup>899</sup> CHAPMAN 2011, 15.

<sup>900</sup> MARE 2002, 49-50.

<sup>901</sup> MARE 1997, 280-281.

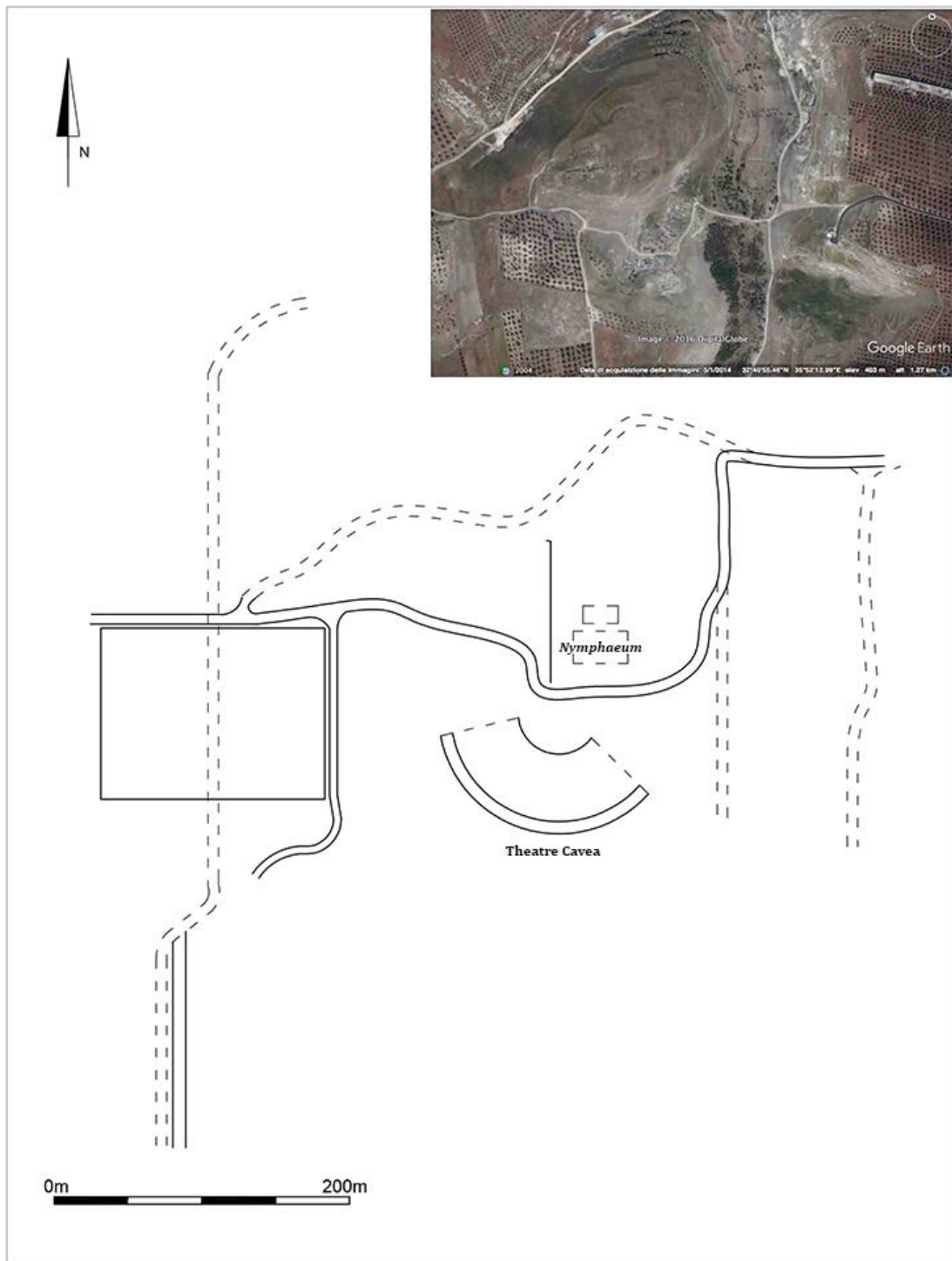


FIG. 18 Remains of Roman Abila, based on MARE 2002, Abb. 62. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

However, further excavations conducted by John Wineland have given no conclusive evidence of the presence of a temple, although some Roman capitals were found<sup>902</sup>. 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<sup>903</sup>. It seems that Artemis was never depicted on the coins.

<sup>902</sup> CHAPMAN 2011, 17.

<sup>903</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 48-55; MESHORER 1985, 78.



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<sup>904</sup>: until now we are not able to date the structure, and the only coin found is from Byzantine period<sup>905</sup>. Tombs give more information about Roman Abila, although the best part of them was from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE<sup>906</sup>: deceased people were buried into multiple *loculi* or *sarcophagi* carved into the stone or in simple graves. The tombs had usually one chamber and the (few) inscriptions are written in Greek<sup>907</sup>. The frescoes suggest that the citizens of Abila reached a certain grade of wealth.

---

<sup>904</sup> CHAPMAN *et alii* 2006, 66.

<sup>905</sup> CHAPMAN 2011, 16.

<sup>906</sup> BARBET and VIBERT-GUIGUE 1988-1994.

<sup>907</sup> BARBET and VIBERT-GUIGUE 1988-1994, 19-32.

## 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<sup>908</sup> and some Books of the Bible: the city and its territory seemed to have never been conquered by Israelites<sup>909</sup>, albeit Beth Sean was included in the list of administrative districts established under the kingdom of Solomon<sup>910</sup>. 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<sup>911</sup>.

The name «Beth Sean» maybe derived from the Semitic word «sha'anana», which means «tranquillity, peaceful, quiet»<sup>912</sup>.

The site preserved its ancient name also during the Hellenistic Age<sup>913</sup>, albeit it was flanked by the new Greek name of Scythopolis (Σκυθόπολις), appeared in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, when the city was under the Ptolemies, and preferred by «Hellenised» circles. Byzantine writers, like Syncellus<sup>914</sup>, have connected its name to the Scythian invasion towards the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Herodotus had already remembered this

---

<sup>908</sup> 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.

<sup>909</sup> In several books is claimed that the tribe of Manasseh received some Canaanite territories, among which Bet-Shean was, but it did not conquer them. See *JOSH* 17:11-12 (και ἔσται Μανασση ἐν Ισσαχαρ και ἐν Ασηρ Βαιθσαν και αἱ κῶμαι αὐτῶν [...] και οὐκ ἠδυνάσθησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Μανασση ἐξολεθρεῦσαι τὰς πόλεις ταύτας και ἤρχετο ὁ Χαναναῖος κατοικεῖν ἐν τῇ γῆ ταύτῃ), *Jdg* 1:27 («και οὐκ ἐξῆρεν Μανασση τὴν Βαιθσαν ἣ ἐστὶν Σκυθῶν πόλις οὐδὲ τὰς θυγατέρας αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τὰ περίοικα αὐτῆς [...] και ἤρξατο ὁ Χαναναῖος κατοικεῖν ἐν τῇ γῆ ταύτῃ»). Furthermore, in *I SAM* 31:10 («και ἀνέθηκαν τὰ σκεῦη αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ Ἀσαρτεῖον και τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ κατέπηξαν ἐν τῷ τείχει Βαιθσαν») and *II SAM* 21:12 («και ἐπορεύθη Δαυιδ και ἔλαβεν τὰ ὀστά Σαουλ και τὰ ὀστά Ἰωνθαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ παρὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν υἱῶν Ἰαβις Γαλααδ οἱ ἔκλεψαν αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς πλατείας Βαιθσαν ὅτι ἔστησαν αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἣ ἐπάταξαν οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι τὸν Σαουλ ἐν Γελβουε») is affirmed that Philistines killed Saul and his sons and then hung their bodies up to the wall of Beth Sean.

<sup>910</sup> *I KGS* 4:7-12: «και τῷ Σαλωμων δώδεκα καθεσταμένοι ἐπὶ πάντα Ἰσραηλ χορηγεῖν τῷ βασιλεῖ και τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ μήνα ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τὸν ἕνα χορηγεῖν [...] Βακχα υἱὸς Ἀχιλιδ Θανααχ και Μεκεδω και πᾶς ὁ οἶκος Σαν ὁ παρὰ Σεσαθαν ὑποκάτω τοῦ Εσραε και ἐκ Βαισαφουδ Εβελμαωλα ἕως Μαεβερ Λουκαμ εἷς».

<sup>911</sup> AVI-YONAH 1962, 128.

<sup>912</sup> SMITH 1894, 363.

<sup>913</sup> The site is still called Bethsean in *I MACC* V, 52 («και διέβησαν τὸν Ἰορδάνην εἰς τὸ πεδῖον τὸ μέγα κατὰ πρόσωπον Βαιθσαν») and *I MACC* XII, 40 («και εὐλαβήθη μήποτε οὐκ ἔαση αὐτὸν Ἰωνθαν και μήποτε πολεμήσῃ πρὸς αὐτὸν και ἐζήτει συλλαβεῖν αὐτὸν τοῦ ἀπολέσαι και ἀπάρας ἦλθεν εἰς Βαιθσαν»).

<sup>914</sup> SYNC. *Chron.* Ed. Dindorf I, 405: «Σκύθαι τὴν Παλαιστίνην κατέδραμον και Βασάν κατέσχον τὴν ἐξ αὐτῶν κληθεῖσαν Σκυθόπολιν».

invasion, saying that the Scythians defeated the Medes and ruled Asia for 28 years: after this period, the Medes took their territories back<sup>915</sup>.

Many scholars accepted the hypothesis that a group of Scythians founded the settlement and lived there from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE onwards<sup>916</sup>, only Victor Tcherikover rejected this hypothesis although he did not find a good explanation to the question of the name<sup>917</sup>.

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)<sup>918</sup>. The name of Nysa appears on several coins dated to Roman Imperial times<sup>919</sup>. 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<sup>920</sup>. However, Nysa became a common name only since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century onward<sup>921</sup>. 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<sup>922</sup>.

Felix Marie Abel<sup>923</sup>, followed by Michael Avi-Yonah<sup>924</sup>, reported another theory about the name of Scythopolis: Scythian soldiers served in the armies of Alexander the Great and

---

<sup>915</sup> HDt. I, 104-106: «[...] Σκύθαι [...] τὴν κατύπερθε ὁδὸν πολλῶ μακροτέραν ἐκτραπόμενοι, ἐν δεξιῇ ἔχοντες τὸ Καυκάσιον ὄρος. ἐνθαῦτα οἱ μὲν Μῆδοι συμβαλόντες τοῖσι Σκύθησι καὶ ἐσσωθέντες τῇ μάχῃ τῆς ἀρχῆς κατελύθησαν. οἱ δὲ Σκύθαι τὴν Ἀσίην πᾶσαν ἐπέσχον. ἐνθεῦτεν δὲ ἦσαν ἐπ’ Αἴγυπτον. καὶ ἐπεῖτε ἐγένοντο ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ Συρίῃ, Ψαμμήτιχος σφέας Αἰγύπτου βασιλεὺς ἀντιάσας δῶροισί τε καὶ λιπῆσι ἀποτράπει τὸ προσωτέρω μὴ πορεύεσθαι. οἱ δὲ ἐπεῖτε ἀναχωρέοντες ὀπίσω ἐγένοντο τῆς Συρίας ἐν Ἀσκάλωνι πόλι, τῶν πλεόνων Σκυθέων παρεξεληθόντων ἀσινέων, ὀλίγοι τινὲς αὐτῶν ὑπολειφθέντες ἐσύλησαν τῆς οὐρανίης Ἀφροδίτης τὸ ἱρόν. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἱρόν, ὡς ἐγὼ πυνθανόμενος εὐρίσκω, πάντων ἀρχαιότατον ἱρῶν ὅσα ταύτης τῆς θεοῦ: καὶ γὰρ τὸ ἐν Κύπρῳ ἱρόν ἐνθεῦτεν ἐγένετο, ὡς αὐτοὶ Κύπριοι λέγουσι, καὶ τὸ ἐν Κυθήροισι Φοινικῆς εἰσὶ οἱ ἰδρυσάμενοι ἐκ ταύτης τῆς Συρίας ἐόντες. τοῖσι δὲ τῶν Σκυθέων συλήσασσι τὸ ἱρόν τὸ ἐν Ἀσκάλωνι καὶ τοῖσι τούτων αἰεὶ ἐκγόνοισι ἐνέσκηψε ὁ θεὸς θῆλεαν νοῦσον: ὥστε ἅμα λέγουσὶ τε οἱ Σκύθαι διὰ τοῦτο σφέας νοσέειν, καὶ ὁρᾶν παρ’ ἑωυτοῖσι τοὺς ἀπικνεομένους ἐς τὴν Σκυθικὴν χώραν ὡς διακέαται τοὺς καλέουσι Ἐνάρεας οἱ Σκύθαι. ἐπὶ μὲν νυν ὀκτῶ καὶ εἴκοσι ἔτεα ἤρχον τῆς Ἀσίας οἱ Σκύθαι, καὶ τὰ πάντα σφι ὑπὸ τε ὕβριος καὶ ὀλιγωρίας ἀνάστατα ἦν: χωρὶς μὲν γὰρ φόρον ἔπρησσαν παρ’ ἐκάστων τὸν ἐκάστοισι ἐπέβαλλον, χωρὶς δὲ τοῦ φόρου ἤρπαζον περιελαύνοντες τοῦτο ὃ τι ἔχοιεν ἕκαστοι. καὶ τούτων μὲν τοὺς πλεῖνας Κουαζάρης τε καὶ Μῆδοι ξεινίσαντες καὶ καταμεθύσαντες κατεφόνευσαν, καὶ οὕτω ἀνεσώσαντο τὴν ἀρχὴν Μῆδοι καὶ ἐπεκράτεον τῶν περ καὶ πρότερον, καὶ τὴν τε Νίνον εἶλον (ὡς δὲ εἶλον ἐν ἑτέροισι λόγοισι δηλώσω) καὶ τοὺς Ἀσσυρίους ὑποχειρίου ἐποίησαντο πλὴν τῆς Βαβυλωνίης μοίρης».

<sup>916</sup> AVI-YONAH 1962, 125.

<sup>917</sup> TCHERIKOVER 1959, 103.

<sup>918</sup> Nat. Hist. V, 16,74: «*scythopolim, antea nysam, a libero patre sepulta nutrice ibi scythis deductis*».

This explanation is followed also by SOLINUS (ed. Mommsen, c. 36, 1-2): «[...] *Scythopoli primos incolas et auctorem dabo. Liber pater cum humo nutricem tradidisset, condidit hoc oppidum, ut sepulturae titulum etiam urbis moenibus ampliaret. Incolae deerant: e comitibus suis Scythas delegit, quos ut animi firmaret ad promptam resistendi violentiam, praemium loci nomen dedit*».

<sup>919</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 186-209.

<sup>920</sup> Nysa was probably a daughter of king Antiochos wed to Pharnaces I of Pontus. See RIGSBY 1980, 240.

<sup>921</sup> BELAYCHE (2009, 174-179) well analyses Scythopolis' foundation myths.

<sup>922</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2004a, 24-25

<sup>923</sup> ABEL 1952, Vol. II, 57.

<sup>924</sup> 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<sup>925</sup>.

Flavius Josephus knew both this names of the city, but he affirmed that in his days the city was called Scythopolis<sup>926</sup>, mostly by Greeks<sup>927</sup>. Stephanus of Byzantium stated that Nysa Scythopolis was called «Baisan» by the barbarians<sup>928</sup>.

According to Flavius Josephus, the city was in Coele Syria, albeit located on the west bank of the river Jordan<sup>929</sup> and had its own independent territory<sup>930</sup>: here Alexander Jannaeus and Cleopatra III of Egypt stipulated a formal treaty<sup>931</sup>. Polybius wrote that it was free at least from 218 BCE, when Antiochos III captured the settlement of Philoteria and

---

<sup>925</sup> APPLEBAUM 1989, 1.

<sup>926</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* V, 83: «[...] τῆς τε Μανασσήτιδος οἱ ἡμίσεις ἀπὸ μὲν Ἰορδάνου μέχρι Δώρων πόλεως, πλάτος δὲ ἐπὶ Βηθησάνων, ἣ νῦν Σκυθόπολις καλεῖται».

*AJ* VI, 374: «Τῇ δ' ἐπιούσῃ σκυλεύοντες οἱ Παλαιστῖνοι τοὺς τῶν πολεμίων νεκροὺς ἐπιτυγχάνουσι τοῖς Σαούλου καὶ τῶν παιδῶν αὐτοῦ σώμασι καὶ σκυλεύσαντες ἀποτέμνουσιν αὐτῶν τὰς κεφαλὰς, καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν περιήγγειλαν τὴν χώραν πέμψαντες, ὅτι πεπτώκασιν οἱ πολέμιοι: καὶ τὰς μὲν πανοπλίας αὐτῶν ἀνέθηκαν εἰς τὸ Ἀσάρτειον ἱερόν, τὰ δὲ σώματα ἀνεσταύρωσαν πρὸς τὰ τείχη τῆς Βηθσάν πόλεως, ἣ νῦν Σκυθόπολις καλεῖται».

<sup>927</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XII, 348: «διαβάντες δὲ τὸν Ἰορδάνην ἦγον εἰς τὸ μέγα πεδῖον, οὗ κεῖται κατὰ πρόσωπον πόλις Βεθσάνη καλουμένη πρὸς Ἑλλήνων Σκυθόπολις».

*AJ* XIII, 188: «ἀπάτη δ' αὐτὸν καὶ δόλω κρίνας ἀνελεῖν εἰς Βαιθσάν ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας παραγίνεται τὴν καλουμένην ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων Σκυθόπολιν [...]».

<sup>928</sup> STEP. BYZ. s.v. Σκυθόπολις: «Παλαιστίνης πόλις. ἣ Νῦσα Κοίλης Συρίας Σκυθῶν πόλις, πρότερον **Βαίσιων λεγομένη** ὑπὸ τῶν Βαρβάρων. ὁ πολίτης Σκυθοπολίτης».

<sup>929</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 7,7 (155-157): «Ἀφελόμενος δὲ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τὰς ἐν κοίλῃ Συρία πόλεις, ἃς εἶλον, ὑπέταξεν τῷ κατ' ἐκεῖνο Ῥωμαίων στρατηγῷ κατατεταγμένῳ καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἰδίοις ὄροις περιέκλεισεν. ἀνακτίζει δὲ καὶ Γάδαρα ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατεστραμμένην Γαδαρεῖ τινὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἀπελευθέρων Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος. ἠλευθέρωσεν δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ μεσογείᾳ πόλεις, ὅσας μὴ φθάσαντες κατέσκαψαν, Ἴππον Σκυθόπολιν τε καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἰάμνειαν καὶ Μάρισαν Ἀζωτόν τε καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς παραλίους Γάζαν Ἰόππην Δώρα καὶ τὴν πάλαι μὲν Στράτωνος πύργον καλουμένην, ὕστερον δὲ μετακτισθεῖσάν τε ὑφ' Ἡρώδου βασιλέως λαμπροτάτοις κατασκευάσμασι καὶ μετονομασθεῖσαν Καισάρειαν. ἃς πάσας τοῖς γνησίοις ἀποδοὺς πολίταις κατέταξεν εἰς τὴν Συριακὴν ἐπαρχίαν»;

*AJ* XIV, 49: «ὡς δὲ παραμειψάμενος Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν εἰς Κορέας ἦκεν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τῆς Ἰουδαίας διεξιόντι τὴν μεσόγειον, ἐνταῦθα εἷς τι περικαλλὲς ἔρυμα ἐπ' ἄκρου τοῦ ὄρους ἰδρυμένον Ἀλεξάνδρειον Ἀριστοβούλου συμπεφευγότος, πέμψας ἐκέλευσεν ἦκειν πρὸς αὐτόν».

<sup>930</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* III, 3,1 (35-37): «Δύο δ' οὐσας τὰς Γαλιλαίας, τὴν τε ἄνω καὶ τὴν κάτω προσαγορευομένην, περιείσχει μὲν ἡ Φοινίκη τε καὶ Συρία [...] ἀπὸ δὲ μεσημβρίας Σαμαρεῖτις τε καὶ Σκυθόπολις μέχρι τῶν Ἰορδάνου ναμάτων».

<sup>931</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 355: «ταῦτα δὲ Ἀνανία παραινέσαντος ἡ Κλεοπάτρα πείθεται μηδὲν ἀδικῆσαι τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, ἀλλὰ συμμαχίαν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐποίησατο ἐν Σκυθοπόλει τῆς κοίλης Συρίας».

Scythopolis itself<sup>932</sup>. However, the city was not hostile to the Jews<sup>933</sup>, even after Alexander Jannaeus conquered it<sup>934</sup> and Pompey separated it from Jewish territories<sup>935</sup>. Gabinius restored the city<sup>936</sup>, which was independent even during the Hasmonean rule<sup>937</sup>. The city was included in both lists of Pliny and Claudius Ptolemy, Josephus knew Scythopolis as the «greatest city of the Decapolis»<sup>938</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>932</sup> POLYB. V, 70,1-5: «Ἀντίοχος δὲ τὴν δύναμιν ἀναλαβὼν ἦκε καὶ κατεστρατοπέδευσε πρὸς τῇ Σιδῶνι. τὸ μὲν οὖν καταπειράζειν τῆς πόλεως ἀπέγνω διὰ τὴν προϋπάρχουσαν αὐτόθι δασιλίαν τῆς χορηγίας καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐνοικούντων καὶ συμπεφευγῶτων ἀνδρῶν: ἀναλαβὼν δὲ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτὸς μὲν ἐποιεῖτο τὴν πορείαν ὡς ἐπὶ Φιλοτερίας, Διογνήτῳ δὲ συνέταξε τῷ ναύαρχῳ πάλιν ἔχοντι τὰς ναῦς ἀποπλεῖν εἰς Τύρον. ἡ δὲ Φιλοτερία κεῖται παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν λίμνην, εἰς ἣν ὁ καλούμενος Ἰορδάνης ποταμὸς εἰσβάλλων ἐξίησι πάλιν εἰς τὰ πεδία τὰ περὶ τὴν Σκυθῶν πόλιν προσαγορευομένην. γενόμενος δὲ καθ' ὁμολογίαν ἐγκρατῆς ἀμφοτέρων τῶν προειρημένων πόλεων, εὐθαρσῶς ἔσχε πρὸς τὰς μελλούσας ἐπιβολὰς διὰ τὸ τὴν ὑποτεταγμένην χώραν ταῖς πόλεσι ταύταις ῥαδίως δύνασθαι παντὶ τῷ στρατοπέδῳ χορηγεῖν καὶ δασιλὴν παρασκευάζειν τὰ κατεπιίγοντα πρὸς τὴν χρείαν».

<sup>933</sup> II MACC XII, 29-31: «ἀναζεύξαντες δὲ ἐκέθην ὥρμησαν ἐπὶ Σκυθῶν πόλιν ἀπέχουσαν ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων σταδίου ἑξακοσίου ἀπομαρτυρησάντων δὲ τῶν ἐκεῖ καθεστώτων Ἰουδαίων ἦν οἱ Σκυθοπολίται ἔσχον πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐνοίαν καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῆς ἀτυχίας καιροῖς ἡμερον ἀπάντησιν ὑχαριστήσαντες καὶ προσπαρακαλέσαντες καὶ εἰς τὰ λοιπὰ πρὸς τὸ γένος εὐμενεῖς εἶναι παρεγενήθησαν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα τῆς τῶν ἑβδομάδων ἑορτῆς οὔσης ὑπογύου».

<sup>934</sup> JOSEPH. AJ XIII, 395-396: «Κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἤδη τῶν Σύρων καὶ Ἰδουμαίων καὶ Φοινίκων πόλεις εἶχον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς θαλάσση μὲν Στράτωνος πύργον Ἀπολλωνίαν Ἰόππην Ἰάμνιαν Ἄζωτον Γάζαν Ἀνθηδόνα Ῥάφειαν Ῥινοκόρουρα, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ κατὰ τὴν Ἰδουμαίαν Ἄδωρα καὶ Μάρισαν καὶ ὄλην Ἰδουμαίαν, Σαμάρειαν Καρμήλιον ὄρος καὶ τὸ Ἰταβύριον ὄρος Σκυθόπολιν Γάδαρα, Γαυλανίπιδας Σελεύκειαν Γάβαλα».

<sup>935</sup> JOSEPH. BJ I, 7,7 (156): «ἠλευθέρωσεν δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ μεσογαίᾳ πόλεις, ὅσας μὴ φθάσαντες κατέσκαψαν, Ἴππον Σκυθόπολιν τε καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἰάμνιαν καὶ Μάρισαν Ἄζωτον τε καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς παραλίους Γάζαν Ἰόππην Δῶρα καὶ τὴν πάλαι μὲν Στράτωνος πύργον καλουμένην, ὕστερον δὲ μετακτισθεῖσάν τε ὑφ' Ἡρώδου βασιλέως λαμπροτάτους κατασκευάσασιν καὶ μετονομασθεῖσαν Καισάρειαν»;

AJ XIV, 75: «καὶ Γάδαρα μὲν μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν καταστραφεῖσαν ἀνέκτισεν Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος τῷ Γαδαρεὶ ἀπελευθέρῳ αὐτοῦ: τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς Ἴππον καὶ Σκυθόπολιν καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Δίον καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἐπιτε Μάρισαν καὶ Ἄζωτον καὶ Ἰάμνιαν καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν τοῖς οἰκητορσιν ἀπέδωκεν».

<sup>936</sup> JOSEPH. BJ I, 8,4 (166): «συνεπολίσθησαν γοῦν τούτου κελεύσαντος Σκυθόπολις τε καὶ Σαμάρεια καὶ Ἀνθηδῶν καὶ Ἀπολλωνία καὶ Ἰάμνεια καὶ Ῥάφεια Μάρισά τε καὶ Ἀδώρεος καὶ Γάβαλα καὶ Ἄζωτος καὶ ἄλλαι πολλαί, τῶν οἰκητόρων ἀσμένως ἐφ' ἐκάστην συνθεόντων»;

AJ XIV, 87-88: «Γαβίνιος μὲν οὖν μέρος τῆς στρατιᾶς ἐνταυθοὶ καταλιπών, ἕως ἂν ἐκπολιορκηθῇ τὸ χωρίον, αὐτὸς ἐπήγει τὴν ἄλλην Ἰουδαίαν, καὶ ὅσαις ἐπετύγχανεν καθηρημέναις τῶν πόλεων κτίζειν παρεκελεύετο. καὶ ἀνεκτίσθησαν Σαμάρεια καὶ Ἄζωτος καὶ Σκυθόπολις».

<sup>937</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 144.

<sup>938</sup> JOSEPH. BJ III, 9,7 (446): «ἡ δ' ἐστὶν μεγίστη τῆς δεκαπόλεως».

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 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>939</sup>, but he focused his analysis on the ancient writers who wrote about this city.

After the brief accounts made by Jasper Ulrich Seetzen<sup>940</sup> and later by John Lewis Burckhardt<sup>941</sup>, Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangeles surveyed the area of the theatre and the necropolis, to north-east of the acropolis<sup>942</sup>. In 1852 Edward Robinson saw the same ruins<sup>943</sup>. 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<sup>944</sup>.

During the 20s and 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, the most important ones from 15<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>945</sup>.

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<sup>946</sup>, 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 Mazar and Rachel Bar-Nathan, revealing the agora, the Caesareum, the  $\omega\delta\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu$  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.

---

<sup>939</sup> RELAND 1714, 992-998.

<sup>940</sup> SEETZEN 1859, 317-319.

<sup>941</sup> BURKHARDT 1983, 343.

<sup>942</sup> IRBY and MENGELS 1823, 301-303.

<sup>943</sup> ROBINSON 1856, 326-332.

<sup>944</sup> CONDER and KITCHENER 1882, 101-114.

<sup>945</sup> OREN 1973.

<sup>946</sup> APPLEBAUM 1978, 77-97.

### 4.13.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE

The earliest remains of the settlement were discovered on the south site of Tel Beth Sean, dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> 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 use<sup>947</sup>.

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 buildings<sup>948</sup>, probably because of the destruction of the city caused by the conquest of Alexander Jannaeus. It seems likely that before the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE the population of Scythopolis had not settled the Nahal Amal valley<sup>949</sup>.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. However, an earlier shrine probably stood there<sup>950</sup>.

---

<sup>947</sup> See TSAFRIR 1989 for further information.

<sup>948</sup> FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 2002, 73.

<sup>949</sup> DI SEGNI, FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 1999, 60-61.

<sup>950</sup> MAZOR 2016, 358.

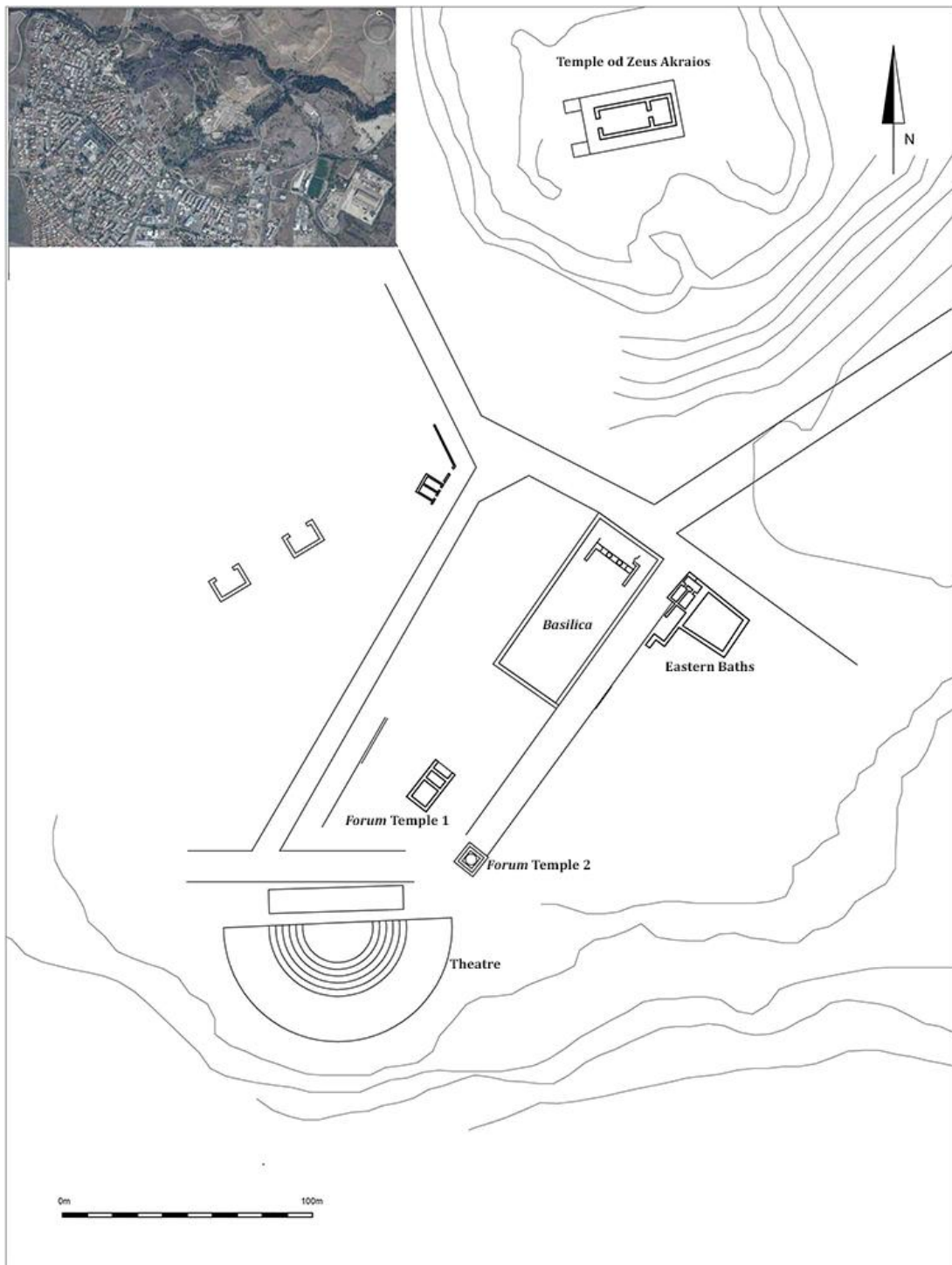


FIG. 19 Scythopolis city plan, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, based on MAZOR and ATRASH 2014, fig. 10.10. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

It is difficult to define which god was worshipped in this temple: two inscriptions dated to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE mention Zeus Akraios, whereas a third alludes to Zeus Bacchus<sup>951</sup>. In the valley, a temple dedicated to Demeter and Kore was built near the theatre, while another one was dedicated to Dionisos.

<sup>951</sup> LIFSHITZ 1961.



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<sup>952</sup>.

The city knew a huge development mostly during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>953</sup>. The temple had a four columns façade and stood on a high *podium*. The exact plan of the ναός has not been clarified<sup>954</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>955</sup>. 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 ὄδειον, used probably as *βουλευτήριον*, which went out of use during the 6<sup>th</sup> century, when a semi-circular plaza (called «sigma») was created<sup>956</sup>. 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 *Caesareum*, dedicated to the Emperor cult<sup>957</sup>. The Palladius street led to the bathhouse, to the south-west, built firstly during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and replaced by a Byzantine building, and to the southern theatre, presumably built during the first stages of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE (possibly under the reign of Tiberius) and enlarged at the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, during the Flavian period<sup>958</sup>. It was rebuilt during the Severan Age<sup>959</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>960</sup>. It collapsed

---

<sup>952</sup> DI SEGNI, FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 1999, 61-63.

<sup>953</sup> FISCHER 1923, 239.

<sup>954</sup> SEGAL 2013, 223.

<sup>955</sup> FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 1986-1987, 58.

<sup>956</sup> FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 1992, 120.

<sup>957</sup> MAZOR and NAJJAR 2007, 11.

<sup>958</sup> MAZOR and ATRASH 2014, 228.

<sup>959</sup> MAZOR and ATRASH 2015, 9-20. The first excavators have dated the theatre to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. See APPLEBAUM 1978, 88-89.

<sup>960</sup> FOERSTER and TSAFRIR 1992, 121.

during the earthquake of 749 CE and its stones were reused in later periods. The Crusaders used the seats for building a fortress nearby.

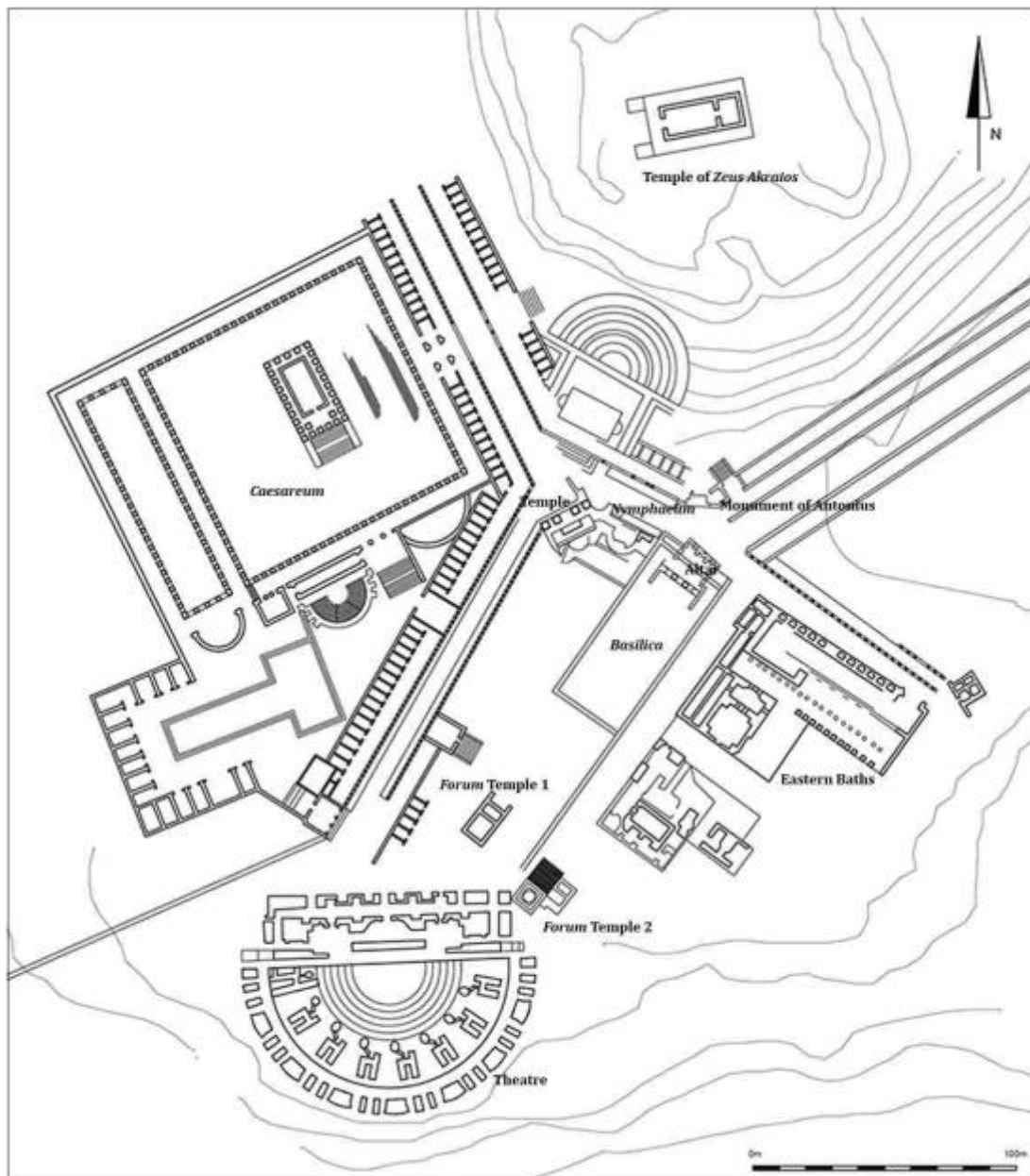


FIG. 20 Scythopolis city plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, based on MAZOR and ATRASH 2014, fig. 10.10.

## 4.14 PELLA/TABAQAT FAHL

On the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, the modern village of Tabqat 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<sup>961</sup>.

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<sup>962</sup>, while a natural hill, called «Tell al-Husn», lies at south-east. Favourable climatic conditions led colonisation of the area since Palaeolithic<sup>963</sup>. A first settlement on the site of the Hellenistic city of Pella was dated to Late Neolithic<sup>964</sup>.

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<sup>965</sup>: the city name is firstly attested in some Egyptian execration texts dated to 19<sup>th</sup> century BCE, which mentioned a Semitic settlement called «Pihilum»<sup>966</sup>.

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<sup>967</sup>.

It seems likely that the city was in the list of the Palestinian sites conquered by the Egyptian king Sethos I<sup>968</sup>. 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<sup>969</sup>. 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<sup>970</sup> and Boutis<sup>971</sup>. According to Victor Tcherikover, the name of Berenike is a clear proof that the city was founded by Ptolemy III<sup>972</sup>: Ptolemaic rule in southern Syria

---

<sup>961</sup> WALMSLEY 2007, 241.

<sup>962</sup> SMITH 1973, 1.

<sup>963</sup> WALMSLEY *et alii* 1993, 169.

<sup>964</sup> BOURKE 1997, 96-98.

<sup>965</sup> NEAEHL 3, s.v. Pella

<sup>966</sup> SMITH 1968, 134; SCHÜRER II 1979, 146; WEBER 1993, 12; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 170.

<sup>967</sup> MORAN 1992, 309, EA 256: there is a mention of the city of Pihilu, whose prince Mut-Bahlu was accused of wanting to leave the city.

<sup>968</sup> SMITH 1973, 29-31.

<sup>969</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Δίον: «πόλις [...] κοίλης Συρίας. Κτίσμα Ἀλεξάνδρου, καὶ Πέλλα ἦς τὸ ὕδωρ νοσηρόν».

<sup>970</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Βερενίκα: «[...] ἔστι καὶ ἄλλη περὶ Συρίαν, ἣν Πέλλαν καλοῦσιν».

<sup>971</sup> 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 Βοῦτις λεγομένη».

<sup>972</sup> TCHERIKOVER 1959, 99.

began after the battle of Ipsos, in 301 BCE. Berenike was a common name among the women of the Egyptian court<sup>973</sup>.

However, Polybius, talking about the conquests of Antiochos III in 218 BCE, reported just the name of Pella<sup>974</sup>. Appian, instead, claimed that the city was founded by Seleucos I<sup>975</sup>. According to Flavius Josephus, Alexander Jannaeus conquered and destroyed the city

---

<sup>973</sup> Berenike, in fact, was the name of the wife of Ptolemy I, the daughter of Ptolemy II and the wife of Ptolemy III.

<sup>974</sup> POLYB. V, 70,12: «ἀσφαλισάμενος δὲ καὶ τὸ Ἀταβύριον ἀνέζευξε, καὶ προάγων παρέλαβε Πέλλαν...».

<sup>975</sup> APPIAN *Syr.* IX (57): «τοσαῦτα μὲν δὴ περὶ τῶν Σελεύκω προμαντευθέντων ἐπτυθόμην: γίγνεται δ' εὐθύς Ἀλεξάνδρου μεταστάντος ἡγεμῶν τῆς ἵππου τῆς ἐταιρικῆς ἥς δὴ καὶ Ἡφαιστίων ἡγήσατο Ἀλεξάνδρω καὶ ἐπὶ Ἡφαιστίωνι Περδίκκας, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἵππον σατράπης τε τῆς Βαβυλωνίας καὶ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τῇ σατραπείᾳ. γενομένω δὲ αὐτῷ τὰ ἐς πολέμους ἐπιτυχεστάτῳ Νικάτωρ ἐπώνυμον γίγνεται: τῷδε γὰρ ἀρέσκομαι μᾶλλον τοῦ Νικάτορα κτείνειν. καὶ τὸ σῶμα ὄντι εὐρώστῳ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ, καὶ ταῦρον ἄγριον ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρου θυσίᾳ ποτὲ ἐκθορόντα τῶν δεσμῶν ὑποστάντι μόνῳ καὶ ταῖς χερσὶ μόναις κατειργασμένῳ, προστιθέασιν ἐς τοὺς ἀνδριάντας ἐπὶ τῷδε κέρατα. πόλεις δὲ ᾤκισεν ἐπὶ τὸ μήκος τῆς ἀρχῆς ὅλης ἑκκαίδεκα μὲν Ἀντιοχείας ἐπὶ τῷ πατρὶ, πέντε δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ μητρὶ Λαοδικείας, ἑννέα δ' ἐπωνύμους ἑαυτοῦ, τέσσαρας δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς γυναίξιν, τρεῖς Ἀπαμείας καὶ Στρατονίκειαν μίαν. καὶ εἰσὶν αὐτῶν ἐπιφανέσταται καὶ νῦν Σελεύκειαι μὲν ἢ τε ἐπὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ καὶ ἢ ἐπὶ τοῦ Τίγρητος ποταμοῦ, Λαοδικεῖα δὲ ἢ ἐν τῇ Φοινίκῃ καὶ Ἀντιοχία ἢ ὑπὸ τῷ Λιβάνῳ ὄρει καὶ ἢ τῆς Συρίας Ἀπάμεια. τὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἢ Μακεδονίας ὠνόμαζεν, ἢ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἑαυτοῦ τισιν, ἢ ἐς τιμὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως: ὅθεν ἔστιν ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν ἄνω βαρβάροις πολλὰ μὲν Ἑλληνικῶν πολλὰ δὲ Μακεδονικῶν πολισμάτων ὀνόματα, Βέρροια, Ἐδεσσα, Πέρινθος, Μαρώνεια, Καλλίπολις, Ἀχαῖα, Πέλλα, Ὠρωπός, Ἀμφίπολις, Ἀρέθουσα, Ἀστακός, Τεγέα, Χαλκίς, Λάρισα, Ἡραία, Ἀπολλωνία, ἐν δὲ τῇ Παρθυηνῇ Σώτεια, Καλλιόπη, Χάρις, Ἐκατόμυλος, Ἀχαῖα, ἐν δ' Ἰνδοῖς Ἀλεξανδρόπολις, ἐν δὲ Σκύθαις Ἀλεξανδρέσχατα. καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς αὐτοῦ Σελεύκου νίκαις ἔστι Νικηφόριον τε ἐν τῇ Μεσσοποταμίᾳ καὶ Νικόπολις ἐν Ἀρμενίᾳ τῇ ἀγχοτάτῳ μάλιστα Καππαδοκίας».

because it was not expected to adopt Jewish customs<sup>976</sup>. As for other cities of the area, Pompey freed Pella<sup>977</sup>, which became to be part of the Decapolis<sup>978</sup>.

Later Christian authors, such as Epiphanius<sup>979</sup>, 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<sup>980</sup>.

---

<sup>976</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 4,8 (104): «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Πέλλαν ἐλὼν ἐπὶ Γέρασαν ἦει πάλιν τῶν Θεοδώρου κτημάτων γλιχόμενος, καὶ τρισὶ τοὺς φρουροὺς περιβόλους ἀποτειχίσας διὰ μάχης τὸ χωρίον παραλαμβάνει»; *AJ* XIII, 392-397: «Βασιλεύει δὲ μετ' αὐτὸν τῆς κοίλης Συρίας Ἀρέτας κληθεὶς εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τῶν τὴν Δαμασκὸν ἐχόντων διὰ τὸ πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον τὸν Μενναίου μίσος. στρατεύσας δ' ἐκέιθεν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ περὶ Ἄδιδα χωρίον μάχη νικήσας Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπὶ συνθήκαις ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας. Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ἐλάσας αὐθις ἐπὶ Δίαν πόλιν αἰρεῖ ταύτην, καὶ στρατεύσας ἐπὶ Ἔσσαν, οὗ τὰ πλείστου ἄξια Ζήνωνι συνέβαινεν εἶναι, τρισὶν μὲν περιβάλλει τείχεσιν τὸ χωρίον, ἀμαχί δὲ λαβὼν τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ Γαύλαναν καὶ Σελεύκειαν ἐξώρμησεν. παραλαβὼν δὲ καὶ ταύτας προσεξεῖλεν καὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχου λεγομένην φάραγγα καὶ Γάμαλα τὸ φρούριον. ἐγκαλῶν δὲ πολλὰ Δημητρίῳ τῷ τῶν τόπων ἄρχοντι περιέδυσεν αὐτόν, καὶ τρίτον ἤδη πεπληρωκῶς ἔτος τῆς στρατείας εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ὑπέστρεψεν προθύμως αὐτὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων διὰ τὴν εὐπραγίαν δεχομένων. Κατὰ δὲ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἤδη τῶν Σύρων καὶ Ἰδουμαίων καὶ Φοινίκων πόλεις εἶχον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς θαλάσση μὲν Στράτωνος πύργον Ἀπολλωνίαν Ἰόππην Ἰάμνιαν Ἄζωτον Γάζαν Ἀνθηδόνα Ῥάφειαν Ῥινοκόρουρα, ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσογαίᾳ κατὰ τὴν Ἰδουμαίαν Ἄδωρα καὶ Μάρισαν καὶ ὄλην Ἰδουμαίαν, Σαμάρειαν Καρμήλιον ὄρος καὶ τὸ Ἰταβύριον ὄρος Σκυθόπολιν Γάδαρα, Γαυλανίτιδας Σελεύκειαν Γάβαλα, Μωαβίτιδας Ἡσεβῶν Μήδαβα Λεμβὰ Ορωναίμαγελεθων Ζόαρα Κιλικίων αὐλῶνα Πέλλαν, ταύτην κατέσκαψεν ὑποσχομένων τῶν ἐνοικούντων ἐς πάτρια τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνη μεταβαλεῖσθαι, ἄλλας τε πόλεις πρωτεύουσας τῆς Συρίας ἦσαν κατεστραμμένοι».

<sup>977</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 7,7 (156): «ἠλευθέρωσεν δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ μεσογαίᾳ πόλεις, ὅσας μὴ φθάσαντες κατέσκαψαν, Ἴππον Σκυθόπολιν τε καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν καὶ Ἰάμνιαν καὶ Μάρισαν Ἄζωτόν τε καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς παραλίους Γάζαν Ἰόππην Δῶρα καὶ τὴν πάλαι μὲν Στράτωνος πύργον καλουμένην, ὕστερον δὲ μετακτισθεῖσάν τε ὑφ' Ἡρώδου βασιλέως λαμπροτάτοις κατασκευάσμασιν καὶ μετονομασθεῖσαν Καισάρειαν»;

*AJ* XIV, 75: «καὶ Γάδαρα μὲν μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν καταστραφεῖσαν ἀνέκτισεν Δημητρίῳ χαριζόμενος τῷ Γαδαρεὶ ἀπελευθέρῳ αὐτοῦ: τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς Ἴππον καὶ Σκυθόπολιν καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Δίον καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἐπιτε Μάρισαν καὶ Ἄζωτον καὶ Ἰάμνιαν καὶ Ἀρέθουσαν τοῖς οἰκητορσιν ἀπέδωκεν».

<sup>978</sup> The city is mentioned in both the lists of Pliny and of Claudius Ptolemy.

<sup>979</sup> EPIPH. *Adv. Haeres.* XXIX, 7,7-8: «Ἔστιν δὲ αὕτη ἡ αἵρεσις ἡ Ναζωραίων ἐν τῇ Βεροιαίων περὶ τὴν Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει περὶ τὰ τῆς Πέλλης μέρη καὶ ἐν τῇ Βασανίτιδι ἐν τῇ λεγομένην Κωκάβη, Χωχάβη δὲ Ἑβραϊστὶ λεγομένη [...]».

EPIPH. *Adv. Haeres.* XXX 2,7-8: «Γέγονε δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴ τούτων μετὰ τὴν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἄλωσιν. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πάντες οἱ εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότες τὴν Περαιάν κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ κατώκησαν, τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν Πέλλῃ τινὶ πόλει καλουμένη τῆς Δεκαπόλεως τῆς ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ γεγραμμένης πλησίον τῆς Βαταναίας καὶ Βασανίτιδος χώρας [...]».

<sup>980</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 210-217; MESHORER 1985, 92.

At the beginning of the Jewish war the city was ravaged by riots together with other cities<sup>981</sup>. Eusebius<sup>982</sup> remembered that a community of Christians fled to Pella<sup>983</sup> from Jerusalem during the revolt<sup>984</sup>.

The city reached its maximum population and prosperity during the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Damascus<sup>985</sup>, as the presence of a fort on the top of Tell al-Husn would confirm<sup>986</sup>. During the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 was<sup>987</sup>.

---

<sup>981</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I, 7,7 (156): «πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγὴν ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἐξαγριοῦται, καὶ διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κώμας τῶν Σύρων καὶ τὰς προσεχούσας ἐπόρθουν πόλεις, Φιλαδέλφειάν τε καὶ Ἑσεβωνίτιν καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν».

<sup>982</sup> EUSEB. *Hist. Eccl.* III 5.3-4: «μου, ὁ οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τινα χρησμόν τοῖς αὐτόθι δοκίμοις δι' ἀποκαλύψεως ἐκδοθέντα πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου μεταναστῆναι τῆς πόλεως καὶ τινα τῆς Περαιᾶς πόλιν οἰκεῖν κεκελευσμένου, Πέλλαν αὐτὴν ὀνομάζουσιν, ἐν ἧ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ μετωκισμένων, ὡς ἂν παντελῶς ἐπιλελοιπότην ἀγίων ἀνδρῶν αὐτὴν τε τὴν Ἰουδαίων βασιλικὴν μητρόπολιν καὶ σύμπασαν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν, ἢ ἐκ θεοῦ δίκη λοιπὸν αὐτοῦς ἀπετοσαῦτα εἰς τε τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους αὐτοῦ παρηνομηκότας μετῆι, τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἄρδην τὴν γενεὰν αὐτὴν ἐκείνην ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίζουσα».

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

<sup>984</sup> The episode is confirmed by Eriphanius, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century. EUSEB. *Hist. Eccl.* IV 6.3-4: «[...] ἀκμάσαντος δὲ τοῦ πολέμου ἔτους ὀκτωκαιδεκάτου τῆς ἡγεμονίας κατὰ Βηθθηρα ἑπολίχνη τις ἦν ὄχυρωτάτη, τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων οὐ σφόδρα πόρρω διεστῶσα τῆς τε ἐξωθεν πολιορκίας χρονίου γενομένης λιμῶ τε καὶ δίψει τῶν νεωτεροποιῶν εἰς ἔσχατον ὀλέθρου περιελαθέντων καὶ τοῦ τῆς ἀπονοίας αὐτοῖς αἰτίου τὴν ἀξίαν ἐκτίσαντος δίκην, τὸ πᾶν ἔθνος ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα γῆς πᾶμπαν ἐπιβαίνειν εἴργεται νόμου δόγματι καὶ διατάξεσιν Ἀδριανοῦ, ὡς ἂν μηδ' ἐξ ἀπόπτου θεωροῖεν τὸ πατρῶον ἔδαφος, ἐγκελευσμένου: Ἀρίστων ὁ Πελλαῖος ἱστορεῖ. οὕτω δὴ τῆς πόλεως εἰς ἐρημίαν τοῦ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους παντελῆ τε φθορὰν τῶν πάλαι οἰκητόρων ἐλθούσης ἐξ ἄλλοφύλου τε γένους συνοικισθείσης, ἢ μετέπειτα συστάσα Ῥωμαϊκὴ πόλις τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἀμείψασα, εἰς τὴν τοῦ κρατοῦντος Αἰλίου Ἀδριανοῦ τιμὴν Αἰλία προσαγορεύεται. καὶ δὴ τῆς αὐτόθι ἐκκλησίας ἐξ ἐθνῶν συγκροτηθείσης, πρῶτος μετὰ τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς ἐπισκόπους τὴν τῶν ἐκεῖσε λειτουργίαν ἐγχειρίζεται Μάρκος».

<sup>985</sup> WALMSLEY 2007, 244.

<sup>986</sup> WATSON and TIDMARSH 1996.

<sup>987</sup> 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<sup>988</sup>: 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<sup>989</sup>: 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<sup>990</sup>.

In 1887 the German scholar Gottlieb Schumacher began the most exhaustive survey, writing his results in a small book<sup>991</sup>: he saw the so-called «Roman Temple», noting the presence of Christian symbols on some columns<sup>992</sup>. 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»<sup>993</sup> and then the central mound, which consisted of «innumerable heaps of building stones»<sup>994</sup>. 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<sup>995</sup>.

In 1967 Robert Houston Smith, from Wooster College in Ohio, conducted the first systematic excavations in Pella<sup>996</sup>. An international team, headed by R. H. Smith, Basil Hennessy and Anthony McNicoll of the University of Sydney, resumed the works only in 1979<sup>997</sup>, until 1985: since this year only the Australian team worked in Pella, focusing in particular on the pre-classical and late antique periods<sup>998</sup>.

#### 4.14.2 URBAN LANDSCAPE

Very little is known about the city during the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE: there were found few signs of an Early Hellenistic presence<sup>999</sup> and there are no stratified

---

<sup>988</sup> ROBINSON 1856, 320-324.

<sup>989</sup> GUÉRIN 1868-1880, vol. III, 288-292.

<sup>990</sup> MERRILL 1881, 185-186.

<sup>991</sup> SCHUMACHER 1888b.

<sup>992</sup> SCHUMACHER 1888b, 23: he found on some columns the letters A and Ω.

<sup>993</sup> SCHUMACHER 1888b, 44-45.

<sup>994</sup> SCHUMACHER 1888b, 55.

<sup>995</sup> RICHMOND 1934.

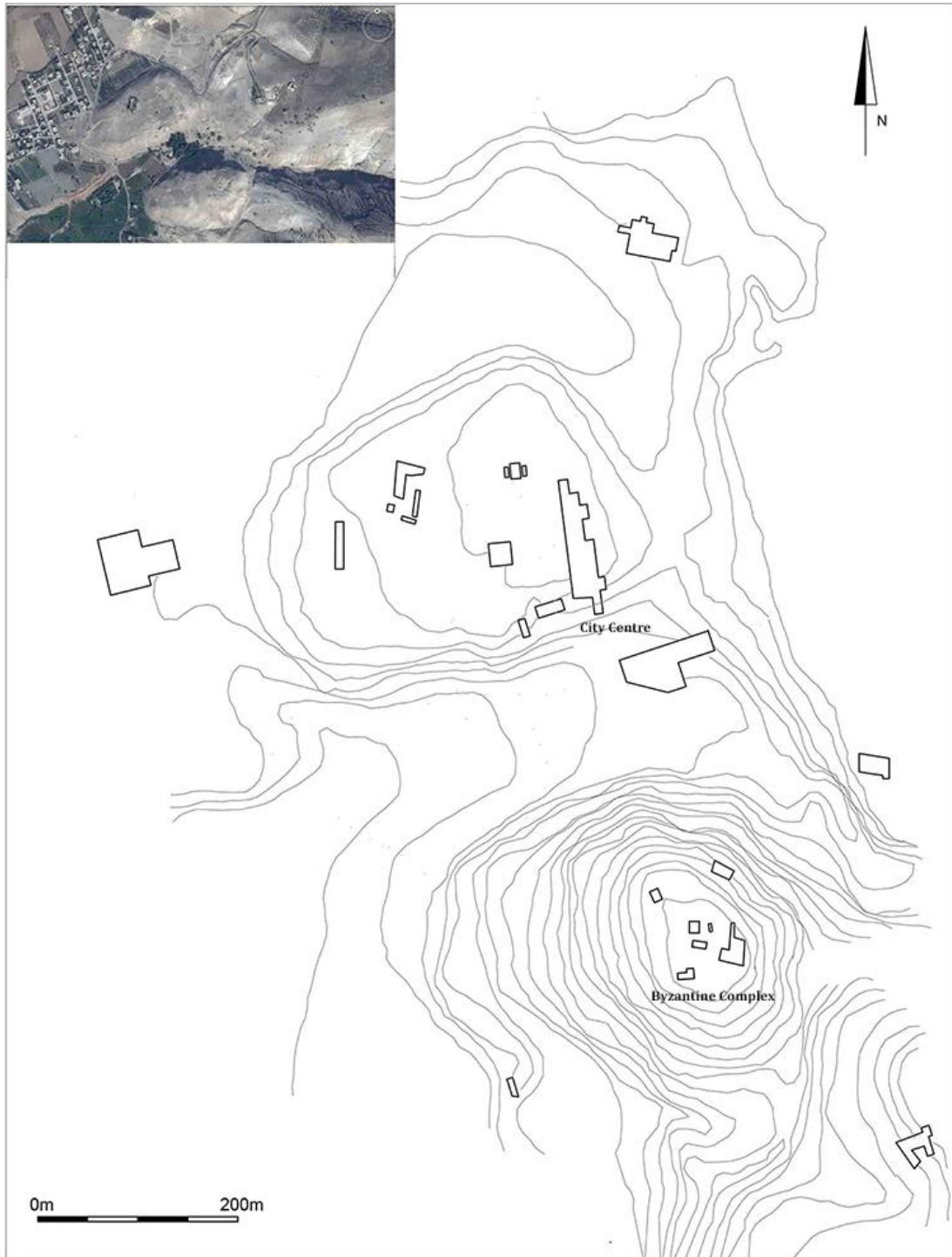
<sup>996</sup> SMITH 1973.

<sup>997</sup> MCNICOLL, SMITH, HENNESSY 1982.

<sup>998</sup> MCNICOLL+ *et alii* 1992; WATSON 2002, 61.

<sup>999</sup> See MCNICOLL, SMITH, HENNESSY 1982, 65; MCNICOLL+ *et alii* 1992, 103: 3<sup>rd</sup> century remains are rare and consist only in fragments of pottery and coins. About coins, only three can be certainly attributed to Ptolemy II Philadelphus: see SHEEDY *et alii* 2001, 15-16.

remains before the Seleucid conquest<sup>1000</sup>. According to John Tidmarsh, the best part of Hellenistic material belongs almost exclusively to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE<sup>1001</sup>.



---

<sup>1000</sup> WATSON 2002, 62.

<sup>1001</sup> TIDMARSCH 2004, 459.



FIG. 21 Pella's main excavation areas. Based on McNICOLL+ *et alii* 1992, fig. 3. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

By contrast, Late Hellenistic remains are much more numerous at Pella and in its surroundings: two fortresses were found on Jebel Sartaba<sup>1002</sup> and on Tell Hammeh<sup>1003</sup>, while the city itself seems to have had no fortifications, unlike other Decapolis cities, which were delimited by walls, as well as Gadara<sup>1004</sup> or Gerasa<sup>1005</sup>.

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<sup>1006</sup>.

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<sup>1007</sup>.

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<sup>1008</sup>.

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<sup>1009</sup>. 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 *ὄδειον*, 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<sup>1010</sup>.

Beside the *ὄδειον*, 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 *nymphaeum* depicted on several coins minted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE<sup>1011</sup>: this complex building had three floors and a richly decorated façade with columns and statues<sup>1012</sup>. Actually the *exedra* was identified as a remnant of city's baths<sup>1013</sup>.

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*<sup>1014</sup>.

---

<sup>1002</sup> McNICOLL, SMITH, HENNESSY 1982, 65-67.

<sup>1003</sup> McNICOLL+ *et alii* 1992, 103-107.

<sup>1004</sup> HOFFMANN 2000.

<sup>1005</sup> KENNEDY 1998, 56

<sup>1006</sup> WATSON 2002, 63.

<sup>1007</sup> JOSEPH *BJ* I, 4,8 (104) and *AJ* XIII, 392-397: see note 969.

<sup>1008</sup> SMITH 1987, 56.

<sup>1009</sup> McNICOLL, SMITH, HENNESSY 1982, 77.

<sup>1010</sup> McNICOLL, SMITH, HENNESSY 1982, 78-82.

<sup>1011</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 214-215, nos. 11-12.

<sup>1012</sup> MESHORER 1985, 92.

<sup>1013</sup> McNICOLL+ *et alii* 1992, 122.

<sup>1014</sup> McNICOLL+ *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<sup>1015</sup>. According to Pamela Watson, the hill resembles the south of Tell al-Husn<sup>1016</sup>.

Archaeological excavations unearthed remains of well-built walls dated to late Roman period (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century CE), which are a clear sign of a reorganization of a domestic area in the south-eastern area of the city<sup>1017</sup>. The later 3<sup>rd</sup> century was a period of difficulty for trade, the city seemed to decline, although some imported goods were still imported<sup>1018</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>1015</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 214-215; MESHORER 1985, 92, no. 250.

<sup>1016</sup> WATSON 2002, 65.

<sup>1017</sup> WATSON 2002, 69.

<sup>1018</sup> The contents of the tombs, where the best part of Late Roman evidences have been found, confirmed the economic decline.

## 4.15 GERASA/JERASH

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 Chrysorrhoeas 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<sup>1019</sup> and of its surroundings<sup>1020</sup>, a stable settlement during the Bronze and then Iron Age occupied the hill south-western the oval plaza<sup>1021</sup>, where the Archaeological Museum nowadays lies<sup>1022</sup>.

The territory of Gerasa was presumably part of the area ruled by Ammonites from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>1023</sup>: 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 Kasmaios from Ger(asa)<sup>1024</sup>. Another attestation is a Nabataean inscription dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and found at Petra. On this inscription the name «*Garshu*» is registered<sup>1025</sup>.

A late tradition ascribed the foundation of the city to Alexander the Great, who settled a group of old men (γέροντες) at the site<sup>1026</sup>. This late tradition has been confirmed by some coins minted at Gerasa during the reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla<sup>1027</sup> and of Elagabus<sup>1028</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, according to two inscriptions found in the city<sup>1029</sup>. According to Arnold Jones, a group of aristocratic élite

---

<sup>1019</sup> The last findings were unearthed during the excavations of the North-western Quarter of the city. See LICHTENBERGER and RAJA 2015, 486.

<sup>1020</sup> KENNEDY (2000, 448) has identified 6 Neolithic sites.

<sup>1021</sup> KENNEDY 1998, 55. NELSON GLUECK (1939, 28) had already identified an Iron Age site on a hill north of Jerash.

<sup>1022</sup> The so-called «Camp Hill» of the Anglo-American expedition. See KRAELING 1938, 28 and SEIGNE 1992, 332.

<sup>1023</sup> KRAELING 1938, 28.

<sup>1024</sup> EISSFELDT 1941, 434; SEYRIG 1965, 26 n. 2; LICHTENBERGER 2003, 192, n. 1671: «ἔπι Ταχίππου --- Κασμαῖος Ἀβδαίου Γερ[ασηνός] τὸν βωμὸν Ἡλίωι καὶ θε[οῖς τοῖς] συμβώμοις».

<sup>1025</sup> STARCKY 1965, 95-96.

<sup>1026</sup> 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 ἡλικίᾳ πάντας κτείνας, ἀπέλυσε τοὺς γέροντες. οἱ ελθόντες, κτίζουσι πόλιν [...]».

<sup>1027</sup> These coins have a bust of Alexander and the legend «ΑΛΕΧ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚ(ΕΔΩΝ) ΚΤΙ(ΣΤΗΣ) ΓΕΡΑΣΩΝ» on the reverse. For further information, see SEYRIG 1965, 25-28; SPIJKERMAN 1978, 164-165, nos. 29, 31.

<sup>1028</sup> On these coins the legend on the reverse is «ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΩΝ». SPIJKERMAN 1978, 166-167, nos. 34-35.

<sup>1029</sup> WELLES 1938, 410, no. 78: «Μακεδόνων»: this inscription is dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. WELLES 1938, 423, no. 137. It is possible that Alexander ordered Perdikkas to found a city: SEYRIG (1942, 25-28) had rightly dated the erection of the statue of Perdikkas at the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. *Contra* SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 150, who wrote about the erection of a statue during the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

of the city called himself «Macedonians»<sup>1030</sup>, creating a legendary tradition. A similar situation is registered in various cities in Asia Minor, like Eumeneia in Phrygia<sup>1031</sup>.

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<sup>1032</sup>, and a coin of Ptolemy II, found at Birketein, north of Gerasa<sup>1033</sup>. According to Carl H. Kraeling<sup>1034</sup>, followed by Jacques Seigne<sup>1035</sup>, 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<sup>1036</sup>. 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<sup>1037</sup>. 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<sup>1038</sup>. Furthermore, Seleucid kings promoted the cult of Zeus Olympios<sup>1039</sup>.

As proof that Gerasa acquired importance during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1040</sup>.

Although the Semitic name was always used, Gerasa was also known with the name «Antioch on the Chrysorrhoeas»: 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>1041</sup>. The coins which attested the name were all dated to the Marcus Aurelius' principate<sup>1042</sup>.

---

<sup>1030</sup> JONES 1937, 238-239

<sup>1031</sup> COHEN 2006, 250-251; 404.

<sup>1032</sup> CLARK, BOWSHER and STEWART 1986, 255.

<sup>1033</sup> BELLINGER 1938, 500.

<sup>1034</sup> KRAELING 1938, 30-32.

<sup>1035</sup> SEIGNE 1992, 332-333.

<sup>1036</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* 4,8 (104): «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Πέλλαν ἐλὼν ἐπὶ Γέρασαν ἦει πάλιν τῶν Θεοδώρου κτημάτων γλιχόμενος, καὶ τρισὶ τοὺς φρουροὺς περιβόλοις ἀποτειχίσας διὰ μάχης τὸ χωρίον παραλαμβάνει».

*AJ* XIII, 393: «Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ἐλάσας αὐθις ἐπὶ Δίαν πόλιν αἰρεῖ ταύτην, καὶ στρατεύσας ἐπὶ Ἔσσαν, οὗ τὰ πλείστου ἄξια Ζήνωνι συνέβαινε εἶναι, τρισὶν μὲν περιβάλλει τείχεσιν τὸ χωρίον, ἀμαχί δὲ λαβὼν τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ Γαύλαναν καὶ Σελεύκειαν ἐξώρμησεν».

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

<sup>1037</sup> KRAELING 1938, 31, n. 24.

<sup>1038</sup> KRAELING 1938, 31.

<sup>1039</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 191-195.

<sup>1040</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XIII, 398: «Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος ἐκ μέθης εἰς νόσον καταπεσὼν καὶ τρισὶν ἔτεσιν τεταρταίῳ πυρετῷ συσχεθεὶς οὐκ ἀπέστη τῶν στρατειῶν, ἕως οὗ τοῖς πόνοις ἐξαναλωθεὶς ἀπέθανεν ἐν τοῖς Γερασηνῶν ὄροις πολιορκῶν Ῥάγαβα φρούριον πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου».

<sup>1041</sup> The oldest mention of the name «Antioch of the Chrysorrhoeas» is a dedication from Pergamum (IGR IV 374): «Ἀντιοχέων τῶν [πρὸς τῷ] Χρυσορόα ἢ [β]ουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμ[ος]», dated to 102-104 CE.

<sup>1042</sup> SPIJKERMAN (1978, 160-161, nos. 9-12). The inscription was always the same: «AN(TIOXEΩN) TΩ(N) ΠP(OΣ) XP(YCOPOΔ) TΩ(N) ΠP(OΤEPON) ΓE(PAΣHΝΩN)».

Pliny listed a city named *Galasa* instead of *Gerasa* among the cities of the Decapolis<sup>1043</sup>, but he was possibly wrong. The city was inserted in the list of Ptolemy<sup>1044</sup> and Stephanus of Byzantium remembered the city as member of the Decapolis<sup>1045</sup>.

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<sup>1046</sup>.

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

During his travels, Hadrian visited the city, as many dedications and the erection of a triumphal Arch showed<sup>1050</sup>. We assume from inscriptions that the city became a colony with the name «*Colonia Aurelia Antoniniana*», but we do not know exactly when<sup>1051</sup>.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> 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)<sup>1052</sup>. Furthermore, Ammianus Marcellinus said it was one of the best

---

<sup>1043</sup> *Nat. Hist. V, 16 (74).*

<sup>1044</sup> PTOL. *Geog. V, 14,22*

<sup>1045</sup> STEPH. BYZ. *s.v. Γέρασα*: «πόλις τῆς Κοίλης Συρίας, τῆς Δεκαπόλεως. ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἀρίστων ῥήτωρ ἀστείος ἔστιν, ὡς Φίλων, καὶ Κήρυκος σοφιστῆς καὶ Πλάτων νομικὸς ῥήτωρ, πᾶσαν παιδείωσιν ὡς μίαν ἀποστοματίζων καὶ ἐν συνηγορίαις καὶ παρεδρευταῖς καὶ θρόνοις τὴν ὀρθότητα τῶν νόμων ἐπιτηδεύων. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Γερασηνός, ὡς Μῆδαβα Μηδαβηνός».

<sup>1046</sup> For inscriptions, see WELLES 1938; for coins, see SPIJKERMAN 1978, 156-167.

<sup>1047</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II 18,1 (458): «πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγὴν ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἐξαγριοῦται, καὶ διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κώμας τῶν Σύρων καὶ τὰς προσεχούσας ἐπόρθουν πόλεις, Φιλαδέλφειάν τε καὶ Ἑσεβωνίτην καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν».

<sup>1048</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II 18,5 (480): «Γερασηνοὶ τε οὔτε εἰς τοὺς ἐμμεΐναντας ἐπλημμέλησαν καὶ τοὺς ἐξελεθεῖν ἐθελήσαντας προέπεμψαν μέχρι τῶν ὄρων».

<sup>1049</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* IV 9,1 (486-490): «Ὁ δὲ Οὐεσπασιανὸς πανταχόθεν περιπειχίζων τοὺς ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τε τῇ Ἱεριχοῖ καὶ ἐν Ἀδίδοις ἐγείρει στρατόπεδα καὶ φρουροὺς ἀμφοτέραις ἐγκαθίστησιν ἕκ τε τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ καὶ συμμαχικοῦ συντάγματος. πέμπει δὲ καὶ εἰς Γέρασα Λούκιον Ἄννιον παραδοὺς μοῖραν ἵππεων καὶ συχνοὺς πεζοὺς. ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἐφόδου τὴν πόλιν ἐλὼν ἀποκτείνει μὲν χιλίους τῶν νέων, ὅσοι μὴ διαφυγεῖν ἐφθασαν, γενεὰς δὲ ἠχμαλωτίσατο καὶ τὰς κτήσεις διαρπάσαι τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐπέτρεψεν: ἔπειτα τὰς οἰκίας ἐμπρήσας ἐπὶ τὰς πέριξ κώμας ἐχώρει. φυγαὶ δ' ἦσαν τῶν δυνατῶν καὶ φθοραὶ τῶν ἀσθενεστέρων, τὸ καταλειφθὲν δὲ πᾶν ἐνεπίμπρατο. καὶ διειληφότος τοῦ πολέμου τὴν τε ὀρεινὴν ὄλην καὶ τὴν πεδιάδα πάσας οἱ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις τὰς ἐξόδους ἀφήρητο: τοὺς μὲν γε αὐτομολεῖν προαιρουμένους οἱ ζηλωταὶ παρεφύλασσοντο, τοὺς δὲ οὐπω τὰ Ῥωμαίων φρονούντας εἶργεν ἢ στρατιὰ πανταχόθεν τὴν πόλιν περιέχουσα». 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.

<sup>1050</sup> In particular, WELLES 1938, 401-402, nos. 58 and 424-425, nos. 143, 144, 145.

<sup>1051</sup> 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.

<sup>1052</sup> 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<sup>1053</sup> and Eusebius alluded to it as one of the most eminent πόλεις of Arabia<sup>1054</sup>. 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<sup>1055</sup> but still inhabited<sup>1056</sup>.

#### 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<sup>1057</sup>: 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>1058</sup>.

Six years after Seetzen, John Lewis Burkhardt saw the same buildings, although he spent only few hours in the city<sup>1059</sup>.

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<sup>1060</sup>. The German explorer visited the city many times, providing many drawings and pictures of the site<sup>1061</sup>.

With the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>1062</sup>.

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<sup>1063</sup>. 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

---

<sup>1053</sup> AMM. MARC. XIV 8,13: «*Huic 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. Hanc provinciae imposito nomine, rectoreque adtributo, obtemperare legibus nostris Traianus compulit imperator, incolarum tumore saepe contunso, cum glorioso Marte Mediam urgeret et Parthos*».

<sup>1054</sup> EUSEB. *Onom. s. v.* Γεργασει: «ἐπέκεινα τοῦ Ἰορδάνου παρακειμένη πόλις τῷ Γαλαάδ, ἣν ἔλαβε φυλή Μανασσή. αὕτη δὲ λέγεται εἶναι ἡ Γερασά, πόλις ἐπίσημος τῆς Ἀραβίας [...]».

<sup>1055</sup> WILLIAM OF TYRE, XII, 16: «*Fuit autem Gerasa una de nobilibus provinciae Decapoleos civitatibus, a Jordane paucis distans milliariibus, monte Galaad contermina, in tribu Manasse sita. In hujus parte munitiore, quoniam reliqua civitas hostilitatis metu diu jacuerat desolata, castrum ex quadris et magnis lapidibus, cum multis sumptibus erigi sibi fecerat anno praeterito Doldequinusi*».

<sup>1056</sup> According to PIEROBON (1983, 12-13), the area of the sanctuary of Zeus was probably used as fortress in that period, and not the sanctuary of Artemis.

<sup>1057</sup> SEETZEN 1854, 388-390.

<sup>1058</sup> SEETZEN 1859, 201-205.

<sup>1059</sup> BURKHARDT 1983, 253-259.

<sup>1060</sup> SCHUMACHER 1902, 122 ff.

<sup>1061</sup> SCHUMACHER 1892, 1893, 1895 and 1902.

<sup>1062</sup> For more information, see STINESPRING 1938, 2.

<sup>1063</sup> STINESPRING 1938, 3-4; PIEROBON 1983-1984a, 15.

Crowfoot<sup>1064</sup>. 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<sup>1065</sup> 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<sup>1066</sup>.

From 2001 to 2003, the «Jerash City Walls Project» started the investigation of the city wall foundations<sup>1067</sup> 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<sup>1068</sup>. Since 2011, a Danish-German project has been conducted in the Northwest Quarter of the ancient city<sup>1069</sup>.

#### 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»<sup>1070</sup>.

The only archaeological evidence of a 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE phase is constituted by the so-called «ναός» in the lower terrace of the Sanctuary of Zeus<sup>1071</sup>: 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 Perdikkas is later, and archaeological and epigraphic data until now do not confirm it.

No structures of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE were found: the main indirect indicators for the size of the city in this period are from the necropolis<sup>1072</sup>: 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<sup>1073</sup>. 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<sup>1074</sup>; however, it is more likely that the northern area was already inhabited during

---

<sup>1064</sup> Several preliminary reports appeared from 1928 to 1931, the works were all collected into KRAELING 1938.

<sup>1065</sup> GULLINI 1983-1984, 5-134;

<sup>1066</sup> ZAYADINE 1986 and 1989.

<sup>1067</sup> KEHRBERG 2003, 2011.

<sup>1068</sup> BLANKE *et alii* 2007.

<sup>1069</sup> LICHTENBERGER and RAJA 2015 and 2016.

<sup>1070</sup> BRAEMER 1987, 525.

<sup>1071</sup> SEIGNE 1992, 333; RAJA 2012, 148.

<sup>1072</sup> KEHRBERG and MANLEY 2001; 2002, 7-8.

<sup>1073</sup> SEIGNE 2002, 18-19.

<sup>1074</sup> SEIGNE 1992, 336-337.

the 1<sup>st</sup> century. According to three inscriptions<sup>1075</sup>, a temple of Artemis has already existed<sup>1076</sup>, as well as the so-called «Temple C»<sup>1077</sup>. Furthermore, various structures, destroyed during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, were found under the «cathedral».

Raffaella Pierobon, following the data collected by Pierre Briant for the cities of the Near Eastern communities<sup>1078</sup>, 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<sup>1079</sup>. 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<sup>1080</sup>.

---

<sup>1075</sup> WELLES 1938, 388-390, nos. 27-29.

<sup>1076</sup> PARAPETTI 1986.

<sup>1077</sup> 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.

<sup>1078</sup> BRIANT 1982, in particular 88-89.

<sup>1079</sup> PIEROBON 1983-1984a, 32.

<sup>1080</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2008, 150-151.



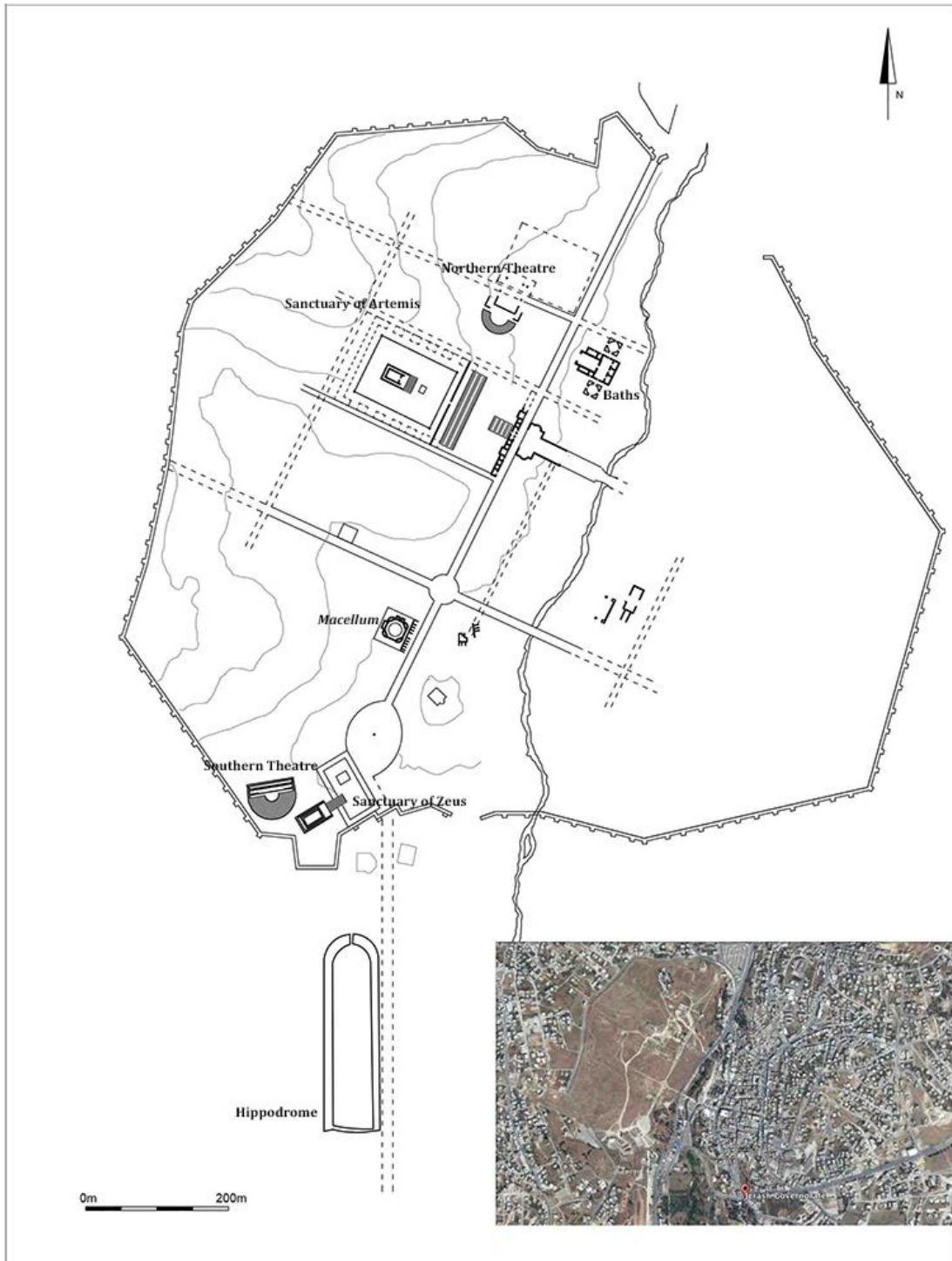


FIG. 22 Gerasa city plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Based on ZAYADINE 1986. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

Kraeling attributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE also the so-called «oval Plaza», connected with the enlargement of the Sanctuary of Zeus<sup>1081</sup>. However, Roberto Parapetti has claimed that the plaza was built only during the Trajan's reign, connected with the South Gate<sup>1082</sup>: actually, the hypothesis of Parapetti seems to be more likely, because during the early

<sup>1081</sup> KRAELING (1938, 42) has wrongly identified the Oval Plaza as the *forum* of the city.

<sup>1082</sup> PARAPETTI 1984, 56.

stages of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE: some scholars have related the urban layout with the construction of the Northwest Gate, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE on the base of an inscription<sup>1083</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>1084</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>1085</sup>. The grid seems to be based on a main north-south thoroughfare (the so-called «*cardo maximus*»), crossed by perpendicular streets<sup>1086</sup>: 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<sup>1087</sup>. As said above, the first enlargement of the Sanctuary dedicated to Zeus was carried out during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE: the local architect Diodoros built a large terrace during 27/28 CE<sup>1088</sup>. The lower part of the rock was filled in and supported by a sort of *cryptoporticus*<sup>1089</sup>. 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<sup>1090</sup>. In 69/70 CE Theon, son of Demetrios<sup>1091</sup>, financed the reconstruction of the temple, of which not much is known<sup>1092</sup>: 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<sup>1093</sup>. Furthermore, another inscription remembered Ariston, the brother of Zabdion, who made a dedication for the new temple in 42/43 CE<sup>1094</sup>. 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<sup>1095</sup>. During the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1096</sup>. Beyond the peristyle, four semi-circular *exedrae* stood, interchanged with at least three entrances and surrounded by *tabernae*<sup>1097</sup>. The dating of the structure to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century was supported by architectural and decorative style of the building<sup>1098</sup> and especially by two inscriptions bearing the name of Tiberius Iulius Iulianus Alexandros, Roman governor of

---

<sup>1083</sup> WELLES 1938, 397-398, no. 50.

<sup>1084</sup> 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).

<sup>1085</sup> KEHRBERG and MANLEY 2001, 440; 2003, 86.

<sup>1086</sup> The grid is obviously incomplete, because the eastern part of the old city is covered by the modern city.

<sup>1087</sup> SEIGNE 2002, 9-10.

<sup>1088</sup> SEIGNE 1985, 291.

<sup>1089</sup> PARAPETTI 1984, 53; SEIGNE 1992, 334.

<sup>1090</sup> SEIGNE 1992, 334.

<sup>1091</sup> WELLES 1938, 375-378, nos. 5-6.

<sup>1092</sup> SEIGNE 1985, 289

<sup>1093</sup> WELLES 1938, 373-374, no. 2.

<sup>1094</sup> WELLES 1938, 374-375, no. 3.

<sup>1095</sup> SEIGNE 1997, 999.

<sup>1096</sup> OLAVARRI-GOICOECHEA 1986: earlier excavators identified the structure as the *ἀγορά* according to two inscriptions on two columns (WELLES 1938, 411, nos. 80-81).

<sup>1097</sup> USCATESCU and MARTÍN BUENO 1997, 69-70.

<sup>1098</sup> MARTÍN BUENO 1989, 188.

the Roman province of Arabia, who probably contributed to the erection of the *macellum*<sup>1099</sup>. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> century and its stones were used in other parts of the city<sup>1100</sup>.

During the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, many other buildings were erected: in the northern sector a small theatre<sup>1101</sup>, which was identified as an ὠδεῖον, was built during the reign of Marcus Aurelius according to an inscription<sup>1102</sup>. At its first stage it had only fourteen rows of seats and it could work as a βουλευτήριον<sup>1103</sup>, as proved by an inscription found on the eastern part of the *cuneus*: in fact, it can be read τόπο[ς] βουλῆς<sup>1104</sup>. The fascinating hypothesis of the presence of an ἀγορά on the other side of the street was formulated by Rostovtzeff<sup>1105</sup>: the presence of a βουλευτήριον 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<sup>1106</sup>.

During the Antonine period the erection of the Sanctuary of Artemis started in an area previously used as a burial area<sup>1107</sup>. However, several inscriptions referred to a previous temple<sup>1108</sup>, which had to stay in the same area<sup>1109</sup>, albeit its remains were not yet discovered<sup>1110</sup>. 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 προπύλαια, giving access to a rectangular square flanked by columns and crossed by a street parallel to the main thoroughfare<sup>1111</sup>. The first part of the *via sacra* ended in two fountains with niches framed by columns which created a little trapezoidal square<sup>1112</sup>: according to an inscription, this part of the complex was built in 150 CE<sup>1113</sup>. 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 προπύλαια and moving towards west, a first terrace, named «intermediate terrace», was reached through a monumental stairway<sup>1114</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>1099</sup> MARTÍN BUENO 1992, 319; USCATESCU and MARTÍN BUENO 1997, 72-73. Tiberius left Arabia between 125 and 127 (SARTRE 1982a, 81).

<sup>1100</sup> OSTRASZ 1995 for the history of the monument.

<sup>1101</sup> It was named «North Theatre». See SEIGNE and AGUSTA-BOULAROT 2005.

<sup>1102</sup> WELLES 1938, 405, no. 65.

<sup>1103</sup> RAJA 2012, 162.

<sup>1104</sup> AGUSTA-BOULAROT and SEIGNE 2005, 302.

<sup>1105</sup> ROSTOVITZEFF 1932, 82.

<sup>1106</sup> LEPAON 2008, 52-57.

<sup>1107</sup> SEIGNE (1992, 338) believed that the temple was built *ex nihilo* in an area outside the city, and that a previous temple was erected on the «Camp hill» (SEIGNE 1999, 836).

<sup>1108</sup> 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.

<sup>1109</sup> KRAELING 1938; PARAPETTI 1982, 255.

<sup>1110</sup> 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.

<sup>1111</sup> PARAPETTI (1982, 256) has noted that this street is even larger than the main street.

<sup>1112</sup> BRIZZI, SEPIO and BALDONI 2010, 347-349.

<sup>1113</sup> WELLES 1938, 404, no. 63.

<sup>1114</sup> We still do not know what the function of this terrace was.

According to an inscription<sup>1115</sup>, 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.

---

<sup>1115</sup> 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<sup>1116</sup>.

The earliest remains of the human presence date back to the Palaeolithic Period (250000-100000 BCE)<sup>1117</sup>: 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<sup>1118</sup>.

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<sup>1119</sup>. The Ammonites were one of the tribes that came from the Syro-Arabian desert during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1120</sup>. However, the area ruled by Ammonites was not a static entity and the Ammonites tried to extend their kingdom attacking the Israelites<sup>1121</sup>.

At the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE, king David conquered the site and proclaimed himself king of both Israel and Ammon<sup>1122</sup>, but after the division of the kingdom of Israel

---

<sup>1116</sup> The city was located along the main north-south road of the Transjordan land, the so-called «King's Highway».

<sup>1117</sup> NAJJAR 2002, 88.

<sup>1118</sup> HÜBNER 1992, 23-24.

<sup>1119</sup> *II SAM* 12:26 stated that king David conquered the capital of Ammonites: see below, note 1122.

<sup>1120</sup> *DT* 3:16; *JOSH* 12:2.

<sup>1121</sup> MACDONALD and YOUNKER 1999, 31.

<sup>1122</sup> *II SAM* 8:11-12: «καὶ ταῦτα ἠγάσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Δαυὶδ τῷ κυρίῳ μετὰ τοῦ ἀργυρίου καὶ μετὰ τοῦ χρυσοῦ οὐ ἠγάσεν ἐκ πασῶν τῶν πόλεων ὧν κατεδυνάστευσεν, ἐκ τῆς Ἰδουμαίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς Μωαβ καὶ ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Ἀμμων καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ ἐξ Ἀμαληκ καὶ ἐκ τῶν σκύλων Ἀδρααζαρ υἱοῦ Ρααβ βασιλέως Σουβα»;

*II SAM* 10:1-19: «καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἀπέθανεν βασιλεὺς υἱῶν Ἀμμων καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν Ἀννων υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν Δαυὶδ ποιήσω ἔλεος μετὰ Ἀννων υἱοῦ Ναας ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησεν ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔλεος καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Δαυὶδ παρακαλέσαι αὐτὸν ἐν χειρὶ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ παρεγένοντο οἱ παῖδες Δαυὶδ εἰς τὴν γῆν υἱῶν Ἀμμων [...] καὶ ἤκουσεν Δαυὶδ καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν Ἰωαβ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοὺς δυνατοὺς καὶ ἐξήλθαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἀμμων καὶ παρετάξαντο πόλεμον παρὰ τῆ θύρα τῆς πύλης καὶ Συρία Σουβα καὶ Ρωβ καὶ Ἰστωβ καὶ Μααχα μόνον ἐν ἀγρῷ καὶ εἶδεν Ἰωαβ ὅτι ἐγενήθη πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀντιπρόσωπον τοῦ πολέμου ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ πρόσωπον ἐξ ἐναντίας καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὀπισθεν καὶ ἐπέλεξεν ἐκ πάντων τῶν νεανίσκων Ἰσραὴλ καὶ παρετάξαντο ἐξ ἐναντίας Συρίας καὶ τὸ κατάλοιπον τοῦ λαοῦ ἔδωκεν ἐν χειρὶ Ἀβεσσα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ παρετάξαντο ἐξ ἐναντίας υἱῶν Ἀμμων [...] καὶ εἶδαν πάντες οἱ βασιλεῖς οἱ δούλοι Ἀδρααζαρ ὅτι ἔπαισαν ἐμπροσθεν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἠτομόλησαν μετὰ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐδούλευσαν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐφοβήθη Συρία τοῦ σώσαι ἔτι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἀμμων»;

*II SAM* 12:26-31: «καὶ ἐπολέμησεν Ἰωαβ ἐν Ραββαθ υἱῶν Ἀμμων καὶ κατέλαβεν τὴν πόλιν τῆς βασιλείας καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ἰωαβ ἀγγέλους πρὸς Δαυὶδ καὶ εἶπεν ἐπολέμησα ἐν Ραββαθ καὶ κατελάβομην τὴν πόλιν τῶν ὑδάτων καὶ νῦν συνάγαγε τὸ κατάλοιπον τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ παρέμβαλε ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν καὶ προκαταλαβοῦ αὐτὴν ἵνα μὴ προκαταλάβωμαι ἐγὼ τὴν πόλιν καὶ κληθῆ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτὴν καὶ συνήγαγεν Δαυὶδ πάντα τὸν λαὸν καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Ραββαθ καὶ ἐπολέμησεν ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ κατέλαβετο αὐτὴν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὸν στέφανον Μελχολ τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ σταθμὸς αὐτοῦ τάλαντον χρυσοῦ καὶ λίθου

into the kingdom of Judah at south and kingdom of Israel at north, Ammonites obtained independence and Rabbath Ammon was their capital city<sup>1123</sup>. Until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbath Ammon became one of the vassals of the Assyrian and then of the Babylonian kings<sup>1124</sup>. 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 Ptolemies: Stephanus of Byzantium affirmed that during his reign Ptolemy II Philadelphus gave to Amman the official dynastic name «Philadelphia»<sup>1125</sup> and remembered that the city was also called «Astarte»<sup>1126</sup>. However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE sources used the pre-Ptolemaic name of «Rabbatammana»<sup>1127</sup>. According to Henry Innes MacAdam, the name seemed to have been only propagandistic and probably the settlement did not receive the status of πόλις<sup>1128</sup>. When Antiochos 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<sup>1129</sup>. Under

---

τιμίου και ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς Δαυιδ καὶ σκύλα τῆς πόλεως ἐξήνεγκεν πολλὰ σφόδρα καὶ τὸν λαὸν τὸν ὄντα ἐν αὐτῇ ἐξήγαγεν καὶ ἔθηκεν ἐν τῷ πρίονι καὶ ἐν τοῖς τριβόλοις τοῖς σιδηροῖς καὶ διήγαγεν αὐτοὺς διὰ τοῦ πλινθίου καὶ οὕτως ἐποίησεν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσιν υἰῶν Ἀμμων καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν Δαυιδ καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ»;

<sup>1123</sup> HÜBNER 1992, 24.

<sup>1124</sup> *II KGS* 24:2: the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar prepared a military expedition against Jehoiakim, the king of Judah. He organised an army with Aramaeans, Moabites and Ammonites.

JOSEPHUS *AJ* X, 181 registered that Nebuchadnezzar, after having taken Jerusalem, conquered also Moabites and Ammonites: «καὶ ταῦτα συνέβη: τῷ γὰρ πέμπτῳ τῆς Ἱεροσολύμων πορθήσεως ἔτει, ὃ ἐστὶ τρίτον καὶ εἰκοστὸν τῆς Ναβουχοδονοσόρου βασιλείας, στρατεύει Ναβουχοδονόσορος ἐπὶ τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν, καὶ κατασχὼν αὐτὴν ἐπολέμησε καὶ Μωαβίταις καὶ Ἀμμανίταις».

<sup>1125</sup> STEPH. BYZ. s.v. *Φιλαδέλφεια*: «πόλις [...] τῆς Συρίας ἐπιφανῆς πόλις, ἢ πρότερον Ἄμμανα, εἴτ' Ἀστάρτη, εἴτα Φιλαδέλφεια, ἀπὸ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου. ὁ πολίτης Φιλαδελεφύς. τὸ δὲ Φιλαδελεφηνὸς ἐπιχώριον. οὕτω γὰρ Ἰώσηπος κ' τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας».

<sup>1126</sup> According to TCHERIKOVER (1961, 100), the name reminded Asteria, the mother of the Tyrian Herakles (Melqart): both had an important cult into the city and were represented on the coins.

<sup>1127</sup> POLYB. V, 71,4: «μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πυνθανόμενος εἰς τὰ Ῥαββατάμματα τῆς Ἀραβίας καὶ πλείους ἠθροισμένους τῶν πολεμίων πορθεῖν καὶ κατατρέχειν τὴν τῶν προσκεχωρηκότων Ἀράβων αὐτῷ χώραν, πάντ' ἐν ἐλάττονι θέμενος ὤρμησε καὶ προσεστρατοπέδευσε τοῖς βουνοῖς, ἐφ' ὧν κείσθαι συμβαίνει τὴν πόλιν».

<sup>1128</sup> MACADAM 1992, 27.

<sup>1129</sup> POLYB. V, 71,4-11: «μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πυνθανόμενος εἰς τὰ Ῥαββατάμματα τῆς Ἀραβίας καὶ πλείους ἠθροισμένους τῶν πολεμίων πορθεῖν καὶ κατατρέχειν τὴν τῶν προσκεχωρηκότων Ἀράβων αὐτῷ χώραν, πάντ' ἐν ἐλάττονι θέμενος ὤρμησε καὶ προσεστρατοπέδευσε τοῖς βουνοῖς, ἐφ' ὧν κείσθαι συμβαίνει τὴν πόλιν. περιελθὼν δὲ καὶ συνθεασάμενος τὸν λόφον κατὰ δύο τόπους μόνον ἔχοντα πρόσδοον, ταύτη προσέβαινε καὶ κατὰ τούτους συνίστατο τοὺς τόπους τὰς τῶν μηχανημάτων κατασκευάς. ἀποδοὺς δὲ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῶν ἔργων τῶν μὲν Νικάρχῳ, τῶν δὲ Θεοδότῳ, τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτὸς ἤδη κοινὸν αὐτὸν παρεσκεύαζε κατὰ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν τῆς ἐκατέρου περὶ ταῦτα φιλοτιμίας. πολλὴν δὲ ποιουμένων σπουδῆν τῶν περὶ τὸν Θεόδοτον καὶ Νίκαρχον, καὶ συνεχῶς ἀμιλλωμένων πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ τοῦ πότερος αὐτῶν φθάσει καταβαλὼν τὸ προκείμενον τῶν ἔργων τεῖχος, ταχέως συνέβη καὶ παρὰ τὴν προσδοκίαν ἐκάτερον πεσεῖν τὸ μέρος. οὐ συμβάντος ἐποιοῦντο καὶ νύκτωρ μὲν καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν προσβολὰς καὶ πᾶσαν προσέφερον βίαν, οὐδένα παραλείποντες καιρόν. συνεχῶς δὲ καταπειράζοντες τῆς πόλεως οὐ μὴν ἦνυον τῆς ἐπιβολῆς οὐδὲν διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν εἰς τὴν πόλιν συνδεδραμηκότων

Seleucid power, Rabbatamma 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<sup>1130</sup>, according to the studies of Ernest Will<sup>1131</sup>.

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<sup>1132</sup>.

---

ἀνδρῶν, ἕως οὗ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων τινὸς ὑποδείξαντος τὸν ὑπόνομον, δι' οὗ κατέβαινον ἐπὶ τὴν ὑδρείαν οἱ πολιορκούμενοι, τοῦτον ἀναρρήξαντες ἐνέφραξαν ὕλη καὶ λίθοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ γένει. τότε δὲ συνειξαντες οἱ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν διὰ τὴν ἀνυδρίαν παρέδοσαν αὐτούς. οὗ γενομένου κυριεύσας τῶν Ῥαββαταμάνων ἐπὶ μὲν τούτων ἀπέλιπε Νίκαρχον μετὰ φυλακῆς τῆς ἀρμοζούσης».

<sup>1130</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XII, 229-233: «[...] ὁ δὲ Ὑρκανὸς ἐπανελθεῖν μὲν οὐκέτι ἔγνω εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, προσκαθίσας δὲ τοῖς πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου συνεχῶς ἐπολέμει τοὺς Ἀραβας, ὡς πολλοὺς αὐτῶν καὶ ἀποκτείνει καὶ λαβεῖν αἰχμαλώτους. ὤκοδόμησεν δὲ βάρην ἰσχυρὰν ἐκ λίθου λευκοῦ κατασκευάσας πᾶσαν μέχρι καὶ τῆς στέγης ἐγγλύψας ζῶα παμμεγεθέστατα, περιήγαγεν δ' αὐτῇ εὐριπτον μέγαν καὶ βαθύν. ἐκ δὲ τῆς καταντικρῦ τοῦ ὄρους πέτρας διατεμῶν αὐτῆς τὸ προέχον σπήλαια πολλῶν σταδίων τὸ μήκος κατεσκεύασεν. ἔπειτα οἶκος ἐν αὐτῇ τοὺς μὲν εἰς συμπόσια τοὺς δ' εἰς ὕπνον καὶ δίαιταν ἐποίησεν, ὑδάτων δὲ διαθεόντων πλῆθος, ἃ καὶ τέρψις ἦν καὶ κόσμος τῆς αὐλῆς, εἰσήγαγεν. τὰ μέντοι στόμια τῶν σπηλαίων ὥστε ἕνα δι' αὐτῶν εἰσδύναμι καὶ μὴ πλείους βραχύτερα ἤνοιξεν: καὶ ταῦτ' ἐπίτηδες ἀσφαλείας ἕνεκα τοῦ μὴ πολιορκηθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ κινδυνεῦσαι ληφθεὶς κατεσκεύασεν. προσωκοδόμησε δὲ καὶ αὐλὰς τῷ μεγέθει διαφερούσας καὶ παραδείσοις ἐκόσμησε παμμήκεσι. καὶ τοιοῦτον ἀπεργασάμενος τὸν τόπον Τύρον ὠνόμασεν. οὗτος ὁ τόπος ἐστὶ μετὰ τῆς Ἀραβίας καὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίας πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου οὐ πόρρω τῆς Ἑσσεβωνίτιδος».

<sup>1131</sup> WILL 1982.

<sup>1132</sup> He was probably king Aretas I, the earliest known Nabataean king. If right, at that time Nabataeans probably ruled over Ammanitis. See *II Macc* V, 6-8: «ὁ δὲ Ἰάσων ἐποίητο σφαγὰς τῶν πολιτῶν τῶν ἰδίων ἀφειδῶς οὐ συννοῶν τὴν εἰς τοὺς συγγενεῖς εὐημερίαν δυσημερίαν εἶναι τὴν μεγίστην δοκῶν δὲ πολεμίων καὶ οὐχ ὁμοεθνῶν τρόπαια καταβάλλεσθαι. τῆς μὲν ἀρχῆς οὐκ ἐκράτησεν τὸ δὲ τέλος τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς αἰσχύνην λαβὼν φυγὰς πάλιν εἰς τὴν Ἀμμάνιτιν ἀπήλθεν. πέρας οὖν κακῆς καταστροφῆς ἔτυχεν ἐγκληθεὶς πρὸς Ἀρέταν τὸν τῶν Ἀράβων τύραννον πόλιν ἐκ πόλεως φεύγων διωκόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων συγούμενος ὡς τῶν νόμων ἀποστάτης καὶ βδελυσσόμενος ὡς πατριδος καὶ πολιτῶν δῆμιος εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐξεβράσθη».

According to Flavius Josephus, during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE Zenon Cotylas and his son Theodorus were the rulers of Philadelphia<sup>1133</sup> and conquered the territory of Gerasa<sup>1134</sup>, Gadara and Amathus<sup>1135</sup>.

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<sup>1136</sup>. During the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, Philadelphia stood at the periphery of the events in which the area of Southern Levant was involved. Hasmoneans 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<sup>1137</sup>.

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<sup>1138</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>1133</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I 2,4 (60): «τριβομένης δὲ διὰ ταῦτα τῆς πολιορκίας ἐπέστη τὸ ἀργὸν ἔτος, ὃ κατὰ ἐπταετίαν ἀργεῖται παρὰ Ἰουδαίους ὁμοίως ταῖς ἐβδομάσιν ἡμέραις. κὰν τούτῳ Πτολεμαῖος ἀνεθῆκε τῆς πολιορκίας ἀναιρεῖ τοὺς ἀδελφούς Ἰωάννου σὺν τῇ μητρὶ καὶ φεύγει πρὸς Ζήνωνα τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Κοτυλᾶν: Φιλαδελφείας δ' ἦν τύραννος»;

*AJ* XIII, 235: «καὶ Πτολεμαῖος, ὑπὸ ταύτης ἀνεθῆκε τοῦ πολέμου τῆς αἰτίας ἀποκτείνει τοὺς ἀδελφούς τοῦ Ὑρκανοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοῦτο δρᾶσας πρὸς Ζήνωνα φεύγει τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Κοτυλᾶν, τυραννεύοντα τῆς Φιλαδελφείων πόλεως».

We cannot establish with certainty the ethnic identity of Zenon And Theodorus, but Nabataean commanders with Hellenised names were well-attested.

<sup>1134</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I 4,8 (104): «Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Πέλλαν ἐλὼν ἐπὶ Γέρασαν ἦει πάλιν τῶν Θεοδώρου κτημάτων γλιχόμενος, καὶ τρισὶ τοὺς φρουρούς περιβόλους ἀποτειχίσας διὰ μάχης τὸ χωρίον παραλαμβάνει».

<sup>1135</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I 4,2 (86): «Ἀλέξανδρος Γαδάρων τε πολιορκία κρατεῖ καὶ Ἀμαθοῦντος, ὃ δὴ μέγιστον μὲν ἦν ἔρυμα τῶν ὑπὲρ Ἰορδάνην, τὰ τιμιώτατα δὲ τῶν Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ζήνωνος κτημάτων ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ»;

*AJ* XIII, 356: «Ὁ δὲ τῶν ἐκ Πτολεμαίου φόβων ἐλευθερωθεὶς στρατεύεται μὲν εὐθύς ἐπὶ τὴν κοίλην Συρίαν, αἰρεῖ δὲ Γάδαρα πολιορκήσας δέκα μηνσίν, αἰρεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀμαθοῦντα μέγιστον ἔρυμα τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατωκημένων, ἐνθα καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξια Θεόδωρος ὁ Ζήνωνος εἶχεν. ὃς οὐ προσδοκῶσιν ἐπιπεσῶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις μυρίους αὐτῶν ἀποκτείνει καὶ τὴν ἀποσκευὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου διαρπάζει».

<sup>1136</sup> Reading Josephus (*BJ* I,6,3 (129)), it seems clear that the city was integral part of the reign of Aretas III: «ἀνεχώρει δὲ ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν Ἀρέτας καταπλαγεὶς, καὶ πάλιν εἰς Δαμασκὸν Σκαῦρος».

<sup>1137</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* I 19,5 (380): «Τούτοις παρακροτήσας τὸν στρατὸν ὡς ἑώρα προθύμους, ἔθυσεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ μετὰ τὴν θυσίαν διέβαιναν τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως. στρατοπεδευσάμενος δὲ περὶ Φιλαδέλφειαν ἐγγὺς τῶν πολεμίων περὶ τοῦ μεταξὺ φρουρίου πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἠκροβολίζετο βουλόμενος ἐν τάχει συμβαλεῖν: ἔτυχον γὰρ κάκεινοι τινὰς προπεπομφότες τοὺς καταληψομένους τὸ ἔρυμα».

<sup>1138</sup> JOSEPH. *BJ* II 18,1 (457-458): «Τῆς δ' αὐτῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ὥρας ὡσπερ ἐκ δαιμονίου προνοίας ἀνήρου Καισαρεῖς τοὺς παρ' ἑαυτοῖς Ἰουδαίους, ὡς ὑπὸ μίαν ὥραν ἀποσφαγῆναι μὲν ὑπὲρ διςμυρίους, κενωθῆναι δὲ πᾶσαν Ἰουδαίαν τὴν Καισάρειαν: καὶ γὰρ τοὺς διαφεύγοντας ὁ Φλῶρος συλλαβῶν κατήγεν δεσμώτας εἰς τὰ νεώρια. [458] πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πληγὴν ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἐξαγριόυται, καὶ διαμερισθέντες τὰς τε κώμας τῶν Σύρων καὶ τὰς προσεχούσας ἐπόρθουν πόλεις, Φιλαδέλφειάν τε καὶ Ἑσεβωνίτην καὶ Γέρασα καὶ Πέλλαν καὶ Σκυθόπολιν».



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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries the legend was «Φιλαδέλφεια Κοίλης Συρίας»<sup>1139</sup> 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<sup>1140</sup>. Furthermore, the city was represented on the Peutinger map as an important trade station.

#### 4.16.1 HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Adrian Reland visited the area of Philadelphia, already identified with the biblical city of Rabbath Ammon, and its surroundings<sup>1141</sup>.

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 ruins<sup>1142</sup>. Furthermore, the German explorer wrote a brief history of the city based on ancient writers<sup>1143</sup>.

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 theatre<sup>1144</sup>.

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 remains<sup>1145</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Princeton University (New Jersey) started an expedition into the area with pictures and reconstructions<sup>1146</sup>, 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 below<sup>1147</sup>.

After the World War II, the Jordan Department of Antiquities carried out several excavations in the area of the citadel and the Roman *forum*<sup>1148</sup>.

In 1980s and 1990s a Spanish expedition made excavations and restoration works in the Umayyad palace on the citadel<sup>1149</sup>, while a Joint Franco-Jordanian Expedition, directed

---

<sup>1139</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, vol. II, 158; SPIJKERMAN 1978, 250-257; MESHORER 1985, 96.

<sup>1140</sup> AMM. MARC. XIV, 8,13: «*Huic 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*».

EUSEB. *Onom.* s. v. Ἀμμαν: «ἡ νῦν Φιλαδέλφια, πόλις ἐπίσημος τῆς Ἀραβίας».

<sup>1141</sup> RELAND 1714, 521.

<sup>1142</sup> SEETZEN 1859, 212.

<sup>1143</sup> SEETZEN 1859, 212-215.

<sup>1144</sup> BUCKINGHAM 1825, 66-78.

<sup>1145</sup> CONDER 1889, 19-65.

<sup>1146</sup> BUTLER 1907.

<sup>1147</sup> BARTOCCINI 1932, 1933-1934; ALMAGRO 1983.

<sup>1148</sup> HARDING 1959; ZAYADINE 1973, 1977-78.

<sup>1149</sup> ALMAGRO 1982, 1987, 1994.

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<sup>1150</sup>.

#### 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<sup>1151</sup> and consisted of one central courtyard surrounded by six rectangular rooms. The building was dated to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and early 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and many imported pottery sherds from Egypt and Cyprus were found<sup>1152</sup>. 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 7<sup>th</sup> century palace were unearthed<sup>1153</sup>.

The area of the citadel was completely transformed during the Roman period: three terraces were built there and a wall, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, had to surround all the upper area<sup>1154</sup>. 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<sup>1155</sup>. It seems likely it was dedicated to Heracles, one of the most important deities of the city, as shown on coins<sup>1156</sup>: 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<sup>1157</sup>. A fragmentary inscription from the 9<sup>th</sup> century attested the presence of a cult to the Ammonite god Milcom or Molech/Moloch<sup>1158</sup>, who probably was later assimilated to the Phoenician Melqart and finally to Heracles. Other archaeologists asserted that the temple was a *tetrastylus prostylus*<sup>1159</sup>. Instead, modern researchers have believed it had six columns on the front<sup>1160</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>1150</sup> ZAYADINE, HUMBERT and NAJJAR 1989, HUMBERT and ZAYADINE 1992.

<sup>1151</sup> HENNESSY 1966, 155

<sup>1152</sup> NEAEHL 4, s.v. Philadelphia.

<sup>1153</sup> HUMBERT and ZAYADINE 1992, 249.

<sup>1154</sup> NAJJAR 2002, 94.

<sup>1155</sup> EL FAKHARANI 1975, 553.

<sup>1156</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 243 ff.

<sup>1157</sup> BARTOCCINI 1932, 16. This theory is today rejected: see BOWSHER 1992, 136.

<sup>1158</sup> HORN 1967, 2.

<sup>1159</sup> ALMAGRO 1983, 608-617.

<sup>1160</sup> BOWSHER 1992, 132.

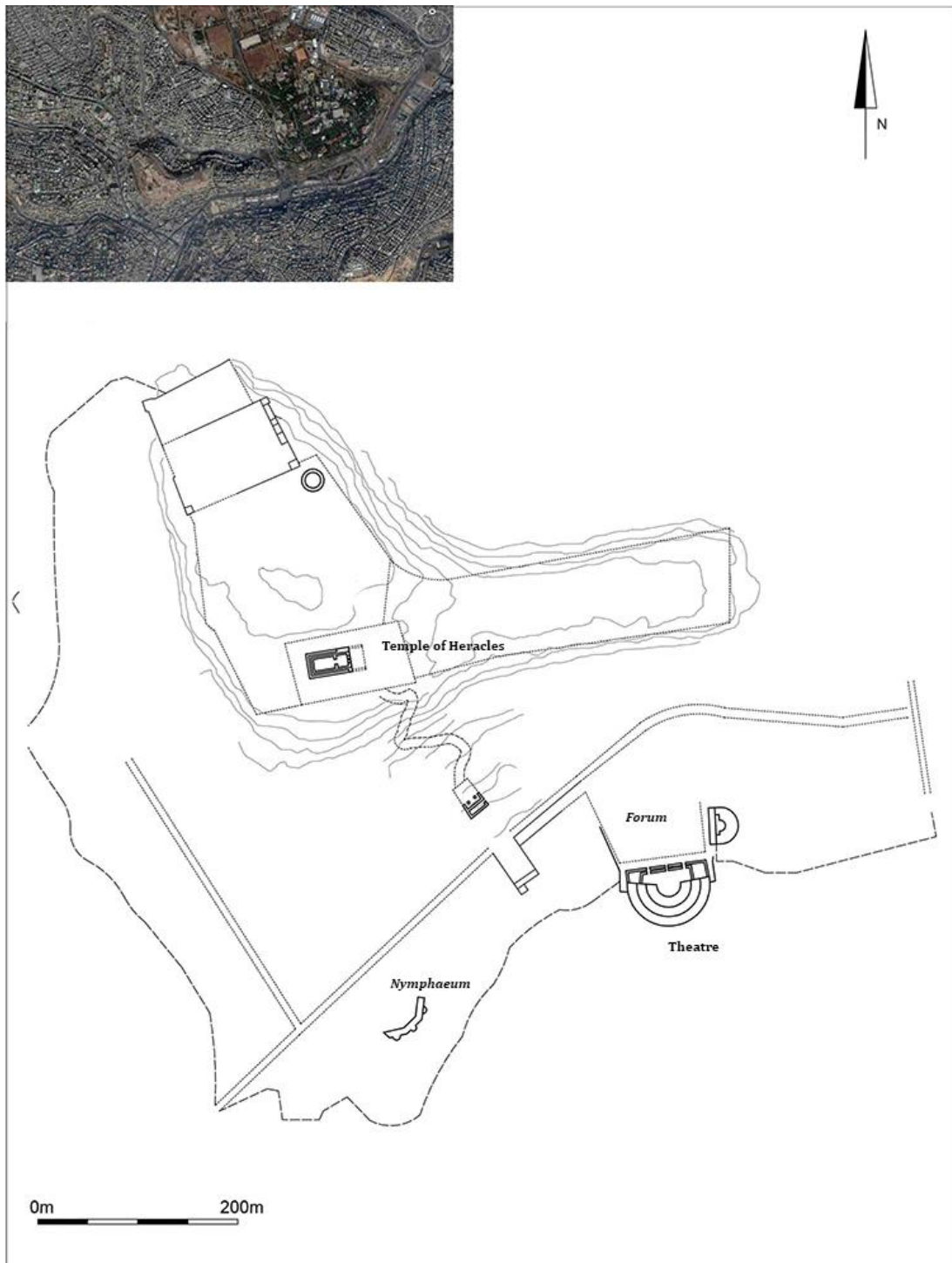


FIG. 23 Philadelphia city plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Based on NORTHEDGE 2002. Satellite image taken from Google Earth.

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<sup>1161</sup>.

<sup>1161</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to an inscription, the theatre was built during the reign of Antoninus Pius<sup>1162</sup>. 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 ὄδειον, was erected: it had five entrances on its western side and two towers were built on either side of the eastern wall<sup>1163</sup>.

The complex of the *forum* and the two theatres was probably planned at the same time and finished during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1164</sup>. 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<sup>1165</sup>, creating a portico. Early remains of the structure dated back to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>1166</sup>.

Conder identified the structure as a bath<sup>1167</sup>, albeit Butler was the first one who identified it as a *nymphaeum*<sup>1168</sup>: 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<sup>1169</sup>. Arthur Segal has recently claimed that it could be a small temple dedicated to the imperial cult instead of *nymphaeum*<sup>1170</sup>, like that one seen at Hippos-Sussita, but the new discoveries led us to think that his hypothesis is not sound.

---

<sup>1162</sup> ZAYADINE 1969, 34-35; NAJJAR 2002, 92.

<sup>1163</sup> NEAEHL 4, s.v. Philadelphia.

<sup>1164</sup> ALMAGRO 1983, 631-639.

<sup>1165</sup> SEGAL 2013, 265.

<sup>1166</sup> WAHEEB and ALGHAZAWI 2012, 133.

<sup>1167</sup> CONDER 1889, 41.

<sup>1168</sup> BUTLER 1907, 59.

<sup>1169</sup> WAHEEB and ALGHAZAWI 2012, 134.

<sup>1170</sup> 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 localisation. 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»<sup>1171</sup>, 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 interrupted<sup>1172</sup>.

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 gods<sup>1173</sup>.

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 «πόλις» 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 world<sup>1174</sup>: 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

---

<sup>1171</sup> ROSTOVITZEFF 1932, 67.

<sup>1172</sup> GLUECK 1937-1939, 139 ff.

<sup>1173</sup> WENNING 1992, 82. See also LEWIN 2014, 114.

<sup>1174</sup> BARGHOUTI 1982, 209.

to replace the oldest sanctuaries in the acropolis by new temples in the lower cities<sup>1175</sup>. 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<sup>1176</sup>. Probably something similar happened also at Gerasa, that seemed to develop from at least two different settlements, the Greek and the local one<sup>1177</sup>.

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 Sepphoris, Scythopolis or Philadelphia. It seems unlikely to establish if the layouts are Greek or Syrian<sup>1178</sup>.

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 (Ἀσκαλών), Ashdod became Azotos (Ἀζωτος), Jaffa or Yafo became Joppe (Ἰόπη), Gader became Gadara (Γάδαρα), Abel became Abila (Ἀβίλα), and thus Sussita became Hippos (Ἴππος). 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<sup>1179</sup>. The Ptolemies founded very few new cities and preferred to not interfere on the organisation of the κῶμαι.

For Seleucids, the πόλις provided stable criteria for establishing Greek identities of its citizens, the Romans continued to use πόλις system for governing. Rather, city became the economic, social, religious, cultural centre, often the place where local political

---

<sup>1175</sup> OPPENHEIM 1965, 131.

<sup>1176</sup> STRABO XVI 2,4: «[...] ἔστι δ' ἡ μὲν Ἀντιόχεια καὶ αὕτη τετράπολις, ἐκ τετάρων συνεστῶσα μερῶν: τετείχισται δὲ καὶ κοινῶν τείχει καὶ ἰδίῳ καθ' ἕκαστον τὸ κτίσμα: τὸ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον αὐτῶν ὁ Νικάτωρ συνώκισε μεταγαγὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἀντιγονείας τοὺς οἰκῆτορας, ἦν πλησίον ἐτείχισεν Ἀντίγονος ὁ Φιλιππου μικρὸν πρότερον, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον τοῦ πλήθους τῶν οἰκητόρων ἔστι κτίσμα, τὸ δὲ τρίτον Σελεύκου τοῦ Καλλινίκου, τὸ δὲ τέταρτον Ἀντιόχου τοῦ Ἐπιφανοῦς».

<sup>1177</sup> See the chapter about Gerasa above.

<sup>1178</sup> BALL 2000, 255.

<sup>1179</sup> BARGHOUTI 1982, 213.

activity had to develop<sup>1180</sup>. 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<sup>1181</sup>: 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<sup>1182</sup>.

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<sup>1183</sup>. 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 *decumanus* intersecting a north-south *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<sup>1184</sup>. 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<sup>1185</sup>.

#### 4.17.2 THE NATURE OF THE DECAPOLIS CITIES

---

<sup>1180</sup> This illusory independence let ROSTOVITZEFF (1957, 131) to consider the Roman Empire as a federation of self-governing cities.

<sup>1181</sup> DENTZER 2000, 160.

<sup>1182</sup> DENTZER 2000, 161.

<sup>1183</sup> LERICHE 2000, 124.

<sup>1184</sup> SARTRE 2001, 640.

<sup>1185</sup> ANDRADE 2013, 23-24.

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 1<sup>st</sup> century CE onwards, although these sources did not specify what it really was<sup>1186</sup>. 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 significant 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»<sup>1187</sup> around 90 CE. The Decapolis, indeed, would have been an administrative unity attached to Syria at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>1188</sup>. It seems likely that, if an administrative league of ten cities existed, it had a short life, ended during the first years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1189</sup>, it had no strong political power and administrative aims: the term «Decapolis» suddenly became a geographical name. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

---

<sup>1186</sup> There are not descriptions of it as a league or confederation. See PARKER 1975

<sup>1187</sup> ISAAC 1981, 68: «[ἡ]γησα[μ]ένω[ι] Δεκαπόλεω[ι] τῆ[ι] ἐν Συρίᾳ».

<sup>1188</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 91.

<sup>1189</sup> TSAFRIR 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<sup>1190</sup>, Dion<sup>1191</sup>, Gadara<sup>1192</sup>, Pella<sup>1193</sup>, Philadelphia<sup>1194</sup> and Scythopolis<sup>1195</sup> the inscriptions «K(OI) C(YP)» were engraved, especially at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE<sup>1196</sup>. According to Maurice Sartre<sup>1197</sup>, 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.

	WALLS	SPECTACLE BUILDINGS	ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS	BATHS	RELIGION BUILDINGS	COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
CAPITOLIAS	II CE	II CE (Theatre)				II CE (shops)
HIPPOS	II BCE	I-II CE (ῥδειον) II CE (Theatre)			II BCE	
DION						
ADRAHA	III CE	III CE (theatre)				
CANATHA		I CE (Theatre)			I-II CE	
GADARA	II BCE	I CE (Theatre) II CE (ῥδειον?)			II BCE I CE	II CE (macellum)
ABILA		II-I BCE (?)				
PELLA		I CE (ῥδειον)				
SCYTHOPOLIS		I CE (Theatre) II CE (ῥδειον and «Amphitheatre»)	I CE Basilica	I CE	II-I BCE I CE; II CE	
PHILADELPHIA		II CE			II CE	
GERASA	II or IV CE	I CE (Theatre) II CE (ῥδειον and Hippodrome)			I CE II CE	II CE (macellum)

TAB. 3 Buildings chronology according to the excavation reports.

Furthermore, Sartre has adduced an inscription from Didyma, dated to the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>1198</sup>, 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 Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ ἄλλων πόλεων»<sup>1199</sup>. Further evidence is provided by an inscription from Eumeneia in Phrygia, written in Latin: «*M(arcus) Iulius*

<sup>1190</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 50-57, nos. 1-9, 15-19, 21-22, 28, 31; WINELAND 2001, 79.

<sup>1191</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 118-121, nos. 1-3, 10; AUGÉE 1988, 325.

<sup>1192</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 136-151, nos. 31-61, 73-74, 76-77, 80, 83.

<sup>1193</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 214-215, nos. 13, 16.

<sup>1194</sup> For Philadelphia, the inscription «ΚΟΙΑΗ CYPIA» appeared already sporadically during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and frequently since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. SPIJKERMAN 1978, 244-257, nos. 3, 8, 11-17, 19, 23-28, 31-33; 34-47.

<sup>1195</sup> SPIJKERMAN 1978, 188-193, nos. 5-14; KINDLER and STEIN 1987, 180-187.

<sup>1196</sup> GRAF 1992, 33.

<sup>1197</sup> SARTRE 2010, 177.

<sup>1198</sup> 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.

<sup>1199</sup> REHM and WIEGAND 1958, no. 151.

*M(arci) f(ilius) Fabia| Pisonianus qui et Dion|... domo Tyro metropolis Phoenices| et Coeles Syriae...»*<sup>1200</sup>. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ruins 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<sup>1201</sup> flourished from a religious site on a hilltop, with sanctuaries built not much before the coming of Pompey<sup>1202</sup>: they probably were previously devoted to Semitic divinities<sup>1203</sup>. 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<sup>1204</sup>: 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<sup>1205</sup> 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<sup>1206</sup>, worshipped at least in Abila<sup>1207</sup>, Gadara<sup>1208</sup> and Philadelphia<sup>1209</sup>. Even borrowing Greek names, many of these deities preserved epithets which suggested their «local» essence<sup>1210</sup>.

However, we need to bear in mind that all these cities developed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, and that our hypothesis about previous periods are only conjectural. It is also true that many cities maybe had a certain grade of prosperity and a large size during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

---

<sup>1200</sup> BUCKLER, CALDER and COX 1926, 74-75, no. 20.

<sup>1201</sup> See in particular the cases of Gadara, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Hippos, Canatha, and maybe Abila.

<sup>1202</sup> In the Decapolis area, the temple on the top of a hill were built at Pella, Philadelphia, Scythopolis, Gadara, Gerasa

<sup>1203</sup> SCHÜRER 1973, Vol. II, 36-39; BOWSER 1987, 66.

<sup>1204</sup> 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 RIEDL 2011, 351-352.

<sup>1205</sup> RIEDL 2005, 326; LICHTENBERGER 2008, 148.

<sup>1206</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2011, 562-565.

<sup>1207</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 67-72; RIEDL 2005, 42-47;

<sup>1208</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 89-95; RIEDL 2005, 127-132;

<sup>1209</sup> LICHTENBERGER 2003, 244-277; RIEDL 2005, 250-287;

<sup>1210</sup> I am talking about the epithet of «Arotios» 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<sup>1211</sup>.

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»<sup>1212</sup>: 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<sup>1213</sup>, 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<sup>1214</sup>. 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 Hasmonaeans 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<sup>1215</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

---

<sup>1211</sup> 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».

<sup>1212</sup> SOMMER 2012, 242.

<sup>1213</sup> MILLAR 1987b, 154.

<sup>1214</sup> ANDRADE 2013, 119.

<sup>1215</sup> 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<sup>1216</sup>.

#### 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1217</sup>. We have to take in account that it was very hard to modify the function of a complex structure such a theatre<sup>1218</sup>: 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<sup>1219</sup>. It seems very unlikely that theatres were built in perishable material, since the lack of wood in the region<sup>1220</sup>.

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<sup>1221</sup>.

It seems therefore that, except for Greece and Asia Minor, all the Eastern Mediterranean had no theatres or other edifices for spectacle since the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, when Herod for

---

<sup>1216</sup> ANTH. PAL. VII 417: «Νᾶσος ἐμὰ θρέππειρα πάτρα δέ με τεκνοῖ | Ἀθῆς ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ναιομένα Γάδαρα...εἰ δὲ Συρος, τί τὸ θαῦμα; μίαν, ξένε, πατριδα κόσμον | ναιομεν».

<sup>1217</sup> MILLAR 1987a, 117-118; SEAR 2006, 106. FRÉZOULS (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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Ai Khanoum, some theatres, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, have been discovered. For a first hypothesis about the presence of a theatre of 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 Ai Khanoum, see BERNARD 1976, 314-322; Id. 1978 429-441.

<sup>1218</sup> FRÉZOULS 1959, 205.

<sup>1219</sup> FRÉZOULS 1959, 207.

<sup>1220</sup> 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.

<sup>1221</sup> PLUT. *Vit. Alex.* LXXII, 1: «ὡς δὲ ἦκεν εἰς Ἐκβάτανα τῆς Μηδίας καὶ διώκησε τὰ κατεπείγοντα, πάλιν ἦν ἐν θεάτροις καὶ πανηγύρεσιν, ἅτε δὴ τρισχιλίων αὐτῷ τεχνιτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀφιγμένων. ἔτυχε δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας Ἥφαιστίων πυρέσσω: οἷα δὲ νέος καὶ στρατιωτικὸς οὐ φέρων ἀκριβῆ διαίταν, ἅμα τῷ τὸν ἰατρὸν Γλαῦκον ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ θέατρον περὶ ἄριστον γενόμενος καὶ καταφαγῶν ἀλεκτρούνα ἐφθόν καὶ ψυκτῆρα μέγαν ἐκπιῶν οἴνου κακῶς ἔσχε καὶ μικρὸν διαλιπῶν ἀπέθανε».

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 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Principate<sup>1222</sup>, and other games organised by the Emperor in 13 BCE for celebrating the consecration of the *Ara Pacis*, donating to Augustus 300 talents<sup>1223</sup>.

Furthermore, he was gymnasiarch on the Aegean island of Cos and built gymnasia 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 Judaeian 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»<sup>1224</sup> and even animal-baitings<sup>1225</sup>.

---

<sup>1222</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 6: «Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ καὶ τὸν εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν πλοῦν ἐποιήσατο Καίσαρι τε συντυχεῖν ὀρμηθεὶς καὶ θεάσασθαι τοὺς παῖδας ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διατρίβοντας. Καίσαρ δὲ τὰ τε ἄλλα φιλοφρόνως αὐτὸν ἐξεδέξατο καὶ τοὺς παῖδας ὡς ἤδη τελειωθέντας ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἀπέδωκεν ἄγειν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν». For the date, see: SCHÜRER 1973, vol. I, 292; RICHARDSON 1996, 239; 262; PATRICH 2009, 184.

<sup>1223</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XVI, 128: «ἐν δὲ ταῖς ὑστέραις ἡμέραις Ἡρώδης μὲν ἐδωρεῖτο Καίσαρα τριακοσίοις ταλάντοις θεᾶς τε καὶ διανομὰς ποιούμενον τῷ Ῥωμαίων δήμῳ, Καίσαρ δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦ μετάλλου τοῦ Κυπρίων χαλκοῦ τὴν ἡμίσειαν πρόσοδον καὶ τῆς ἡμισείας τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἔδωκεν καὶ τὰλλα ξενίας καὶ καταγωγῆς ἐτίμησεν».

<sup>1224</sup> 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 θυμελικοῖ led PATRICH (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 «Greek» nature of these games.

<sup>1225</sup> JOSEPH. *AJ* XV, 267-275: «Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξέβαινον τῶν πατρίων ἐθῶν καὶ ξενικοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ὑποδιέφθειρον τὴν πάλαι κατάστασιν ἀπαρעγγεῖρητον οὖσαν, ἐξ ὧν οὐ μικρὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸν αὐθις χρόνον ἠδικήθημεν ἀμεληθέντων ὅσα πρότερον ἐπὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἦγεν τοὺς ὄχλους: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἀγῶνα πενταετηρικὸν ἀθλημάτων κατεστήσατο Καίσαρι καὶ θέατρον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ὠκοδόμησεν, αὐθις τ' ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μέγιστον ἀμφιθέατρον, περίοπτα μὲν ἄμφω τῇ πολυτελείᾳ, τοῦ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἔθους ἀλλότρια: χρῆσις τε γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ θεαμάτων τοιοῦτων ἐπίδειξις οὐ παραδίδοται. τὴν μὲντοι πανήγυριν ἐκεῖνος ἐπιφανεστάτην τὴν τῆς πενταετηρίδος συνετέλει καταγγείλας τε τοῖς πέριξ καὶ συγκαλῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντός ἔθους. οἱ δ' ἀθληταὶ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἀγωνισμάτων ἀπὸ πάσης γῆς ἐκαλοῦντο κατ' ἐλπίδα τῶν προκειμένων καὶ τῆς νίκης εὐδοξία, συνελέγησάν τε οἱ κορυφαῖοτατοι τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν: οὐ γὰρ μόνον τοῖς περὶ τὰς γυμνικὰς ἀσκήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ μουσικῇ διαγινόμενοις καὶ θυμελικοῖς καλουμένοις προτίθει μέγιστα νικητήρια: καὶ διεσπούδαστο πάντας τοὺς ἐπισημοτάτους ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμιλλαν. προύθηκεν δὲ καὶ τεθρίπποις καὶ συνωρίσιν καὶ κέλῃσιν οὐ μικρὰς δωρεάς, καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα κατὰ πολυτέλειαν ἢ σεμνοπρέπειαν παρ' ἐκάστοις ἐσπούδαστο φιλοτιμία τοῦ διάσημον αὐτῷ γενέσθαι τὴν ἐπίδειξιν ἐξεμίμησατο. τό γε μὴν θέατρον ἐπιγραφαὶ κύκλῳ περιεῖχον Καίσαρος καὶ τρόπαια τῶν ἐθνῶν, ἃ πολεμήσας ἐκεῖνος ἐκτήσατο, χρυσοῦ τε ἀπέφθου καὶ ἀργύρου πάντων αὐτῷ πεποιημένων. τὰ δ' εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν οὐδὲν οὕτως ἦν οὐτ' ἐσθήτος τίμιον οὔτε σκευῆς λίθων, ὃ μὴ τοῖς ὀρωμένοις ἀγωνίσμασιν συνεπεδείκνυτο. παρασκευῆ δὲ καὶ θηρίων ἐγένετο λεόντων τε πλείστων αὐτῷ συναχθέντων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσα καὶ τὰς ἀλκὰς ὑπερβαλλούσας ἔχει καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶν σπανιώτερα: τούτων αὐτῶν τε πρὸς

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 Jerusalem<sup>1226</sup>.

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 Damascus<sup>1227</sup>. However, Herod did not finance 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 Judaea<sup>1228</sup>, it seems at least odd that the Judaean king supported only Damascus in the construction of γυμνάσιον and a theatre<sup>1229</sup>.

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 theatre<sup>1230</sup>. 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 ὠδεῖον, 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

---

ἄλληλα συμπλοκαὶ καὶ μάχαι πρὸς αὐτὰ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων ἀνθρώπων ἐπιτηδεύοντο, τοῖς μὲν ξένοις ἐκπληξίς ὁμοῦ τῆς δαπάνης καὶ ψυχαγωγία τῶν περὶ τὴν θεὰν κινδύνων, τοῖς δ' ἐπιχωρίοις φανερὰ κατάλυσις τῶν τιμωμένων παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐθῶν: ἀσεβὲς μὲν γὰρ ἐκ προδῆλου κατεφαίνετο θηρίοις ἀνθρώπους ὑπορρίπτειν ἐπὶ τέρψει τῆς ἀνθρώπων θεᾶς, ἀσεβὲς δὲ ξενικοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐξαλλάττειν τοὺς ἐθισμούς».

<sup>1226</sup> JOSEPH *BJI*, 21,8 (415-416): «Τὰ γε μὴν λοιπὰ τῶν ἔργων, ἀμφιθέατρον καὶ θέατρον καὶ ἀγοράς, ἄξια τῆς προσηγορίας ἐνιδρύσατο. καὶ πενταετηρικούς ἀγῶνας καταστησάμενος ὁμοίως ἐκάλεσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καίσαρος, πρῶτος αὐτὸς ἄθλα μέγιστα προθεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς ἑκατοστῆς ἐνενηκοστῆς δευτέρας Ὀλυμπιάδος, ἐν οἷς οὐ μόνον οἱ νικῶντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ τρίτοι τοῦ βασιλικοῦ πλοῦτου μετελάμβανον. ἀνακτίσας δὲ καὶ Ἀνθηδόνα τὴν παράλιον καταρριφθεῖσαν ἐν πολέμῳ Ἀγρίππειον προσηγόρευσε: τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ φίλου δι' ὑπερβολὴν εὐνοίας καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς πύλης ἐχάραξεν τὸ ὄνομα, ἦν αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ κατεσκεύασεν»;

*AJ* XVI, 136-137: «Περὶ δὲ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον συντέλειαν ἔλαβεν ἡ Καισάρεια Σεβαστή, ἦν ὠκοδόμηι δεκάτῳ μὲν ἔτει πρὸς τέλος ἐλθούσης αὐτῷ τῆς ὅλης κατασκευῆς, ἐκπεσοῦσης δὲ τῆς προθεσμίας εἰς ὄγδοον καὶ εἰκοστὸν ἔτος τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπ' Ὀλυμπιάδος δευτέρας καὶ ἐνενηκοστῆς πρὸς ταῖς ἑκατόν. ἦν οὖν εὐθύς ἐν καθιερώσει μείζονες ἑορταὶ καὶ παρασκευαὶ πολυτελέσταται: κατηγγέλκει μὲν γὰρ ἀγῶνα μουσικῆς καὶ γυμνικῶν ἀθλημάτων, παρεσκευάκει δὲ πολὺ πλῆθος μονομάχων καὶ θηρίων ἵππων τε δρόμον καὶ τὰ πολυτελέστερα τῶν ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ καὶ παρ' ἄλλοις τισὶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων»

<sup>1227</sup> JOSEPH *BJI*, 21,11 (422). See above, note 622.

<sup>1228</sup> MOMIGLIANO 1994, 22.

<sup>1229</sup> As said above, Damascus cannot be considered a city belonging the Decapolis.

<sup>1230</sup> HAMMOND 1965, 545-549; MCKENZIE 1990, 143-144.

in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>1231</sup>. 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<sup>1232</sup>. One of the causes of the break of construction policy between the beginning and the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>1233</sup> 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<sup>1234</sup> 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<sup>1235</sup>. According to Michel Austin, the fragmentation of the Empire was one of the causes of the strength of Seleucid power<sup>1236</sup>: at the same time, it allowed the development of local traditions in many aspects of life<sup>1237</sup>.

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<sup>1238</sup>. It seems likely that only γυμνάσια and έφηβεΐα represented clearer markers of «Greekness»<sup>1239</sup>. To practice sport in heroic or athletic nudity had to be an

---

<sup>1231</sup> WEISS 2014, 70.

<sup>1232</sup> FRÉZOULS 1961, 59-60.

<sup>1233</sup> ANDRADE 2013, 40.

<sup>1234</sup> *I MACC* I, 10: «καὶ ἐξήλθεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ρίζα ἀμαρτωλὸς Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανῆς υἱὸς Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως ὃς ἦν ὄμηρα ἐν Ῥώμῃ καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν ἔτει ἑκατοστῷ καὶ τριακοστῷ καὶ ἐβδόμῳ βασιλείας Ἑλλήνων».

<sup>1235</sup> GIOVANNINI 1993, 278. For a full list of gymnastic institutions in Greek cities, see KENNEL 2006.

<sup>1236</sup> AUSTIN 2003, 131.

<sup>1237</sup> It has been clearly shown in HANNESTAD 2011 and 2012.

<sup>1238</sup> 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: «[...] ἔκτισε δὲ ἐκεῖ ἄνω καὶ μονομάχιον καὶ θέατρον. ἀνεπέωσε δὲ καὶ τὸ Πάνθειον, μέλλονθα συμπίπτειν, ἀνεγείρας τὸν βωμόν [...]».

It was then enlarged by Agrippas. *MAL. Chron.* 9, 288: «προσέθηκε δὲ κτίσας ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ Ἀντιοχείας ἄλλην ζώνην ἐπάνω τῆς πράτης διὰ τὸν πολὺν δῆμον ὁ Ἀγρίππας [...]».

<sup>1239</sup> 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<sup>1240</sup>. 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<sup>1241</sup>: it probably means that these activities were allowed and common among Jews during the other days of the week<sup>1242</sup>.

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»<sup>1243</sup>. However, even among Rabbinic sources a clear change happened: while tannaitic sources, dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, were much more determined to condemn foreign practises, Amoraic sources, dated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, tried to persuade their communities to not see Roman shows more than to attack them directly<sup>1244</sup>.

It seems likely that Jewish population was attracted by spectacles, in particular the gladiatorial ones, and attending them became a common practice during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

---

<sup>1240</sup> SARTRE 2009, 205.

<sup>1241</sup> PHILO, *De Vita Mos.* II, 39 (211): «ταύτης ἔνεκα τῆς αἰτίας ὁ πάντα μέγας Μωυσῆς ἐδικαίωσε τοὺς ἐγγραφέντας αὐτοῦ τῇ ἱερᾷ πολιτείᾳ θεσμοῖς φύσεως ἐπομένους πανηγυρίζειν, ἐν ἰλαραῖς διάγοντας εὐτυμίας, ἀνέχοντας μὲν ἔργων καὶ τεχνῶν τῶν εἰς πορισμὸν καὶ πραγματειῶν ὅσα κατὰ βίου ζήτησιν, ἄγοντας δ' ἐκεχειρίαν καὶ διαφειμένους πάσης ἐπιπόνου καὶ καματηρᾶς φροντίδος, σχολάζοντας οὐχ ὡς ἔνιοι γέλωσιν ἢ παιδιαῖς ἢ μίμων ἢ ὄρχηστῶν ἐπιδείξεισι, περὶ ἃς κηραίνουσι καὶ δυσθανατοῦσιν οἱ θεατρομανοῦντες καὶ διὰ τῶν ἡγεμονικωτάτων αἰσθήσεων, ὀράσεως καὶ ἀκοῆς, δούλην ἀπεργαζόμενοι τὴν φύσει βασιλίδα ψυχῆν, ἀλλὰ μόνω τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν».

<sup>1242</sup> FELDMAN 1993, 61.

<sup>1243</sup> WEISS 2014, 205.

<sup>1244</sup> 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<sup>1245</sup>. 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<sup>1246</sup>. Some scholar believed that gladiators were not included in the original text written by Polybius<sup>1247</sup>; however, considering the Antiochos' enthusiasm for gladiators reported by Livy<sup>1248</sup>, it seems likely that the Seleucid king wanted to introduce this kind of games in the Hellenistic East<sup>1249</sup>.

---

<sup>1245</sup> CARTER 2010, 152.

<sup>1246</sup> POLYB. XXX, 25,1-9 (=ATH. 194d-e): «ὁ δ' αὐτὸς οὗτος βασιλεὺς ἀκούσας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ συντετελεσμένους ἀγῶνας ὑπὸ Αἰμιλίου Παύλου τοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγοῦ, βουλόμενος τῇ μεγαλοεργίᾳ ὑπερᾶραι τὸν Παῦλον ἐξέπεμψε πρέσβεις καὶ θεωροὺς εἰς τὰς πόλεις καταγγελοῦντας τοὺς ἐσομένους ἀγῶνας ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Δάφνης: ὡς πολλὴν γενέσθαι τῶν Ἑλλήνων σπουδὴν εἰς τὴν ὡς αὐτὸν ἄφιξιν. ἀρχὴν δ' ἐποίησατο τῆς πανηγύρεως τὴν πομπείαν οὕτως ἐπιτελεσθεῖσαν. καθηγούντο τινες Ῥωμαικὸν ἔχοντες καθοπλισμὸν ἐν θώραξιν ἀλυσιδωτοῖς, ἄνδρες ἀκμάζοντες τὰς ἡλικίαις πεντακισχίλιοι: μεθ' οὓς Μυσοὶ πεντακισχίλιοι. συνεχεῖς δ' ἦσαν Κίλικες εἰς τὸν τῶν εὐζώνων τρόπον καθωπλισμένοι τρισχίλιοι, χρυσοὺς ἔχοντες στεφάνους. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις Θρᾶκες τρισχίλιοι καὶ Γαλάται πεντακισχίλιοι. τούτοις ἐπέβαλλον Μακεδόνες δισμύριοι, χρυσάσπιδες μὲν μύριοι καὶ χαλκάσπιδες πεντακισχίλιοι, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἀργυράσπιδες: οἷς ἐπηκολούθει μονομάχων ζεύγη διακόσια τεσσαράκοντα. τούτων κατόπιν ἦσαν ἵππεῖς Νισαῖοι μὲν χίλιοι, πολιτικοὶ δὲ τρισχίλιοι, ὧν οἱ μὲν πλείους ἦσαν χρυσοφάλαροι καὶ χρυσοστέφανοι, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι ἀργυροφάλαροι. μετὰ δὲ τούτους ἦσαν οἱ λεγόμενοι ἐταῖροι ἵππεῖς: οὗτοι δὲ ἦσαν εἰς χιλίους, πάντες χρυσοφάλαροι. τούτοις συνεχὲς ἦν τὸ τῶν φίλων σύνταγμα, ἴσον καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος καὶ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις ἐπίλεκτοι χίλιοι, οἷς ἐπηκολούθει τὸ καλούμενον ἄγημα, κράτιστον εἶναι δοκοῦν σύστημα περὶ χιλίους».

<sup>1247</sup> GÜNTHER 1989.

<sup>1248</sup> LIVY XLI, 20: «...spectaculorum quoque omnis generis magnificentia superiores reges vicit, reliquorum sui moris et copia Graecorum artificum; gladiatorum munus, Romanae consuetudinis, primo maiore cum terrore hominum, insuetorum ad tale spectaculum, quam voluptate dedit; deinde saepius dando et modo vulneribus tenuis, modo sine missione, etiam familiare oculis gratumque id spectaculum fecit, et armorum studium plerisque iuvenum accendit. itaque qui primo ab Roma magnis pretiis paratos gladiatores accersere solitus erat».

<sup>1249</sup> 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<sup>1250</sup>. My analysis confirms that archaeological evidences continue to be scarce until the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, albeit several studies are shedding more light on the centuries of Ptolemaic and Seleucid rules, in particular for Palestine<sup>1251</sup>. 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<sup>1252</sup>, 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<sup>1253</sup>. 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

---

<sup>1250</sup> MILLAR 1987a, 129; SARTRE 2001, 31-33; KROPP 2013, 19.

<sup>1251</sup> See, in particular, TAL 2008 and 2009. However, the author himself is conscious that there are not «Greek» buildings (TAL 2011, 252).

<sup>1252</sup> NAEREBOUT 2014, 268.

<sup>1253</sup> 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 architectural 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, clear 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<sup>1254</sup> : 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 resistance<sup>1255</sup>. The study of identity has indeed produced paradoxes: dominated cultures rebelled against dominant cultures, but doing it they attained some foreign elements<sup>1256</sup>. 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 culture<sup>1257</sup>. 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 criterion<sup>1258</sup>.

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,

---

<sup>1254</sup> BOWERSOCK 2008, 22.

<sup>1255</sup> BARCLAY 2002, 17.

<sup>1256</sup> WILL 1998, 757; MA 2008, 378.

<sup>1257</sup> MOMIGLIANO (1975, 114) has claimed that Jews under Hasmonaeans were more Hellenised than before.

<sup>1258</sup> WOOLF 1994, 129.

according to the words of Flavius Josephus<sup>1259</sup>. 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<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1260</sup>: 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 Rabbat's kingdom<sup>1261</sup>; 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 they 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

---

<sup>1259</sup> JOSEPH. *Ap.* II, 225-235. See above, note 140.

<sup>1260</sup> PEACOCK 2013, 189.

<sup>1261</sup> BOWERSOCK 1983, 82; 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<sup>1262</sup>. 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»<sup>1263</sup>, 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<sup>1264</sup>.

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<sup>1265</sup>; 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<sup>1266</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>1262</sup> BELAYCHE 2001, 70.

<sup>1263</sup> NAEREBOUT 2014, 278.

<sup>1264</sup> TERRENATO 2005, 66.

<sup>1265</sup> COTTON 2007, 405.

<sup>1266</sup> About the presence of Jews in the Roman Army, see ROTH 2007.

However, during the 1<sup>st</sup> century and mostly the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>1267</sup>.

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 Rabbal 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<sup>1268</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>1267</sup> WOOLF 1994, 130.

<sup>1268</sup> LE ROUX 2011, 14.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
AAAS	<i>Annales Arabes Archéologiques Syriennes</i>
ADAJ	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AncW	<i>The Ancient World</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ASCS	<i>The Australian Society for Classical Studies</i>
ASNP	<i>Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa</i>
AWE	<i>Ancient West &amp; East</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAAL	<i>Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises</i>
BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of American School of Oriental Research</i>
BASP	<i>The Bulletin of American Society of Papyrologist</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BOSRA	DENTZER-FEYDY, J., VALLERIN, M., FOURNET, T. and MUKDAD R. and A. <i>Bosra. Aux Portes de l'Arabie</i> , Beyrouth, Damas and Amman: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2007
CIG	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , Berlin, 1828-1877
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin, 1856-
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i> , Paris, 1881-1962
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
DM	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
EJ	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica. Second Edition</i> . Thomson Gale: United States of America, 2006
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
FGRH	JACOBY, F. (ed.), <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Leiden: Brill
GGA	<i>Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen</i>
HAURAN I	DENTZER, J.-M. (ed.), <i>Hauran I. Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine</i> . Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1985-1986
HAURAN II	DENTZER-FEYDY, J., DENTZER, J.-M. and BLANC, P.-M. (eds.), <i>Hauran II. Les installations de Sī' 8</i> , Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2003
HAURAN IV	DENTZER, J.-M. and WEBER, T. M. (eds.), <i>Hauran IV, Sahr al-Ledja, Un sanctuaire du désert basaltique à l'époque romaine</i> , Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2009
HAURAN V	AL-MAQDISSI, M.; BRAEMER, F. and DENTZER, J.-M. (eds.), <i>Hauran V. La Syrie du Sud du Néolithique à l'Antiquité Tardive. Recherches récentes. Actes du colloque de Damas 2007</i> . Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2010

HIPPOS 2002	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Third Season of Excavations</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2004	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Fifth Season of Excavations (September - October 2004)</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2005	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Sixth Season of Excavations (July 2005)</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2008	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Ninth Season of Excavations (June - July 2008)</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2009	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Tenth Season of Excavations (July and September 2009)</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2010	SEGAL, A., SCHULER, M. and EISENBERG, M. (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita. Eleventh Season of Excavations (July 2010)</i> , Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HIPPOS 2013	SEGAL, A. <i>et alii</i> (eds.), <i>Hippos-Sussita of the Decapolis. The First Twelve Seasons of Excavations 2000-2011</i> , Vol. 1, Haifa: Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS/TS	<i>Hervorm de Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
IGLS	<i>Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
INS	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
JAA	<i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JQR	<i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
MAA	<i>Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry</i>
NC	<i>The Numismatic Chronicle</i>
NEAEHL	STERN, E. (ed.), <i>New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
QUCC	<i>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica</i>
REA	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
SCI	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
SHAJ	<i>Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan</i>
TAPhA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



## ABBREVIATIONS OF ANCIENT SOURCES

2 Cor.	Paul, <i>2nd Letter to Corinthians</i>
AMM. MARC.	Ammianus Marcellinus
ANTH. PAL.	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>
APP. B civ.	Appian, <i>Bella civilia</i>
APP. Syr.	Appian, Συριακή
ARR. Anab.	Arrian, <i>Anabasis</i>
ATH.	Athenaeus
AUGUST. De Civ. D.	Augustine, <i>De Civitate Dei</i>
BAlex.	<i>Bellum Alexandrinum</i>
CHRON.	<i>Book of Chronicles</i> . Cited as I CHRON, II CHRON
CIC. Fam.	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Familiares</i>
CIC. Flacc.	Cicero, <i>Pro Flacco</i>
CIC. Prov. Cons.	Cicero, <i>De provinciis consularibus</i>
CIC. QFr.	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem</i>
DAM. Isid.	Damascius, <i>Vita Isidori</i>
DIO CASS.	Dio Cassius, <i>Historia Romana</i>
DIOD. SIC.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca historica</i>
DION. HAL. Ant. Rom.	Dionysius Halicarnassensis, <i>Antiquitates Romanae</i>
DT	<i>Book of Deuteronomy</i>
EPIPH. Adv. Haeres.	Epiphanius, <i>Adversos Haereses</i> , ed. F. Williams
EUSEB. Hist. Eccl.	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
EUSEB. Onom.	Eusebius, <i>Onomasticon</i>
EUSEB. Praep. Evan.	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>
EZRA	<i>Book of Ezra</i>
GEN	<i>Book of Genesis</i>
HDT.	Herodotus
IS	<i>Book of Isaiah</i>
JDT	<i>Book of Judith</i>
JOSEPH. AJ	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
JOSEPH. Ap.	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>
JOSEPH. BJ	Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
JOSEPH. Vita	Josephus, <i>Vita</i>
JOSH	<i>Book of Joshua</i>
KGS	<i>Book of Kings</i> . Cited as I KGS, II KGS
LIV.	Livy, <i>Ab Urbe Condita Libri</i>
MACC	<i>Book of Maccabees</i> . Cited as I MACC, II MACC
MAL. Chron.	John Malalas, <i>Chronographia</i>
Nat. Hist.	Pliny, <i>Naturalis Historia</i>
NEH	<i>Book of Nehemiah</i>
NUM	<i>Book of Numbers</i>
Periplus	<i>Periplus Maris Erythraei</i>
PHILO De Vita Mos.	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i>
PHOT. Bibl.	Photius, <i>Bibliotheca</i>
PLUT. Vit. Alex.	Plutarch, <i>Vitae parallelae. Alexander</i>

POLYB.	Polybius, <i>Historiae</i>
PTOL. <i>Geog.</i>	Ptolemy, <i>Geographia</i>
QUINT. <i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i>
SAM	<i>Book of Samuel</i> . Cited as <i>I SAM</i> , <i>II SAM</i>
SEN.	Seneca (the younger)
STEPH. BYZ.	Stephanus Byzantius, <i>Ethnika</i> ,
STRABO	Strabo, <i>Geographia</i>
SYNC. <i>Chron.</i>	Syncellus, <i>Chronographia</i>
TAC. <i>Agr.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i>
TAC. <i>Ann</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
TAC. <i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i>
TB	<i>Book of Tobit</i>
TERT. <i>De pallio</i>	Tertullian, <i>De pallio</i>
VIB. SEQ. <i>Gentes</i>	Vibius Sequester, <i>de gentibus per litteras libellus</i>
XEN. <i>An.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>
XEN. <i>Cyr.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Cyropedia</i>

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

**ABDUL-HAK, S.**

1951 «Un nouveau relief en basalte représentant Mithra Tauroctonos», *AAAS* 1, 141-144;

**ABEL, F. M.**

1938 *Géographie de la Palestine, I-II*. Paris: Librairie Lecroff;

1952 *Histoire de la Palestine: Depuis la conquête d'Alexandre jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, Paris: Librairie Lecroff;

**ABBADI, S. and ZAYADINE, F.**

1996 «Nepos the Governor of the Provincia Arabia in a Safaitic Inscription?», *Semitica* 46, 155-164;

**ADAMS, R. J. (ed.)**

2008 *Jordan. An Archaeological Reader*, London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.;

**ADAN-BAYEWITZ, D.**

1993 *Common Pottery in Roman Galilee: A Study of Local Trade*, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press;

2003 «On the Chronology of the Common Pottery of the Northern Roman Judaea/Palestine», in G. C. BOTTINI, L. DI SEGNI and L. D. CHUPCALA (eds.) 2003, 5-32;

**ADAN-BAYEWITZ, D. and AVIAM, M.**

1997 «Iotapata, Josephus and the Siege of 67: Preliminary Report on the 1992-1994 Seasons», *JRA* 10, 131-165;

**AGUSTA-BOULAROT, S. and SEIGNE, J.**

2005 «La fonction des odéons dans les provinces orientales de l'Empire: l'exemple de *Gerasa* de la Décapole (Jordanie)», in LAFON and SAURON (eds.) 2005, 297-310;

**AIME, M.**

2004 *Eccessi di culture*, Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore;

**ALBRIGHT, W. F.**

1925 «Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Haurān: The spring trip of the School in Jerusalem», *BASOR* 19, 3-17;

**ALCOCK, S.**

1993 *Graecia Capta. The landscapes of Roman Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

1997 «The Problem of Romanization, the Power of Athens», in HOFF and HOTROFF (eds.) 1997, 1-7;

**ALCOCK, S., EGRI, M. and FRANKS, F. D. (eds.)**

2016 *Beyond Boundaries. Connecting Visual Cultures in the Provinces of Ancient Rome*, Los Angeles: Getty Publications;

**ALCOCK, S. et alii (eds.)**

2001 *Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

**ALIQOT, J.**

1999-2003 «Les Ituréens et la présence arabe du Liban», *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 56, 161-290;

**ALMAGRO, A.**

1982 «The restoration of the Umayyad monumental constructions on the Amman Citadel, 1979-1981», *ADAJ* 26, 277-282;

- 1983 «The Survey of the Roman Monuments of Amman by the Italian Mission in 1930», *ADAJ* 27, 607-639;
- 1987 «Origins and repercussions of the architecture of the Umayyad palace in Amman», *SHAJ* 3, 181-192;
- 1994 «A Byzantine building with a cruciform plan in the citadel of Amman», *ADAJ* 38, 417-427;
- ALPASS, P.**  
2013 *The Religious Life of Nabataea*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;
- AL-SHAMI, A.**  
2005 «A new discovery at Bayt Rās/Capitolias – Irbid», *ADAJ* 49, 509-519;
- ALT, A.**  
1953 «Galiläische Probleme», in A. ALT (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volks Israel*, München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 363-435;
- AMER, G. et alii**  
1982 «L'ensemble basilical de Qanawat (Syrie du Sud)», *Syria* 59, 257-318;
- AMIT, D., PATRICH, J. and HIRSCHFELD Y. (eds.)**  
2002 *The Aqueducts of Israel*, Portsmouth, RI: *JRA Supp. Series* 46;
- ANDRADE, N.**  
2013 *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;
- ANGIÒ, F.**  
2007 «Epigr. 10 Austin-Bastianini (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII, 309, col. II 7-16)», *ZPE* 60, 50;
- APPLEBAUM, S.**  
1978 «The Roman Theater of Scythopolis», *SCI* 4: 77-103;  
1989 *Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times*, Leiden: Brill;
- ARIEL, D. T. and NAVEH, J.**  
2003 «Selected inscribed Sealings from Kedesh in the Upper Galilee», *BASOR* 329, 61-80
- AUGÉ, C.**  
1988 «Sur le monnayage de Dion "de Coelé Syrie"», in GATIER *et alii* (eds.) 1988, 325-341;
- AUGIER, Y. and SARTRE, M.**  
2002 «Le dieu de Rabbos, maître du "temple péripète" de Canatha», *DM* 13, 125-130
- AUSTIN, M.**  
2003 «The Seleukids and Asia», in ERSKINE 2003, 121-133;
- AVIAM, M.**  
2004a «First Century Jewish Galilee: An Archaeological Perspective», in D. R. EDWARDS (ed.) 2004, 7-26;  
2004b *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Galilee. 25 Years of Archaeological Excavations and Surveys. Hellenistic to Byzantine Periods*, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press;  
2006 «Distribution Maps of Archaeological Data from the Galilee: An Attempt to Establish Zones Indicative of Ethnicity and Religious Affiliation», in ZANGENBERG, ATTRIDGE and MARTIN (eds.) 2006, 115-132;
- 2013 «People, Land, Economy and Belief in First-Century Galilee and its origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis», in D. A. FIENSY and R. K. HAWKINS 2013, 5-48;
- AVIAM, M. and AMITAI, A.**  
2002 «Excavations at Khirbet esh-Shuhara», in Z. GAL (ed.) 2002, 119-133;
- AVI-YONAH, M.**  
1962 «Scythopolis», *IEJ* 12, 123-134;

- 1966 *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House;
- BALL, W.**  
2000 *Rome in the East*, London & New York: Routledge;
- BARBET, A. and VIBERT-GUIGUE, C.**  
1988-1994 *Les peintures des nécropoles romaines d'Abila et du nord de la Jordanie*, Beyrouth: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient; Paris: Geuthner;
- BARBU, D.  
2009 «Artapan. Introduction historique et historiographique», in P. BORGEAUD, T. RÖMER and Y. VOLOKHINE (eds.), *Interprétations de Moïse. Égypte, Judée, Grèce, Rome*, Leiden: Brill;
- BARCLAY, J. M. G.**  
2002 «Jewish Identity Strategies under the Hegemony on Hellenism», in KONRADT and STEINERT (eds.) 2002, 13-25 ;
- BARKAY, R.**  
2006 «Seven New Silver Coins of Malichus I and Obodas III», *NC* 166, 99-103;  
2011 «The Earliest Nabataean Coins», *NC* 171, 67-73, pls. 4-5;  
2015 «New Aspects of nabataean Coins», *ARAM* 27, 431-439;
- BARTH, F.**  
1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company;
- BARTOCCINI, R.**  
1932 «Scavi ad Amman della Missione Archeologica Italiana», *Bollettino dell'Associazione Internazionale degli Studi Mediterranei* 3, 16-23;  
1933-1934 «Scavi ad Amman della Missione Archeologica Italiana», *Bollettino dell'Associazione Internazionale degli Studi Mediterranei* 4-5, 10-27;
- BASTIANINI, C. and GALLAZZI, G. (eds.) in collaboration with AUSTIN, C.**  
2001 *Posidippo di Pella. Epigrammi (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 109)*, Milano: LED Edizioni Universitarie;
- BAUMAN, Z.**  
1998 *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Cambridge: Polity Press;  
1999 *Culture as Praxis*, London: Sage;
- BEARD, M., NORTH, J. and PRICE, S.**  
1998 *Religions of Rome. Volume I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;
- BEER, G.**  
1914-1916 «Ituraea», *RE* IX/2, col. 2378;
- BELAYCHE, N.**  
2001 *Iudaea-Palaestina: the pagan cults in Roman Palestine (second to fourth century)*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;  
2009 «Foundation myths in Roman Palestine. Traditions and reworkings», DERKS and ROYMANS (eds.) 2009, 167-188;
- BELELLI, G.**  
1985-1986 «La ronde-bosse de caractère indigène en Syrie du Sud»; in HAURAN I, 311-372;
- BELLINGER, A. R.**  
1938 «Coins and Glassware», in KRAELING (ed.) 1938, 497-503;

**BEN DAVID, CH.**

2002 «The Aqueducts of Hippos-Susita», in AMIT, PATRICH, and HIRSCHFELD (eds.) 2002, 199-206;

2005 *The Jewish Settlement on the Golan in the Roman and Byzantine Period*, Qazrin: Golan Institute Research;

2014 «Distribution of Kefar Hananya Type Kitchenware in Roman Period Golan: The Data from the Surveys», *Tel Aviv* 41, 238-254;

**BERLIN, A.**

1997a «Between Large Forces: Palestine in the Hellenistic Period», *BA* 60, 2-51;

1997b «From Monarchy to Markets: the Phoenicians in Hellenistic Palestine», *BASOR* 306, 75-88;

2005 «Jewish Life before the Revolt: The Archaeological Evidence», *JSJ* 36, 417-470;

2006 *Gamla I: The Pottery of the Second Temple Period*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquity Authority;

2014 «Household Judaism», in FIENSY and STRANGE (eds.) 2014, 208-215;

**BERLIN, A. and FRANKEL, R.**

2012 «The Sanctuary at Mizpe Yammim: Phoenician Cult and Territory in the Upper Galilee during the Persian Period», *BASOR* 366, 25-78;

**BERLIN, A. and HERBERT, S. C.**

2015 «Kedesh of the Upper Galilee», in FIENSY and STRANGE (eds.) 2015, 424-441;

**BERMAN, A.**

2013 «The Coin Finds of Hippos-Sussita», in HIPPOS 2013, 278-300;

**BERNARD, P.**

1976 «Campagne de fouilles 1975 à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan)», *CRAI*, 287-322;

1978 «Campagne de fouilles 1976-1977 à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan)», *CRAI*, 421-468;

**BERNARDINI, P. and BRAVI, L.**

2002 «Note di lettura al nuovo Posidippo», *QUCC* 70, 147-163;

**BETTINI, M.**

2016 *Radici. Tradizione, identità, memoria*, Bologna: il Mulino;

**BHABHA, H. K.**

1994, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge;

**BIENERT, H.-D. and HÄSER, J. (eds)**

2004, *Men of Dikes and Canals. The Archaeology of Water in the Middle East*. Rahden: Marie Leidorf;

**BIETENHARDT, H.**

1963 «Die Dekapolis von Pompeius bis Traian: Ein Kapitel aus der neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte», *ZDPV* 79, 24-58;

**BIKERMAN, E.**

1947 «La Coelè-Syrie. Notes de géographie historique», *Revue Biblique* 54, 256-266;

**BILDE, P.**

1988 *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works. And Their Importance*, JSPSup 2, Sheffield: JSOT Press;

**BIFFI, N.**

2002 *Il Medio Oriente di Strabone. Libro XVI della Geografia, Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Bari: Edipuglia;

**BIRAN, A.**

1994 *Biblical Dan*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society;

**BLAGG, T. and MILLETT, M. (eds.)**

1990 *The early Roman Empire in the West*, Oxford: Oxbow Books;

**BLANC, P.-M., DENTZER, J.-M. and SODINI, J.-P.**

2007 «La grande église à plan centre (ou «cathédrale de l'Est»)», in BOSRA, 137-141;

**BLANKE, L. et alii**

2007 «From Bathhouse to congregational Mosque: further discoveries on the Urban History of Islamic Jarash», *ADAJ* 51, 177-197;

**BLÖMER, M., LICHTENBERGER, A. and RAJA, R. (eds.)**

2015 *Religious Identities in the Levant from Alexander to Muhammed*, Turnhout: Brepols;

**BOMBELLI, L.**

1986 *I frammenti degli storici giudaico-ellenistici*, Genova: Università di Genova, facoltà di Lettere;

**BOTTINI, G. C., DI SEGNI, L. and CHUPCALA, L. D. (eds.)**

2003 *One Land-Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of S. Loffreda*, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press;

**BOURDIEU, P.**

1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

**BOWERSOCK, G. W.**

1965 *Augustus and the Greek World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;

1983 *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge (MA) and London: Harvard University Press;

2008 «Considering Hellenism in the Roman Near East: Introductory Remarks», in ELIAV, FRIEDLAND and HERBERT (eds.) 2008, 21-23;

**BOWMAN, A. K., GARNSEY, P. and RATHBONE, D. (eds.)**

2000 *The Cambridge Ancient History. Second Edition. Vol. XI, The High Empire, A.D. 70-192*, Cambridge University Press;

**BOWSER, J. M. C.**

1987 «Architecture and Religion in the Decapolis. A Numismatic Survey», *PEQ* 119, 62-69;

1990 «Early Nabataean Coinage», *ARAM* 2, 221-228;

1992 «The Temple of Hercules: A Reassessment», in NORTHEDGE 1992, 129-138;

**BRAEMER, F.**

1987 «Two Campaigns of Excavations on the Ancient Tell of Jerash», *ADAJ* 31, 525-530;

1988 «Prospections archéologiques dans le Hauran (Syrie): le réseaux de l'eau», *Syria* 75, 99-137;

2002 «Le rempart de Bosra au II<sup>e</sup> millénaire avant notre ère», *Syria* 79, 65-74;

**BRAEMER, F. et alii**

1999 «Tours à noyau chemise de Syrie du Sud», *Syria* 76, 151-176;

**BRENK, B., JÄGGI, C. and MEIER, H.-R.**

1995 «The Buildings under the "Cathedral" of Gerasa. The Second Interim Report on the Jerash Cathedral Project», *ADAJ* 39, 211-220;

**BRIANT, P.**

1982 «Colonisation hellénistique et populations indigènes II», *KLIO* 64, 83-98;

**BRIZZI, M., SEPIO, D. and BALDONI D.**

2010 «Italian Excavations at Jarash 2002-2009: the Area of the East Propylaeum of the Sanctuary of Artemis and the 'Propylaea Curch' Complex», *ADAJ* 54, 345-369

**BROISE, H., FOURNET, T.**

2007 «Les thermes du Sud», in BOSRA, 219-224;

**BROWNING, I.**

1982 *Jerash and the Decapolis*, London: Chatto & Windus;

**BRÜNNOW, R. E. and DOMASZEWSKI, A. V.**

1909 *Die Provincia Arabia*, III, Strassburg: Trübner;

**BUCKLER, W. H., CALDER, W. M. and COX, C. W. M.**

1926 «Asia Minor, 1924. III – Monuments from Central Phrygia», *JRS* 16, 53-94;

**BUCKINGHAM, J. S.**

1825 *Travels among the Arab Tribes inhabiting the Countries East of Syria and Palestine*, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green;

**BÜHRIG, C.**

2001 «Some Aspects of the Monumental Gate *extra muros* of Gadara from the Late Roman Period seen in its Context of Urban Development», *SHAJ* 7, 547-552;

2009 «The 'Eastern City Area' of Gadara (Umm Qays): Preliminary Results on the Urban and Functional Structures Between the Hellenistic and Byzantine Periods», *SHAJ* 10, 369-376;

2011 «The Development of Urban Structures in the Decapolis City of Gadara», *ARAM* 23;

2013 «Das Theater-tempel-Areal von Gadara. Konzeption und Wandel des gestalteten Raumes», in GERLACH, I. and RAUE, D. (eds.), *Sanktuar und Ritual. Heilige Plätze im archäologischen Befund*, Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 139-157;

**BÜHRIG, C. and LIESEN, B.**

2007 «Umm Qeis/Gadara», *AJA* 111, 524-526;

**BULLOCH, A. et alii (eds.)**

1993 *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*. Berkeley: University of California Press;

**BURKHARDT, J. L.**

1983 *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land. 1882*. Reprint. New York: AMS Press;

**BURNS, R.**

2005 *Damascus. A History*, London and New York: Routledge;

2011 «The colonnaded axes of the cities of the Decapolis and southern Syria in the Roman imperial period – Romanization or localization?», *ARAM* 23, 447-465;

**BUTCHER, K.**

2003 *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London: British Museum Press;

**BUTLER, H. C.**

1903 *Architecture and other Arts*, New York: Century;

1907 *Publication of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria*, Div. II, Leiden: Brill;

1916 *Ancient Architecture in Syria: Section A, Southern Syria. Part 6: Si (Seeia)*, Leiden: Brill;

**CABALLOS RUFINO, A. and LEFEBVRE, Y. S. (eds.)**

2011 *Roma generadora de identidades. La experiencia hispana*, Madrid: Casa de Velázquez;

**CARTER, M. J.**

2010 «Gladiators and Monomachoi: Greek Attitudes to a Roman 'Cultural Performance'», in Z. PAPAKONSTANTINOY (ed.) 2010, 150-173;

**CASANOVA, A.**

2004 «Osservazioni sul lessico scientifico ed i neologismi del nuovo Posidippo», *Prometheus* 30, 217-234;



**CASTELLS, M.**

2006 «Nothing new under the sun?», in Ø. LaBianca and S. A. Scham (eds.), *Connectivity in Antiquity. Globalization as long-term historical process*, London: Equinox, 158-167;  
2010 *The Power of Identity (Second Edition)*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell;

**CHANCEY, M. A.**

2006 «The Epigraphic Habit of Hellenistic and Roman Galilee», in ZANGENBERG, ATTRIDGE and MARTIN (eds.) 2006, 83-98;

**CHAPMAN, D. W.**

2011 «Roman remains at Decapolis Abila: an Update on twenty-eight years of Excavations», *ARAM* 23, 11-25;

**CHAPMAN, D. W. et alii**

2006 «The 2004 Excavation at Abila of the Decapolis», *ADAJ* 50, 61-68;

**CLARK, V. A., BOWSER, J. M. C. and STEWART, J. D.**

1986 «The Jerash North Theatre: Architecture and Archaeology 1982-1983», in F. ZAYADINE 1986, 205-270;

**CLERMONT-GANNEAU, C.**

1897 *Études d'archéologie orientale II*, Librairie Émile Bouillon: Paris;

1898 *Recueil d'archéologie orientale. Tome II*. Paris: E. Leroux;

1901 *Recueil d'archéologie orientale. Tome IV*. Paris: E. Leroux;

**COHEN, G. M.**

2006 *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and the North Africa*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press;

**COHEN, S. J. D.**

1999 *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press;

**COLLINGWOOD, R. G.**

1932 *Roman Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;

**COLLINS, J. J. and STERLING, G. E. (eds.)**

2001 *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, Notre Dame (Indiana): University of Notre Dame Press;

**COTTON, H. M.**

1999 «Die Papyrusdokumente aus der jüdischen Wüste und ihr Beitrag zur Erforschung der jüdischen Geschichte des 1. und 2. Jh.s n. Chr.», *ZDPV* 115, 228-247;

2003 «The Bar Kokhba Revolt and the Documents from the Judean Desert: Nabataean Participation in the Revolt (*P. Yadin* 52)», in SCHÄFER (ed.) 2003, 133-152;

2007 «The Impact of the Roman Army in the Province of Judaea/Syria Palaestina», in DE BLOIS and LO CASCIO (eds.) 2007, 393-407;

**COTTON, H. M. et alii (eds.)**

2009 *From Hellenism to Islam. Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**CROMHOUT, M.**

2008 «Were the Galileans “religious Jews” or “ethnic Judaeans”?», *HTS/TS* 64,3, 1279-1297;

**CONDER, C. R.**

1889 *The Survey of Eastern Palestine: Memoirs of Topography, Orography, Hydrography and Archaeology II*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund;

**CONDER, C. R. and KITCHENER, H. H.**

1882 *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of Topography, Orography, Hydrography and Archaeology II*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund;

**CURCHIN, L. A.**

2004 *The Romanization of Central Spain. Complexity, diversity and change in a provincial hinterland*, London and New York: Routledge;

**DABROWA, E.**

1986 «Cohortes Ituraeorum», *ZPE* 63, 221-230;

**DAR, S.**

1988 «The History of the Hermon Settlements», *PEQ* 120, 26-44;

1993 *Settlements and Cult Sites on Mount Hermon, Israel: Ituraean Culture in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Oxford: BAR International Series 589;

**DASZKIEWICZ, M., LIESEN, B. and VRIEZEN, K. J. H.**

2014 «Provenance Study of Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Kitchen Wares from the Theatre-Temple Area of Umm Qais/ Gadara, Jordan», in FISCHER-GENZ, GERBER and HAMEL (eds.) 2014, 147-158;

**DAVIES, W. D. and FINKELSTEIN, L. (eds.)**

1984 *Cambridge History of Judaism, I. the Persian Age*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**DE BLOIS, L. and LO CASCIO, E. (eds.)**

2007 *The Impact of Roman Army (200 BC – AD 476). Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

**DE JONG, L.**

2007 «Narratives of Roman Syria : a historiography of Syria as a province of Rome», *Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics* ([www.princeton.edu/\\_pswpc/](http://www.princeton.edu/_pswpc/));

**DE KLIJN, G. and BENOIST, S. (eds.)**

2014 *Integration in Rome and in the Roman World. Proceedings of the Tenth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Lille, June 23-25, 2011)*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

**DENCH, E.**

2005 *Romulus' Asylum. Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**DENTZER, J.**

1979 «À propos du temple dit de 'Dusares' à Si'», *Syria* 56, 325-332;

**DENTZER, J.-M.**

1985-1986 «Conclusion: Développement et culture de la Syrie du Sud dans la période préprovinciale (I<sup>er</sup> s. avant J.-C. – I<sup>er</sup> s. après J.-C.)», in HAURAN I, 387-420;

1990 «Neue Ausgrabungen in Si' (Qanawat) und Bosra (1986-1987) : Zwei einheimische Heiligtümer der vorkaiserzeitlichen Periode» in *Akten des XIII. internationalen Kongresses für Klassische Archäologie*, Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern;

2000 «Le développement urbain en Syrie à l'époque hellénistique et romaine : modèles "occidentaux et orientaux"», *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 52, 159-163;

2003a «Le Jebel al-'Arab à l'époque <hellénistique>: Repères chronologiques et Identité Culturelle», in FREYBERGER, HENNING and VON HESBERG (eds.) 2003, 181-207;

2003b «The Nabataeans at Bosra and in Southern Syria», in MARKOE (ed.) 2003, 109-111;

2007 «L'impact des modèles "classique" sur le cadre de la vie urbaine en Syrie du Sud, entre la fin de l'époque hellénistique et le début de l'époque byzantine», in LARONDE and LECLANT (eds.) 2007, 33-78 ;

**DENTZER, J.-M. et alii**

2010 «Formation et développement des villes en Syrie du Sud de l'époque hellénistique à l'époque byzantine : les exemples de Bosra, Suweida, Shahba», in HAURAN V, 139-169;

**DENTZER, J.-M., BLANC, P. M. and FOURNET, T.**

2002 «Le développement urbain de Bosra de l'époque nabatéenne à l'époque byzantine : bilan des recherches françaises 1981-2002», *Syria* 79, 75-154;

2007 «Le développement urbain», in BOSRA, 31-38;

**DENTZER, J.-M. and DENTZER-FEYDY, J.**

1991 *Le Djebel al-'Arab: histoire et patrimoine au Musée de Suweida*, Paris: Editions Recherches sur les civilisations;

**DENTZER, J.-M., DENTZER-FEYDY, J. and BLANC, P.-M.**

2001 «Busra dans la perspective par millénaires: la Busra nabatéenne», *SHAJ* 7, 457-468;

**DENTZER, J.-M. and ORTHMANN, W. (eds.)**

1989 *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie, II. La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag;

**DENTZER-FEYDY, J.**

1985-1986 «Décor architectural et développement du Hauran du Ier siècle avant J.-C. au VIIe siècle après J.-C.», in HAURAN I, 261-309;

1988 «Frontières et matériel archéologique en Syrie du Sud: politique et culture du Ier siècle av. Notre Ère au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle de Notre Ère», in GATIER, HELLY and REY-COQUAIS (eds.) 1988, 219-239 ;

2003 «Nature et fonction du monument: conclusions», in HAURAN II, 105-109;

2015 «New archaeological research at the sanctuary of Sî' in southern Syria: The Graeco-Roman divinities invite themselves to Baalshamîn», in BLÖMER, LICHTENBERGER and RAJA (eds.) 2015, 313-328;

**DENTZER-FEYDY, J. et alii**

2007 *Bosra aux portes de l'Arabie*, Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient;

**DERKS, T. and ROYMANS, D. (eds.)**

2009 *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press;

**DE VOGÜÉ, M.**

1865-1877 *Syrie centrale: architecture civile et religieuse, du Ier au VIIIe siècle*, Baudry: Paris;

**DIAZ-ANDREU, M. (ed.)**

2005 *Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity and Religion*, London and New York: Routledge;

**DIAZ-ANDREU, M. and LUCY, S.**

2005 «Introduction», in M. Diaz-Andreu (ed.), 1-13;

**DIJKSTRA, J. H. F. and FISHER, G. (eds.)**

2014 *Inside and out. Interactions between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, Leuven, Paris, Walpole (MA): Peeters;

**DI SEGNI, L., FOERSTER, G. and TSAFRIR, Y.**

1999 «The basilica and an altar to Dionysos at Nysa-Scythopolis», in HUMPHREY 1999 (ed.), 59-75;

**DONCEEL, R.**

1983 «L'exploration de Qanaouat (Qanawat)», *AAAS* 33.2, 129-139, pls. 1-4;

1987 «L'évêque Epiodore et les basiliques de Kanatha d'après une inscription grecque inédite», *Le Muséon* 100, 67-88;

**DONNER, F.M.**

1986 «Xenophon's Arabia», *Iraq* 48, 1-14;

**DONNERMANN, R. H.**

1990 «Preliminary Comments on the Pottery Tradition at Tell Nimrin, illustrated from the 1989 Season of Excavations», *ADAJ* 34, 155-158;

**DOWNEY, S. B.**

1988 *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians*, Princeton: Princeton University Press;

**DOWNES, M.**

2000 «Refiguring colonial categories on the Roman frontier in southern Spain», in FENTRESS (ed.) 2000, 197-210;

**DUECK, D.**

2000 *Strabo of Amasia. A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome*, Routledge: London and New York;

**DUECK, D., LINDSAY, H. and POTHECARY, S.**

2006 *Strabo's Cultural Geography. The Making of a Kolossourgia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

**DUNAND, M.**

1934 *Le Musée de Soueïda: Inscriptions et monuments figurés*, Paris: P. Geuthner;

**DUSSAUD, R.**

1955 *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam*, Presses de l'Ifpo: Beyrouth;

**DVORJETSKI, E.**

2013 «The Historical Geography of Sussita-Antiochia Hippos-Qal'at el-Husn», in HIPPOS 2013, 40-63;

**ECK, W.**

1999 «The bar Kokhba Revolt: the Roman Point of View», *JRS* 89, 76-89;

2003 «Hadrian, the Bar Kokhba Revolt, and the Epigraphic Transmission», in SCHÄFER (ed.) 2003, 153-170;

**EDWARDS, D.**

1992 «The Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos of the Lower Galilee in the First Century: Implications for the Nascent Jesus Movement», in L. I. LEVINE (ed.) 1992, 53-73;

2004 *Religion and Society in Roman Palestine: Old Questions, New Approaches*, Routledge: New York and London;

**EAEHL**

M. Avi-Yonah (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*;

**EISENBERG, M.**

2013 «Military Architecture», in HIPPOS 2013, 86-127;

**EISSFELDT, O.**

1941 «Zu syrischen Tempeln und Kulturen in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit», *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 44, 433-441;

**ELIAV, Y. Z. , FRIEDLAND, E. A. and HERBERT S. (eds.)**

2008 *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East. Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, Leuven-Dudley (MA): Peeters;

**EMBERLING, G.**

1997 «Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives», *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5, 295-344;

**EPH'AL, I.**

1982 *The ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent. 9<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC*, Magnes Press: Jerusalem;

**EPSTEIN, C. and GUTMAN, S.**

1972 «The Golan», in M. KOCHAVI (ed.), *Judaea. Samaria and the Golan: An Archaeological Survey in 1967-1968*, The Archaeological Survey of Israel: Jerusalem, 298-344 (Hebrew);

**ERLICH, A.**

2009 «Terracotta Figurines and Masks», in HIPPOS 2009, 53-62;

**ERSKINE, A.**

2002 «O Brother Where Art Thou? Tales of Kinship and Diplomacy», in OGDEN (ed.) 2002, 97-115;

2003 *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, Blackwell Publishing: Malden (MA), Oxford and Victoria;

**ERTEL, C.**

2000 «Qanawat. Neue Forschungen zum Peripteraltempel», *DM* 12, 187-222;

**FAHD (ed.)**

1989 *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, Travaux du Centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 10, Leiden: Brill;

**FELDMAN, L. H.**

2014 *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey;

**FENTRESS, E. (ed.)**

2000 *Romanization and the City. Creation, Transformations, and Failures. Proceedings of a conference held at the American Academy in Rome to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the excavations at Cosa, 14-16 May, 1998*, Portsmouth, Rhode Island: *JRA Supp. Series* 38;

**FISCHER, C. S. and KRAELING, C. H.**

1938 «The Temple C», in KRAELING 1938, 139-148;

**FISCHER-GENZ, B., GERBER, Y. and HAMEL, H. (eds.)**

2014 *Roman Pottery in the Near East. Local Production and Regional Trade. Proceedings of the Round Table Held in Berlin, 19–20 February 2010*, Oxford: Archaeopress;

**FIEMA, Z. T.**

1987 «The Roman Annexation of Arabia: A General Perspective», *AncW* 15, 25-35;

2003 «Roman Petra (A.D. 106-363: A Neglected Subject)», *ZDPV* 119, 38-58;

**FIENSY, D. A. and STRANGE, J. R. (eds.)**

2014 *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods. Volume 1: Life, Culture, and Society*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press;

2015 *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods. Volume 2: The Archaeological Record from Cities, Towns, and Villages*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press;

**FIENSY, D. A. and HAWKINS, R. K. (eds.)**

2013 *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus*, Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta;

**FISHER, C.**

1923 «Beth-Shan Excavations of the University Museum Expedition 1921-1923, *Museum Journal* 14, 227-248;

**FISHER, G. (ed.)**

2015 *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**FOERSTER, G. and TSAFRIR, Y.**

1986-1987 «Nysa-Scythopolis – A New Inscription and the Titles of the City on its Coins», *INJ* 9, 53-58;

1992 «Nysa-Scythopolis in the Roman Period. A Greek City of Coele Syria. Evidence from Excavations at Bet Shean», *ARAM* 4: 117-139;

2002 «Skythopolis – Vorposten der Dekapolis», in HOFFMANN and KERNER 2002, 72-87;

**FONTANA, M. V.**

1986 «Archaeological Research in the Sanctuary of Artemis», in ZAYADINE (ed.) 1986, 180-183;

**FOURNET, T. and WEBER, T. M.**

2010 «*Adraha* (Deraa) romaine et byzantine: développement urbain et monuments», in HAURAN V, 171-197;

**FRANK, A. G. and GILLS, B. K. (eds.)**

1993, *The World System: from five hundred years to five thousand*, London: Routledge;

**FRANKEL, R.**

1993 «Mizpe HaYamim», *NEAEHL* 3, 1061-1063;

**FRANKEL, R. et alii (eds.)**

2001 *Settlement Dynamics and Regional Diversity in Ancient Upper Galilee*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquity Authority;

**FREEMAN, P.W. M.**

1997 «Mommsen through to Haverfield: the origins of Romanization studies in late 19th-c. Britain», in MATTINGLY (ed.) 1997, 27-50;

**FREYBERGER, K. S.**

1993 «Der „Peripteraltempel“ in Qanawät. Ein Arbeitsbericht», *DM* 7, 63-79, taf. 20-28;

1998 *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenisierten Osten*, Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern;

2000 «The Roman Kanatha: Results of the Campaigns in 1997/1998», *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, LII, 143-156;

2004 «Das Theater in Kanatha: Funktion und Bedeutung», in J. M. BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ and A. GONZÁLEZ BLANCO (eds.), *Sacralidad y Arqueología: homenaje al Prof. Thilo Ulbert al cumplir 65 años*, Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 13-32;

2010 «Bedeutung und Funktion der Heiligtümer im städtischen Kontext des antiken Kanatha», in HAURAN V, 239-254;

2013 «Local temples in Kanatha: Religious life in the Hellenistic and Roman Period», in V. DOBROWSKI (ed.), *Et in Arcadia ego: studia memoriae professoris Thomae Mikocki dicata*, Institute of Archaeology, Warszawa: University of Warsaw;

2015 «Continuity and Change of Religious Life in Southern Syria during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods», in BLÖMER, LICHTENBERGER and RAJA (eds.) 2015, 283-296;

**FREYBERGER, K. S., HENNING, A. and VON HESBERG, H.**

2003 *Kulturkonflikte im Orient an der Wende vom Hellenismus zur römischen Kaiserzeit*, Rahden/Westf.: Verlag Marie Lendorf;

**FREYBERGER, K. S. et alii**

2016 *Kanatha von hellenistischer bis spätantiker Zeit: Band I: Die Heiligtümer. Orte der Herrschaft und urbane Kommunikationszentren*, Darmstadt: P. von Zabern;

**FREYNE, S.**

1980a *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: a study of Second Temple Judaism*, Wilmington, Delaware and Notre Dame, Indiana: Michael Glazier and University of Notre Dame Press;

1980b «The Galileans in the Light of Josephus' *Vita*», *NTS* 26, 397-413;

1988 *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press;

1999 «Behind the names. Galileans, Samaritans, Ioudaioi», in MEYERS (ed.) 1999, 39-55;

2000 *Galilee and Gospel*, Boston and Leiden: Brill;

2001 «Galileans, Phoenicians, and Itureans. A Study of Regional Contrasts in the Hellenistic Age», in COLLINS and STERLING 2001, 182-215.

**FRÉZOULS, E.**

1959 «Recherches sur les theatres de l'Orient syrien I», *Syria* 36, 202-228;

1961 «Recherches sur les theatres de l'Orient syrien II», *Syria* 38, 54-86;

1982 «Aspects de l'histoire architecturale du theatre romain», *ANRW* II.12.1, 343-441;

**FULLER, M. J.**

1987 *Abila of the Decapolis: A Roman-Byzantine city in Transjordan*, Ann Arbor: UMI;

**FUNARI, P. P. A., HALL, M. and JONES, S. (eds.)**

1999 *Historical Archaeology. Back from the edge*, London and New York: Routledge;

**GRABBE, L. L. and LIPSHITS, O. (eds.)**

2011 *Judah between East and West. The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, London and New York: T&T Clark;

**GAL, Z.**

1992 *The Lower Galilee during the Iron Age*. Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, Indiana;

2002 *Eretz Zafon. Studies in Galilean Archaeology*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquity Authority;

**GARDNER, A.**

2013 «Thinking about Roman Imperialism: Postcolonialism, Globalisation and Beyond?», *Britannia* 44, 1-25;

**GARDNER, A., HARRING, E. and LOMAS, K. (eds.)**

2013 *Creating Ethnicities and Identities in the Roman World*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London;

**GATIER, P.L.**

1988 «Philadelphie et Gerasa du royaume nabatéen à la province d'Arabie», in GATIER, HELLY and REY-COQUAIS (eds.) 1988, 159-170;

**GATIER, P.L., HELLY, B. and REY-COQUAIS, J.-P. (eds.)**

1988 *Géographie historique au Proche-Orient*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique;

**GATIER, P.-L. et alii (eds.)**

2005 «Mission de Yanouh et de la haute vallée du Nahr Ibrahim. Rapport préliminaire 2003-2004», *BAAL* 9, 161-188;

**GAWLIKOWSKY, M.**

1986 «A Residential Area by the South Decumanus», in ZAYADINE 1986, 107-136;

**GIARDINA, A. and PESANDO, F. (eds.)**

2012 *Roma Caput Mundi*, Milano: Electa;

**GIBBON, G. E.**

1984 *Anthropological Archaeology*, New York: Columbia University Press;

**GIOVANNINI, A.**

1993 «Greek cities and Greek commonwealth», IN BULLOCH *et alii* (eds.) 1993, 265-286;

**GLUECK, N.**

1937-1939 «Explorations in Eastern Palestine, III», *BASOR* 18-19;

1939 «The earliest History of Jerash», *BASOR* 75, 22-30;

1951 «Explorations in Eastern Palestine, IV», *BASOR* 25-28 (1945-49);

1965 *Deities and Dolphins. The Story of the Nabataeans*, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux;

**GOODMAN, M.**

1983 *State and Society in Roman Galilee A.D. 132-212*. Rowman & Allanheld: Totowa, New Jersey;

**GOSDEN, C.**

2004 *Archaeology and Colonialism. Cultural Contact from 5000 BC to the Present*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**GRAF, D.**

1989 «Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace», in FAHD (ed.) 1989, 381-400;

1990 «The Origin of the Nabataeans», *ARAM* 1, 45-75;

1992 «Hellenisation and the Decapolis», *ARAM* 4, 1-48;

2003 «Arabs in Syria: Demography and Epigraphy», *Topoi Supp.* 4, 319-340;

2006 «The Nabataeans in the Early Hellenistic Period: The Testimony of Posidippus of Pella», *Topoi* 14, 47-68;

2016 «*Koīlē Syria* and the Decapolis», *ARAM* 28 (1), 1-9;

**GRECO, E. and TORELLI, M.**

1983 *Storia dell'urbanistica. Il mondo greco*. Laterza: Bari;

**GREENE, J. A. and AMR, K.**

1992 «Deep Sounding on the Lower Terrace of the Amman Citadel», *ADAJ* 36, 113-144;

**GREENE, K.**

2008, «Learning to consume: consumption and consumerism in the Roman empire», *JRA* 21, 64-82;

**GRUEN, E. S.**

1996 «The Purported Jewish-Spartan Affiliation», in R. W. WALLACE and E. M. HARRIS (eds.), *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Graeco-Roman History, 360-146 B.C., in Honor of E. Badian*, Norman (OK): University of Oklahoma Press;

2011 *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press;

2013 «Did the Romans have an Ethnic Identity?», *Antichthon* 47, 1-17;

**GUÉRIN, V.**

1868-1880 *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine*, Ernest Leroux: Paris;

**GULLINI, G. (ed.)**

1983-1984 «Gerasa I. Report on the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Jerash. Campaigns 1977-1981», *Mesopotamia* 18-19;



**GÜNTHER, L.-M.**

1989 «Gladiatoren beim Fest Antiochos' IV. Zu Daphne (166 v. Chr.)?», *Hermes* 117, 250-252;

**GUTMAN, S.**

1973 «Renewed discussion of identification of Gamala's location», in S. DAR (ed.), *The Roman Period in Eretz-Israel*, Tel Aviv, 199-266 (Hebrew);

**HABICHT, C.**

1960 Review of «A. Rehm and T. Wiegand, *Didyma II. Die Inschriften*», *GGA* 213, 145-166;

**HACKL, U., JENNI, H. and SCHNEIDER, C. (eds.)**

2003 *Quellen zur Geschichte der Nabatäer. Textsammlung mit Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht;

**HALES, S. and HODOS, T. (eds.)**

2010 *Material Culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**HALL, J. M.**

1997 *Ethnic identity in Greek Antiquity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

2002 *Hellenicity. Between Ethnicity and Culture*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press;

**HAMMOND, P. C.**

1965 *The Excavations of the Main Theater at Petra, 1961-1962: Final Report*, London: Quaritch;

1973 *The Nabataeans: their History, Culture and Archaeology*, Gothenburg: P. Åströms Förlag;

**HANNESTAD, L.**

2011 *The Economy of Koile Syria after the Seleukid Conquest: an Archaeological Contribution*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press;

2012 «The Seleucid Kingdom», in D. T. POTTS (ed.) 2012;

**HANSON, R.**

1980 *Tyrian Influence in the Upper Galilee: Meiron Wxcavation Project 2*. Cambridge (MA): ASOR;

**HARDING, G. H.**

1959 *The Antiquities of Jordan*, London: Lutterworth Press;

**HARTAL, M.**

1987 «Khirbet Zemel 1985, 1986», *IEJ* 37.4, 270-272;

2008 «The Use of Pottery as a Tool for the Definition of Provincial Borders», in S. BAR (ed.), *In the Hill-Country, and in the Shephelah, and in the Arabah*, Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House;

**HARTMAN, D.**

2016 *Archivio di Babatha, 1*, Brescia: Paideia Editrice;

**HAVERFIELD, F.**

1923 *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, 4th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press;

**HEINZELMANN, M.**

2004 «The southwest residential quarter of Hippos», *HIPPOS* 2004, 135-139;

**HENNESSY, J. B.**

1966 «Excavation of a Bronze Age Temple at Amman», *PEQ* 98, 155-162;

**HENNESSY, J. B., BOURKE, S. and DESCOEUDRES, J.-P. (eds.)**

1995 *Trade, contact, and the movement of peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean: Studies in honour of J. Basil Hennessy*, Sydney: Southwood Press,

**HERBERT, S. (ed.)**

1994 *Tel Anafa I. Final Report on Ten Years of Excavation at a Hellenistic and Roman Settlement in Northern Israel*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: JRA Supp. Series 10.1;

**HERBERT, S. and BERLIN, A.**

2003 «A New Administrative Center for Persian and Hellenistic Galilee: Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan/University of Minnesota Excavations at Kedesh», *BASOR* 329, 13-59;

**HERFORT-KOCH, M., MANDEL, U. and SCHÄDLER, U. (eds.)**

1996 *Hellenistische und kaiserzeitliche Keramik des östlichen Mittelmeergebietes. Kolloquium Frankfurt 24.-25. April 1995*, Frankfurt a. M.: Arbeitskreis Frankfurt und die Antike;

**HINGLEY, R.**

2000 *Roman Officers and British Gentlemen*, London and New York: Routledge;

2005 *Globalizing Roman Culture*, London and New York: Routledge;

2010 «Cultural diversity and unity: empire and Rome», in HALES and HODOS (eds.) 2010, 54-75

**HODDER, I.**

1982 *Symbols in action. Ethnoarchaeological studies of material culture. New Studies in Archaeology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

**HODOS, T.**

2010 «Local and Global Perspectives in the Study of Social and Cultural Identities», in HALES and HODOS (eds.), 3-31;

**HOFF, M. C. and ROTROFF, S. I. (eds.)**

1997 *The Romanization of Athens*, Oxford: Oxbow;

**HOFFMANN, A.**

1999 «Ein hellenistisches Heiligtum in Gadara», *Topoi* 9/2, 795-831;

2000 «Die Stadtmauern der hellenistisch-römischen Dekapolisstadt Gadara. Zusammenfassender Bericht über die seit 1991 durchgeführten Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen», *AA*, 175-233;

2001 «Hellenistic Gadara», *SHAJ* 7, 391-397;

2002 «Topographie und Stadtgeschichte von Gadara/Umm Qais», in HOFFMANN A. AND KERNER S. 2002, 98-124;

**HOFFMANN, A. and KERNER, S. (eds.)**

2002 *Gadara – Gerasa und die Dekapolis*, Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern;

**HOOVER, O. D.**

2006 «A Reassessment of Nabataean Lead Coinage in Light of New Discoveries», *NC* 166, 105-119;

**HOPKINS, A. G.**

2006a *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan;

2006b «Introduction: Interactions Between the Universal and the Local», in HOPKINS (ed.) 2006a, 1-38;

**HOPKINS, C. (ed.)**

1972, *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan;

**HORDEN, P. and PURCELL, N.**

2000 *The Corrupting Sea. A study of Mediterranean History*, London: Blackwell;

**HORN, S. H.**

1967 «The Amman Citadel Inscription», *BASOR* 193, 2-13;

**HORSLEY, R. A.**

1995 *Galilee. History, Politics, People*, Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press;

1996 *Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee*, Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press;

**HÜBNER, U.**

1992 «'Ammān before the Hellenistic Period», in *NORTHEGE* 1992, 23-26;

**HUMBERT, J. B. and ZAYADINE, F.**

1992 «Trois campagnes de fouilles à Ammān, 1988 - 1991. Troisième terrasse de la citadelle. Mission franco-jordanienne», *Revue Biblique* 99, 214-260;

**HUMPHREY, J. H. (ed.)**

1999 *The Roman and Byzantine Near East. Volume 2*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: JRA Supp. Series 31;

**HURST, H. and OWEN, S. (eds.)**

2005 *Ancient Civilizations. Analogy, Similarity & Differences*, London: Duckworth;

**ILAN, Z.**

1988-89 «Horvat Arbel», *ESI* 7-8, 8-9;

**INVERNIZZI, A. and SALLES, J.-F. (eds.)**

1993 *Arabia Antiqua. Hellenistic Centres around Arabia*, Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente;

**INSOLL, T. (ed.)**

2007 *The Archaeology of Identities. A Reader*, London and New York: Routledge;

**IRBY, C. L. and MANGLES, J.**

1823 *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria, and the Holy Land*, London: Murray;

**ISAAC, B.**

1981 «The Decapolis in Syria, a neglected Inscription», *ZPE* 44, 67-74;

2004 *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press;

2006 «Proto-Racism in Graeco-Roman antiquity», *World Archaeology* 38, 32-47;

**JACOBSON, D. M. and KOKKINOS, N. (eds.)**

2009 *Herod and Augustus. Papers Presented at the IJS Conference, 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

2012 *Judaea and Rome in Coins. 65 BCE- 135 CE. Papers Presented at the International Conference Hosted by Spink, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September 2010*, London: Spink;

**JENNINGS, J.**

2011, *Globalizations and the Ancient World*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**JENSEN, M.**

2006 *Herod Antipas in Galilee. The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**JONES, A. H. M.**

1937 *The cities of Roman Eastern Provinces*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;

**JONES, S.**

1997 *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing identities in the past and present*, London and New York: Routledge;

1999 «Historical categories and the praxis of identity: the interpretation of ethnicity in historical archaeology», in FUNARI, HALL and JONES (eds.) 1999, 219-232

2007 «Discourses of identity in the interpretation of the past», in INSOLL (ed.) 2002, 44-58;

**KAIZER, T.**

2008 *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

**KALOS, M.**

1999 «Un sanctuaire d'époque hellénistique en Syrie du Sud: Khirbet Massakeb», *Topoi* 9/2, 777-794;

2003 «Le sanctuaire de Sahr al-Ledja. Nouvelles données archéologiques», in FREYBERGER, HENNING and VON HESBERG (eds.) 2003, 157-168;

**KANELLOPOULOS, C.**

1994 *The Great Temple of Amman*, Amman: American Center of Oriental Research;

**KARASNEH, W., AL-ROUSAN, K. and TELFAH, J.**

2002 «New discovery in Jordan at Beit Ras (ancient Capitolias)», *Occident & Orient* 7.1, 9-11;

**KASHER, A.**

1988 *Jews, Idumaeans, and Ancient Arabs*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

1990 *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**KEHRBERG, I.**

1989 «Selected Lamps and Pottery from the Hippodrome at Jerash», in ZAYADINE (ed.) 1989, 85-97;

2004 «Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Pottery from Gerasa», *SHAJ* 8, 189-196;

2011 «Roman Gerasa seen from below. An Alternative Study of Urban Landscape», *ASCS* 32, 1-18;

**KEHRBERG, I. and MANLEY, J.**

2001 «New Archaeological Finds for the Dating of the first Gerasa City Wall», *ADAJ* 45, 437-446;

2002 «The Earliest Hellenistic Tomb Find in Jerash or Antioch on the Chrysorhoas. The Jerash City Walls Project: Excavations 2001», *Occident and Orient* 7/1, 7-8;

2003 «The Jerash City Walls Project 2002 – Excavation and Planning Aspects of the Roman Masterplan. A Report», *ADAJ* 47, 83-86;

**KENNEDY, D.**

1998 «The identity of Roman Gerasa: an archaeological approach», in CLARKE, G. (ed.) *Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity*, Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology, 11, 39-69;

2000 «The frontier of settlement in Roman Arabia. From Gerasa to Umm el-Jimal... and beyond», *Mediterraneo Antico* 3, 397-453;

2007 *Gerasa and the Decapolis: A "virtual island" in Northwest Jordan*, London: Duckworth;

**KENNEL, N.**

2006 *Ephebeia: a Register of Greek Cities with Citizen Training Systems in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Hildesheim: Weidmann.

**KERNER, S.**

2004 «The Water Systems in Gadara and other Decapolis Cities of Northern Jordan», in BIENERT and HÄSER (eds) 2004, 187-202;

**KETTENHOFEN, E.**

1991 «Zur Geschichte der Stadt Der'ā in Syrien», *ZDPV* 107, 77-91;

**KILLEBREW, A. and FASSBECK, G. (eds.)**

2016 *Viewing Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology. VeHinnei Rachel – Essays in Honor of Rachel Hachlili*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

**KINDLER, A. and STEIN, A.**

1987 *A Bibliography of the City Coinage Of Palestine: from the 2nd century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D.*, Oxford: BAR International Series 374;

**KLEIN, S.**

1928 *Galilaea vor der Makkabäerzeit*, Palästina-Studien 4, Berlin: Menorah;

1977 *Sepher haYshuv*, Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben Tsevi (Hebrew);

**KNAPP, A. B.**

2008 *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**KNAUF, E. A.**

1983 «Supplementa Ismaelitica 6. Tall hira – eine Ituräer Burg», *BN* 21, 41-47;

1985 *Ismael. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag;

1998 «The Ituraeans: Another Bedouin State», in A. NEUWIRTH, H. SADER, T. SCHEFFLER (eds.), *Baalbeck, Image and Monument, 1898-1999*, Beyrouth-Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 269-71;

**KOCH, D. A.**

1983 «Inhaltliche Gliederung und geographischer Aufriss im Markusevangelium», *NTS* 29, 145-166;

**KOKKINOS, N.**

1998 *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press;

**KONRADT, M. and STEINERT, U. (eds.)**

2002 *Ethos und Identität. Einheit und Vielfalt des Judentums in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, Paderborn-München-Wien-Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh;

**KOSSINNA, G.**

1911 *Die Herkunft der Germanen. Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie*, Würzburg: Curt Kabitzsch;

**KRAELING, C. H. (ed.)**

1938 *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research;

**KRAEMER, R.**

2006 «Implicating Herodias and Her Daughter in the Death of John the Baptizer: A (Christian) Theological Strategy?», *JBL* 125, 321-349;

**KROPP, A. J. M.**

2010 «Limits of Hellenisation: Pre-Roman basalt temples in the Hauran», *Bollettino di Archeologia Online* 1, 1-18;

2011 «Nabataean Dushārā (Dusares) – An overlooked cuirassed God», *PEQ* 143, 176-197;

2013 *Images and Monuments of Near Eastern Dynasts, 100 BC-AD 100*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**KUHRT, A. and SHERWIN-WHITE, S. M. (eds.)**

1987 *Hellenism in the East. Interaction between Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*, Berkeley: University of California Press;

**KUSCHKE, A., MITTMANN, S. and MÜLLER U.**

1976 *Archäologischer Survey in der nördlichen Biqā', Herbst 1972*, (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, B, 11), Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert;

**DE LABORDE, L.**

1837 *Voyage de la Syrie*, Paris: Firmin Didot;

**LAFON, X. and SAURON, G. (eds.)**

2005 *Théorie et pratique de l'architecture romaine. La norme et l'expérimentation. Études offertes à Pierre GROS*, Publications de l'Université de Provence;

**LAPP, P. W.**

1961 *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology. 200 B.C. - A.D. 70*, New Haven: ASOR;

LARCHÉ, F. and ZAYADINE, F.

2003 «The Qasr al-Bint of Petra», in MARKOE (ed.) 2003, 199-213;

**LARONDE, A. and LECLANT, J. (eds.)**

2007 *La Méditerranée d'une rive à l'autre: Culture classique et culture périphériques. Actes du 17ème colloque de la Villa Kérylos à Beaulieu-sur-Mer les 20 & 21 octobre 2006*, Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres;

**LAXANDER, H.**

2003 «Ein Fundkomplex früherer Votivplastik aus Qanawat», in FREYBERGER, HENNING and VON HESBERG (eds.) 2003, 143-156;

**LEIBNER, U.**

2009 *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee: An Archaeological Survey of the Eastern Galilee*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**LEMAIRE, A.**

1999 «Der Beitrag idumäischer Ostraka zur Geschichte Palästinas im Übergang von der persischen zur hellenistischen Zeit», *ZDPV* 115, 12-23;

**LENZEN C. J.**

1992 «Irbid and Beit Ras. Interconnected Settlements c. A.D. 100-900», *SHAJ* 4;

1995 «Continuity or discontinuity. Urban change or demise?», in J. B. HENNESSY, S. BOURKE, J.-P. DESCOEUDRES (eds.) 1995, 325-331;

2002 «Kapitolias – Die vergessene Stadt im Norden», in HOFFMANN and KERNER 2002, 36-45;

**LENZEN, C. J. and KNAUF, E. A.**

1987 «Beit Ras – Capitolias. A preliminary evaluation of the archaeological and textual evidence», *Syria* 64, 21-46;

**LENZEN, C. J. and MCQUITTY, A. M.**

1983 «A Preliminary Survey of the Irbid-Beit Ras Region, North West Jordan», *ADAJ* 27, 656;

1988 «The 1984 Survey of the Irbid/Beit Ras Region», *ADAJ* 32, 265-274;

**LEPAON, T.**

2008 «Les édifices balnéaires de Gerasa de la Décapole : premières observations», *Syria* 85, 51-70;

**LERICHE, P.**

2000 «Le phénomène urbain dans la Syrie hellénistique», *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 52, 99-125;

**LE ROUX, P.**

2011 «Identités civiques, identités provinciales dans l'Empire romain», in CABALLOS RUFINO and LEFEBVRE (eds.) 2011, 7-19;

**LEVINE, L. I. (ed.)**

1992 *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge (MA) and London: Harvard University Press;

**LEVINE, L. I. and SCHWARTZ, D. R. (eds.)**

2009 *Jewish Identities in Antiquity. Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**LEWIN, A. S.**

2011 «The friendly kings. Politics, culture and religion in the East», in MOOSBAUER and WIEGELS (eds.) 2011, 309-322;

2014 «Rome's Relations with the Arab/indigenous people in the first-third centuries», in DIJKSTRA and FISHER (eds.) 2014, 113-143;

**LICHTENBERGER, A.**

2003 *Kulte und Kultur in der Dekapolis: Untersuchungen zu numismatischen, archäologischen und epigraphischen Zeugnisse*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz;

2004a «City foundation Legend in the Decapolis», *BAIAS* 22, 23-34;

2004b «Some Remarks on the Civic Coinage of Antioch at Hippos», in *HIPPOS* 2004, 106-121;

2008 «Artemis and Zeus Olympios in Roman Gerasa and Seleucid religious policy», in KAIZER 2008, 133-153;

2011 «The Decapolis and Phoenicia», *ARAM* 23, 559-583;

**LICHTENBERGER, A. and RAJA, R.**

2015 «New Archaeological Research in the Northwest Quarter of Jerash and Its Implications for the Urban Development of Roman Gerasa», *AJA* 119, 483-500;

2016 «The Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project at Jarash: Results from the 2011-2013 seasons», *SHAJ* 12, 173-188;

**LIFSHITZ, B.**

1961 «Der Kult des Zeus Akraios und des Zeus Bakchos in Beisan (Skythopolis)», *ZDPV* 77, 186-190;

**LITTMANN, E.**

1904 *Semitic Inscriptions*, New York: The Century Co;

**LITTMANN, E., MAGIE, D. and STUART, D. R.**

1914 *Greek and Latin Inscriptions: section A. Southern Syria, 6 Si (Seeia)*, Leiden: Brill;

**LULIĆ, J.**

2015 «Theorizing Romanization. Cognition and Cultural Change in Roman Provinces: A Case of Religious Change in Roman Dalmatia», in ROSELAAR (ed.) 2015a, 20-38;

**MA, J.**

2008 «Paradigms and Paradoxes in the Hellenistic World», in VIRGILIO (ed.) 2008, 371-385;

**MACADAM, H. I.**

1986 *Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Arabia Northern Sector*, Oxford: BAR;

1992 «The History of Philadelphia in the Classical Period», in NORTHEDGE 1992, 27-46;

**MACDONALD, B.**

1993 «Nomads in the Hawran in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence», *Syria* 70, 303-403;

- 2000 «Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia», *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11, 28-79;
- 2003a «“Les Arabes en Syrie” or “La pénétration des arabes en Syrie”. A question of perceptions?», *Topoi Supp.* 4, 303-318;
- 2003b «Languages, Scripts, and the Uses of Writing among the Nabataeans», in MARKOE (ed.) 2003, 37-56;
- 2009a «Arabs, Arabias and Arabic before Late Antiquity», *Topoi* 16/1, 277-332;
- 2009b *Literacy and Identity in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, Surrey: Ashgate;
- 2014 «‘Romans go home’? Rome and other ‘outsiders’ as viewed from the Syro-Arabian Desert», in DIJKSTRA and FISHER (eds.) 2014, 145-163
- MACDONALD, B., ADAM, R. and BIENKOWSKI, P. (eds.)**
- 2001 *The Archaeology of Jordan*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press;
- MACDONALD, B. and YOUNKER, R. W.**
- 1999 *Ancient Ammon*, Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill;
- MACSWEENEY, N.**
- 2009 «Beyond Ethnicity: The Overlooked Diversity of Group Identities», *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 22, 101-126;
- MAGNELLI, E.**
- 2004 «Posidippo (10 A.-B.) e gli Arabi Nabatei», *Aegyptus* 84, 151-155;
- 2008 «Minutaglie posidippee», *ZPE* 165, 49-54;
- MAGNESS, J.**
- 2011 *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit*, Gran Rapids (Michigan) and Cambridge (U.K.): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company;
- MANN, C.**
- 2010 «Gladiators in the Greek East: A Case Study in Romanization», in PAPAKONSTANTINO (ed.) 2010, 124-149;
- MA’OZ, Z. U.**
- 1997 «Review of Shimon Dar, *Settlements and Cult Sites on Mount Hermon, Israel: Ituraean Culture in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*», *IEJ* 47, n°3/4;
- 2011 *Itur in Galilee*, Qazrin: Archaostyle;
- MARKOE, G. (ed.)**
- 2003 *Petra rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, New York: Harry N. Abrahms Ind. Publishers;
- MARE, W. H.**
- 1984 «The 1982 Season at Abila of the Decapolis», *ADAJ* 28, 39-54;
- 1997 «The Artemis Statue Excavated at Abila of the Decapolis in 1994», *ADAJ* 41, 277-281;
- 2002 «Abila und Wadi Quweilbeh – Basiliken und Gräber», in HOFFMANN and KERNER 2002, 303-310;
- MARTÍN-BUENO, M.**
- 1989 «Notes préliminaires sur le Macellum de Gerasa», *Syria* 66, 177-199;
- 1992 «The Macellum in the Economy of Gerasa», *SHAJ* 4, 315-319;
- MARQUIS, T. L.**
- 2006 «Re-Presenting Galilean Identity: Josephus’s Use of 1 Maccabees 10: 25-45 and the Term *loudaios*», in ZANGENBERG, ATTRIDGE and MARTIN (eds.) 2007, 55-67;
- MASCLE, J.**
- 1944 *Le Djebel Druze*, Beyrouth: Les lettres françaises;



**MASON, S.**

2001 *Flavius Josephus: translation and Commentary*. Vol. 9, *Life of Josephus*, Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill;

**MATEOS, P.**

2014 *Names, Ethnicity and Populations. Tracing Identity in Space*, London: Springer;

**MATSUMOTO, K. and TELFAH, J.**

2009 «Umm Qays: preliminary Report on the 2008 Season», ADAJ 53, 2009, 415-421;

**MATTINGLY, D. J.**

1997a (ed.) *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism. Power, discourse, and discrepant experience in the Roman Empire*, Portsmouth, Rhode Island: *JRA Supp. Series 23*;

1997b «Dialogues of power and experience in the Roman Empire», in MATTINGLY (ed.)

1997a, 7-24;

2011 *Imperialism, Power and Identity. Experiencing the Roman Empire*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press;

**MAZOR, G.**

2016 «Imperial Cult in the Decapolis. Nysa-Scythopolis as a Test Case», in KILLEBREW and FASSBECK (eds.) 2016, 355-383;

**MAZOR, G. and ATRASH, W.**

2014 «The Roman Theatre at Nysa-Scythopolis (Bet She'an)», in WAGEMAKERS 2014 (ed.), 226-233;

2015 *Bet She'an III. Nysa-Scythopolis: the southern and Severan theaters*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority;

**MAZOR, G. and NAJJAR, A.**

2007 *Nysa-Scythopolis: The Caesareum and the Odeum*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquity Authority;

**MCCOWN, C. C.**

1932 «Two Greek Inscriptions from Beit Ras», *BASOR* 46, 13-15;

1936 «A Rock Cutting from Beit Ras in Transjordan», *BASOR* 64, 21-23;

**MCKENZIE, J.**

1990 *The architecture of Petra*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**McNICOLL, A. W.**

1997 *Hellenistic Fortifications from the Aegean to the Euphrates*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;

**McNICOLL, A. W., SMITH R. H. and HENNESSY B. (eds.)**

1982 *Pella in Jordan 1. An interim report on the Joint University of Sydney and the College of Wooster excavations at Pella 1979-1981*, Canberra: Australian Nat. Gallery;

**McNICOLL+, A. W. et alii (eds.)**

1992 *Pella in Jordan 2: the second interim report of the joint University of Sydney and College of Wooster excavations at Pella 1982-1985*, Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology;

**MERRILL, S.**

1881 *East of the Jordan: A record of Travel and Observation in the Countries of Moab, Gilead, and Bashan*, London: Bentley & Son;

**MERSHEN, B. and KNAUF, E.A.**

1988 «From Gadar to Umm Qais», *ZDPV* 104, 128-145;

**MESHORER, Y.**

1975 *Qedem 3: Nabataean Coins*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem;

1985 *City Coins of Eretz-Israel and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*, Jerusalem: The Israel Museum;

**MESISTRANO, V.**

2009 «The Forum Area», *HIPPOS* 2009, 10-16;

2013 «Forum», *HIPPOS* 2013, 148-63;

**MESSINA, V.**

2010 *Seleucia al Tigri. Il monumento di Tell 'Umar. Lo scavo e le fasi architettoniche*, Firenze: Le Lettere;

**MEYERS, E.**

1985 «Galilean Regionalism: a Reappraisal», in W. GREEN (ed.), *Approaches in Ancient Judaism V*, Atlanta: Scholar Press, 115-131;

1999 *Galilee through the centuries: confluence of cultures*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns;

**MEYERS, E. et alii**

1978 «The Meiron Excavation project: Archaeological Survey in Galilee and Golan, 1976», *BASOR* 230, 1-24;

1981 *Excavation at Ancient Meiron, Upper Galilee, Israel 1971-72, 1974-75, 1977*, Cambridge (MA): ASOR;

**MILDENBERG, L.**

2000 «Über die Münzbildniss in Palästina und Nordwestarabien zur Perserzeit», in C. UEHLINGER (ed.) 2000, 375-392;

**MILIK, J.**

1958 «Nouvelles inscriptions nabatéennes», *Syria* 35, 227-251;

2003 «Une bilingue araméo-grecque de 105/104 avant J.-C.», in HAURAN II, 269-275;

**MILLAR, F.**

1987a «The Problem of Hellenistic Syria», in A. KUHRT and S. M. SHERWIN-WHITE (eds.), 110-133;

1987b «Empire, Community and Culture in the Roman Near East: Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabs», *JJS* 38, 143-164;

1993 *The Roman Near East. 31 BC – AD 337*, Cambridge (MA) and London: Harvard University Press;

2014 «Jerusalem and the Near Eastern Diaspora in the Early Imperial Period», *SCI* 33, 139-154;

**MILLETT, M.**

1990 «Romanization: Historical Issues and Archaeological Interpretations», in T. BLAGG and M. MILLETT (eds.) 1990, 35-41;

**MILLETT, M., ROYMANS, N. and SLOFSTRA, J.**

1995 «Integration, Culture and Ideology in the Early Roman West», in J. METZLER *et alii* (eds.), *Integration in the Early Roman West*, Luxembourg: Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1-5;

**MITTMANN, S.**

1964 «Die römische Straße von Gerasa nach Adraa», *ZDPV* 80, 113-136;

1970 *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz;

**MEYNARCZYK, J.**

2009 «Pottery Report», in *HIPPOS* 2009, 104-156;

2011 «Hellenistic Pottery Deposits at Hippos of the Dekapolis. Contribution to the Study of Hellenic Ceramics Production and Distribution on the Sea of Galilee», in *Z' Epistimonikí sunántonisí gia tin Ellinistikí keramikí*, Aigío, 49 Aprilíou 2005, Athens, 577-590;

**MŁYNARCZYK, J. and BURDAJEWICZ M.**

2004 «The North-West Church (NWC)», in *HIPPOS* 2004, 52-81;

2005 «The North-West Church (NWC)», in *HIPPOS* 2005, 32-50;

**MOMIGLIANO, A.**

1975 *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

1994 *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press;

**MOMMSEN, T.**

1886 *The Provinces of the Roman Empire: From Caesar to Diocletian, Parts 1 and 2*, translated by W. P. Dickson, London: Macmillan and Co.;

**MOOSBAUER, G. and WIEGELS, R. (eds.)**

2011 *Fines imperii – imperium sine fine? Römische Okkupations- und Grenzpolitik im frühen Principat Beiträge zum Kongress, Fines imperii – imperium sine fine? in Osnabrück vom 14. bis 18. September 2009*, Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH;

**MORAN, W. L.**

1992, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press;

**MOR, M.**

2003 *The Geographical Scope of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt*, in SCHÄFER (ed.) 2003, 107-131;

**MORELAND, J.**

2001, *Archaeology and Text*, London: Duckworth;

**MORLEY, N.**

2010 *The Roman Empire. Roots of Imperialism*, London and New York: Pluto Press;

**MOUNIF, L.**

2003 «Note sur la Technologie des Sculptures en Basalte», in FREYBERGER, HENNING and VON HESBERG (eds.) 2003, 219-222;

**MRAS, K. (ed.)**

1982 *Die Praeparatio Evangelica. Teil 1: Einleitung. Die Bücher I bis X*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag;

**MUSTI, D.**

1963 «Sull'idea di suggeneia in iscrizioni greche», *ASNP* 32, 225-239;

**MYERS, E. A.**

2010 *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East*, New York: Cambridge University Press;

**NAEREBOUT, F. G.**

2006-2007 «Global Romans? Is Globalisation a Concept that is going to help us understand the Roman Empire?», *Talanta* XXXVIII-XXXIX, 149-170;

2014 «Convergence and Divergence: one Empire, many Cultures», in DE KLEIJN and BENOIST (eds.) 2014, 263-282;

**NAJJAR, M.**

2002 «Rabbath Ammon – Philadelphia – Amman», in HOFFMANN A. AND KERNER S. 2002, 88-97;

**NASRALLAH, J.**

1948 «Une station ghassoulienne du Hauran», *Revue Biblique* 55, 81-103;

1950 «Tumulus de l'âge du Bronze dans le Hauran», *Syria* 27, 314-331;

**NEDERVEEN PIETERSE, J.**

2015 *Ancient Rome and Globalisation: Decentring Rome*, in PITTS and VERSLUYS (eds.) 2015a, 225-239;

**NEGEV, A.**

1977 «The Nabataeans and the Provincia Arabia», *ANRW* II.8, 520-686;

- NEHMÉ, L.**  
2010 «Les inscriptions nabatéenne du Hawrān», in HAURAN V, 451-492;
- NETZER, E.**  
2003 *Nabatäische Architektur: Insbesondere Gräber und Tempel*, Mainz: P. von Zabern;
- NORTHEDGE, A. (ed.)**  
1992 *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Ammān*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;
- NUN, M.**  
1989 *The Sea of Galilee and its Fishermen in the New Testament*. Kibbutz Ein Gev, Israel: Kinnereth Sailing Co.;
- OGDEN, D. (ed.)**  
2002 *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives*, London: Duckworth Swansea;
- OELMANN, F.**  
1921 «Die persischen Tempel», *AA* 1921, 273-288;
- OLAVARRI-GOICOECHEA, S.**  
1986 *Excavaciones en el agora de Gerasa en 1983*, Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura;
- OREN, E. D.**  
1973 *The Northern Cemetery of Beth-Shean*, Leiden: Brill;
- ORRIEUX, C.**  
1983 *Les papyrus de Zenon: L'horizon d'un grec en Egypte au IIIe siècle avant J.C.*, Paris: Edition Macula;
- OSTRASZ, A. A.**  
1995 «The Hippodrome of Gerasa: A Case of the Dichotomy of Art and Building Technology», *SHAJ* 5, 183-192;
- PADGETT, J. M. (ed.)**  
2001 *Roman Sculpture in the Art Museum, Princeton University*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press;
- PALTIEL, E.**  
1991 *Vassals and Rebels in the Roman Empire*, Brussels: Latomus;
- PAPAKONSTANTINO, Z. (ed.)**  
2010 *Sport in the Cultures of the Ancient World*, London and New York: Routledge;
- PAPAIANNOU, M.**  
2016 «A Synoecism of Cultures in Roman Greece», in ALCOCK, ERGI and FRAKES (eds.) 2016, 31-45;
- PARAPETTI, R.**  
1984 «Architectural and Urban Space in Roman Gerasa», *Mesopotamia 18-19*, 37-84;  
1986 «The Italian Activity within the Jerash Project 1982-83», in ZAYADINE 1986, 167-203;  
2002 «Gerasa und das Artemis-Heiligtum», in HOFFMANN A. AND KERNER S. 2002, 23-35;
- PARR, P. J.**  
1965 «The Beginnings of Hellenization at Petra», *VIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Archéologie Classique*, Paris: Editions de Boccard, 527-533;
- PARKER, S. T.**  
1975 «The Decapolis Reviewed», *JBL* 94, 437-441;
- PATRICH, J.**  
1990 *The Formation of Nabataean Art: The prohibition of a Graven Image*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Pres;  
2002 «Herod's Theater in Jerusalem – A New Proposal», *IEJ* 52, 231-239;

- 2007 «Nabataean Art between East and West: A Methodical Assessment», in POLITIS (ed.) 2007, 79-101;
- 2009 «Herodian Entertainment Structures», in JACOBSON and KOKKINOS (eds.) 2009, 181-213;
- 2011 «Roman *Hippo-Stadia*: the ‘Hippodrome’ of Gerasa reconsidered in light of the Herodian *Hippo-Stadium* of Caesarea Maritima», *ARAM* 23, 211-251;
- PATTERSON, L. E.**  
2010 *Kinship Myth in Ancient Greece*, Austin: University of Texas Press;
- PEACOCK, M.**  
2013 «The ‘Romanization’ of Petra», in GARDNER, HERRING AND LOMAS (eds.) 2013, 169-193;
- PERDRIZET, P.**  
1899 «Syriaca 9. Gadara χρηστομουσῖα», *Revue Archéologique* 35, 49-50;
- PETERS, F. E.**  
1977 «The Nabateans in the Hawran», *JAOS* 97,3, 263-277;
- PFLAUM, H.-G.**  
1967 «Un nouveau diplôme militaire d’un soldat de l’armée d’Égypte», *Syria* 44, 339-362;
- PIAZZA, M. G.**  
1983-1984 «Soundings in the Intermediate terrace of the Sanctuary of Artemis at Gerasa, 1979-1981», in GULLINI (ed.) 1983-1984, 113-134;
- PIEROBON, R.**  
1983 «Guglielmo di Tiro e il “castrum” di Gerasa», *Prospettive Settanta V*, 8-13;  
1983-1984a «Gerasa in Archaeological Historiography», in *Mesopotamia* 1983-1984, 13-35;  
1983-1984b «Sanctuary of Artemis: Soundings in the Temple Terrace, 1978-1980», in *Mesopotamia* 1983-1984, 85-111;  
1995 «Gadara, “Atthis en Assyriois”», in S. CERASUOLO (ed.), *Mathesis e Philia. Studi in onore di Marcello Gigante*, Napoli: Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Filologia Classica dell’Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II;
- PIRAUD-FOURNET, P.**  
2007 «Le palais dit “de Trajan”», in BOSRA, 147-154;
- PITTS, M.**  
2008 «Globalizing the local in Roman Britain: an anthropological approach to social change», *JAA* 27, 493-506;
- PITTS, M. and VERSLUYS, M. J. (eds.)**  
2015a (eds.) *Globalisation and the Roman World. World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, New York: Cambridge University Press;  
2015b «Globalisation and the Roman World: perspectives and opportunities», in PITTS and VERSLUYS (eds.) 2015a, 3-31;
- POLITIS, K. (ed.)**  
2007 *The World of the Herod and the Nabataeans: volume 2 of the International Conference The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans, held at the British Museum, 17-19 April 2001*, Stuttgart: Steiner;
- POTTS, D. T. (ed.)**  
2012 *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. Vol. II*, Malden (MA), Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell;

**PRABHU, A.**

2007 *Hybridity. Limits, Transformations, Prospects*, Albany: State University of New York Press;

**RAJA, R.**

2012 *Urban Development and Regional Identity in the Eastern Roman Provinces, 50 BC-AD 250. Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press;

**RAYNOR, J. and MESHORER, Y.**

1988 *The Coins of Ancient Meiron*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns.

**REED, J.**

2002 *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: a Re-examination of the Evidence*, Trinity Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Press International;

**REHER, G. F. and FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ, M.**

2015 «Archaeological narratives in ethnicity studies», *Archeologické rozhledy* LXVII, 400-416;

**REHM, A. and WIEGAND, T.**

1958 *Didyma II. Die Inschriften*, Gebr. Berlin: Mann Verlag;

**REICH, R. and BILLIG, Y.**

2000 «A group of Theater Seats Discovered near the South-Western Corner of the Temple Mount», *IEJ* 50, 175-184;

**RELAND, H.**

1714 *Palaestina ex monumentis veteribus illustrata*, Utrecht: G. Broedelet;

**REMOTTI, F.**

2010 *L'ossessione identitaria*, Lecce: Editori Laterza;

**RENEL, F.**

2010 «La céramique antique de Syrie du Sud de la période hellénistique à la période byzantine»; in HAURAN V, 515-544;

**RETSÖ, J.**

1990 «Xenophon in Arabia», in S.-T. Teodorsson (ed.), *Greek and Latin Studies in Memory of Cajus Fabricius*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis: Göteborg, 122-133;

2003 *The Arabs in Antiquity. Their history from the Assyrians to the Umayyads*, New York: Routledge Curzon;

**REY, G.**

1861 *Voyages Dans Le Haouran et Aux Bords De La Mer Morte. Exécute Pendant Les Annees 1857 et 1858*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand;

**REY-COQUAIS, J.-P.**

1992 «Decapolis», in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5, 116-121;

**RICHARDSON, P.**

1996 *Herod. King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press;

**RICHMOND, J.**

1934 «Khirbet Fahil», *PEQ* 66, 18-31

**RIEDL, N.**

2005 *Gottheiten und Kulte in der Dekapolis. PhD thesis Freie Universität Berlin 2003* (<http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/2005/155/>);

2011 «Zeus on Decapolis city coins: Merely local issue?», *ARAM* 23, 347-365;

**RIGSBY, K. J.**

1980 «Seleucid Notes», *TAPhA* 110, 233-254;

- ROBINSON, E.**  
1856 *Later Biblical Researches in Palestine*, London: Murray;
- ROBINSON, E. S. G.**  
1936 «Coins from Petra, etc.», *NC* 16, 288-291;
- ROBINSON, G.**  
1837 *Travels in Palestine and Syria*, London: Henry Colburn;
- ROCHE, M.-J.**  
1996 «Remarques sur les Nabatéens en Méditerranée», *Semitica* 45, 73-99;
- ROHMER, J.**  
2010 «L'occupation humaine du plateau du Leja, de l'âge du Fer à l'annexion romaine: perspectives de recherche», *HAURAN* V, 119-137;
- ROOT, B. W.**  
2014 *First Century Galilee*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;
- ROSELAAR, S. T.**  
2015a (ed.) *Processes of Cultural Change and Integration in the Roman World*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;  
2015b «Introduction: Processes of Cultural Change and Integration in the Roman World», in ROSELAAR (ed.) 2015a, 1-19;
- ROSTOVITZ, M. I.**  
1932 *Caravan cities*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;  
1957 *The Social and Economic History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;
- ROTH, J. P.**  
2007 «Jews and the Roman Army: Perceptions and Realities», in DE BLOIS and LO CASCIO (eds.) 2007, 409-420
- ROYMANS, N.**  
2004 *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power. The Batavians in the Early Roman Empire*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press;
- RUBY, P.**  
2006 «Peoples, fictions? Ethnicité, identité ethnique et sociétés anciennes», *REA* 108, 25-60;
- SACHET, I.**  
2000 «La céramique fine de Gaza. Une fenêtre ouverte sur les voies commerciales», in J.-B. HUMBERT (ed.), *Gaza méditerranéenne. Histoire et archéologie en Palestine*, Paris: Editions Errance, 51-69
- SAFRAI, Z.**  
1985 *The Galilee in the Time of the Mishna and Talmud*, Ma'alot: Midreshet Shorashim;  
2006 «Temporal layers within Strabo's description of Coele Syria, Phoenicia and Judaea», in DUECK, LINDSAY and POTHECARY (eds.) 2006, 250-258;
- SAFRAI, S. and STERN, M. (eds.)**  
1976 *The Jewish People on the First Century, Volume 2*, Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum;
- SAID, E.**  
1978 *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth, England: Penguin;
- SANDHAUS, D.**  
2007 «The Pottery», in MAZOR and NAJJAR (eds.) 2007, 115-122;
- SARTRE, M.**  
1979 «Rome et les Nabatéens à la fin de la République (65-30 av. J.-C.)», *Topoi* 81, 37-53 ;  
1982a *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*, Bruxelles: Collection Latomus 178;

- 1982b *Bostra. Inscriptions grecques et latine de la Syrie*, XIII/1, Paris: Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 113 ;
- 1985 *Bostra. Des origines à l'Islam*, Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner;
- 1988 «La Syrie Creuse n'existe pas» in GATIER *et alii* 1988, 15-40;
- 1989 «Organisation du territoire et pouvoirs locaux dans la Syrie hellénistique et romaine», *Transeuphratène* 1, 119-128;
- 1992 «Les cités de la Décapole septentrionale: Canatha, Raphana, Dion et Adraha», *ARAM* 4, 139-156;
- 1993 «Communautés villageoises et structures sociales d'après l'épigraphie de la Syrie du Sud», in A. CALBI, A. DONATI and G. POMA (eds.), *L'epigrafia del villaggio*, Faenza: Fratelli Lega editori, 117-135;
- 2001 *D'Alexandre à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique. IV<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. - III<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.*, Paris: Fayard;
- 2008 «The Nature of Syrian Hellenism in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods», in ELIAV, FRIEDLAND and HERBERT (eds.) 2008, 25-49;
- 2009 *Histoires Grecques, Snapshots from Antiquity*, Cambridge (MA) and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press;
- 2010 «Les manifestations du culte impérial dans les provinces syriennes et en Arabie», in C. EVERS and A. TSINGARIDA (eds.), *Rome et ses provinces. Genèse et diffusion d'une image du pouvoir. Hommages à Jean-Charles Balty*. Bruxelles: Timperman, 167-186;
- SARTRE-FAURIAT, A.**
- 2001, *Des tombeaux et des morts, monuments funéraires, société et culture en Syrie du Sud du I<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.-C. au VII<sup>e</sup> s. apr. J.-C.*, Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient;
- 2004 *Les voyages dans le Hawran (Syrie du Sud) de W. J. Bankes (1816 et 1818)*, Beyrouth: Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient;
- SCHÄFER, P. (ed.)**
- 2003 *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered. New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;
- SCHIPPMANN, K.**
- 1971 *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter;
- 1972 «The Development of the Iranian Fire Temple», in *The memorial Volume. V<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, Teheran: Ministry of Culture and Arts;
- SCHMID, S. G.**
- 1996 «Die Feinkeramik der Nabatäer im Spiegel ihrer kulturhistorischen Kontakte», in HERFORT-KOCH, MANDEL and SCHÄDLER (eds.) 1996, 127-145;
- 1997 «Nabataean Fine Ware Pottery and the Destructions of Petra in the Late First and Early Second Century A.D.», *SHAJ* 6, 413-420;
- 2001a «The "Hellenisation" of the Nabataeans: a new Approach», *SHAJ* 7, 407-420;
- 2001b «The Nabataeans: Travellers between Lifestyles», in MACDONALD, ADAMS and BIENKOWSKI (eds.) 2001, 367-426;
- 2007a «La distribution de la céramique nabatéenne et l'organisation du commerce nabatéen de longue distance», *Topoi Supplement* 8, 61-91;
- 2007b «Nabataean Pottery», in POLITIS (ed.) 2007, 309-326;
- 2008 «The Hellenistic Period and the Nabataeans», in ADAMS (ed.) 2008, 353-409;



**SCHMITT-KORTE, K.**

1990 «Nabataean Coinage, Part II. New Coin Types and variants», *NC* 150, 105-133;

**SCHMITT-KORTE, K. and PRICE, M.**

1994 «Nabataean Coinage, Part III. The Nabataean Monetary System», *NC* 154, 67-131;

**SCHNELLE, U.**

1999 *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht;

**SCHOTTROFF, W.**

1982 «Die Ituräer», *ZDPV* 98, 134-136;

**SCHULZ, F.**

1934 *Prinzipien des römischen Rechts*, München und Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot;

**SCHUMACHER, G.**

1886 *Across the Jordan*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund;

1888a *The Jaulân*, London: Bentley;

1888b *Pella*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund;

1889 *Abila of the Decapolis*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund;

1890 *Northern 'Ajlûn, "Within the Decapolis"*, London: Palestine Exploration fund;

1892 «Meine Reise im Ostjordanlande 1891», *ZDPV* 15, 63-64;

1893 «Ergebnisse meiner Reise durch Hauran, Adschlun und Belka», *ZDPV* 16, 153-170;

1895 «Dscherasch», *ZDPV* 17, 126-140;

1897 «Das südliche Basan», *ZDPV* 20, 65-228;

1902 «Dscherasch», *ZDPV* 25, 109-177;

1914 «Unsere Arbeiten im Ostjordanlande VI», *ZDPV* 37, 123-134;

**SCHÜRER, E.**

1973 *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, London: T&T Clark;

**SCHWARTZ, E.**

1906 «Die Aeren von Gerasa und Eleutheropolis», *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 338-382;

**SCHWARTZ, S.**

1989 «The "Judaism" of Samaria and Galilee in Josephus' version of the Letter of Demetrius I to Jonathan (*Ant.* 13.48-57)», *HTR* 82, 377-392;

1991 «Israel and the Nations Roundabout: 1 Maccabees and the Hasmonean Expansion», *JJS* 41, 16-38;

2009 «Euergetism in Josephus and the epigraphic culture of first-century Jerusalem», in COTTON *et alii* (eds.) 2009, 75-92;

**SCHWENTZEL, C.-G.**

2005 «Les thèmes du monnayage royal nabatéen et le modèle monarchique hellénistique», *Syria* 82, 149-166 ;

**SEAR, F.**

2006 *Roman Theatres. An Architectural Study*, Oxford: Oxford University Press;

**SEETZEN, U. J.**

1810 *A Brief Account of the Countries adjoining the Lake of Tiberias, the Jordan and the Dead Sea*, London;

1854-1859 *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten*, Vol. I-IV, Berlin;

**SEGAL, A.**

2001 «The Kalybe Structures: Temples for the Imperial Cults in Hauran and Trachon – An Historical-Architectural Analysis», *Assaph-Studies in Art History* 6, 91-118;

- 2008 «Religious Architecture in the Roma Near East: temples of the basalt lands» in KAIZER 2008;
- 2009 «The *Forum Area*», in HIPPOS 2009, 11-16;
- 2013a «Research History» in HIPPOS 2013, 12-17;
- 2013b «Urban plan and city landscape» in HIPPOS 2013, 64-85;
- 2013c «Hellenistic Sanctuary» in HIPPOS 2013, 128-147;
- 2013d «Basilica», in HIPPOS 2013, 164-181;
- 2013e «Odeion», in HIPPOS 2013, 182-193;
- 2013f *Temples and Sanctuaries in the Roman East*, Exeter: Short Run Press;
- SEIGNE, J.**
- 1985 «Le sanctuaire de Zeus à Jerash: éléments de chronologie», *Syria* 62, 287-295;
- 1992 «Jérash romaine et byzantine: développement urbain d'une ville provinciale orientale», *SHAJ* 4, 331-340;
- 1997 «De la grotte au périptère. Le sanctuaire de Zeus Olympien à Jérash», *Topoi* 7, 993-1004;
- 1999 « Sanctuaires urbains: acteurs ou témoins de l'urbanisation ? Les exemples de Gerasa et de Palmyre», *Topoi* 9, 833-848;
- 2002 «Gerasa-Jerasch – Stadt der 1000 Säulen», in HOFFMANN A. AND KERNER S. 2002, 6-22;
- SEIGNE, J. and AGUSTA-BOULAROT, S.**
- 2005 «Le théâtre nord de Gerasa/Jerash (Jordanie). Fonctions et chronologie», *Topoi* 12-13, 339-357
- SEYRIG, H.**
- 1950 *Notes on Syrian Coins*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs 119, New York: American Numismatic Society;
- 1965 «Alexandre le Grand, fondateur de Gerasa», *Syria* 42, 26-27;
- SHALIT, A.**
- 1954 «Κοίλη Συρία from the Mid-Fourth Century to the Beginning of the Third Century B.C.», *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 1, 64-77;
- SHAW, B. D.**
- 2000 «Rebels and outsiders», in BOWMAN, GARNSEY and RATHBONE (eds.) 2000, 361-403;
- SHENNAN, S. J.**
- 1989 *Archaeological Approaches to cultural Identity*, London and New York: Routledge;
- SHERWIN-WHITE, A. N.**
- 1984 *Roman Foreign Policy in the East, 168 B.C. to A.D. 1*, London: Duckworth;
- SILVER, K.**
- 2016 «The Chronology of the Late Republican Coinage of the Cities in the Decapolis», *ARAM* 28 (1), 47-68;
- SIMONS, J.**
- 1937 *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia*, Leiden: Brill;
- SMITH, G. A.**
- 1894 *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, London: Hodder & Stoughton;
- 1901 «Notes of a journey through Hauran, with inscriptions found by the way», *PEQ*, 341-361;
- SMITH, R. H.**
- 1968 «Pella of the Decapolis, 1967», *Archaeology* 21, 134-137;

1973, *Pella of the Decapolis. Volume I. The 1967 season of the College of Wooster Expedition to Pella*, London: College of Wooster;

1987 «Trade in the Life of Pella of the Decapolis», *SHAJ* 3, 53-58;

**SMITH, R. H. and DAY, L. P. (eds.)**

1989 *Pella of the Decapolis Volume 2*, Wooster: Eisenbrauns;

**SOMMER, M.**

2012 «Heart of Darkness? Post-colonial Theory and the Transformation of the Mediterranean», *AWE* 11, 235-245;

2015 «Οικουμενη: *Longue durée* Perspectives on Ancient Mediterranean 'Globality'», in PITTS and VERSLUYS (eds.) 2015a, 175-197;

**SPIJKERMAN, A.**

1978, *The coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia*, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press;

**SPIVAK, G. C.**

1994 «Can the Subaltern Speak?», in P. WILLIAMS and L. CHRISMAN (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 66-111;

**STARCKY, J.**

1965 «Nouvelle épitaphe nabatéenne donnant le nom sémitique de Pétra», *Revue Biblique* 72, 95-97, pls. V-VI;

1966 «Pétra et la Nabatène», in *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément 7* (Paris: Létouzey et Ané éditeurs);

1985-1986 «Les inscriptions nabatéennes et l'histoire de la Syrie meridionale et du Nord de la Jordanie», in HAURAN I, 167-181;

**STAVRIANOPOULOU, E.**

2013a *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period. Narrations, Practices, and Images*, Leiden and Boston: Brill;

2013b «Hellenistic World(s) and elusive Concept of 'Greekness'», in E. STAVRIANOPOULOU (ed.) 2013a, 177-205;

**STERN, E.**

1978 *Qedem 3: Excavations at Tel Mevorakh (1973-1976). Part one: From the Iron Age to the Roman Period*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem;

1982 *The Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538-332 B.C.*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips;

1984 «The Persian Empire and the Political and Social History of Palestine in the Persian Period», in DAVIES and FINKELSTEIN (eds.) 1984, 70-87;

**STERN, M.**

1976 *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism. Vol. I. From Herodotus to Plutarch*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities;

**STINESPRING, W. F.**

1938 «The History of Excavation at Jerash», in KRAELING (ed.) 1938, 1-10;

**SYON, D.**

2012 «Galilean Mints in the Early Roman Period: Politics, Economy and Ethnicity», in JACOBSON and KOKKINOS (eds.) 2012, 51-64;

2015 *Small Change in Hellenistic-Roman Galilee. The Evidence from Numismatic Site Finds as a Tool for Historical Reconstruction*, Jerusalem: Israel Numismatic Society;

**TAL, O.**

2008 «Cult in Transition from Achaemenid to Greek Rule: The Contribution of Achaemenid-Ptolemaic Temples of Palestine», *Transeuphratène* 36, 165-183;

2009 «Hellenism in Transition from Empire to Kingdom: Changes in the Material Culture of Hellenistic Palestine», in LEVINE and SCHWARTZ (eds.) 2009, 55-73;

2011 «'Hellenistic Foundations' in Palestine, in GRABBE and LIPSCHITS (eds.) 2011, 242-311;

**TCHERIKOVER, V.**

1937, «Palestine under the Ptolemies. A Contribution to the Study of the Zenon Archive», *Mizraim* 4-5, 9-90;

1959, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, Philadelphia: The Jewish publication society of America;

**TERRENATO, N.**

2005 «The Deceptive Archetype: Roman Colonialism in Italy and Postcolonial Thought», in HURST and OWEN (eds.) 2005, 59-72;

**THALMANN, J.-P.**

1978 «Tell 'Arqa (Liban Nord) campagnes I-III (1972-1974) Chantier I. Rapport préliminaire. Introduction d'Ernest Will», *Syria* 55, 1-145, 147, 149, 151;

**THOLBECQ, L.**

2007 «Hérodiens, Nabatéens et Lagides dans le Hawrân au 1er s. av. J.-C.: Réflexions autour du sanctuaire de Ba'alšamîn de Sî' (Syrie du Sud)», *Topoi* 15/1, 285-310;

**TSAFRIR, Y.**

1989 «Further Evidence of the Cult of Zeus Akraios at Bet Shean (Scythopolis)», *IES* 39, 76-78;

2011 «The Decapolis again – Further notes on the meaning of the term», *ARAM* 23, 1-10;

**TSUK, Ts. et alii**

2002 «A New Survey of the Aqueducts of Hippos-Susita», in AMIT, PATRICH, and HIRSCHFELD (eds.) 2002;

**UEHLINGER, C. (ed.)**

2000 *Images as media. Sources for the cultural History of the Near East and the East Mediterranean*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht;

**URMAN, D.**

1985 *The Golan*, Oxford: BAR/IS 269;

**USCATESCU, A. and MARTÍN-BUENO, M.**

1997 «The Macellum of Gerasa (Jerash, Jordan): From a Market Place to an Industrial Area», *BASOR* 307, 67-88;

**VANDKILDE, H.**

2004 *Archaeology, anthropology and globalization. Inaugural lecture, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004* available at <http://www.aal.au.dvglobal/nyheder/papers/paperfiler/forelaesuk>;

**VAN DE VELDE, C. W. M.**

1958 *Memoir to Accompany the Map of the Holy Land*, Gotha;

**VAN DOMMELEN, P.**

1997 «Colonial constructs: Colonialism and archaeology in the Mediterranean», *World Archaeology* 28:3, 305-323;

**VERSLUYS, M. J.**

2014 «Understanding objects in motion. An archaeological dialogue on Romanization», *Archaeological Dialogues* 21, 1-20;

**VIRGILIO, B. (ed.)**

2008 *Studi ellenistici XX*, Pisa-Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore;

**VITELLI, G. (ed.)**

1917 *Papiri Greci e Latini*, Vol. 4, Firenze: Tipografia Enrico Ariani;

**VRIEZEN, K. J. H. K.**

2015 «Ceramics», in VRIEZEN and WAGNER-LUX (eds.) 2015, 70-161;

**VRIEZEN, K. J. H. K. and WAGNER-LUX, U. (eds.)**

2015 *Gadara – Umm Qēs II. The Twin Churches on the Roman-Byzantine Terrace and Excavations in the Streets*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag;

**YADIN, Y. et alii (eds.)**

1958 *Hazor III-IV: An Account of the Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavations, 1957-1958 (Plates)*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society;

**WADDINGTON, W. H.**

1870 *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie recueillies et expliquées*, Paris: Firmin Didot;

**WAGEMAKERS, B.**

2014 *Archaeology in the Land of Tells and Ruins*, Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books;

**WAGNER-LUX, U.**

1997 «Excavations and survey in Umm Qais-Gadara, Spring 1997», *Occident and Orient*, 2,2;

**WAHEEN, M. and ALGHAZAWI R.**

2012 «Roman Nymphaeum in Philadelphia, South Levant: New Excavation Data», *MAA* 14, 131-142;

**WALLACE-HADRILL, A.**

2012 «Romanizzazione», in GIARDINA and PESANDO (eds.) 2012, 111-116;

**WALLERSTEIN, I.**

1974, *The Modern World System*, New York: Academic Press;

**WALMSLEY, A. G.**

2007 «Household at Pella, Jordan: domestic destruction deposits of the mid-8th C.», in L. LAVAN, E. SWIFT and T. PUTZEYS (eds.), *Objects in Context, Objects in use: material spatiality in late antiquity*, Leiden: Brill;

**WALMSLEY, A. G. et alii (eds.)**

1993 The Eleventh and Twelfth Seasons of Excavations at Pella (Tabaqat Fahl) 1989-1990, *ADAJ* 37, 165-240;

**WATSON, P.**

2002 «Pella – Die Stadt am Jordangraben», in HOFFMANN and KERNER 2002, 59-71;

**WATSON, P. and TIDMARSCH, J.**

1996 «Pella/Tall al-Husn excavations 1993. The University of Sydney-15th season», *ADAJ* 40, 293-313;

**WEBER, M.**

1980 [1921] *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**WEBER, T. M.**

2002, *Gadara-Umm Qēs I. Gadara Decapolitana. Untersuchungen zur Topographie, Geschichte, Architektur und der Bildenden Kunst einer "Polis Hellenis" im Ostjordanland*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag;

2003 «La statuaire d'un sanctuaire tribal de Syrie du Sud et ses relations romano-mésopotamiennes», *Topoi Supp.* 4, 349-363

2006, «Gadara and the Galilee», in ZANGENBERG, ATTRIDGE and MARTIN (eds.) 2006, 449-477;

**WEBSTER, J.**

2001 «Creolizing the Roman Provinces», *AJA* 105, 209-225;

**WEISER, W. and COTTON, H.-M.**

1996 «Gebt dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist...» Die Gewährungen der Griechen, Juden, Nabatäer und Römer im syrisch-nabatäischen Raum unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des kurses von Sela'/Melaina und Lepton nach der Annexion des Königreiches der Nabatäer durch Rom», *ZPE* 114, 237-287;

**WEISS, Z.**

2014 *Public Spectacles in Roman and Late Antique Palestine*, Cambridge (MA) and London: Harvard University Press;

**WELLES, C. B.**

1938 «The Inscriptions», in KRAELING (ed.) 1938, 355-467;

1965 «Romanization of the Greek East: Introduction», *BASP* 2.2, 42-46;

**WENNING, R.**

1987 *Die Nabatäer. Denkmäler und Geschichte. Eine Bestandaufnahme des archäologischen Befundes*, Freiburg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht;

1992 «The Nabataeans in the Decapolis/Coele Syria», *ARAM* 4, 79-99;

1993 «Das Ende des nabatäischen Königreiches», in INVERNIZZI and SALLES (eds.) 1993, 81-103;

2001 «Hauranite Sculpture», in PADGETT (ed.) 2001, 312-347;

2003 «Hauranitische Skulpturen in Princeton», in FREYBERGER, HENNING and VON HESBERG (eds.) 2003, 289-290;

2007 «The Nabataeans in History», in K. POLITIS (ed.) 2007, 25-44;

**WESTERMANN, W. L. and HASENOEHL, E. S.**

1934 *Zenon Papyri, Business Papers of the Third Century dealing with Egypt and Palestine*, 1 vol., New York: Columbia University Press;

**WETZSTEIN, J. G.**

1860 *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen, nebst einem Anhang über die Sabäischen Denkmäler in Ostsyrien*, Berlin: D. Reimer;

**WHITTAKER, D.**

2009 «Ethnic discourses on the frontiers of Roman Africa», in DERKS and ROYMANS (eds.) 2009, 189-205;

**WILD, S.**

1973 *Libanesische Ortsnamen. Typologie und Deutung*, (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 9), Beyrouth – Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner;

**WILL, E.**

1989 «Les villes de la Syrie à l'époque hellénistique et romaine», in DENTZER and ORTHMANN (eds.) 1989, 223-250;

1998 *Historica graeco-hellenistica. Choix d'écrits 1953-1993*, Paris: De Boccard;

**WINELAND, J. D.**

2001 *Ancient Abila: An Archaeological History*, Oxford: Archaeopress;

**WINNETT, F. V.**

1973 «The Revolt of Damasi: Safaitic and Nabataean Evidence», *BASOR* 211, 54-57;

**WINNETT, F. V. and HARDING, G. L.**

1978 *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, Toronto: Toronto University Press;

**WOOLF, G.**

1994 «Becoming Roman, staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the civilizing Process in the Roman East», *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40, 116-143;

1997 «Beyond Romans and Natives», *World Archaeology* 28:3, 339-350;

1998 *Becoming Roman: The origins of provincial administration in Gaul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

2001 «Inventing empire in ancient Rome», in ALCOCK *et alii* (eds.) 2001, 311-322;

**WÖRRLE, M.**

2000 «Ein hellenistische Inschrift aus Gadara», *AA* 2000,2. 267-271;

**WRIGHT, G. R. H.**

1969 «Strabo on funerary customs at Petra», *PEQ* 101, 113-116;

**WRIGHT, N. L.**

2013 «Ituraean Coinage in Context», *The Numismatic Chronicle* 173, 55-71, pls. 14-15

**WUTHNOW, H.**

1930 *Die semitischen Menschnamen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri des Vorderen Orients*, Leipzig.

**ZANGENBERG, J., ATTRIDGE H. W. AND MARTIN D. B. (eds.)**

2006, *Religion, Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck;

**ZAYADINE, F.**

1969 «A Greek Inscription from the forum of Amman-Philadelphia, A. D. 189», *ADAJ* 14, 34-35;

1973 «Recent excavations on the citadel of Amman. A preliminary report», *ADAJ* 18, 17-35;

1977-1978 «Excavations on the upper citadel of Amman, area A, 1975 and 1977», *ADAJ* 22, 20-45;

1986 (ed.) *Jerash Archaeological Project 1, 1981-1983*, Amman: Department of Antiquities of Jordan;

1989 (ed.) «Jerash Archaeological Project 1984-1988, 2», *Syria* 66;

**ZAYADINE, F., HUMBERT, J.-B. and NAJJAR, M.**

1989 «The 1988 excavations on the citadel of Amman. Lower terrace, area A. Department of Antiquities», *ADAJ* 33, 357-363;

**ZEITLIN, S.**

1974 «Who were the Galileans? New Light on Josephus' Activities in Galilee», *JQR* 64, 189-203.