The Role of Palmyrene Temples in Long-Distance Trade in the Roman Near East

by John Berkeley Grout

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, John Berkeley Grout, hereby affirm that this thesis and the work presented herein is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly indicated.

Signed,

John Berkeley Grout

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the archaeology, epigraphy and historiography of Palmyrene temples and long-distance trade in early Roman Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and western Iraq. Forty-two temples are examined, both Palmyrene and comparanda, in both urban and rural settings.

New models are proposed which characterise the roles which these temples are shown to have played in long-distance trade. These models include: 'networking' temples acting as foci for the network of trust upon which long-distance trade relied; 'hosting' temples acting as foci of trade itself, hosting fairs and exhibiting wealth from long-distance trade; and 'supporting' temples directly supporting trade via infrastructure such as waystations or caravanserais. New insight is thus provided into the role of temple institutions in the broader economy, in urban and rural life, and in the fabric of society as a whole.

In the first part, fundamentals are established, terms defined and academic and historical background set, including the historiographical context of the thesis. The new models for the role of temples in long-distance trade are proposed in light of the evidence examined. A case study is made of Hatra as a comparandum to Palmyra, particularly with regard to the dominance of its temples.

In the second part, the nature of long-distance trade in the Roman Near East is explored. The archaeology, epigraphy, literature and practicalities of ancient long-distance trade are examined, and a case study is made of Petra as a comparandum to Palmyra, particularly with regard to the incense trade which was crucial for ancient religion.

In the third part, the temples of Palmyra and of Palmyrenes elsewhere, are examined, including in Dura-Europos and the Red Sea littoral. The evidence is interrogated in detail and in the context of previous research, and candidates for temples involved in or related to long-distance trade are identified.

In the conclusion, the thesis is considered in the round, the consequences of the proposed models are explored, and areas for further research are identified.

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LIST OF MAPS AND IMAGES

All maps are the creation of the author, using *Antiquity À-la-Carte*, Ancient World Mapping Centre, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Online: http://awmc.unc.edu

FOREWORD

This thesis is very different from that originally envisaged – that original thesis was overtaken by events in the first few months of study. Since then, by the reckoning of the United Nations, over three hundred thousand individuals have been killed, almost eight million displaced, and over four million driven from Syria and Iraq altogether.

Among them are individuals whose work has gone into the studies upon which this thesis relies, not least Doctor Khaled al-As'ad, who was killed in the final weeks of this project. Some are individuals with whom I would have worked during, and whom I would be thanking in the foreword of, that original thesis which cannot now be written.

Of the locations studied in this thesis, to the best of my knowledge only those in Jordan remain undamaged. Shortly before I completed this thesis' initial draft, the ruins of Palmyra were demolished. Those of Dura-Europos and Apamea have been ransacked; those of Hatra destroyed. Countless other sites have been damaged. In many cases temples have been singled out, either due to their nature as sites of pagan religion or the durability of their ruins against attack. Looting of antiquities and of temple sites in particular has taken place on a colossal scale. It is unlikely that the extent of the damage will become clear for many years, but many of the future studies demanded by this thesis, and by previous scholarship, are in all probability no longer possible.

Trust in God,

but tie up your camel.

– Traditional Arabic proverb.

PART I: TEMPLE TRADE AND CARAVAN CITIES

Introduction and Historiography

ναὶ μὴν καὶ ὄλβου πέρι ἐν τοῖσιν ἐγὼ οἶδα πρῶτόν ἐστινπολλὰ γὰρ αὐτοῖσιν ἀπικνέεται χρήματα ἔκ τε Ἀραβίης καὶ Φοινίκων καὶ Βαβυλωνίων καὶ ἄλλα ἐκ Καππαδοκίης, τὰ δὲ καὶ Κίλικες φέρουσι, τὰ δὲ καὶ Ἀσσύριοι. [...] ὀρταὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πανηγύριες οὐδαμοῖσιν ἄλλοισιν ἀνθρώπων τοσαίδε ἀποδεδέχαται.

Indeed, in wealth it is in first place among temples that I know of, for many goods reach it from Arabia and the Phoenicians and Babylonians and yet more from Cappadocia, and also what the Cilicians bring, and what the Assyrians. [...] *For no other nation has appointed so many feasts and festivals here.*

– Lucian of Samosata, de Dea Syria, 10.[1]

1. 'Temple Trade' – A New Approach?

In my experience, trade and religion are often discussed together in overviews of periods or civilisations. Why? The combination of trade and religion are communal activities of a kind, and both concern themselves to a point with material culture. Yet satisfactory rationalisation for their conjunction has been notably absent, from school presentations on Pharaonic Egypt to postgraduate seminars on post-Roman Britain. Studying the Roman Near East in earnest, one comes across offhand mentions of 'temple trade'.[2]

As with most aspects of archaeology and history in Antiquity, the questions I hope to answer in this thesis are ones which will require drawing upon evidence which is scattered, fragmentary, contradictory (or, from time to time, demonstrably misleading), and which all too often is either inconclusive or wholly inadequate. How then to approach it in the first place?

This thesis – a study of the roles played by Palmyrene temples and sanctuaries in long-distance trade in the Roman Near East – will have implications for the roles of temples more generally. As we shall see, as the source of much of the best evidence for trade in the Roman Near East, Palmyra is the logical focus of a study of these phenomena. By its nature, our study will focus on the period between Pompey's annexation of Syria and the fall of Zenobia. It must show how the two quite different phenomena of temples and trade interacted, whether (or to what degree) they shared space, and how we might

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[1] Trans. Lightfoot, J. L. (2003), *Lucian – On the Syrian Goddess*, OUP, Oxford, p. 253.
[2] One example, selected entirely at random, is in Davies, J. K. (1998), "Ancient economies: models and muddles", in Parkins, H. and Smith, C. (eds.) (1998), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, Routledge, London, p. 246, point 4.

conceptualise their relationship. It will do this by studying the archaeology, historiography and epigraphy of Palmyrene temples and sanctuaries both in Palmyra and throughout the Roman Near East, in the context of both the ancient economy and of temples and sanctuaries themselves.

This thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of temples and sanctuaries, Palmyrene or otherwise – rather a study of the evidence which relates to Palmyrene and comparable temples and sanctuaries, and long-distance trade. Including comparanda elsewhere such as at Hatra and Petra, forty-two temples will be examined across twenty-three sites;[3] these are listed in the Gazetteer for ready comparison.[4] A range of other sites are also discussed either where a temple was attested but is now lost, such as at Vologesias,[5] or where the term 'temple' would itself be inappropriate, such as the *funduq* at Coptos or the caravan halt at the Gennaes.[6]

The thesis proposes and tests new models for how the relationships between temples (particularly Palmyrene temples) and trade (particularly long-distance trade) can be understood. We will arrive at three broad models according to which the various involvements of temples in trade can be categorised (detailed in section 1.4 below), having tested these models against the evidence and foregoing scholarship. However, this thesis will not propose that temples or sanctuaries were significant actors *in their own right* in the long-distance trade of our region and period.[7] The relationships, as we shall see, were subtler than that. In brief, I shall propose that Palmyrene temples appear to have fulfilled the roles of foci in the network of trust, of hosts of commerce and trade itself, and of the provision of infrastructure and services supporting that trade. The roles are thus of 'networking', 'hosting' and 'supporting' temples in trade.

We first explore our terms, comparative studies and foregoing works in Part I, in order to underpin the undertaking at large. We also briefly review the temples and sites we shall examine, the three models for the role of temples in long-distance trade, and examine Hatra and other comparisons with the Palmyrene study. In Part II, we explore the ancient economy and the nature of long-distance trade in our

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[3] See Map 1, p. 12.
[4] For a full listing of temples and sanctuaries considered, see the Gazetteer, pp. 276-7.
[5] See below, p. 228.
[6] See below, pp. 259-63 (Coptos); pp. 224-7 (Gennaes).
[7] As we shall see, it is to be doubted whether there is sufficient evidence to support such a study, except perhaps as it relates to the incense trade, on which see section II.3.1, pp. 119-22.

period, in particular the logistics, participants and routes involved; we also examine Petra and Baetocaece as comparanda for the Palmyrene study. Part III contains the study of the temples and trade of Palmyra, and of Palmyrenes abroad in the Near East. In the Conclusion, we draw together our findings and provide conclusions for the thesis as a whole.

1.1   Space and time

My choice of space and time is dictated by the region and period of Palmyrene florescence: the Roman Near East, roughly from the 50s BC to the 270s AD.

The Near East – which I take, very roughly, to mean the land south of the Taurus Mountains, west of Mesopotamia and north of a line between the Gulf of Aqaba and the head of the Persian Gulf – has been inhabited for tens of millennia. It is an area perennially concerned with boundaries and communication: it lies at the junction between the Old World's two great landmasses – Africa and Eurasia – and its two great seas – the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Throughout recorded history, it has also sat between great civilisations – Egyptian and Babylonian, Greek and Persian, Roman and Parthian, Christian and Muslim.

Thanks to these boundaries' profusion and permeability, the Near East has also been the site of long-distance trade since time immemorial. In the Third Millennium BC, Assyrian caravans watered at the Eqfa Spring, which, two thousand years later, would become the site of Palmyra.[8] I rather doubt that those we know of were the first to do so. That some of the region's earliest evidence for long-distance trade comes from the very site most closely associated with it in our period – Palmyra – is illustrative both of the antiquity of the phenomena with which we will be dealing, and of the way in which the landscape shaped patterns of trade.

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[8] Eisser, G and Lewy, J. (1935), *Die altassyrischen Rechtsurkunden von Kûltepe*, Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft, Band 33 3-4, J. Hinrich, Berlin, no. 303; Arnaud, D. (1986), *Recherches aud pays d'Aštata, Emar VI.3: Textes sumériens et accadiens, textes*, Éditions Recherches sur les Civilisations, Paris, no. 21.

Map 1: Sites of interest in the Roman Near East, 50 BC to 273 AD

Taurus Mountains

Mesopotamia

Mediterranean Sea

Gulf of Aqaba

Persian Gulf

Gerrha

Spasinou-Charax

Seleucia
Babylon
Vologesias?

Hit

Hatra

Nisibis

Dura-Europos

Edessa

Zeugma
Antioch
Apamea
Seriane
Baetocaece
Emesa
Palmyra
Ba'albek
Damascus
Kadesh
Si'a
Bostra
Gerasa
Philadelphia
Dhiban
Khirbat-et-Tannur
Khirbat-et-Dariyeh
Thoana
Petra
Dumat

Sidon
Beyrutos
Jerusalem
Gaza
Qanawat

'Aila
Iram
Leuke Kome
Myos Hormos
Denderah
Coptos

This brings us to the time frame for our study. We are necessarily constrained by the dates of the evidence from Palmyra, and of Palmyrenes. Besides, given that we are studying the Roman Near East, it makes sense in any case to limit our investigation to the period when the Near East was actually under Roman control (i.e. after 64 BC in any case).[9] That date also roughly corresponds with the beginning of a period of significant urbanisation and monumentalisation at Palmyra, and many other sites such as Petra, Hatra, Gerasa and others besides. By way of an end point, 272/3 AD was the date of the reduction of Palmyra by Aurelian, from which its trade network never recovered. By this date, Dura-Europos and Hatra had also fallen. The accession of Diocletian a decade later saw radical reforms across the board, among other things quite literally redrawing the provincial map, redenominating the currency, and introducing new price controls. 273 AD therefore seems the natural point for our study to cease.

Although we shall therefore proceed with these two dates as the rough start and end points for the thesis, where necessary, material from without the boundaries laid down above will be considered – we shall discuss some examples shortly.[10]

1.2   Terminology

In the interests of clarity, we should also establish some terminology. I defined the Near East above, but the area under Roman control was never exactly contiguous with the geographical Near East, and from time to time (most notably under Trajan and Septimius Severus) extended beyond it, to or even beyond the River Tigris. Of course, it has been debated to what extent the Near East ever was truly 'Roman'; this is not a debate we need get involved with just yet.[11] We should take the time to briefly unpack the other terms upon which we will rely. Each of these is of course expanded upon as we explore the field of study as it presently stands. But we can at least clarify the fundamentals before moving on:

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[9] 64 BC being the commonly-accepted date of Pompey's annexation, although it is doubtful that Palmyra itself was under Roman control at this point.

[10] It is worth noting that this time frame has been adopted by other scholars for similar studies. See for instance Sommer, M. (2005.a), *Roms orientalische Steppengrenze: Palmyra – Edessa – Dura-Europos – Hatra. Eine Kulturgeschichte von Pompeius bis Diocletian*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart.

[11] On this, see for instance Ball, W. (2000), *Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire*, Routledge, London. On the debate over ethnicity and identity, see below, pp. 50-5.

The word 'temple' I feel we can take – in the context of our question, at least – as shorthand for both the structures themselves, the sanctuaries within which they are commonly found, and (to a much lesser degree) the cultic institutions inhabiting both. As we shall see, the Near East in the Roman period is host to temples of many different stripes and origins, ranging from stupendous edifices such as the Temple of Bel at Palmyra to far humbler buildings such as the wayside temple at Seriane.[12] It is also host to buildings which had a cultic purpose but which may not truly have been temples, such as the *funduq* at Coptos.[13] We concern ourselves primarily with Palmyrene sites of worship, but will also see comparanda from Near Eastern traditions (principally what might be defined – at length – elsewhere as Syrian, Semitic, Arab or Aramaic), and to a lesser extent from Greco-Roman traditions.[14]

It is worth taking note of the terminology *of* temples as well. Different studies use differing and sometimes confusing definitions of the same terms. For instance, Segal tends to use the term *sanctuary* to refer to the wider precinct within which the central structure stands, often including a boundary wall or *temenos*; and the term *temple* to refer to the main structure within (stereotypically columnar and pedimented).[15] Ball, however, uses the term *sanctuary* or *naos* to refer to the inner structure (in the sense of inner sanctum), and the terms *temple* or *temenos* to refer to the wider precinct or edifice as a whole.[16] Throughout this thesis, I will follow both Segal and ancient terminology, generally using the terms *sanctuary* or *temenos* to refer to the precinct, and the terms *temple* or *naos* to refer to the focal structure (occasionally *temple* is used as shorthand for the whole complex, such as the Temple of Bel at Palmyra).

'Long-distance trade' is a wonderfully nebulous term. It would certainly be wrong to put an arbitrary lower limit on how far trade must go, or for how long, before it becomes 'long distance'; it would be equally wrong to say that it must cross arbitrary cultural, regional or geographical boundaries. It strikes me that it should fundamentally involve the transport and sale or exchange of goods at a significant remove from their point of origin, and most likely by people not responsible for their original production.

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[12] On both of these, see section III.4.2.1, pp. 207-8 (Temple of Bel); and section III.4.3, pp. 213-4 (Seriane).
[13] See for instance the Great Temple at Petra, section II.3.2, pp. 136-8.
[14] On this debate, see below, pp. 50-5.
[15] Segal, A. (2013), *Temples and Sanctuaries in the Roman East*, Oxbow, Oxford; see for instance pp. 76-83.
[16] Ball (2000); see for instance p. 336.

Another way of putting it would be that it stretches beyond the territory associated with a particular local or proximate market.[17]

'Caravan cities' we shall discuss shortly. For now, suffice to say that I take 'caravan trade' to broadly mean both the sale and exchange of goods reliant upon animal caravans travelling moderate, if not long, distances,[18] and also the logistics and associated endeavours, sales and exchange supporting said caravans.

A concept central to this thesis, and to the ancient economy as a whole, was the 'network of trust' – the complex web of personal bonds which allowed trade to take place between individuals at a great remove from one another. We shall see that this is a concept rooted as much in analysis of human behaviour and social patterns as in network theory more broadly.[19] Rauh summates the phenomena at work here: "*By forming themselves into an array of religious fraternities, resident merchants* [at Hellenistic Roman Delos] *were able to assemble clusters of trustworthy business partners and, thus, to provide for a variety of technical, especially financial arrangements.* [...] *Through increasing familiarity with one another, these people ultimately forged the axis of a trans-Mediterranean trading network*".[20]

1.2.1 Temple Trade

'Temple trade' can be conceived of as two separate but interrelated things.

First, it can mean trade undertaken by temples: their benefiting from trade (in our case, long-distance trade) as 'actors' or consumers in their own right, for instance of incense.[21] This implies that temples may

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[17] This broadly agrees with Alcock's slightly more limited definition. See Alcock, S. (2007) "The eastern Mediterranean", in Scheidel, W., Morris, I. and Saller, R. (eds.) (2007), *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, CUP, Cambridge, p. 689.

[18] The trifecta of silk, spices and incense come most readily to mind, but we shall consider other goods as well. As we shall see, incense in particular is important with regard to temples. See section II.3.1, pp. 119-22.

[19] On which see for instance Seland, E. H. (2013), "Networks and social cohesion in Indian Ocean trade: geography, ethnicity, religion", in *Journal of Global History* 8, Issue 03 (Nov 2013), pp. 373-90.

[20] Rauh, N. K. (1993), *The Sacred Bonds of Commerce: Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos, 166-87 B.C.*, J. G. Gieben, Amsterdam, pp. 339-40.

[21] As we shall see in detail shortly, an analysis of temples in economic respects has been done with regard to temples in Asia Minor, by Beate Dignas. She includes a single Near-Eastern site, Baetocaece. Such a study for Syria and/or the wider Roman Near East would be welcome indeed, but beyond the scope of this particular thesis (and most likely the available evidence). See Dignas, B. (2002), *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, OUP, Oxford. The work of Steinsapir begins to do this; see Steinsapir, A. I. (2005), *Rural Sanctuaries in Roman Syria: The Creation of a Sacred Landscape*, *BAR* International Series 1431, *BAR*, Oxford. An analysis of Roman Near Eastern temples in respect of the caravan trade has been attempted by Klaus Freyberger, but as we shall see, his attempt is notable for its weaknesses as much as for its strengths. See

have sought information about, or had relations with, multiple suppliers or clients, but ultimately supposes a series of direct relationships between the temple, and actual and potential suppliers and clients. Crucially for our purposes, it implies a nodal relationship with long-distance trade. An investigation into this variety of temple trade would require direct evidence such as records, sales, and finds of long-distance goods.

It can also mean trade undertaken through temples: their enabling of trade through roles such as the networking described above by Rauh, or the hosting of periodic fairs and markets.[22] This would imply, rather than a series of individual relationships (which may nevertheless have been complex), that by facilitating exchange of goods and information between third parties, temples engaged in a wide variety of direct and indirect relationships with multiple actors at a variety of distances. The number of potential relationships and exchanges is vastly higher: as well as acting as destinations for long-distance trade, it implies that temples could also act as nodes and hubs for it. This phenomenon can be elucidated not only by direct evidence such as archaeology and inscriptions, but also via indications from temple morphology and construction. It is this conception of temple trade in particular which this thesis will explore.

1.3   Methodology

This thesis will therefore examine evidence of and from temple sites and sites of worship, and characterise these with regard to trade. The sites examined will principally be Palmyrene, but include comparanda from elsewhere, and a particular focus will be on their relationship with long-distance trade. This undertaking will be aided by an examination in Part II of ancient trade and its nature, scope and requirements. The Palmyrene temples and comparanda from elsewhere are listed in a Gazetteer for reference.[23] The evidence considered will include archaeological material, written material (both epigraphy from sites and ancient literary sources), the architecture, morphology and location of temple sites, and the relation between such sites and others. The range of evidence from successive sites will be compared and

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Freyberger, K. S. (1998), *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenisierten Osten*, *Damaszener Forschungen* Band 6, von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein.

[22] On which, see below, pp. 178-82. A prime example of this is Baetocaece, although there are hints that such fairs were held at Palmyra as well. An analysis of Roman Near Eastern temples in respect of the caravan trade has been attempted by Klaus Freyberger, but as we shall see, his attempt is notable for its weaknesses as much as for its strengths. See Freyberger, K. S. (1998), *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenisierten Osten, Damaszener Forschungen* Band 6, von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein.

[23] Gazetteer, pp. 276-7.

interrelated to build a picture not only of the relationship of individual sites to commerce and long-distance trade, but of how temple sites interacted with ancient long-distance trade as a networked phenomenon transcending cultural, geographical and political boundaries.

Three models will be established, which characterise the relationships between temples and long-distance trade. I shall term these the networking temple, the hosting temple, and the supporting temple; these three are elaborated below, and will be demonstrated by the evidence considered.

A number of points must be recognised.

First, while we shall be seeking evidence of 'temple trade' as defined above, and what it can tell us, it would be false to assume that all evidence relates to trade; equally, given that evidence for trade is often ephemeral, a lack of evidence cannot be taken as evidence of absence. It would also be false to presume that evidence of commerce is necessarily evidence of *long-distance* commerce (although the goods conveyed may still have arrived from long distance, for instance via a system of cabotage).[24]

Second, explicit archaeological and epigraphic evidence from sites across the Roman Near East is perhaps an order of magnitude less in quantity than from other areas of what might be called the Roman East, such as Anatolia or Egypt.[25] Indeed, evidence from some sites is almost entirely lacking, or limited to a single source, such as the site of the Sanctuary of Atargatis at Hierapolis.[26] Further, unambiguous evidence for long-distance trade generally accounts for a small proportion of overall material from any given site or source, even in places where one might expect it to be abundant, such as Rome or Delos, and even where it exists, identifying commercial functions of a given space more often than not "*poses a vexing problem*".[27] Of forty-nine inscriptions recorded from Palmyra's Temple of Bel, for instance, six relate directly to long-distance trade.[28]

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[24] See below, p. 114-5.
[25] See for instance the comparisons of numbers of known inscriptions in Eck, W. (2009), "The presence, role and significance of Latin in the epigraphy and culture of the Roman Near East", in Cotton, H. M., Hoyland, R. G., Price, J. J. and Wasserstein, D. J. (eds.) (2009), *From Hellenism to Islam – Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, CUP, Cambridge, pp. 15-42, esp. pp. 16-21.
[26] Lucian, *de Dea Syria*. See below, pp. 32-4.
[27] See Rauh (1993), p. 79.
[28] See discussion below, pp. 215-6.

It must therefore be emphasised that we are largely dealing with accumulated indications, not binary proofs.[29]

We shall therefore focus – where it is available – on evidence which clearly relates to trade and to long-distance trade. Inscriptions mentioning caravans, merchants, or goods of long-distance trade are therefore of primary importance, as is explicit archaeological evidence of such goods. But the disposition, morphology and position of a site, as well as its archaeology, can also contribute. Was the temple on a main thoroughfare, beside a major road, or tucked away in a back street or atop a peak? Did it have a huge courtyard, a wayside enclosure, or banqueting rooms? Was it built of local stone or Luna marble? Answers to these questions may not make up for the lack of attestation through explicit archaeological or epigraphic evidence, but they remain potent indicators of a site's likely role and significance.

Archaeological evidence abounds, as we shall see, although it is often frustratingly shallow, even if it is extensive.[30] Specific studies – often focused upon Roman Egypt thanks to the preferential preservation conditions there – are the most common, and once again the comparative lack of studies from our area is noteworthy.[31] We shall explore evidence from other individual sites in the Roman Near East as we come to them in the following Parts, as comparanda with Palmyra. This, in combination with literary and epigraphic sources, will form the basis for our investigation. Of course, as with all kinds of evidence, the archaeology is skewed by what has survived. In the context of long-distance trade, many commodities simply do not survive, or only do so under rare circumstances (waterlogged or desiccated conditions); as a result, studies tend to focus on materials such as glass, ceramics and metals, and the quantities of organics which do survive are not reflective of the ancient reality. Many organics, such as slaves, animals, fabrics, spices and the like, are all but archaeologically invisible under most conditions.

Epigraphic evidence is likewise subject to caveats and pitfalls. For instance, as with archaeology, the issue of what has survived, versus what has not, necessarily skews the available evidence. Furthermore,

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[29] Charles Beard's "*damn dark candle over a damn dark abyss*" springs to mind, cited in a communication by Smith, R. F. (1989), in *American Historical Review* 94 (Oct. 1989), p. 1247.
[30] Major studies include Harris (2011), McLaughlin (2010), Tomber (2008), Young (2001), and of course, Raschke (1978).
[31] See for instance Sidebotham, S. E. (2011), *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*, UCP, London.

consideration must be given to other questions. Why was an inscription erected? Why was it erected (or found) where it was? How was it intended to be interpreted? What were the motives for erecting it, actual and professed? Why was it written in one language (or languages) over another? Why has it survived? Often few, if any, of these questions are answerable, but they must nevertheless be considered. For instance, while it is apparent that the caravan trade was present across the Roman Near East, it is only in Palmyra that epigraphic attestation survives in any quantity. Quite why this should be is one of a number of questions which we shall explore.

Where possible, this thesis will propose a likely role for a temple site in long-distance trade. By examining Palmyrene sites of worship across the Roman Near East, and a wide range of comparanda as well, we will build a picture of the diversity of roles which temples played in long-distance trade and the networks of societies, cults and personal ties upon which that trade – and arguably the whole ancient economy – relied. We shall see shortly how the endeavour might be approached from a theoretical basis.

1.4   New models for temples and trade

In considering the roles of temples in long-distance trade, we must bear in mind the importance of a number of factors within multiple fields. The role of temples in society and in the economy is of course fundamental, as is conceiving of temples as entities in society and the economy, rather than just as expressions of ethnicity or identity. But crucial to an understanding of this is an appreciation of the role of institutions in networks of trust, and the role of networks of trust, and of religious networks, in the economy as a whole. We will explore the scholarship surrounding these issues shortly. In Part II, we will consider the implications – what the evidence might look like. In Part III, we will discuss the Palmyrene evidence itself. That evidence is extensive, although rarely is it clear-cut (such as with the 'caravan inscriptions').[32] In many instances, the case for a role in long-distance trade will only emerge from consideration in the round of a temple's site, morphology, routes, finds, and remains, taken together.

One aspect implicit in, and common to, the models here presented, is the capacity for temples as institutions to provide protection and assurance (including divine or supernatural insurance) to those

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[32] By which I mean, simply, inscriptions mentioning caravans or long-distance trade. See section III.5.1, pp. 215-9.

engaged in what was ultimately a very risky endeavour: the transport and sale of goods and animals representing enormous concentrations of wealth, over long distances in adverse conditions. The ability to engage in business under a presumption of something approaching fair treatment and non-violence is a fundamental requirement of a network of trust in the first place;[33] as we shall see, this has led to commercial activity gravitating towards sacred and religious institutions throughout history. Such a role is demonstrated at Delos, for instance.[34]

It is the argument of this thesis that Palmyrene temples fulfilled a range of important direct and indirect roles in long-distance trade in the Roman Near East. The most important of these was as sites supporting the network of trust upon which trade relied. While many of these roles remain elusive or speculative, these models – in essence, 'networking', 'hosting' and 'supporting' temples – are those which are most strongly indicated in the evidence, with the 'networking' temple being the most prevalent. In this way, the socio-economic role of Palmyrene temples can begin to be established beyond labels of ethnicity or identity, and their role in long-distance trade in our region and period can be explored and expressed in far greater depth than an offhand reference to "*temple trade*".

In basic terms, the closest modern analogies for the three models – networking, hosting and supporting – might be the clubhouse, the county fairground, and the fuelling station. In other words, networking temples were where merchants exchanged information, hosting temples were where they exchanged and sold goods and services, and supporting temples were where they received services in support of these activities. In addition to these three roles, temples sometimes directly benefited from the proceeds of long-distance trade in their construction, as explicitly shown with the Temple of Bel at Palmyra.[35] Let us examine these models in more detail:

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[33] See for instance North, D. C. (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, CUP, Cambridge.

[34] See Rauh (1993), p. 339: "*By erecting religious shrines in each of the island's agoras, resident merchants fashioned these squares into "precincts" where the gods witnessed the oaths used to bind contractual agreements.*" Also pp. 129-50.

[35] See below, pp. 207-8 & 219-22.

These were temples which had a direct, if not always obvious, role in trade: facilitating the network of trust upon which Palmyra's trade relied. They may not always have been the largest or grandest temples in their settlement or district, often instead catering for smaller groups, families, associations, guilds or tribes within it. Through membership of these organisations and participation in these rites, the network of trust could be cemented and extended to new places, such as with the *funduq* at Coptos.[36] In the main, this appears to have been the principal role of Palmyrene temples in long-distance trade, and as we shall see, reflects trends identified for instance at Delos: "*When clustering in an emporium, foreign merchants appear to have preferred to organise themselves according to religious brotherhoods centring upon the worship of a particular pagan god, usually maritime gods or the patron gods of their towns of origin*".[37] (In this case, the Palmyrene gods.)

Such a networking role might be evinced directly by the presence of honorific inscriptions dedicated to, or erected by, individuals identified with long-distance trade away from their local communities; such a role would also be indicated by the convergence of cultic space and facilities such as banqueting rooms with individuals from beyond the proximate community (indicated for instance by names or the origins of artefacts, in this case Palmyrenes abroad). As we shall see, such epigraphy is indeed found at Palmyra. By erecting dedicatory inscriptions to one another, Palmyrenes engaged in long-distance trade could demonstrate their trustworthiness and piety, literally cementing their credentials within the network of trust.[38] Examples are the Temple of Baalshamin at Palmyra or the *funduq* at Coptos.[39] Despite their sometimes unassuming nature, networking temples were arguably the most important to Palmyra's long-distance trade; they were, by some way, the most prevalent.

What will be apparent from the evidence we will survey is that temples across the Roman Near East played a role maintaining, expanding and updating the networks of trust upon which all long-distance trade relied. The erection of inscriptions and statues in temples, particularly at Palmyra, suggests a role for

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[36] III.5.5, pp. 259-63.
[37] Rauh (1993), p. 29.
[38] On such inscriptions, see in particular Dijkstra, K. (1995), *Life and Loyalty: A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence*, Brill, Leiden, esp. pp. 15-32 on dedicant-dedicand relationships, euergetism and patronage.
[39] See below, pp. 259-63.

Palmyrene temples of all sizes as spaces where expressions of trust and commercial success could not only be erected, but could be expected to be seen. To be sure, there is a specific genre of honorific inscriptions to merchants and individuals in long-distance trade which is not found outside the Palmyrene sphere. In the case of the most successful caravan traders such as Soados, statues and inscriptions were erected in their honour simultaneously in multiple sanctuaries and religious sites across the Palmyrene sphere; in Soados' case this was done no less than three separate times.[40] This habit is also seen in honorific inscriptions from Palmyra's Temple of Bel; a not dissimilar habit can be observed at the Sanctuary of Shamash at Hatra, but not explicitly in the context of trade.[41]

As well as signifying euergetism and patronage,[42] these inscriptions also emphasise one's standing in the community and, crucially, one's trust and admiration by members of the community engaged in long-distance trade. In many cases, individuals who assisted caravans or led them under adverse circumstances were honoured;[43] individuals who successfully concluded major deals were also honoured, including, as we shall see, two matrons sponsoring long-distance trade via the Red Sea, at Medamoud in Egypt.[44] Such inscriptions are by no means limited to temples; in Palmyra at least they may also be found in the agora and along the Colonnaded Street. However, this simply shows that this was a tendency which took place in spaces where an individual's or group's successful navigation of the network of trust could be advertised for all to see; the inclusion of Palmyrene temples in this habit suggests their role was just as important as the agora or the main ceremonial thoroughfare, if not more so considering the bias towards temples in, for instance, the Soados inscriptions.

The erection of inscriptions is not the only expression of this networking role, although it is perhaps the most obvious. As we shall see, one possible explanation for the absence of caravan- and trade-related

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[40] See below, pp. 222-9; Kaizer (2002), pp. 62-3.

[41] See below, pp. 84-5. On the honorific statues and inscriptions of Hatra, see above all Dirven, L. (2008), "Aspects of Hatrene religion: A note on the statues of kings and nobles from Hatra", in Kaizer (ed.) *Variety of Religious Life*, pp. 209-46. See also Dijkstra (1995), Ch. 4, pp. 171-244. The two traditions had marked differences – those at Hatra appear to have been much more religious in nature and were not erected in such public places as Palmyra (cf. Dirven), while apparently leaving "*tacit*" much of the actual honour intended to accrue to the dedicand (cf. Dijkstra).

[42] Cf. Dijkstra (1995), pp. 23-8.

[43] Such as the aforementioned Soados.

[44] See below, pp. 259-63.

honorific inscriptions from elsewhere is that the circumstances at Palmyra were uniquely favourable for their erection and/or preservation: the centrality of camels and pastoralism for the city's way of life in the Syrian steppe, combined with the absence of a monarchy which would have heavily altered the context and expectations of any honorific epigraphic habit. This is not to say that the caravan trade and associated phenomena were absent elsewhere, but that Palmyra was where they were most likely to leave such lasting direct evidence.[45]

Caravan inscriptions aside, the erection of temples themselves also seems to have been an act which, consciously or not, directly strengthened the network of trust upon which long-distance trade relied: the Temple of the Necropolis and Temple of the Gaddê at Dura-Europos, the funduq at Coptos, and the Temples of the Augusti at Petra, Vologesias, and Muziris, were all erected by or with the assistance of diasporal trading populations, and had among others a function of serving those trading communities in their new homes (although it should be recognised that, for instance, Temples of the Augusti also served the function of demonstrating loyalty to Rome on the part of local ruling elites). Either way, by providing a venue for common worship and, more importantly, common cult and ritual activity, the personal bonds of trust between these individuals could be strengthened. So too could opportunities for the involvement of incoming members of these diasporal communities. This allowed for the integration of new members into the network of trust, and further facilitated that network's spread and expansion.

It often seems likely that networks in these temples extended well beyond their proximate communities – most obviously at Palmyra, but also at Hatra and probably Petra – to the nomadic and pastoral communities of the surround, which were crucial for the organisations of long-distance trade.[46] The potential role of sanctuaries in securing networking with and between nomads and the permanently settled communities should not be underestimated, particularly considering the importance of these groups, and their trust, for the caravan trade. Such an argument could be made for temples such as those of Bel, Rabaseire and Arsu at Palmyra, Temple XI at Hara, and Iram and Qasrawet in Nabataea.

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[45] See also for instance Kaiser (2013), p. 66, who notes that at Hatra the organisation of any such trade might be expected to be done by or on behalf of the monarchy.

[46] See on exactly this subject, Dijkstra, K. (1990), "State and Steppe: The socio-political implications of Hatra inscription 79", in *JSS* 35 (1990), pp. 81-98. We shall explore this in more detail in due course.

In these ways, both large and small urban temples acted as anchors for the network of trust. Such networking temples also included the Temples of Baalshamin and Allat at Palmyra, the Temple in the Necropolis and the Temple of the Gaddê at Dura, the funduq at Coptos, the Small Temple at Petra, the Temples of the Augusti at Vologesias and Muziris, and the temple at Medamoud in Egypt.[47]

Two further models can be determined from the evidence; while both were present in the Palmyrene sphere, more examples exist outside it – although it is of course probable that many would have been impacted upon by Palmyra's long-distance trade:

1.4.2   Hosting Temples: temples as venues for trade

These were temples which had a direct role in trade, physically hosting major fairs and the commerce associated with them. They were often the largest temples in their district or city, not only with temenoi large enough to host a fair, (constituting a major commercial opportunity in and of itself, such as at Baetocaece),[48] but often with permanent commercial arrangements too, such as the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa,[49] and the Sanctuary of Shamash at Hatra.[50] These temples were therefore integrated into long-distance trade as destinations for the sale of goods. Being necessarily such large edifices, only the Temple of Bel and possibly the Temple of 'Nabu' appear to have fulfilled this role in the Palmyrene sphere, although evidence from elsewhere suggests that this kind of temple-trade relationship was in fact widespread across the Roman Near East.[51]

Indications that a temple was a host for long-distance trade in this way can be both morphological and evidential. It must be stressed that the presence of any one such indication on its own is insufficient evidence that a temple was in fact a host for long-distance trade in this fashion. We must therefore look for the convergence of some or all of the following indicators: direct attestation of a fair, festival, or an

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[47] It is also possible that the caravanserai temples we discuss in due course may have been used by nomadic or pastoralist communities, but that will require new evidence from specific temples for substantiation.

[48] See below, pp. 182-5.

[49] See below, p. 170.

[50] See below, pp. 82-6.

[51] The presence of money-lenders at the Temple on the Mount in Jerusalem (Gazetteer, 26), as attested in scripture, while not an indication of long-distance trade, is a further indication of the ability of sacred spaces to act as hosts to commercial enterprise. The role of protection and assurance is just as important there as it would be for long-distance trade.

otherwise periodical market within the temple precinct;[52] the presence of permanent commercial space such as shops within the sanctuary morphology;[53] archaeological indications of commerce such as quantities of coins, goods such as incense-burners, lamps, pottery, etcetera.[54] The presence of a large temenos court and proximity to major routes can be further indicative, in concert with other factors.

It certainly seems that there is a role for temples directly hosting trade, long-distance or otherwise, within their precincts. In the case of some temples, such as Artemis at Gerasa, the Great Temple at Petra, or the Temple of Jupiter Damascenus, this appears to have been in the form of permanent commercial premises; in the case of others, such as Palmyrene Bel, Zeus Baetocaece and, most likely, Zeus Belos at Apamea and Hatrene Shamash, it was likely in the form of permanent, regular or periodic markets. These markets may have coincided with, or followed in the wake of, major religious festivals. At Palmyra itself, we will see that the main religious festivals coincided with the arrival of the caravans from Charax in April.[55] Such festivals, also indicated at Baetocaece, Ba'albek and Hatra, were likely dominant in their immediate territory at the very least, and in the case of the largest temples, presumably attracted pilgrims on a larger scale. In the case of Hierapolis, the major festival seems to have attracted people and goods from across the Roman Near East and beyond, including Mesopotamia and Egypt, if we are to believe Lucian.[56] Outwith Palmyra, such festivals in all likelihood took place at most major temenos temples; non-urban temples such as Baetocaece and Si'a also appear to have had this role.

In this way, the largest temples both of the Palmyrene sphere and of our region acted as at least occasional destinations for trade, both long-distance and otherwise, in their own right, to say nothing of their undoubted demand themselves for incense and other goods travelling long distances. The advent of a major festival would have been a significant draw for pilgrims and the trade they inevitably brought, and the presence of permanent commercial premises would have ensured a continuous role for such temples in directly hosting commerce under the auspices and protection of the deity(-ies) and their cult. This,

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[52] As at the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, below, pp. 207-8, and the Temple of Zeus Baetocaece, below, pp. 182-5.
[53] As at the Temple of Artemis in Gerasa, below, p. 170, and the Temple of Zeus Damascenus, below, pp. 97-8.
[54] As at the Great Temple in Petra; see below, pp. 136-8 & 144-5.
[55] See below, pp. 165 & 181.
[56] See below, pp. 9 & 32-4.

combined with the networking role of temples identified above, would have made periodic fairs important events for maintaining this network of trust as well.

1.4.3   Supporting Temples: temples supporting long-distance trade

These were temples which had a less direct, facilitating role in trade: temples attached to caravanserais, for instance – often either including facilities or integrated into them in the same complex, or built expressly for that purpose, such as at Iram, or possibly at Sa'diyya near Hatra, in the latter case set up by the captain of the Hatrene guard.[57] The best example from the Palmyrene sphere is the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura-Europos, and the Gennaes caravan halt.[58] Despite their often unassuming nature, such temples had a key role as infrastructure, offering physical and spiritual protection, succour and sanctuary, and could also be used to tax long-distance trade, allowing authorities to act through them upon such trade.

As one might expect, indications that a temple was a supporting temple in this fashion are chiefly to do with siting and morphology: proximity to major routes, the presence of watering and corralling infrastructure such as large cisterns or wells, and enclosures, and so on. Express epigraphic identification is welcome but restricted in the main to examples in the Nabataean, not the Palmyrene, sphere, as are most examples of supporting temples among those which we examine.

Such extra-urban temples frequently had a role in hosting or augmenting the infrastructure upon which long-distance trade and communication relied. To be sure, many such extra-urban temples had a principal role serving the rural communities of which they formed a part, such as Si'a, and should not be called caravanserais. However, many more were explicitly designed for the receiving of a large number of animals and persons at once, and the provisioning for their watering, as at Wadi Sabra.[59] Often, such temples were found at boundaries, raising the possibility that these temples were used for taxation, such as that at Kadesh and that at Seriane, both of which had small attendant communities. However, such temples were frequently isolated and their role as caravanserais is beyond doubt; many such temples were in the Nabataean trade network, such as those of Iram, Qasrawet and Thoana.

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[57] See below, pp. 76-7.
[58] It must be stressed that while Palmyrene trade at Dura-Europos appears to have been strictly between the two cities and their surrounds, the underlying principles, particularly regarding trust, remain exactly the same.
[59] See below, p. 132.

Such sites may well have played a secondary role in the network of trust: the 'caravanserai of the Gennaes' from the Soados series of honorifics in the Palmyrene sphere, and the Hatrene Sa'diyya dedication,[60] suggest that they could play just such a role. The demand of temples and of governments for incense has also been proposed as one reason why such temples could also have been used for the taxation of long-distance trade, at least along the Incense Route.[61] In the case of the temple(s) at Wadi Sabra, large attendant structures are suspected to constitute a caravanserai, as we will see.[62] In this way, such temples could also play a role in the organisation and taxation of long-distance trade. It is also possible that they had a role to play in cementing relations between settled and non-settled populations; this role on a grand scale has been proposed by others as a possible explanation for the initial settlement of cities such as Palmyra and Hatra.[63]

These temples likely played a critical role in supporting long-distance trade, and arguably in long-distance travel and communication of all kinds in our period. Particularly in hostile terrain such as the Syrian steppe, the Mesopotamian Desert or the Arabian interior, they provided the surest facilities and sources of supplies and safety in terrain that was – and remains – notoriously unforgiving to outsiders. That they often charged heavily for the provision of these supplies, according to Pliny at least,[64] suggests that they were only too well aware of this fact.

Extra-urban temples supporting long-distance trade in these ways included at the very least the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura-Europos, the Gennaes caravan halt, and those at Seriane, Iram, Qasrawet, Thoana, Sa'diyya near Hatra, and Dhiban. Those at Si'a, Kadesh and Wadi Sabra also likely played at least a partial role in supporting long-distance trade. Many more will doubtless come to light.

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[60] See below, pp. 76-7.
[61] See below, pp. 129-33.
[62] See p. 132.
[63] See for instance Smith, A. M. (2013), *Roman Palmyra – Identity, Community, and State Formation*, OUP, New York, *passim*, (Palmyra); Kaizer (2013), *passim*, esp. pp. 69-71 (Hatra), also Dijkstra (1990), *passim*, esp. pp. 97-8 (Hatra).
[64] *NH* XII.32.

1.4.4 *Further remarks*

These three models – network, hosting and supporting temples – are not intended to represent the full spectrum of roles which temples could play in long-distance trade, or in commerce more broadly, in our region and period, or at all. Equally, it is not proposed that these models were rigid; the Temple of Bel at Palmyra, for instance, may very well at once have been a networking temple and a host to trade; we shall also see how supporting temples might also have roles in the network of trust. Doubtless many temples such as those at Si'a fulfilled elements of all three models without fully expressing the characteristics of any. There were also undoubtedly a great many temples whose role in long-distance trade was so minimal or at such a remove as to be virtually non-existent, or whose role – as, for instance, consumers, wholesalers, financiers, etcetera – is not easily expressed by any of the three roles presented here. It is also the case that many such roles are unlikely to have left meaningful evidence surviving into our period, forcing us to instead rely on the consideration of factors such as situation, morphology, construction, routes, finds and remains, taken together to suggest a direction.

The models presented in this thesis comprise the roles which the evidence we will explore most readily supports or suggests. It will be clear that societies and communities were operating in a networked fashion through these institutions; these three models permit us to begin to see how this was the case. In this way, we will not only see the roles which temples played in long-distance trade, but also in commerce more broadly, in the network of trust binding the ancient world together, and in society as a whole.

This is not to say that further roles are not allowable in the evidence as well. The role of temples as consumers – of incense, and of other goods from long-distance trade, from silks to wines to animals and even the Indian eunuchs attested on the Alexandrian Tariff – is not easily elucidated through the evidence we will see. Nor, indeed, is any role as actors in trade and commerce in their own right, or as suppliers. However, given the patchy nature of the evidence, it is to be doubted whether there is sufficient evidence from the Roman Near East to investigate this as fully as would seem warranted.

1.5 Ancient Sources

A number of texts stand out as particularly relevant to long-distance trade; regarding Palmyra, we shall see in due course that the ancient canon is mixed at best.[65] The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*,[66] a shipping manual for the Egypt-India route via the Red Sea, provides a crucial snapshot of First-Century AD maritime trade. It is remarkable as it appears to be a genuine first-hand account from a merchant of the period – a unique survival. To this we might add Isidore's *Parthian Stations*,[67] which almost certainly deals with a military route through northern Syria and Mesopotamia,[68] but which can nevertheless tell us much about the logistics of overland transport in our period.[69] The *Parthian Stations* is particularly useful as it is a source for the Near East in the Parthian and Roman period, as opposed to Egypt and the Red Sea, which is where much of our other evidence – such as the aforementioned *Periplus* – congregates.

Strabo's *Geography* and Pliny's *Natural History* are two surviving examples of ancient geographies of the known world, both with extensive passages on our region and the trade within it; to these we can add Ptolemy's *Geography*. Strabo writes extensively on the Roman Near East and beyond, including India in his account; however, he appears to have disdained merchants as a source of information,[70] making his description of areas beyond his direct experience out of date at best and highly suspect at worst. His work appears to cover the early period of our investigation – the mid-First Century AD, and he does not in fact mention Palmyra at all. Pliny is also compendious, if not more so, but is both polemical and contradictory in his reliance upon previous works deemed to be of authority (such as Strabo), thereby making precise dating of his information difficult.[71] As we shall see, regarding Palmyra, his account is as much reflective of Roman stereotype as ancient reality. Ptolemy's work is the least detailed of the three, being cartographical rather than encyclopaedic, but as he based much of his writing on the experiences of

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[65] See below, III.2, pp. 190-3.
[66] *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, trans. Casson, L. (1989), *The Periplus Maris Erythraei – Text with introduction, translation, and commentary*, PUP, Princeton.
[67] Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, trans. Müller, K. (1853), in Schoff, W. H. (ed.) (1914), *Parthian Stations by Isidore of Charax: an account of the overland trade route between the Levant and India in the First Century B.C.*, Ares, Chicago. See Kramer, N. (2003), "Das Intinerar Σταθμοι Παρθικοι des Isidor von Charax – Beschreibung eines Handelsweges?", in *Klio* 85 (2003), pp. 120-30; also the translation in Brill's *New Jacoby*.
[68] This is the conclusion from a reading of some of the entries which describe "*the legion*"; see McLaughlin (2010), p. 12. The translator assumes its purpose was as a caravan route, however (see Schoff (1914), p. 17).
[69] See above all Kramer (2003), *passim*.
[70] Potentially because of their exaggerating sales patter, among other things; see McLaughlin (2010), pp. 9-10.
[71] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 6-7.

contemporary Alexandrian merchants, it is a valuable source of information about Roman trading settlements overseas.[72]

Ancient sources for long-distance trade have periodically been the subject of compendia; one of the first, and certainly one with a remarkable history of its own, is that by Coedès,[73] presumed to contain "*almost every known reference to silk*" in the Classical canon and beyond.[74] Extensive inscriptional evidence in Greek and Latin, but more importantly in Palmyrene and Hatrene Aramaic, and Nabataean, survives and is of particular use.[75] Of these, the Palmyrene 'caravan inscriptions' and epigraphy such as the Nicanor archive from the Red Sea ports in Egypt are noteworthy.[76]

Rathbone's study of the Appianus estate in the Fayum is an important source for prices, logistics and integration;[77] Sijpesteijn's study of customs duties similarly gives a great deal of evidence for the logistics of long-distance and regional trade, particularly with regard to the quantities involved and the animals used to transport them.[78] The prevalence of written material from Roman Egypt is worth emphasising, such as the Muziris papyrus;[79] this prevalence means that quite a lot of modern studies on the ancient economy, particularly in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, draw extensively upon them, and yet they relate to a highly idiosyncratic part of the Roman Empire, and, indeed, the Roman East.

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[72] See for instance McLaughlin (2010), p. 14.

[73] Coedès, G. (1910), *Texts of Greek and Latin Authors on the Far East from the 4th C. B.C.E. to the 14th C. C.E.*, trans. Sheldon, J. (2010), Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium. The existence of the 1910 original was doubted prior to a 1979 reprint. (ibid., p. xi). See also Sheldon, J. (2012), *Commentary on George Coedès, Texts of Greek and Latin Authors on the Far East*, Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium.

[74] Ibid., p. xii.

[75] See below; see also Healey, J. F. (2009), *Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period: Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, Volume IV*, OUP, Oxford. On inscriptions in trade generally, see for instance (if dated) Meijer, F. and Van Nijf, O. (1992), *Trade, Transport and Society in the Ancient World: A sourcebook*, Routledge, London.

[76] See below, pp. 215-32. On the caravan inscriptions, see above all Fox, G. and Lieu, S. N. C. (2011), *Inscriptiones Palmyrenae Selectae ad Commercium Pertinentes*, ACRC, Macquarie University, Online; http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download.jsp?id=106178 (retrieved 17/03/2012)
For Egyptian sources see for instance Rathbone, D. (1991), *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century A.D. Egypt*, CUP, Cambridge.

[77] Rathbone (1991), esp. Ch. 7, pp. 265-330. Although he does not deal with long-distance trade, he does deal with the underlying fundaments of transport, which remain important.

[78] Sijpesteijn (1987).

[79] In Rathbone, D. (2000).

Ceramics, numismatics, and archaeological small finds can also be useful indicators, if nothing else to indicate economic integration of sites with their wider region or beyond.[80] However, in many cases, these are not published or known where sites have not been dug.

One further source is the Peutinger Map, the only surviving map of the Roman world as it seemingly was in antiquity.[81] Highly schematised, the map focuses entirely on land routes, vastly distorting coastlines and other features and rendering roads as largely straight lines, almost in the manner of a modern urban transit map such as that of the London Underground. Major cities are indicated with symbols, and crucially, the waypoints – towns, villages, stops, caravanserais – between them are all named, along with the distances between them. A medieval copy of an antique original, it has been subject to error and laziness in copying,[82] yet it remains a remarkable survival of what appears to be a map of the Roman world. Talbert argues that the original must post-date the extension of the Roman road network to Dacia in the Second Century, but that its striking lack of Christian elements suggests it pre-dates the conversion of the Empire,[83] and tentatively proposes that it may date from the period of the Tetrarchy (i.e., circa 300 AD).[84] Nevertheless, its retention of cities which by then had been destroyed, such as Hatra and even the Campanian cities destroyed by Vesuvius' eruption in 79 AD, as well as the roads of the by-then-abandoned Dacian province, is odd, particularly as Dura-Europos appears to have been completely omitted. Palmyra appears on Section IX of the Map, with the remainder of the Roman Near East on Sections VIII (south and west of Palmyra, including Petra), and X (north and east of Palmyra, including Hatra).

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[80] A good example is the 'Great Temple' of Philadelphia/Amman, which has yielded coins from across the Roman Near East as well as Rome and Alexandria, suggesting a degree of connectivity not otherwise clearly elucidated from the site itself. See Koutsoukou, A., Russel, K. W., Najjar, M and Momani, A. (1997), *The Great Temple of Amman: the Excavations*, American Centre of Oriental Research, Amman, pp. 23-4.

[81] On which see above all Talbert, R. J. A. (2010), *Rome's World – The Peutinger Map Reconsidered*, CUP, New York. Prior scholarship on the Map dates from its rediscovery in the 16th Century onwards, yet given its unique nature, modern scholarship is surprisingly sparse (see Talbert (2010), pp. 71-2). His is the first monograph on the Map since 1983, and the first in English in well over a century.

[82] Ibid., pp. 125-7.

[83] Ibid., pp. 133-6.

[84] Ibid., p. 136.

As for temples, those of Palmyra pass entirely without mention in the Classical canon. A few Near Eastern temples are mentioned by various Christian authors of Late Antiquity, usually in the context of iconoclasm.[85] Perhaps the best ancient literary source for any of the temples of the Roman Near East is Lucian's *De Dea Syria*,[86] although there is intense debate as to whether it may be relied upon at all.[87] In it, he purports to describe the Temple of Atargatis at Hierapolis (Gazetteer, 24), in the context of other great temples in Roman-era Syria, all of which are now lost to us.

As with other ancient authors, the question of how Lucian's work can be approached is vexed, and it would be as mistaken to accept it as fact as it would be to discount it out of hand. This issue is dubbed, simply, 'The Problem' by Lightfoot in her definitive analysis of the *de Dea Syria*:[88] she takes the view that reducing the work to satire and discounting it on that basis is mistaken, as "*the frequency with which the details furnished by* DDS *have turned out to be perfectly right*" suggests that it has an underappreciated use "*as a documentary source*".[89] She is inclined to believe that it was indeed written by Lucian after all,[90] and that he visited the temple personally.[91] She finds attractive the notion that it was intended to be performed with his *Herodotus*;[92] although whether the intended audience – if any – was in Greece itself or the Hellenised Near East cannot be known.[93]

Hardly anything survives of the vast temple complex described in Lucian's *de Dea Syria*; aside from an indication of where it may once have been, and the suspected site of the pool he described, our only knowledge of the temple comes down to us through his writing. Consequently, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, he makes it clear that it was a large temenos temple hosting significant fairs and

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[85] E.g. below, p. 96.
[86] The subject of a definitive translation and commentary by Lightfoot (2003).
[87] See for instance Lightfoot (2003), pp. 209-21.
[88] Lightfoot (2003), p. 86.
[89] Ibid., p. 87.
[90] Ibid., pp. 184-208, esp. pp. 196-200.
[91] Ibid., p. 216: "*I am persuaded – I think – of the reality of Lucian's visit to Hierapolis.*"
[92] Ibid., p. 207.
[93] Ibid., p. 208.

festivals, drawing visitors and commerce from across the Roman Near East, as far afield as Egypt and Mesopotamia.[94]

In the absence of an extant ruin which might be compared to his description, Lucian's *de Dea Syria* is the best evidence we have for the Temple of Atargatis (and the only evidence of its kind for any Near Eastern temple of the period), however its nature as a work of ethnography in the Herodotean vein, satirising its own narrator, means that it should be treated with caution.[95] On the subjects of iconography and detail, the account is borne out strikingly well in the evidence, but when Lucian apes Herodotus' use of the outlandish, his work's nature as a Herodotean pastiche has obvious implications for how it should be read. In short, some details are clearly accurate, and others clearly not; those which are borne out elsewhere are of greatest interest to our own study.

For our purposes, the most interesting passage in the *de Dea Syria* is passage 10, quoted at the beginning of this Part, in which Lucian describes the exceptional wealth, reach, and festivals of the temple, having established its exceptional workmanship and holiness.[96] It is a passage rich with Herodotean and classical topoi, particularly in his recounting of the phenomena demonstrating the temple's holiness.[97] Lucian mentions πρῶτόν – goods or wares – from Arabia, Phoenicia, Babylonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia and Assyria. Lightfoot notes that these places are all "*named in Herodotus*", and that the construction of each is differed for emphasis.[98] This range of places is reflected in passage 32, in which he recounts the wide array of origins for the jewels adorning the cult statues – Egypt, India, Ethiopia, Medea, Armenia and Babylonia.[99] Both lists are credible – and certainly not a pious or Herodotean exaggeration on the order of the infamous three-hundred-fathom phalli of passage 28. They are presented for effect – why would they not be? – but that is not itself grounds for discounting them. If they are indeed reliable, or even only partly reliable, combined with his description of the festivals in passages 47-60, they would suggest

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[94] Lucian, *DDS*, 10, quoted at beginning of Part I above, p. 9.
[95] Lightfoot (2003), p. 217: "*It is around the narrator and his personality – garrulous, fussy, credulous – not the cult, that the humour crystallises.*"
[96] Ibid., pp. 253-3 (text) and 331-4 (commentary).
[97] Ibid., pp. 332-3: "*The particular prodigies that Lucian cites here seem to have solidified into topoi especially in and after the Alexander historians (though they also pre-existed them).*"
[98] Ibid., p. 333.
[99] Ibid., p. 271 (text).

(passage 10 in particular) that the Temple of Atargatis at Hierapolis was a temple attracting large numbers of pilgrims and goods from beyond the immediate region. Lucian makes no mention of a market or commercial fair, but the absence of such trade at Hierapolis would be surprising given the scale of the festivities, range of goods attested, and the presence of similar markets at similar festivals, as we shall see.

2. The Way Forward

Our first task will be to establish how long-distance trade worked in our region and period: Part II will explore this in detail, not least the specific requirements and capabilities of the camel, upon which this trade relied. We shall first survey the state of the debate on the ancient economy, the Roman Near East and the place of long-distance trade within both; we shall also survey that regarding temples and religion in the Roman Near East. As we shall see, all four areas of debate have their shortcomings – the endless 'triangular debate', and excessive focus on texts, ethnicity and identity respectively. However, we can identify approaches and comparanda that are instructive in the positive sense as well. It is clear, for instance, that an approach treating temples as institutions in society (and, therefore, in trade) is required. We can draw on the institutionalist camp of the 'triangular debate' and to some degree on New Institutional Economics to approach temples as socio-economic entities rather than mere expressions of identity. It is also clear that a detailed study of long-distance trade is required, hence our focus in Part II.

2.1   Thesis outline

In the following Parts, we consider the problems and nature of long-distance trade before examining the temples of our case studies in turn.

Part II discusses the logistics of trade. We see that there were five principal routes for long-distance trade through the Roman Near East, and that the costs involved restricted meaningful participation in long-distance trade to the wealthiest, and those with access to significant herds of camels. Even then, conditions were such that they tended to group together, with one-off arrangements, trade associations, guilds and *collegia*-like enterprises to spread costs and share considerable profits. In many cases these associations had a religious or cultic element, and successful participation in the network of trust would often lead to dedications in temples to affirm trustworthiness and success, lending these temples an important secondary role in that network. We also explore the infrastructure of long-distance trade, the

roads, caravanserais, and fairs that trade involved, and the traces these phenomena left in the archaeological and epigraphic record, including strong evidence that fairs were held in temple precincts. We shall also examine the case study of Petra and its temples in the context of the ancient incense trade.

Part III explores in detail the trade network of Palmyra, starting first with the evidence from Palmyra itself and progressing to evidence abroad, from across our region and beyond. We see that the major temples in Palmyra had links to long-distance trade via inscriptional evidence, and that evidence discussed in Part II concerning the logistics of trade, and the network of trust, is often borne out in the archaeology of Palmyrene temples both in Palmyra and elsewhere.

The Conclusion offers a retrospective to the thesis, its results, and some final remarks. It is shown that the phenomena proposed in Part II and identified in Part III, as well as in our various comparanda and case studies, are not limited to the Palmyrene sphere and are attested in temples across the Roman Near East. Inscriptional and archaeological evidence powerfully suggests that the temples under consideration were deeply woven into both the long-distance trade network, and the network of trust which underpinned it, across the region and throughout the period of our investigation.

3. The State of Play

The subjects of temples and of trade are both well-trodden in academia; that of temples *and* trade is far less well-explored. While some studies (discussed below) purport to be about both, in reality they tend to lean more towards the one subject than the other, leaving a hole in the scholarship which this thesis is an effort to begin to fill. Of course, debates in both fields are of primary importance. An exhaustive study of nearly two centuries of scholarship on these matters would be beyond both our space and our needs; however, we shall examine major threads, as well as scholarship pertaining to the archaeology and history of our region and period.

3.1   The ancient economy

Two threads dominate scholarship on the ancient economy and long-distance trade in the Roman Near East. The first is a roughly triangular debate between three schools of thought regarding the nature of the ancient economy and the role of trade within it. The second thread feeds in some respects from the first,

and relates specifically to the roles of institutions and networks in the ancient economy. Naturally, many of the issues raised here will be revisited and developed in Parts II and III.

3.1.1 The triangular debate

What I term the 'triangular debate' concerns a seemingly unending dispute over the ancient economy, between camps which might broadly be characterised as *primitivist*, *modernist* and *institutionalist*.[100] It has its roots in the latter half of the 19th Century, when the first models of the ancient economy began to develop in German scholarship.[101] Arguably the first model was advanced by Karl Rodbertus,[102] proposing that the ancient economy was composed of a primary economic unit – the *oikos* or household – in an undifferentiated economy in kind. From this followed the development of the prototypical primitivist and modernist conceptions of the ancient economy; the former, espoused by Bücher, also focused on the *oikos*, but lessened the importance of trade and money;[103] the latter, developed by Meyer, emphasised the role of trade, money and manufacturing and assumed that economies were structured along the lines of modern market organisation.[104] At this stage, the substance of the argument centred on the organisation of the economy, broadly agreeing on the evidence but disagreeing on its interpretation. While an early middle ground was sought by Salvioli,[105] both Bücher and Meyer offered rigid models of economic activity which they conceived as being universal in the ancient world.

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[100] An eloquent summary of the effect of this debate on Near Eastern studies before the era of our own study can be found in Monroe, C. M. (1997), "Money and Trade", in Snell, D. C (ed.) (2005), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 171-4. For a broader analysis of the triangular debate's effects and shortcomings, see Saller, R. (2002), "Framing the Debate over Growth in the Ancient Economy", in Scheidel, W. and von Reden, R. (eds.) (2002), *The Ancient Economy*, EUP, Edinburgh, pp. 251-69. See also Scheidel, W., Morris, I. and Saller, R. (2007), "Introduction", in idem (eds.), *Cambridge Economic History*, pp. 1-14, and Harris, W. V. (2011), *Rome's Imperial Economy*, OUP, Oxford, *passim.*

[101] For analysis of the history of the scholarship, see for instance Bang, P. F. (2008), *The Roman Bazaar: A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire*, CUP, Cambridge, pp. 17-72. See also Pearson, H. W. (1957), "The Secular Debate on Economic Primitivism", in Polanyi, K., Arensberg, C. M., and Pearson, H. W. (eds.) (1957), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in history and theory*, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., pp. 3-11.

[102] Rodbertus, K. (1865), "Zur Geschichte der römischen Tributsteuem", *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, IV, pp. 341-427.

[103] Bücher, K. (1912), *Industrial Evolution*, trans. Wickett, S. M., H. Holt, New York.

[104] Meyer, E. (1924), *Kleine Schriften*, Vols. I & II, Niemeyer, Halle.

[105] See below. Salvioli, G. (1906), *Le Capitalisme dans le Monde Antique – Études sur l'Histoire de l'Économie Romaine*, trans. Bonnet, A. (1906), V. Giard & E. Brière, Paris.

This rigidity provided an opening for Michael Rostovtzeff, whose major work, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, of 1926,[106] was one of the first significant studies to combine archaeological, literary and ancient historical approaches. It regularly uses terms such as 'capitalist' and 'proletariat', and is clearly a reaction against his own experiences of the Russian Revolution – Rostovtzeff was a Ukrainian-Russian ancient historian of the Nineteenth Century, who emigrated to the United States via Great Britain following the 1918 revolution.[107] Rostovtzeff saw the Roman economy as being analogous to the modern, adopting recognisably free-market and capitalist principles in response to supply and demand, and with advanced systems, structures and principles (what economists would term 'institutions'). He is seen as the father of the 'modernist' school of thought on the Roman economy,[108] owing in large part to the unprecedented scope and detail of his study – indeed, his influence is such that many later scholars choose to contrast their work with his, even to this day.

Meanwhile, Max Weber provided a key argument for the primitivist camp,[109] arguing first that ancient cities can be modelled as 'consumer cities', effectively parasitising their hinterlands and inexorably drawing in goods, and second that ancient societies were focused principally on the military and political spheres. Economic considerations, so far as they existed at all, were therefore subservient to these priorities, in marked contrast to the political and ideological structures that underpinned the rise of capitalism.[110] This 'pre-modern' theme was supported by Polanyi,[111] who argued that in the ancient economy, a distinction must be made between the pre-modern and modern functions of trade, money, and markets.[112] He also

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[106] Rostovtzeff, M. (1926), *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, OUP, Oxford.

[107] For a detailed account of how Rostovtzeff's experiences shaped his scholarship, see Wes, M. A. (1990), "Michael Rostovtzeff, Historian in Exile", *Historia. Einzelschriften* 65 (1990), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart.

[108] This is not entirely accurate, however, as that debate was advanced by the time Rostovtzeff wrote his book. See also Saller's objection to the characterisation of Rostovtzeff as a modernist, Saller (2002), *passim*, esp. pp. 255-6. See now Temin, P. (2013), *The Roman Market Economy*, PUP, Oxford.

[109] Weber, M. (1927), *General Economic History*, Allen & Unwin, London. This developed themes he advocated as early as 1891 in his doctoral thesis – Weber, M. (1891), *Die römische Agrargeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung für das Staats- und Privatrecht*, F. Enke, Stuttgart, Online.

[110] See now Love, J. R. (1991), *Antiquity and Capitalism – Max Weber and the sociological foundations of Roman civilisation*, Routledge, London.

[111] Polanyi, K. (1957), "The Economy as Instituted Process", in Polanyi et al (eds.) (1957), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Ch. 13, pp. 243-70. See now above all Dale, G. (2010), *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market*, Polity, Cambridge.

[112] Polanyi's distinctions are worth elaborating upon in brief (Ibid., pp. 256-70). Trade can be in the form of gifts or presentations, administered trade, and market trade. The latter of the three – market trade – he argues is the most modern, and therefore the one generally meant in shorthand by modern historians, even in contexts where it ought not to belong. Money, meanwhile, was not used exclusively in the modern sense of legal

argued that centrally-directed redistribution and fixed prices drove the ancient economy, basing his model upon ancient Mesopotamian empires such as Assyria.[113]   Polanyi's major contribution to historical economics as a whole was his 1944 book *The Great Transformation*;[114] as a book about modern England, it bears little relation to our own field.   However, his ideas of embedded economies and state direction directly contributed both to primitivism and the development of the institutionalist camp.   Both Polanyi and Weber argued that what resembles the modern – urbanism, trade, and relatively developed institutions – could have distinct pre-modern forms.

Weber and Polanyi were the intellectual precursors to Moses Finley's *The Ancient Economy*.[115] His incorporation of sociological analyses returned primitivism to the centre of the debate,[116] even though he rejected the term, seeking to break out of the primitivist-modernist dichotomy and declaring elsewhere the "*primitive models all but useless*".[117]   That said, Finley argued that the abstract concept of 'the ancient economy' is itself necessarily flawed as the ancients themselves had no conception of what we in the modern era would call 'economy'. He argued instead that "*we have, I suggest, to seek different concepts and different models, appropriate to the ancient economy, not (or not necessarily) to ours.*"[118]   Finley emphasises the differences between the ancient and modern economies, including the absence of sophisticated accounting, the presence of slaves which would have distorted any labour market, and the lack of a unified conception of tax, commerce, accounts, and markets.   The prominence of status roles in society constituted a further distortion, reflected in attitudes towards possessions such as land, which today would be regarded as financial assets.   He echoes Rodbertus' argument that the *oikos*, or household, was the

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tender, but as a means of exchange further and additional to barter. 'Market' is a combination of elements of supply and demand, but in ancient times these two elements were distinct and not always present at the same time. See also Dale (2010), Ch. 4, pp. 137-87.

[113] Ibid., Ch. 2. The Assyrian comparandum is one to which we return below.

[114] Polanyi, K. (1944), *The Great Transformation*, Beacon Press, Boston.

[115] Finley, M. I. (1973) *The Ancient Economy*, Updated Edition (1999), UCP, London.

[116] But see in particular Saller's objection to the widespread characterisation of Finley as 'primitivist', in Saller (2002), *passim*, esp. pp. 252-5.

[117] See Finley, M. I. (1975), *Use and Abuse of History*, Chatto and Windus, London, p. 117, quoted in modified form also in Saller (2002), p. 253.

[118] Ibid., p. 27.

primary economic unit, arguing that the primary aspect of the ancient economy was the self-sufficiency of each household and community; this allows him downplay significantly the role of trade.[119]

Many of Finley's points had in fact been made seventy years previously by Salvioli;[120] he argued that recognisable capitalism (in the early Twentieth Century sense) only briefly "*shined on the surface*" of the Roman economy,[121] vanishing again at the first signs of constraint by the monetary systems and limitations of the ancient economy as a whole. Finley went further, arguing that it was never present.

Finley's position was complemented by A. H. M. Jones,[122] who argued that the ancient economy was for the most part agrarian, and that other aspects, such as trade, were necessarily minor by comparison. Indeed, their agreement led Hopkins to describe their joint position as "*a new orthodoxy*", even while describing the veritable "*war*" between primitivist and modernist camps in a volume which added many of its own wrinkles to the issues at hand.[123] We will return to this "*orthodoxy*" shortly.

Weber and Polanyi's works also allowed for the institutionalist camp to develop. This notion was notably advanced by Warmington,[124] who argued that much of the apparent increase in trade between Rome and 'the East' is attributable directly to deliberate strategies by Augustus which were continued by later emperors, to foster trade and to manage it at the highest levels of government. This view was echoed by Rostovtzeff, who attributed increases in trade to policies of specific emperors, although he allowed for more doubt as to whether the effects were entirely deliberate.[125] The institutionalist camp held that economic policy was an explicit factor in statecraft, whether it be at the level of the Roman emperor (in which case, often in its earlier expressions, such institutionalism might almost be termed *statist*) or of smaller units and organisations such as cities and client states within or partly within the Roman sphere (Palmyra and Nabataea being examples from our region and period).

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[119] Ibid., pp. 17-26.
[120] Salvioli (1906), pp. 309-20. Captialism continues to fascinate ancient economists – see Love (1991).
[121] Ibid., p. 308.
[122] Jones, A. H. M. (1974), *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*, Blackwell, Oxford.
[123] Hopkins, K. (1983), "Introduction", in Hopkins, K., Garnsey, P. and Whittaker, C. R. (eds.) (1983), *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, Chatto and Windus – Hogarth, London, pp. ix-xxv.
[124] Warmington, E. H. (1928), *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India*, CUP, Cambridge.
[125] See Rostovtzeff (1926), for instance p. 91 on Augustus.

Either way, early institutionalism emphasised the degree of centralised organisation in the Roman Empire, either political or otherwise. For much of its history, it also assumed a deliberate attempt to focus trade within the Roman sphere of control while at the same time seeking to elbow out non-Roman participants and 'middlemen'.[126] These themes and understandings have been directly applied to evidence from the period of Neo-Assyrian rule in the Near East – examples are Sargon II's concern to open an Egyptian port "*to make Egyptians and Assyrians trade with each other*",[127] and Esarhaddon's proactive ambition that the "*inhabitants set their minds to trading and communicating with all the lands in their entirety*".[128] The absence of such explicit evidence from the Roman period was no deterrent to early institutionalists.[129] Indeed, this is a theme which was warmed to repeatedly over ensuing decades,[130] until cold water was poured on it – and on a good deal else – by Manfred Raschke fifty years later.[131]

Raschke argued that rather than being centrally planned or directed, long-distance trade was actually the result of individual or small-scale community activity responding to localised concerns. He also made the argument that so-called 'middlemen', generally disparaged in prior scholarship as non-Roman, were in fact mostly Roman citizens or subjects. In any case, as was first argued by Weber, almost every move hitherto held up as an example of 'economic' or 'commercial' policy is in fact far better explained in terms of military or territorial "*aggrandisement*", as Young puts it,[132] or "*to counter possible Parthian incursions*", to use Raschke's own words.[133] It is worth noting that he makes the further point that the evidence suggested that the silk trade was significantly smaller than is often supposed,[134] and the spice trade larger,[135] but still unimportant to the Asian economies of the time, and therefore of debatable significance.[136] As we shall

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[126] See below. See also Polanyi, Arensberg and Pearson (eds.) (1957), Ch. 2.

[127] See Kuhrt, A. (2002), *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000-330 BC*, 2 Vols., Routledge, London, Vol. 2, p. 537.

[128] Ibid., p. 537. See Borger, R. (1956), *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 9, Selbstverl. d. Hrsg., Graz, pp. 25-6, Ep. 37.

[129] This is not wholly unreasonable – absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence.

[130] And occasionally still is; see Saller (2002), p. 266.

[131] Raschke, M. G. (1978), "New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East", in *ANRW* II.9.2 (1978), pp. 604-1378.

[132] See Young, G. (2001), *Rome's Eastern Trade*, Routledge, London, pp. 1-2.

[133] Raschke (1978), p. 648. See more broadly Ibid. Pt. 3, "III – The Middlemen", pp. 637-50.

[134] Ibid., Pt. 2, "II – Silk and the Imbalance of Trade", pp. 622-37.

[135] Ibid., Pt. 4, "IV – The Spice Trade", pp. 650-76.

[136] Ibid., Pt. 5, "V – Conclusion", pp. 676-9. This position has recently been supported by Bang. See Bang, P. F. (2009), "Commanding and Consuming the World: Empire, Tribute, and Trade in Roman and Chinese History," in Scheidel, W. (ed.) (2009), *Rome and China – Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*, OUP,

see, new evidence now enables us to re-evaluate some of his conclusions.[137] Raschke's argument shifted

the focus from the highest-tier, imperial, organisation, to that of smaller units and communities.[138] This,

he argued, was the primary driver, particularly of trade – instead of a top-down direction, it was a bottom-

up process, not led by supply and demand but by, for instance, opportunism and the changing economic

circumstances of nomadic populations – insofar as it can be said to have been "*led*" at all.[139] To be clear,

Raschke is no modernist; the granularity he envisages is echoed in later works, most particularly that of

Horden and Purcell in *The Corrupting Sea*,[140] to which we shall return in due course.

Let us return to Hopkins' "*orthodoxy*". Since its establishment, qualitative and quantitative shifts in

the wealth of archaeological data available have shifted the terms of the debate away from generalising

models and towards more specific studies on individual aspects, regions, goods and cultures.[141] This has

also led to new criticisms of the traditional pillars of the triangular debate. For instance, while Finley has

been criticised for largely ignoring material evidence, this very lack has permitted that evidence to be

seriously re-evaluated by way of rebuttal.[142] Equally, the models from figures and examples so despaired

of by Raschke were permissible for Hopkins and others;[143] moreover, many of the underlying assumptions

of previous decades – for instance, the prohibitive cost of over-land transport – have been shown to be

incorrect,[144] despite their commonplace repetition even to this day.

Oxford, pp. 100-20, on comparative tribute economies and (much less so) on the impact of long-distance trade; he follows Raschke (see p.120).

[137] See above all McLaughlin, R. (2010), *Rome and the Distant East – Trade Route to the Ancient Lands of Arabia, India and China*, Continuum, London. See now idem, (2014), *The Roman Empire and the Indian Ocean: The Ancient World Economy and the Kingdoms of Africa, Arabia and India*, Pen and Sword, Barnsley.

[138] Indeed, the evidence tends to lean against outright Imperial control of trade during our period. See for instance Tomber, R. (2008) *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*, Bristol Classical Press, London, p. 154. That said, imperial control is still argued for from time to time: Sidebotham argues for a coherent Roman economic policy in the Red Sea, for instance. See Sidebotham, S. E. (1986), *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa, 30 B.C. – A.D. 217*, *Mnemosyme* Suppl. 91; Brill, Leiden. Control or direction by smaller states such as Nabataea is argued for as well; see Young (2001), pp. 90-135, esp. p. 115.

[139] Ibid., Pt. 1, "I – The Rise of the Silk Trade", pp. 606-22.

[140] Horden, P. and Purcell, N. (2000), *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Blackwell, Oxford.

[141] One prominent and still-influential, if increasingly dated, example, is Duncan-Jones, R. (1982), *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*, Second Edition, CUP, Cambridge. More recently, idem. (1994), *Money and Government in the Roman Empire*, CUP, Cambridge.

[142] See particularly Harris (2011), p. 3.

[143] See Raschke (1978), pp. 604-22 and *passim*. Bang (2008) is exactly the kind of work which Raschke meant, and of which he so despaired.

[144] See for instance Laurence, R. (1998), "Land Transport in Roman Italy: costs, practice and the economy", in Parkins and Smith (eds.), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, pp. 129-48.

With particular regard to the triangular debate, this new raft of – mainly archaeological – information poses an existential challenge to the "*orthodox*" (i.e. primarily textual and positivistic) characterisation of ancient trade as minimal, opportunist, reliant on inadequate and expensive transport and with no integrated markets, ultimately forming a thin layer of froth on a fundamentally agrarian brew. Indeed, Harris goes so far as to say that "*it may be doubted whether it has ever been much favoured by anyone who combined a wide knowledge of Mediterranean archaeology and of the ancient texts*".[145] Suffice it to say that in the light of step changes in archaeological evidence, efforts to re-evaluate the ancient economy, usually in terms of individual aspects, have gained pace largely at the expense of the former "*orthodoxy*".[146] An example of this new focus can be found in Alston's treatment of the role of temples and other institutions in Roman-era Egypt,[147] a comparandum to which we shall return shortly.

In the meantime, Butcher's study of the Near-Eastern economy indicates the direction of travel.[148] As part of his broader survey of the region, it comprises a formidable exploration of the resources available to communities across Roman Syria, their interplay and the networks connecting them. For him, the fundamental unit of the economy is the village rather than the *oikos* or household ("*the importance of the village in Roman Syria and the Near East cannot be over-emphasised*"),[149] and he develops a synergistic model of urban and rural economies acting as parts of a broader, interdependent network.[150] This is reflected in his characterisation of ancient trade, although he explicitly does not focus on long-distance trade outside the Roman Empire, preferring instead to focus on Syrian trade with the rest of the Roman Empire.[151] However, he consciously strikes a note between the primitivist and modernist ends of the spectrum, highlighting, for instance, the ongoing difference in local currencies in Roman Syria despite the (perhaps retrospective) desirability of a single currency to fully integrate markets and minimise costs.[152]

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[145] See Harris (2011) p. 156.

[146] The challenge is eloquently summated by Parkins. See Parkins, H. (1998), "Time for change? Shaping the future of the ancient economy," in Parkins and Smith (eds.), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, pp. 1-15.

[147] See Alston, R. (1997), "Ritual and power in the Romano-Egyptian city", in Parkins, H. (ed.) (1997), *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the consumer city*, Routledge, London, pp. 147-72.

[148] Butcher, K. (2003), *Roman Syria and the Near East*, British Museum Press, London, pp. 135-79.

[149] Ibid., p. 138. He explicitly attacks the Weberian model on the same page.

[150] Ibid., p. 179.

[151] Ibid., pp. 186-9.

[152] Ibid., p. 222.

Some recent examples relating particularly to Near-Eastern long-distance trade include Bang's *Roman Bazaar*,[153] and Young's *Rome's Eastern Trade*;[154] the former is a productive contrast between the Roman and Mughal empires, arguing that rather than looking to later periods of European history, a much better comparandum can be found in India owing to a wide variety of similarities between the two. In this way, Bang not only reminds us of the overwhelmingly agrarian nature of the Roman economy (one thing on which A. H. M. Jones was probably correct), but of the power structures inherent within such an economy. Young, for his part, explores in depth the evidence for trade through the eastern borders of the Roman empire and attempts to site the trade and its mechanisms both in space and in the societies of the communities engaging in that trade. He focuses in particular on the political and economic institutions, both formal and informal, which must have existed to support that trade.[155] Such a focus is of merit, considering the aims of the present thesis. We shall examine this in detail shortly.

The triangular debate exposes two parallel approaches to the ancient economy: that of quality, or its nature, and that of quantity, or its extent:

3.1.2   Quality: the nature of trade

Just as scholarship on the ancient economy as a whole may be characterised by the triangular debate, and that on ancient Near-Eastern religion may, as we shall see, be characterised by the identity debate, scholarship on long-distance trade, in particular that in the Roman Near East, may be characterised by a debate between 'minimalists' and 'maximalists' over the question of "*whether trade was very important*".[156] The two camps essentially do what they say on the tin: minimalists (often textual and positivistic, in the model of Finley and Polanyi) assume a minor role for long-distance trade and tend to play down its influence and extent; the opposite maintains for maximalists (often archaeologists, either way taking after Rostovtzeff). As with the other debates we have seen, neither camp holds a monopoly on the truth –

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[153] Bang (2008).

[154] Young (2001).

[155] Ibid., *passim.* As we shall see, this has broad parallels with New Institutional Economics (see below), although Young does not directly acknowledge it.

[156] Cf. Harris (2011), p. 156, in his summary of the debate.

indeed, Harris advises that "*the dichotomy is misleading, and should be avoided*".[157] We have just seen how much

the same can be said of the triangular debate.

As we have seen, one of the earliest, and still one of the most useful, studies on Rome's eastern long-

distance trade is Raschke's.[158] He marshalled significant evidence from Chinese written sources to dispel

the long-held belief (still cleaved to occasionally) that the Chinese government of our period was

concerned with maintaining any kind of monopoly or control over the silk trade, as it gained no direct

benefit from it in the first place. He also dispenses with the notion that the silk trade was significant

enough to have contributed to any Roman imbalance of trade with the east,[159] as implied by Pliny's

accounts of a drain of precious metals.[160] In fact, Raschke suggests that the price of silk may have been

substantially lower than commonly assumed, particularly in the eastern half of the empire.[161] Similarly,

most of the 'middlemen' commonly associated with eastern trade were in fact Roman vassals or citizens,

and most of their profits would have remained within the ambit of the Roman Empire.[162] He argues that

the spice trade was by far the more substantial, although the shipping costs and taxes (levied by the

Romans themselves) were probably much higher than the prices originally paid for them.[163] He also

reminds us that the Roman coin hoards in India are dwarfed by those from Germany and other peripheral

Roman provinces, and represent neither a particularly significant outlay on the Romans' behalf, nor a

particularly significant proportion of the Indian economy of the time.[164] He goes on to conclude that

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[157] Ibid.

[158] Raschke (1978), Pt. 1, "I – The Rise of the Silk Trade", pp. 606-22. See now Gregoratti, L. (2015), "The Parthian Empire: Romans, Jews, Greeks, Nomads, and Chinese on the Silk Road", in Walter and Ito-Adler (eds.), *The Silk Road: Interwoven History*, pp. 43-70.

[159] Raschke (1978), Pt. 2, "II – Silk and the Imbalance of Trade", pp. 622-37. Raschke also has no time whatsoever for attempts to quantify the ancient silk trade based on what few – flawed – figures we have, or, at least, had at his time of writing. It remains impossible to calculate the volumes concerned; see for instance Young (2001), p. 194.

[160] Pliny, *NH*, VI.101, XII.84. We shall see indications that it was in fact larger than Pliny suggests, pp. 254-9.

[161] Raschke (1978), p. 624. But see now McLaughlin on price increases due to reprocessing at different stages along the route – McLaughlin (2010), pp. 161-3.

[162] Raschke (1978), Pt. 3, "III – The Middlemen", pp.637-50. It has been successfully argued in the years since that there nevertheless remained a sizeable cohort of non-Roman 'middlemen' in long-distance trade eastward from the Roman Near East, particularly in Arabia and India. See for instance McLaughlin (2010), and Seland (2013). Raschke's core point is well taken, however, and remains one worth bearing in mind, particularly as one approaches the borders of Roman control.

[163] Once again, see now McLaughlin on financing eastern commerce – McLaughlin (2010), pp. 156-60.

[164] Raschke (1978), Pt. 4, "IV – The Spice Trade", pp. 650-76. See now above all Tomber (2008), pp. 30-7 and Parker (2008), pp. 147-202.

Roman trade does not appear to have been a major factor for contemporary Asian economies.[165] In the decades since, a huge amount of new information has come to light, but while the field has in many respects moved on from just the evidence Raschke presents, his analysis of the written sources still obtains, and if nothing else, the caution with which he approaches the topic is instructive.

Recent years have seen a move away from generalised models in favour of more granular studies of specific aspects of the ancient economy. This has been driven in many respects by the coming to light of large quantities of new archaeological data which challenges assumptions within the triangular debate. One particular aspect of this has been a return in some senses to institutionalism, but institutionalism in terms largely divorced from the state, in favour of guilds, associations and other bodies – many still civic, but not explicitly governmental.[166] We shall see in the next section that comparative studies, and those of bodies of evidence outside the conventional canon, have often provided new insights.

3.1.3   Quantity: Raschke's nightmare

The triangular debate on the ancient economy is essentially qualitative. For significant parts of its history, the three camps have broadly agreed on the evidence underpinning the debate, but disagreed over its interpretation. The advent of ever greater archaeological evidence (admittedly from a low base) has allowed greater divergence. Despite Raschke's best efforts to discourage such studies, the past thirty or so years have seen a concomitant surge in essentially quantitative studies of the ancient economy.[167] Most recently, works such as that of Peter Bang have sought to quantify the GDP of the Roman economy from first principles using a combination of known prices, comparanda, and volumes estimated from the archaeological and epigraphic record;[168] while now somewhat dated, the work of Duncan-Jones remains the single most authoritative attempt to do this.[169]

The fundamental problem with forming a quantitative view of the Roman economy, or at least of most aspects of it, is simple lack of evidence: while at first glance evidence for long-distance trade appears

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[165] Raschke (1978), Pt. 5, "V – Conclusion", pp. 676-9.
[166] See for instance Young's critique on page 1 (2001).
[167] Duncan-Jones (1982) is the best example, notable both for lack of examples from the Roman Near East and any study of long-distance trade. See also Bang (2008), Temin (2013), among others.
[168] Bang (2008).
[169] Duncan-Jones (1982).

extensive (and, indeed, it is), nowhere is it sufficiently deep to support generalised models with any pretence of accuracy. Archaeology, when it is not eschewed,[170] is patchwork at best and to all intents and purposes random at worst,[171] and in any case, as regards long-distance trade, few commodities survive. Meanwhile, literary sources, where they survive (again, essentially randomly), are often polemic, biased, impressionistic and ill-informed (or sometimes, all four), making them at best unreliable and at worst actively misleading.[172] These problems are particularly true for Roman Syria and the Roman Near East as a whole – for instance, Duncan-Jones' work is notable for its simple lack of material from our area of investigation.[173] Studies by those such as Sijpesteijn, which we shall examine in detail, are underpinned by solid epigraphic and papyrological evidence which give a firmer basis upon which to proceed;[174] this also forms the basis for Bang and Duncan-Jones' work. The danger inherent in such approaches is obvious: a house of cards built upon successive assumptions and guesstimates, as prophesied (if a little bitterly) by Raschke.[175]

Even if the evidence does not permit firm conclusions about how much pepper, silk or incense was imported from the east, it does at least give indications. The prevalence of pepper across Roman archaeological sites, for instance, suggests not only that the quantity was significant,[176] but also that it was in sufficient volume to be affordable, at least in small quantities, by even those of quite modest means.[177] The *Horraea Piperata*, a spice and incense warehouse in Rome, had space on its ground floor alone for 5,800 tons of spice; McLaughlin estimates that would be enough for a pound of spice between every five people in the Roman Empire.[178] To be fair to McLaughlin, this is merely an extrapolation to make a point, but the limitations of such estimates rapidly become clear: this is based on a schematic

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[170] See for instance Finley (1973), Millar (1993).

[171] See for instance the uneven survival of coin hoards from India (see Tomber, (2008), pp. 30-7).

[172] See for instance the debate around Pliny's cited figures for the value of Rome's eastern trade (eg. Parker (2008), pp. 183-9) or around the accuracy of Strabo's *Geography* (eg. McLaughlin (2010), pp. 9-10).

[173] Most of Duncan-Jones' evidence comes from Italy, Africa and Egypt. See Duncan-Jones (1982).

[174] Sijpesteijn, P. J. (1987), *Customs Duties in Greco-Roman Egypt*, Terra, University of Michigan.

[175] Rasckhe (1978), pp. 604-22. Rathbone likens ancient historians interested in such quantitative studies to moths fluttering fatally around a candle; see Rathbone, D. (2000), "The Muziris Papyrus (S B XVIII 13167): Financing Roman Trade with India", in *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 46, p. 47.

[176] "*Enormous*", to use Cappers' word – Cappers, R. T. J. (2006), *Roman Foodprints and Berenike: Archaeobotanical Evidence of Subsistence and Trade in the Eastern Desert of Egypt*, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Monograph 55, UCP, Los Angeles, p. 70.

[177] See for instance Tomber (2008), pp. 55 & 173-4, citing pepper at Vindolanda.

[178] McLaughlin (2010), p. 144.

approximation of the Imperial population at a single point in time (for which we have no clear indication), his assumption about the relative amounts of pepper versus other goods in the warehouse notwithstanding.[179]

While such approaches have a role to play in conceptualising the Roman economy, care must be taken in approaching the figures underpinning their conclusions, particularly where such figures are abstracted from a single province or source (chiefly Egypt, or for instance Pliny's attestation of 100 million sesterces' worth of trade with the East).[180] Raschke's scepticism is justified, yet it is likely that while such figures and estimations will be broadly incorrect, those with the greatest grounding in the evidence are most likely to be accurate to within an order of magnitude. Even if this does not provide a firm base for conclusions, it at least provides a referent for preliminary models which may then be tested against the evidence we *do* have, both where it is clear-cut and where it merely suggests a direction.[181] In this regard, we shall have to make do with ball parks, rather than balls.

It therefore seems that a qualitative approach to the Roman Near Eastern economy is that most compatible with the evidence we actually have. Quantitative analyses can be useful in an auxiliary way as we have seen, but barring astounding new evidence, are likely to remain at best indicative. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, are likely to make much more headway given the evidence we have, as to how the ancient economy worked, was constituted, and was linked together.

3.2   Institutions and networks of trust

Since Raschke, and particularly around the turn of the millennium, attempts to understand and examine specific aspects of the ancient economy have largely supplanted generalised approaches to the entire field;[182] we have seen some examples. Whereas institutionalists in particular previously looked to the highest tiers of government to find supporting structures for trade, the focus now is on guilds, trade

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[179] Quantities of silk found at Palmyra are likewise inconclusive. See Stauffer, A. M. (1996), "Textiles from Palmyra: Local Production and the Import and Imitation of Chinese Silk Weavings", in *AAAS* 42, pp. 425-30.
[180] Pliny, *NH* VI.26.10; XXII.41.84.
[181] This is more or less the conclusion reached by Temin (2013).
[182] One notable exception, if an exceedingly abstracted and modernist one (that is to say, in perspective rather than in its characterisation of the ancient economy), is Jones, D. W. (2014), *Economic Theory and the Ancient Mediterranean*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester. Its attempts to apply complex theoretical formulae to the study of the ancient economy would likely have distressed Raschke even more than Duncan-Jones' quantity studies.

associations, elite groups, trading colonies and what might, before Raschke, have been characterised as

non-Roman middlemen. This is reflected in the application of Douglass North's 'New Institutional

Economics',[183] which seeks to understand economic systems in particular through the impact of legal and

social aspects,[184] transaction costs and limited information,[185] and particularly the need to contain

violence.[186] It also suggests that although institutions can arise "*as a means to mitigate transaction costs*" from

inefficiencies and less-than-perfect information, they often have a legal, economic or practical significance

quite apart from this.[187] Frier and Kehoe explore how New Institutional Economics can be – cautiously –

applied to studies of the ancient economy, and particularly the Roman, suggesting that it can help both

frame questions about outstanding issues,[188] and explain irrationalities which other models (chiefly

Neoclassical) struggle to accommodate.[189] This brings us to a key point: institutions or organisations with

a sometimes significant economic bearing do not require an explicitly economic primary purpose.[190]

Rauh's 1993 study of the long-distance trade and networked character of Delos, including the role of

religious institutions within them, is thus highly relevant. He concludes that "*the Greco-Roman business*

community that emerged at Delos in the late Second Century B.C. depended heavily on religious forms and institutions to

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[183] Exactly this approach has now been taken by Seland – see for instance Seland, E. H. (2014), "Caravans, Smugglers and Trading Fairs - Organizing Textile Trade on the Syrian Frontier", in Droß-Krüpe (ed.), *Textile Trade*, pp. 83-90, esp. pp. 84-5. See above all North, D. C., Wallis, J. J. and Weingast, B. R (2009), *Violence and social orders: a conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history*, CUP, Cambridge. Also North, D. C. (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, CUP, Cambridge. These develop initial ideas from North, D. C. (1979) "A framework for analysing the state in economic history", in *Explorations in Economic History*, 16, pp. 249-59.

[184] These are the "*institutions*" which are strictly meant in New Institutional Economics, although the second sense – that which is generally meant when ancient historians talk about "institutions", which economists term organisations of individuals – is often used in the shorthand as well.

[185] See Scheidel, W. (2001), "Approaching the Roman Economy", in Scheidel, W. (ed.) (2001), *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*, CUP, Cambridge, pp. 9-10. For a detailed analysis of how New Institutional Economics can be brought to bear on the ancient economy, see Frier, B. and Kehoe, D. P. (2007), "Law and economic institutions" in Scheidel, Morris and Saller (eds.), *Cambridge Economic History*, pp. 113-43. For New Institutional Economics more broadly, see above all Furubotn, E. G. and Richter, R. (2005), *Institutions and Economic Theory: The Contribution of the New Institutional Economics*, Second Edition, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

[186] North, Wallis and Weingast (2009).

[187] See Frier and Kehoe (2007), p. 118.

[188] Ibid., *passim*, but see for instance p. 141-2 on structure and change in the Egyptian agrarian economy, including the issue of agricultural land owned and worked by temples.

[189] Ibid., *passim*, but see for instance pp. 137-142 on path dependence. See also Saller's dampening comments to the effect that the Roman growth which New Institutional Economics implies may not have been present, Saller (2002), p. 266.

[190] For a given definition of 'economic'. As Finley has shown with some eloquence, this was likely significantly at variance in Antiquity from a Twentieth or Twenty-First Century definition.

organise its trade",[191] and his findings, as we have seen and shall continue to see, are important for any study on the relationship between temples and trade. Perhaps more than any other, his study explodes the (false) presumption of a divide between commercial and religious space in the ancient world.[192] We shall return to Rauh in due course.[193]

Three studies on Roman trading relations with India provide further insight into long-distance trade in our period. Tomber and McLaughlin both emphasise that the expense of long-distance trade would have mitigated against small or individual merchants acting alone, the sheer scale of the undertaking forcing them to either work together or under the auspices of a single very wealthy backer, once again suggesting a role for institutions supporting trade, acting within networks of trust.[194] Tomber lists the extensive array of evidence for substantial trade between Rome and India.[195] Parker likewise argues against outright state-level control of Roman-Indian trade, particularly from the Red Sea;[196] he also emphasises the prevalence both of non-Roman Arabian and Indian middlemen, and of cabotage;[197] these are issues to which we turn in detail shortly.

In his new study of Palmyrene long-distance trade, Seland explores the preconditions for its creation, emphasising the importance of the maritime routes via the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, the seasonality of their synergy with overland caravan routes, the contingency of the caravan trade upon relations with the inhabitants of the steppe, and the probable large size of those caravans; he also emphasises the role of the network of trust and the value of New Institutional Economics.[198] He gives specific consideration to

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[191] Rauh (1993), p. 339.
[192] Ibid., pp. 79-81.
[193] Below, p. 100.
[194] Tomber (2008), esp. pp. 152-60. This neatly fits into the framework above. McLaughlin provides some examples of this. See McLaughlin (2010), Ch. 2.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Parker, G. (2008), *The Making of Roman India*, CUP, Cambridge, pp. 171-183. On Rome and India see also Cimino, R. M. (ed.) (1994), *Ancient Rome and India — Commercial and cultural contacts between the Roman world and India*, Italian Embassy Cultural Centre, New Delhi.
[197] Parker (2008), pp. 182-3. On cabotage, see above all Braudel, F. (1949), trans. Reynolds, S. (1972, pub. 1995), *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 Volumes, UCP, London.
[198] Seland, E. H. (2015), "Palmyrene Long-distance Trade: Land, River, and Maritime Routes in the First Three Centuries CE.", in Walter, M. N. and Ito-Adler, J. P. (eds.) (2015), *The Silk Road: Interwoven History, History, Vol. 1: Long-distance Trade, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge Institutes Press, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 101-31.

networks of trust, although he does not use the term himself, in a 2013 paper examining trade across the Indian Ocean in antiquity, to which we shall return in the next Part.[199]

These are all issues which echo those raised by Tomber, Parker and McLaughlin, emphasising again Tomber's point that such trade was most likely carried out by groups of merchants rather than individuals. This necessitated the creation of institutions, and indeed we have evidence for those institutions across (for instance) the Palmyrene trading network. As we shall see, Taco Terpstra's work on trading communities provides useful comparanda from farther west in the Roman world, and establishes some key facets of the network of trust and institutions in our period, including those used by Roman Syrians.[200]

It is in this context of institutions supporting trade that this thesis approaches the question of temples and their involvement in long-distance trade. Given their evident importance and – often – dominance of ancient cities and ancient life (often in hand with local elites and rulers), determining temples' relationship with trade, and long-distance trade in particular, sheds light on their impact beyond their more obvious functions.

3.3   The Roman Near East: compendia and comparanda

With regard to general studies of the Roman Near East,[201] monographs by Millar, Ball, Sartre and Butcher have in recent decades reshaped the field. Millar's was the most influential,[202] approaching the subject primarily through epigraphy and literary sources,[203] and often focused on the 'Greek-ness' or 'Roman-ness' of the evidence.[204] He is primarily interested in matters other than the economic: his first major

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[199] Seland, E. H. (2013), "Networks and social cohesion in Indian Ocean trade: geography, ethnicity, religion", in *Journal of Global History* 8, Issue 03 (Nov 2013), pp. 373-90.

[200] Terpstra, T. (2013), *Trading Communities in the Roman World*, Brill, Leiden.

[201] We will examine studies on particular areas, regions and aspects of the Roman Near East (which abound) as we come to them in the following Parts, including, of course, Palmyra in Part III.

[202] Millar, F. (1993), *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337*, HUP, Cambridge, Mass. To this one might add his *Caravan Cities* paper, and the collection of papers in response in Alston and Lieu. See first Millar, F. (1998), "Caravan Cities: the Roman Near East and long-distance trade by land", in *BICS Suppl.* 71 (1998), pp. 119-37; and second Alston, R. and Lieu, S. (eds.) (2007), *Aspects of the Roman East: Papers in Honour of Professor Fergus Millar, FBA, Studia Antiqua Australiensa 3*, Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium. For an extensive review of Millar, see Kennedy, D. (1999), "Greek, Roman and native cultures in the Roman Near East", in Humphrey, J. (ed.) (1999), *The Roman and Byzantine Near East Volume 2: Some Recent Archaeological Research*, *JRA* Suppl. 31, Ann Arbor, pp. 76-106.

[203] As he himself states – Millar (1993), p. xiii.

[204] See for instance ibid., pp. 250-6, on temples in rural sites and villages.

theme is the changing structure of Roman military power in the Near East.[205] His second, through presentation of (mainly literary) evidence on aspects of Roman Near Eastern life broken down by area, is an attempt to explore whether the region ever developed a cultural identity which was comparable to the Greco-Roman. He argues not; that the Greco-Roman model and identity overwhelmingly dominated the Near East, with the exception of the Jews and, for a time, Palmyra. He also takes issue with the notion of 'Orientalism', a concept of a kind of 'eastern-ness' which is heavily bound up with romantic views and Eighteenth-Century fears of the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, Millar is nevertheless focused on ethnic identity, which he sees as operating almost exclusively through language (hence the Jewish and Palmyrene exceptions).[206]

As regards long-distance trade, Millar only cursorily addresses this subject despite a promise to the contrary.[207] One interest of his is in whether the long-distance trade of Palmyra had a significant effect on neighbouring Emesa – he concedes that the evidence is "*wholly inadequate*" but concludes that overland long-distance trade between Palmyra and the Phoenician coast via Emesa may have fostered "*significant economic and cultural links*".[208] The inadequate evidence to which he refers – a passage of Galen mentioning an Indian good brought to Phoenicia via camel (and thereby satisfying Galen that it was authentic)[209] – is purely textual. As we shall see, there are other sources such as evidence of significant overland traffic between Palmyra and Damascus.[210] We will explore this evidence in greater detail in subsequent Parts. As regards temples, Millar's coverage is largely confined to a discussion of the cults within them, or their frontages, rather than any consideration of temples as institutional phenomena.[211]

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[205] This may in part be a response to Isaac's prior work on the Roman military in the Near East. See Isaac, B. (1990), *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, Clarendon, Oxford.
[206] See for instance Millar (1993), p. 504.
[207] Ibid., p. 16 – "*Both the cultural and the economic importance of long-distance trade will have to be discussed further below.*" Indeed it will, but not in *The Roman Near East*.
[208] Ibid., p. 309.
[209] Galen, *de simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis*, in Kühn, K. G. (ed.) (1826, reprinted 1965), *Claudii Galeni – Opera Omnia*, Vol. XII, Georg Olms, Hildesheim, pp. 215-6.
[210] Millar (1993), pp. 297-9. Such traffic must of course be presumed, but largely from first principles. Poidebard identified a number of separate ancient routes connecting Palmyra and Damascus; see Poidebard, A. (1934), *Le Trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie*, Librarie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, pp. 27-56.
[211] See for instance ibid., pp. 242-9, on the cults at Hierapolis and Doliche.

Since its publication, as observed by Sommer, subsequent scholarship often attempts to either prove or disprove Millar's core thesis regarding Near Eastern cultural identity.[212] For instance, Warwick Ball's *Rome in the East* explicitly sets out to refute it.[213] Whereas Millar relied upon textual evidence, Ball relies upon archaeology; whereas Millar argued for the Greco-Roman domination of the Near East, Ball argues for precisely the opposite – that 'Eastern' influences dominated – and whereas Millar is cautious and mostly positivist, Ball is expansive and often adventurous in his conclusions.[214] There are, suffice to say, problems with *Rome in the East*, as pointed out by reviewers;[215] there are equally striking similarities in Ball's and Millar's approaches and priorities.

As regards trade, Ball emphasises both the indirect nature of long-distance trade between Rome and the East, and the role of the Indians in it (effectively as middle-men, recalling Raschke).[216] Ball's view on the Silk Road is however very similar to Millar's;[217] he dismisses it as a modern invention, going so far as to call it a Victorian "*myth*".[218] More important for our purposes is Ball's extensive treatment of Near-Eastern temples, their origins, nature and inspirations.[219] Whereas Millar uses a positivist textual approach to argue for the essential 'Greek-ness' of temples across the Roman Near East (and therefore of the Roman Near East itself), Ball uses an architectural approach to argue for the 'Eastern-ness' of temples across the Roman Near East (and therefore of the Roman Near East itself). Despite their different methodologies, both authors carry the underlying assumption that temples are best approached as signifiers of ethnicity, both in terms of a broad set of identities ("Greek", "Roman", "Hellenistic", "Palmyrene", "Syrian", "Semitic", "Iranian", "Nabataean", the list goes on) and in terms of their purpose.

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[212] See Sommer, M. (2005.b), "The archaeology and history of Roman Syria" – Review of Butcher (2003), *Roman Syria*, in *JRA* 18 (2005), p. 726. See also Kennedy (1999).
[213] Ball (2000).
[214] One example in particular is Ball's attempt to characterise Palmyra as at least partly "Iranian" in character – Ball (2000), pp. 85-6. See now Gawlikowski, M. (1997), "The Syrian Desert under the Romans", in Alcock, S. (ed.) (1997), *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, Oxbow, Oxford.
[215] See for instance Greatrex, G. (2001), Review of Ball (2000), *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2001.08.32, Online; http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2001/2001-08-32.html (retrieved 11/06/2015).
[216] Ball (2000), pp. 123-39, esp. pp. 133-9.
[217] Noted as a point of irony by Greatrex (2001).
[218] Ball (2000), pp. 138-9. See *contra*, for instance, Walter and Ito-Adler (eds.) (2015).
[219] Ibid., pp. 317-56.

Both Sartre and Butcher's works are, like Millar and Ball's, overviews, but neither has a single overriding thesis. Sartre's work takes a very different view of 'Hellenism' and its counterparts to Millar and Ball.[220] He questions the very nature of the dichotomy between Hellenised and 'indigenous' culture: rather than taking a positivist view of epigraphy and material culture (i.e. one that suggests these are always direct or even explicit expressions of 'ethnicity'), he points out that "*three or four centuries after Alexander's conquest, it is not likely that Hellenism was seen as a foreign culture; it was one of the cultures of Roman Syria.*"[221] Essentially, Sartre proposes a much more nuanced, diachronic view of culture and ethnicity in the Roman Near East. He notes the supplanting of Phoenician culture with Aramaic prior to Alexander's time, suggesting that rather than a simple struggle between two cultures, the Roman Near East enjoyed a multi-layered "*composite*" culture undergoing constant – if not always rapid – change.[222] This model may be borne out by comparanda from Egypt, below.

As regards long-distance trade, Sartre focuses on the role of the Nabataeans in the aromatics trade with Arabia, and of the Palmyrenes in trade with India, making careful note that trade with the East was reciprocal and not merely comprised of Roman imports.[223] The territory he covers in his exploration of Near-Eastern temples is familiar, exploring the various cults and differing variety of temples and their features, settling on familiar examples (Palmyrene Bel, Heliopolitan Jupiter, Zeus Baetocaece).[224] He draws extensively on Rabbinic and Talmudic sources for evidence of local trade, which necessarily limits at least the first part of his discussion to Palestine.[225] Nevertheless, he paints a vibrant picture of the ancient Near Eastern economy.

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[220] Sartre, M. (2001), *D'Alexandre à Zénobie: Histoire du Levant antique, IVe siècle av. J.-C. – IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.*, Fayard, Paris. The English-language work, *The Middle East Under Rome*, is an abridged and somewhat limited translation of the original, which covers both a longer period and a much greater depth of ancient texts. See Sartre, M. (2005), *The Middle East Under Rome*, trans. Porter, C. and Rawlings, E., Belknap, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

[221] Sartre (2001), p. 882: "*D'ailleurs, trois ou quatre siècles après la conquête d'Alexandre, il est douteux que l'hellénisme soit perçu comme un cultre étrangère: elle est l'une des cultures de la Syrie romaine.*"

[222] Ibid., pp. 877-83. With regard in particular to identity, this is broadly the model favoured more recently by Andrade; see Andrade, N. J. (2013), *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, CUP, Cambridge.

[223] Sartre (2001), pp. 833-50.

[224] Ibid., pp. 887-927.

[225] Ibid., pp. 828-31.

Butcher's work employs archaeological, literary, epigraphic, numismatic and other evidence to cover the seven-hundred-year period between the Roman and Islamic conquests;[226] this large scope sometimes forces him to be brief.[227] He explores both the Near-Eastern economy as a whole,[228] and the caravan trade, advocating an economic model between the primitivist and modernist extremes and characterisable as a close, mutually-dependent network between cities and milliard villages, recalling the granularity of Horden and Purcell;[229] he visualises the caravan trade as a notable but minor part of the overall economy. As regards temples, Butcher notes that the commonplace appearance of temples on coins forms a useful comparandum to the archaeological remains, and sometimes allows identification of the structures themselves.[230] He largely avoids making sweeping conclusions about ethnicity or identity, however, acknowledging the different pressures at work, and avoiding suggestion that either 'Eastern' or 'Western' influences ended up being on top.[231]

A number of common themes are apparent across these works. In regard to trade, they all stress that eastward and southward long-distance trade did not *appear* to play a major part in the economy of the Roman Near East, although they might take generous or parsimonious views of its extent. Notably, with only the partial exception of Ball's contribution, models of urbanism in the Near East are generally derived from Mediterranean models and the orthodoxy of Jones and Finley, rather than Rostovtzeff's more modernistic and positive model. Most apparent across all of these studies, however, are the issues of ethnicity and culture; the dichotomy between 'East' and 'West' which was noted particularly by Millar in his two-part epilogue,[232] and which formed the basis of both his work and Ball's response. Ethnicity is the lens through which temples are seen throughout these works. They are discussed in terms of identity, with interest in architecture or archaeology primarily serving to help make an argument in ethnic terms. The question of how temples might have actually worked – for instance, within economic structures – is

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[226] Butcher (2003) .
[227] See Sommer (2005.b), p. 727.
[228] Horden and Purcell (2000).
[229] In this way he can be seen as an ally of Horden and Purcell (2000); see also Part II, pp. 114-5.
[230] Butcher (2003), p. 336; see more broadly pp. 335-71.
[231] Ibid., *passim*, but see for instance pp. 293-4 on conflicting Roman, Latin, Achaemenid, Nabataean, Palmyrene and Greek forces at work in the First-Century urban monumentalisation of the region.
[232] See Millar (1993), Ch. 13, pp. 489-534.

therefore left unanswered. It is this question which this thesis will explore, seeking to move the debate beyond questions of ethnicity debate towards the function of temples in society.

3.3.1   Caravan cities

The first major work of note on long-distance trade in the Roman Near East – or at least the first with significant reach into the modern period – is Rostovtzeff's *Caravan Cities*,[233] an archaeological, geographical and historical survey of four cities in the region: Palmyra, Petra, Dura-Europos (Dura) and Gerasa (Jerash), but to which he would have added Bostra, Damascus, Beroea (Aleppo) and Philadelphia (Amman), if their archaeological remains had been sufficient.[234] This work is, as Rostovtzeff himself says, effectively a write-up of his travels and impressions of the cities listed – what he calls his "*sketches*"[235] – and he confesses no methodological reason for his selection of the cities he discusses.[236] Furthermore, he nowhere explains precisely what he means by the term "*caravan city*"; however, it bears mentioning that he did witness large contemporary caravans at each of the sites he describes.[237]

It has therefore fallen to others to debate precisely what Rostovtzeff meant and to offer their own definitions. This has rather left the field open to his critics, foremost among whom is Fergus Millar,[238] who argues that 'caravan cities' must have "*owed their character as cities to trade*",[239] and the caravan trade in particular. Millar argues that since the only city about which this might in any way be demonstrated is Palmyra, no other candidate deserves the appellation and therefore the label is without use.[240] His conclusion is supported by Alston in his analysis of Roman contacts south of Egypt.[241] Alston develops the definition somewhat, arguing that "*in a 'caravan city', one would expect the leading citizens to draw much of their*

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[233] Rostovtzeff, M. (1932) *Caravan Cities*, trans. Talbot Rice, D. & T., Clarendon, Oxford, Reprinted (1971), AMS Press, New York.

[234] Ibid., pp. vi-vii. He elsewhere adds Homs (Emesa), Hama (Epiphanaia), and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris to the list (p. 91).

[235] Ibid., p. iii.

[236] Ibid., p.vi.

[237] As we see in the next Part, there is reason to believe there is broad continuity between the caravans observed in the modern era and those described in the ancient sources; on this see Seland (2015).

[238] Millar (1998).

[239] Ibid., p. 119; Millar's emphasis.

[240] Ibid., p. 137.

[241] Alston, R. (2007), "Fraying Round the Edges: Models of Change on the Margins", in Alston and Lieu (eds.), *Aspects of the Roman East*, pp. 1-32.

wealth from trade and to acknowledge their city's dependence on the caravans,"[242] and that the lack of evidence for this, Palmyra aside, "*is telling*". Butcher likewise plays down the significance of the caravan trade, although adds Petra to Palmyra as 'caravan cities' which "*derived much wealth from this enterprise, but the model of these 'caravan cities' should not be extrapolated* […] *the caravan trade simply produced additional wealth.*"[243]

Reference to this debate is made in virtually every work concerning one of the cities on Rostovtzeff's original list, or which could conceivably have been added to it.[244] Generally speaking, such interventions either agree with Millar's minimising stance, or propose to dismiss it or move beyond it. For my part, I regard Millar's definition as proscriptive. In a way, the confounding factor is not the absence of attestation in most places, but the fact that Palmyra is the one place where it emphatically *is*; in this regard, Alston's definition affords greater room for manoeuvre.[245]

Indeed, Seland observes that were it not for the (fragmentary and exceptional) corpus of caravan inscriptions from Palmyra, "*Rostovtzeff's older notion of the 'caravan city' would have been hard to maintain*".[246] This raises a crucial point: how might Palmyra's relationship with long-distance trade look to us if the caravan inscriptions did not survive? To my mind, it would look strikingly like Petra. Or, for that matter, like Hatra, and scholars would be queuing up to stress how minor the role of long-distance trade was in its life and development,[247] or else discuss an invisible trade with the East which clearly existed but was never acknowledged in local writing. This is not to suggest that Petra or Hatra were 'caravan cities' (by Millar's or Alston's definitions, at least), but we must make some allowance when dealing with epigraphic absence for the truism that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

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[242] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[243] Butcher (2003), p. 184.

[244] Compare for instance remarks in the papers in Kaizer and Facella with those in Dirven's *Hatra*. See Kaizer, T. and Facella, M. (eds.) (2010), *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart; and Dirven, L. (ed.) (2013), *Hatra: Politics, Culture and Religion between Parthia and Rome*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart.

[245] Alston (2007); it should be noted that he discusses the phenomenon principally in the context of the settlements of southern Egypt.

[246] Seland (2015), p. 111.

[247] Harris' words regarding the 'minimising' viewpoint of ancient trade again spring to mind: "*it may be doubted whether it has ever been much favoured by anyone who combined a wide knowledge of Mediterranean archaeology and of the ancient texts.*" Harris (2011) p. 156.

Should the term 'caravan city' be avoided? Perhaps, if only in the interests of avoiding a fight. But one risks obfuscation in attempting to find alternatives (and surely, one would be needed). As it happens, we will see over the course of this thesis that the term can be useful when defined realistically. For instance, even Palmyra would probably have existed as a city in some form had it not been for the caravan trade. It occupies an oasis whence it exerted control over the interior of the Syrian Desert; this alone makes it the most obvious site for urban nucleation for more than fifty kilometres in every direction.[248] The city controlled and depended upon a substantial hinterland; so far, so unremarkable. However, what will become clear in the following pages is that it is the caravan trade which imparted to Palmyra – and to Petra, for that matter – the wherewithal to build and maintain the spectacular structures they possessed, and which come down to us as ruins. This was likely the case for many of the other cities we consider too. A better definition of a 'caravan city', therefore, is one which the caravan trade helped to *define* its character, by enabling the construction of exceptional structures through wealth imparted by the trade's direct and passive engagement.[249] Butcher cautions against extrapolation,[250] but surely Petra and Palmyra are merely extreme, rather than unique, examples.[251] With Hatra, Damascus, Gerasa and other cities, the question of quite *how* they were able to afford such lavish structures is not readily answered. Royal wealth and wealth from religious centres, by all means – but where did *that* wealth come from, and through what mechanisms did it arrive? The simplest answer is often the caravan trade.

3.4   Near-Eastern temples and long-distance trade

The ethnicity debate aside, little work has been done on temples and sanctuaries in the Near East, either as a whole (as opposed to Near Eastern *religion*, on which, see below),[252] or with regard to trade. Individual sites and trends have of course been discussed, sometimes at length, not least Palmyra, which we shall

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[248] We discuss this in depth in Part III.
[249] I would include the taxation of such trade in such engagement. The obvious counter-example is Dura-Europos, which possesses neither grand civic or religious architecture, nor a shred of evidence to suggest it was heavily bound into the long-distance trading networks of the Roman Near East – both of which characterise Palmyra, Petra, Damascus and other cities besides. We might therefore presume that it was a node for long-distance trade insofar as it was a destination for it, rather than a hub in the network.
[250] Butcher (2003), p. 184.
[251] Consider Gawlikowski (1997), p. 49: "*Although no royal patronage was visible, Palmyra managed to channel the profits of the caravan trade into temples, colonnades and other buildings, slowly making the desert city akin to any of the more typical coastal centres in Syria*".
[252] A notable exception is Susan Downey's work on their architecture, although she focuses on Mesopotamia and Persia and does not venture further west than the right bank of the Euphrates – Downey (1988).

come to in Part III. There is an important role for comparable studies from elsewhere in the Roman East, and we shall turn to some of these in due course. Previous general studies, such as Turcan's, tended to focus on the cults *in* Roman Near Eastern temples, rather than on the structures themselves.[253] The recent publication of Segal's compendious work on *Temples and Sanctuaries in the Roman East* is therefore welcome; he brings together a vast number of sites from across Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Sinai,[254] and much of their historiography too.[255] This is, if not the first attempt so to do, certainly the most recent and arguably the most complete. Unfortunately from our perspective, if he does mention a temple as having, for instance, been a caravanserai, he does not always provide his sources or reasoning.[256] George Taylor's *The Roman Temples of Lebanon*, while now dated, is also noteworthy, if nothing else for its discussion of many temples along the Phoenician coast whose existence is only known to us via the coinage of cities such as Tyre and Byblos.[257]

The single most prominent work which explicitly examines Near Eastern temples in the context of trade is Klaus Freyberger's 1998 work, *Die frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen*,[258] which manages at once to be both detailed and vague. It is essentially an architectural volume, concentrating on the technical details and construction of a variety of temples in Roman Syria and the immediate surround. However, this architectural focus is limiting: nowhere does he explain what he holds a 'caravan station' to be, and nor does he explain his choice of sites, which range from Palmyra (a caravan city, certainly) to Si'a – a remote 'peak sanctuary'.[259] Often, his justification for including a particular site borders on the perfunctory,[260] and his evidentiary basis for his conclusions is often either lacking or suspect.[261]

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[253] Turcan, R. (1992), *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Nevill, A. (1996), Blackwell, Oxford.

[254] But inexplicably, not all of them (for instance, he notably omits Antioch, Apamea, Dura-Europos, Hatra, and the Temples of Arsu, Rabaseire, and Bel-Hamon at Palmyra). Strictly speaking, a book with this title should also include temples from Asia Minor and Egypt; a better title for Segal's work would be '*Temples and Sanctuaries in the Roman* Near *East*'.

[255] Segal (2013).

[256] See for instance Segal (2013), p. 315, discussion of Iram, second paragraph.

[257] Taylor, G. (1967), *The Roman Temples of Lebanon: a pictorial guide*, Dar el-Machreq, Beirut.

[258] Freyberger (1998).

[259] While there is a case to be made for Si'a, Freyberger does not seriously attempt to make it.

[260] See for instance ibid. p. 46, on the peak sanctuary at Si'a: "*Judging by its position, the temple was not in an isolated location far from any habitation, but in the vicinity of small village communities and also on a traffic junction of important trade routes on the Jabal al'Arab.*" (*Nach dieser Position zu urteilen, befand sich die Tempelanlage in keiner isolierten Lage fernab jeglicher Bewohnung, sondern in der Nachbarschaft kleiner dorfgemeinden und zudem an einem Verkehrsknotenpunkt wichtiger Handelsrouten des Gabal al 'Arab.*)

With regard to Near Eastern temples more generally, Richardson gets beyond ethnicity to discuss the relationship between the major religious sanctuaries and the cities they inhabited, at Palmyra, Petra, Gerasa, Caesarea Maritima and Jerusalem.[262]   He is principally concerned with issues of physical, architectural and civic integration, and how the widespread redevelopment and monumentalisation of religious spaces in our period can be seen in a broader context of identity, definition, and power. Richardson focuses on the archaeological evidence almost to the exclusion of the literary; indeed, he acknowledges this openly, saying that he feels the written evidence is already "*well-known and its use has sometimes resulted in a one-sided picture; texts after all are often written by an author who has one or another axe to grind*".[263]   However, by choosing to largely ignore the written evidence, he entirely omits discussion of the connections which the Palmyrene Temple of Bel has to the city's elite, euergetists, and the caravan trade.[264]   In fact, he avoids mention of trade or commerce at all, despite the fact that at least one of the temples he discusses included explicitly commercial space.[265]   However, his aims and statements regarding the role of these sanctuaries beyond the immediately religious do bear holding in mind as we conduct our own study.   Temples integrated into their communities in complex and multi-faceted ways.   What bearing might these relationships have had on the perception of these sanctuaries by those who commissioned, built, and used them?

3.4.1   Orientalism and interpretatio: a brief historiography of Near-Eastern religion

The study of Near-Eastern religion in our period is a venerable and extensive area,[266] thanks in large part to the often spectacular temple ruins of the region which, for all their grandeur, pass almost completely unmentioned in Classical literature.   With the very notable exception of Lucian of Samosata's

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[261] See for instance his reading of inscription H272, discussed below, pp. 82-4 (see Freyberger (1998), p. 90).

[262] Richardson, P. (2002), *City and Sanctuary: Religion and Architecture in the Roman Near East*, SCM Press, London.

[263] Ibid., pp. 178-9.

[264] Identified, for instance, by Millar (1993), p. 322.

[265] The Temple of Artemis at Gerasa, which incorporated shops; see below, p. 170.

[266] For a survey of the historiography and extent of the topic over the years, see for instance Kaizer, T. (2008.a), "Introduction", in Kaizer, T. (ed.) (2008), *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 1-36, esp. pp. 11-21. On pre-Hellenistic religion see for instance Xella, P. (1986), "Le polythéisme phénicien", in Bonnet, C., Lipinski, E. and Marchetti, P. (eds.) (1986), *Religio Phoenicia: acta colloquii Namurcensis habiti diebus 14 et 15 mensis Decembris anni 1984, Studia Phoenicia IV*, Société des Études Classiques, Namur, pp. 29-39.

de Dea Syria,[267] there is precious little in the Classical canon; as a result, the study of Near-Eastern religion in our period is one largely informed by archaeology and epigraphy.

The progress of the field can, in broad strokes, be charted from the very first – often impressionistic and purple – letters and journals of the grand tourists,[268] followed by pioneering fin-de-siècle archaeological missions producing vast and lavishly illustrated tomes.[269] Dedicated national and international schools and excavations focused on specific sites in the first half of the Twentieth Century onwards (particularly French, German, British and American groups),[270] and a vast menagerie of synthetical, comparative and analytical works follows in the decades since, based on the fruits of that labour; of particular note is the *EPRO-RGRW* series of collections and monographs.[271] Specific investigations and excavations have often had profound effects and established certain scholars as giants of the field. Thanks to the inter-war Mandate in the Levant, many of these scholars are French or publish in it: Henri Seyrig's extensive series of *Antiquités syriennes* articles in the journal *Syria* form the foundation of much that followed;[272] his has been followed by work in similar veins by Michal Gawlikowski,[273] Ernest Will,[274] and more recently, Jon-Baptiste Yon.[275]

Much as study of the ancient economy remains dominated by Michael Rostovtzeff, study of religion and cult in the Roman Near East remains dominated by the seminal work of Franz Cumont in 1906.[276]

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[267] Lightfoot (2003).
[268] See for instance those of Volney, C. F. C., Comte de (1791), *Les ruines, ou, Méditation sur les révolutions des empires*, Editions Desenne, Paris; or Bell, G. (1907), *Syria: the desert & the sown*, Heinemann, London.
[269] See for instance Andrae, W. (1908), *Hatra. Nach Aufnahmen von Mitgliedern der Assur-Expedition der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, I, Teil: Allgemeine Beschreibung der Ruinen*, Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gessellschaft, 9, Leipzig.
[270] See the series of Preliminary Reports Rostovtzeff, M., et al (eds.) (1926-52) *The Excavations at Dura-Europos. Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters*, Preliminary Reports I-IX, YUP, New Haven.
[271] The vast series originally founded by Maarten Vermaseren, *Études préliminaires sur les religions orientales dans l'empire romain* (*EPRO*), published by Brill, Leiden, now reconstituted as the series *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* (RGRW).
[272] Seyrig, H. (1931-65), *Antiquités syriennes*, 6 Vols., Geuthner, Paris; now with a seventh volume, Seyrig, H. (2013), *Antiquités syriennes* VII, *Syria* Supplement 1, IFPO Press, Beyrouth.
[273] See for instance Gawlikowski, M. (1973), *Palmyre VI, Le temple palmyrénien*, PWN: Editions Scientifiques de Pologne, Warsaw.
[274] See above all Will, E. (1995), *De l'Euphrate au Rhin. Aspects de l'hellénisation et de la Romanisation du Proche-Orient*, IFAPO, Beirut.
[275] See Yon, J-B. (2002), *Les Notables de Palmyre*, IFAPO, Beiruit (though this is not purely about religious life).
[276] Cumont, F. (1906; reprinted 1929), *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, Geuthner, Paris; fourth edition.

His work was the first explicitly concerned with Near Eastern religion, although Cumont's interest was in its influence in the rest of the Roman Empire, and particularly the spread of individual cults. It is this work which popularised the concept of the 'Oriental cult', a theme warmed to by Eissfeldt,[277] Vermaseren,[278] Teixidor,[279] and Turcan,[280] among many others, in the following decades. This conception of Near-Eastern religion effectively pitted 'indigenous' cults and forms against Greco-Roman ones, a debate sharpened by the prevalence of Greek inscription for the most part, with pockets of Aramaic dialects, reflecting the ethnic debate raised by Millar. Issues of identity,[281] conformity and presumed '*interpretatio graeca*' of Semitic and Aramaic deities, with the assumption of hybridised names such as Zeus-Hadad in Damascus, dominate the scholarship.[282] As Kaizer says, "*the religious history of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East has invariably been analysed in terms of an intersection between 'indigenous' and 'foreign' (mostly Classical) aspects.*"[283] This ethnic lens has dominated the field to the exclusion of alternative approaches, something which this thesis will attempt to redress.[284]

3.4.2   Beyond identity: characterising Near Eastern temples

Previous works discussing temples in the Roman Near East (as opposed to any one *specific* temple in the Roman Near East) generally take one of two approaches within the framework of Near-Eastern religions explored above.[285] These two approaches are best demonstrated by two prominent works regarding them: Segal's major study,[286] and the relevant section of Ball's earlier, more generalist work on the Roman East as a whole.[287] Both scholars discern a small number of discrete types or common features of these temples, and use those as a basis for discussion.

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[277] Eissfeldt, O. (1941), *Tempel und Kulte syrischer Städte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig.
[278] In his *EPRO-RGRW* series..
[279] See for instance Teixidor, J. (1977), *The Pagan God, Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East*, PUP, Princeton.
[280] See Turcan, R. (1989), *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Nevill, A. (1996), Blackwell, Oxford.
[281] On identity in Roman Syria in particular, see now Andrade (2013).
[282] See for instance the collection of papers in Blömer, M., Lichtenberger, A. and Raja, R. (eds.) (2015), *Religious Identities in the Levant from Alexander to Muhammed – Continuity and Change*, Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium.
[283] Kaizer (2008.a), p. 21.
[284] The consensus appears to be that this ethnic lens is a feature and not a bug in the approach of current scholarship; I am not convinced.
[285] See also the relevant historiographical sections for the temples discussed in all Parts.
[286] Segal (2013).
[287] Ball (2000), Ch. 7, esp. pp. 317-56.

Ball identifies the 'temenos temple' as the Near Eastern temple *par excellence*.[288] This is fair: the feature of a large monumentalised enclosure, almost invariably paved and with monumental walls if not full or partial colonnades, is a characteristic endemic to the Roman Near East but found only rarely in temples outside it.[289] Within this large walled or porticoed court, the main temple building itself is either placed focally, in or near the centre (for instance, the Temple of Bel at Palmyra) or at one end (as, for instance, with the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Ba'albek).
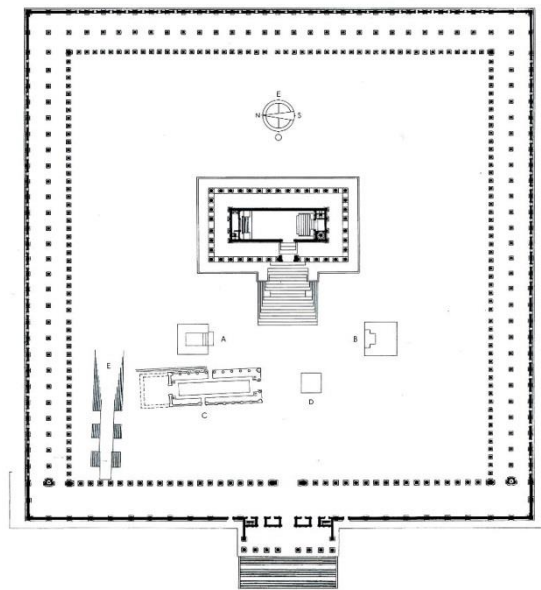
Fig. 1: Plan of the Sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (Gazetteer, 1). A: altar; B: basin; C: earlier banqueting rooms; D: secondary altar?; E: sacrificial access tunnel.

Common features of the temenos temple, according to Ball, include a similarly monumental gateway or propyleum marking the main ceremonial entrance (generally aligned with the focal temple, as in the Temple of Zeus Damascenus),[290] a very large altar, separate from the main temple itself but often occupying a commanding position within the temenos court (as in the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Baalbek),[291] and within the main temple, a raised adyton or thalamos – a focal niche or raised platform – at one or both ends of the main room (as in the Temple of Bel at Palmyra. He avoids the Hellenising terms 'cella' or 'naos').[292] The role of high places – towers, raised altars, or even temples in high situations – is also emphasised. Other characteristics which Ball identifies include the so-called "*tripartite inner chamber*",[293] wherein the focal end of the inner sanctum is split into three sections (one example is the Qasr-al-Bint at Petra); and the 'circumambulatory', a particularly common feature in Nabataean temples

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[288] Ibid., p. 318. See Fig. 1, above.

[289] He gives the example of the Temple of the Sun in Rome – but this is explicitly for a cult imported from Emesa in any case. Ibid., pp. 329-30. Closer examples, still in the Roman East, can be found in Ephesus, most strikingly the Serapeion and "Upper Agora", and also in the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria. See Raja, R. (2012), *Urban Development and Regional Identity in the Eastern Roman Provinces, 50 BC- AD 250, Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa*, Museum Tusculanum Press, Copenhagen, pp. 43-4 (Aphrodisias); 65-71 (Ephesus).

[290] Ball (2000), p. 326.

[291] Ibid., p. 335.

[292] Ibid., p. 337.

[293] Ibid., p. 342.

wherein a concentric corridor surrounds the inner chamber (as at the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra). The tripartite feature Ball describes on occasion as "*apsidal*" and as a direct progenitor of the feature in the first Near Eastern churches.[294] He insists the circumambulatory is explicitly Iranian in character, reminiscent of Zoroastrian fire-temples.[295]

For Ball, these features are identified and arrayed as evidence of the inextricably 'Near-Eastern' (or sometimes, 'Iranian')[296] character of the temples he discusses, as opposed to the Greco-Roman character ascribed on the basis of their decoration and outward appearance (columns, pilasters, pediments, etc.). This contributes to his overall polemic of Eastern features dominating Roman ones, in all areas.

Segal, on the other hand, identifies just two broad types of temple.[297] The first he dubs 'Vitruvian',[298] or temples which adhere in his judgement to the principles of Vitruvius' *de Architectura*;[299] he identifies 50 such temples.[300] The second variety is 'Non-Vitruvian', or "*those that are not of Hellenistic-Roman origins in the widest sense of the category*";[301] he identifies 26.[302] Of these, he further classifies a distinct cohort of Nabataean temples;[303] 13 Non-Vitruvian and 6 Vitruvian.[304] Interestingly, each successive variety is half the size of the one before it; he avoids making any inference, however. Having identified these varieties of temple, Segal distinguishes between two varieties of sanctuary: urban and extra-urban.[305]

Segal's focus is purely architectural, although his classification of temple varieties is clearly divisible along superficially ethnic lines (whereby 'Vitruvian' is Greco-Roman and 'Non-Vitruvian' is implicitly Near-Eastern; the Nabataean cohort speaks for itself). For him, these are merely useful handles with

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[294] Ibid. The triapsidal form has precedent in Roman basilicas too, however, and also in Mesopotamia, on which see Downey, S. B. (1988), *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, PUP, Princeton, esp. pp. 175-80.
[295] Ibid., pp. 343-4.
[296] He does not consider the possibility that this may simply be case of convergent evolution. Gawlikowski (1997) is convinced that it is false to suggest a Parthian or Iranian influence.
[297] Segal (2013), p. ix.
[298] Ibid., pp. 1-32.
[299] Vitr., *de Arch.*, III-IV.
[300] Segal (2013), p. ix.
[301] Ibid., pp. 32-45, quote from p. 32.
[302] Ibid., p. ix.
[303] Ibid., pp. 45-50.
[304] Ibid., p. 45.
[305] Ibid., p. 51.

which to get to grips with the architectural variety of the structures in his corpus, although the validity of the 'Vitruvian' and 'Non-Vitruvian' labels is highly subjective and open to doubt.

In this way, we have two distinct approaches to temples in the Roman Near East. Ball uses architecture as a convenient means to get at the perceived ethnic identity and origins of the temples he discusses, whereas Segal does the opposite, using convenient broad identifiers (to which Ball would be the first to ascribe 'ethnicity') as a means to get at their architectural features. For what it is worth, Freyberger essentially attempts to do both, using architectural commonalities to inform judgements on perceived ethnic identity, while concurrently using ethnicising labels to arrive at discrete groups of temples.[306]

Let us consider the approaches of other Near-Eastern scholars.[307] For his part, Millar discusses temples individually, and normally in the context of Hellenisation or Romanisation – "*In the same period* [the Second Century] *we can see the physical transformation of some temples, to make them conform to Graeco-Roman models.*"[308] For him, any variations in design are local aberrations which have survived despite the overwhelmingly Greco-Roman character of the epigraphy.[309]

Although he is mostly interested in gods and cults, Sartre notes the first introductions of Greek architectural tastes under the Seleucids, although evidence from this period (which for Sartre, like Millar, is mostly reliant on texts) is sparse.[310] By the Roman period his focus is almost entirely textual,[311] although when he does discuss temples, he emphasises the inherent syncretism of their architecture, arguing for the merging of indigenous and Greco-Roman architectural forms rather than the supremacy of either over the other.[312]

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[306] Freyberger (1998), *passim*, esp. Ch. F, pp. 121-3.

[307] I do not include Downey here as she does not discuss Palmyrene temples as such, although she does discuss Palmyrene temples in Dura-Europos. On these, see Downey (1988), pp. 88-130.

[308] Millar (1993), p. 352, discussing Palmyrene architecture, which he judges, incidentally, to be "*representing a coherent, and unique, example of a mixed city culture*" (p. 327), perhaps anticipating Sartre (2001), pp. 877-83.

[309] Ibid., *passim*; see for instance pp. 321-8.

[310] Sartre (2001), pp. 292-3. Butcher makes the very important point that "*the more we know about Ptolemaic architecture, the less Roman some of the classical architecture of Syria and the Near East becomes. If we were to know more about the Seleucid style our ideas about architecture in the region might be altered still further.*" (2003), p. 290.

[311] Sartre (2001), Ch. XIX, pp. 851-83.

[312] Ibid., pp. 908-927.

Butcher emphasises "*departure from the classical archetype*" while admitting that Near Eastern temple exteriors are often "*'typically' Greco-Roman*",[313] contrasting outward appearance with interior layout. As with Ball, he is quick to identify the temenos with defining peribolos or surrounding wall, with or without colonnade; he also mentions the separate altar, monumental entrance (propylon) and central temple, for which he prefers the term *naos*.[314] He identifies other features peculiar to Near Eastern temples, including channels and basins, niches, towers and 'High Places', and banked seating (the 'theatron' type seen at Petra, Si'a and elsewhere), as well as the tripartite and circumambulatory features identified by Ball.[315] Butcher approaches the question of temples and architecture from the subject of identity,[316] expressing distaste for traditional questions of the Greco-Roman/'Eastern' dichotomy, and prefers to focus on their social and spiritual function.[317] This is a much more instructive focus, although again, Butcher is chiefly preoccupied with issues of ethnicity and identity, and most aspects are ultimately discussed in these underlying terms.

This ethnocentric merry-go-round is all very well, but has obvious limitations when it comes to our own study. Obviously Palmyrene temples, particularly those abroad, can be viewed as ethnic constructs. However, the ethnocentric approach has led to discussion of temples in the context of their role in society generally through the prism of a presumed statement, or implied statement, of identity via their dedication, features and appearance, or the language(s) used therein.[318] This ethnic focus is not limited to discussions of Palmyrene or Near-Eastern temples; a similar focus can be observed in in studies on art,[319] and of Egyptian temples during our period, with very similar results.[320] Of course, by focusing on Palmyrene temples we are necessarily looking at what was a self-identified ethnic group, but drawing upon

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[313] Butcher (2003), Ch. 9, pp. 335-98; quotes on p. 358.

[314] Ibid., pp. 352-3.

[315] Ibid., pp. 354-361.

[316] Ibid., Ch. 9, pp. 335-98. On identity, see again Andrade (2013).

[317] Butcher (2003), pp. 351-63.

[318] For more on the limitations of this approach, see for instance Kaizer, T. (2000), "The "Heracles Figure" at Hatra and Palmyra: Problems of Interpretation", in *Iraq* 62 (2000), pp. 221-2.

[319] Eg. Quet, M.-H. (1999), "La mosaïque dite d'Aiôn de Shahba-Philippopolis, Philipe l'Arabe et la conception hellène d l'ordre du monde, en Arabie, à l'aube du christianisme," in *Cahiers Glotz* 10 (1999), pp. 269-330.

[320] See for instance Naerebout, F. G. (2007), "The temple at Ras El-Soda. Is it an Isis temple? Is it Greek, Roman, Egyptian, or neither? And so what?", in Bricault, L., Versluys, M. J. and Meyboom, P. G. P. (eds.) (2007), *Nile into Tiber. Egypt in the Roman World, Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis studies, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, May 11-14 2005, Religions in the Greco-Roman World* 159, Brill, Leiden, passim, esp. pp. 540-9.

comparanda from elsewhere in the Roman Near East is crucial for establishing the extent to which the phenomena we are examining transcended any Palmyrene 'ethnicity'. As we shall see, Seland's discussion of Palmyra's trading network as an explicitly ethnic construct is a crucial development from this point.[321]

Naerebout's comments in his study of a small Ionic-order temple at Ras el-Soda in Egypt are therefore welcome; as he says with implicit regard specifically to Ball and Butcher's takes on temple forms, "*what something looks like seems in fact a fairly essential part of what it is. The impression made at first sight is something that will have been very much a conscious concern of those who put up these buildings.*"[322] In his study he in fact points out the extensive similarities between small temples in Syria and Egypt during our period, suggesting that "*the Syrian temples and Ras el-Soda form part of a Hellenistic architectural* koinē*, which is also Roman, because Roman elements have been integrated into that* koinē."[323] Indeed, he goes on to suggest that the Ras el-Soda temple catered to a multicultural society at ease with switching between multiple different facets of a single, broader whole which included what modern scholars recognise as "*'true' Egyptian, Hellenised/Romanised Egyptian and Greek and Roman*".[324] There is much and more to suggest that similar conclusions about the temples we are considering from the Roman Near East would not be far wide of the mark.

As far as we are concerned, however, the purely ethnic fixation is rather to miss the point – the questions this thesis seeks to answer demand that we consider how Palmyrene temples *functioned* in society, a question which Naerebout's model allows us to approach with much greater ease. For the ancients, visiting the temple of the local deity was the done thing. Upon moving to a new place, or even travelling through, paying one's respects to the local gods was part of life; hence tales of visits by Roman dignitaries to many temples in our region, most famously the Temple on the Mount.[325] Greeks living in Egypt paid their respects at local temples which were about as Egyptian as it was possible to get,[326] yet this would not have been seen by them or their contemporaries as a statement of identity, or even of acculturation. A find of an Indian offering to Serapis at Berenike indicates that this custom was not restricted to

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[321] See below, pp. 111-4. Seland, E. H. (2013), "Networks and social cohesion in Indian Ocean trade: geography, ethnicity, religion", in *Journal of Global History* 8, Issue 03 (Nov 2013), pp. 373-90

[322] Ibid., p. 539.

[323] Ibid., p. 540.

[324] Ibid., p. 548.

[325] Joseph., *BJ*, I, 7.7.

[326] Naerebout (2007), pp. 524-5.

Europeans.[327] Conversely, the erection of a 'Greek' temple was not necessarily a sign of creeping Hellenisation – it could equally have been a statement of the defiant 'Greek-ness' of an erecting group far from home, despite their presence in a foreign land.[328]

We will see throughout our study that temples of all shapes and sizes maintained connections with far-flung places, and hosted fairs and festivals.[329] What this shows is that regardless of issues of identity or ethnicity, these societies, Palmyra's among them, were operating in a networked fashion through these institutions – our purpose is to find out *how*.

3.5   Categories of temple

Due to our need to approach temples as institutions – socio-economic, rather than simply architectural or ethnic constructs – we will recognise categories of temple based simply on their situation rather than any other biasing factor. This yields three broad types: major urban temples, smaller urban temples, and extra-urban temples.

Major urban temples are those which dominate a major settlement. Generally temenos temples of some form or another, they include (but are not limited to) the largest such structures in the Roman world. A Palmyrene example is the Temple of Bel at Palmyra; others include the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa, and the Temple of Shamash at Hatra.

Smaller urban temples are not of this order of scale, generally possessing smaller temenoi or none at all, and not so much dominating the urban fabric as forming a regular part of it; Palmyrene examples include the Temples of Allat and of Rabaseire at Palmyra, the Temple of the Gaddê at Dura-Europos, and Temple XIII at Hatra.

Extra-urban temples are, quite simply, those not within the bounds of a major settlement. They might be large, such as those at Si'a, or small, such as that at Iram; equally, they might be attached to a

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[327] Tomber (2008), p. 76.

[328] See for instance the Temples of the Imperial Cult at Vologesias and Petra (below, pp. 125-6 and 202-3). For a limited-scope study of how religious mores may have changed in the southern Decapolis region, and in particular whether continuity may be observed over time, see Lichtenberger, A. (2014), "Religious life in southern Syria during the Roman period", in Frood, E. and Raja, R. (eds.) (2014), *Redefining the Sacred: Religious Architecture and Text in the Near East and Egypt, 1000 BC – AD 300*, Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, pp. 209-230.

[329] For an example of both, see for instance the Temple Zeus Baetocaece (Gazetteer, 11).

smaller town, such as those at Ba'albek, to a hamlet or village, such as that at Seriane, or outwith a major nearby settlement, such as the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura-Europos. These three categories thus avoid the ethnic dimension which dominates other studies of Near-Eastern temples.[330]

At this stage it will be instructive to consider a case study which might be fruitfully compared and contrasted with Palmyra and its array of temples.

3.6   Hatra: a case study

Hatra (*al-Hadr* in Arabic) was a city in the Jezirah in the Mesopotamian desert, which attained prominence during the Second Century AD. Not quite halfway through the Third Century, it was abruptly abandoned; its ruins, in north-west Iraq, remain impressive.[331]

3.6.1   Historiography

καὶ ἔστι μὲν οὔτε μεγάλη οὔτε εὐδαίμων ἡ πόλις· ἥ τεπέριξ χώρα ἔρημος ἐπὶ πλεῖστόν ἐστι, καὶ οὔθ᾽ ὕδωρ, ὅ τι μὴ βραχὺ καὶ τοῦτοδυσχερές, οὔτε ξύλον οὔτε χιλὸν ἴσχει. καὶ πρός τε αὐτῶν τούτων, ἀδύνατον τὴν προσεδρείαν πλήθει ποιούντων, πρόςτε τοῦ Ἡλίου, ᾧπέρ που καὶ ἀνάκειται, ῥύεται.

This city is neither large nor prosperous, and the surrounding country mostly desert and has neither water (save a small amount, and that poor in quality), nor timber nor fodder. These very disadvantages, however, afford it protection, making impossible a siege by a large multitude, as does also the Sun-god, to whom it is consecrated. [332]

Thus is Hatra first described by Cassius Dio, who presents Trajan's 116/7 AD siege of the city as the turning point in his campaign in Parthia. The name of Hatra is Aramaic; it is referred to as *Hatra d-Shamash*, which literally translates as "*enclosure of the sun-god*".[333] Scholarship on the city in large part consists of reactions to its characterisations by ancient (that is to say, Roman) and modern authors.[334] Hatra is also encountered in Arabic sources, for which we rely principally on the Ninth-Century historian al-Tabari, who recounts a few older sources on Hatra, memorably including al-A'sha Maymun b. Qays' words: "*Have*

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[330] On which, see above, pp. 57-67.
[331] Shortly after this section was completed, the ruins of Hatra were destroyed. How much archaeology remains will not become clear for some time; the site may well be all but lost to us.
[332] Dio, 68.31.1-2, trans. Cohoon and Lamar Crosby (1940, reprinted 1951).
[333] Kaizer, T. (2000.b), "Some Remarks about the Religious Life of Hatra," in *Topoi* 10 (2000), pp. 229-232.
[334] For a comprehensive analysis of modern scholarship on Hatra, see above all Dirven, L. (2013.a), "Introduction", in *Hatra*, pp. 9-20.

you not seen al-Hadr, whose people always enjoyed ease of life?".[335] More evocative is al-Tabari's recollection of 'Adi b. Zayd:

> *And [where, now, is] the ruler of al-Hadr, who built it and for whom the taxation of the Tigris*
>
> *and the Jhabur was collected? He raised it up firmly with marble and covered it over with plaster,*
>
> *and yet the birds have found nesting places in its pinnacles.* [336]

It is worth noting that for all the vividness of al-Tabari's descriptions of Hatra, precious little acknowledgement of it is present in most studies of Hatra within a Roman context.[337] We shall examine the (largely contemporary) Roman sources first before engaging more fully with al-Tabari.

Cassius Dio's initial description of Hatra is damning; he revisits it in recounting Septimius Severus's attempts to conquer the city later that century,[338] although it is notable that far from the benighted desert settlement of Trajan's time, by Severus', it "*enjoyed great fame, possessing a vast number of offerings to the Sun-god as well as vast sums of money*".[339] Even so, note his mention of the Sun-god in both instances. Severus' attack on Hatra is also related by the dubious (but occasionally very useful) Herodian,[340] but here the ancient sources diverge: Dio describes two unsuccessful sieges, the second in great detail, while Herodian only recounts the one, occurring earlier than in Dio's muddled sequence of events.[341] Herodian also diverges from Dio's description of the city's environs: he instead describes Hatra as "*a city at the very top of a*

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[335] al-Tabari, *History*, I.828, trans. Bosworth (1999), p. 34.
[336] Ibid, I.830, trans. Bosworth (1999), p. 37.
[337] A notable exception is Hauser, S. R. (2013), "Where is the man of Hadr, who once built it and taxed the land by the Tigris and Chaboras? On the significance of the final Siege of Hatra", in *Hatra*, pp. 119-139.
[338] Dio 76.10-11.
[339] Ibid., 76.12.1-2, trans. Cohoon and Lamar Crosby (1940, reprinted 1951). Note that the offerings to Shamash and the "*vast sums of money*" are counted separately. It is possible that these offerings are recounted in honorific inscriptions from the sanctuary itself.
[340] Herodian 3.9.2-7, trans. Echols (1961). The *Historia Augusta* discusses Severus' Second Parthian War but does not mention Hatra.
[341] This confusion of dates and timings is noted by Sartre, who admits that the two accounts cannot be reconciled before conceding at least that they agree that, like Trajan, Severus failed to take the city. As we shall see, they actually agree on rather more than that. See Sartre (2005), pp. 148-9. Sommer places the sieges during Severus' second campaign, tentatively in 198 AD, after Millar (who puts them in the spring and late summer or autumn respectively) and Sartre (whom, Sommer erroneously recalls, convolves them into a single extended siege; if he had kept reading, he would have seen that Sartre's stance is rather more nuanced). See Sommer, M. (2013), "In the twilight. Hatra between Rome and Iran", in *Hatra*, p. 34 n.4. See also Millar, F. (1964), *A Study of Cassius Dio*, Oxford, p. 143; Isaac, B. (2013), "Against Rome and Persia. From success to destruction", in *Hatra*, pp. 23-32.

precipitous ridge, encircled by enormous, strong walls and teeming with archers".[342] The walls are self-evident, and the archers entirely credible. There is, however, no such ridge.

It is striking, given their broad agreement on the course of the campaign, that both authors – both, of course, writing from the Roman perspective – should be so wrong in such different ways about Hatra's topography: as we shall see, Hatra's hinterland is a lot more fertile than Cassius Dio allows,[343] and there is no trace of Herodian's "*precipitous ridge*" in the topography of the site.[344] It is likely that both authors were relying on less than perfect sources – Dio seems to have relied upon official reports of dubious accuracy,[345] while Herodian in particular seems to have drawn much of his narrative from a combination of (contradictory and misinterpreted) oral testimony and an (inaccurate) interpretation of the Arch of Septimius Severus, which it has been suggested depicts the siege of Hatra on Panel IV.[346]

After Dio's text breaks off, Hatra was besieged a second time in 240/1 – much more extensively and ultimately successfully – by Ardashir's Sassanids,[347] and abandoned. It is mentioned once more in passing, along with Trajan and Severus' attempts to capture it, by Ammianus as he was passing by in his own way in the latter half of the Fourth Century AD:

vetus oppidum in media solitudine positum, olimque desertum	An old settlement in the desert, long-abandoned and in absolute solitude. [348]

Some centuries later, Hatra's heyday was evoked in detail by the early Arabic historian al-Tabari; who collects and summarises earlier works describing Hatra in terms of its sudden and precipitous fall from prosperity, to the extent that it was "*famed in early Islamic lore as a symbol of the transience of earthly power*".[349]

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[342] Herodian 3.9.3-4, trans. Echols (1961).
[343] See below. Dio does at least readily admit to becoming less factually accurate the farther events get from Rome, but this is at best a confession, rather than an excuse. See Dio I.1.1.
[344] See below.
[345] Rubin, Z. (1975), "Dio, Herodian and Severus' Second Parthian War", in *Chiron* 5 (1975), pp. 421-2.
[346] Sidebottom, H. (1997), "Herodian's Historial Methods and Understanding of History", in *ANRW* II.34 (1997), pp. 2787-2788. See also Whittaker (1969), p. 317, n. 4. For more on the Arch of Septimius Severus, compare Picard, G. (1962), "L'Arc de Septime Sévère au Forum Romain", *CRAI* 106 (1962), 1, pp. 7-14 with Rubin (1975); see also Lusina, S. (2006) "Battle Imagery and Politics on the Severan Arch in Rome", in Dillon, S. and Welch, K. E. (eds.) (2006), *Representations of War in Ancient Rome*, CUP, Cambridge, pp. 282-3. Picard and Rubin's thesis – that the fourth panel of the Arch depicts Hatra – is compelling. That both scholars belabour their point and thus over-reach in their argument does not undermine their basic contention, which if true would make the panel one of the only known contemporary depictions of Hatra at its zenith.
[347] The vast encircling siege works from this second Sassanid siege remain to this day, as we shall see.
[348] Ammianus 25.8.5, trans. Isaac (2013), p. 27.

It is worth reminding ourselves that al-Tabari was writing in the 9th Century AD, and that in his writing he brings together older Persian and early Arabic texts which recounted the circumstances of Hatra's fall some centuries previously. These texts seem to be principally concerned with the mythic aspects and symbology of the stories surrounding the final, terminal siege of Hatra and its ensuing destruction, purportedly with the complicity of one of its princesses. Arabic and Persian accounts of Hatra's fall to Ardashir I (inaccurately presented as Shapur I, presumably because Shapur was there too, and his strapping youth at the time is more befitting a romantic hero)[350] are highly mythologised, and although their usefulness for reconstructing the course of the Sassanid sieges is limited at best, they remain important indicators of Hatra's status and prosperity.[351] For our purposes, the passages we have seen above seem to gel well with the physical remains of the city, and they remain preservations of vivid contemporary or near-contemporary accounts of the city.

The site was visited by a team led by Andrae at the beginning of the Twentieth Century; his resulting publication of photographs first brought Hatra to widespread attention in the modern era.[352] Sir Aurel Stein famously surveyed the surround and identified many of the routes to and from Hatra in the 1930s.[353] Since then, the site has been patchily explored, dug and surveyed, mostly by Iraqi archaeologists but punctuated with occasional European projects. Unfortunately as a result, most of Hatra's archaeology, coinage and pottery are only published in Arabic and have yet to meaningfully enter Western scholarship.[354] The history of this scholarship is well-charted by Lucinda Dirven.[355] It was included in

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[349] Bosworth (1999), p. 31 n. 97.

[350] Zakeri, M. (1998), "Arabic reports on the fall of Hatra to the Sasanids. History or Legend?", in Leder, S. (ed.) (1998), *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, p. 162. Other accounts attesting (or assuming) the presence of Shapur II at the siege cannot possibly be correct as his reign was well into the 4th Century AD.

[351] Zakeri (1998); Hauser (2013), pp. 119-121.

[352] Andrae (1908); and Idem. (1912), *Hatra. Nach Aufnahmen von Mitgliedern der Assur-Expedition der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, II, Teil: Einzelbeschreibung der Ruinen*, Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gessellschaft, 9, Leipzig.

[353] *Limes Report, passim*, esp. pp. 57-88.

[354] An example is the 1974 book in Arabic by F. Safar and M. A. Mustafa, *Hatra: the City of the Sun God* (Baghdad), which presents evidence which could help inform the 'caravan cities' debate. From Altaweel, M. R. and Hauser, S. R., (2004), "Trade routes to Hatra according to evidence from ancient sources and modern satellite imagery", in *Baghdader Mitteilungen*, Band 35 (2004), p. 60. On Arabic scholarship on Hatra, see above all Dirven (2013.a), pp. 10-12.

[355] See Dirven (2013.a), pp. 9-20.

Susan Downey's *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, which brought together much of the post-war scholarship on Hatra.[356]

In 1998, Klaus Freyberger included Hatra's Sanctuary of Shamash in his *Temples of the Caravan Stations*.[357] The Sanctuary was surveyed by separate teams led respectively by Professors Roberta Venco Ricciardi and Michal Gawlikowski,[358] and between 1996 and 2000, an Italian team conducted sonar soundings in and around the main temple sanctuary in the city centre.[359] In the early Twenty-First Century, analyses of aerial and satellite photography allow greater understanding of the site and its surrounds,[360] particularly when compared with Section X of the Peutinger Table, which as we shall see, depicts Hatra as lying on important trade routes.[361] Most recently, Dirven's invaluable edited colloquium volume brings together a very wide range of articles on Hatra, as well as valuable summaries of both modern scholarship and Hatra in ancient texts; it represents the present high-water mark for Hatrene studies.[362]

Broadly, there are two ways in which Hatra is approached in modern scholarship. The first is via the vexed question of whether or not it may have been a 'caravan city'; it is also – rather more productively – discussed in terms of its vacillating relationship with Rome and Parthia.[363]

Although Hatra was not included in Rostovtzeff's original list of 'caravan cities',[364] it is often assumed that he allowed for it to be included in the definition,[365] and given Hatra's position on routes still visible today and in the Peutinger Table, it is common for the 'caravan city' attribution – genuine or not –

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[356] Downey (1988), pp. 159-73.
[357] Freyberger (1998), pp. 89-102.
[358] Dirven (2013.a), pp. 10-11.
[359] See Venco Ricciardi, R. and Peruzzetto, A. (2013), "The ancient phases of the great sanctuary at Hatra", in *Hatra*, pp. 84-7. See also Figure 12 below, p. 83.
[360] Scardozzi, G. (2013), "The contribution of old aerial photos and multitemporal satellite images to the study of two ancient cities along the eastern Roman limes: Hatra and Dura-Europos", in *Proceedings of the 4th EARSeL Workshop on Cultural and Natural Heritage, Earth observation: a window on the past, Matera, Italy, 6-7th June 2013*, European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories, Online, pp. 339-346. See also Altaweel and Hauser (2004).
[361] This was the main thrust of Altaweel and Hauser (2004; pp. 71-80), as we shall see in due course.
[362] *Hatra*.
[363] A third approach, via al-Tabari, is largely concerned with his account itself rather than the city's history and archaeology. See for instance Zakeri (1998), *passim*; see also Bosworth (1999), pp. 31-7; Hauser (2013).
[364] Cf. Rostovtzeff (1932), pp. iii-viii.
[365] A definition which he never gave. Nevertheless, see for instance Young (2001), p. 192, n. 19. In fact, the originator appears to be Sir Aurel Stein; see *Limes Report*, p. 58.

to feature as the departure point for discussion of the city.[366] It is therefore easy for Hatra's role in long-distance trade to be either overstated,[367] or lost or overly downplayed amid unhelpful arguments about how one defines a 'caravan city' in the first place. We have seen how this debate might sensibly be progressed.[368] Beneath the noise of the 'caravan cities' debate, it is generally undoubted (if sometimes only grudgingly admitted)[369] that Hatra must have played a role of *some* kind in the caravan trade, and the view that Hatra in fact was a 'caravan city' after all is still proposed from time to time.[370] Others such as Downey maintain that its role was primarily as a centre of pilgrimage – a role which, incidentally, would also have made it highly attractive to trade during the festival season.[371] Whatever its role in trade was, and the extent to which that trade impacted the city, remains controversial; we shall explore evidence towards this shortly and arrive at our own conclusions.

3.6.2   Region and Routes

Hatra is situated on the Wadi Tharthar in Mesopotamia, approximately 50 kilometres west-northwest of Assur, 80 south-southwest of Mosul, and 100 southeast of Balad Sinjar (ancient Singara), in terrain dominated in the ancient period by nomads and patchily-irrigated desert between the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Such terrain is characterised by so-called *hollow ways*: geographical impressions left by ancient itineraries through the desert (most notably, but by no means limited to, caravan routes) that have further eroded naturally and become geological features in their own right, connecting sites of ancient settlement and activity.[372] Analysis of any aerial or satellite photograph of Hatra's surrounds, or indeed the rest of the Jezirah or northern Syria, will reveal these hollow ways as straight, generally shadowed features cutting across the terrain with little regard for elevation, and as Altaweel and Hauser have demonstrated, "*leading*

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[366] See, for instance, Kaizer (2013); Young (2001), pp. 192-3. See *contra*, for instance, Freyberger (1998), p. 89.

[367] See, for instance, Freyberger (1998), pp. 89-102.

[368] See above, pp. 55-7, re: caravan cities.

[369] See, for instance, Young (2001), pp. 192-3. See *contra*, for instance, Kaizer (2013), who goes out of his way to stress that Hatra nevertheless had long-distance trade of some kind, probably to a not inconsiderable degree.

[370] See for instance Freyberger (1998), pp. 89-102; see also Hauser, S. R. (2000), "Ecological limits and political frontiers: the "kingdom of the Arabs" in the Eastern Jazira in the Arsacid Period", in Milano, L. et al (eds.), *Landscapes, Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East. Papers Presented to the XLIV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Venezia, 7-11 July 1997*, II, Padua, pp. 193-4.

[371] Downey (1988), pp. 159-73.

[372] See Wilkinson, J. T. (1993), "Linear Hollows in the Jazira, Upper Mesopotamia", in *Antiquity* 67, pp. 548-562.

exactly into known gates" in Hatra's walls.[373] Sir Aurel Stein identified many of these from the air and concluded from their extent and direction that Hatra had to be a caravan city; many of the arguments he brings supporting this contention remain valid and unanswered by the notion's opponents, and if nothing else the extent of the infrastructure – roads and caravanserais – remains considerable.[374]

Six main routes have been identified, along with numerous smaller local routes leading to minor wadis, oases and sites of Achaemenid-era activity.[375] One heads east-southeast and connects Hatra with Assur, and shows signs of bearing traffic that was both heavy and regular for some time,[376] perhaps giving an indication as to the relationship between the two cities.[377] A second route heading southeast from Hatra on the left bank of the Wadi Tharthar in the direction of the River Tigris also links up with hollow ways from Assur, and heads in the direction of Ctesiphon and Tikrit.[378] A third route, mirroring the second on the right bank of the Wadi Tharthar, appears to link Hatra with Tell Ariji, which was occupied during the Parthian period; continuing along this route's trajectory suggests it directly connected Hatra with Tikrit.[379] A fourth route can be identified leading westwards from Hatra to the Al-Milh Al-Ashkar salt flats; likewise following its trajectory suggests a direct connection with the Euphrates, to either 'Ana or Dura-Europos, where Hatrene inscriptions and coins have been discovered, as we shall see.[380] A fifth, particularly well-preserved route, heads due northwest to Balad Sinjar via a number of smaller settlements.[381] A final route heads more or less north in the direction of Tell Dera.[382] It is worth bearing in mind that while hollow ways to Nineveh more than likely existed, agricultural activity between Hatra and Nineveh has obliterated them. Given the apparent importance of the route to Assur, however, we might expect that a similar route linked Hatra with Nineveh.

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[373] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), p. 80.
[374] See *Limes Report*, esp. pp. 57-88.
[375] Ibid., p. 62.
[376] Wilkinson (1993).
[377] Ibid., p. 63.
[378] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), p. 63.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid., pp. 64 & 71-80. For a comprehensive scholarship summary of Hatrene coins and inscriptions in Dura, see Gregoratti (2013), p.49, n. 24.
[381] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), pp. 64-9.
[382] Ibid.

Visible routes from Hatra may productively be compared with Segment X of the Peutinger Table, which sites it on three routes through Mesopotamia and indicates the city with a symbol reserved for the most important sites.[383] The Peutinger Table can be somewhat difficult to deal with as it occasionally misinterprets or duplicates place names and routes.[384] Nevertheless, one of Hatra's routes heads north to Singara, where it splits into two branches heading for Nisibis and Edessa respectively, and thence to Zeugma;[385] the second route heads east to Carrhae (identified on the map as *Tharrana*), while the third route links Hatra with Ctesiphon.[386]

Comparing the northerly route with hollow ways already identified suggests that for all its schematic reduction of the routes, the Tabula Peutingeria is essentially correct in its identification of routes to Balad Sinjar from Hatra; this is corroborated by an inscription from Tell 'Abrat al-Saghira dated to 116 AD.[387] Altaweel and Hauser propose that the locations of *Sirgora* and *Zogorra* on the left-hand route can be synonymised with *Singara* and *Zagurae* on the north, on the basis that the Peutinger Map is highly schematic, in the manner of modern urban-transit network maps;[388] this seems likely, but presents difficulties if the remainder of the two routes are convolved. The simplest and most probable explanation is that there were multiple ways through the steppe;[389] their use may for instance have been seasonal. The route south to Ctesiphon via Tikrit presents further issues, chiefly relating to difficulties identifying sites mentioned in the Peutinger Table,[390] however, given the presence of hollow ways heading directly for Tikrit from Hatra, and eschewing Assur (which would entail a significant diversion of one or two days' travel),[391] it is likely that at least that much of the reconstruction is valid.

It is of course most likely that the routes which are now Hatra's hollow ways saw their greatest use before its abandonment after the second Sassanid siege in 240/1; the same can be said for the routes

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[383] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), pp. 72-81. See also *Limes Report, passim.*
[384] On the Peutinger Table, see above all Talbert (2010), esp. pp. 133-161. See above, p. 31.
[385] Exactly this route is recounted by Isaac (2013), p. 30.
[386] Ibid., p. 73.
[387] See Teixidor, J. (1966), "Notes hatréennes" in *Syria* 43 (1966), p. 94.
[388] Ibid., p. 74.
[389] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), pp. 75-7 explore the difficulties with reconciling the two itineraries. Stein discusses it as well and concludes at least one bridge, now lost, must have been involved. See *Limes Report*, pp. 64–5.
[390] Ibid., pp. 77-8.
[391] Ibid., p. 78.

which appear on the Peutinger Table. As we shall see shortly, there is in fact only limited evidence for continuous occupation at Hatra prior to the First Century AD and virtually none following the second Sassanid siege; the period of highest use for these routes therefore has to have been in the hundred and eighty years following 60 AD. It is worth bearing in mind that this period also coincides with the period of greatest use of trade routes in the Palmyrene sphere, and the date of its cessation is very close in time to the date of Aurelian's reduction of Palmyra, and the abandonment of Dura-Europos due to Sassanid efforts there too. Either way, these routes must have borne significant and sustained traffic during the period of their greatest use; their extent also shows that most of this traffic must have originated outwith the Hatrene hinterland. Regular short-haul traffic between Hatra and its closest outlying settlements would explain the particular prominence of its shortest-distance hollow ways, and go some way to explaining the heavy traffic evident upon them (and, as Kaizer points out, how Hatra itself was fed),[392] although it is worth remembering that even allowing for subsequent erosion, such traffic cannot *on its own* satisfy an explanation for the hollow ways' scale.

Comparison of the hollow ways and routes identified in the Peutinger Table with locations where identifiably Hatrene epigraphic inscriptions have been found is also very productive. Inscriptions have been discovered as far west as Dura-Europos and as far east as Tikrit, lending further weight to the likely routes between these cities and Hatra.[393] One such was discovered on a limestone block at Sa'diyya, a wadi approximately 20 km east of Hatra on the road to Mosul, a few kilometres west of the Tigris at a site used into very recent times by the Bedouin for animal watering and growing cereals. The inscription, dated to April 124 AD, describes a monument set up by one Zena, the commander of the Hatrene guards.[394] However, the inscription is damaged and difficult to read. There are many different readings of both the original Aramaic and its translation:[395] Aggoula identifies Zena's monument as a "*caravanserai and*

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[392] Kaizer, T. (2013), "Questions and problems concerning the sudden appearance of the material culture of Hatra in the first centuries CE", in *Hatra*, p. 71.

[393] See Bertolino, R. (1997), "Les inscriptions hatréennes de Doura-Europos: étude épigraphique", in *Doura-Europos, Études IV* (1991-1993), Beirut, pp. 199-201.

[394] All inscriptions from Hatra, unless otherwise noted, are in Hatrene Aramaic.

[395] It is worth saying that Dijkstra offers a completely different translation of the Sa'diyya inscription, based on Ibrahim's (1986) drawing, but that Dijkstra's translation is not at all reflected in others'. See Dijkstra (1995), p. 239-40.

temple",[396] Ibrahim as a "*garden, stage or stopping place*",[397] and Beyer as an "*altar base and incense altar*".[398] The balance of these translations indicates a religious structure or altar of some kind, perhaps with an additional role as a waystation – both Ibrahim and Aggoula propose such a function of some kind ("*caravanserai*"; "*stage or stopping place*"). Beyer's incense altar would have burnt goods carried long-distance. All three agree that Zena was guard captain. Certainly, a military presence of some kind from Hatra along the routes following the Tigris should not come as a surprise, but it is nevertheless a useful indication that a similar situation maintained in Hatra and its surrounds to that in other cities in comparable areas. That a Hatrene guard captain was present – and, indeed, set up – a monument of some kind here would seem to corroborate al-Tabari's reported quote of 'Adi b. Zayd to the effect that the king of Hatra was responsible for taxing "*the Tigris and the Jhabur*".[399] The date of the inscription suggests that within a decade of Trajan's failed assault on the city, its influence extended at least as far as the Tigris.

Of the three or four inscriptions known from Dura, three are graffiti; one mentions a triad of Hatrene gods,[400] and was situated in a house not far from the Temple of Atargatis.[401] The second is fragmentary, but may refer to Shamash;[402] the third is a problematic bilingual Hatrene Aramaic-Greek inscription discovered in the Temple of Atargatis which appears to include a dedication to Hatrene Shamash.[403] A fourth, from Dura's Palmyra Gate, was translated by Torrey as a graffito in memory of "*the camel train of Kalb*",[404] although this reading is disputed by Bertolino amongst others.[405] Although it can only be dated cautiously, the most favoured dating places this fourth inscription in the latter part of the First Century AD, making it earlier than any known Hatrene Aramaic inscription.[406] Just as Dura is the site for one of the earliest known Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions, this inscription may therefore be

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[396] Aggoula, B. (1991), *Inventaire des Inscriptions Hatréennes*, Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, Paris, p. 174-5, no. 5, *Sa'diyya*.
[397] Ibrahim, J. K. (1986), *Pre-Islamic Settlement in Jazirah* (Thesis), State Organisation of Antiquities and Heritage, Baghdad, pp. 213-4
[398] Beyer, K. (1998), *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra, und dem übrigen Ostmesopotamien*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, p. 116 – "*der Altarunterbau und der Räucheraltar*".
[399] al-Tabari, *History*, I.830, trans. Bosworth (1999), p. 37.
[400] Bertolino (1997), pp. 201-2.
[401] Leriche and Bertolino (1997), pp. 208-9.
[402] Ibid., p. 203.
[403] Ibid., pp. 203-5.
[404] Torrey, C. (1931), "The Safaitic Inscriptions" in *TEAD* II, p. 176.
[405] Bertolino (1997), pp. 202-3; esp. n. 24.
[406] Leriche and Bertolino (1997), p. 212 "*nous avons ici l'inscription hatréenne la plus ancienne connue à nos jours*".

the earliest known example of Hatrene Aramaic, which would suggest that relations between the two were well-established at a time when Dura's own links with Palmyra were flourishing. If Torrey's translation is correct, it would indicate that not only were relations established, but that Hatrenes were involved in the caravan trade from Dura in the direction of (and, one has to presume, to) Palmyra, in the same way that Palmyrenes were present in the East. However, the inscription's translation remains disputed, and Beyer does not include it in his list of Hatrene inscriptions from Dura;[407] it must nevertheless be noted.

3.6.3 Site and Hinterland

Situated as it is in the Jezirah, Hatra's immediate environs are now largely desert, although it is worth noting that it seems that in Antiquity, it was rather more clement than it is now, notably with access to good water,[408] in spite of its characterisation by ancient authors. There are many small and minor settlements and areas of habitation in Antiquity known in the vicinity, and many remain linked with Hatra's network of known hollow ways; these settlements must have fallen into a Hatrene hinterland which, among other things, will have provided the principal part of the city's food,[409] as well as in all likelihood a major part of the pilgrims which headed to the Sanctuary of Shamash. That many such outlying settlements can be contemporaneously dated with the period of Hatra's flourishing between the late First and first half of the Third Centuries CE should therefore come as no surprise.[410] As we have seen from the use of terrain around Sa'diyya, seasonal cultivation of cereals and other crops remains a key facet of life in Mesopotamia, and with the substantial water systems engineering indicated by remains from Achaemenid and Sassanid times, it is likely that the Hatrene hinterland was able to support a not inconsiderable amount of agriculture (though this may have been impacted by the Roman wars).

Quite where the city of Hatra got its water from has been the subject of some discussion, with the most obvious suggestion of the Wadi Tharthar being troublesome due to its significant remove of 3-4

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[407] Cf. Beyer (1998). It would presumably be inscription number 2, which is omitted from his sequence.

[408] al-Aswad, H. (1991), "Water Sources at Hatra", in *Mesopotamia*, 26, pp. 195-211; see also Edwell (2008), pp. 253-4, n. 14. A change in the area's fertility may be quite satisfactorily explained by an absence of human effort instead of some sort of climatic shift; such efforts often alter local climate systems in any case.

[409] On this subject, Kaizer (2013), pp. 69-71 raises the issue of the Palmyrène and the Tariff's extensive depiction of local trade by way of comparison. See also al-Aswad (1991).

[410] al-Aswad (1991), pp. 195-7.

kilometres or so from the city itself.[411] There are strong indications from Arabic historical sources that the Tharthar was, at least for part of the year, "*a large river*" during the time of Hatra's occupation,[412] a possibility borne out by the remains of a substantial bridge approximately 3 kilometres from Hatra.[413] When the Tharthar was in spate it could grow to some scores or hundreds of metres in width, and many metres deep.[414] There are also indications that there were dams situated near Hatra in Antiquity.[415] Hatra also had wells and aquifers in use at the time of the city's period of greatest habitation, some of which may have had a ritual function owing to their situation in or near the city's various temples;[416] there is also a lake in the south-western quarter of the city, which was embanked during the Second Century; it contains water to this day.[417]

Any examination of the site of Hatra from the ground will leave one struck by the extent and monumentality of its remains; similarly, any examination from above will leave a vivid impression of the city's layout. Hatra can readily be described in terms of a cartwheel, with rounded rectilinear walls pierced by occasional gates straddling roads defining three principal axes, all converging on the Sanctuary of Shamash in the city's heart, and corresponding with the direction of the city's major regional connections. The Sanctuary is the only significant open space within the circuit of the walls. The dominant circuit of walls is very late in the grand scheme of Hatra's occupational history, likely built in response to the Sassanid threat;[418] a rather less grand inner circuit of walls encompasses a smaller area, and is very likely the circuit assaulted by Trajan in 116.[419] Notably, the larger, later, outer circuit includes areas such as the old necropolis, which lay outside the older plan of the city; the necropolis and other outlying areas were

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[411] See for instance Scardozzi (2013), p. 342.
[412] See Al-Aswad (1991), p. 200.
[413] Ibid. pp. 201-4, "*The Stone Bridge of Hatra*".
[414] Ibid, pp. 200-4.
[415] Ibid., p. 211.
[416] Ibid, pp. 204-10.
[417] Ibid., pp. 210-11. This lake is the prominent circular formation visible in the south-western (lower right) corner of Fig. 2 overleaf.
[418] Scardozzi (2013), pp. 342-3.
[419] Ibid.; see also in particular Gawlikowski (2013).

encompassed by the later Severan-era walls, presumably to deny their use as cover for later assailants. The tombs also show sign of disassembly.[420]

Much larger features outside the standing Severan-era walls have been identified as circumvallation and contravallation works dating to the Sassanid sieges, and have themselves attracted significant study as some of the largest and best-preserved siege works from Antiquity.[421] The circumvallation remains in almost its entire circuit, while the most prominent surviving element of contravallation lies to the south-east of the city proper.
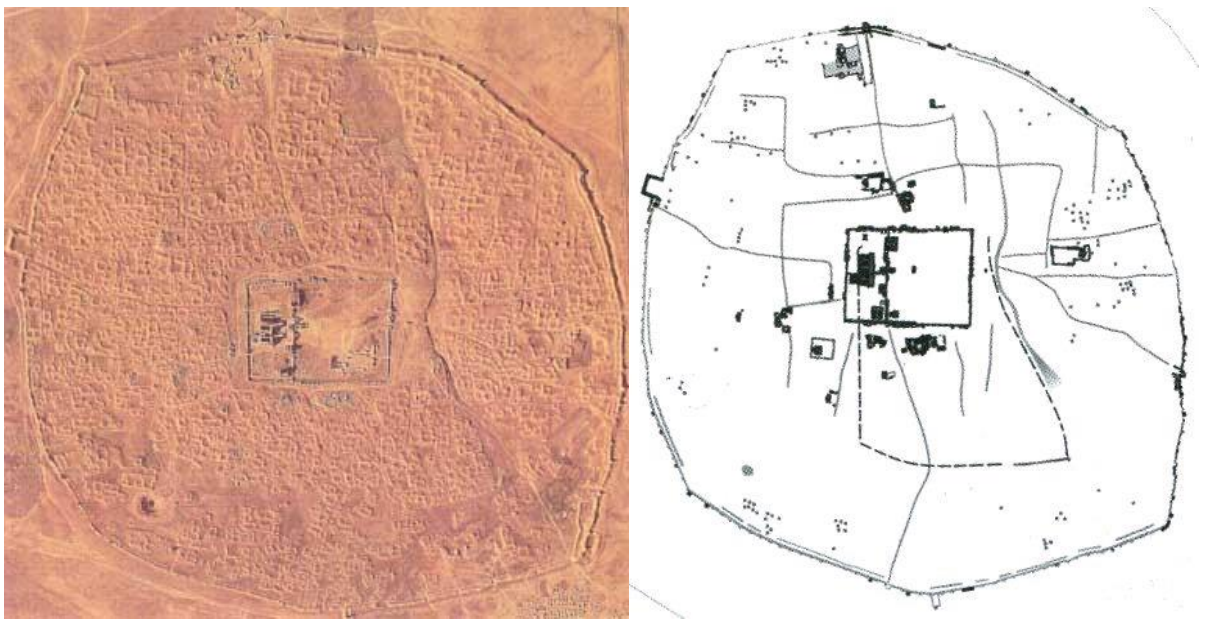
Fig. 2: [left] An aerial photograph of Hatra's ruins; [right] A schematic plan of Hatra, with some major features indicated. The dashed line is that of the Trajan-era walls.

As we have seen, comparison of Hatra's gates with known ancient routes shows an exact correspondence,[422] and just as there are three major axes indicated on the Peutinger Table and by the hollow ways, so are there three major axes visible in the city's remains themselves. Within the city, these three transverse axes all cross inside the main temple enclosure, with symmetrical gates on either side of

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[420] Gawlikowski (2013), pp. 76-7, proposes that a later expansion of the old necropolis outside the Sassanid-era walls was levelled, either by the Hatrenes to deny their use to the Sassanid attackers, or by the Sassanids to provide material for their own siege works.
[421] Ibid. See in particular Hauser (2013) and Scardozzi (2013).
[422] Altaweel and Hauser (2004), p. 80.

the main temple complex within. The proportional size of the Sanctuary of Shamash to the rest of the city is only too readily apparent.

The Sanctuary of Shamash (Gazetteer, 19) utterly dominates the city, and as we shall see, is datable to the middle of the Second Century AD.[423] The Sanctuary itself comprises a vast forecourt with two smaller courts, with evidence for an incomplete peribolos (see Fig. 3 overleaf); the Sanctuary's outer dimensions of 456 by 320 metres make it larger than that of the Temple of Zeus Damascenus by almost 25%, with an area even greater than that of the Temple on the Mount at Jerusalem.[424]

The layout of the city clearly suggests the importance of the Sanctuary – indeed, it suggests that the complex held more than a purely ritual role for Hatra's inhabitants. The Sanctuary is not unique among major temples for being at the meeting of major routes: both the Temple of Zeus Damascenus and the Great Temple of Philadelphia lay at crossroads or major junctions as well. However, unlike both, the Hatrene Sanctuary lies at the principal crossroads *for the city as a whole*. Any individuals transiting Hatra would necessarily have had to traverse or circumnavigate the Sanctuary of Shamash. From a monumental point of view, this makes sense, but it makes sense from a commercial point of view as well. In the absence of an agora, forum or marketplace, that there is no comparable open space within the city walls – particularly within the smaller Trajanic walls – would imply that somewhere else (such as the temenos) must have fulfilled their functions, unless some alternative facility can be demonstrated.[425] Let us turn to the evidence concerning precisely this.

3.6.4   Material

Archaeological evidence for Hatra's early occupation is questionable and generally problematic. While there is very limited suggestion of habitation of the site after the 240/1 Sassanid siege, there is little indication of anything more than an enclosure prior to the First Century AD.[426] We are therefore dealing with a site very much bounded by those two dates. There is some limited evidence of habitation of some

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[423] Gawlikowski (2013), p. 78.
[424] Freyberger (1998), p. 93.
[425] Downey (1988), pp. 159-73 argues that Hatra was a pilgrimage destination, and that the Sanctuary of Shamash primarily served the pilgrims while the small temples primarily served the local inhabitants. This is very well, but what is good for pilgrims is good for trade – and the question of where trade took place remains.
[426] See for instance Kaizer (2013), pp. 59-61.

kind in the Fifth to Third Centuries BC in the form of scattered pottery finds from the temenos of the main Sanctuary near to the site of the Great Iwans in the smaller courts at the western end. However, aside from a single imported Assyrian/Achaemenid lamp, there is nothing of particular interest to our investigation.[427]

For many years, Hatra was assumed to have been a Hellenistic-era city with significant roots; however, early excavations repeatedly failed to identify any major architectural remains from this period.[428] Soundings and limited excavations between 1996 and 2000 suggested that the visible Sanctuary of Shamash may have had predecessors on the same site, but not in sufficient detail for them to be dated.[429] The conclusion of the excavators was that an archaic phase of habitation – possibly a tell – was remodelled and then abandoned, similar to the Temple of Bel at Palmyra, although with no indication of date.[430] The site was then re-occupied and again abandoned during the Hellenistic period. The first enclosure on the site of the temenos was built during the First Centuries BC and AD, and the site was monumentalised towards the end of the First Century AD, during which the city expanded to nearly eight times its former size,[431] before the temples including the Great Iwan complex in the Sanctuary's west end were finally erected during the first half of the Second Century.[432] The presence of a necropolis of up to 140 tombs between the pre-117 AD and pre-Sassanid wall circuits indicates that the site was the subject of significant habitation during the First Century AD.[433]

Ward-Perkins mentions an inscription on the façade of the Sanctuary of Shamash dating to 77 AD.[434] However, a dedicatory inscription to Lord Nasru (a King of Hatra) dated to 138 AD suggests a date for the erection of the enclosure itself.[435] Freyberger suggested a construction date as early as 17 AD (which would make it a contemporary of, for instance, the Temple of Bel at Palmyra); this was based on analysis

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[427] See Venco Ricciardi and Peruzzetto (2013), pp. 87-8.
[428] Ibid., pp. 81-3.
[429] Ibid., pp. 84-7.
[430] Ibid., pp. 86-7.
[431] Gawlikowski (2013), pp. 75-6.
[432] Ibid., pp. 88-9.
[433] See Aggoula (1983), pp. 420-1. Gawlikowski (2013), p. 77 also presents a tomb inscription from this necropolis *"best dated"* to 56 AD.
[434] See Ward-Perkins, J. B. (1965), "The Roman West and the Parthian East", in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. LI, pp. 175-199.
[435] H272. See for instance Gawlikowski (2013), p. 78; Beyer (1998), p. 79.

of the styles of decoration within the sanctuary and a puzzling assertion that the date of the inscription is unclear.[436] This is incorrect, as even a cursory examination of the inscription will show.[437]
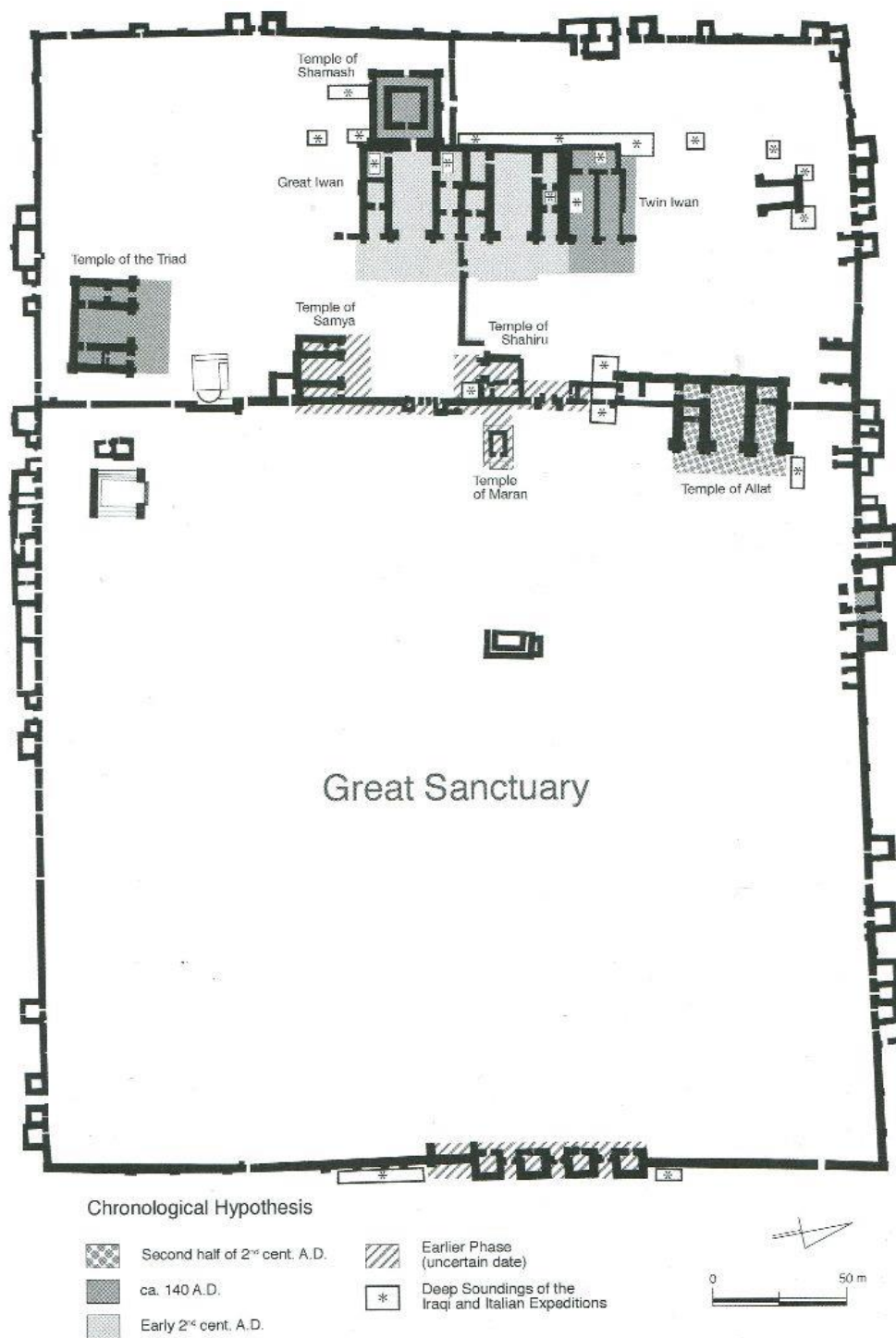
Fig. 3: A plan of the Sanctuary of Shamash at Hatra (Gazetteer, 19), with some major structures indicated.

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[436] Freyberger (1998), p. 90.
[437] Beyer (1998), p. 79l; cf. image in Aggoula (1991), pp. 129-30 & Pl. XXI; the dating formula unambiguously shows the year 449, or 138 AD.

One can see how Freyberger was tempted to view the Sanctuary of Shamash in the same context as the great temples from the Roman Near East such as Jupiter Damascenus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus and Palmyra's Bel. However, examination of the Sanctuary's layout shows immediate problems with this comparison: there is no one focal temple or iwan, and little to no axiality or symmetry to the design. Architecturally-speaking, the buildings within the Sanctuary of Shamash are a curious mixture of both Achaemenid/Parthian and what one might cautiously call 'Syrian' models. Most notably, the collection of structures includes, almost centrally along the long axis of the Sanctuary, abutting the end of the dividing wall between the two smaller courts, a peristyle Ionic-Corinthian temple with a Syrian pediment.[438] This structure is unique within the Sanctuary complex, and stands out like a sore thumb. The absence of any significant structures at all from the centre of the main court – other than a single off-centre altar (nevertheless aligned centrally with regard to the monumental entrance in the eastern end of the enclosure wall) – is striking, and leads one to wonder quite what all this empty space was used for. If there was no one focal structure, was it used instead by many cults, as Palmyra's Temple of Bel was held to later?

Eight inscriptions from around the Sanctuary complex make reference to *sgyl* – *esagil* – the great temple, apparently named for (or at least cognate with) the eponymous great temple in Babylon.[439] Each of these also mentions a gift of money, purportedly towards its construction; this puts one in mind of similar inscriptions from elsewhere such as the Temple of Palmyrene Bel.[440] Cassius Dio's remark about the huge number of gifts to the god, and separately, the city's vast sums of money, springs to mind.[441] Either way, there is no obvious candidate structure for this *esagil* of Shamash in the remains of the Sanctuary – there is certainly no trace of such a structure in the vast forecourt, although the (off-centre and symmetry-ruining) Square Temple in the southern inner court has been labelled the Temple of

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[438] Imaginatively called the "Hellenistic Temple". See Freyberger (1998), pp. 98-101; see also Gawlikowski (2013), pp. 77-9. Identified in Fig. 3 above as the 'temple of Maran'. See also Downey (1988), pp. 159-62.
[439] These being H107, H191, H202, H225, H240, and H244-6. On the *esagil*, see Kaizer (2000.b), pp. 232-5.
[440] See III.5.1.1, pp. 219-22.
[441] Dio 76.12.1-2.

Shamash on the basis of a small altar bearing his name and a solar design above the main entrance.[442] The vast iwans in the centre may in fact be what is meant.[443]

Also of interest is a legislative decree, apparently issued by the city of Hatra, found on the right-hand wall of the main eastern gate into the city.[444] This decree forbids the selling of the "*stones, pebbles, or mortar of a milling area belonging to the temple, because the temple* [treasury] *had already levied the price of milling them*".[445] Maintaining a structure of such size would have been a major project in its own right, and the amount of – non-local – Mosul marble in the city and in the Sanctuary suggests that the supply of stone was a significant and ongoing undertaking.[446] That a public ordinance banning its resale was needed implies at the very least that the materials for its construction were valuable; one is forcibly put in mind of 'Adi b. Zayd's reference, related by al-Tabari, to the city's impressive marble works.[447] It bears considering that all of this marble would have required transportation to Hatra over land, and the – considerable – funds to pay for it (and for its transportation) must have come from somewhere.[448]

Most notable for our purposes is a group of inscriptions collected from the walls of the rooms around the circuit of the temenos of the Sanctuary itself;[449] unlike other great Sanctuaries, the circuit of rooms was not complete, and nor, seemingly, was the colonnade; great stretches of the temenos boundary are a simple, if impressive, wall, sometimes rather haphazardly aligned.[450] These inscriptions all contain the Aramaic word *dkt'*, which has as possible translations 'place with sacred connotation', 'sacred place', 'installation', and 'shop', in similar vein to the Greek word τόπος (*topos*). Aggoula argues effectively for an etymological link between the Aramaic word *dkt'* and the terms *dūkettā* and *dūktā* from Judeo-Aramaic

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[442] Specifically H202.xix. It bears noting that of the ten inscriptions (over thirty if the sections of H202 are counted separately) from the Square Temple, this is the only one that actually mentions Shamash at all. See Beyer (1998), pp. 68-9.

[443] See for instance Downey (1988), pp. 159-61.

[444] H344; see Beyer (1998), pp. 93-4.

[445] Ibid., ll. 4-8, translated by Aggoula as "*il est interdit à quinconque de vendre des pierres et des cailloux et du mortier d'une aire de broyage appurtenant au temple (maison de dieu) parce qu'a été prélevé le prix de leur broyage sur le (trésor du) temple*". On legislative decrees at Hatra, see Kaizer, T. (2006.b), "Capital punishment at Hatra: Gods, magistrates and laws in the Roman-Parthian period", in *Iraq* 68 (2006), pp. 139-154.

[446] Aggoula (1991), *passim.*

[447] al-Tabari, *History*, I. 830, trans. Bosworth (1999), p. 37.

[448] Dio's "*vast sums of money*" spring to mind – see Dio, 76.12.1-2.

[449] H7, H254, H259, H282 and H284. See also Aggoula (1983), pp. 408-9.

[450] See Fig. 3, p. 83.

and Syriac respectively, which both have overt commercial connotations.[451] He thus assumes these inscriptions indicate shops, such as "*the great shop of Aba, son of Astnaq*" from the exterior wall of a room opening into the main court;[452] Beyer assumes they denote "*workshop*" instead,[453] while Hoftijzer and Jongeling note that it is "*prob. indication of offertory-box*" but go on to allow the translation "*shop*" elsewhere in Hatra.[454] Of course, craftspeople often sell things in their workshops. Besides, one must exercise caution when assuming that a given term in one language must translate as a single term in another. Could these places not have had multiple roles simultaneously? Business could surely be conducted in a space with sacred connotations, and we know from elsewhere that people took advantage of this to engage in commerce. If these are indeed 'places with sacred connotation' which were built by or allocated to groups or individuals during religious festivals, it makes sense for these to be just those places where such business was conducted – and if a group or individual was allocated a place for a festival, that place may have been used both for the religious ceremonies and for the festival market which would have accompanied such occasions, under the protection of the presiding deity.

The Shamash Sanctuary's size and central location on axial routes, as well as its morphology, the apparent allocation of the structures around the temenos – and the weight of traffic implied by the hollow ways leading to and from Hatra's main gates – combine to suggest that it was the site of major religious festivals and their attendant fairs, and can thus be characterised as a hosting temple in trade, which would explain the concatenation of these different elements. Although we have seen no concrete evidence of long-distance trade, there is no evidential reason to believe it was absent. Indeed, the disproportionate size of sanctuary to settlement forcibly reminds one of Baetocaece,[455] where we know this to have been the case.

Scattered around Hatra, both within the old city (i.e. within the Trajanic walls) and the later city (i.e. without the Trajanic circuit but within the Sassanid-era walls) are fourteen other buildings and complexes

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[451] See Aggoula (1983), pp. 409-10 and Aggoula (1991), p. 7.
[452] Aggoula 1, *IIH*, p. 179, no. 20. Aggoula translates it from the Aramaic into French as "*La grande boutique de 'b', fils de 'stnq*".
[453] Beyer (1998), p. 173. He also admits the translation "*place*", but he uses the meaning "*workshop*" in each of his translations.
[454] Hoftijzer, J. and Jongeling, K. (1995), *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* II, Brill, Leiden, p. 247.
[455] See below, pp. 182-5.

identified by varying measures as temples, and numbered I to XIV (see Fig. 4). Analysis of the finds suggests that each temple was dedicated to multiple deities, in a not-dissimilar fashion to other smaller temples from the region.[456] Of particular note for our purposes are Temples V, IX, XI, and XIII, although it will be worth considering the small temples as a collective as well.

A - Triad Temple
B - Temple of Allat
C - Temple of Samya
D - Temple of Shahiru
E - Hellenistic Temple
F - Great Iwans
G - Square Temple
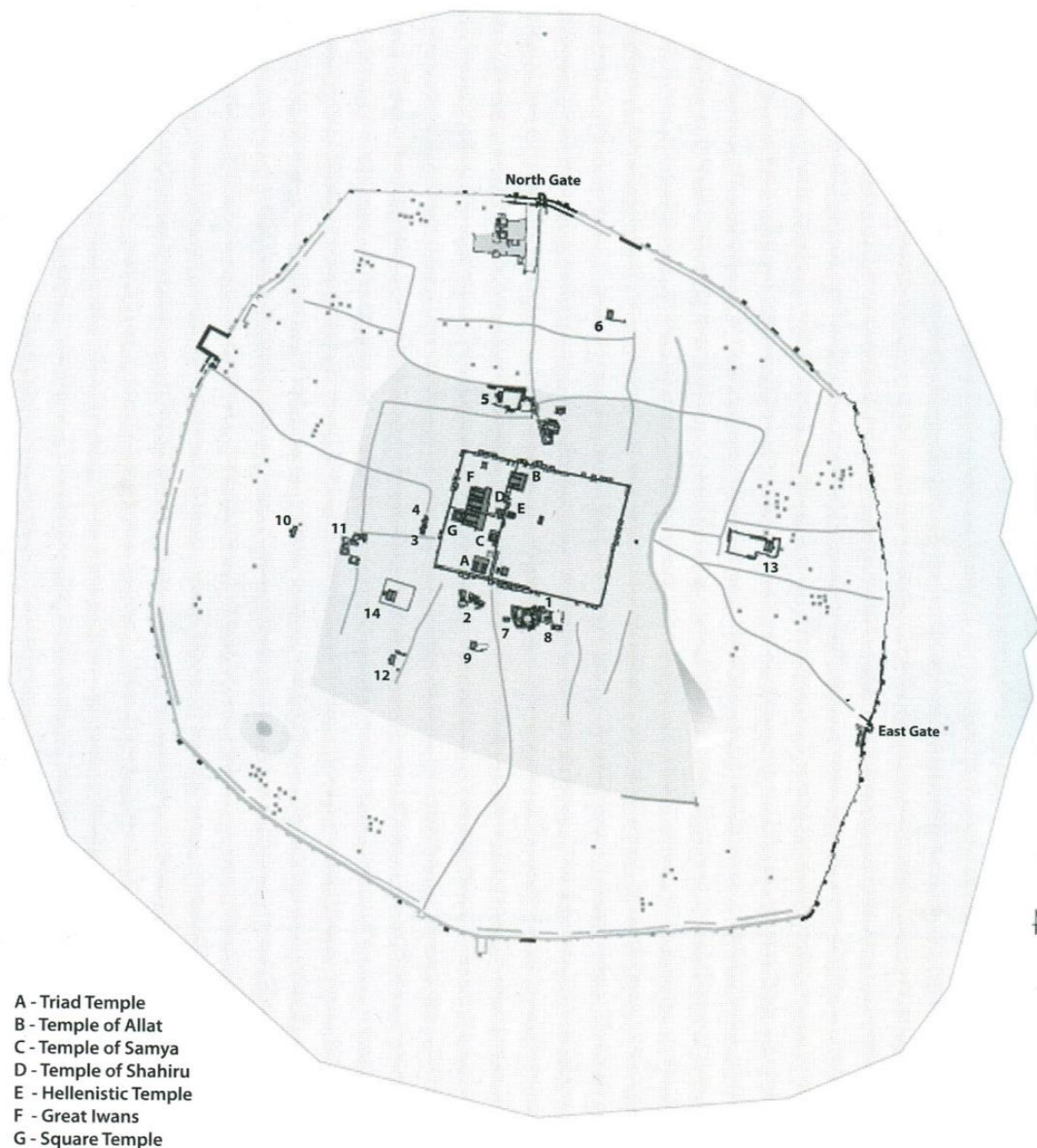
Fig. 4: A plan of Hatra with the small temples indicated. The shaded area is that within the Sassanid contravallation. The darker area is roughly that of the Trajan-era city; Temple XIII (Gazetteer, 23) can be seen amongst the tower tombs to the east.

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[456] See Jakubiak, K. (2013), "A note on the inscriptions and architectural decorations from the small temples", in *Hatra*, pp. 91-105. See also Downey (1988), pp. 162-73.

The small temples may be found in each cardinal direction from the Sanctuary of Shamash, with most clustered to the south and west. All but three may be found within the Trajanic walls; Temples VI, X and XIII were located outside the older city, and were engulfed by later residential developments.[457] The impression is of an eclectic mix of large and small structures hosting varied activity in honour of heterogeneous cults and traditions; they contrast strikingly in form and scale with the huge Sanctuary of Shamash. No less than nine of these temples also appear to either have been dedicated to, or to have contained artefacts dedicated to Hercules/Nergal, a deity which Jakubiak notes for associations with the afterlife and with worship by nomadic populations in the area.[458]
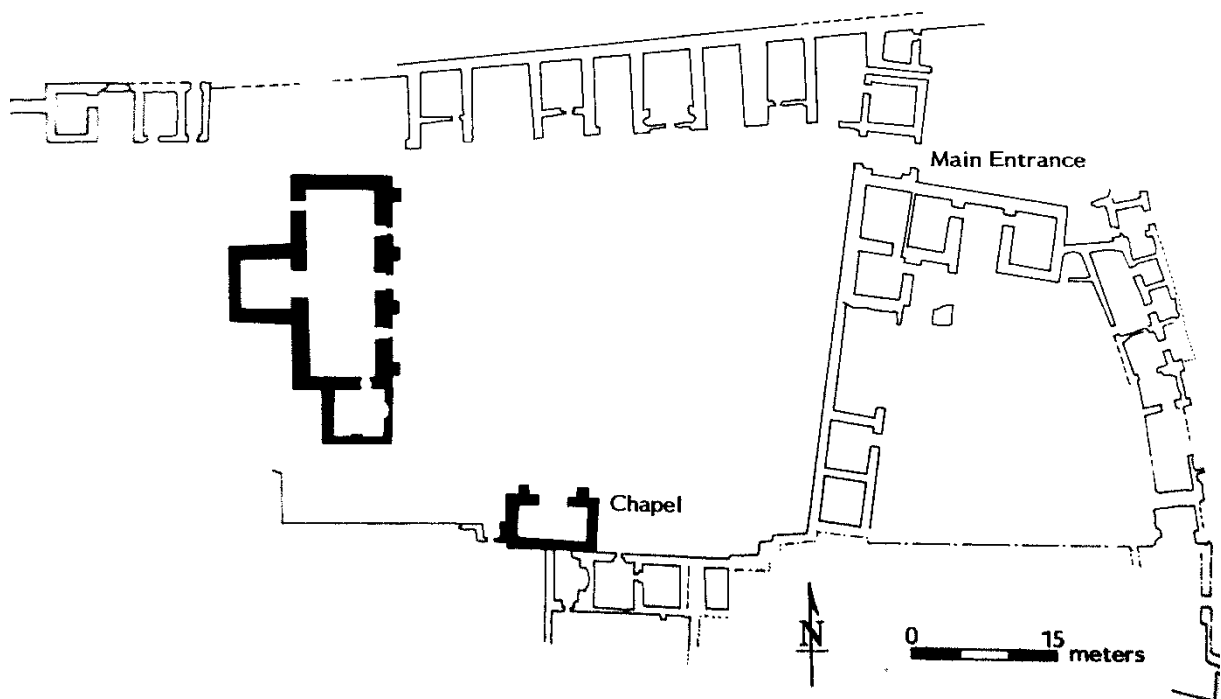
Fig. 5: A plan of Temple V, Hatra (Gazetteer, 20)

Temple V (Gazetteer, 20; Fig. 5) is situated north of the main Sanctuary on the main axial route from the north gate, and has been provisionally identified as a temple to Ashurbel, possibly also to Bar-Maren and Nabu,[459] and contained more than a dozen dedicatory statues and inscriptions, with many to highly elite individuals. These include a royal priestess,[460] a princess, a priest, and a royal prince,[461] while over the

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[457] Jakubiak (2013), p. 103. See also Fig. 4, above.
[458] Ibid., p. 103. Specifically, Temples I, V, VII, VIIIb, IX, X, XI, XIII, and XIV.
[459] Ibid., pp. 95-6.
[460] H34. This is interesting as there do not seem to have been female priests at, for instance, Palmyra.

Temple's main entrance is an inscription dedicated to King Nasru of Hatra and his son Vologeses.[462] One inscription in particular from this temple is from a statue of a woman found with the others listed above, and dedicated in the month of Elul, 549 (August, 237 AD).[463] As with the others, it mentions her father, who in this case is described with an unclear word, either *hmd'* or *hmr'*.[464] In recognising that the final letter is unclear, Safar suggests a reading of "*agréable*" for *hmd'*, or an alternate reading of *hmr'*, cognate with the Arabic *ḥammār* – "*caravanier*".[465] Caquot assumes that it is part of the father's name rather than a descriptor of his role, although he shows no awareness of Safar's reading.[466] However, none of the other inscriptions from this temple use multi-part names for the father – each instead follows the normal formula of single-word name followed by a descriptor signifying occupation. Aggoula also reads the word as *hmr'*, but cognate instead with the Syriac *ḥammāra*, he translates it as "*marchand de vin*";[467] Beyer equivocates: "*Wein (die Esel?) zuständigen*".[468] We have seen from Palmyra and elsewhere the capacity for caravan owners and leaders to become fabulously wealthy – the defining elite of their city; could this woman's father have been a *caravanier* from a similar elite in Hatra? This would surely far better explain her presence alongside princes and royal priests than if her father had been a wine merchant, even a wealthy or agreeable one. Safar's alternate reading seems the most likely; it would also mean that this inscription is the only known one from Hatra to mention the caravan trade.

Another find from Temple V raises the prospect of links between Hatra and Hierapolis in Syria: a cuirassed statue of a god, identified as Nabu but showing truly exceptional similarity to the statue of Hierapolitan Apollo as described by Macrobius.[469] While this statue is of local make and of relatively local

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[461] H36-7, H39, and H41, respectively.
[462] H33. See also Jakubiak (2013), pp. 95-6.
[463] H35.
[464] Ibid., esp. l. 2.
[465] See Safar, F. (1952), "Kitabat al-Hadr", in *Sumer* 8 (1952), pp. 120-1, n. 30, published in Arabic, and Aggoula's notes on his translation and reading in *IIH* p. 30. Hoftijzer and Jongeling (1995; pp. 383-4) suggest either *wine-merchant* or *donkey-driver*, the latter of which would fit Safar's reading.
[466] See Caquot, A. (1953), "Nouvelles Inscriptions Araméennes de Hatra", No. 35, in *Syria* 30 (1953), pp. 240-1.
[467] Literally, "*merchant of wine*"; Aggoula (1991), H35, p. 30.
[468] Literally, "*wine- (or donkey-?) competent*"; Beyer (1991), H35, p. 38. Beyer's parenthetical query reflects Safar's reading.
[469] Macr. *Sat.* 1.17.66-67.

Mosul marble, its profound resemblance to the cult statue in Hierapolis is too strong to be coincidental,[470] and is more than passingly intriguing given the 400 km separation between the two sites. Kropp proposes a rather involved[471] explanation as to its presence in Hatra involving Apollo's oracular powers and a hypothetical planned assault on Hatra by Caracalla before he died on campaign at Carrhae in 217 AD.[472] Quite what this statue is doing in Hatra must for now remain an open question; it could simply reflect a style of depiction common across the wider East which also found its way into Macrobius' description.

Temple IX (Gazetteer, 21; Fig. 6) is situated just to the west of the main road between the Sanctuary and the south gate; it is assumed to have been dedicated to Nergal and notably is the site of three Latin inscriptions to Hercules/Nergal,[473] as well as multiple figures of Hercules. Two of the Latin inscriptions are from the soldiers of *Legio* I *Parthica*,[474] and one is on Mosul marble.[475] An Aramaic inscription found on the cella floor, dated to November/December 186 AD, is notable for its mention of 'merchants' – *tgry'*:

	byrḥ knwn šnt	*In the month Kanun of the*
	498 n[y]š' dy	*year 498 (186/7 AD). This*
	'qym '[bd]smy'	*is the stele which Abdsimia*
4	br yhyb'	*son of Yehiba has erected in*
	lqr tgry'	*honour of the merchants*
	dy smy'	*who have made the*
	'bdw	*Standards.* [476]

This inscription is the only one to explicitly mention 'merchants' in the entire Hatrene corpus;[477] that it should be found in a temple is unsurprising as this is often where honorific inscriptions have been

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[470] With a Tyche figure, flanked by eagles, bearded and carrying a shield, cuirassed with an Aegis and *gorgoneion* on the *back*, not the front. The statue is also carved in the round, which is unusual in Hatrene sculpture.

[471] In his own words, "*both speculative and slightly acrobatic*", Kropp (2013), p. 197.

[472] His explanation hinges on a rare silver tetradrachm of Caracalla, minted at Kyrrhos, Hierapolis, Edessa and Carrhae, with the Hierapolitan coins bearing the same cult image described by Macrobius and under discussion in from Hatra. This tetradrachm is published in Seyrig, H. (1949), "Antiquités Syriennes 40 – Sur une idole hiérapolitaine", in *Syria* 26, pp. 17-28, Pl. 1.1. Kropp argues that its presence both on a coin of Caracalla and in Hatra suggests that an oracle of Hierapolitan Apollo was perceived by the Hatrenes as contributing to Caracalla's defeat, and that this statue in Hatra was therefore perhaps made in that context. See Kropp (2013), pp. 197-9.

[473] *Oates* 79-81, *IIH*, p. 183; see also Jakubiak (2013), p. 99.

[474] H80 and H81.

[475] H79.

[476] H65, after Dijkstra (1995), pp. 188-9. The 'standards' of the inscription were religious banners common to Hatrene religious sculpture; see ibid., p. 189, n. 44. See also Beyer (1998), pp. 44-5.

[477] Dijkstra (1995), p. 175.

found in Hatra, but it must be stressed that the context of Hatrene honorific dedications appears to have differed crucially from the Palmyrene in key respects.[478] Not least among these was that Hatrene temples were not, it would seem, the public spaces which Palmyrene temples were, and that such dedications appear to have been much more strictly religious in nature than those at Palmyra.[479]
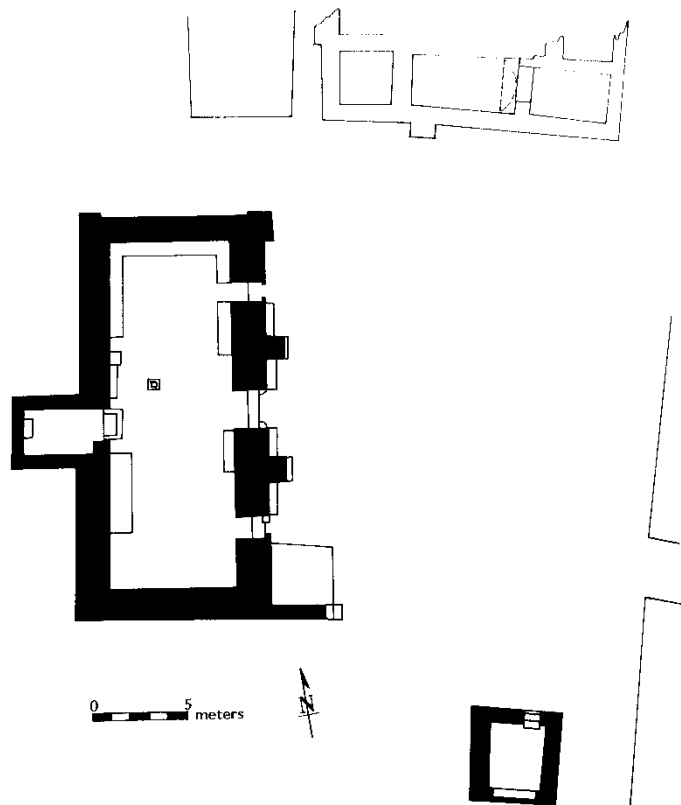
Fig. 6: A plan of Temple IX, Hatra (Gazetteer, 21)

The implications of inscription H79, from Temple XI (Gazetteer, 22; Fig. 7), are also worth noting. Dijkstra explores this inscription in detail:[480] it appears to reflect a cessation of hostilities by nomads against the ruling Hatrene dynasty, and a reaffirmation of "*their allegiance to the Hatran dynasty*",[481] along with a promise not to kidnap the son of king Sunatruq (which rather suggests a promise not to do so *again*). Crucially for our purposes, it is argued that this inscription was erected in this way in Temple XI because that temple was frequented by members of the very same nomadic tribe;[482] by including a genealogy back five generations, the dedicants of the inscription could include a great number of individuals – "*if at some point one's own genealogy corresponds with the one that is given, one will consider himself as belonging to the group that is recruited* [in the inscription]".[483] Dijkstra argues that the best place to give this decree meaning is to lend it the weight not only of the Hatrene king and the leaders of the nomads erecting it, but of the gods as well by erecting it in this temple – in that temple's

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[478] On which, see above all, Dirven (2013.b), *passim.*
[479] Ibid.; see also, Dijkstra (1995), pp. 243-4.
[480] Dijkstra (1990); see also Beyer (1998), pp. 47-8.
[481] Ibid., p. 97.
[482] Ibid., p. 98.
[483] Ibid., p. 93.

entrance, no less.[484] To be clear, the implication is that Temple XI was used by members of the nomadic or seminomadic population from the Hatrene surround when they visited the city; this implies enduring ties between the settled and non-settled populations which suggests the two were more integrated, or perhaps even less distinct, than commonly assumed.
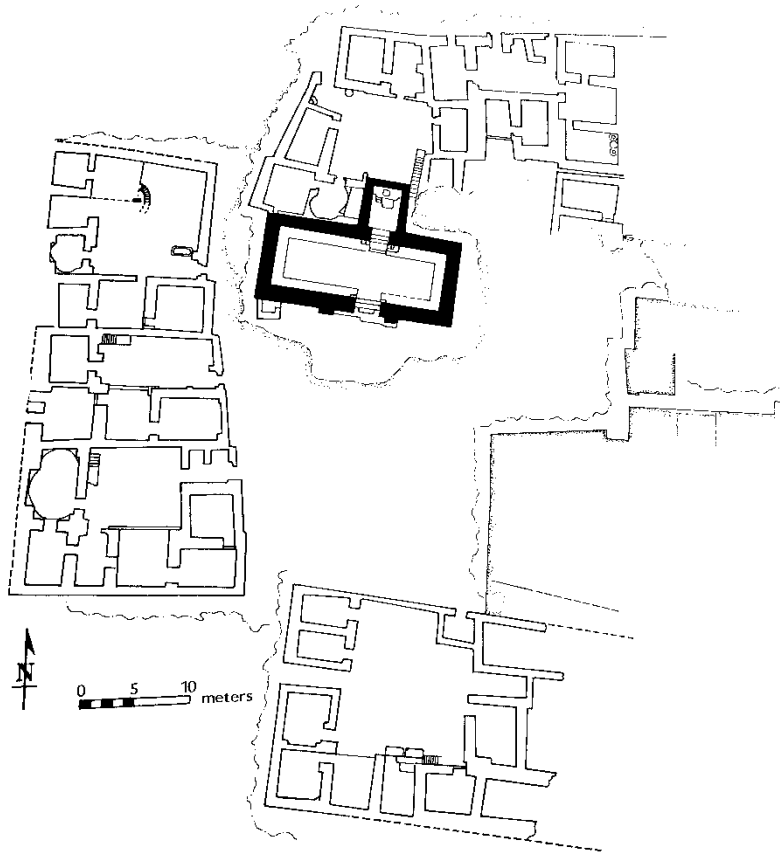
Fig. 7: A plan of Temple XI, Hatra (Gazetteer, 22)

Temple XIII (Gazetteer, 23) was erected in amongst the tower-tombs of the necropolis, on the main road east of the main Sanctuary, which was absorbed into the city as it expanded beyond the Trajanic walls to fill the area within the later Sassanid-era circuit. This temple was identified by the initial excavators as the Temple of *Herakles-Nergal*, although this identification is no longer favoured, the temple generally being known currently as Temple XIII instead,[485] although more recently it has been held to have been dedicated to a Gad/Tyche figure.[486]

It is worth noting that a single family or tribal name – **rmgw** or *Ramgu* – crops up at least five times in inscriptions from Temple XIII, leading to the suggestion that it was a familial/tribal shrine of some description erected amongst the tower-tombs of the old necropolis, in similar manner to the Palmyrene

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[484] Ibid., pp. 97-8.
[485] "Excavations in Iraq, 1981-82" (no author cited), in *Iraq*, 45.II (1983), pp. 199-224, pp. 211-2.
[486] Jakubiak (2013), p. 102.

Temple in the Necropolis at Dura.[487] Among the finds from the temple, excavators discovered a relief

stele dedicated in Palmyrene Aramaic (not Hatrene), to Allat, as well as an altar showing strong typically-

Palmyrene elements, and an Egyptian carving with hieroglyphics. Given the Palmyrene connections and

the surprising presence of an Egyptian artefact, it seems likely that the *Ramgu* had interests in the west.

One is put in mind of Torrey's possible *caravan train* inscription from Dura.[488]

The relief – "*a bas-relief stele covered with decoration typical for Palmyrene rather than Hatrene art*"[489] – is

dedicated to Allat; the name of the freedman dedicant – Obaihan, or *'byhn* – is common at Palmyra, but

this is the only known attestation from Hatra (virtually the reverse is true of the other name on the

inscription, that of his master).[490] The combination of names and style suggests that the relief was either

imported from Palmyra, as the excavators propose following analysis of the material itself,[491] or was

otherwise carved in-situ, but by a Palmyrene sculptor. Either eventuality indicates a link between the two

cities, although probably only on a personal basis.[492] With the altar, the connections are stylistic rather

than material or linguistic.[493] It compares strikingly with reliefs from Palmyra,[494] and from its

surrounds.[495] The excavators found other evidence of long-distance contact as well; an Egyptian carving

depicting a Pharaoh flanked by animals and "*the hawk of Horus*", along with hieroglyphic inscriptions;[496]

this is likely a *cippus* of Horus.[497] All told, however, the evidence from Temple XIII is really very limited;

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[487] Ibid. Gawlikowski (2013), pp. 76-7. See also Kaizer (2000.b), p. 244.

[488] Torrey (1931), p. 176; see above.

[489] Ibid. On the relief and its significance, see Dirven, L. (2013.b), "Palmyrenes in Hatra: Evidence for cultural relations in the Fertile Crescent", in Gawlikowsky and Majcherek (eds.), *Studia Palmyrenskie* XII, pp. 49-60.

[490] Yon (2013), p. 162.

[491] "Excavations in Iraq, 1981-82", in *Iraq*, 45.II (1983), pp. 199-224, p. 212.

[492] See for instance Dirven (2013.b), pp. 54-5.

[493] Al-Salihi, W. (1987), "Palmyrene Sculptures found at Hatra", in *Iraq*, 49, pp. 53-61.

[494] Ibid., pp. 58-60; figs. 6-8. See *contra* See Yon (2013), p. 162.

[495] Kropp attempts to draw a further Palmyrene link in his discussion of gods depicted *en cuirasse*, in an examination of the statue of Nabu at Hatra; while this is in relation to a (crude) depiction in the main court of the Sanctuary of Shamash, his attempt essentially goes nowhere. He does, however, place the Hatrene Nabu firmly in the context of Syrian, rather than Mesopotamian, iconography, indicating at least passing interaction with Syria. See Kropp (2013), pp. 194-5.

[496] "Excavations in Iraq, 1981-82", in *Iraq*, 45.II (1983), pp. 199-224, p. 212. "*A small piece of dark green stone carved with the figure of an Egyptian Pharaoh standing above two crocodiles. He holds a deer by its horns in his left hand and a leopard by its tail in his right hand. Behind the king stands the hawk of Horus. On each side are hieroglyphic inscriptions.*"

[497] See for instance West, N. (2011), "Gods on small things: Egyptian monumental iconography on late antique magical gems and the Greek and Demotic magical papyri", in *Pallas*, 86, pp. 135-166, esp. Figs. 1a & 1b, which correspond strikingly with the excavators' description quoted above (n. 496).

the Palmyrene and Egyptian finds can be described as "*a chance intrusion*" in an otherwise Hatrene context,[498] and while interesting, they do not point to ties on anything more than a personal level.

3.6.5   Conclusions

Hatra's name – "*sacred enclosure*" – its hollow ways, its agricultural hinterland, its disproportionately large "*enclosure*"-like Sanctuary, its description in ancient sources, and its cultic environment together provide an indication of the city's origin. It was an urban nucleation born of a coming together, perhaps periodically, of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples for the purposes of worship, exchange and trade, at a defensible site of religious significance; the variety of temples reflect an ongoing multifaceted religious life and written sources emphasise its role as a city of pilgrimage.

This is not, then, to say that Hatra was a 'caravan city' – or at least, not in the sense assumed by Millar. Rather, it seems that long-distance trade contributed to the wealth of the city alongside agricultural exploitation of the region, and local trade networks. However, the sheer level of wealth attested by the remains seems likely to have derived not from local resources, but from the profits of long-distance trade, perhaps on the back of pilgrimage. Hatra's function as a fortress may be seen as a logical extension of it being an urban site in the first place – and clearly a defensible one (a factor probably not lost on its original founders). However, Hatra's description in ancient sources, in particular Dio's line about "*vast sums of money*", as well as the architecture from the height of its florescence as a city, indicate beyond sensible doubt a settlement which enjoyed considerable wealth, at least for a time. This wealth is also attested by the *esagil* donation inscriptions from the Sanctuary, recalling those seen at Palmyra and recalling Dio's description of the extensive gifts to the temple (which were nevertheless separate from the "*vast sums of money*").

Hatra's location, conveniently *in meso potamoi*, may have lent itself to participation in long-distance trade, as we have possibly seen in certain readings of the inscription of the guard captain at Sa'diyya, and perhaps also that of the *caravanier*'s daughter in Temple V and the camel train inscription from Dura-Europos. Either way, just as the Palmyrene trading network was established in part by the use of soldiers

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[498] Dirven (2013.b), p. 53.

to guard the caravans, so too have we seen a Hatrene temple established by the captain of the guards along a major route. The extension of the hollow ways in the direction of Mosul, Ctesiphon, Palmyra and Dura-Europos lend support to this, as may the Palmyrene and Egyptian finds from the Small Temples. It is this participation – in which, in the words of 'Adi b. Zayd, it taxed the Tigris and the Jhabur – that enabled the city and its residents to generate the considerable wealth they both clearly possessed, and required in order to furnish themselves with such impressive monuments and defences. In that sense, it arguably fits the more realistic definition of a 'caravan city' arrived at above.[499] It is, to be sure, likely that pilgrimage formed a part, perhaps even the greater part, of this traffic – but this was still a trade, it still came over long distances, and goods and services would have followed in its wake.

As to the role of Hatra's temples, we must take the Small Temples and the main sanctuary separately. Regarding the Sanctuary of Shamash, its dimensions (certainly in absolute terms but particularly in proportion to the size of its settlement) and its situation (central, dominant, at a major regional crossroads) suggest both secular as well as religious functions. Indeed, there are comparisons with Baetocaece on morphological grounds;[500] the city's roads, hollow ways, extensive hinterland and even the prevalence of the same gods in the sanctuary all reinforce the case for a major regional fair here. The main sanctuary seems likely to have been the site of commerce, and the large court appears also to have been used to host fairs. The proceeds of the long-distance trade concomitant with such activity remain the most likely source of the vast wealth donated to the main sanctuary for its construction.

The Small Temples provide the only attestations from Hatra itself of traders and potentially the caravan trade, as well as artefacts and names from abroad, including from as far afield as Egypt, Palmyra, and possibly Hierapolis. This may suggest a role for the Small Temples supporting the network of trust on which long-distance trade relied. Taken with Hatra's own situation and still-visible transport links, Temples V, XI, and XIII were presumably not sites of trade themselves, but they may have been nodes in the network of trust underpinning long-distance trade in and through the region, as the presence of individuals from abroad and outside the city might indicate.

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[499] pp. 55-7.
[500] On Baetocaece, see below, pp. 182-5.

3.7 Further comparanda

3.7.1 *Other major urban temples and sanctuaries*

A range of other major Near Eastern sites spring to mind such as Apamea, Ba'albek, Bostra, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Philadelphia. We shall examine Petra, Gerasa, and Baetocaece in Part II.[501] Many sites such as Antioch, now almost completely lost to us, can presently tell us little besides that it is reasonable to expect at least one large temple sanctuary to have been located there.[502] Knowledge of these sites is important if we are to situate Palmyra's own temples in their regional context.

Apamea on the Orontes was linked to Palmyra by a major road,[503] and was the site of at least one major temple sanctuary: that of Zeus Belos (Gazetteer, 8), which occupied the space between the Agora and acropolis and whose temenos is estimated to have had dimensions on the order of 200 by 300 metres.[504] The site was excavated in the 1980s and 90s by Balty and Balty, but the temple's well-known 386 AD destruction left little trace,[505] although it is theorised that the temple was the site of the Chaldean Oracles during the Second Century AD.[506] More is known about the temple from its mention in later texts noting in some detail its destruction during the pagan purges of the Christian empire.[507] Of particular interest to us is the fact that the Zeus Belos sanctuary directly abutted, and in fact included within its outermost wall, the city's main Agora, directly fusing two of the city's central urban features and combining its principal commercial and cultic spaces.[508] The site of ancient Apamea has been utterly wrecked during the course of the Syrian Civil War, making further work all but impossible.[509]

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[501] See below, pp. 122-50 (Petra) and pp. 170-2 (Gerasa).

[502] Lassus mentions a large number of temples known from the Seleucid and early Roman periods. See Lassus, J. (1977), "La ville d'Antioche à l'époque romaine d'après l'archéologie", in *ANRW* II.8, p. 69.

[503] Mouterde and Poidebard (1945), pp. 41-59.

[504] See for instance Balty, J. (1981), "L'Oracle de Apamée", in *L'Antiquité Classique*, Vol. 50 (1981), pp. 5-14.

[505] See above all Balty, J. (1997), "Le Sanctuaire Oraculaire de Zeus Bêlos d'Apamée", in *Topoi*, Vol. 7 (1997), pp. 791-9.

[506] Athanassiadi, P. (2006), *La Lutte pour l'Orthodoxie dans le Platonisme Tardif de Numénius à Damascius*, L'Âne d'Or, Paris, pp. 38-70, esp. pp. 59-66.

[507] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.21-3, esp. 5.22. See also for instance Busine, A. (2013), "From Stones to Myth: Temple Destruction and Civic Identity in the Late Antique Roman East", in *Journal of Late Antiquity*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall, 2013), pp. 325-346.

[508] Balty (1981), pp. 13 & 14; esp. Fig. II.2.

[509] See Casana, J. and Panahipour, M. (2014), "Notes on a Disappearing Past: Satellite-Based Monitoring of Looting and Damage to Archaeological Sites in Syria", in *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 2.II, p. 131.

The temples at Heliopolis/Ba'albek (Gazetteer, 9, 10) were among the largest in the Roman world. Attempts have been made in the past to link them with long-distance trade,[510] and the site appears on Section IX of the Peutinger Tables as *Eliopoli*, where it appears with the symbol for a major settlement, on routes linking it with Damascus, Emesa and Berytus.[511]   Inscriptions identified by Aggoula indicate that groupings of local villages and of guilds or *collegia* partook in functions in the main court of the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus,[512] suggesting that it hosted festivals of at least regional significance. Its colossal size, and the 1,150 tonnes of Aswan granite in its construction, may imply its significance was greater.[513]

The Temple of Zeus Damascenus (Gazetteer, 13; Fig. 8), sometimes referred to as the Temple of Jupiter Damascenus, dominated ancient Damascus. In the Roman period, it was stupendous in scale, with an outer peribolos measuring hundreds of metres on a side (385 by 305),[514] and coming in at an area of between 117,000 and 125,000 square metres;[515] as Burns notes, this places it in the same order of scale as the vast Temple on the Mount at Jerusalem.[516] The outer and inner periboloi were nested, with a second monumental gate marking the transition to an inner temenos, which in turn surrounded the temple itself in the centre. The outer peribolos was lined with rooms; to be precise, sets of units comprising of a front and back room, facing in to the courtyard, particularly in the wider 'Gamma' section.[517] The temple was also linked to the Agora by a monumental colonnaded street. Currently, most of Damascus' famous souks fall within the limits of the ancient Roman peribolos.[518] Burns and Freyberger discuss mass-participation public religious events, most likely taking place within the vast inner temenos and outer peribolos of the temple. While remembering that the inner temenos, as ever, remained a sacred space, the

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[510] Freyberger (1998), pp. 62-70. For the current high-water mark in German scholarship on the site, see in particular a very recent volume by van Ess, M. and Rheidt, K. (eds.) (2014), *Baalbek – Helipolis, 10 000 Jahre Stadtgeschichte*, Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz. See also Hajjar, Y. (1985), *La Triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek: Iconographie, Théologie, Culte et Sanctuaires*, Montreal University Press, Montreal. On the position of the site overall in the Roman Near East, see Young, G. (2003), "Emesa and Baalbek: Where is the Temple of Elahgabal?", in *Levant 35* (2003), pp. 159-162, and *contra*, González García, A. (2013), "¿Fue Baalbek el Templo do Heliogábalo?: Nuevas Evidencias", in *El Futuro del Pasado* 4 (2013), pp. 315-338.
[511] See for instance Freyberger (1998), p. 62.
[512] *IGLS* VI.2801, 2802, 2804. See Aggoula (1983), pp. 415-8.
[513] Segal (2013), pp. 122-6; see also Ball (2000), pp. 37-49 & 322-8.
[514] Freyberger (1998), p. 93.
[515] Figure of 117,000 m² given by Burns, R. (2005), *Damascus, a History*, Routledge, Abingdon, p. 64; figure of 125,000 m² given by Segal (2013), p. 155.
[516] Ibid., p. 64.
[517] See for instance the plan by Watzinger, C. and Wulzinger, K. (1921) *Damaskus die antike Stadt*, Berlin, p. 4, fig. 1. See also Will, E. (1994), "Damas Antique", in *Syria* 71 (1994), pp. 1-43.
[518] Burns (2005), p. 72, fig. 6.5.

outer peribolos did not – and in any case, argues Burns, is far too large a space to have lain unused between ceremonies.[519] Given the vast number of pilgrims the temple was clearly built to accommodate, the question arises of what these rooms were for. Given their front-and-back arrangement, their location both within the temple complex and in relation to other elements of Damascus' fabric (most notably the agora and the axial colonnade linking it with the temple), by far the most convincing explanation is that they were shops,[520] with the front room being the shop floor and the back room being just that, used for storage and other supporting functions. The outer peribolos has indeed been identified as a bazaar.[521]
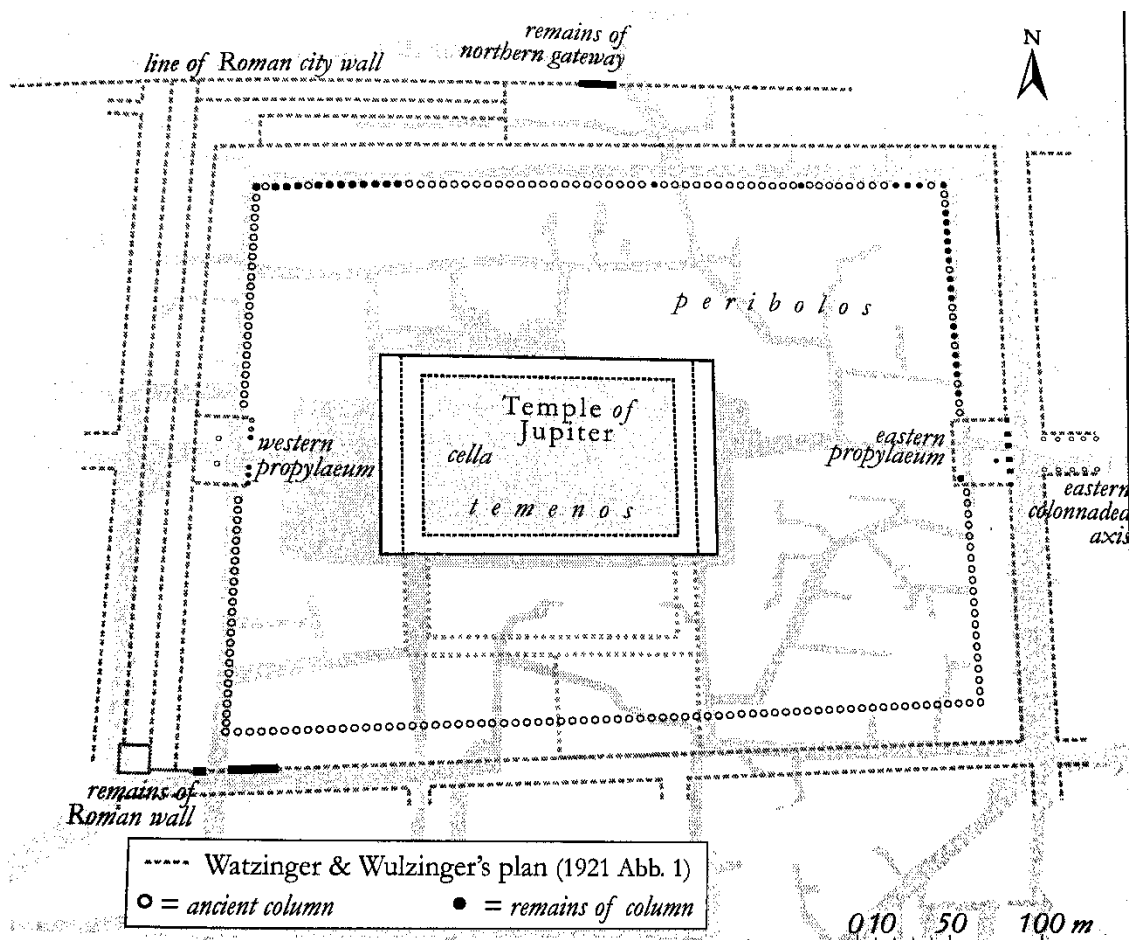
Fig. 8: A plan of the Temple of Zeus Damascenus (Gazetteer, 13)

The Temple on the Mount at Jerusalem (Gazetteer, 26) needs no introduction; at 144,000 metres squared, its sanctuary was the largest in the Roman world, although its precise layout is the subject of

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[519] Ibid., p. 66.
[520] This is, for instance, the interpretation advanced by Aggoula (1983), p. 418.
[521] Will (1994), pp. 35-6, fig. 13.

significant disagreement.[522] Its links with commerce and trade are well-established – indeed, they are even present in popular consciousness in the form of the Biblical accounts of Jesus expelling merchants and overturning the money-lenders' tables in the temple courtyard.[523] This temple must be viewed in the context of huge temenos temples in the Roman Near East, and as part of a trend (possibly even the trendsetter) which includes the region's other major contemporary temples at Palmyra, Damascus and elsewhere.[524]
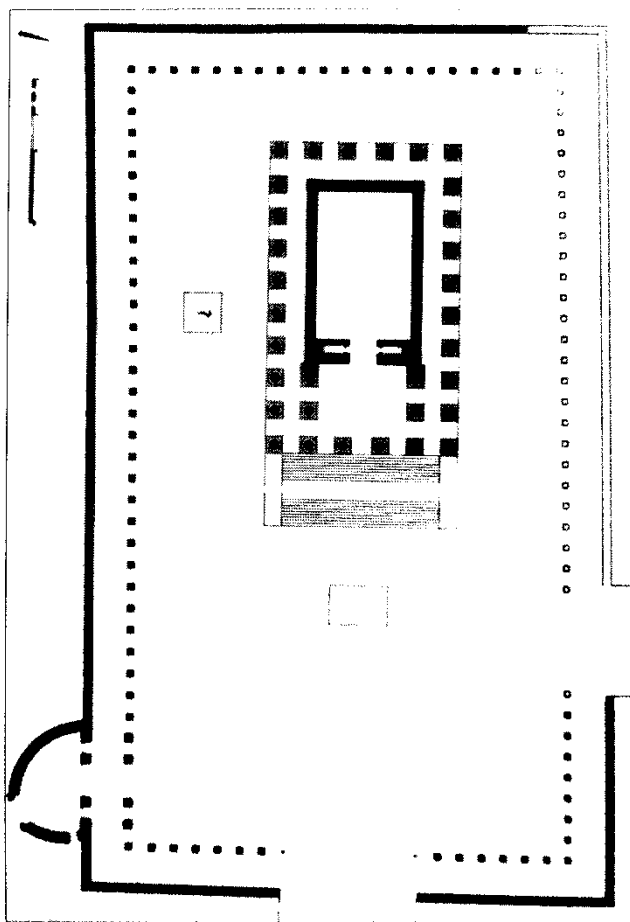
Fig. 9: A plan of the Great Temple at Philadelphia (Gazetteer, 34)

Ancient Philadelphia – modern Amman – sported at least one major temple on its acropolis, characterised as the Temple of Hercules but more safely known simply as the Great Temple (Gazetteer, 34; Fig. 9).[525] That temple clearly aspired to be counted among the great sanctuaries of the region, but shows numerous inadequacies in the methods and materials of its construction, some of which are addressed by ingenious solutions.[526] Although the site did not yield many coins – just eighteen from our period – they were minted in a very wide array of locations, including Rome, Alexandria, Neapolis, Caesaraea, Gaza, Bostra, and Antioch, as well as Philadelphia itself.[527]

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[522] See Segal (2013), pp. 266-278 and nn. 546-570 for a comprehensive discussion of the site and its scholarship. For the temple itself, see above all Mazar, E. (2002), *The Complete Guide to the Temple Mount Excavations*, Jerusalem, esp. pp. 24-61, and Ben-Dov, M. (1982), *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*, Jerusalem.

[523] See *Matthew* 21:12-13; *Mark* 11:15-19; *Luke* 19:45-48; *John* 2:13-16.

[524] As, for instance, does Freyberger (1997), pp. 118-120.

[525] See for instance Kanellopoulos (1994), Ch. III *The Temenos*, pp. 15-22, esp. pp. 18-19.

[526] Ibid., pp. 78 & 80.

[527] Koutsoukou et al (1997), p. 28.

Moreover, the temple itself lay on the principal T-junction on the acropolis, turning the temple sanctuary itself into a thoroughfare directly linking the Cardo and Decumanus Maximus with the heights of the acropolis itself.[528] The five metre wide roofed portico which surrounded the temenos was the location where most of the coins from our period were found.[529]

Tantalisingly, there are recent finds from the Nabataean city of Bostra, northeast of Gerasa, suggesting the presence of a monumental arch and "*vast porticoed court*" dated to the First Century AD and occupying the site of the later cathedral-church; its excavators believe these to be the remains of a monumental temenos, possibly dedicated to Dusares (Gazetteer, 12).[530] If they are correct (and there is little to suggest they are wildly mistaken) then we could add Bostra to this list. We are also aware of large temenos temples at Epiphanaia, Antioch and Emesa, all of which are now lost to us mainly due to subsequent building activity (although Antioch's ruins have been submerged by the Orontes). There was almost certainly at least one major temple at Beroea (modern Aleppo) as well,[531] and coins from Byblos and the other Phoenician coastal cities all indicate substantial temples in these cities as well; some are even shown with temenoi although none of these survive.[532] Those at Byblos, Sidon and Tyre are also described in some detail by Lucian of Samosata, who relates that they received large numbers of pilgrims during their major festivals, in similar manner to that of Atargatis at Hierapolis.[533] All are, however, now lost to us.

3.7.2   Other works

Having examined useful work along similar lines on similar topics and from the Roman Near East, and the notable comparison of Hatra and other sites, we should consider a few other useful comparanda – many more exist than we can do justice to here. We have already seen how studies and new approaches to Egyptian temples can help inform our own approach. For instance, there have been many publications which discuss the Near East and aspects of its history and historiography which cut off precisely at the

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[528] Kanellopoulos (1994), Pl. XIII.
[529] Koutsoukou et al (1997), p. xii, Fig. 1; compare with ibid. pp. 26-28, coins 9-26.
[530] Dentzer, J-M. (2007), "Le développement urbain à Bosra", in Dentzer-Feydy, J., Vallerin, M, Fournet, T and Mukdad, R. and A. (eds.) (2007), *Bosra: aux portes de l'Arabie*, IFPO, Beirut, p. 15. See also Dentzer J-M. (2003), "The Nabataeans at Bosra and Southern Syria", in *Petra Rediscovered*, p. 110.
[531] Cf. Ball (2000), pp. 318-335.
[532] See Taylor, G. (1967), *The Roman Temples of Lebanon: a pictorial guide*, Dar el-Machreq, Beirut, *passim*.
[533] Lucian, *DDS*, 3-7.

point of our own investigation, or with the coming of Alexander;[534] equally, there have been studies of other regions along similar lines to our own study. Many of these provide useful background and comparanda for our purposes. For instance, Anatolia (roughly, modern-day Turkey) and Egypt (roughly contiguous with the modern Arab Republic) directly abut the Near East to north and south-west respectively; both are fertile ground for comparison with Palmyrene temples, as is Delos, which prior to our period was a major site of trade between what would become the Roman Near East and the rest of the Mediterranean.

As we have seen, Rauh's study of Hellenistic-Roman Delos is perhaps the most important for our purposes. He explores the relationship between long-distance trade and religious structures, institutions and spaces there in great detail. He identifies individuals and groups of merchants from across the Hellenistic Near East (but not from Palmyra, which makes sense as this period is before its rise).[535] Although Delos' florescence predates Palmyra's, the parallels are significant: it was a site of significant long-distance trade between Rome and the East, and involved the participation of a number of expatriate trading communities from Near Eastern cities, of exactly the same kind which Palmyra would maintain elsewhere in the three centuries which followed Delos' destruction. The phenomena he describes, of commercial and religious roles being inextricably linked to the same spaces, of religious ties forming the common underpinning of a network of trust between traders, and so on, appear to have been common across Antiquity: "*While the remains of the Delian emporium present an* [sic] *pronounced example of a religious-oriented commercial society, similar examples can be found in nearly every commercial centre of the Hellenistic-Roman world*".[536]

From Anatolia, Kuhrt's characterisation of Old Assyrian trade in Asia Minor in the late Second Millennium BC is noteworthy.[537] She not only details a complex network of trading stations and markets, but of merchant families settling male relatives abroad in one of the trading colonies, "*where they directed and promoted the family trading business by selling consignments of goods, sending the profits back home and also adding to them*"

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[534] See for instance Kuhrt (1995), and Snell (ed.) (2005); see also Steiner, M. L. and Killebrew, A. E. (eds.) (2014), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant, c. 8000–332 B.C.E.*, OUP, Oxford.
[535] Rauh (1993), p. 28.
[536] Ibid., p. 340.
[537] Kuhrt (1995), pp. 90-5.

by engaging in the internal Anatolian carrying trade".[538] She mentions that merchants in Ashur would from time to time engage contacts from outside the family circle for particular, mutually-beneficial arrangements, and remarks that although material survives specifically from Assyria, similarly elaborate systems must have obtained elsewhere in the Near East.[539] As we shall see, there are clear parallels with Palmyra here. The notion of a network of trust is a crucial one for our study, and as we shall see, similar systems obtained at other times in the Near East as well. Exactly such a network is the subject of ongoing work by the University of Bergen, and their results will be extremely illuminating.[540]

Beate Dignas' work on temples and the economy in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor focuses on the finances and economic role of the cults inhabiting the temples,[541] determining a three-way relationship between cult institutions, local communities, and local rulers.[542] The differences between Roman Anatolia and the Roman Near East, particularly with regard to degrees of Hellenisation and Romanisation, are worth remembering. On the other hand, the two regions share a great deal of history, and the Temple of Zeus Baetocaece is even one of Dignas' principal examples in her own study despite being over the provincial border in Syria. She focuses in particular on the fact that Baetocaece hosted a major periodic market – "*the sanctuary was the host of the market and thus a beneficiary*".[543] Her analysis is of the economics of temples and cults, including the role of temples as landowners and receivers of rent, as opposed to their wider role either in trade or the economy as a whole. Even so, there are broad parallels with Palmyra, and many major landowning temples are known from Syria – one example is Si'a. Dignas' conclusions regarding major cult centres under Roman rule are also highly relevant: "*Important cult centres must have been one of the major incentives for Rome to transform settlements into poleis, thereby making use of the influence of the sanctuary, its quasi-civic organisation and above all its common role as a market-place and trade centre.*"[544] Indeed,

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[538] Ibid., p. 94.
[539] Ibid., p. 95.
[540] Seland, E. H. (ed.) (ongoing), *Mechanisms of cross-cultural interaction: Networks in the Roman Near East (2013-2016)*, University of Bergen, Online: http://www.neroneproject.blogspot.no/ (accessed 23/06/2015).
[541] Dignas (2002).
[542] Ibid., *passim*; see in particular pp. 272-3. For more on the economic role of temples in Asia Minor, see Debord, P. (1982), *Aspects Sociaux et Économiques de la Vie Religieuse dans l'Anatolie Gréco-Romaine, EPRO*, Brill, Leiden, esp. pp. 225-43.
[543] Dignas (2002), p. 169.
[544] Ibid., p. 244.

Palmyra suddenly adopted the language of a Hellenistic *polis* where previously such terms were absent.[545] We shall return to Baetocaece in Part II.

The economic role of Anatolian sanctuaries in and before our period is also explored by Debord,[546] who considers their role as banking institutions,[547] and as mints (a local phenomenon to Asia Minor).[548] More importantly, (but all too briefly),[549] he asks "*what does a sanctuary require to function, and conversely what might it offer to commercial circulation or the general economy?*".[550] He lists the material required for their construction, possibly including marble, but certainly stone, mentioning temples such as Ephesian Artemis owning their own quarries.[551] The remainder of his discussion is chiefly informed by a dedicatory stele from Didyma in Ionia, celebrating a donation to the Temple of Apollo by Seleucus I in 288/7 BC.[552] The record is of a royal donation of the value of 3,428 drachmae 3 obols in gold, 9,380 drachmae in silver, ten talents of frankincense, one talent of myrrh, and two minae each of cassia, cinnamon and costus, and a "*great bronze lamp-stand*", as well as a thousand-head of sheep and twelve "*steers*" as sacrifices.[553] Such a source has clear limitations for our own purposes and period – the realities of an early-Third Century BC Ionian royal temple donation cannot be wholly transposed to Palmyra or early Roman Syria – however, the donation should at least give an idea of the kinds of materials temples dealt with. Debord makes the point that the large quantities of aromatics concerned would surely have mostly been for use by the temple for sacrifices and burning, rather than other uses such as pharmacy and cosmetics; therefore it is likely that the majority of the aromatics and spice trade through Syria would have been "*for supplying Greek and 'Oriental' sanctuaries.*"[554] As we shall see, there is indeed substantial evidence from Palmyra to suggest

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[545] See for instance Smith (2013).
[546] Debord (1982), *passim*, esp. pp. 225-43.
[547] Ibid., pp. 225-30.
[548] Ibid., pp. 230-5.
[549] Ibid., pp. 235-7.
[550] Ibid., p. 235: "*…de quoi un sanctuaire a-t-il besoin pour 'fonctionner' et inversement que peut-il offrir au circuit commercial ou économie général?*"
[551] Ibid.
[552] See Letter 5, Welles, C. B. (1934), *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: a study in Greek epigraphy*, Kondakov Institute, Prague, pp. 33-40.
[553] Ibid., p. 35.
[554] Debord (1982), p. 237: "*On doit considérer en effet que les autres usages (pharmacie, cosmétiques, etc) ont une bien moindre importance quantitative et que donc la route caravanière aboutissant en Syrie et dont le contrôle a longtemps été l'enjeu de luttes entre Séleucides et Lagides, fonctionne essentiellement pour alimenter les sanctuaires grecs et 'orientaux'.*"

that the aromatics trade was crucial for Palmyrene religious practice.[555] (That said, as we shall see, the quantity discussed in the donation is not large in the grand scheme of things.)[556]

As we have seen, much can also be learnt from studies of Egypt, both in the Roman era and before. We should exercise caution in drawing parallels from Egypt, just as we should from anywhere, and it bears mentioning that the religious and political framework in Egypt was fundamentally different from that which maintained in the Roman Near East.[557] Nevertheless, by the time of our study, both areas had been under Hellenistic – and, later, Roman – control for very similar lengths of time, and religious and economic contacts between the two zones are well-attested far before our period. There are many recognisable features of both civic and religious life in the two areas, and we have already witnessed Narebout's successful comparison of small temples in our own region and Egypt.

Alston's 1997 study of the levels of influence of Egyptian temples has some parallels with Dignas' investigation.[558] Papyri records of temple holdings, expenditure, activities and celebration days afford a significant amount of evidence as to their economic and social power; among other things, these suggest expenditures either side of 10,000 drachmae per year for medium-sized temples during the Second and Third Centuries.[559] In many places, markets were held within temple precincts or on temple land.[560] However, he notes that these arrangements do not appear to have survived beyond our period, suggesting that successive Roman civic reforms led to a marked decline of temple power even before the rise of Christianity.[561]

Alston's 1998 study of the trade of Middle Egyptian villages and cities shows the different scales of networks and levels of trade and contact between different settlements and urban centres; we have already touched on his remarks about the caravan trade.[562] As well as quantitative study of volumes of trade and

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[555] See below, p. 120.
[556] See below, p. 121.
[557] Some of the key differences are enumerated by Alston (1997), pp. 148-150.
[558] Alston (1997), esp. pp. 147-54.
[559] Ibid., p. 151.
[560] Ibid., p. 152.
[561] Ibid., pp. 153-4.
[562] Alston, R. (1998), "Trade and the City in Roman Egypt", in Parkins and Smith (eds.), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, pp. 168-202.

the size of loads regularly carried by animals, to which we return in our next Part, he also collates evidence

for markets being conducted in temple courtyards at Karnak and elsewhere,[563] and emphasises the

potential use of temples as institutions through which local elites could control trade,[564] and the pre-

eminence of guilds in exercising such control.[565] Most importantly for our purposes, he notes "*the

relationship between trade guilds and religious associations*[,] *and it seems possible that the guilds of the Roman period evolved

from associations of traders attached to temples.*"[566] The role of such guilds in establishing and maintaining a

network of trust is also emphasised, citing the example of a wool trader from Karanis.[567]

With regard to the intersection of guilds, religious associations and the network of trust, Rimmer

Herrmann recounts the problem in ancient history of forming a picture of urban societal units "*larger than

the nuclear family but smaller than the entire city*", to use Van de Mieroop's words.[568] She provides a possible

example of a neighbourhood tomb used by a *collegia*-like society or other association of "*upper-class men*", or

by an urban clan.[569] She reminds us of the *marzeah*, "*an upper-class, male religious drinking society*" attested

across the pre-Hellenistic Near East and particularly from Ugarit, and entitled to own property and trade,

effectively as a body corporate.[570] This suggests broad continuity of this phenomenon into our period

from well before.

In the meantime, Seland, in his 2015 study of Palmyrene trade, draws direct comparisons with well-

documented journeys across the Syrian Desert from the Eighteenth-Century adventurers in order to gain

impressions of the time taken by similar caravans from our period.[571] As we shall see, this is a fruitful

avenue for modelling such long-distance trade.

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[563] Ibid., p. 174.
[564] Ibid., p. 185.
[565] Ibid., p. 175.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.
[568] Mieroop, M. van de, (1997), *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*, Clarendon, Oxford, p. 102, quoted in Rimmer Herrmann (2014), p. 169.
[569] Rimmer Herrmann, V. (2014), "The KTMW Stele from Zincirli: Syro-Hittite Mortuary Cult and Urban Social Networks", in Frood and Raja (eds.), *Redefining the Sacred*, pp. 173-6.
[570] Ibid., pp. 173-4.
[571] Seland (2015), pp. 122-3.

These comparanda show that many aspects relating to the intersection of Roman Near-Eastern temples and trade are not isolated to our period or region of study. Indeed, many more comparanda from farther-flung periods and locales spring to mind – the Venetian trading quarters in Jerusalem and Constantinople, the Hanseatic League, the Jewish diaspora in the Italian city states, and more.[572] But that would be a thesis in itself.

4. Concluding Remarks

This is ultimately a thesis about Palmyrene temples and their context. Regarding that context, the Hatrene case study has offered some indication of how temple morphology, location and finds can imply different roles in society and possibly, trade. A possible role of the Sanctuary of Shamash was as a focal point for goods and persons arriving from outside the city, while at least some of the Small Temples appear to have been sites of worship and dedication by individuals from Hatra and abroad. This would have allowed them to be sites of the exchange of information and building trust, as for instance is indicated by the inscription from Temple XI, and implied by the variety of artefacts and dedications in Temple XIII.

Prior scholarship on temples in the Roman Near East has generally approached them via the cults within them,[573] their artistic or architectural significance,[574] or their significance relating to debates concerning ethnicity and a perceived struggle between "Western" Greco-Roman and "Eastern" culture in the Roman Near East.[575] Meanwhile, the debate on the nature of the ancient economy, and trade in particular, has seen a shift in recent years towards an institutional approach incorporating New Institutional Economics.[576]

Eivind Seland characterised the Palmyrene trading network in a 2013 paper as an "*ethnic*" network bound together by shared language, religion, culture and heritage.[577] This directly recalls the ethnicity debate regarding Near Eastern temples which we explored above. "Palmyrene" temples are self-evidently ethnic, to an extent, but ethnicity itself is a poor lens through which to picture their role in a networked

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[572] As we have seen, Bang (2008) draws extensive comparison with Mughal India.
[573] See for instance, Turcan (1989); Kaizer (2002).
[574] See for instance, Segal (2013).
[575] See for instance, Ball (2000).
[576] See for instance, Seland (2013; 2015).
[577] Seland (2013).

society such as Palmyra's or that of the Roman Near East writ large. Although previous studies on the ancient economy have begun to emphasise its networked nature, and thus that of ancient society, studies of temples have thus far failed to conceive of them in that context, i.e. as institutions within networks other than the religious or ethnic. There is therefore a gap in our present understanding of both phenomena.

This thesis will thus use the study of Palmyrene temples in long-distance trade as a test case for understanding these institutions in this context. Palmyrene temples are an identifiable but geographically dispersed subset of temples in the Roman Near East, and long-distance trade is arguably the ultimate expression of the networked economy and networked society of antiquity. Roles indicated for these temples, viewed alongside selected comparanda, can therefore form the starting point for discussion of temples in a fuller context – economic, as well as societal, religious or ethnic.

Critical to this study, therefore, will be understanding how networks and long-distance trade actually functioned in Palmyra and the Roman Near East. This is the focus of Part II, which will examine further comparisons with Palmyrene temples.

PART II: THE MECHANICS OF TRADE

The logistics of overland trade in the Roman Near East

> *A man could powerfully imagine himself the lord of creation when mounted on a camel.*
>
> – Geoffrey Moorhouse.[1]

1. Introduction

The Roman Near East was well-served with major trading routes: the Silk Road, Spice Route and Incense Road all led through this region in the period of our investigation, and Palmyrenes appear to have been active in many of them. While it can rightly be said that none of these trade routes rigidly followed any one single line, the broad directions of travel remain clear. Before we launch into the study of the Palmyrene temples at the core of our study, we should determine quite what was being traded, from and to where, by who and for whom. In this part, therefore, we shall examine the logistics and mechanics of trade – particularly overland trade – in the Roman Near East during our period.

Trade could be over a range of distances – short-haul from hinterland to market town, regional between local centres, and long-distance: often inter-regional, but always at a great remove from the products' point of origin. Our own particular care is for the latter of the three: long-distance trade, and it will be worth establishing the main commodities, and how they traversed the Roman Near East.

As we shall see, while many of the goods being traded long-distance in and through the Roman Near East may have arrived from their points of origin – India, for instance – by ship, many others, such as Arabian incense, may have come entirely over land. Long-haul overland trade could be conducted by donkey, cart, horse or on foot, but by far the most prominent means of large-scale long-distance over-land transport in our region and period is the caravan of camels – this, then, seems to be the place to start.

It bears considering that there was great variety in the goods and materials being traded long-distance. Staples such as grain, olive oil and wine famously made their way great distances across the ancient world (a particular help to us, as the earthenware used for their transport and storage is a

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[1] Quoted in Irwin, R. (2010), *Camel*, Reaktion Books, London, p. 140.

particularly durable record of their trade).[2] Aromatics and glass- and earthenwares (in their own right) were also traded in great volume,[3] but what might be thought of as high-end or luxury goods are perhaps the most famous – silk, spice and incense. However, are we right to consider these goods to have been expensive luxuries in the first place? Traces of spices have been found in latrine pits across the Roman world,[4] incense was burnt on altars and in houses by rich and poor alike, and nor was silk the expensive rarity one might suppose.[5] We would perhaps do better to think of the value lying in their bulk than their essence: trade in anything in quantity will have been expensive given costs of transport if nothing else, even if it were effectively free at the point of origin.[6]

Our greatest challenge is that long-distance trade was essentially archaeologically ephemeral, leaving little trace: under most circumstances, most organic and living goods are invisible, including animals and slaves. Further, where long-distance trade has left a record, the vast majority of evidence in the eastern Roman Empire comes from Egypt rather than our region. With the exception of the Palmyrene caravan inscriptions and limited finds of silks and other goods, there is really very little from the Roman Near East. We must be careful in applying conclusions from Egyptian sources to our own region, although as we shall see, there was much in common. This is something we shall just have to live with, perhaps bearing Young's words in mind: "*we must, however, always remember that a preponderance of surviving evidence in one area does not necessarily translate to a greater significance of that area in the ancient world.*"[7]

Some goals, then. In this Part, we shall determine, so far as we can, the nature of the long-distance trade through the Roman Near East in our period, particularly as it relates to Palmyra. What were the most important goods and arteries of this trade, and more importantly, who was conducting it, and how? We shall determine the phenomena we should look for when we turn to our case studies and begin investigating temple sanctuaries in earnest. These three goals (nature, actors and signs in evidence) will require, as ever, a study of both ancient evidence and modern scholarship, and it is to these which we must first turn.

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[2] See for instance Duncan-Jones (1982).
[3] See for instance Tomber (2008).
[4] See for instance Tomber (2008), pp. 55 & 173-4.
[5] See for instance Raschke (1978).
[6] On all these, see below.
[7] Young (2001), p. 13.

2. Terms of the Modern Debate

As we have seen in our main historiography, the scholarship surrounding trade and the ancient economy has been historically characterised by the triangular debate between schools of thought regarding the organisation and disposition of the ancient economy. The three corners of this debate – modernist, primitivist and institutionalist – have waxed and waned over the years, and while the evidence and our understanding of it has developed significantly since the debate's origins in the late Nineteenth Century, the fundamentals underlying the debate have barely shifted in decades, only being disrupted by the coming to light of new archaeological evidence.[8]

Long-distance trade in the Roman Near East has long been a popular subject, although, as we have seen, it was Rostovtzeff's *Caravan Cities* which first crystallised the debate about the role it played in the region's societies and urban development. Up until then – and arguably until shortly afterwards – contribution to the study of Roman long-distance trade was often impressionistic, lent support by only scant ancient evidence and varying degrees of familiarity with pre-mechanised trade through Arab lands. Scholarship was therefore given a major boost in the 1930s with the pioneering work of Antoine Poidebard and Sir Aurel Stein, rediscovering the old Roman-era tracks through the Syrian Desert via aerial photography, a novel technique at the time.[9] Since then, the body of evidence for long-distance trade in and through the Roman Near East has only grown, although the precise interpretation of this evidence is of course debated.[10]

While evidence for Roman Near-Eastern long-distance trade from the Near East, and the Roman Empire more broadly, is well-covered by modern scholarship, that same evidence from farther east – at 'the other end', as it were – is far less studied, although that has recently begun to change with the publication of multiple works of note in the last few years.[11]

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[8] See I 3.1, pp. 35-47.
[9] Poidebard (1934); Gregory, S. and Kennedy, D. (1985), *Sir Aurel Stein's Limes Report, BAR* Supplement 272, Oxford.
[10] See for instance Gawlikowski, M. (1994), "Palmyra as a Trading Centre" in *Iraq* 46 (1994), pp. 27-33.
[11] See for instance Bang (2008); Parker (2008); Tomber (2008); Scheidel (ed.) (2009); McLaughlin (2010; 2014); Seland (2013; 2014; 2015).

2.1   Networks in the Roman Near East: trade, trust and religion

Ultimately, a network can be described as a collection of points, or nodes, joined by links, or connections; nodes can form clusters where they group together, although quite what constitutes a 'group' can be a matter of judgement. We have seen how Douglass North and others have developed means by which to analyse social networks in history;[12] in the context of social networks, the nodes can be people or organisations – 'actors', effectively – and the connections their relationships: awareness, interaction, exchange, and so on. In this thesis, we are particularly concerned with the capacity of temples to act as nodes in these networks (i.e. consumers, or 'actors' in their own right), as links in these networks (i.e. as institutions tying different 'actors' together), and as sites for the nucleation of clusters (i.e. as hubs for other 'actors' and their own links), with a focus on long-distance trade as a means by which to examine this capacity. It bears remembering that these networks should not be envisaged as fixed collections of lines and points, but ones which changed over time. Connections and institutions – particularly religious ones – may be lent great weight through custom, tradition and history, particularly in ancient society, while all are vulnerable to change, evolution and collapse.

Three works from 2013 on the subject of networks in society in the Roman world are of particular relevance. Taco Terpstra's study of trading communities has been mentioned already;[13] to this we can add Eivind Seland's shorter analysis of diasporal networks in trade,[14] and Anna Collar's study of religious networks in the Roman world.[15] While Terpstra focuses his efforts on Puteoli, Ostia, Rome, and the province of Asia, he often deals with individuals and groups from the Roman Near East, particularly Syrians of one stripe or another.[16] Similarly, while Collar's work nominally deals with the Roman world as a whole, all three of the major groups she discusses – the western Jewish Diaspora and the cults of Jupiter Dolichenus and Zeus Hypistos – originate within the Roman Near East or in neighbouring Asia Minor. Seland, meanwhile, focuses on trade in the Indian Ocean in antiquity and late antiquity, including the Palmyrene trading network which this thesis will principally explore, alongside the earlier Hellenistic network of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, and the later antique Christian network.

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[12] North (1990); see above, I 3.2, pp. 47-50.
[13] Terpstra (2013).
[14] Seland (2013).
[15] Collar, A. (2013), *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: the Spread of New Ideas*, CUP, Cambridge.
[16] Such as the Tyrians at Puteoli or the Palmyrenes in Rome.

Terpstra's study on trading communities sheds important light on the nature of the network of trust which underpinned long-distance trade in the Roman era (and more broadly before the era of light-speed communications).[17] Although his focus is on Italy, Rome and the province of Asia, his conclusions and approaches are very much applicable to our own study: he is, after all, "*looking for Romans integrating into local communities over-seas, gaining trust there for the purposes of trade*".[18] His "*micro-economic*" approach,[19] focusing on the "*how and why*" of human-scale interaction instead of analysis on a grander scale,[20] recalls Horden and Purcell's micro-ecological approach to the ancient world.[21] He is also careful to use comparanda based on key immediate factors rather than generalised ones (again, micro- versus macro-), which can lead to surprising comparisons such as that of communities of American traders in 1830s Mexican California (who nevertheless fitted the description of a discrete group abroad).[22] A key concept which he uses is that of the "*trade diaspora*", particularly with regard to Near-Eastern communities such as the Tyrians in Puteoli or the Palmyrenes in Rome;[23] this is a phenomenon we see ourselves across the Roman Near East, particularly with Palmyrene and Nabataean populations. The term 'trade diaspora' was first coined by Abner Cohen in 1971, and has gained currency since,[24] although it has come in for criticism as well.[25] Institutionalisation of these scattered communities was through *collegia* and similar bodies such as 'corporations' of ship owners, and via integration into common society to reinforce the network of trust via obeisance to social conventions and legal institutions.[26] In this way, "*group monitoring*" and conscious incorporation of overseas communities into common societal and legal frameworks could help overcome, or at least mitigate, imperfect communication and information exchange systems.[27] Similarly, formalised group membership was itself an almost compulsory act of integration in order to gain access to trade, and could reinforce the role of the expatriate community and its settlement of origin abroad.[28]

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[17] Terpstra, T. (2013), *Trading Communities in the Roman World*, Brill, Leiden.
[18] Ibid., p. 172.
[19] Ibid., p. 1.
[20] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[21] Cf. Horden and Purcell (2000).
[22] Terpstra (2013), pp. 4-5.
[23] Ibid., p. 176.
[24] Cohen, A. (1971), "Cultural strategies in the organization of trading diasporas", in Meillassoux, C. (ed.) (1971), *The development of indigenous trade and markets in West Africa*, OUP, London, pp. 266-84.
[25] Seland (2013), *passim*, esp. p. 375.
[26] Terpstra (2013), pp. 92-3; exactly this phenomenon is described by Rauh in Hellenistic-Roman Delos – Rauh (1993), *passim*, esp. pp. 339-40.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., pp. 124-5.

Seland approaches the antique and late antique Indian Ocean trade from the perspective of networks in society – specifically drawing upon three bodies of evidence to inform case studies of three discrete networks: the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, the Palmyrene caravan inscriptions, and accounts of Christian traders from late antiquity.[29] He establishes the validity of viewing the Palmyrene trading network as a trade diaspora owing to: its dispersed nature, use of features such as language or statements enabling their identity as Palmyrenes (and showing their continued identity with their point of origin), and the preservation of their own identity via use of their own language, names and religion even when abroad.[30] The Palmyrene network is thus described as one "*based on ethnicity*".[31] He identifies as its key ties the use of Palmyrene Aramaic, kinship ties via the tribes and genealogical formulae, and shared adherence to Palmyrene religion, "*a pantheon different from, although not incompatible with, the Greco-Roman pantheon worshipped elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, and the Near Eastern religions practised by Palmyra's eastern neighbours.*"[32] These ties, in combination with the organisation of Palmyra as a self-governing Hellenistic polis with active professional and religious fraternities, made its network strong and self-reinforcing. Appropriate behaviour and expectations could be enforced by peers and societal institutions of which each member was a part.[33] Palmyrenes were likely additionally able to participate in Egyptian and Mesopotamian networks as well as the Palmyrene one itself.[34] While all of this conferred great strength to the Palmyrene network, all of its reinforcing elements – Palmyrene Aramaic, the Palmyrene religion, the Palmyrene socio-political framework – relied on Palmyra itself as a hub. This meant that the city constituted a critical point of failure when it was sacked by Aurelian in 272/3, an act which proved fatal to the network.[35]

Collar takes a very different approach, analysing ancient social networks from the perspective of the spread and diffusion of innovation, specifically, particular religious cults. She identifies networks of "*might*" (the army),[36] governance (to which she adds the Imperial cult), and exchange (for which she relies to a degree on Bang's *Roman Bazaar*) as having been important.[37] She demonstrates that the rapid spread

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[29] Seland (2013), *passim.*
[30] Ibid., p. 382.
[31] Ibid., p. 381.
[32] Ibid., pp. 382-3.
[33] Ibid., pp. 383-4.
[34] Ibid., p. 388-9.
[35] Ibid., p. 384.
[36] Collar (2013), pp. 46-8.
[37] Ibid., pp. 42-53.

of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus was due principally to the fact that its adherents were mostly military, and therefore ingrained in the military social network, which was one of the most developed and far reaching in the Empire.[38] Collar's work is geared very much towards the way networks of individuals and of communities in the Roman world functioned as a vehicle for the spread of ideas and innovation. This thesis, by comparison, will investigate the extent to which temples and religious institutions played a role *in* those networks, and therefore to what extent we can show how such networks actually functioned.

2.2   Granularity

This raises the issue of granularity: the degree to which the ancient economy (and ancient society) can be envisaged as comprising a collection of distinguishable pockets. Fernand Braudel's totemic work on the Mediterranean introduced a number of such concepts to the study of ancient history and the ancient economy.[39] He famously argued for the compartmentalisation of the Mediterranean into a patchwork of smaller seas and areas,[40] a theme which would later be taken to its logical conclusion by Abulafia.[41] Braudel held that trade, particularly over long distances and by sea, was characterised by *cabotage*: port-to-port tramping contingent on the weather and whatever goods were available to trade or barter, between distinct sub-regions.[42]

Horden and Purcell, in their similarly grand 2000 work *The Corrupting Sea*,[43] rather than envisaging the ancient economy as a pan-Mediterranean entity,[44] instead recognise it as a collection of self-sufficient ecological cells or communities, each existing in its own geographical niche and not significantly able to expand beyond it. Their characterisation of the ancient Mediterranean is as more of a mesh than a network of such cells, linked together by trade, emphasising more and finer links than Braudel's model. As pointed out by reviewers, this provides an even stronger counter-argument to Finley's self-sufficient agrarian model than the modernists of the triangular debate.[45] Such 'micro-regions' or 'micro-ecologies',

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[38] Ibid., Ch. 3.
[39] Braudel (1949).
[40] Ibid., I, pp. 25-162.
[41] See Abulafia, D. (2005), "Mediterraneans", in Harris, W. V. (ed.) (2005), *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, OUP, Oxford, pp. 64-93.
[42] See for instance Braudel (1949), pp. 103-8, esp. p. 107.
[43] Horden and Purcell (2000).
[44] Despite arguing throughout for the validity, *mutatis mutandis*, of Mediterranean studies as a discrete field.
[45] See for instance Fentress, J. and Fentress, E. (2001), "The Hole in the Doughnut" – Review of Horden and Purcell (2000), in *Past and Present* 173 (2001), p. 206.

combined with the ease of communication across the Mediterranean, form the basis for their model of the ancient economy – indeed, of the ancient world.[46]

This model has led to new approaches to Near Eastern studies.[47] One of the most notable contributions is Abulafia's, which takes the compartmentalisation argued for by Braudel, and the micro-ecologies of Horden and Purcell, to argue that instead of *the* Mediterranean, scholars should consider the existence of *Mediterraneans*, which he describes as any volume of comparative emptiness across which societies and peoples traded and travelled; thus he offers the Sahara, Gobi and Arabian Deserts as examples of other 'Mediterraneans'.[48] He is careful to include the social and economic aspects minimalised by Braudel and constantly deferred by Horden and Purcell. He argues that the Mediterranean "*possessed a basic commercial unity*", in accordance with Braudel, while allowing for the "*vital stimulus to the creation of lasting exchange networks*" afforded by the variety inherent in Horden and Purcell's micro-regions.[49]

Taking Abulafia's many examples of "*other Mediterraneans*",[50] and given the focus of our own thesis, can we conceive of the Syrian Desert as 'a Mediterranean'? It certainly fits Abulafia's definition, and insofar as it constitutes the northernmost extremity of the Arabian Desert, it could even be said to be one he considered in his initial enumeration of desert-Mediterraneans. The notion of granularity as it relates to trade and institutions – and possibly to cults as well – is worth exploring, particularly in the context of the network of trust.

2.3   Further remarks

As we have seen, trade routes in the Roman Near East, and what was carried on them, have been extensively studied, both recently and in the past. We have already seen examples, and it will suffice to survey the results of these studies, rather than to attempt to recreate them from first principles. In the next section, therefore, we shall summarise what was carried where so as to establish a basis from which

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[46] Ibid., *passim*; see for instance p. 80. The definition is notably challenged by Harris; see Harris, W. V. (2005), "The Mediterranean and Ancient History", in Harris (ed.) *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, pp. 5-6.
[47] See for instance (somewhat misleadingly titled), Kennedy, D. (2007), *Gerasa and the Decapolis: A 'Virtual Island' in Northwest Jordan*, Duckworth, London.
[48] Abulafia (2005), pp. 64-7.
[49] Ibid., p. 68.
[50] The major examples upon which he focuses are the Sahara, the North and Baltic Seas, the Caribbean, the seas and straits between Japan and the Asian mainland, and even the northwest Atlantic between the Azores, Canaries and European mainland. This raises the obvious question of what else might be considered a 'Mediterranean' by this logic – and whether such a term is useful if it may be so broadly applied.

to move on. As for the what and the where, we shall turn to each of those in turn. The manner of the carrying we shall turn to thereafter.

3. Goods

The headline goods of spices, incense and silk are the most prominent in the long-distance trade of Palmyra's time and region, but a great deal else was carried too, both eastwards and westwards. The tariff inscriptions from Alexandria and Palmyra give some indication of the goods likely to be travelling on Near Eastern roads in our period, both in terms of higher-end imports and less high-value goods respectively.[51] Marcus Aurelius' Alexandrian Tariff was preserved in the *Digest* of Justinian:[52]

Species pertinentes ad vectigal: cinnamomum: piper longum: piper album: folium pentasphaerum: folium barbaricum: costum: costamomum: nardi stachys: cassia turiana: xylocassia: smurna: amomum: zingiberi: malabathrum: aroma indicum: chalbane: laser: alche: lucia: sargogalla: onyx arabicus: cardamomum: xylocinnamomum: opus byssicum: pelles babylonicae: pelles parthicae: ebur: ferrum indicum: carpasum: lapis universus: margarita: sardonyx: ceraunium: hyacinthus: smaragdus: adamas: saffirinus: callainus: beryllus: chelyniae: opia indica vel adserta: metaxa: vestis serica vel subserica: vela tincta carbasea: nema sericum: spadones indici: leones, leaenae: pardi: leopardi: pantherae: purpura: item marocorum lana: fucus: capilli indici.	*Type of goods liable to* vectigal *(import tax): cinnamon; long pepper; white pepper; pentaspherum leaf; Barbary leaf; costum; costamomum; nard; stachys; Tyrian casia; casia-wood; myrrh; amomum; ginger; malabathrum; Indic spice; galbanum; asafoetida juice; aloe; lycium; Persian gum; Arabian onyx; cardamomum; cinnamon-wood; cotton goods; Babylonian hides; Persian hides; ivory; Indian iron; linen; all sorts of gem: pearl, sardonyx, ceraunium, hyacinth stone, emerald, diamond, sapphire, turquoise, beryl, tortoise-stone; Indian or Assyrian drugs; raw silk; silk or half-silk clothing; embroidered fine linen; silk thread; Indian eununchs; lions; lionesses; pards; leopards; panthers; purple dye; also: Moroccan wool; dye; Indian hair.*[53]

As we have seen, ancient authors and archaeology both provide other sources for goods in transit, and in any case, the topic is well-covered in modern scholarship.[54] One or two goods are obvious – particular stones and marbles travelled the length and breadth of our region in our period, for instance, and many of these were used in the construction of temples.[55] Archaeology from temple sites often produces material which arrived in the area, if not the site itself, via long-distance trade. As Young and others have stated, it can be difficult to distinguish in archaeology between direct and indirect evidence for

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[51] See Matthews, J. F. (1984), "The Tax Law of Palmyra", in *JRS* 74 (1984), pp. 157-80.

[52] The tariff merely records those items subject to import tax (presumably the 25% *tetarte* in the Muziris Papyrus (Rathbone (2000), *pace* Young (2001), p. 188); presumably other goods were not subject to this tax.

[53] The 'Alexandrian Tariff – *Digesta*, XXXIX.4.16.7, trans. Watson (1985).

[54] See for instance among many, Tomber, R. (2013), "Pots, coins and trinkets in Rome's trade with the East", in Wells (ed.) *Rome Beyond its Frontiers*, pp. 87-104.

[55] See for instance the marble used in the Small Temple at Petra (see below, pp. 146-8).

long-distance trade, and between indicators of long-distance eastern trade and those of the general background commerce associated with any major settlement.[56] In many cases, however, the latter is a false dichotomy – items from abroad have to have gotten there somehow. A more direct challenge is that in many cases, long-distance trade simply did not leave evidence liable to survive in the first place; this explains the over-dominance of Egypt, for instance.

A distinction is often made between 'staple' and 'luxury' goods, or at least between luxury goods and other kinds, but the definitions are subjective and imprecise.[57] A more useful – and practical – distinction can instead be made between goods which were carried in bulk, often as the main good(s) for a particular journey, and secondary or low-mass cargoes, much smaller in volume, often carried in the interstices of a larger cargo and sometimes even incidentally, but often worth multiples of the principal cargo.[58] This tendency is seen throughout history, both in our period and before,[59] in Medieval times,[60] and in modern times with the small-bulk, high-value cargoes (such as strawberries and electronic components) carried on modern passenger airliners. Common bulk goods included wheat, wine, olive oil, incense, ivory, and bales of raw silk; common low-mass goods included precious woods, metals and stones, as well as glass, ivory fragments, worked silks and clothes, spices, and aromatics.[61]

In the Roman Near East, the standard units for dry goods were the Roman modius and the Hellenistic artaba; the precise definitions of both units in modern terms have been disputed and are not always wholly clear.[62] Rathbone's definition is the most authoritative: he defines an artaba as equivalent to

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[56] See Young (2001), p. 11 – *"Even if there were physical remains of the long-distance eastern trade in major cities of the Roman East, it may very well be impossible to distinguish them from the artefacts of general trade and commerce in the city"*. Articles traded long-distance may also have arrived via *cabotage* rather than by direct long-distance trade.
[57] See for instance the discussion in Young (2001), pp. 14-18.
[58] Butcher makes an explicit point that *"the markets for secondary cargoes were huge and profitable, even if the individual items were cheap"*. See Butcher (2003), p. 187.
[59] See for instance the Muziris papyrus in Rathbone (2000); see also Tomber (2013).
[60] See for instance Braudel (1946), I, pp. 103-8.
[61] See for instance McLaughlin (2010), pp. 50-2, 181.
[62] See Sperber, D. (1991), *Roman Palestine, 200-400 – Money and Prices, Second Edition with Supplement*, Bar-Ilan University Press, Ramat-Gan, p. 114; compare Rathbone (1991), pp. 464-6. The *modius* actually includes two measurements: the *modius Italicus,* or Roman *modius,* with a known value of 8.62 modern litres, and the slightly larger *modius castrensis,* or 'provincial' *modius.* Generally, the *Italicus* is understood when the word '*modius*' is encountered without qualification. Delightfully, however, the *modius castrensis* was used in both 'heaped' and 'flattened' forms – normally without indication – whereby the former was understandably slightly heavier than the latter. For Sperber's figures to make sense vis-à-vis Rathbone's, it would seem that he is working with the values for a flattened *modius castrensis.* For a thorough explanation of the terms and their relevant statistics, see Duncan-Jones (1982), pp. 370-2, also Duncan-Jones, R. (1976.a), '*The Prince of Wheat in Roman Egypt under the Principate*', in *Chiron* 6 (1976), pp. 241-62.

4.5 modii, or about 39 litres.[63] The artaba, like the Roman modius, had varying definitions, in the case of the artaba comprising a varying number of choinixes; the 48-choinix artaba appears to have been the most prevalent, and the measure preferred by officials.[64] Based on Pliny's figures for the weights of wheat from different parts of the Empire, an artaba of wheat would have weighed approximately 31 kilograms.[65]

Liquid volumes were generally measured in terms of amphorae, the standard Roman measurement, established by Duncan-Jones at about 26 litres.[66] Records from Egypt indicate the continuing use of Hellenistic units: the metretes for oil and keramion and spathia for wine, in the Customs House records, for instance.[67] Their precise values are unclear, although Rathbone suggests a maximum weight of 11.25 kilograms for an Arsinoite keramion-monochoron, with a volume of 7 litres;[68] Arsinoite donkeys and asses often carried 8 such jars,[69] for a total capacity of 56 litres, or about two amphorae, if Duncan-Jones' figure is to be trusted; this tallies with the maximum carrying weight of asses, which, as Rathbone puts it, "*refuse to move if overloaded*".[70] In terms of weight, wine has the same specific gravity as water, allowing for a simple litre-to-kilogram conversion; olive oil is slightly lighter, being about 90% that of water.

The main Roman unit of weight was the Roman pound, which was approximately 323 grams.[71] The talent was the main large measurement, being equivalent to 100 Roman pounds (32.3kg) or 6,000 Hellenistic drachmae; a silver drachma was equivalent in value to a Roman sestertius (¼ of a denarius).

Prior scholarship has, at great length, demonstrated the folly of attempting to draw meaningful quantitative conclusions from what little ancient evidence we have;[72] calculating the prices of these goods in the Roman Near East is therefore a task of dubious merit. However, what is clear is that the trade in these goods required significant collateral – the (perhaps extreme) example of the Muziris papyrus indicates that a single shipment (which included ivory and nard, but whose principal cargo – presumably

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[63] Rathbone (1991), pp. 464–6.
[64] See above all Duncan-Jones (1976.a), pp. 257–60; and idem. (1982), p. 372.
[65] Pliny, *NH* XVIII.12.
[66] Duncan-Jones (1982), p. 372; assuming *3 modii Italici* of 8.62 litres each; his working is unclear.
[67] See Rathbone (1991).
[68] Ibid., p. 470; here, Rathbone gives a useful account of the different measures of amphora and keramion in circulation both at this time historically, and currently in relevant (or, as may be, irrelevant) scholarship.
[69] Ibid., p. 469.
[70] Ibid., p. 470.
[71] Duncan-Jones (1982), pp. 369–70.
[72] One of the more instructive – and better – examples is Rathbone, dealing with the implications of the Muziris papyrus – see Rathbone (2000), pp. 45–9.

low-weight and high-cost – is lost to us) had a combined value of over a thousand talents of silver –

almost seven million drachmae (roughly the same figure in sesterces), or just under 1.75 million denarii.[73]

This is a colossal sum by any measure.[74] Palmyrene inscriptions likewise suggest an extremely high cost.[75]

We shall discuss the implications of this below.

Pliny's information on the incense road gives some indication of the cost of long-distance trade by

citing the customs paid per camel for the route between Thomna, in southern Arabia, and Gaza; he states

that 688 denarii – 2,752 drachmae – were paid in total, "*and then taxes are paid to the publicans of our Empire*".[76]

It is not clear whether this sum would have been paid in coin, in kind, in both, or at all; however it is likely

that we can take Pliny's figure as at least vaguely approximate, as his depth of knowledge of the rest of the

route suggests his use of an informed source. The total value of the goods carried by each camel was

presumably sufficient, even after the Roman levy (presumably 25%), to more than meet the costs of the

endeavour.[77] We shall turn to how much such a camel could carry shortly; on the subject of the Incense

Road, however, we should first discuss that important commodity.

3.1   Incense

The trade in aromatics appears to have been extensive from well into the archaic period.[78] 'Aromatics'

effectively means non-edible biota (i.e. plant material, usually resin) which exudes a fragrance for use in

perfumes and oils, or burnt in scent-producing burners and arrangements. The latter use in particular was

highly significant to ancient religion. In both uses, incense was and remains highly-prized.

The word 'incense' does not actually refer to aromatics from a single specific plant, but, rather, to a

range of plants providing material that produces a similar fragrance. What is most commonly meant by

the term is frankincense (or olibanum): resin from *Boswellia* balsam trees, particularly *Boswellia sacra* and

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[73] Cf. Rathbone (2000), pp. 46-9.

[74] For comparison, a well-paid family secretary in Egypt during the latter part of our period was paid approximately 40 *drachmae* per month; see Rathbone (1991), p. 137.

[75] See below, pp. 256-8.

[76] Pliny, *NH* XII.32.65. This tax may have been the 25% *tetarte* or a comparable tax to that levied at Alexandria and Antioch. On the tetarte see Young (2001), pp. 95-6.

[77] Pliny states that the cost is 6, 5 or 3 denarii a pound for first, second and third-rate incense respectively; it is unclear whether his prices merely reflect those in Rome itself, or more broadly.

[78] See for instance Serpico, M. and White, R. (2000), "The Botanical identity and transport of incense during the Egyptian New Kingdom", in *Antiquity* 74 (2000), pp. 884-97.

three other varieties,[79] originating from the heel of Arabia, with the best quality to be found in the Dhofar.[80] However, fragrant resins of other plants were often used as cheaper, nearby substitutes (Singer identifies twenty-five such species),[81] such as resin from local *Pistacia* trees in Egypt and the Levant.[82] As for myrrh, this was a darker resin extracted from *Commiphora* trees, most particularly the eponymous *Commiphora myrrha*.[83] Both varieties of resins were dried and used in the form of lumps or pearls of solid resin, either: tossed onto hot coals and burnt; crushed or infused as an aromatic; or otherwise "*ground up, burned or melted down to treat everything from depression to infertility, from mouth-ulcers to haemorrhoids*".[84]

3.1.1   *Incense and Aromatics in Religion*

Particularly as our interest is in the role of temples in trade, the role of incense in religion deserves expanding upon. It was virtually ubiquitous in houses, its pleasing scent used to cleanse worshippers, purify air and offer directly to the gods.[85] It was used most prodigiously in temples, ceremonies, on altars of all kinds, as widely recorded in friezes and archaeological remains from the Bronze Age onwards, by which time its use was already extensive.[86]

In Palmyra, the act of incense burning is attested frequently, on tesserae, altars and reliefs, most particularly to identify individuals as worshippers of deities who may also be present in the scene.[87] Indeed, the frequency of its depiction at Palmyra drove Kaizer to remark that it is "*By far the most popular depiction of a sacrificial act at Palmyra*".[88] He later notes that "*The same feature is often attested in the Palmyrène and at Dura-Europos*".[89] It is possible that the annual burning of a large quantity of incense at Babylon's Temple of Bel may have been reflected in Palmyra during the major festival in the month of Nisan.[90]

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[79] Singer, C., (2007), "The Incense Kingdoms of Yemen: An Outline History of the South Arabian Incense Trade", in Peacock and Williams (ed.), *Food for the Gods*, pp. 7-10.
[80] Ibid., p. 8.
[81] Ibid., p. 7.
[82] Specifically *Pistacia atlanticus* and *Pistacia terebinthus* (the terebinth tree); see Serpico and White (2000), pp. 885-6. It is possibly resin from these trees, native to Syria, which constituted the 'aromatics' mentioned in the Palmyrene Tariff, on which see below, p. 203.
[83] Singer (2007), p. 8.
[84] Ibid., p. 6.
[85] See for instance *Food for the Gods*.
[86] Serpico and White (2000), pp. 887-9.
[87] See for instance Colledge, M. A. R. (1976.a), *The Art of Palmyra*, Thames and Hudson, London, Figs. 39, 41 (Damascus Museum acc. no. C.2118), 42 (DM acc. no. C3841) and 43 (DM acc. no. C.2842).
[88] Kaizer (2002), p. 177.
[89] Ibid., p. 178, n. 39.
[90] Herodotus I.183; on the Nisan festival, see below, p. 180.

3.1.2 Production

Incense-bearing trees as a rule require a limestone soil, coolness, and moisture instead of direct rainfall; they are as a result best-suited to elevated cloud-bound plateaux such as those in the Dhofar region of southern Arabia, the region of Biblical Sheba.[91] Direct cultivation of the trees is unfeasible; instead, harvesting was done from wild trees – the method was explained in detail by Pliny, whereby an incision was made on the trunk and the bark struck, with the resulting effluent being allowed to dry before being collected, either from mats laid out for the purpose, or scraped directly from the trunk. Incense was traditionally harvested once a year in the spring, but owing to high demand a 'second cutting' took place from time to time in the autumn, although this was recognised to yield an inferior product.[92]

3.1.3 Transport and Trade

From southern Arabia, incense made its way north to the Roman Near East via ship up the Red Sea (thence also to Egypt), or via caravan overland up the spine of Arabia along the so-called 'Incense Road'. There are indications that the trade in incense was colossal even well before our own period: over a ton of resin from the Levant was discovered in the Uluburun shipwreck, which, in the context of high Egyptian demand, "*indicates the presence of a commercial resin industry somewhere in Syria-Palestine on a scale not hitherto expected* […] *it is now evident that there was a major resin industry in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age, with an active network of trade in the Mediterranean for its distribution.*"[93]

Plutarch recalls contemporary reports of the tale of Alexander the Great's capture of Gaza, whereupon he sent 500 talents of incense for his old childhood tutor to sacrifice,[94] suggesting that the trade was on an industrial scale even in Alexander's time. If the report is correct, and Plutarch was using the Attic talent, the consignment would amount to approximately fifteen tons of incense. Consequently, the particular power of temples as consumers of the goods of long-distance trade needs to be seriously considered.

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[91] Singer (2000), pp. 8-9.
[92] Pliny, *NH* XII.30.
[93] Serpico and White (2000), pp. 894-5.
[94] Plut. *Alex.* XXV.6.

Different qualities of incense are recognised both by modern harvesters from trees today;[95] and in ancient sources such as Pliny, who records three grades of incense quality, priced accordingly.[96] Given the size of the institutions acquiring it, and the seasonality of the incense trade, it is likely that larger temples at least will have bought incense on a quite literally industrial scale;[97] how these temples were able to do so, at not inconsiderable cost and requiring no small degree of organisation, is worth investigating. A study of this relationship is therefore a worthwhile avenue for future research.[98]

Given the importance of incense and its trade to the religious life of the Roman Near East, it is appropriate at this juncture to consider a second case study in relation to Palmyra – that of Petra, a city whose fortunes were in no small part determined by its dominance of the incense trade at the Mediterranean/Levantine end.

3.2   Petra: a case study

Petra was a city on the eastern flank of the Wadi Araba connecting the Dead Sea with the Gulf of Aqaba; it first attained prominence during the First Century BC in part due to its control of the incense trade. During the Third Century AD, it began a decline from which it never recovered; its ruins in southern Jordan remain some of the most striking in the world.

3.2.1   Historiography

When approaching Petra historiographically, one must draw a distinction between the city itself and the Nabataeans, the people who founded it and for whom it acted as the capital and religious centre. As one of a mosaic of tribes in the region during the second half of the First Millennium BC, the Nabataeans are mentioned, with varying degrees of certainty and reliability, in a variety of texts and inscriptions from Egypt, the Levant and Mesopotamia, potentially including the Bible.[99] As we shall see, from an early

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[95] Singer (2000), pp. 7-9.
[96] Pliny, *NH* XII.32.
[97] For instance, the annual sacrifice of ~2.5 tonnes of incense at the Temple of Bel at Babylon as recorded in Herodotus I.183 suggests that this was the case. Large quantities were also recorded by Lucian, *DDS* 30.
[98] The logical thing would be to use the approaches of Dignas (2003) and Debord (1982) as starting points.
[99] See the Apocryphal I *Macc.* 5:25. On this, see for instance Bowersock (1983), p. 14. See also Taylor, J. (2001), *Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans*, I.B. Tauris, London, pp. 14-17. For a concise but extensive overview see Al-Salameen, Z. (2007), "Frankincense and the Nabataeans: Historical and Archaeological Evidence", in *Journal of King Saud University, 21, Tourism in Archaeology* (1) (2009), pp. 1-4.

stage, the Nabataeans are characterised as being heavily involved in the caravan trade, particularly that of incense from southern Arabia.[100]

Diodorus Siculus describes the late Fourth-Century BC Nabataeans' annual retreat to "*a certain rock*"[101] – literally, πέτρας (petras) – for their gathering, and which Antigonid forces under Athenaeus and Demetrius attempted to raid in 312 BC.[102] Diodorus relied for this entire section on the contemporary eyewitness history of Hieronymus of Cardia,[103] although he himself wrote in the First Century BC. Diodorus portrays the Nabataeans as nomadic and makes no mention of the *city* of Petra; it appears that even if the site was in use in the Fourth Century BC, it was not yet urbanised. However, reading between the lines of Hieronymus' account, it appears that even in this era the Nabataeans were nevertheless well-established.[104] They had significant trading links to a variety of places and in a variety of commodities both local and far-flung, the use of Aramaic (the "*Syrian characters*"[105] with which they protest in writing to Antigonus), and of sophisticated water management systems.[106]

Diodorus' near-contemporary, Strabo,[107] provides a markedly different picture, however:

| μητρόπολις δὲ τῶν Ναβαταίων ἐστὶν ἡ Πέτρα καλουμένη: κεῖται γὰρ ἐπὶ χωρίου τἆλλα ὁμαλοῦ καὶ ἐπιπέδου, κύκλῳ δὲ πέτρᾳ φρουρουμένου τὰ μὲν ἐκτὸς ἀποκρήμνου καὶ ἀποτόμου τὰ δ' ἐντὸς πηγὰς ἀφθόνους... | *The metropolis of the Nabataeans is Petra, as it is called; for it lies on a site which is otherwise smooth and level, but it is fortified all around by a rock, the outside parts of the site being precipitous and sheer, and the inside parts having springs in abundance...*[108] |

The Nabataeans themselves crop up from time to time in other sources, such as in Zenon's Third Century BC records from the Fayum in Egypt, which record the Incense Road to Gaza via Gerrha on the

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[100] For a reasonably comprehensive collection of texts and inscriptions relating to Nabataea and its trade, see Negev, A. (1977), "The Nabataeans and the Provincia Arabia", in *ANRW* II.8, pp. 521-70.
[101] Diodorus Siculus, XIX.95.1.
[102] Ibid., XIX.94.1-100.2.
[103] Ibid., XVIII.42-44, & 50. On the subject of Hieronymus of Cardia, see Graf, D. F. (1997), *Rome and the Arabian Frontier: from the Nabataeans to the Saracens*, Ashgate Variorum, Great Yarmouth, pp. 51-3.
[104] This was pointed out by Graf (1997), p. 53.
[105] Diodorus Siculus. XIX, 96.1.
[106] Ibid. XIX, 94.6.
[107] For much of the passages concerning Nabataea and its trade, Strabo appears to have relied principally upon Eratosthenes (cited in *Geog.* XVI 4.2) and Artemidorus of Ephesus (cited in *Geog.* XVI 4.5). Eratosthenes flourished in the Third Century BC, but Artemidorus flourished in the Second and First Centuries BC. As above, unlike Strabo, Diodorus used predominantly Second- and Third- Century BC authors such as Agatharchides of Knidos for the basis of his work; see Groom (1981), p. 67. Writing much later, Josephus also mentions from time to time that Petra was "*the capital of the Arabian kingdom.*" Josephus, *War.* I.125.
[108] Strabo, *Geog.* XVI.4.21.

coast of the Persian Gulf, as well as Nabataean trade links with Egypt.[109] The now somewhat obscure

Agatharchides of Knidos also records these routes, writing in the latter half of the Second Century BC; his

writing formed one of the bases for Diodorus Siculus' later accounts.[110] The Nabataeans are mentioned

by Strabo and Diodorus,[111] and also by Pliny,[112] in connection with the Incense Road to Gaza from the

heel of Arabia.[113] Pliny and Strabo both describe two routes to Petra, one following the western coast of

the Arabian peninsula from Sheba in the environs of modern Yemen – the traditional Incense Road[114] –

and the other across the an-Nafud from the city of Gerrha, opposite Bahrain in the Persian Gulf.[115]

Petra is mentioned briefly by Cassius Dio in the context of the Roman annexation of Nabataea; after

this point, Petra is generally only mentioned in passing. Eusebius mentions it as "*a stronghold of superstition*"

in his summation of places in Arabia where Christian churches could now be found, in purported

fulfilment of a prediction by Isiah.[116] Epiphanaius of Cyprus (fl. 374-403 AD) mentions that Nabataean

pagan religious ceremonies took place there on the 25th of December,[117] and Athanasius of Alexandria

mentions a pair of Christian bishops of Petra in the late Third or early Fourth Centuries AD.[118]

After the Fourth Century, there is evidence of an increasing collapse of Petra as an urban centre, or,

at the very least, a move away from the ordered urbanism characteristic of the Roman period.[119] A

particularly damaging earthquake in 363 AD collapsed many important buildings,[120] and heralded a

profound decline. There is much evidence that the site was not completely abandoned; the city continued

to house functioning churches, and a find of charred papyri dated to the late Sixth or early Seventh

Centuries AD has yielded attestations of at least three churches and a range of activity at the site.[121] Three

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[109] See Graf (1997), pp. 70-5, with remarks on pp. 53-4. On the route, see Maps 3 & 4, above, pp. 153-4.
[110] See Groom (1981), pp. 66-73.
[111] Diodorus Siculus, XIX, 94.4-5; Strabo *Geog.* XVI, 3-4 *passim*, esp. 3.3, 4.4, 4.18-23.
[112] Pliny *NH*, XII, 32.
[113] Young (2001), p. 91, cautions that it is mistaken to construe Petra's long-distance trade as being involved with the spice and silk trades from India.
[114] Strabo *Geog.* XVI, 4.18; Pliny *NH*, XII, 32.
[115] Strabo *Geog.* XVI, 3.3; Pliny *NH*, VI, 32.
[116] Barnes, T. D. (1981), *Constantine and Eusebius*, HUP, London, p. 102.
[117] Epiphanaius, *Panarion* 51.22.11.
[118] Athanasius, *Hist. Arian.* III.6; *Antioch* 10.
[119] Reid, S. K. (2005), *The Small Temple: an Imperial Cult Building in Petra, Jordan*, Gorgias, New Jersey, p. 27.
[120] Ibid.
[121] See for instance in Frösén, J. (2002), "The Petra Papyri: Information and significance", in Frösén, J. and Fiema, T., (eds.) (2002), *Petra, A City Forgotten and Rediscovered*, Helsinki University Press, Helsinki, pp. 18-24.

hundred years after the great earthquake, Petra and its environs were claimed during the Muslim conquests of the 630s, and following this, Petra ceases to be referred to as a functioning settlement.[122]

There is some evidence that Petra was briefly the site of a Crusader outpost; it would be over six hundred years before it was revisited by Europeans. Petra was famously 'rediscovered' by the Swiss explorer Burckhardt in the early Nineteenth Century.[123] Following his visit, interest in the site grew rapidly, although it was not until the establishment of the independent Kingdom of Jordan that access to the site became safe and reliable.[124] By this time, however, difficulty of access combined with the site's spectacular setting only contributed to the formulation of an indelibly romantic view of the city.[125] The Twentieth Century saw the establishment of a corpus of scholarship concerning Petra's position in history and its archaeological remains; after studies in the post-war period, a seminal work on its archaeological remains were published by McKenzie.[126] Millar's great work *The Roman Near East* was preceded by ten years by Bowersock's *Roman Arabia*, which covered ancient Nabataea and surrounding territories;[127] Bowersock argued that understanding pre-Roman Nabataea is crucial to understanding what followed under Roman control.[128] In the new millennium, collections of papers edited by Frösén and Fiema,[129] and by Politis,[130] both form important cornerstones of recent scholarship, as does another major collection of papers under Glenn Markoe,[131] and Peter Alpass' *The Religious Life of Nabataea*.[132] Excavations are ongoing at a variety of locations in the city.

3.2.2   Region and Routes

Petra is located on the Wadi Musa, a perennial stream on the eastern flank of the Wadi Araba, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, approximately 360 kilometres south of Damascus, approximately

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[122] See for instance Reid (2005), p. 27.

[123] See for instance Lewis, N. N. (2003), "Petra: The First-Comers", in Markoe, G. (ed.) (2003), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, Thames and Hudson, London, pp. 112-115.

[124] See Miettunuen, P. (2002), "Travellers, Pilgrims and Tribes – Jabal Harun in the past 200 years", in *Petra*, pp. 126-7.

[125] For an excellent example, see Llewellyn, B. (2003), "The Real and the Ideal: Petra in the Minds and Eyes of Nineteenth-Century British and American Artist-Travellers", in *Petra Rediscovered*, pp. 117-131.

[126] McKenzie, J. (1990), *The Architecture of Petra*; *British Academy Monographs in Archaeology, No. 1*, OUP, Oxford. A lighter but still useful work is Browning, I. (1982), *Petra*, Chatto and Windus, London.

[127] Bowersock, G. (1983), *Roman Arabia*, HUP, London.

[128] Ibid., *passim*, esp. for instance pp. 24–8.

[129] *Petra*.

[130] Politis, K. D. (ed.) (2007), *The World of the Nabataeans, Vol. 2 of the International Conference 'The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans' held at the British Museum, 17-19 April, 2001*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart.

[131] *Petra Rediscovered*.

[132] Alpass, P. (2013), *The Religious Life of Nabataea*, Brill, Leiden.

185 kilometres south-south-west of Philadelphia (modern Amman), 160 kilometres south-south-east of Jerusalem, and 160 kilometres south-east of Gaza. It is situated in terrain dominated particularly to the east and west by sandstone upland deeply scored with narrow eroded gorges; this terrain is characteristic of the ancient pre-Classical kingdom of Edom lying between the Red and Dead Seas. Such a position allowed the site of Petra to become an important lynchpin in regional and inter-regional trade in Antiquity, connecting as it does routes from the Persian Gulf and Arabia with those leading into Egypt and the wider Near East, and, crucially, the Mediterranean via the port of Gaza.

Indeed, as we have seen, the ancient Roman sources are in particular agreement about the two principal trading routes leading into Petra from the south and east. Strabo and Pliny both describe routes leading from the Persian Gulf, and from the heel of Arabia, the latter of which Pliny describes in particular detail:

evehi non potest nisi per gebbanitas, itaque et horum regi penditur vectigal. caput eorum thomna abest a gaza, nostri litoris in iudaea oppido, [30 xxiiii] 30 [xxxvii] d p., quod dividitur in mansiones camelorum lxv. sunt et quae sacerdotibus dantur portiones scribisque regum certae. sed praeter hos et custodes satellitesque et ostiarii et ministri populantur. iam quacumque iter est aliubi pro aqua, aliubi pro pabulo aut pro mansionibus variisque portoriis pendunt, ut sumptus in singulas camelos dclxxxviii ad nostrum litus colligat, iterumque imperii nostri publicanis penditur.

It [frankincense] cannot be carried except through [the land of] the Gebbanitae, and thus a vectigal tax to their king is also paid. Their capital, Thomna, is 1,487 ½ miles from the town of Gaza in Judaea, on the Mediterranean Sea, which journey is divided into sixty-five stages for camels. There are also fixed portions which are given to the priests and royal scribes, but beside these the guards and their attendants, the gatekeepers and the servants plunder also: indeed, wherever their journey goes they pay at one place for water, at another for food or lodging, and also the various taxes, so that for one camel, 688 denarii are consumed in reaching the Mediterranean, and then taxes are paid to the publicans of our Empire.[133]

In this regard, both Pliny and Strabo agree to a remarkable degree.[134] Given the details Pliny reports, it seems likely that he based this account on a reliable first-hand source. Pliny and Strabo also agree on the second route to Petra, this time from the city of Gerrha, opposite Bahrain (ancient Tylos) in the Persian Gulf, making a hop across the an-Nafud Desert to approach Petra from due east via Dumat:

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[133] Pliny *NH*, XII.32, trans. Rackham (1945; reprinted 1968).
[134] See Strabo, *Geog*. XVI.4.2-3 for a description of the region and 16.4.4 for a description of the route. It bears mentioning that it is likely Pliny relied at least in part on Strabo's work as a source for his own writing.

πλησίον δ᾿ αὐτῆς ἀκρωτήριον, ὃ διατείνει πρὸς τὴν Πέτραν τὴν τῶν Ναβαταίων καλουμένων Ἀράβων καὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην χώραν, εἰς ἣν Μιναῖοί τε καὶ Γερραῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ πλησιόχωροι τὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων φορτία κομίζουσιν.

Near the island [of Phocae] is a promontory, which extends to the Rock [literally, Petran] of the Nabataean Arabians, as they are called, and to the Palestine country, whither Minaeans and Gerrhaeans convey their loads of aromatics.[135]

This route from Gerrha is also attested in the papyri of Zenon from the Third Century BC, one of which also records that Nabataean traders were encountered en route to Egypt from the Near East as well.[136] The Zenon papyri indicate that the Nabataeans enjoyed a well-established trading network by the mid-Third Century BC. Strabo does not describe the Nabataeans as covering most of the route, however, ascribing that role instead to the Gerrhaeans themselves.

While the evidence for Petra's involvement in the aromatics trade – in other words, the Incense Road – is beyond reasonable doubt, there is little to say that it was significantly involved in either of the other two iconic trade routes, the Silk Road and Spice Route, at least before the Third Century.[137] While, it is true, the road from Gerrha certainly did approach Petra from the direction of the Persian Gulf, and, indeed, it must have been the case that goods of some kind from India and farther afield made it to Petra, there is no evidence for through trade in these goods at Petra, at least in our period;[138] rather, it seems that to the extent that Petra was involved in the spice and silk trades, it was as a consumer rather than as a waypoint on the network. That said, as Young points out, during times when the Euphrates-Palmyra route was disrupted, the Gerrha route via Petra or the other major Nabataean city of Bostra would have been a viable alternative,[139] although there is no actual evidence to support this reasonable contention.

There is, to be sure, evidence of at least *some* trade: for instance, a South-Asian ivory wand was discovered in the Temple of the Winged Lions, which we shall return to below,[140] and the presence of Asian rather than African elephants on the column capitals of the Great/Southern Temple implies a degree of familiarity with these creatures, most likely via trade contacts which may not otherwise have left

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[135] Strabo, *Geog.* XVI.4.18, citing Artemidorus of Ephesus (who flourished around 100 BC), trans. Jones (1932, reprinted 1949). See also *Ibid.* 3.3 and also Pliny, *NH*, VI.32.
[136] See Graf, D. F. (1990), "The Origin of the Nabataeans", in *Aram* 2, pp. 54-5.
[137] Young (2001), pp. 122-8.
[138] See Ibid., pp. 125-8 on why this may have changed over time.
[139] Ibid., pp. 125-6.
[140] See Hammond, P. (2003), "The Temple of the Winged Lions", in *Petra Rediscovered*, p. 249; see also Graf, D. F. and Sidebotham, S. E. (2003), "Nabataean Trade", in *Petra Rediscovered*, p. 71, Fig. 50.

lasting evidence; see Figure 5 below.[141] But even with these exceptions in mind, if we are to talk in terms of Petra as a trading city (and, indeed, we must), we would do best to talk of it in terms of the one good we know for certain it traded in: incense.

From Petra, major roads lead north to Philadelphia (modern Amman), Jerusalem, Damascus and Bostra, north-west to the port of Gaza, and west to Egypt via Sinai, as well as south along the Wadi Araba to the ports of Aqaba and Leuke Kome at the head of the Red Sea. This latter is important, as while there was undoubtedly a land route into Egypt from Petra, the port of Leuke Kome would have allowed rather swifter, safer travel to the Egyptian heartland via the Red Sea ports. The port of Gaza, too, critically afforded caravans via Petra direct access to the Mediterranean; indeed, it seems that for centuries, Gaza was the principal port at the head of the incense route.[142]

Petra is shown on Section VIII of the Peutinger Table, depicted with an incomplete and apparently hastily-added symbol for a major city. The Table shows a route to 'Addianum' (identified as the site of Ghadyan, a site of significant Roman-era remains)[143] and a branching route to both Philadelphia and Jerusalem via Thomna, a caravanserai which is notably the site of at least one Nabataean temple.[144] This branching route appears to follow the route of the Via Nova Traiana, although notably the Peutinger
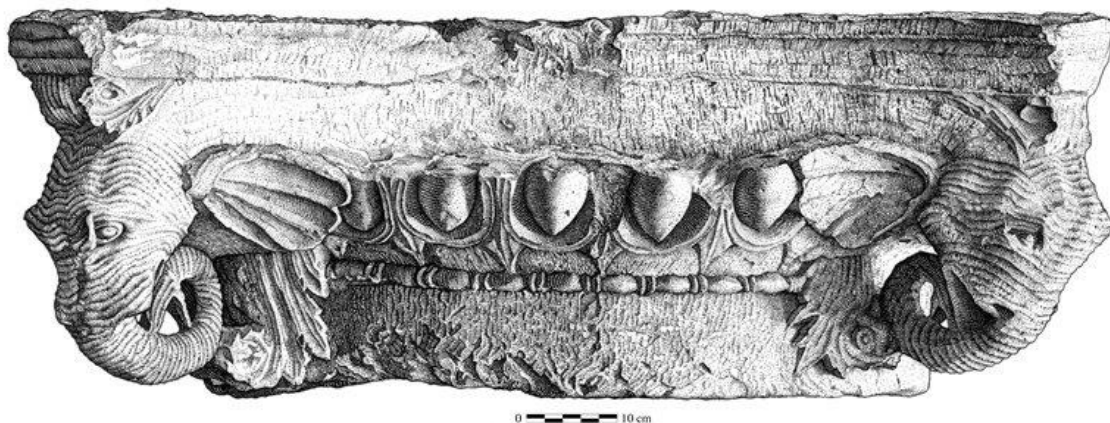
Propylaeum - Lower Temenos Elephant Headed Capital from an Engaged Column

Fig. 10: An Asian elephant head column capital from the Great Temple at Petra.

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[141] See Joukowsky, M. S. (2003), "The Great Temple", in *Petra Rediscovered*, pp. 218-9, Figs. 236 & 237.
[142] Pliny, NH, *XII.32.*
[143] Bowersock (1983), p. 180.
[144] Segal (2013), no. 82, p. 298.

Table does not explicitly mention it.[145] The temple and sanctuary at Thomna has yet to be excavated, but

that it was also mentioned by Ptolemy indicates that it was used for some time.[146] Further, the presence

of a Nabataean structure, and a temple at that (if an undated one) when other similar structures in the area

and along the same route have been dated to the First and Second Centuries BC strongly suggests that the

Via Nova Traiana itself was hardly a new route, but a refinement of an existing caravan route between

Petra and the Decapolis.[147] On the subject of Nabataean temples along routes, evidence for the routes to

and from Petra is extensive, thanks to the significant number of Nabataean buildings and remains

identified in the immediate surround,[148] showing sites of interest in the direction of both Jerusalem and

Damascus, and farther afield. Naturally, both cities would have been significant consumers of goods

travelling on the Incense Route.

As well as evidence along the route from Petra to Damascus, there is also at least one site en route

from Petra to Egypt which is worthy of mention.[149] Qasrawet – lying just about in north-west Sinai,

southeast of the Katia oasis and 55 km southeast of modern Port Said – was a caravan station sporting at

least two Nabataean temples (Gazetteer, 35, 36), both dating to the First Century BC, and presumed to

have formed part of a larger sanctuary now lost to us.[150] The site of Qasrawet was later fortified by the

Romans, showing that, like many Nabataean caravan stations and guard posts along caravan routes,[151] its

importance – and Nabataean trade with Egypt – continued well into the period of Roman rule.[152] With

regard to trade with and through Egypt, there is substantial epigraphic evidence, including over eighty

Nabataean inscriptions,[153] as well as graffiti in the amethyst mines at Abu Diyeiba,[154] at Coptos and

Berenike.[155] A fragmentary Ptolemaic inscription at Denderah even attests to a lease between a Palmyrene

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[145] See Bowersock (1983), pp. 176-9; this perhaps could help date the map, or at least its own sources.
[146] Ptolemy *Geog.* 5.15.5.
[147] For instance, see Khirbet-al-Dariyeh (Segal (2013), pp. 293-7; Freyberger (1998), pp. 31-4) and Khirbat-el-Tannur (Segal (2013), pp. 289-93; Freyberger (1998), pp. 34-41). On the Via Nova Traiana see above all Graf, (1995).
[148] See for instance Segal (2013), nos. 49-51, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79-82.
[149] As well as Qasrawet, there are other sites including at the Wadi Umm Sidreh and the Wadi Taba. See for instance Zayadine, F. (1985), "Caravan Routes between Egypt and Nabataea and the Voyage of Sultan Baibars to Petra in 1276", in Hadidi, A. (ed.), *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, II, Amman; pp. 159-71.
[150] Segal (2013), nos. 76 *&* 77, pp. 281-6.
[151] See above all Young (2001), pp. 119-134.
[152] Segal (2013), p. 281.
[153] Graf and Sidebotham (2003), p. 73.
[154] Ibid., p. 71.
[155] Ibid, p. 73.

and a Nabataean,[156] seen as evidence of "*Palmyrene-Nabataean commercial relations*".[157] Additionally, a funerary fragment from Athribis, and finds of blue pigment materials and, tellingly, faience, in the Temple of the Winged Lions reinforces the notion of strong links between Petra and Egypt.[158] Indeed, on the subject of the Temple of the Winged Lions, a proposed cult attribution is to a Nabataean form of the Cult of Allat or al-Uzza, possibly as an assimilated form of the cult of Isis.[159] This would imply that contacts and relations with Egypt were strong enough to greatly impact Nabataean cultural and religious life.

There is also a small square-concentric Nabataean temple at the site of Iram (Gazetteer, 25), lying on the route between Petra and the Gulf of Aqaba at a site of significant water sources, and in use from the turn of the First Century BC/AD to the end of the Second Century AD.[160] There are signs of significant Nabataean trading infrastructure in all directions during the period of our investigation. That these sites included temples should not be surprising; it follows that the provision of cult and worshipping space along these trade routes was considered to be necessary for the successful conduct of the enterprise.

A number of Nabataean temples in the region can shed further light on the role of temples in trade.

Iram is located approximately 40 kilometres due east of 'Aqaba on the main Nabataean road north to Petra, approximately 65 kilometres to the north-north-west; it also sat on the east-west route to Gerrha.[161] The site was excavated extensively by Savignac in the 1930s, with the assistance of Horsfield;[162] it was revisited in the 1959 by Kirkbride.[163] Numerous springs rise in the area immediately around the temple,

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[156] Sidebotham (1986), p. 96; see also Clermont-Ganneau, C. (1919), "Les Nabatéens en Égypte", in *Revue de l'Histoire de Religions* 80, pp. 1-29; and Littman, E. and Meredith, D. (1954), "Nabataean Inscriptions from Egypt - II", in *BSOAS* 16, p. 227.

[157] Graf and Sidebotham (2003), p. 73.

[158] Hammond (2003), p. 229. See now Alpass (2013), pp. 53-6.

[159] Hammond (2003), pp. 224-6. "*On the basis of the type of temple, the altar platform, the decoration and other features, it appears that the temple involved the kind of religious practices associated with the Egyptian goddess Isis.*" Despite the assuredness of the attribution (and to be fair to him, he does go into great detail), Hammond has not, as of 2014, published a plan of the temple he excavated, even though he himself cites its layout as a major factor in his attribution of the cult to (a "*borrowed*") one of Isis. On the Nabataean use of dolphin imagery, see above all Glueck, N. (1966), *Deities and Dolphins*, Cassell, London, of whom Hammond appears to be unaware.

[160] Segal (2013), no. 87, pp. 315-7.

[161] See Negev (1977), p. 588.

[162] Savignac, R. (1932), "La sanctuaire d'Allat à Iram" in *Revue Biblique* 41 (1932), pp. 581-97; idem. (1933), "La sanctuaire d'Allat à Iram" in *Revue Biblique* 42 (1933), pp. 405-22; idem. (1934), "La sanctuaire d'Allat à Iram" in *Revue Biblique* 43 (1934), pp. 572-89; Savignac, R. and Horsfield, G. (1935), "Le temple de Ramm", in *Revue Biblique* 44 (1935), pp. 245-78.

[163] Kirkbride, D. (1960), "Le temple Nabataean de Ramm: Son evolution architecturale", in *Revue Biblique* 67 (1960), pp. 65-92.

which fed a large reservoir.[164]   The temple sanctuary (Gazetteer, 25) was open rather than enclosed, making it difficult to establish its size; however, the temenos was paved with hexagonal flagstones.[165] The temple is centrally integrated into the space, which also appears to have included an army camp.[166] The site itself was identified by means of a Nabataean inscription, and comprised an extensive fortified caravan station serving both routes upon which it lay,[167] and dating to 31 AD or earlier.[168]

Thoana is located on the Via Nova Traiana approximately 87 kilometres northeast of Petra, and appears in Section VIII of the Peutinger Table as *Thornia*. It has never been excavated, but was surveyed at the beginning of the last century.[169]   Curiously, the temple (Gazetteer, 42), measuring 20 by 23.7 metres, is crammed into the far eastern end of its enclosure, which measures 86 by 140 metres, making it almost exactly the same size as the Sanctuary of Zeus at Baetocaece. The temple is well-served with wells and cisterns, and appears to be situated in the centre of a large caravan station.[170]

The village of Dhiban was located approximately 180 kilometres north of Petra, 62 kilometres southeast of Jerusalem and 55 kilometres south-south-west of Amman. A Nabataean temple (Gazetteer, 14) somewhat resembling Petra's Qasr-el-Bint was erected at the site amid a large paved sanctuary, only to be obliterated by a Byzantine church.[171] It was a major station on the main trade route north of Petra.[172]

The prosperous village of Kadesh was located strategically, approximately 32 kilometres east of Tyre at the head of its eponymous valley. It is the site of a somewhat well-preserved Roman temple (Gazetteer, 27) with a sanctuary bounded by a large, 55 by 80 metre peribolos,[173] and was recently excavated by a team of American archaeologists.[174] The temple appears to have been in use since at least the early 2nd Century

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[164] Savignac (1932), p. 586.
[165] Freyberger (1998), p. 43.
[166] Segal (2013), p. 315.
[167] Negev (1977), p. 588.
[168] Freyberger (1998), p. 42.
[169] Musil, A. (1906), *Arabia Petraea*, Vol. I, Vienna, Hölder, pp. 29-32.
[170] Segal (2013), p. 298.
[171] See above all excavation reports by Tushingham, A. D., in *BASOR* 133 (1954), pp. 6-26, by Winnett, F. and Reed, W., in *AASOR* 36-37 (1964), and Tushingham, A. in *AASOR* 40 (1972), pp. 27-55.
[172] See Negev (1977), p. 611.
[173] See above all Fischer, M., Ovadiah, A. and Roll, I. (1984), "The Roman Temple at Kedesh, Upper Galilee: A Preliminary Study", in *Tel Aviv: Journal of the Institute of Archaeology* Vol. 11.1, pp. 146-172.
[174] Herbert, S. C. and Berlin, A. M., (2010) *Tell Kedesh, Israel*, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology and University of Michigan, Online; http://www.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/fieldwork/currentfieldwork/telkedeshisrael (accessed 17/12/2014).

AD, until the devastating 363 AD earthquake.[175] Kadesh was important throughout our period, and was situated on major trade routes to and from Tyre attested in classical sources.[176]

As will be shown in a forthcoming publication by Laurent Tholbecq, the larger temple at Wadi Sabra (Gazetteer, 37), to the south of Petra, was situated at a chokepoint on a main route into the city, and with much of the infrastructure of a caravanserai, was a logical place to tax incoming caravans; the site was also host to a large theatre and bathhouse, recalling, for instance, Si'a.[177] The role of such caravanserai temples in taxation has previously been proposed by Young and Zayadine.[178]

The two Nabataean sites of Khirbat-al-Tannur (Gazetteer, 28) and Khirbat-et-Darieh (Gazetteer, 29) also bear mention, although it is worth noting that while these sites are located along the King's Road, neither is particularly accessible, although Khirbat-et-Darieh also appears to have comprised various agricultural buildings as well as a major water supply.[179] To these three sites we might add Si'a – also Nabataean and in much the same situation as Khirbat-et-Darieh, being the site of a significant complex of at least three temples (Gazetteer, 39, 40, 41), and near major routes between the cities of Canatha, Damascus and Palmyra, but again being difficult to access and generally classified as a peak sanctuary.[180] All three of these sites (Khirbat-al-Tannur, Khirbat-et-Dariyeh, and Si'a) were included by Freyberger in his analysis of the temples of the "*caravan stations*", although as with Ba'albek, without meaningful justification.[181] It is hard to imagine any of these sites being caravanserais in the same manner as Qasrawet, but it is nevertheless worth reflecting on their closeness to major routes.[182] Village and peak sanctuaries such as these along major routes could have had a supporting role in long-distance travel and trade without necessarily having been caravanserais.[183] As has been pointed out by Steinsapir, it is likely that the large precinct at Si'a provided a site for the regular exchange of goods and information for the

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[175] Fischer, Ovadiah and Roll (1984), p. 167.
[176] See for instance Eusebius *Onom.* 116.10, Josephus *War.* II.459 & IV.105.
[177] Tholbecq, L. (forthcoming), "Sanctuaries, Taxation and Caravans: Wadi Sabra, a Satellite Hamlet of Petra", in *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 46 (forthcoming).
[178] Young (2001), pp. 109-12 & 115; Zayadine (1992).
[179] Segal (2013), p. 293.
[180] See above all Alpass (2013), pp. 181-5. See also Dentzer, J.-M. (1985), "Six campagnes de fouilles à Sî: Developpement et culture indigene en Syrie meridionale", in *Damazener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985), pp. 65-83; also Segal (2013), pp. 206-213; and Freyberger (1998), pp. 46-55, who attempts (and rather fails) to make the case for Si'a and various other sites, including Khirbat-al-Tannur and Khirbat-et-Darieh being more heavily involved in the caravan trade.
[181] Freyberger (1998), pp. 46-55.
[182] Freyberger (1998), p. 54.
[183] See also Butcher (2003), pp. 109-12.

populace working on the extensive agricultural land owned by the temple itself, and those travelling the road below,[184] in this way perhaps reminding us of Baetocaece. Alpass supports this, suggesting that it functioned as a religious centre for the whole region: "*as well as serving the religious needs of the nomads, the sanctuary* [at Si'a] *may well have had a broader function as a point of contact or negotiation between the two communities*," settled and nomadic.[185] This strongly recalls what we saw in the previous Part in Hatra – even here, temples and trade are in close proximity.

3.2.3   Site and Hinterland

> *...the hues of youth upon a brow of woe, which men call'd old two thousand years ago; match me such marvel, save in eastern clime – a rose-red city 'half as old as time'.* [186]

John William Burgon's poem is highly evocative of the site of Petra. Indeed, the city's remains are, with the best will in the world, inescapably romantic: surrounded on most sides by sandstone cliffs into which sophisticated tomb facades have been carved, as well as both houses and city amenities such as the theatre. Approached from all sides save the south, and to a lesser extent, the north, the approach to Petra is necessarily through gorges and gaps in these same cliffs. The most famous approach – if not necessarily the most convenient – is the Siq, a narrow, winding sandstone cleft which suddenly and breathtakingly deposits the traveller in Petra's centre.

Constrained as it is by the cliffs, that Petra's urban topography is unique is both a truism and something of an understatement. The single main Colonnaded Street is not straight, and effectively connects the mouths of two large gullies as they flow into the Wadi Musa, between the Siq in the east and the Wadi as-Siyyagh in the west.[187] Hemmed in by extensive rocky uplands to the west and east, the terrain to the north is hilly and rough; as a result, Petra seems to have expanded principally to the north and south, where extensive Roman and Byzantine walls remain to this day, augmenting Petra's natural defences.[188] Petra's surroundings notably contain extensive signs of the caravan trade, including sites for

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[184] See Steinsapir (2005), p. 23.
[185] Alpass (2013), p. 184.
[186] Burgon, J. W. (1846), *Petra, a poem: to which a few short poems are now added*, F. MacPherson, Oxford, p. 24
[187] See Nehmé, L. (2003), "The Petra Survey Project", in *Petra Rediscovered*, p. 153, Fig. 143.
[188] Ibid.

the watering and accommodation of caravans on all of the major routes leading out of the city.[189] Evidence that the caravan trade was central to Petra's economy is evident in the Siq itself: impressive reliefs of camel trains and caravans are carved into the rock, seemingly by "*Nabataean entrepreneurs*".[190] Any discussion of Petra's urban topography must acknowledge that while archaeology at Petra is substantial, it is highly fragmentary. Parr provides much useful insight and commentary on the issues surrounding Petra and its archaeology at the turn of the Millennium; I will not attempt to reproduce his study here.[191] Successive studies in the years since have begun to move the debate beyond what he presents, however.[192] See Figure 6 overleaf for a plan of the area under discussion.

Petra's Colonnaded Street is dominated towards the eastern end by a series of major courtyards identified variously as markets, gardens and temple enclosures. Traditionally, these were divided into Upper, Middle and Lower Markets, named as such owing to their highly central location and open plan, the theory being that a major commercial centre such as Petra could be expected to have a large central market or agora. However, recent excavations and studies have thrown this into doubt, and the identification of the Lower Market as a *paradeisos* – in effect, an ornamental pool and garden – puts into doubt the identification of the other two 'Markets'.[193] It does, however, seem that the Upper Market at least remained an open area during the period of our investigation,[194] and may even have had a colonnaded peribolos, leading to the suggestion that it may have functioned as an agora after all.[195] The arrangement of monumental buildings around the other end of the colonnaded street appear to have been planned as part of the same broad vision intended to greet the traveller on arrival with a suitably stupendous blending of the city's architecture and striking cliffs and stone.[196]

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[189] Graf and Sidebotham (2003).
[190] Ibid., pp. 68-9, Fig. 49.
[191] See Parr, P. J. (2007), "The Urban Development of Petra", in Politis (ed.) *The World of the Nabataeans*, pp. 273-300.
[192] See for instance Segal (2013), pp. 299-315, esp. p. 306.
[193] See above all Bedal, L-A. (2004), *The Petra Pool-Complex: A Hellenistic Paradeisos in the Nabataean Capital*, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, esp. pp 22 & 39-40. Pages 28-38, incidentally, provide a good potted architectural history of Petra.
[194] Bedal (2004), pp. 36-7.
[195] See Figure 11 overleaf.
[196] Segal (2013), p. 313.
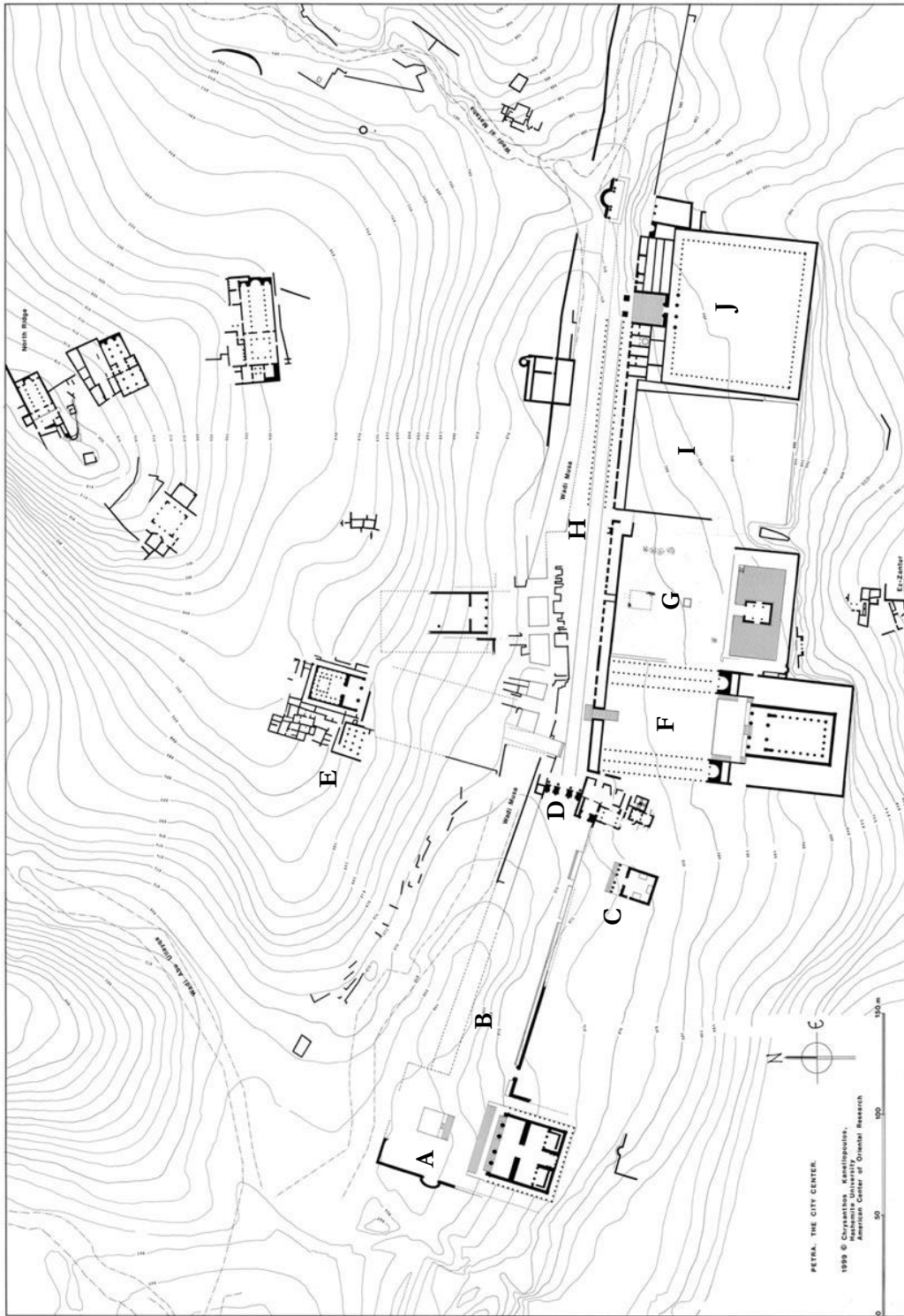
Figure 11: A plan of Petra. A – Qasr al-Bint and altar. B – long temenos of the Qasr al-Bint. C – Small Temple. D – temenos gate. E – Temple of the Winged Lion. F – Southern/Great Temple. G – "Lower Market"/Paradeisos. H – Colonnaded Street. I – "Middle Market". J – "Upper Market" agora.

There are three major temples in this central area, identified today as the Temple of the Winged Lions, the Southern or Great Temple, and the Qasr-al-Bint. With particular regard to our own investigation, it is worth noting that the dates for each of the major temples are all too often provisional and reliant on tenuous evidence.[197] This makes forming conclusions about these structures difficult to say

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[197] See Parr (2007), pp. 285-295 '*Strabo's Petra*' and '*The Roman Impact*'. See also Alpass (2013), pp. 53-62.

the least; however, it is agreed that each dates comfortably within the period of our investigation. At the earliest, they are dated to the mid to late First Century BC; at the latest to the mid to late First Century AD.[198] As we shall see, the most secure dating sequences are for the Qasr-al-Bint and Southern/Great Temple.[199]
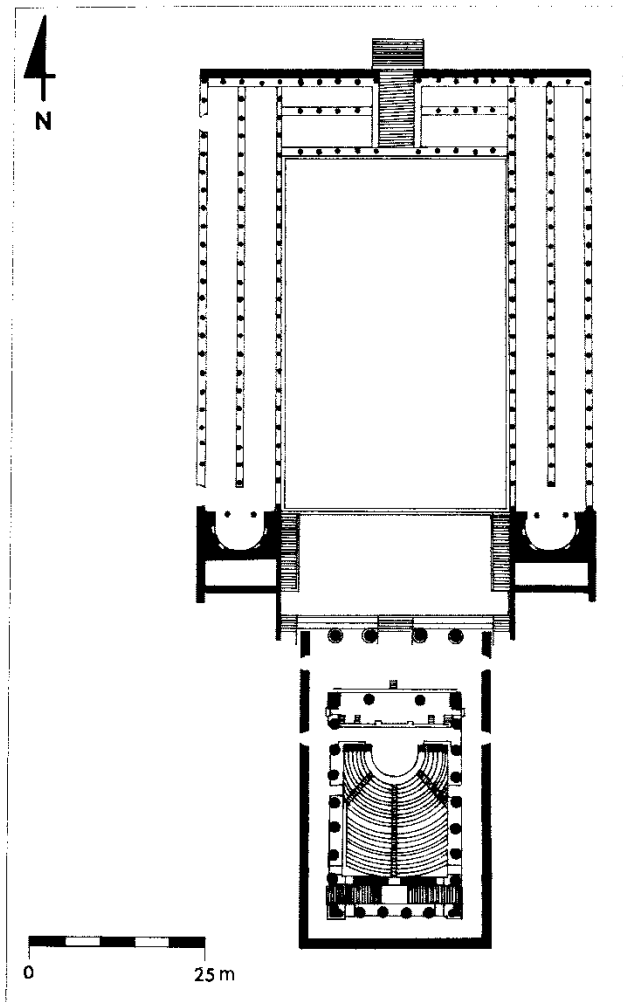
Fig. 12: A plan of the Great Temple at Petra (Gazetteer, 33)

Of the three major temples we shall examine, at once the most interesting and most perplexing is the Great, or Southern Temple (Gazetteer, 33; Fig. 12). This was likely first erected in the last quarter of the First Century BC,[200] as a peripteral *tetrastylos in antis* structure measuring 42.5 by 35.5 metres.[201] It is set back some way from the Colonnaded Street running east-west through the centre of Petra, although in its first stage, it is unclear what manner of forecourt separated it from the street.[202] At some point between the end of the First Century BC and the end of the independent Nabataean Kingdom in 106 AD, the temple was re-modelled, a monumental hexagonal-paved triple-porticoed forecourt was added, measuring 57 by 65 metres on the outside and

raised 8 metres above the level of the Colonnaded Street; at least the eastern half of the façade was lined with shops.[203] As we shall see, there is ample evidence to suggest that during this time, the main courtyard

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[198] Ibid., p. 286.
[199] See Segal (2013), pp. 306 & 312-4. On the 'Great Temple', see also Alpass (2013), pp. 59-62.
[200] Ibid., p. 312.
[201] Ibid., p. 309.
[202] Ibid., p. 312. It is worth noting that the "Colonnaded Street" only seems to have become colonnaded – and paved – in the Second Century AD.
[203] Ibid., pp. 307-8.

may even have fulfilled the function of Petra's agora.[204]   Most strikingly of all of the second-phase

renovations, however, the temple's peripteral columns were walled up and theatre-style banked seating

was added to the naos.[205]   It is therefore this second stage, broadly concurrent with the First Century AD,

which presents the most questions.

Following this extensive renovation, the Southern/Great Temple may not actually have been a

temple at all.   There is disagreement as to its precise nature from this point – *bouleterion*, basilica, *odeon* or

royal palace being popular options beside continued use as a temple.[206]   A possible parallel for the naos

'theatre' exists in the form of the proposed *bouleterion* 'tiered room' structure in the Temple of Artemis at

Dura-Europos;[207] banked seating of different kinds can also be found in other Nabataean temples, at Si'a

and the Qasr al-Bint, which we shall turn to shortly.[208]

The third and seemingly final stage of the Southern/Great Temple, essentially filling the period of

Roman occupation up to the terminal 363 AD earthquake, integrated it fully with urban Petra's

monumental framework, in a fashion which strongly echoes Roman and Herodian norms.[209]   This took

advantage of the Colonnaded Street, the spectacular Wadi Musa channel and the structures on its far side,

such as the Temple of the Winged Lion and the hypothesised palace north of the Southern/Great Temple

itself.[210]   For her part, Bedal argues that the 'Lower Market' *paradeisos* and the Great Temple (which it

abuts) were built and renovated concurrently as part of the same royal palatial complex, before being

opened for public access under the Romans post-106 AD.[211]   She notes that the plan of the *paradeisos* "*is*

virtually identical to the pool-complex at Herodium".[212]   While this may well be the case for the *paradeisos*, I am

not remotely convinced about the Great Temple, as it was clearly at least initially a religious structure, and

there is nothing to suggest that the building did not retain a strong cultic function even after its

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[204] Taylor (2001), p. 120.
[205] Ibid., pp. 312-3. See above all Joukowsky (2003).
[206] See above all Joukowsky (2003); and Alpass (2013), pp. 59-62. See also Fiema, Z. T. (2002), "From the Annexation to Aaron: Petra in Roman and Byzantine Times", in *Petra*, pp. 60-73, p. 65; and Segal (2013), no. 85, pp. 306-314. See also Bedal (2004), *passim*, esp. pp. 22, 32-37 & 176-7.
[207] See above all Leriche, P. (1999), "Salle à Gradins du temple d'Artémis à Doura-Europos", in *Topoi* 9 (1999), Fasc. 2, pp. 719-739. See also Downey (1988).
[208] See Segal (2013), pp. 211-2 for Si'a and among others, Parr (2007) for the Qasr al-Bint and the issue of 'theatres'.
[209] See above all Bedal (2004), esp. Ch. VI, pp. 171-185.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Bedal (2004), esp. Ch. VI, pp. 171-185.
[212] Ibid., p. 171.

renovations.[213]   Certainly, the Temple of Durene Artemis provides an example of such a building which retained a cultic function even after the addition of *bouleterion*-style seating.   Segal tends to agree,[214] drawing architectural parallels with the Herodian Sebasteion/Augustium in Sebaste/Samaria and rightly leaving open the question of whether the renovations had cultic or civic significance.   Might it be too much to suggest that they had both?
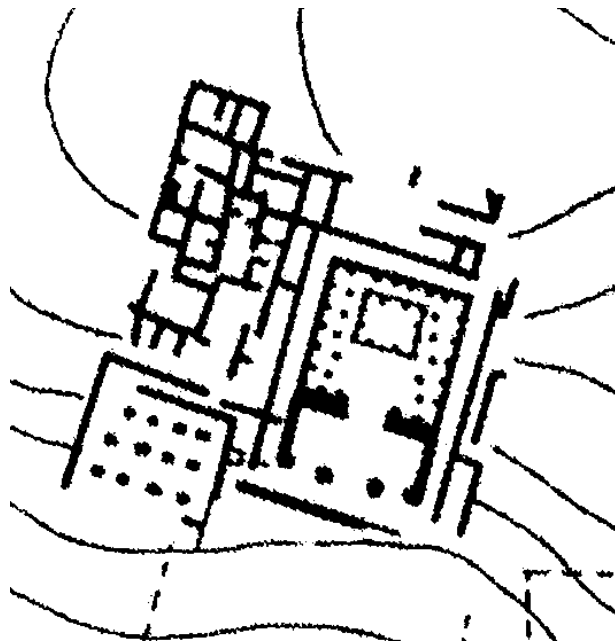
Fig. 13: A new plan of the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra (Gazetteer, 31), close-up of Fig. 11.

Moving north, the Temple of the Winged Lions (Gazetteer, 31; Fig. 13) was "*entirely of marble*" and its podium was "*paved with marble slabs*",[215] all of which would have to have been imported to Petra at significant expense.   We shall explore this below.   The Temple itself, which the excavators suggest was dedicated to Allat (Hammond proposes a Nabataean "*borrowing*" of Isis,[216] although this is doubtful at best and it is unclear which deity or deities was worshipped here),[217] is approximately 20 by 25 metres in size, with a square central hall measuring 17.42 metres on a side.[218]   Hammond's original plan has apparently since been superseded by Akasheh and Kannellopoulos', shown above.[219]   It is part of a complex which appears to have had both industrial and commercial uses, which we shall examine shortly.   Hammond's brave identification of the cult as some kind of Nabataean appropriation of Isis might have implications for the level of Nabataean contacts with Egypt; the discovery of faience and other artefacts from Egypt could reinforce this connection.[220]   Nabataean-Egyptian contact is attested as far back as the Third Century BC and most likely significantly predates it; we have also seen evidence of Nabataean-Egyptian trade and interaction

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[213] This is supported to an extent by Alpass (2013), pp. 59-62, although he is more sceptical than I am.
[214] Segal (2013), pp. 313-4.
[215] Segal (2013), no. 83, p. 300. On this temple, see Alpass (2013), pp. 53-5.
[216] See Hammond (2003), pp. 224-7; see also Glueck (1966). See *contra*, Alpass (2013), pp. 54-5.
[217] Alpass (2013), p. 55.
[218] Ibid., and Segal (2013), p. 300.
[219] Segal, p. 300.
[220] Hammond (2003), pp. 225-8.

from Qasrawet and a variety of places in Egypt.[221] However, his proposal has drawn criticism and is not borne out either by the religious makeup of the rest of Nabataea or the updated interpretation of the temple plan.[222] Either way, the temple was originally dedicated in 27 AD during the reign of King Aretas IV;[223] although it was redecorated (in substantially more austere fashion) almost at once, it appears to have remained largely unchanged until its destruction in the 363 AD earthquake.[224]
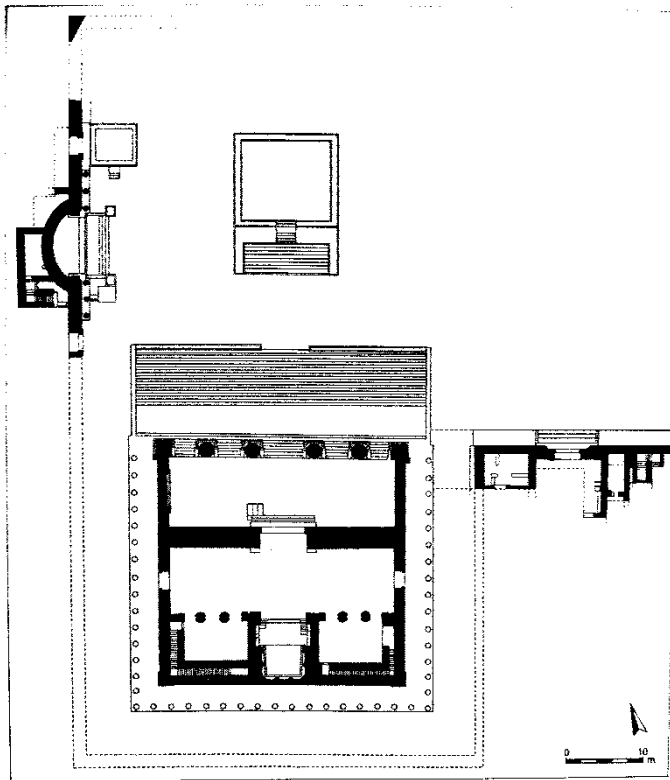
Fig. 14: A plan of the Qasr al-Bint at Petra (Gazetteer, 30).

The last of the three major temples in Petra is known today as the Qasr al-Bint (Gazetteer, 30; Fig. 14) and is presumed to have been Petra's premier temple.[225] It has been assumed that it was dedicated to Dusares as the city's principal deity; however, no firm dedication has been found, although the attribution is widely accepted.[226] In terms of architecture, the Qasr al-Bint comprises a 180 by 80-metre temenos hemmed in on the north by the Wadi Musa itself, on the west by sheer cliffs and on the south by the sharp slope of Ez-Zantur.[227] This constricted – but long – temenos, shown towards the bottom of Fig. 11 above, contains the Qasr al-Bint itself, a 32-metre square *tetrastyle in antis* temple upon a three-metre podium.[228] As already noted, there has been significant

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[221] See above.
[222] See Alpass (2013), pp. 53-5, and Fig. 11 above, p. 135.
[223] Hammond (2003), p. 224.
[224] Segal (2013), p. 300.
[225] Segal (2013), no. 84, pp. 300-306. See Alpass (2013), pp. 56-9.
[226] Bartlett, J. R. (2007), "Nabataean Religion", in Politis (ed.) *The World of the Nabataeans*, pp. 55-78; p 71. See *contra* Alpass (2013), pp. 57-9. Segal (2013) deftly avoids any discussion of the temple's dedicand.
[227] Alpass (2013), p. 56, proposes that the paved temenos was a Roman addition altering the orientation of the complex to an east-west axis, when previously it was oriented north.
[228] Freyberger (1998), pp. 6-7.

disagreement as to when precisely the temple can be dated;[229] however, its excavators insist it must date from at least the reign of King Odobas III, i.e. 28-9 BC.[230] Most recently, on the basis of excavations completed around the turn of the Millennium, a chronological framework has been devised: the temple was begun in the last third of the First Century BC on the site of an earlier monument; it was completed in the first half of the First Century AD, renovated variously during the Second and Third Centuries, badly damaged during the Palmyrene revolt under Zenobia between 268-272/3 AD, and finally destroyed by the major earthquake which devastated the city in 363.[231]

Architecturally, the Qasr al-Bint can be placed in the context of Babylonian and Mesopotamian temples, with similarity to the ostropylon of the Temple of Jupiter Damascenus,[232] and also in the propylaea of Appius Claudius Pulcher in Eleusis,[233] fitting a Hellenised eastern model of temples hybridising different architectural traditions in new and unique ways.[234] The temple also adheres to a 'complex-to-simple' rule in Nabataean architectural development.[235] It displays regional similarities with temples from the Palmyrene sphere, particularly with regard to what appears to have been a sacred banqueting hall similar to those of the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods at Dura-Europos and the Temple of Bel at Palmyra.[236] The temple's excavators, bearing in mind its stucco decorations, draw parallels with Trajan's Market and the House of Sallust in Rome, and with the bathhouse in Herod's Palace on Masada.[237] Put simply, the Qasr al-Bint is something of an architectural palimpsest, displaying styles and techniques from far and wide.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, scholarship has focused on the building's peculiarities of design and layout, in particular the theatre-like seating to one side and the lack of many traditional features of a Hellenistic

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[229] For instance, Freyberger (1998), pp. 6-7, places the temple alongside the *Ara Pacis* and proposes that its construction began as early as the 60s BC; while this is disputed by Parr (2007), p. 291, unusually for Freyberger, his dating is disputed as too *late*, with Parr suggesting that the temple precedes the First Century BC entirely. Alpass (2013), pp. 56-9 despairs of dating the structure but proposes a *terminus ante quem* of the reign of Aretas IV, i.e. 9 BC to 40 AD (p. 57).

[230] Freyberger (1998), p. 6, n. 52; see also Larché and Zayadine (2003), p. 201; Segal (2013), p. 306.

[231] Segal (2013), p. 306; see also Larché and Zayadine (2003), pp. 199-213.

[232] Freyberger (1998), p. 8.

[233] Ibid., p. 9.

[234] Ibid., pp. 8-11.

[235] Parr (2007), p. 291.

[236] Freyberger (1998), p. 10.

[237] Larché and Zayadine (2003), p. 202.

temple,[238] suggesting instead that it had a variety of functions, or possibly was intended to be used as a multi-functional public building. Freyberger suggests that the building was indeed a temple, drawing not on the conventional Hellenistic peristyle for its construction, but rather on the 'opera' style of construction seen on Delos and elsewhere.[239] Indeed, given the temple's possible dedication to Dusares, among others, I suspect that the Qasr al-Bint's seating benches could well explain the '*theatron* of Dusares' inscription which has thus far yet to be securely identified with a structure.[240] It is worth noting that similar theatre-like constructions can be seen in other Nabataean temples and sites such as at Si'a, even referred to in Nabataean by the construction *ty'tr'*,[241] and over the way in the Great Temple in Petra itself. An exedra in the western end of the temenos appears to have been dedicated to the co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.[242]

For our purposes, the Qasr al-Bint's most interesting aspect is its courtyard, bounded by a monumental archway connecting it with the Colonnaded Street, in its excavators' own words, "*at the convergence of the main caravan roads leading to the city centre*."[243] A parallel for this archway in terms of size, decoration, alignment and context, may be found in the Eastern Market Gate of the Temple of Jupiter Damascenus; it has consequently been argued that this courtyard likely fulfilled the same function as the outer court of the Damascus temple and the first of the four courtyards of the Temple in Jerusalem: i.e., the temple courtyard here in Petra acted as a market.[244] This conclusion is supported by Parr, who additionally notes that this temenos gate may well be significantly later than the rest of the complex, and theorises it to overlie an older monumental entrance to the temenos,[245] although Alpass disputes the existence of an earlier portal.[246] The Qasr al-Bint temenos is one of the largest open spaces in Petra, and is close to one of the main gates of the city at the end of the main axial thoroughfare; however, it is not on the same scale as comparable temples such as Bel at Palmyra, on account of the site's restrictive

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[238] See for instance McKenzie (1990), pp. 135-138; compare Parr (2007), pp. 289-291.

[239] Freyberger (1998), pp. 6-18.

[240] Parr (2007), pp. 286 & 289. While he avoids an attribution to Dusares, Zayadine's response to Parr's various remarks is worth noting. See Larché, F. and Zayadine, F. (2003), "The Qasr al-Bint of Petra" in *Petra Rediscovered*, pp. 200-1.

[241] Segal (2013), p. 314, cf. ibid., pp. 211-2.

[242] See Augé, C., Renel, F., Borel, L. and March, C. (2002), "New Excavations in the Qasr al-Bint Area at Petra," in *ADAJ* 46 (2002), pp. 309-13.

[243] Larché and Zayadine (2003), p. 199.

[244] Freyberger (1998), p. 13.

[245] Parr (2007), p. 295.

[246] Alpass (2013), p. 56.

topography. That the Qasr al-Bint was a site of, or involved with, trade, is supported by its proximity to the extensive open areas of the 'Markets', as noted by the excavators.[247]

However attractive this proposition is, I am not actually convinced that it was in fact involved in trade to any noteworthy degree. If nothing else, with no monumental distinction between an inner and outer temenos,[248] one must presume that the temenos gate at the end of the Colonnaded Street marked the transition between sacred and profane ground. The excavators' appeal to the traditional Market relies on old and discounted attributions, as we have seen above with the 'Lower Market' *paradeisos*. The Colonnaded Street certainly was a major thoroughfare, but the Qasr al-Bint caps it off; a northerly turn in front of the temenos gate is effectively a side-street and not a continuation of the monumental street, and there is no direct evidence from the excavation of the temenos to suggest that it was the site of trade in this manner. Besides, Alpass explains the strange orientation of the Qasr vis-à-vis the Colonnaded Street by proposing that the latter was a Roman-era imposition on the original northerly orientation of the former.[249] If nothing else, the temenos' extreme plan and layout discourages an immediate link to a Baetocaece-style fair, and even if one took place in Petra (as one might reasonably assume), there are other, better, areas for such to have taken place, most notably the Great Temple forecourt, which exhibits the commercial space the Qasr al-Bint's lacks, and the 'Upper Market' which, of the three traditional 'Markets', is both the one most likely to have actually been used in that capacity, and also that farthest away, its entrance lying a good 300 metres east back down the Colonnaded Street from the Qasr al-Bint's temenos gate. One can certainly imagine a fair with stalls lining the long *temenos* between the gate and the temple, but an imagination it must surely remain until some new evidence can show otherwise. It may well have had a role in the network of trust, but this cannot presently be shown.

There is one additional element in the Qasr al-Bint temenos worthy of mention – a fourth temple, generally known as the Small Temple (Gazetteer, 32; Fig. 15), nestled into the south-eastern corner just south of the temenos gate.[250] This temple was excavated by Reid, who determined that it was dedicated to

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[247] Larché and Zayadine (2003), p. 199.
[248] Unlike at Damascus and Jerusalem.
[249] Alpass (2013), p. 56.
[250] The distance between the two is on the order of 35 metres. See Segal (2013), no. 86, pp. 314-5.

the Roman Imperial Cult;[251] its presence here is unsurprising given the importance and centrality of the temenos. What is most interesting to us is the large quantity of marble utilised in its decoration, which we shall turn to very shortly. The Small Temple was, curiously, raised high on a podium beneath which ran a canal of some description linking in with Petra's main water management systems.[252] It likely had its own small forecourt or plaza integrating it into the series of courtyards around the Colonnaded Street.[253] That it seems to have adhered far more to Roman architectural characteristics than Nabataean should be unsurprising, given its function. Given the presence of limestone and marble-clad basins added to the design approximately midway through the building's use – and the find of a single tantalising piece of lead piping, the excavators suspect it may have been adapted with aspects of Serapis-cult worship, especially after that god became bound up in worship of the Imperial Cult under the reigns of Septimius Severus, Commodus and Caracalla.[254]
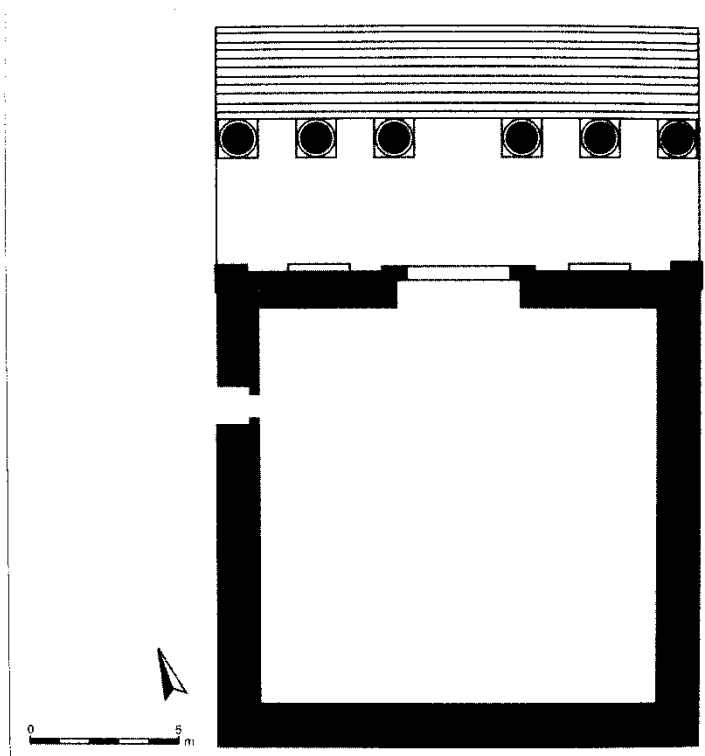
Fig. 15: A plan of the Small Temple at Petra (Gazetteer, 32).

The Small Temple itself was single-roomed, and 14.62 metres square,[255] with the frontal hexastyle colonnade taking its platform to 20.8 metres in length.[256] It was raised high above the surrounding precinct, to a floor level 4.5 metres above the surround.[257] A lamp fragment in the platform fill allowed the excavators to present a *terminus post quem* of some point between "*the early first century CE to somewhere around the year 70.*"[258] This

[251] See Reid (2003).
[252] Ibid., p. 82 – "*Outside the northwest corner of the building there is evidence of canalization* [sic] *that extends under the building in the form of a stone-lined channel.*"
[253] Segal (2013), p. 314.
[254] Reid (2003), pp. 178-180.
[255] Ibid, p. 64.
[256] Segal (2013), p. 314.
[257] Reid (2003), p. 65.
[258] Ibid., p. 97.

would broadly fit with the date for the annexation of Nabataea by Rome in 106, although this is quite an early lower bound on the date for its construction. Reid suspects that the temple indeed predates the annexation.[259] It is worth remembering that Petra was undoubtedly under the influence, to some degree, of Rome well before the formal annexation. Further, we have evidence of at least two Imperial Cult temples without the formal bounds of the Empire, in the form of the Imperial Cult temple attested at Vologesias in the Second Century AD,[260] and the possible presence of an Imperial Cult building of some description in distant Muziris,[261] both of which we shall come to in the next Part.

If the Small Temple indeed predated the Roman annexation, it is possible that its construction was backed or instigated by the Nabataean kings as a show of loyalty to Rome. Regardless, once built, it is potentially an example of a temple serving an expatriate community in the role of a networking temple. It is difficult to imagine that there was not a Roman trading community of some stripe in Petra given its importance on the Incense Road. If nothing else, the involvement of Romans in the Small Temple's construction would seem to be a given, as it required direct access to the internal Roman marble market.

3.2.4   Material

Its impressive architectural remains notwithstanding, finds and other evidence from three of Petra's temples are of particular importance to our own investigation. We have already touched upon the proposed chronologies for the three main temples; they all point to the urbanisation and rapid expansion – at least in terms of permanent architecture – in the First Century BC; a process which continued well into the First Millennium AD and, despite the traumatic earthquake of 363 AD, did not stop even then. This trend can also be observed at other sites in the Roman East; we have already seen this trend at work in Hatra, for instance.

Regardless of the Great Temple's ultimate purpose, it has to be said that this is a religious structure which underwent a radical transformation of use, even if it retained some degree of cult function (which it appears to have done). Of note from the Great Temple Sanctuary are the Asian elephant column capitals

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[259] Ibid.
[260] *PAT* 1062 = *SEG* 7, 135 = *IPSC* G16, after Matthews (1984), pp. 166-7. Not yet in *IGLS*.
[261] See Tomber (2008), p. 148.

mentioned above, which suggest at least passing Nabataean contacts with south and south-east Asia.[262] But what should interest us more is the truly vast range of small finds from the site, including figurines, cooking wares, *unguentaria*, over 500 coins and a similar number of lamps,[263] all of which suggest that it was a highly active site; indeed, it seems that the lower temenos was used as a marketplace or agora of some description.[264]

Either way, what we are dealing with here is a temple which was quite literally converted for, among others, commercial use, in the form of the market we can presume to have taken place in the forecourt (and also the shops in the façade). This is an integration of market and temple; of cultic and commercial space. It bears mentioning that the Great Temple Sanctuary was the last major open space before the temenos gate of the Qasr al-Bint capped off the Colonnaded Street, marking the final transition from secular to sacred ground.[265]

When the Temple of the Winged Lions collapsed in the 363 earthquake, much of the building's fittings, contents and decorations were preserved, as well as much of those in the outbuildings and other elements of its complex. Consequently, its excavators were afforded one of the most wide-ranging collections of undisturbed finds in Petra.[266] Most striking are finds of Egyptian faience fragments and a funerary fragment from Athribis, also in Egypt,[267] and an ivory wand with a female figure from south-eastern Asia, attesting to far-reaching trade links to both east and west.[268] The excavators also discovered evidence of numerous workshops supporting not only the temple's immediate cultic activities, but also a trade in souvenirs, religious artefacts, "*portable altars*" and even bronze busts of strikingly high quality (although not entirely honest construction),[269] all purposefully "*for export*".[270] Indeed, the extent and variety of the workshops is such that the excavators expect that "*the temple could probably have sustained itself*

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[262] See above.

[263] Joukowsky (2003), p. 220. By comparison, this is more than twenty-seven times the number of Greco-Roman coins found at the comparable site of the Great Temple in Philadelphia, and these were of greater variety of values than those in Philadelphia. See Koutsoukou, A., Russel, K. W., Najjar, M and Momani, A. (1997), *The Great Temple of Amman: the Excavations*, American Centre of Oriental Research, Amman, pp. 24-8.

[264] In this way the temple and its plan echoes somewhat the layout of the *bouleterion* and North Agora at Aphrodisias in Caria; see Raja (2012), Fig. 4 & pp. 30-7.

[265] See Figure 11, p. 135.

[266] See Hammond (2003).

[267] Ibid., p. 229.

[268] Graf and Sidebotham (2003), p. 71, fig. 50.

[269] Hammond (2003), p. 227 explains that they were hollow-cast in bronze with separate bases and lead inserts – and that they were likely sold by weight in bronze, thereby allowing them to be sold at a significant markup.

[270] Ibid.

financially without difficulty."[271] It seems likely that the extraordinary variety of "*well-sculpted*" busts discovered in the temple represented a variety of donors along the lines of those attested in inscriptions from, for instance, the Temple of Bel at Palmyra.[272] A great variety of imported Roman ceramics, including lamps and at least one *unguentarium* suggest strong commercial links with the rest of the Roman empire.[273] It is also worth pointing out the significant amount of marble discovered both in the Temple itself and paving its courtyard: there is no native marble within a significant distance of Petra, and all marble there must necessarily have been imported long-distance over land. While we are not at present in a position to say where the marble in this temple came from, its presence in such quantities at this temple, of all temples, indicates that the Temple of the Winged Lions was a direct beneficiary of long-distance trade.

In her excavation report and analysis of the Small Temple, Reid provides a valuable pool of evidence in the form of the marble fragments recovered from the temple.[274] It is worth noting not only the proximity of Petra's Imperial Cult temple to the city's centres of religion and commerce,[275] but also its adornment in more than a metric ton of imported Anatolian and Balkan marble; Reid estimates there to have been as much as four tons used in the temple's final construction,[276] from as far afield as Luna, Marmara, Thasos and Penteli.[277] Despite the lack of marble quarries anywhere near Petra,[278] the Small Temple is not unique in its marble discoveries; indeed, large quantities of marble are known to have been used in the construction of the Temple of the Winged Lions, the Southern/Great Temple, the Qasr al-Bint and the Garden complex.[279] However, that such a (proportionally) large quantity of *specifically Roman* marble was used in the Small Temple *is* noteworthy; the isotopic analysis indicating that it originated from Greece or Anatolia makes this marble of direct interest for our purposes, as during this time, the Roman marble trade was under direct Imperial control via the *ratio marmorum*.[280] Whoever sponsored the

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid. For the Palmyra inscriptions, see above, pp. 118-20.
[273] Hammond (2003), pp. 228-9.
[274] Reid (2005), Ch. 4, pp. 113-148.
[275] A common factor in the placement of Imperial Cult sites in cities; see Reid (2005), pp. 153-4, for instance.
[276] Reid (2005), pp. 49-50.
[277] Ibid., pp. 202-4.
[278] The nearest are in Anatolia, over 1,000 kilometres away (see Reid (2003), p. 49).
[279] See *Petra Rediscovered.*
[280] On this, see for instance Fant, J. C. (1988), "The Roman Emperors in the Marble Business: Capitalists, Middlemen or Philanthropists?", in Herz, N. and Waelkens, M. (eds.) (1988), *Classsical Marble: Geochemistry, Technology, Trade*, NATO ASI Series153, Kluwer, Dordecht, pp. 147-58. See also Fischer, M. L. (1998), *Marble Studies: Roman Palestine and the Marble Trade*, Xenia 40, Universitätsverlag Konstanz, Konstanz.

construction of the Temple must therefore have been able to command access to the tightly-controlled internal Imperial marble market.

Although her own analysis has much merit, Reid overreaches in her discussion of the relationship between the Imperial Cult and commerce.[281] Here, she relies on Kraybill's misjudged and virtually unreadable exploration of the role of the Imperial Cult,[282] in which he vastly overstates its levels of rigidity, organisation, integration and hold on commercial activities across the Empire.[283] This works against Reid's conclusions regarding the marble here, but since her recourse to Kraybill is intended to bolster rather than underpin her argument, it does not wholly vitiate her conclusions. Appealing to the Imperial Cult is not required to tie the Small Temple into empire-wide commerce.

That Petra is entirely landlocked and 100 km from the nearest navigable water is worth reiterating in light of the distance this marble would have needed to come. The Small Temple marble, whichever of the quarries it comes from, would in fact have made a 160 km overland journey from Gaza (or 240 from Caesarea; to imagine it reaching Petra from 'Aila would entail a ludicrously convoluted journey).[284] Marble was often cut at least crudely prior to transport;[285] given that the majority of the marble found at the Small Temple was in the form of *crustae* slabs, it makes sense for these to have been carried pannier-style by camels, with the slabs slung along the animals' flanks. It is likely that these camels will not have been greatly encumbered, although for a shortish distance of less than 200 km, a round figure of approximately 200 kg each is by no means unreasonable.[286] Given that four tonnes, give or take, of marble is estimated to have been used, about twenty camel-loads would account for the entirety of the marble used in the construction of the Small Temple. This is a small number given the size of the caravans we know to have been in use, which often comprised thousands of animals.[287] Of course, there is no direct evidence for the means by which this marble came to Petra; however, based purely on these figures, it is likely that it was a

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[281] We examine here Reid (2005), pp. 184-188.
[282] See, with great reservations, Kraybill, J. N. (1996), *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Suppl. 132, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, pp. 123-41.
[283] See North, J. A. (2000), "Review Notice", in *Classical Review*, Vol. 50 (2000), pp. 324-5.
[284] This point is also made by Reid (2005), p. 121.
[285] Ibid., p. 144.
[286] See below, pp. 159-166.
[287] See for instance Graf and Sidebotham (2003).

single caravan which brought this marble to Petra. Thus encumbered, the journey from Gaza would have taken a week, allowing for a rest day before or after the crossing of the Wadi Araba was attempted.

It is suggested by the modifications to the Small Temple over time that it kept abreast of the evolution of the Imperial Cult into the Third Century. Reid argues that the local elites which in all probability backed and assisted in the erection of the Small Temple would have stood to gain, not only quite literally from its construction, but also from its presence in the city, both in its outward function as a centre for the Imperial Cult, and in the message and symbolism which it conveyed as both a Roman and as a specifically Imperial structure. That these individuals were also able to access the *ratio marmorum* speaks both to their influence and their loyalties. The relationships of commerce and networks of trust extended to the Emperor himself, and, as Reid says, "*the same economic ties that brought marble to Petra may have been able to bring in other goods, and also to bring trade items out of Petra to the wider empire as well.*"[288]

3.2.5 Conclusions

As a city with a history of long-distance trade, that Petra was a caravan city should by all rights be beyond doubt at this stage. That the city's great temples directly benefitted from this trade, and had a relationship with it, does require investigation, however. For instance, unlike Palmyra or most of the other major cities under consideration, Petra's main sanctuary (that of the Qasr-al-Bint) was not of the typical rectangular design, but necessarily constrained by the city's extreme topography. The relatively long, narrow sanctuary of the Qasr al-Bint does not fit the type of festival-hosting peribolos courts we see at Palmyra and elsewhere, for instance at Baetocaece or the Sanctuary of Shamash at Hatra. The discovery in the last few weeks of what appears to be a very large temenos temple to the north of central Petra could explain a great deal about the temples discussed above, including the absence of an obvious 'hosting' temple.[289]

As we have seen, most striking for our purposes are the market in the Great Temple, the marble remains from the Small Temple, and the commercial activities suggested at the Temple of the Winged

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[288] Reid (2005), p. 186.

[289] Parcak, S. and Tuttle, C. A. (2016), "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Discovery of a New Monumental Structure at Petra, Jordan, Using WorldView-1 and WorldView-2 Satellite Imagery", in *BASOR* 375 (May, 2016), pp. 35-51, which was published too late to incorporate into the main body of this thesis.

Lions. It is worth remembering the location of all three temples in Petra's topography: at the end of the Colonnaded Street at the heart of the city, "*at the convergence of the main caravan roads leading to the city centre.*"[290]

The Great Temple is essentially perplexing, but evidence from the site appears to indicate a concurrent use of the space for both religious and commercial purposes. The prevalence of theatre-like constructions in Nabataean religious architecture indicates that it may not have been a *bouleterion* at all. Even if it were, the concurrent use of the building's naos as a *bouleterion* does not necessarily mean that the building lost all cultic or religious use; the possible *bouleterion* in Dura-Europos displays a similar conjunction of concurrent civic and religious uses.[291] The huge amount of commercial finds from the forecourt strongly suggest that this was a site of commerce. Little of the evidence, it is true, points explicitly to long-distance trade, but the Asian elephant column capitals suggest more than merely local connections. The indications, then, are that it fulfilled the role of a hosting temple.

The Small Temple most strikingly showcases Petra's inclusion in the Roman sphere even before its outright incorporation into the Empire. It speaks to Petra's integration not only in terms of its mere existence, but also in terms of its emphatically Roman architecture and decoration, and its development as a cult structure in line with the evolution over time of the Imperial Cult. It is highly likely that the individuals who helped establish the Small Temple were the same individuals who would have had access to, and stood to profit from, any involvement in the *ratio marmorum*. All of this shows the interplay between the Small Temple and the world of explicitly long-distance trade: we have here an example of a temple structure enjoying a fundamental relationship (at a remove, granted, but still) with both Empire-wide trade and very local concerns of individual trading links and networks within and without the Empire. The Small Temple, in and of itself, was the direct cause of, and a beneficiary from, long-distance trade across both sea and land across the length and breadth of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Beyond this, the fact of its existence in the first place suggests above all that it was a crucial point in the burgeoning network of trust required to support long-distance trade through Petra.

The Temple of the Winged Lions is the site of some of Petra's most spatially-exotic finds, including artefacts from as far afield as Egypt and south-western Asia. This in and of itself suggests that the

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[290] Larché and Zayadine (2003), p. 199.
[291] Leriche (1999), esp. pp. 729-732.

temple's adherents entertained contacts through or relationships with Nabataean long-distance trade. It is clear from its remains that the Winged Lions temple was one of Petra's most prestigious; it also speaks to the long-distance contacts which existed between Egypt and Nabataea. That the temple was engaged in the creation, sale and export of high-end goods shows that it benefited from Petra's long-distance trade as a direct actor: a rare example of the first kind of temple trade identified in the introduction, in addition to any role it may have had in the network of trust between Nabataea and Egypt.

4. Trajectories

As the results of a recent United Nations study into the 'Silk Road' have shown, conceiving of a trade route as a 'route' *per se* is problematic at best – the map of the 'road' can instead best be described as a network riddling a belt across southward Asia between the Forty-Eighth and Twenty-Third parallels.[292] That said, one can speak of routes in generalised terms in the context of their termini and likely waypoints, although the itineraries of any two journeys will likely have differed, sometimes markedly.[293] This is why the routes shown in the following maps are shaded as well as indicated by their major waypoints.

As far as long-distance trade in the Roman Near East is concerned, five principal routes present themselves. Each of these is either outright demonstrated or strongly implied by the evidence we have, and as we shall see, each impinged to some degree upon the temples and sanctuaries of our region. The two most important of these from the Palmyrene perspective arise from the significant seaborne trade with India, and which is attested directly in the *Periplus*; these entered the Persian Gulf and Red Sea heading northwards.[294] Overland routes from southern Arabia and inner Asia are attested elsewhere.

These five broad routes comprise the principal axes for long-distance trade through the Roman Near East in our period. Trade with or via India in turn comprises the lion's share of Palmyra's trade; trade with Arabia in aromatics, and with China and the far east in goods such as silk, also factored in the region's long-distance trade, very much in that order.

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[292] See above all Williams, T. (2015), "Mapping the Silk Roads", in Walter and Ito-Adler (eds.), *The Silk Road*, pp.1-42.

[293] On this topic, see Singer's characterisation of the Incense Road below, pp. 155-6.

[294] See Raschke (1978), pp. 650-76. On the Gulf trade see for instance Potts, D. T. (1997), "The Roman Relationship with the Persicus sinus from the Rise of Spasinou Charax (127 BC) to the Reign of Shapur II (AD 309-379)", in Alcock (ed.), *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, pp. 89-107. On the Red Sea trade see for instance Sidebotham (2011; 1986). On trade with India see Tomber (2008; 2013).
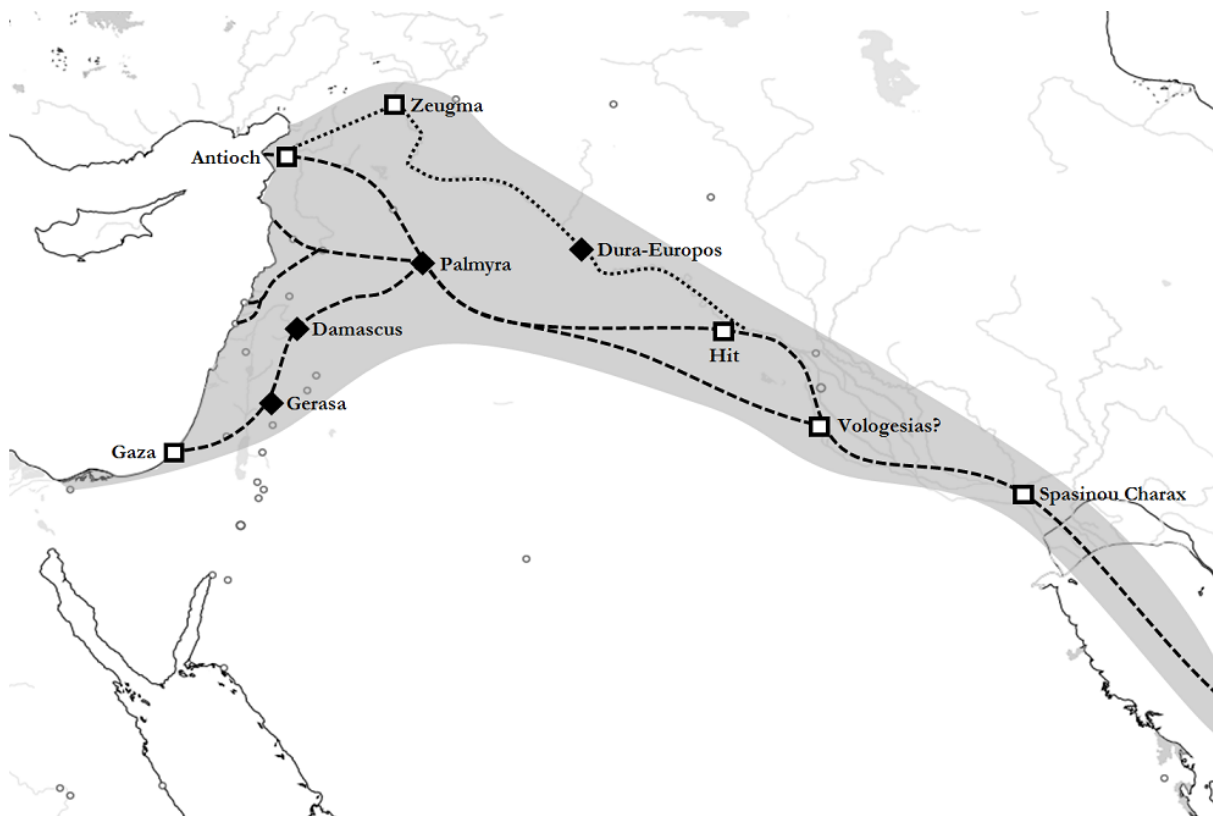
Map 2: The routes upriver from the Persian Gulf via Spasinou Charax. The dotted line indicates an outbound route from Antioch downriver via Zeugma, passing Dura-Europos. The dashed line indicates the main route via Vologesias.

4.1   The routes upriver from the Persian Gulf

These routes continue directly from the maritime spice trade with India, transhipping at Spasinou Charax (near modern-day Basra) and travelling northwards up the Euphrates. The Parthian route attested by Isidore meets the river at Zeugma and begins travelling downstream from there;[295] as the route involving the shortest overland transit between the river and Antioch, this route in reverse is favoured by scholars as the most likely natural route for Indian goods to the Mediterranean for most of Antiquity.[296] Seland suggests, based on considerable evidence (not least the monsoon cycle), that the trade reached its height between December and March, with goods arriving at Palmyra between February and May, and in the wider Roman Near East shortly thereafter.[297] Goods travelling this route will be broadly similar – but not, perhaps identical – to those travelling into Egypt via the much better-documented Red Sea route; we might therefore expect spices including pepper and cinnamon, ivory, aromatics, precious woods and

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[295] Isidore, *Parthian Stations*, 1.
[296] See for instance Young (2001), Ch. 5, pp. 187-200. See now Seland (2015).
[297] Seland (2015), pp. 122-3. As we shall see in the next Part, this is broadly borne out by the dateable components of the caravan inscriptions.

stones, and silk; from Rome we might expect "*pearls, purple, clothing, wine, dates, gold and slaves*", among other items and products.[298]

A branch from this route led across the Syrian Desert via Palmyra – and thence to Damascus, the Decapolis, Emesa and the Mediterranean beyond – at the very least during the period of our investigation. If the Assyrian tablet referring to the spring at Palmyra is to be believed, it existed for a long time beforehand as well.[299] Quite where the Palmyrene route left the Euphrates valley in our period is unclear; the best candidate is Hit, above which the Euphrates ceases to be easily navigable going upstream; Dura-Europos and 'Ana are other options.[300] An inscription from the Agora at Palmyra suggests a direct route went between Palmyra, Vologesias, and Spasinou Charax, avoiding Hit and Dura entirely.[301] We generally lack direct evidence of the trade westward from Palmyra, although it has to have existed; Poidebard identified infrastructure between Palmyra and Damascus and Bostra from the air,[302] and Palmyrene inscriptions along the road to Damascus, together with Galen's witnessing of caravans on the Phoenician coast, support the logical notion that trade moved on from Palmyra to the coast.[303] Given the ubiquity of Palmyrene evidence, and a comparative lack of indication of the involvement of others along this branch, at least in our period, it appears to have been a Palmyrene creation.[304]

4.2   The routes overland from the Persian Gulf

As with the upriver routes, these routes effectively continue the maritime trade routes with India, disembarking this time at Gerrha, on the Arabian coast opposite Bahrain, and travelling inland to 'Aila on the Gulf of Aqaba, or via Petra, the Nabataean capital, to the Mediterranean (probably the port of Gaza). These routes have been considered improbable by some, but attested by both Strabo and Pliny,[305] and via archaeological evidence from along the route,[306] particularly from the Severan period.[307] While evidence is

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[298] Potts (1997), pp. 97-103. On the 'Silk Road', see below, p. 157-8.
[299] See Eisser and Lewy (1935), no. 303.
[300] All three are attested in the *Parthian Stations*; on this subject see Gawlikowski, M. (1983.a), "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", in *Syria* 60 (1983), pp. 53-68. See also Seland (2015).
[301] *IGLS* XVII.246 = *PAT* 1412 = *Inv.* X.112; see below, p. 235.
[302] Poidebard (1934), pp. 34-67.
[303] On Palmyrene inscriptions from near Damascus, see Millar (1993), pp. 298-9. For Galen, see Galen, *De Simp. Med. Temp.* in Kuhn (ed.) *Opera Omnia*, pp. 215-6.
[304] See below, pp. 101-3.
[305] Strabo *Geog.* XVI, 3.3; Pliny *NH* VI.32.
[306] See Segal (2013), no. 87, pp. 315-7.
[307] See Young (2001), pp. 122-6.
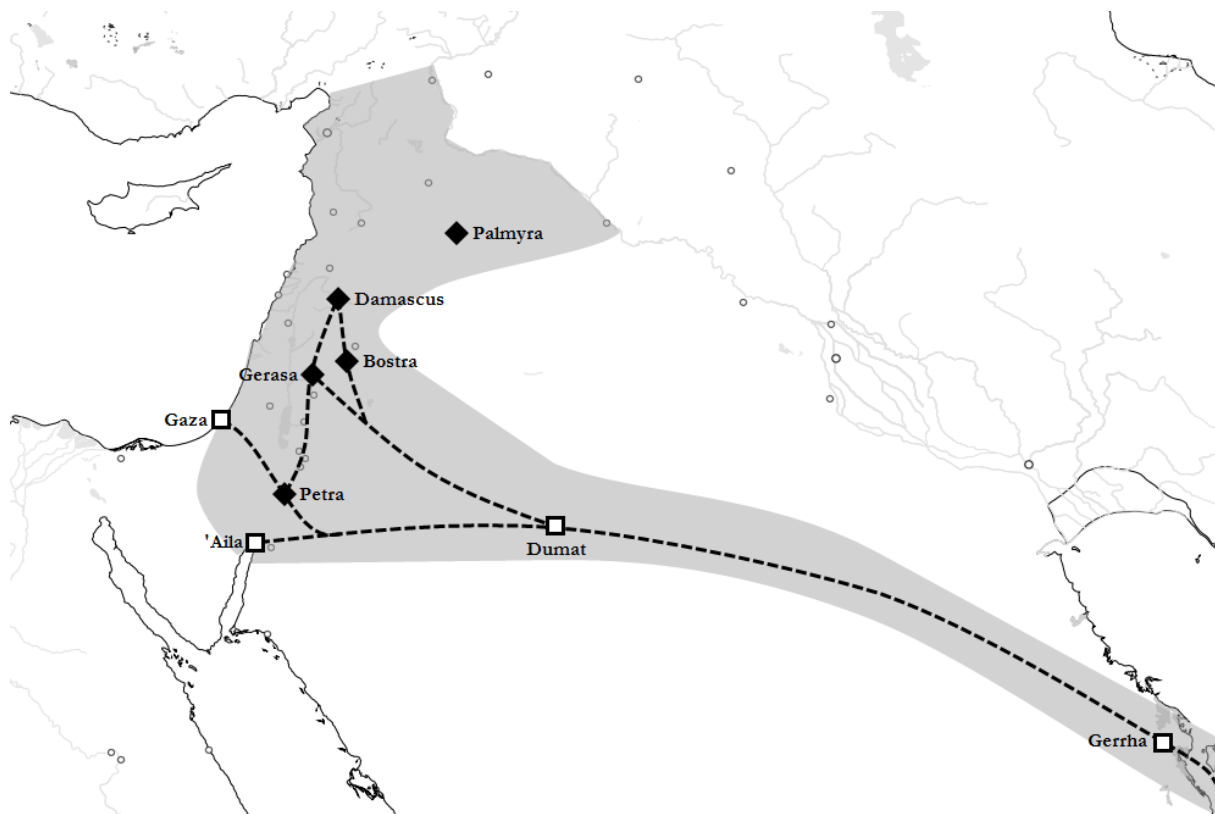
Map 3: The routes overland from the Persian Gulf via Gerrha and Dumat.

somewhat limited, it is a potential alternative to the Euphrates valley routes if they were disrupted,[308] and also to the Arabian incense route.[309] As with the Palmyrene branch of the Euphrates route, this route appears to have been a Nabataean or Gerrhaean creation rather than the most natural of routes (a natural route would have avoided the an-Nafud Desert). Nevertheless, it continued to be used well into Roman times, as the fort at Dumat (Jawf) indicates.[310] The goods travelling this route will have been broadly similar to those travelling along the upriver route from the Persian Gulf, perhaps with a higher proportion of aromatics and incense over land and sea from southern Arabia.

4.3 The Red Sea routes – the "Spice Route"

As with the Persian Gulf routes, these continue the Indian maritime trade, this time making landfall either on the Arabian or Egyptian sides of the Red Sea; it is likely they will have been active at a similar time to

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[308] This is a point made, for instance, by Young (2001), pp. 125-6.
[309] See for instance Groom, N. (1981), *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade*, Longman, London, pp. 194-8.
[310] See for instance Speidel, M. P. (1987), "The Roman Road to Dumata (Jawf in Saudi Arabia) and the Frontier Strategy of Praetensio Colligare", in *Historia* 36 (1987), pp. 215-9; see also discussion by Young (2001), pp. 122-6.
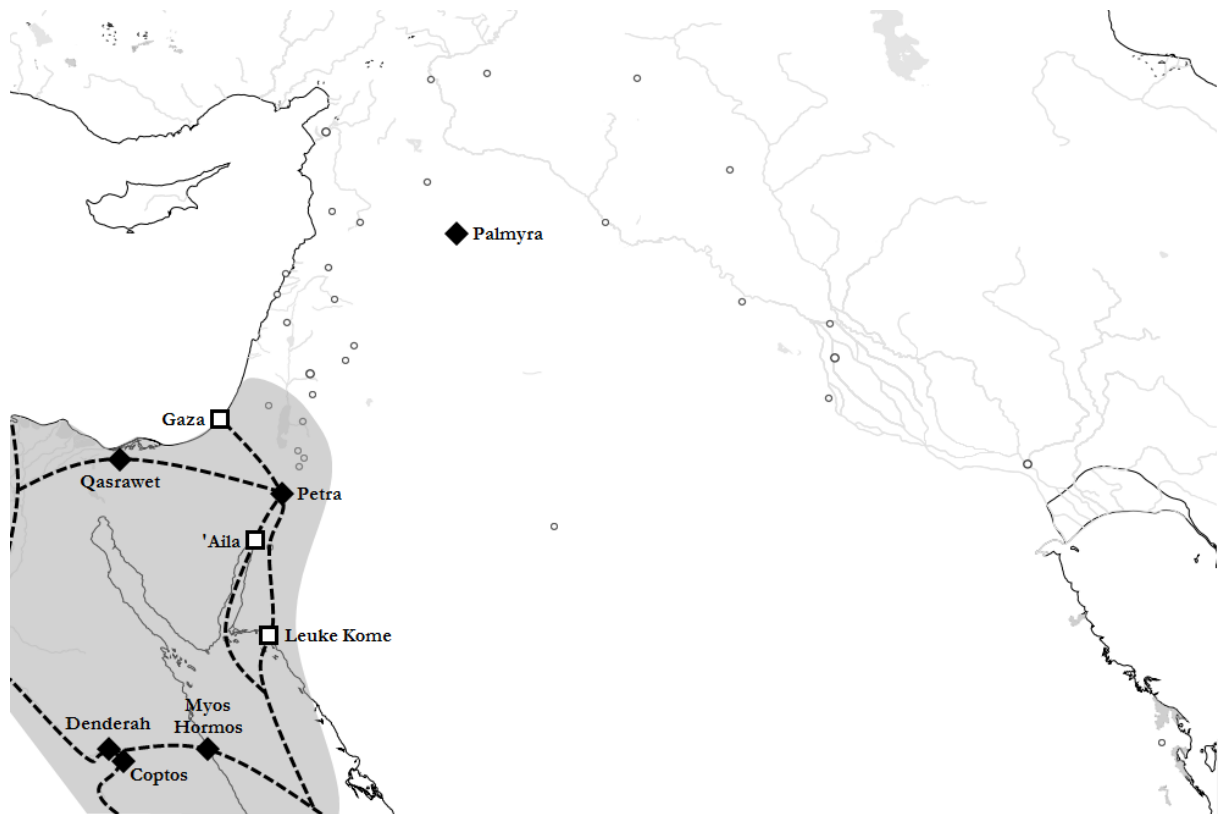
Map 4: The Red Sea routes via Myos Hormos, 'Aila and Leuke Kome. Berenike is well to the south of this map.

the Gulf maritime routes above.[311] It is also probable that at least some of the Red Sea trade was in incense from the heel of Arabia.[312] Owing in large part to the desiccating conditions of the Egyptian desert, most of our evidence comes from ports on the Egyptian side,[313] including Berenike and Myos Hormos – and, of course, the *Periplus* itself.[314] Having landed on the Egyptian coast, the goods made their way across the desert to take ship again down the Nile to Alexandria.[315] Evidence from the Arabian side chiefly relates to 'Aila and Leuke Kome,[316] whence goods travelled overland to Petra and Gaza; there is increasing evidence from southern Arabia too.[317] As we shall see, there also appears to be overland trade across the land bridge at Sinai, between Egypt and Nabataea/Roman Arabia.[318]

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[311] See above; see also Seland (2015), pp. 122-3.
[312] See above all Peacock, D. and Williams, D. (eds.) (2007), *Food for the Gods: New Light on the Ancient Incense Trade*, Oxbow, Oxford.
[313] See Sidebotham (1986; 2011); see also Young (2001), Ch. 2, pp. 27-89; Tomber (2008), Ch. 3, pp. 57-87
[314] *Periplus Maris Erythraei.*
[315] The Muziris papyrus explicitly provides for the transhipment of the goods from India at Coptos (*Verso*, ll. 3-4). See Rathbone (2000), p. 40.
[316] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 94-6; see below, pp. 259-63.
[317] See for instance Peacock and Williams (eds.) (2007). See now McLaughlin (2014), pp. 28-58.
[318] See above, pp. 129-30.

The Red Sea trade picked up markedly during our period, with both demand and investment growing, perhaps due to favourable geopolitical circumstances.[319] The Egyptian side appears to have been significant throughout our period, and to have grown as tensions between Rome and Parthia imperilled the Persian Gulf, while the route from 'Aila and Leuke Kome was Nabatean-controlled and may have waned towards the end of our period.[320] For most of our period, these routes appear to have been how the vast majority of Indian goods entered the Roman market.[321] As we shall see, there is evidence to suggest significant Palmyrene and Nabataean involvement in the Red Sea; the manner of their involvement here perhaps suggests models for similar involvement elsewhere.[322]

The goods travelling this route are well-attested. On the Arabian side, incense and aromatics from southern Arabia dominated; those in Egypt appear to have been much more heterogeneous. As we have seen, the Alexandrian Tariff provides an indication of the taxable goods travelling this route, including spices, ivory, hides, and silks, as well as more esoteric items such as big cats and Indian eunuchs.

4.4 The routes along the spine of Arabia – the "Incense Road"

Of primary importance to Nabatea, these routes ran between the heel of Arabia and the Mediterranean ports at Gaza and Caesarea, and seem to have carried the vast majority of the incense trade, via Medina, Petra and Nabataea.[323] This route is attested extensively by Pliny, who goes so far as to relate a reasonably complete itinerary, including the distances and customs en route,[324] and by Strabo before him.[325] It appears to have maintained well into or even beyond our period in spite of the existence of the maritime trade from beyond the heel of Arabia into the Red Sea ports, and to have existed well before our period, being attested at the time of Alexander the Great's invasion.[326] The route co-existed with the seaborne

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[319] See for instance Sidebotham (2011).
[320] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 94-6.
[321] See for instance Tomber (2008), pp. 57-87.
[322] See above, pp. 129-30 & below, pp. 259-63.
[323] See above all (albeit dated) Groom (1981); Young (2001), pp. 90-135; also Peacock and Williams (eds.) (2007); McLaughlin (2010), pp. 61-81; now idem (2014), pp. 28-58.
[324] Pliny *NH*, XII, 32; see above, p. 121.
[325] See Strabo, *Geog.* XVI, 4.2-3 for a description of the region and XVI.4.4 for a description of the route. It bears mentioning that it is likely Pliny relied at least in part on Strabo's work as a source for his own writing.
[326] Plut. *Vit. Alex.* XXV.6.
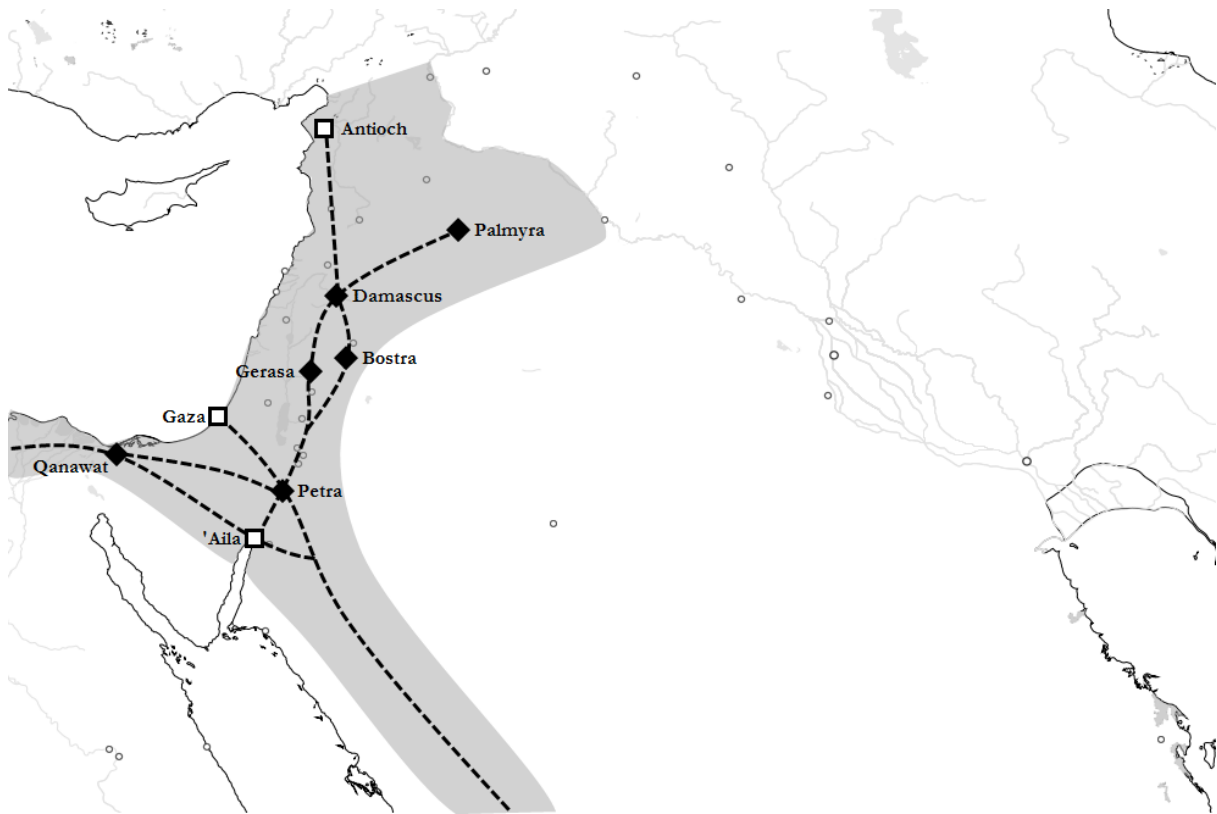
Map 5: The routes along the spine of Arabia via Petra, from Sheba, far to the south of this area at the heel of Arabia.

routes into the Red Sea, and extensive evidence from the southern end of the route suggests a protracted presence of people from the Roman world, including both Nabataeans and Palmyrenes, as we shall see.[327]

Singer's characterisation of the Incense Road applies to any overland trade route, and I cannot improve upon it: "*Although Pliny talked about 'the high road' leading north, there was never simply one great 'Frankincense Route' as is popularly imagined, but rather a complex system of paths, with subsidiary tracks leading from the main roads to various stopping-off points, where goods could be bought and sold, and shelter and food obtained.*"[328] It is in this way that the other trade routes we discuss must also be conceived.

During our period it appears a branch of this route developed via Gerrha, as with the overland trade from the Gulf in Map 3 above.[329] In this case, it seems that the incense route took a route west from Gerrha via Dumat northwest into the Decapolis via the Wadi Sirhan and Bostra, and that this route developed during the First Century AD. It is proposed that this branch developed as a result of the

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[327] Tomber (2008), pp. 100-8; see above, pp. 129-30 & below, pp. 259-63. See also Peacock and Williams (eds.) (2007); Groom (1981), pp. 165-213.
[328] Singer (2007), p. 11.
[329] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 109-12 & 119-21.
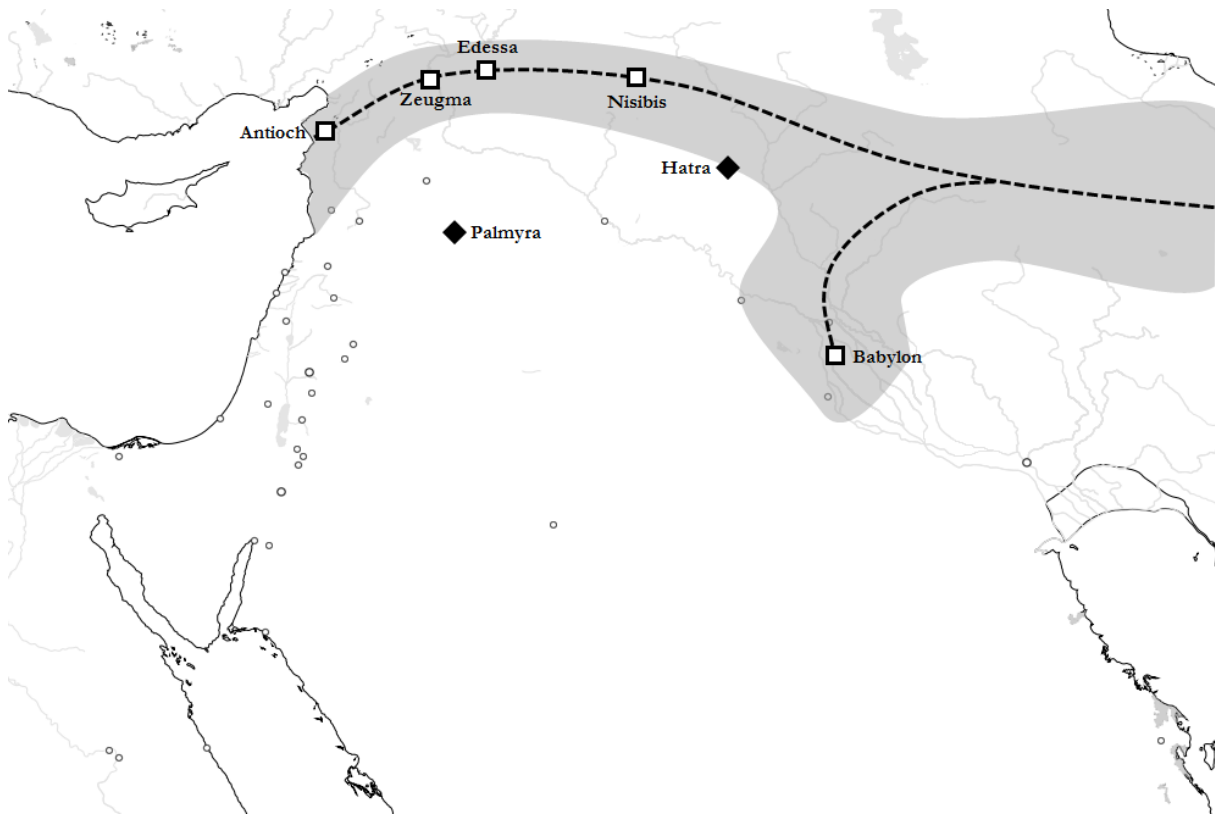
Map 6: The routes overland from Asia – the so-called "Silk Road" to Antioch via northern Mesopotamia.

increasing prosperity of the Decapolis, but that it did not entirely edge out the old route via Petra to Gaza, which would still have been viable.[330] The routes from Petra to Gaza and Bostra, and from Dumat to both Gaza and Bostra, are littered with Nabataean caravanserais.[331] The roads along this route, such as the King's Road and Via Nova Traiana, also appear to have been used by merchants conducting overland trade from Egypt; there are Nabataean caravanserais in Sinai,[332] and a papyrus from a legionnaire at Bostra describing Egyptian merchants arriving there daily by road from Pelusium.[333] The main commodity along this route was of course incense, although there may also have been some trade in other goods and precious metals.

4.5   The Asian overland route – the "Silk Road"

The final route we shall consider is by far the most storied: the Silk Road deconstructed by Raschke and then dismissed by Ball as a specious Victorian "*myth*".[334] Suffice to say, Ball is almost certainly wrong.

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[330] Ibid., p. 111.
[331] Ibid.; see also for instance Zayadine, F. (1992), "L'espace urbain du grand Pétra: les routes et les stations caravanières", in *ADAJ* 36 (1992), pp. 217-39.
[332] See above, pp. 129-30; see also Segal (2013), pp. 281-6.
[333] *P.Mich.* 466; see also Young (2001), p. 120.
[334] Raschke (1978), pp. 606-37; Ball (2000), pp. 138-9.

While the traditional exaggerated conception of the Silk Road maintains almost nowhere today,[335] it is clear that overland trade did make its way across central Asia in our period, entering our region via the Iranian plateau and central and northern Mesopotamia.[336] It is now recognised that most of the goods formerly thought to have been carried overland were in fact carried by sea on the routes from India discussed above, although some goods, silk included, did make their way over land.

As well as inscriptions from Palmyra attesting to overland trade with cities in Mesopotamia,[337] Talmudic sources describe the involvement of Mesopotamian Jews in the trade in silk from overland routes in Asia,[338] Chinese sources demonstrate an awareness of Roman goods travelling eastwards through Mesopotamia,[339] and Ptolemy describes the journey eastwards of Maes Titianus in the late First Century AD.[340] Pliny also attests that "*cardamom also grows in the country of the Medes*",[341] (i.e. ancient Iran) whereas in fact it was, and remains, an Indian product. That he would say it was Medean would only make sense if some reached Rome via Iran. While we would naturally expect silk to have been a major commodity along this route, there was trade in precious stones and materials as well;[342] there would presumably also have been goods from India of similar nature to those seen on the maritime routes – we have seen the suggestion of spices in Pliny.

5. Logistics of Overland Trade

As we have seen, owing in large part to the majority of the evidence hailing from Roman Egypt, most prior studies on long-distance trade in our region and period have focused on maritime trade. As a result, the logistics of the sea route to and from India are reasonably well-established, even if the particulars remain elusive.[343] However, as our region is almost exclusively terrestrial, it behoves us to look at the logistics of land-based trade instead. How was it organised, and how did it work?

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[335] The most glaring exceptions to this trend usually have other motives – see above all *AAAS* 42 (1996) on Palmyra and the Silk Road. Those engaged in 'Silk Road studies' these days tend to prefer to talk of 'silk roads' in the plural, and often without capitals; see for instance Williams (2015).
[336] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 190-1; McLaughlin (2010), Ch. 4, pp. 83-109.
[337] Such as Seleucia, Babylon, Vologesias and Charax; see below, III.5.1, pp. 217-9.
[338] *Midrash*, Samuel 10.3; see for instance McLaughlin (2010), pp. 92-5.
[339] *Hou Hanshu*, 88.12, discussed in McLaughlin (2010), pp. 106-7.
[340] Ptolemy, *Geog.* I.11.6-7.
[341] Pliny, *NH*, XII.29.50. His attestation of it growing in Arabia likewise attests to the maritime spice route.
[342] See Raschke (1978).
[343] See for instance Tomber (2008).

This is a rather murkier topic. Overland long-distance trade in our period was the preserve of the camel caravan, but more than a simple train of animals was required. The organisation, management and running of the trade hinged upon a number of factors, including the geography, the climate (both meteorological and political), and the all-important network of trust. The logistics of overland trade are therefore intrinsic to those of the network of trust. We shall examine these with a view to forming a picture of how the long-distance trade actually functioned – this will give us indications of the roles institutions such as temples will likely have played in it.

We shall shortly examine the wherewithal which long-distance trade required; fundamental, however, was its main means of transport, the humble camel, and it is this which we shall consider first.

5.1   The camel as a beast of burden

Fig. 16: A funerary bust of an unknown man from Palmyra, 150-60 AD, in the collection of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

While the status of the most-common ancient beast of burden, at least as far as trade goes, belonged to the ubiquitous donkey,[344] the camel was undoubtedly the preferred creature in the Roman Near East for long-distance trade.[345] Despite, as we shall see, the greater cost of the camel, it was consistently viewed as the best and most versatile option for over-land haulage. Indeed, such was its status that it has been seen as virtually synonymous with Asian overland trade for much of recorded history; in our period it was seen on Palmyrene and Roman graves as indicators of involvement in long-distance trade; see Figure 16 to the left. Of course, *dromedary* derives from the ancient Greek word δρόμος (*dromos*), meaning track or course.[346]

An understanding of camels' capabilities and requirements is required to understand the trade they facilitated. In the absence of a herd of live camels, care must be taken not to drive a caravan of desks

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[344] Wilson, R. T. (1984), *The Camel*, Longman, London, p. 22.
[345] Adams, C. (2007), *Land Transport in Roman Egypt*, OUP, Oxford, p. 111.
[346] *Camel*, on the other hand, is attested virtually unchanged (*gamal'*) from the earliest scripts.

across the Syrian steppe instead. Our task is complicated by the fact that scholars and ancient sources do not often distinguish between the one-humped dromedary, or Arabian camel (*Camelis dromedarius*), and the two-humped 'true' camel (*C. bactrianus*), or Bactrian – Pliny's *Natural History* is a notable exception.[347] Although there is evidence to suggest that the two were hybridised in the Roman period, it is not sufficient for us to assume the practice was widespread.[348] Wilson explains that, given that the two varieties of camel produce fertile hybrid offspring – and may therefore be treated as the same species – the distinction is maintained in the modern day merely by dint of "*established usage*".[349] As Sijpesteijn points out, one rather more prevailing difficulty is that the camel and the donkey were frequently convolved in ancient record-keeping;[350] sources that explicitly mention camels are therefore key.

It is unclear precisely when the camel was first domesticated. Wilson suggests that the first domestication took place in southern Arabia around the year 2000 BC and credits it with the creation of the incense road;[351] Irwin proposes that the Bactrian was first domesticated in Turkestan approximately a thousand years later, in turn crediting the Bactrian with the enablement of the silk road.[352] Either way, by our period, the camel had become part of the furniture of the Near East.[353]

5.1.1   Requirements

We should first consider the camel's requirements as a beast of burden.   The prevalence of the camel, and its preferential use in long-distance trade, was in no small part down to the animal's stamina when compared to the far more common – and cheaper – donkey. The camel requires, per mile, less water and fodder than the donkey but can carry more than twice as much; as a result, ancient merchants were able to control their costs in part by paying less overall for fodder and watering rights en route. Nevertheless, the costs involved could still be large.[354]

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[347] Pliny, *NH* 106.
[348] Potts, D. T. (2004), *Camel Hybridisation and the Role of Camelus bactrianus in the Ancient Near East*, in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 47 No. 2; pp. 143-165, Brill, Leiden.
[349] Wilson (1984), p. 48. This only maintains to a point: a Great Dane can carry a lot more than a Fox Terrier.
[350] Sijpesteijn (1987), pp. 51-2.
[351] Wilson (1984), pp. 5-7.
[352] Irwin (2010), p. 142.
[353] For a comprehensive history of the camel in human society, see above all Bulliet, R. (1990), *The Camel and the Wheel*, Columbia University Press, New York.
[354] The Palmyrene Tariff, for instance, stipulates a nominal per-head tax on camels, to cover the costs of grazing (ll. 89-92 & 233). Annual watering rights cost 800 denarii, as much as a camel at market (l. 88). See Matthews (1984), pp. 177 & 180.

In ancient times, as now, the camel was quite happily able to survive on little more than grazing and browsing on most terrains;[355] however, for working camels, a supplement of some description was required.[356] In view of that, it is likely that Adams' suggestion that camels were sometimes fed barley was down to this requirement for a high-energy supplement to their normal browse.[357] On average, the camel requires approximately 12 kilos of fodder per day;[358] allowing for variables such as work, conditions, quality of fodder, and so on. Study of papyrological and ostrakological records shows that in Roman Egypt, donkeys were given between 1/20,[359] and 1/6 of an *artaba* of fodder daily.[360] Through such an examination of the evidence, Adams demonstrates that camels were, on average, fed twelve 'bundles' of green fodder (hay) per day,[361] and that this was twice the feed for a donkey.[362] Quite how much a 'bundle' equalled is unclear.[363] Given these figures for donkeys' fodder, we can say that approximately between 2/20 and 2/6 of an *artaba* would have constituted a daily ration for a camel. This is a very wide range – a reminder of the difficulty of coming up with figures from ancient evidence, even for the sake of simplicity.

Wilson determined that the intake per hour ranges from a mere 94 grams for poor-quality fodder in hot temperatures, up to 1,254 grams for high-quality browse in cooler temperatures.[364] These figures are for the browse and not for fodder: we can assume that fodder provided by the ancient caravan leaders will generally have been of higher quality than the lowest-quality browse – and in any case, we have already shown that it is likely that our hypothetical camel would have been given a supplemental, possibly of barley, to complement its browse. If we assume a moderate to high quality of supplement,[365] a daily ration of between 1/10 and 1/6 of an *artaba* seems likely, based on our working above, especially if we consider that any amount of supplement provided would have been additional to the browse available en-route

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[355] Wilson R. T. (1984), *The Camel*, Longman Press, London, p. 105, table 3.3.

[356] Ibid, pp. 108-9.

[357] Adams (2007), p. 88; though see Wilson (1984), p. 115 on working camels fed supplementary barley – "*requires considerable time on range grazing*".

[358] Wilson (1984), p. 112.

[359] *P. Koln III* 161; assuming one *choinix* to be 1/40 of an *artaba* (after Duncan-Jones, R. (1976.b), '*The* choinix, *the* artaba *and the* modius', *ZPE* 21, pp. 43-52); see Adams (2007), p. 84 n. 62.

[360] *O. Bodl. II* 1739; this is a much larger quantity; presumably for either poor-quality fodder, or fodder in lieu of the normal browse.

[361] Adams (2007), p. 86.

[362] Ibid., p. 88.

[363] However, see Adams (2007), p. 84, n. 62.

[364] Wilson (1984), Tables 7.10 & 7.11, on p. 113.

[365] Given Wilson (1984), p. 115 – it is likely any working camels had a mixed supplement not simply consisting of barley, as such a supplement "*requires considerable time on range grazing*".

(particularly in the less extreme Syrian steppe). Given this range, it does not seem unreasonable to assume a volume of approximately one *artaba* per week as a camel's supplement.

As for water, the camel is more than capable of adapting to a long wait between watering, and is also capable of gaining a significant amount of water from the browse, especially in cooler months.[366]   In dry conditions, camels can often drink up to 60 litres every ten days, and a dehydrated camel up to 200 litres in one go.[367] Camels' blood cells and vessels are adapted to allow for such intakes, which would be lethal for other animals.[368] The hump is not used for water storage but is where body fat is concentrated, to prevent overheating; this doubles as an energy store when food is scarce. Water is stored in the flesh and bloodstream, and lost preferentially from tissue.[369] Obviously, access to water will depend as much on the route as the season, but a period of 3 to 4 days without water is not unreasonable, particularly for animals used to such conditions; they can go a similar period without food as well, if pressed.[370]

One other factor is the vast amount of salt which camels require; up to a kilogram a week.[371] This is normally gleaned from salt bush, camel-thorn and acacia in the regular browse, but a supplement may have been necessary on the move.[372] Wilson observes that even on a ration of 60 grams per day, most camels will become deficient on salt and begin to flag; camels given free access to salt will generally take approximately 120 grams per day, "*even when feeding on salt bush*".[373]

We can say, then, that our hypothetical camel will have required, on average, one *artaba* of supplemental fodder, and one kilogram (approximately half a *metron*, or 1/24 of an *artaba*) of salt,[374] per week, in addition to its normal graze (in the absence of which it would have required seventy-two

[366] Ibid, pp. 116 & 143.
[367] Ali, T. M. (1994), *A Manual for the Primary Animal Healthcare Worker*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Online: http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0690e/t0690e00.htm (accessed 07/12/2010); Chaper 7, Unit 61.
[368] Irwin (2010), pp. 19-21. This is thought to be an evolutionary adaptation to minimise the time spent at dangerous watering holes.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Irwin (2010), p. 19.
[371] This is not a typo. See for instance Ali (1994), Chapter 7, Unit 61.
[372] Irwin (2010), p. 17.
[373] Wilson (1984), p. 109.
[374] This would have cost between two and a half and one and a half obols, according to *P. Mich. Inv.* 657, published in Boak, A. E. R. (1937), "An Ordinance of the Salt Merchants", in *American Journal of Philology* 58, No. 2 (1937), pp. 210-9.

'bundles' of hay), and would have also required a large quantity of water on at least one, preferably three or four, days per week (although this need not have been of spectacular quality).[375]

5.1.2   Endurance

In his interpretation, Adams shows that the Diocletianic Edict of Maximum Prices assumed that "*the normal load for a camel was 600* Roman *pounds*", roughly equating to 180 kilograms in weight.[376] Sijpesteijn demonstrates that six *artabas* of grain (or about 186 kilograms) is indeed the average load for the camels attested in the Customs House archive.[377] Wilson cites a range of recommended carrying weights for the camel; these figures range between 80-220 kilograms,[378] the Diocletianic Edict's estimate of 600 Roman pounds falls within this range towards the upper end. Wilson's own recommended carrying weight is 140 kilograms, as an average of the figures provided for his routine for camels under load.[379]

That said, as for upper limits, Wilson observed Sudanese camels carrying in excess of 300 kilograms of grain over extended periods, and higher figures "*probably in excess of the camel's own body weight*".[380] Diodorus Siculus cites camels as being able to carry "*up to 900* [Roman] *pounds*".[381] Diodorus Siculus' figure is less than Potts' high figure of up to 500 kilograms for the Bactrian camel,[382] which is not vastly removed from Wilson's highest figure of 545 kilograms "*over short distances*".[383] One interesting fact identified by Sijpesteijn is that although there are many instances of donkeys being overloaded (presumably for short distances), there is only one instance in the Customs House records of camels carrying an obviously outsize load, whereby a pair of camels carried no less than 20 *artabas* (620 kilograms) of wheat between them over what both Sijpesteijn and Adams deduce was a relatively short distance.[384]

Evidence for the camel's rate of travel under burden comes to us in similar fashion to that for carrying capacity. Wilson states that camels regularly carrying heavy loads would be expected to keep a

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[375] Irwin (2010) notes that camels can happily drink water that is substantially saltier than seawater (p. 19).
[376] Adams, (2007), pp. 77-81.
[377] Ibid, p. 52.
[378] Wilson (1984), p. 151 and, separately, pp. 164-7.
[379] Ibid, p. 151.
[380] Ibid, p. 166.
[381] Diodorus Siculus 2.54.6, as in Adams (2007), p. 80 n. 51.
[382] Potts (2004), p. 155.
[383] Wilson (1984), p. 166.
[384] *P.Customs* 197; Sijpesteijn (1987), p. 54; Adams (2007), pp. 80-1.

pace of up to 25 kilometres per day,[385] although his first-hand study of the camel indicates a much higher rate of travel under favourable conditions. He cites camels that travel 160 kilometres in only 4 days, giving an average rate of 40 kilometres per day for a lightly-laden camel, and at 5 to 6 days, a speed of 27-32 kilometres per day for camels that were heavily laden and "*festooned like Christmas trees with various other bits of baggage*". [386] Wilson expects that "*good baggage camels*" given seven hours to march under a moderate to light burden could make 30 kilometres a day, and "*the very best up to 40 km*".[387] For journeys of any significant distance, he stresses the importance of allowing two days' rest for every five on the march;[388] with camels not allowed days of rest flagging and becoming truculent.

By way of ancient evidence for camels' journey times, one of the most interesting sources is Pliny's description of the incense road – a route 1,487 ½ Roman miles long broken up into 65 stages, with halts between.[389] If we assume that it was a day's travel, halt to halt, then we get a figure of 22.88 Roman miles, or 33.82 kilometres,[390] per day, which fits with Wilson's estimate above. Unfortunately, Pliny does not state quite how long this voyage takes; however, if we assume two days' rest for every five underway, then a single, one-way journey would have taken thirteen weeks.

Seland makes clear in his study of Palmyrene trade that patterns of travel in the region from later, better-documented periods, can give an impression as to the regularity and pattern of Palmyra's caravan trade.[391] The seasons would have dictated navigability of both the steppe and the Euphrates: the ground is wet and treacherous in winter, and spring floods made navigating the river very difficult, particularly upstream.[392] Adequate supply of browse and water was critical when moving a large mass of camels; in Ottoman times, the caravans which so enchanted the Victorian travellers and inspired tales of the Silk Road could be up to 5,000 camels strong, and there is nothing to suggest the Palmyrene caravans were not of comparable size.[393] Singer notes that "*from the 5th Century BC, most caravans consisted of at least 200 camels,*

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[385] Wilson (1984), p. 166.
[386] Ibid.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid., p. 151.
[389] Pliny, *NH* XII 32.65.
[390] Where 1 Roman mile equals 1,478 metres; see Duncan-Jones (1982), p. 371. This higher per-day distance also suggests that the camels chiefly carried incense, which is relatively lightweight.
[391] Seland (2015), *passim*, esp. pp. 122-3.
[392] Ibid., p. 118.
[393] Ibid., p. 117.

together with merchants and their servants. […] A lone trader leading a handful of camels across a vast inhospitable desert would not fare well.[394]

The favoured time for arrival of ships from India at the head of the Persian Gulf suggests that the caravans departed for Palmyra and Damascus in spring, heading across the steppe rather than up the Euphrates valley with the river in spate.[395] The return journey would have been made across the steppe to the river in the summer when the floods had abated; the camels could then be returned to the nomads before the next season.[396] Seland suggests a journey time of approximately 25 to 30 days between Charax and Palmyra, and approximately 6 days thence to Beroea (Aleppo).[397] He supports Teixidor's conclusion that such caravans were annual,[398] although Teixidor reminds us that while the window for such caravans came once a year, multiple caravans may have taken advantage of it.[399] Given the volume of trade indicated by inscriptions, which we shall come to shortly, this seems to be correct.

The balance of evidence, then, points towards an approximate speed of 30 or so kilometres per day for a fit and healthy camel under burden, with an average of 25 kilometres per day standing out as a not-unreasonable figure for a seven-day week. An average burden of 180 kilograms matches both the ancient evidence and the estimated journey times. If the Roman Syrian camel drivers pushed their camels further and rested them at journey's end (assuming their journeys were shorter), or took a lighter load, then a figure of 35 kilometres per day seems realistic, given the foregoing evidence. This quite neatly tallies with Pliny's attested length and number of halts on the Arabian Incense Road.[400]

Assuming for a moment that Pliny's 688-denarii tax figure for the whole journey is both accurate and roughly equal to the quantity paid in the Roman levy (i.e. about 25%),[401] then a single camel-load would have cost about 2,752 denarii. Working backwards, assuming a conversion rate of 323 grams per Roman

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[394] Singer (2007), p. 14.
[395] Ibid., p. 122.
[396] Ibid., p. 123. See above, pp. 150-2, for a discussion of quite where on the river they would have made for.
[397] Ibid.
[398] Ibid., p. 111.
[399] Teixidor, J. (1984), *Un Port romain du desert: Palmyre et son commerce d'Auguste a Caracalla*, Librarie d'Amériqe et d'Orient, Paris, p. 16.
[400] See above.
[401] Ibid. This of course assumes that the levy of which he speaks was the 25% *tetarte*.

pound, yields a camel-load of almost exactly 180 kilograms for second-rate incense[402] – precisely our average load. A first-rate load would have weighed 150 kilograms, a light but not unusually light load very close to Wilson's ideal, which would have allowed for a slightly faster journey, tallying with the number of halts attested on Pliny's route (he also states that on this route at least, fodder was paid for en route and not carried). This is the kind of extrapolation which Raschke hated, but it both gives an idea of just how lucrative the Incense Road was, and suggests that Pliny's source was actually quite reliable.

5.1.3   Cost

While evidence from Roman Syria is lacking, looking once again to Roman Egypt, we can see that the market cost of a camel at was 500 drachmae in 144 AD,[403] while another camel three years later fetched 800 drachmae at market.[404] Ensuing prices for the period from the same source indicate that this was the range within which the camel's at-market price varied for most of the middle of the Second Century; a camel and two foals went for over 900 drachmae around 178 AD.[405] Presumably this variation in price was dependent upon the virtue of the animal concerned – and the haggling ability of trader and buyer alike. Taking the average of prices for the time period, we arrive at a figure of 690 drachmae – a camel was beyond the means of most; over a year and a half's wages for even well-paid workers.[406] On the other hand, for a contractor with three camel drivers and "*four boys to carry grain*" attested from Egypt in 165 AD, two and a half weeks' wages would have covered the cost.[407] Bearing in mind that caravans comprised hundreds or thousands of animals,[408] this suggests that an entire caravan would have constituted an extremely large investment.

Control of camel herds, and thus the caravans, was thus a crucial – and extremely lucrative – aspect of Palmyra's long-distance trade. We shall discuss the implications of this in the next section.

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[402] According to Pliny's own figures.
[403] *BGU* 87, in West, Louis (1916), *The Cost of Living in Roman Egypt, Classical Philology*, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 311.
[404] *BGU* 88, ibid.
[405] *PBM* 1100, ibid.
[406] See Rathbone (1991), pp. 135-9. Quite what business a worker would have had buying a camel is another matter, but this gives an indication of the cost.
[407] *PBM* 331, ibid.
[408] The animals in a caravan of 5,000 camels (after Seland; see above, p.164) could have carried up to a million kilograms of goods (900,000 kg at 180 per camel). The animals themselves would have valued on the order of 4.5 million drachmae, by our figures. By our above calculations, the cargo of a single caravan of this size on the Incense Road would have valued up to 13.76 million denarii.

5.2 Infrastructure

Turning to the wherewithal required to support long-distance trade, we must consider both the physical and social aspects of this support. The most obvious facets of physical infrastructure include routes – paths, tracks, roads – and caravanserais. What did these require, and what did they include? Similarly, for social aspects underpinning long-distance trade, what did the network of trust need to achieve, and what does the evidence for it look like? Understanding what both aspects of the infrastructure supporting long-distance trade look like in the evidence will be of crucial importance in working out the role of specific institutions – such as temples – in it.

5.2.1 Tangible Infrastructure

We have already identified roads and halts – caravanserais, waystations, call them what you will – as two aspects of infrastructure. To the halts we might add wells, or at least water sources. We might also expect large enclosures of some description at the termini of routes – after all, bringing large numbers of pack animals into cities would hardly be desirable.

An enclosure need simply consist of an area with a boundary fence; such things tend not to leave obvious remains in the archaeology. However, we should consider what these enclosures were for. We have already seen that a camel was a major investment, at least so far as most people were concerned, and the extremely high value of the commodities carried. As well as a barrier – possibly a moderately significant one – we would also expect a reasonably significant water supply, particularly considering how much a single camel can drink when thirsty. Just such enclosures have in fact been found at Palmyra, and may have acted as halts for the caravan trade transiting the city rather than catering to it directly (there being no need for such trade to enter the city itself); they may also have been used in the preparation for organising and disbanding caravans of animals departing the city and arriving again.[409] As we shall see, these enclosures may help explain discrepancies in other attestations of the city in the Classical canon.[410]

Pliny describes the facilities available:

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[409] See above all Dentzer, J.-M. (1994), "Khāns ou casernes à Palmyre? À propos de structures visibles sur des photographies aériennes anciennes," in *Syria* 71 (1994), pp. 45-112, esp. 105-6. See now Schmidt-Colinet, A., and al-As'ad, W. (eds.) (2013), *Palmyras Reichtum durch Weltweiten Handel. Archäologische untersuchungen im bereich der Hellenistichen stadt*, two volumes, Verlag Holzhausen, Vienna, Bd. 1, p. 82; see also Hammad, M. (2010), *Palmyre, Transformations urbaines. Développement d'une ville antique de la marge aride syrienne*, Geuthner, Paris, pp. 145-8.
[410] See below, p. 200.

iam quacumque iter est aliubi pro aqua, aliubi pro pabulo aut pro mansionibus variisque portoriis pendunt	*Indeed all along the route they* [the caravan drivers] *keep on paying, at one place for water, at another for fodder, or charges for lodging at the halts...*[411]

So, for this journey – in this case, a 1,487 ½-Roman mile trek up the spine of Arabia from Sheba to the port of Gaza in Judaea – the drivers paid for supplies at regular stations. There were also such halts on the route inland to Coptos from Myos Hormos;[412] these were a common feature of long-haul routes. Poidebard spotted similar caravanserais with appropriate water resources on the route between Palmyra and Hit.[413] A particular example from our region is the dedication of a Palmyrene statue at a caravanserai during our period;[414] a further example is also instructive: a caravanserai established at a small, still-used oasis by the captain of the guard at Hatra, complete with attendant temple.[415]

In Nabataea itself, significant caravanserais were established, sometimes fortified and with extensive agricultural lands to support them and the non-food-producing populations associated with the caravan trade.[416] Such caravanserais are found both around Petra and en route to the Mediterranean at Gaza, and may have provided for the routes' taxation as well as their protection and support.[417] Both fortified and non-fortified caravanserais are found in Nabataea, from before and after the Roman annexation; the farthest of these appear to have been at Dumat, and Hegra (Medain Saleh),[418] their occupation into Roman times has implications, as Young puts it – "*the patrolling of the whole road* [along the Wadi Sirhan] *suggests that there was something of value using the road, and that the Romans wished to protect it*".[419]

Turning to the routes themselves, the study of roads in the Roman Near East was given a significant boost by the work of Sir Aurel Stein in Iraq and Antoine Poidebard in Syria; both men discerned original Roman-era (and earlier) tracks through the Syrian Desert from the air.[420] As well as tracks connecting the major settlements of our investigation, they also identified the first of what have become known as *hollow*

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[411] Pliny, *NH* XII.32.65, trans. Rackham (1945, reprinted 1968).
[412] Young (2001), p. 39 and map 2.2. Some of these appear to have been rather grand affairs.
[413] See above all Mouterde, R. and Poidebard, A.(1931), "La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît du IIe siècle ap. J.-C. D'après une inscription retrouvée au S.-E. de Palmyre (Mars 1930)", in *Syria* 12 (1931), pp. 105-15.
[414] Umm el-'Amad; see below, pp. 224-7.
[415] See below, p. 169; see above all Aggoula, B. (1991), *Inventaire des Inscriptions Hatréennes*, Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, Paris, pp. 174-5, no. 5.
[416] See above all Young (2001), pp. 109-12 & 115.
[417] Ibid.; see also Zayadine (1992). It is proposed, convincingly, that these settlements existed to support and complement the caravan trade, rather than in response to any (mis-)perceived decline of it.
[418] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 121-2.
[419] Ibid., p. 125.
[420] See Poidebard (1934); *Limes Report*.

ways: routes that were in use for so long that they eroded into the ground and became geological features in their own right, as we have seen at Hatra.[421] Poidebard's study is notable for his identification of halts between Damascus and Palmyra, and Palmyra and Bostra, spaced regularly, approximately fifty kilometres apart, and often with significant reservoirs of water.[422] He identified the route between Palmyra and Hit, as we have seen, including some caravanserais along it.[423] Stein similarly noted halts along the route from Hatra to the Euphrates, and north to Nisibis and beyond,[424] and concluded that such extensive provision would only make sense if the caravan trade was significant.[425] Of the routes in our region and period, the most important is probably the Nabataean-era King's Highway between 'Aila and Bostra,[426] adapted and paved during our period as the Via Nova Traiana.[427] The use of this road for the incense trade, and for other long-distance trade inland from the ports of 'Aila and Leuke Kome, is obvious.

We can also get a sense of the importance and development of the roads of our period and region by making note of goods located inland, a long way from their origin. The long-range transport of relatively cheap goods such as grain, wine and olive oil "*implies that transport costs were relatively low*".[428] An extreme example is the 188 Egyptian granite columns at the Sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Ba'albek, which according to Butcher suggests both that the road network was more developed, and overland transport less prohibitively expensive, than commonly assumed.[429] To this we might add the large quantities of marble and granite found at cities including Palmyra, Hatra, and Petra.[430]

The increase in Nabataean habitation and infrastructure has been convincingly linked to the presence of the Incense Road caravan trade along the routes across the Hauran and towards Gaza.[431] This increase in presence brought with it a concomitant increase in temples; indeed, there is a distinct correlation between sites of rural temples – often Nabataean, but others as well – and major routes such as the Via

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[421] See above all Wilkinson (1993); see above, pp. 73-7.
[422] See Poidebard (1934), pp. 34-67.
[423] Mouterde and Poidebard (1931).
[424] See *Limes Report*, pp. 67-79.
[425] Ibid., p. 73. We might append "-and taxable" to the statement.
[426] On this, see above all Graf, D. F. (1995), "The Via Nova Traiana in Arabia Petraea", in Humphrey, J. (ed.) (1995), *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research, JRA* Suppl. 14, Ann Arbor, pp. 241-65.
[427] Ibid., p. 243; see also Young (2001), pp. 119-20.
[428] Butcher (2003), p. 183.
[429] Ibid. It also implies the immense power of those responsible for the sanctuary's construction.
[430] See below.
[431] Butcher (2003), pp. 109-12.

Nova Traiana.[432] A number of possible explanations arise: provision of cultic space for the populations attending the agricultural settlements is the most naturalistic, but many such temples present themselves directly along, or very close to, the main road. This implies cultic space to give thanks for the natural spring, for instance, or to seek protection for the following days' travel – we have seen above an example of a temple at a caravanserai near Hatra, and examples from Nabataea too. A cultic site could also provide a form of income for the maintenance of the caravanserai; as we have seen at sites such as Qaswaret and Iram, these could get very elaborate indeed.[433]

5.2.2   *Gerasa and the phenomenon of oval plazas*

On the subject of the physical infrastructure for long-distance trade, we should briefly consider the temples and urban layout of Gerasa. It was a Decapolis city in northern Jordan, 151 kilometres south of Damascus and situated on the King's Road/Via Nova Traiana between Petra and Bostra, and Petra and Damascus.[434] The two major sanctuaries were those of Artemis and Zeus. The Temple of Artemis (Gazetteer, 17) was the largest in the city, but seems to have been a late addition to its religious furniture and is not in the same league as the great temples at Damascus, Hatra or Jerusalem, coming in at about 34,000 square metres.[435] Of particular interest to us is the fact that its main façade, facing the T-junction of the Cardo with the Decumanus Maximus, is lined with shops integrated into the design.[436] Indeed, Segal makes the point that this arrangement of shops "*recalls to a great extent the formation of halls and exedrae in the courtyard of the Sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in Baalbek.*"[437]

The other major temple in Gerasa, the Temple of Zeus (Gazetteer, 18), appears to have been the oldest sanctuary of the ancient city,[438] although its excavators suspect it of being at least partially built on a quarry site.[439] The final stage of the Zeus sanctuary appears to have been stepped, with a lower, larger

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[432] On these, see for instance Segal, A. (2008), "Religious architecture in the Roman Near East: temples of the basalt lands (Trachon and Hauran)", in Kaizer (ed.), *Variety of Local Religious Life*, pp. 97-132.

[433] See above, pp. 129-31.

[434] On Gerasa, see Browning, I. (1982), *Jerash and the Decapolis*, Chatto and Windus, London; see also Raja (2012), pp. 137-189.

[435] Segal overdoes it somewhat in his description of this temple. See Segal, A. (1981), "Roman Cities in the Province of Arabia", *in Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (May, 1981), pp. 117-118

[436] See for instance Segal (2013), p. 235.

[437] Ibid., n. 451, p. 360.

[438] Ibid., p. 246.

[439] Braun, J-P. (1998), "Gerasa, Sanctuary of Zeus", in *AJA* Vol. 102, No. 3 (July, 1998), pp. 597-8. It is worth saying that either way, the site of the temple would have to first be excavated to level the site for construction, so this may be something of a chicken-and-egg situation.

main court leading up to the temple itself. This complex abuts a huge colonnaded oval space just inside the city's southern gate, and variously characterised as a plaza, piazza or even a forum.[440] Quite what purpose this plaza served is elusive. It has been noted that similar large oval spaces existed at the Damascus Gate at Palmyra, the Damascus Gate at Jerusalem, and the Western Gate at Bostra.[441] Gerasa's is by far the largest, situated at the Southern Gate and measuring more than 90 by 80 metres. Butcher notes that in some places – such as Gerasa – such plazas helped obscure misalignments between major thoroughfares.[442] In Palmyra (whose oval plaza is smaller but still measures more than 40 metres on a side), this is not the case.[443]
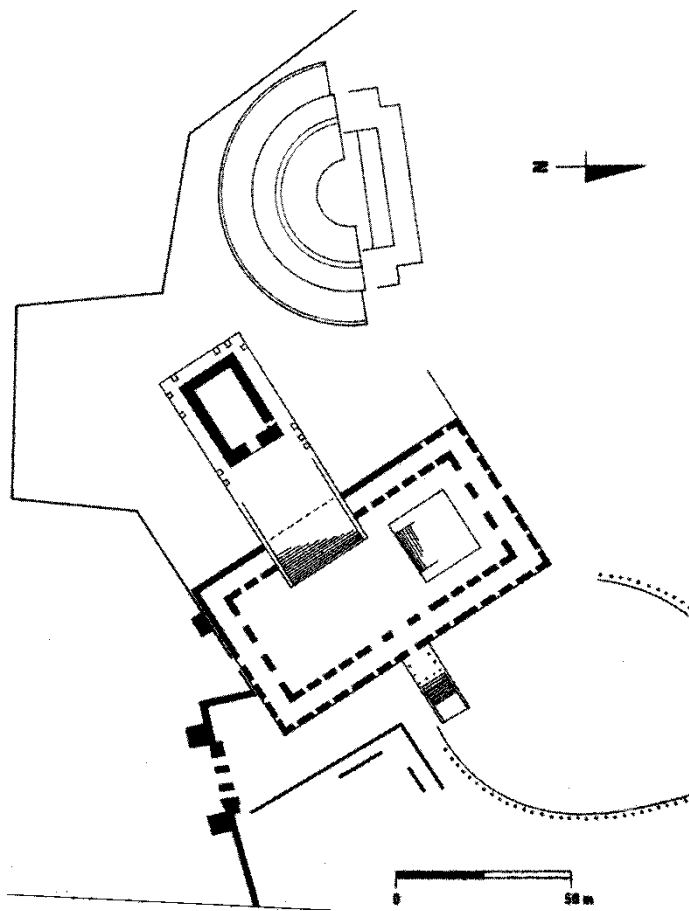
Fig. 17: A plan of the Temple of Zeus at Gerasa (Gazetteer, 18).

The oval plaza in Gerasa is by the Southern Gate, which is the gate facing in the direction of Philadelphia and, ultimately, Petra – the Incense Road, in other words. That in Jerusalem faces Damascus, as does that in Palmyra, which also happens to face the Mediterranean as a whole. That in Bostra faces west, again towards the Mediterranean. In each case, the oval plaza lies just inside a gate which could reasonably expect a large amount of overland traffic.

Given the sometimes very large taxes that were commonly levied on goods and services entering cities,[444] and the amount of traffic which travelled between them, it is possible that these oval plazas were effectively corrals where – for instance – goods from an incoming caravan, or at least part of it, could be checked, unloaded and,

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[440] Ibid.
[441] See Butcher (2003), pp. 253-4.
[442] This is the purpose Raja ascribes to it too; see Raja (2012), p. 158.
[443] Ibid., p. 254.
[444] The *tetarte*, for instance; see also the Palmyrene tariff (see Part III).

crucially (from the city's perspective, at least), taxed prior to introduction to the city's markets. This could be done within the confines of an urban space of unquestionable legal status, which could be guarded (to the advantage of all parties concerned) and into and out of which movement could be controlled *by the taxing authority*. It would be folly to suppose that the caravans were brought into the city or for any period of time – if nothing else the smell would be objectionable – but as a space for receiving, offloading and taxing goods destined for the city's consumers (and taxation for the highest-value luxuries was generally done in kind rather in cash), the plazas' case is strong. They were monumentalised with colonnades and surrounding buildings. Their size and monumentality speak to their importance for the cities concerned. Given the vast revenues a city could have gleaned from taxing inbound commerce – particularly long-distance commerce in valuable goods – it is highly likely that these cities and their rulers would have wished to reflect this in the venue in which they were gathered.

It is, therefore, my view that the fact that the Gerasan Sanctuary of Zeus fronts directly onto the oval plaza is at the very least, worthy of note.[445]

5.2.3   *Intangible Infrastructure*

Much scholarship has focused on the physical furniture attendant on long-distance trade; the socio-economic framework is equally deserving of attention. As with other aspects of long-distance trade, although it was a key facet of life in the Roman Near East, comparative lack of evidence means that for the most part, theory and studies on these phenomena necessarily focus their efforts elsewhere. Roman Egypt again is popular, but so too is the wider Mediterranean basin; particularly Italy (Rome, Ostia and Puteoli especially), as well as Delos.[446] We have also touched on comparanda from other periods in our region, most particularly Old Assyria, Ugarit and the time of Sargon II.[447]

It is clear from the documentary evidence from Egypt that the legal framework was present for the conducting of business relationships and dealings over large periods and distances. We have a number of

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[445] In Gerasa at least, the oval plaza was very close to sites of trade. See Uscatescu, A., and Martin-Bueno, M. (1997), "The Macellum of Gerasa (Jerash, Jordan): From Market Place to an Industrial Area", in *BASOR* 307 (1997), pp. 67-88.
[446] See for instance Terpstra (2013).
[447] See above, pp. 40 & 105

contracts from the shipping trade, for instance; the Muziris papyrus is the most famous,[448] there is also for instance a contract between a Nabataean and a Palmyrene at Denderah,[449] and a number of Roman businessmen are attested in the Nicanor archive, detailing some of the activities of a family company with contacts and agents from across the Roman world and India, although most of it is concerned with supplying the Eastern Desert.[450] Associations of varying degrees of formality often cooperated on such long-distance enterprises; the relation of these associations to more classical Roman *collegia* is probable,[451] but more clear-cut in some instances than others (such as Nicanor). The wealth of papyri, parchments and legal documents from Syria – none relating to long-distance trade, however – does suggest that similar legal institutional frameworks maintained in Nabataea and Syria to those in the rest of the Roman Empire.[452]

In terms of legal structures and arrangements, an inscription from the Palmyrene necropolis edited by Gawlikowski may describe a maritime loan of the same variety as that commonly attested in Egypt.[453] It has been proposed that this may have been the type of instrument available to merchants travelling to and from Charax; Young notes that this was a further avenue by which "*the wealthy magnates of the town could profit from the caravan trade*".[454] However, this inscription is held by de Romanis to instead record the takings of the *tetarte* at Palmyra for a single month (which, incidentally, he works out to be 22,369,141 drachmae 2 obols) – as we shall see, although he does not offer his own translation, I am inclined to agree with his reading.[455] Even so, it would be surprising if similar legal and financial frameworks to Egypt were not present at Palmyra, as we might expect for an area under Roman control involved in such trade. Such arrangements would further indicate, as in Egypt, that the organisation of the trade was essentially private, with the instruments of state occasionally brought to bear to facilitate and abet the trade rather than

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[448] See Rathbone (2000).
[449] Sidebotham (1986), p. 96; see below, pp. 259-63.
[450] See Sidebotham (1986), pp. 86-9; McLaughlin (2010), pp. 156-60; idem. (2014), pp. 80-1.
[451] See for instance Taco Terpstra's treatment of Syrian institutions in Rome along these lines; Terpstra (2013), pp. 127-69.
[452] See Butcher (2003), pp. 142-5.
[453] See below, pp. 254-9. *PAT* 2634, not in *IGLS*; Gawlikowski, M. (1986), "Comptes d'un homme d'affaires dans une tour funéraire à Palmyre", in *Semitica* L36 (1986), pp. 87-99. See *contra*, de Romanis, F. (2006), "Aurei after trade: western taxes and eastern gifts", in *Dal denarius al dinar. L'Oriente e la moneta romana. Atti dell'Incontro di studio, Roma, 16-18 settembre 2004*, Istituto Italiano di Numismatica, Rome, pp. 62-9.
[454] Young (2001), pp. 156-7.
[455] de Romanis (2006), p. 64.

organising it centrally.[456] Furthermore, the frequency of honorific inscriptions from the Council as well as private citizens at Palmyra speaks to the importance of the trade here, at least, and the central involvement of private citizens. The terms used in these inscriptions also bear examination. *Synodiarch* literally translates as guild- or assembly- ruler. Can we posit the existence of guilds organising the caravan trade? Was the synodiarch merely the appointed leader of the group of presumably private merchants arranging the expedition, or was it actually a civic office in Palmyra? Was the office newly elected for each fresh season, or expedition? Was the change from synodiarch to archemporos in later times significant? The evidence does not support an answer either way. Religious dedications can also tell us much: from Palmyra we have the caravan inscriptions, both from within and without the city's major temples; from Roman Egypt, a temple dedication from two female ship-owners and the captain of their fleet,[457] and a dedication of an altar by a guild of Palmyrene merchants in Coptos strongly recalls the *collegia* of Ostia.[458] From elsewhere, inscriptions from Palmyra and Ba'albek attest to the presence of guilds of craftsmen,[459] often in a religious context – in the case of Ba'albek, they are found in the flagstones of the *temenos* of the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus itself.[460] The Nicanor family company is also mentioned in a dedicatory inscription in a temple in Coptos.[461]

Much of this evidence relates to Palmyrene trade in the Red Sea trade. However, what of the trade in the Roman Near East itself? For this, we can turn to the inscriptions from Palmyra itself. The caravan inscriptions, and a number of related dedications from the major temples in the city, attest groups of merchants or named individuals in relation to long-distance trade. As well as those directly attesting the caravan trade, there are also a number attesting a number of individuals or groups of merchants in far-flung cities across inner and southern Mesopotamia, including Babylon, Spasinou Charax and Vologesias.

The caravan inscriptions attest to a variety of roles in the Palmyrene caravan trade, including the role of caravan leader (attested as *synodiarch* (literally, guild- or assembly-ruler) or *archemporos* (literally, ruling

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[456] This is more or less the conclusion reached by Young (ibid.). It is, incidentally, possible that such arrangements did not obtain at places such as Hatra or possibly Petra, where instead such matters possibly fell under royal control (see for instance Kaizer (2013), p. 66).

[457] See McLaughlin (2010), p. 158 and idem. (2014), p. 81.

[458] See below, pp. 259-63. See also Terpstra (2013), esp. pp. 95-125; Young (2001), pp. 80-2.

[459] See above, p. 97.

[460] See Aggoula, B. (1983), "Temple et agora á Hatra", in *Annali, Istituto Universario Orientale di Napoli: Rivista del Seminarip di Studi Asiatici e del Seminario di Studi Africani*, vol. 43 (1983), pp. 407-429.

[461] *IGRR* 1.1172; see also McLaughlin (2014), pp. 80-1.

merchant) in later inscriptions), individuals honoured as *patron* or *protector* of a caravan, and guards or forces of some description.[462] The role of patron or protector appears to have been purely honorific, bestowed by individual merchants and caravans by way of thanks for services rendered in the course of the individuals' normal duties – they do not appear to have been closely involved with any individual caravan otherwise.[463] This implies that 'protectors' from far-off places such as Charax generally were not directly involved in the organisation of caravans at Palmyra, but also that sufficient organisation was present at disparate sites such as Vologesias and Spasinou Charax to enable individuals to assist caravans which got into difficulty.

A network of trust would therefore have been of paramount importance for the organisers of those caravans, and the erection of these caravan inscriptions could only have strengthened the network of trust by rewarding and, in a sense, advertising, such individuals – signifying, if nothing else, to other caravans departing Palmyra, that here was a named individual in this particular city – Vologesias, say, or Charax, who had reliably rendered help in the past. It bears mentioning that at least one caravan was led by the son of the man honoured in the inscription it erected by way of thanks,[464] and another apparently led by brothers,[465] suggesting that close familial links were involved in the organisation and facilitation of the caravan trade, in this way recalling somewhat the family dynasties attested from Old Assyria.[466] Also, although this again relates to the Red Sea trade, at least one guild of Palmyrene merchants and ship-owners is attested at Coptos – this was not an alien arrangement.[467]

5.3   Actors in trade

This leads us to the issue of who exactly was involved in the long-distance trade across the Roman Near East. As we have seen, the requirements of long-distance trade in our period, particularly overland, were substantial, and one would have required significant liquid assets to participate in a serious manner. The evidence from both the Red Sea and Persian Gulf routes strongly suggests that it was principally the domain of the wealthy and well-connected. However, the situation was not necessarily this clear-cut.

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[462] See above all Young (2001), pp. 149-73; see also Yon, J-B. (2002), *Les Notables de Palmyre*, IFAPO, Beiruit, pp. 100-6.
[463] See above all Young (2001), pp. 151-4.
[464] *IGLS* XVII.251 = *Inv.* X.107 = *PAT* 1409.
[465] *IGLS* XVII.127 = *IPSC* G15 (not in *Inv.* or *PAT*).
[466] See above, pp. 101-2 & 105; see also Kuhrt (1995), pp. 90-95.
[467] See below, pp. 259-63.

The Nabataean incense trade appears not to have had the same levels of end-to-end organisation as the maritime trade with India, for instance. As Young notes, the ancient sources do not credit the Nabataeans for bringing incense north up the length of Arabia from Sheba; rather, Strabo and Diodorus state that it was others that conveyed the cargo to Nabataea.[468] Instead, it appears that the Nabataeans essentially fulfilled the role of the non-Roman middleman.[469] Therefore, rather than necessarily fulfiling an acquisitive role, as is strongly implied by the evidence from the Red Sea routes, the role for the Nabataeans appears to have been one of transport, which leads us in turn to the nature of that transport in the first place, both in Nabataea and the wider Roman Near East.

Both the Nabataean and Palmyrene overland networks hinged on the camel as the mode of transport; this necessarily put a great deal of power in the hands of those owning the herds – probably the pastoral nomads who frequent the area to this day (possibly the *Skênitai* attested in the Syrian and Mesopotamian deserts by Strabo).[470] It is thought, as we shall see, that Palmyra, Hatra and Petra nucleated from nomadic and semi-nomadic populations,[471] and there is nothing to suggest a diminution of the camel in importance for these societies after settlement had occurred. Ernest Will suggested a role for herd-owning magnates overseeing the organisation of the Palmyrene trade as the patrons attested in inscription;[472] while that view has been challenged by Young,[473] even if herd owners were not directly involved in the leading of the caravans, the synodiarch would still have had to arrange for the beasts to form the caravan in the first place, effectively convolving the two roles postulated by Will.[474] Dentzer has identified and described caravanserais and rather large enclosures on the outskirts of Palmyra.[475] These will need to have been manned and organised.

The precise role of the herd-owners is unclear, although roles have been suggested in the past, by Will for instance.[476] It is possible they were nomads with whom the synodiarchs had to negotiate for the use of their free-roaming herds when the season for arrivals from India came; this is the model preferred

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[468] See Young (2001), p. 114. Diodorus Siculus III.42.5; Strabo *Geog.* XVI.4.18.
[469] See above, p. 15.
[470] Strabo, *Geog.* 16.1.27.
[471] See below, p. 199 (Palmyra); above, pp. 125-7 (Petra). See also pp. 78-80 (Hatra).
[472] Will, E. (1957), "Marchands et chefs de caravans à Palmyre", in *Syria* 34 (1957), pp. 262-277.
[473] Young (2001), pp. 150-7.
[474] Will (1957).
[475] Dentzer (1994).
[476] Will (1957).

by Seland, drawing comparison with the seasonal borrowing of camels from the Bedouin by the Ottomans.[477] He emphasises the similarity of conditions operating upon the Bedouin and the ancient nomads including movement determined by precipitation, and subsistence via camel herding. If the herd owners were indeed nomads, that would certainly explain their total absence from the epigraphic record.

We have seen that participants in the Red Sea long-distance trade, and possibly – likely – in the Palmyrene as well, often worked together to share costs and spread risk, but also to share in the stupendous profits possible from successful completion of the task, such as the Muziris papyrus shipment.[478] Such arrangements and groups were a key part of the organisation of the long-distance trade. As a result, direct participation in long-distance trade was largely the purview of the wealthiest and the best-connected; in Palmyra at least we have direct evidence of this, and there is little to say that the same was not true elsewhere, for instance at Petra. While membership of *collegia* and of the ancient Near Eastern *marzeah* was exclusively male,[479] evidence from Roman Egypt proves that wealthy women could engage in the Indian maritime trade in their own right, with access to the same resources and legal institutions as men, and employing men in their service.[480] Interestingly, that inscription (a dedication to Leto by Aelia Isidora and Aelia Olympias) comes from a temple at Medamoud, and explicitly describes the women as *naukleroi*, indicating as Young puts it "*that they either owned or chartered merchant ships*"; they are also described as ματρῶναι στολᾶται ('distinguished matrons'), "*a title of some distinction that implies they owned considerable property and could conduct their affairs without a guardian*".[481] We have already seen that the Nicanor archive suggests and attests the involvement in the Red Sea trade of individuals of standing.[482]

As I hope to show in the next Part, there is nothing to suggest that the involvement of wealthy elites in long-distance trade at Palmyra was exceptional.[483] The caravan inscriptions from Palmyra all relate to men, but likewise indicate diversity, at least to a point. That said, we will see how family ties mattered to

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[477] Seland (2015), p. 117, after Yon (2002), p. 101, and Teixidor (1984), pp. 15-7.
[478] Rathbone (2000).
[479] See Rimmer Hermann (2014).
[480] *SEG* VIII.703, reprinted in Young (2001), pp. 58-9.
[481] Young (2001), p. 59.
[482] Sidebotham (1986).
[483] This point is also made by Butcher (2003), p. 184.

the caravans on at least one occasion, and that some families had multiple generations involved in the conduct and facilitation of the caravan trade.[484]

It bears mentioning that as well as elite, wealthy individuals organising and arranging the long-distance trade in our period, there were also many others who gained their living through the caravan trade. Not least the caravan drivers themselves; we have seen that a contractor with three camel drivers (with, presumably, many camels, although we have no way of knowing how many – three drivers suggests quite a few) could have earned 40 drachmae a day – more than thirty times the wage of even well-paid clerks in Roman Egypt during our period.[485] The nomads who it seems likely lent their camels for the conduct of the caravans would likely have been paid handsomely as well; it has been conjectured that the attacking nomads attested in the caravan inscriptions may have been from rival groups who wanted a share of the proceeds.[486] Also, the operation and maintenance of the caravanserais, the roads, and for instance the Nabataean agriculture along the King's Road, will have engaged the services of a very large number of individuals indeed.[487] The evidence suggests that the principal actors were drawn almost entirely from the elite,[488] although the range of individuals availing themselves of the institutions and frameworks of long-distance trade was extensive, and, as Butcher puts it, such transactions took place "*on a significant scale*".[489] In this way, the long-distance caravan trade directly affected many more than the socially or economically elite individuals directing proceedings.

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[484] See III.5.1.
[485] See above, p. 178.
[486] See for instance Seland (2015), pp. 108-11.
[487] It bears mentioning that the paving of the King's Road as the Via Nova Traiana brings a military dimension to its maintenance.
[488] See Yon (2002), pp. 100-6.
[489] Butcher (2003), p. 182.

6. Fairs and Markets

Before concluding, we would do well to take note of another feature of the Roman Near East's economy which is often overlooked in other studies: namely that of the periodic fair or market.[490] We have seen how Seland's study touched on the issue of seasonality;[491] this is an issue which is often overlooked in other studies, and certainly has a bearing on long-distance trade.

Religious festivals are attested from the Roman Near East; Lucian describes that at Hierapolis in some detail,[492] and tesserae 687 and 688 from the Temple of 'Nabu' at Palmyra attest to a festival market overseen by an official – "*un agoranome de panégyrie,*" established by Milik;[493] this does not seem to be an unusual arrangement. Besides, the design of temenos temples often suggests that they were intended to accommodate significant numbers of pilgrims.[494] Their use for periodic festivals and fairs is widely accepted,[495] and demonstrated by *topoi* inscriptions suggesting that positioning during such ceremonies was a matter of some prestige.[496] Monumentalised processional ways are common in major settlements such as Palmyra and Petra, and are even seen in smaller extra-urban sanctuaries such as Si'a; as we shall see, these are often ways of tying these structures into the urban fabric which they can dominate, as at Damascus. The major religious festivals held in these structures are often likened to the major pilgrimages which still occur in the modern Middle East, such as to Mecca; Ball goes so far as to say that each of the major temples in the Roman Near East was at the heart of a religious cult perennially on the cusp of "*incipient monotheism*", and that Jerusalem and Mecca are the only such centres which survive to the present day.[497] Regardless of Ball's assertion, it is nevertheless the case that their temenoi would have

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[490] Butcher (2003), does not discuss trading fairs or periodic markets, for instance. In fact, the only mention is of the periodic fair at the Sanctuary of Zeus Baetocaece. On fairs and markets, see above all de Ligt, L. (1993), *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire: Economic and social aspects of periodic trade in a pre-industrial society*, J. C. Gieben, Amsterdam.

[491] Seland (2015).

[492] Lucian, *DDS*, 49-50.

[493] See Milik, J. T. (1972), *Recherches d'Epigraphie Proche-Orientale*, Vol. I, Geuthner, Paris, pp. 59-62. For the tesserae see Ingholt, H., Seyrig, H. and Starcky, J. (1955), *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, Geuthner, Paris, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII. See also Cantineau, J. (1936), "Tadmorea", in *Syria* 17 (1936), pp. 346-8, nos. 21 & 22; see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.

[494] See for instance Butcher (2003), pp. 347-71; "*the vast size of many courts anticipated the huge crowds that were expected on festival days*", p. 351.

[495] See for instance Burns, R. (2005), *Damascus, a History*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 66; Segal (2013), pp. 154-9.

[496] See for instance Aggoula, B. (1983), "Temple et agora á Hatra", in *Annali, Istituto Universario Orientale di Napoli: Rivista del Seminarip di Studi Asiatici e del Seminario di Studi Africani*, vol. 43 (1983), pp. 407-429.

[497] Ball (2000), p. 318.

accommodated tens of thousands on festival days; the progress of the parades is often the subject of speculation, such as at Petra.[498]

Given the readiness with which major religious festivals are accepted at the temples under consideration, it is surprising that it is only occasionally that thought is given to the phenomenal commercial opportunity which such festivals would have represented. Even if the festival was principally aimed at locals and people from the city's hinterland – as attested at Ba'albek – the simple concentration of people would have represented an opportunity which came only once or twice a year, and if Lucian is to be believed, it is likely that many of the larger temples attracted significant interest from farther afield; indeed, well before Ba'albek became an independent city, towards the end of the period of our investigation, it was the subject of significant interest by rulers of nearby cities.[499]

At least one major religious festival took place in the Sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra: the holy day of Bel fell in the month of Nisan (April).[500] There were others, most of which saw sacred banquets, and at least one of which saw a festival market, as we have seen attested in the Temple of 'Nabu'.[501] The festival of Mannos (Ma'nu in Aramaic), identified by Yon as a martial equestrian deity mainly known at Palmyra,[502] is attested in the surviving middle portion of a Greek inscription to an unknown benefactor found re-used in Byzantine fortifications east of the Temple of Bel, and Yon suggests it took place in that temple:

> [...]   [...] τὸ κτίζ-
> μα τοῦ ἱεροῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ Βηλου ἀργύ<u>ριον ἔτι πάλ</u>αι καὶ με-
> τὰ ταῦτα εἰς δια<u>νομ</u>ὴν ἀείδιον τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τοῦ Βηλου ἐξ ὀν[ό]-
> 8   ματος Ιαριβωλ<u>εου καὶ Σαλαμα</u>λαθου υἱῶν αὑτοῦ δηνά-
> ρια ἑξακισ<ισ>χείλια <u>ἡμέραις</u> [τ]ακταῖς καὶ ἐξ ἰδίου ὀνόματος
> δηνάρια ἑξακισισχείλια εἰς ϛιʹ Λώου καὶ εἰς κρεονομίαν
> πάντων τῶν <u>ἐστιωμέ</u>νων τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔμπροσθεν Μαν-
> 12   νου θεοῦ δηνάρια <u>τετρακόσια</u> ὥστε ἀπὸ τοῦ τόκου γείνεσθε
> [...]

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[498] See above, pp. 133-44.
[499] See above, p. 97; see also for instance Butcher (2003), p. 365.
[500] Gawlikowski (1973), pp. 82-3. *IGLS* XVII.131 = *Inv.* VI.13 (32 AD) (not in *PAT*) institutes sacrifices on the 6th day of Nisan "*for ever*". See Kaizer (2006.a), pp. 95-6; idem. (2002), pp. 207-9.
[501] Milik (1972), pp. 59-62; *RTP*, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII; see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.
[502] Yon (2012), p. 263.

> *...he has for a long time already given silver for the construction of the (temple of the) great and holy god Bel, and after that, for an eternal disbursement to the priests of Bel, in the name of Iarhibol and Salamalathos, his sons, of six thousand denarii on fixed days, and in his own name six thousand denarii on the 16th of Lôos (= August), and for the distribution of meat to all participants at the banquet, the same day, before the god Mannos, four hundred denarii, so that with the interests, he can give meat, with the benefaction of his sons, after his death...*[503]

Commercial activity during religious festivals is well-attested from elsewhere in the Roman East, such as at Acarnania in Greece;[504] Dio Chrysostom also notes that the annual assizes in Apamea effectively constituted a festival as litigants and representatives descended upon the city.[505] There are also fragments from Palmyra and Tyre explicitly mentioning officials supervising markets associated with religious festivals; as we shall see, these are depicted on a pair of tesserae from Palmyra too.[506] As de Ligt notes, almost all of the evidence from the Roman Near East relating to periodic fairs and festivals relates to the later Roman period and not the era of our investigation,[507] however, the indications are that the habit was well-established throughout the Roman era, including in our period.

We have seen above that the seasonality of the caravan trade at Palmyra almost certainly narrowed the window in which the caravan trade would have reached the city to a few months in spring; it is likely that the main festival at the Sanctuary of Bel coincided with the arrival, or at least, the seasonal presence, of the caravans. If the caravans were as large and important as our investigation has suggested, their successful return would certainly have been grounds for celebration. A major annual festival is in fact attested at Palmyra in the month of Nisan – April,[508] as are individuals in charge of supervising the market attendant on this festival.[509] Indeed, if the season was good for caravans, it was also good for pilgrims coming to Palmyra from the hinterland and perhaps Dura, and merchants from farther afield to take advantage of the commercial opportunity. All of this suggests that Seland's proposal is indeed correct.

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[503] Extract of *IGLS* XVII.308 (not in *Inv.* or *PAT*), after Yon (2012), pp. 261-3. Unknown date (Mid-C2nd?)
[504] de Ligt (1993), p. 65.
[505] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.15-16, in de Ligt (1993), p. 226.
[506] Milik (1972), pp. 59-62; *RTP*, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII; see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.
[507] de Ligt (1993), p. 70.
[508] See below, p. 128; see also Gawlikowski, M. (1973), *Palmyre VI, Le temple palmyrénien*, PWN: Editions Scientifiques de Pologne, Warsaw, pp. 82-3.
[509] Milik (1972), pp. 59-62; *RTP*, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII; see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.

As it happens, some of the only clear evidence for regular markets and fairs in our region and our period comes from a temple: Zeus Baetocaece.[510] As we shall see imminently, an inscription from the temenos boundary attests to a regular fair from at least the Third Century BC to the reign of Valerian in the latter half of the Third Century AD.[511] This fair was the subject of numerous disputes between the sanctuary and village of Baetocaece and the nearby city of Arados, in whose territory the site fell; these disputes periodically required the intercession of the reigning Seleucid King or Roman Emperor.[512] The longevity of the fair is remarkable in the evidence, but there is nothing to suggest that it was particularly remarkable at the time.

An Italian-style nundinal market also appears to have been instituted in Dura-Europos in the Roman period, if de Ligt's reading of a graffito-calendar there is correct;[513] short-cycle markets are all but certain in the other major towns and cities of our region. Very often, as we shall see, major temples are erected in very close proximity, or even integrated with, marketplaces and agoras; they sometimes even integrated commercial premises into their design.[514] This is not a phenomenon unique to the Roman Near East – the cases of the Forum Romanum or the Athenian agora spring to mind when considering the common intersection between sites of worship and commerce.

6.1   Baetocaece: a case study

The Sanctuary of Zeus Baetocaece (Gazetteer, 11; Fig. 18), in the modern village of Hosn Suleiman, is one of the clearest examples of the conjunction of commercial and cultic space from our region and period.

The ancient village of Baetocaece, in the territory of Arados (which at 30 kilometres to the west was approximately a day's ride away) is remarkable as it incorporated a very large sanctuary disproportionate to both the size of the settlement and the size of the temple within. Indeed, at 88 by 137 metres, the Sanctuary of Zeus is actually larger in area than that of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Ba'albek,[515] even while the

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[510] On this, see below, pp. 160-1.
[511] *IGLS* VII.4028. See above all Baroni, A. (1984), "*I terreni e i privilege del tempio di Zeus a Baitokaike (*IGLS *VII, 4028)*", in *Studi Ellenistici* I (1984), pp. 135-167.
[512] On this, see Dignas (2003), p. 169.
[513] de Ligt (1993), p. 127.
[514] As at the Temple of Artemis in Gerasa (see below, p. 222) or the Sanctary of Shamash at Hatra (pp. 177-8).
[515] I make the comparison as the Ba'albek temple was the largest in the Roman world, even though its sanctuary was not. The Sanctuary at Baetocaece in fact measures 12,056 m², whereas that at Ba'albek measures 10,605 m². Measurements from Segal (2013), pp. 78 & 124.

temple at its heart is barely 13 by 24 metres, its long stair notwithstanding.[516] While the sanctuary itself is architecturally unremarkable – surrounded by a plain, if high, wall and not, for instance, including a colonnade – Baetocaece *is* notable for being the site of a major trading fair that survived for at least five hundred years.
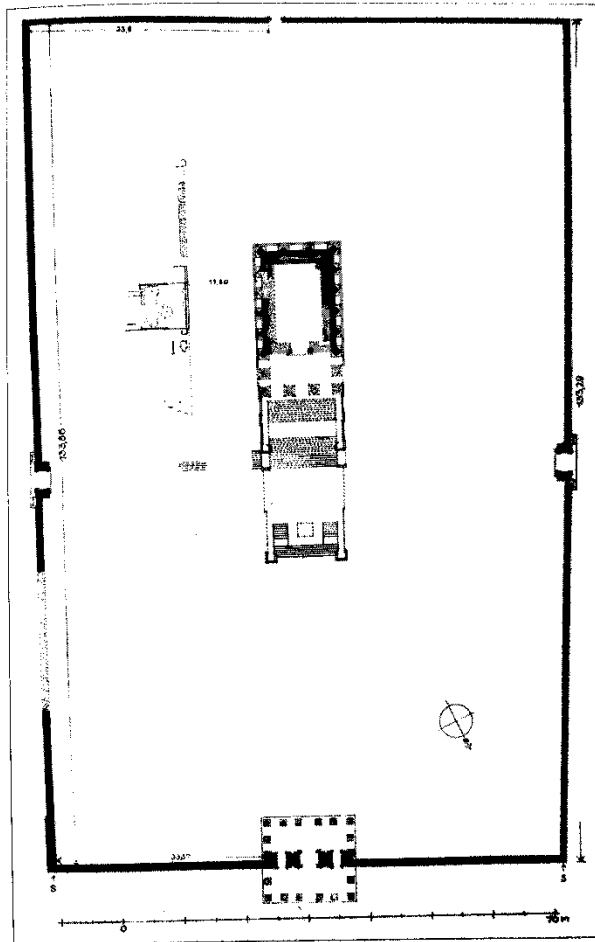
Fig. 18: A plan of the Temple of Zeus at Baetocaece (Gazetteer, 11).

From a lengthy inscription from right by the sanctuary's main gate,[517] we know that this fair was instituted in the first half of the Third Century BC by either the first or second King Antiochus, in a decree which also diverted revenues from the village of Baetocaece towards maintaining the cult. This fair continued into the reign of Augustus, who decreed that animals and goods in transit to the fair should not be taxed at market, and at least as far as Valerian, who decreed that the provincial governor should see to the protection of the cult and the fair from aggressors in the second half of the Third Century AD.[518] That the fair survived so long shows its importance for the regional economy, and the sanctuary's disproportionately large size speaks to the prosperity of the community which erected it (this prosperity in all likelihood was a result of the fair in the first place):

A	Imp(erator) Caesar
	Publius Licin-
	nius Valerianus
4	Pius Felix Aug(ustus) et Imp(etrator)
	Caesar Publius Licinius
	Gallienus Pius Fel(ix) Aug(ustus) et Licin-
	nius Cornelius Saloninus

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[516] Segal (2013), p. 81.
[517] *IGLS* VII.4028. See Baroni (1984), pp. 135–167.
[518] Ibid.

8	Valerianus nobilissius Caesar
	Aurelio Marea et aliis :
	Regnum antiqua beneficia, consuetu-
	dine etiam insecuti tenporis adpro-
12	bata, is qui provinciam regit, remota
	violentia partis adversae, incolumia
	vobis manere curabit.

B

<div align="center">Ἐπιστολὴ Ἀντιόχου βασιλέως ·</div>

16 Βασιλεὺς Ἀντίοχος Εὐφήμῳ χαίρειν · ἐδόθη ὁ κατακεχωρισ-
μέος ὑπομνηματισμός · γενέσθω οὖν καθότι δεδήλωται περὶ ὧν δεῖ διὰ σοῦ
18 συντελεσθῆναι. –

C

18 cont'd – Προσενεχθέντος μοι περὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας θεοῦ Διὸς Βαιτοκαικης
ἐκρίθη συγχωρῆαι αὐτῷ εἰς ἄπαντα τὸν χρόνον, ὅθεν καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ
20 θεοῦ κατάρχεται, κώμην τὴν Βαιτοκαι[κη]νήν, ἣν πρότερον ἔσχεν Δημήτριος
Δημητρίου τοῦ Μνασαίου ἐν Τουργωνα τῆς περὶ Ἀπάμιαν σατραπίας, σὺν τοῖς
συνκύρουσι καὶ καθήκουσι πᾶσι κατὰ τοὺς προϋπάρχοντας περιορισμοὺς
καὶ σὺν τοῖς τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος ἔτους γενήμασιν, ὅπως ἡ ἀπὸ ταύτης πρόσοδος
24 ἀναλίσκηται εἰς τὰς κατὰ μῆνα συντελουμένας θυσίας καὶ τἄλλα τὰ πρὸς αὔξη-
σιν τοῦ ἱεροῦ συντείνοντα ὑπὸ τοῦ καθεσταέου ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἱερέως, ὡς εἴ-
θισται, ἄγωνται δὲ κατὰ μῆνα πανηγύρεις ἀτελεῖς τῇ πεντεκαιδεκάτῃ καὶ
τριακάδι, καὶ εἶναι τὸ μὲν ἱερὸν ἄσυλον, τὴν δὲ κώμην ἀνεπίσ(τα)θμον μηδεμιᾶς
ἀπορρήσεως προσενεθείσης · τὸν δὲ ἐναντιωθησόμενόν τισι τῶν προγε-
28 γραμμένων ἔνοχον εἶναι ἀσεβείᾳ · ἀναγραφῆναί τε καὶ τὰ ἀντίγραφα ἐν
στήλῃ λιθίνῃ καὶ τεθῆναι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἱερῷ. Δεήσει οὖν γραφῆναι οἷς εἴ-
θισται, ἵνα γένηται ἀκολούς τοῖς δελουμένοις.

D

32 Ψήφισμα τῆς πόλεως πεμ(φ)θὲν Θεῷ Αὐγούστῳ ·
Ἐπάνανκες δὲ ἀνέρχεσθαι πάντα τὰ ὤνεια διὰ τῶν ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐπὶ χώρας
ἀγορητῶν πραθησόμενα καθ᾽ ἐ[κ]άστην ἱερομηνίαν πρὸς τὸ ἀδιάλε(ι)πτα ὑπάρχιν
πᾶσι τοῖς ἀνιοῦσ<ι>ι προσκυταῖς, ἐπιμελομένου τοῦ τῆς πόλεως ἀγο-
36 ρητοῦ μηδὲ ἐπιχειροῦντος ἢ ὀχλοῦντος προφάσει παροχῆς καὶ τέλους
καὶ ἐπηρείας τινὸς ἢ ἀαιτήσαιως · ἀνδράποδα δὲ καὶ τετράποδα
καὶ λοιπὰ ζῷα ὁμοῦως πωλείσθω ἐν τῷ τόπῳ χωρὶς τέλους ἢ ἐπη-
ρείας τινὸς ἢ ἀηαιτήσαιως.

E

40 Οἱ κάτοχοι ἁγίου οὐρανίου Διὸς τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν Σε-
βαστῶν εἴς τε τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείας καὶ τὸν τόπον ἐλευθε-
42 ρε[ί]ας τὴν θείαν ἀντιγαφὴν ὑπὸ πάντων προσκυνουμένην
προέταξαν.

A *The emperor Caesar Publius Licinius Valerianus, Pious, Faithful, Augustus, and the emperor Caesar Publius Licinius Gallienus, Pious, Faithful, Augustus, and Licinius Cornelius Saloninus Valerianus, most noble Caesar, to Aurelius Mareas and others:*
The provincial governor will take care that the ancient privileges granted by the kings, confirmed also by the custom of subsequent times, will remain inviolate for you and suppress the agitation of the opposing party.

B

<div align="center">*Letter of King Antiochus:*</div>

King Antiochus to Euphemus; greetings. The appended memorandum was issued: may you now carry out accordingly what needs to be done: –

C

– Having been informed about the force of the god Zeus Baetocaece, I decided to grant him for all times, from which also the power of the god stems, the village of Baetocaece, which previously Demetrius, the son of Demetrius, son of Mnasaeus owned in Togourna in the satrapy of Apamea, together with all appurtenances and the revenues of the current year so that the revenues it yields may be used for the monthly sacrifices and the other expenses that concern the support of the sanctuary by the priest, who was appointed by the god, as is customary; monthly festivals shall be held, immune from tax, on every 15th and 30th of

the month, the sanctuary shall be granted asylia, *and no forces may be stationed in the village, as no objection has been raised. If anyone acts against the above, he will be guilty of impiety. The copies may be written on a stone stele and erected in the same sanctuary. It will now be necessary to write to those that normally receive notice so that things may be carried out as indicated.*

D   *Decree of the city, sent to the divine Augustus.*
It is necessary that all the goods go up via the market officers here and in the countryside for sale each month on the sacred market days in order that they may be available without interruption for all the worshippers going up; the market officer of the city shall be in charge but not interfere or press them under the pretext of requisition, taxation, exaction or reclamation; likewise, slaves, cattle and other animals shall be sold in the place without taxation, exaction or reclamation.

E   *The* katochoi *of the sacred heavenly Zeus have recorded at the beginning the divine rescript, venerated by all, a manifestation of the piety of the divine emperors towards the god and of their liberality towards the place.*

The presence of the fair offers an explanation for the disproportionate size of the court, both in relation to its temple and to its wider settlement. Not only can we infer that the location of the fair was integral to the shrine, but that the size of the complex was a result of that fair's scale. As for the nature of the fair, lines 37-8 in section D offer an indication: "*slaves, cattle and other animals*". Indeed, Dignas notes that "*if our evidence is representative at all, Baetocaece was one of very few slaving centres in the East, thus very important for the Roman slave trade, for which Syria was clearly one of the great suppliers*", adding that "*Arados itself was probably a place which slaves passed through on their way from Palmyra*".[519] The salient features of the Baetocaece sanctuary, then – this conjunction of major commercial activity, disproportionate apparent wealth and disproportionate size – afford an indication of what to look for elsewhere when determining the intersection of significant commerce with temple sites. We should also remember Lucian's description of festivals at the temple at Hierapolis, which suggests that major religious festivals also constituted significant and far-reaching opportunities for commerce – as Dignas notes, the temple and its cult would not only have greatly profited from this trade, but the trade's presence would itself have been a magnet "*for wealthy landowners and tradesmen*".[520] The indications are, then, that the Temple of Zeus Baetocaece fulfilled the role of a hosting temple in trade on at least the local level, and probably at the regional and long-distance level too, if it was indeed integral to the slave trade in the East. If Dignas is correct in her inferences as to the role of the cult itself in the slave trade, then this is an example of temple trade in both of the senses established in our Introduction: trade both by a temple and through a temple.

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[519] Dignas (2002), pp. 162-3. On Baetocaece see also Millar (1993), pp. 271-3.
[520] Ibid., p. 163.

7. From Mechanics to Models

The evidence and studies surveyed in this Part suggest avenues to explore in Palmyra. The role of temples in the network of trust is most worthy of investigation; it is clear there is also some connection between temples and the support of long-distance trade at caravanserais, and the hosting of fairs and commercial activities.

We have seen that trade into the Roman Near East was principally by ship rather than overland, the routes being from India and, to a lesser extent, Southern Arabia, and travelling into the region via the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. The maritime routes principally concerned goods such as spices and silk, and in the case of the Gulf routes, had overland elements upon reaching the Roman Near East. The only significant wholly-overland route was the incense route from Arabia which did not pass through Palmyra, although limited overland trade from central Asia via the so-called 'Silk Road' must have taken place. Upon arriving in the Roman Near East, long-distance trade principally made its way through the region by camel, travelling either north-west via Mesopotamia or Palmyra, or north via Petra and Nabataea.

Overland trade appears to have been dominated 'from the top' by wealthy elite individuals either forming part of the true social elite, or of a wealthy merchant class; the distinction between the two was blurred, particularly at Palmyra. At the 'bottom', overland trade was dominated by the camel, and therefore by the herd-owning pastoralists and nomads of the Syrian and Arabian steppe – the *Skênitai* of Strabo's *Geography* and the nomads of the Palmyrene caravan inscriptions. A single camel could carry approximately 180 kilograms approximately 30 kilometres a day for an extended period, required relatively little, easily-obtainable fodder (and a vast amount of salt), and in caravans likely reached many hundreds or even thousands, carrying many hundreds of thousands of kilograms of goods worth many millions of denarii. Seasonal access to the herds would have been critical for both the Palmyrene and Nabataean networks, and there is evidence for both groups at both 'ends' of their respective networks.

This overland trade required infrastructure in the form of roads, enclosures, watering stations and caravanserais, not least further infrastructure – much less easily identified – for the support of the people engaged in the trade, and the storage and sale of goods. Temples are often found in close proximity to, or integrated as part of, these caravanserais, reinforcing both the ubiquity of the religious world and

necessarily suggesting a role for such temples in the support (and possibly, the taxation) of long-distance trade. The support of this trade also required developed legal institutions, which are attested in the epigraphy, and a developed network of trust, both attested and implied in the epigraphy.

The sheer costs involved, and the scale of the operation, required individual merchants and traders to cooperate and work together as part of associations, guilds and *collegia*, directly attested in the Red Sea maritime trade from Egypt (in which both Palmyrenes and Nabataeans took part), and implied in evidence from Palmyra, in the role of the synodiarch (guild-ruler) or archemporos (ruling merchant) leading each caravan. The Palmyrene caravans often relied upon the largesse, favour or assistance of officials and individuals not directly connected with the enterprise, in order to survive. The tetarte inscription from Palmyra[521] suggests that the scale of the operation was at least an order of magnitude larger than that attested in the Muziris papyrus.

Regional and local fairs and markets also had a role, both in long-distance trade and in the religious life of the communities of the Roman Near East. Often hosted within temple precincts, these represented the greatest opportunities for trade in the region, and are likely to have coincided with the seasonality of the caravan trade. The integration of temples into the civic and commercial space of their cities suggests a role; that much of our evidence for these fairs attests their taking place in temple precincts is significant. Simply from their design, temenos temples can be expected to have catered to extremely large crowds of pilgrims, and it is highly likely that fairs would have coincided with major religious festivals.

We can now begin to see how temples may have fitted into the physical and metaphorical furniture of long-distance trade, and the network of trust underpinning it. Thus equipped, having examined how ancient trade and the network of trust worked, and how they can appear in the evidence we have, we can turn to the temples of Palmyra itself, and its trading diaspora, in Part III.

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[521] *PAT* 2634.

PART III: PALMYRA AND PALMYRENES ABROAD

Temples in the Palmyrene long-distance trade network

1. Introduction

We turn now to our main study: the temples of Palmyra and of Palmyrenes abroad. As we have seen, even while disparaging the term 'caravan city', Millar felt forced to concede that Palmyra was just that, with a large corpus of evidence attesting the extent of its trade across the Roman Near East and beyond.[1] The city and its trading network are ideally suited to being the focus of any investigation into the role of temples in long-distance trade in the Roman Near East; thanks to the distinctiveness of Palmyrene names, the Palmyrene dialect of Aramaic, and Palmyrene artistic forms, Palmyrenes are among the more readily apparent groups in the Roman world. The network also perfectly fits Taco Terpstra's model of a trading diaspora.[2] Crucially, the survival of much archaeological and epigraphic evidence of Palmyra's long-distance trade also distinguishes it from otherwise comparable cities such as the examples of Petra and Hatra which we have already explored.

Our aim is to make a case study of temples in Palmyra's trading network, so as to identify likely characteristics of temple trade from the evidence surveyed, and what characteristics can be discerned elsewhere. We shall do this by examining locales in this network – Palmyra, Dura Europos, Vologesias and the Red Sea, among others – and the epigraphic record in particular. For instance, of the three hundred or so surviving non-fragmentary inscriptions from the city of Palmyra itself catalogued by Yon,[3] thirty-four relate to long-distance trade.[4] Of these, a similar proportion – around twelve percent – can likewise be observed in inscriptions from the Temple of Bel, where of forty-nine non-fragmentary inscriptions, six relate to long-distance trade, and a seventh involves an individual known from other inscriptions to have been prominent in the caravan trade. These inscriptions, referred to collectively by

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[1] Millar (1998), p. 137.
[2] Terpstra (2013), p. 176. See above, pp. 111-4.
[3] *IGLS* XVII/1 = Yon, J-B. (2012), *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, Tome XVII – fascicule 1, *Palmyre*, IFPO, Beirut. Yon records 399 inscriptions in total from the city proper, but about a hundred of these are fragments. A further 163 almost exclusively funerary inscriptions relate to the various necropoleis and the Valley of the Tombs.
[4] See below, pp. 215-9.

some as the 'Caravan Inscriptions',[5] constitute an unparalleled record of long-distance trade in the Roman Near East.

It is apparent from the epigraphic evidence from Palmyra and the rest of the Near East that Palmyrene individuals and groups could be encountered across the region, and indeed across the Roman Empire. As we shall see, inscriptions in Palmyra itself refer to individuals of note assisting the city's caravan trade,[6] and mention other individuals that achieved office in what appear to be their new homes in other cities, often, it would seem, on the back of that same trade.[7] As we shall see, an inscription from the Palmyrene Agora dated to April, 131 AD tells us of a Palmyrene being appointed satrap of Tylos (Bahrain) by the king of Mesene,[8] showing that by the Second Century, Palmyrene influence could be felt into the Persian Gulf; Palmyrenes were also very much active in the Red Sea. At least two inscriptions explicitly attest Palmyrene trade with India;[9] indeed, Palmyra's long-distance trade with India is the subject of a substantial body of scholarship. The same can be said of the city's impressive temple ruins, which range from small urban temples such as the Temples of Allat and Rabaseire to the dominant Temple of Bel, one of the largest and most impressive ruins in the Roman Near East.

It is difficult to mention Palmyra and not get distracted into a description of the place itself – ever since their re-'discovery' by modern Europeans in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,[10] the city's extensive and romantic ruins have inspired a vast amount of scholarship and no small amount of purple prose.[11] Let us examine this historiography in more detail.

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[5] See for instance Yon (2002); Fox and Lieu (2011).
[6] See for instance *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 = *IPSC* G14 (February, 132 AD), discussed below, pp. 222-4, which describes a Palmyrene caravan from Vologesias on the Euphrates.
[7] See for instance an inscription from June, 144 AD describing a Palmyrene military commander, again from Vologesias, rescuing a caravan. *IGLS* XVII.127 = *IPSC* G15, pp. 24-6. Originally published by Drijvers (Drijvers, H. W. (1995.a), "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions", in Geller, M. J. and Greenfield, J. C. (eds.) (1995), *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches*, OUP, Oxford, pp. 31-42; inscription on pp. 33-9). See also Millar (1998), pp. 119-37; Kaizer, T. (2002), *The Religious Life of Palmyra*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, pp. 62-3.
[8] *IGLS* XVII.25 = *Inv.* IX.14a, 23-25 = *PAT* 0262, discussed below, p. 230. See Seyrig, H. (1941), "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre", in *Syria* 22 (1941), pp. 253-5. Seyrig's uncertainty concerning the identity of the location is resolved by the Palmyrene text, published later; see also Potts (1997).
[9] *IGLS* XVII.26 = *PAT* 2763 = *IPSC* G24 (March, 157 AD; not in *Inv.*), discussed below, p. 221, and *IGLS* XVII.250 = *PAT* 1403 = *Inv.* X.96 = *IPSC* G20 (same date), discussed below, p. 234.
[10] Eg. Dawkins J., and Wood, R. (1753), *The Ruins of Palmyra*, London; see also Volney (1791).
[11] Eg. Stoneman, R. (1992), *Palmyra and its Empire*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, p. 15.

2. Historiography

The Biblical city of Thadamora – the pre-Aramaic name for Palmyra – first appears as early as 2000 BC, in a brief reference from an Assyrian clay tablet.[12] Tantalising references such as this are all we have from this period. It is worth noting in passing that our very earliest, Second Millennium BC, sources link the oasis at the Eqfa spring (if not the city itself) with merchants and caravans.[13]

The sources are more or less silent on the subject of Palmyra until the coming of the Romans in the First Century BC. It was Pompey who first established Syria as a Roman province,[14] and although it is worth noting that he identified the northern Euphrates as a boundary,[15] it does not appear that this boundary stretched sufficiently far south to include Palmyra at this time.[16] Our earliest evidence for Romano-Palmyrene interaction suggests that Rome had little if any control over Palmyra in this period. Our earliest Roman reference to the city is by Appian: writing in the Second Century AD, he describes Marc Antony's attempted raid on Palmyra when his army went through Syria in 42/1 BC, shortly after our first Palmyrene Aramaic-language inscription:

ἀποπλευσάσης δὲ τῆς Κλεοπάτρας ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα, ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἔπεμπε τοὺς ἱππέας Πάλμυρα πόλιν, οὐ μακρὰν οὖσαν ἀπὸ Εὐφράτου, διαρπάσαι, μικρὰ μὲν ἐπικαλῶν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι Ῥωμαίων καὶ Παρθυαίων ὄντες ἐφόριοι ἐς ἑκατέρους ἐπιδεξίως εἶχον ʽἔμποροι γὰρ ὄντες κομίζουσι μὲν ἐκ Περσῶν τὰ Ἰνδικὰ ἢ Ἀράβια, διατίθενται δ᾽ ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων, ἔργῳ δ᾽ ἐπινοῶν τοὺς ἱππέας περιουσιάσαι. Παλμυρηνῶν δὲ προμαθόντων καὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἐς τὸ πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ μετενεγκάντων τε καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης, εἴ τις ἐπιχειροίη σκευασαμένων τόξοις, πρὸς ἃ πεφύκασιν ἐξαιρέτως, οἱ ἱππέες τὴν πόλιν κενὴν καταλαβόντες ὑπέστρεψαν, οὔτε ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθόντες οὔτε τι λαβόντες.

When Cleopatra returned home, Antony sent a cavalry force to Palmyra, situated not far from the Euphrates, to plunder it, bringing the trifling accusation against its inhabitants that being on the frontier between the Romans and the Parthians, they had avoided taking sides between them; for, being merchants, they bring the products of India and Arabia from Persia and dispose of them in the Roman territory; but in fact, Antony's intention was to enrich his horsemen. However, the Palmyrenes were forewarned and they transported their property across the river, and, stationing themselves on the bank, prepared to shoot anybody who should attack them, for they are expert bowmen. They found nothing in the city. They turned round and came back, having met no foe, and empty-handed.[17]

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[12] See above, p. 11.

[13] The oasis was passed by caravans from Mari in the 1700s BC. See Arnaud (1986), no. 21.

[14] Edwell, P. (2008), *Between Rome and Persia: the Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman control*, Routledge, London, p. 7.

[15] Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.8.

[16] On which see above all Hekster, O. & Kaizer, T. (2004), "Mark Antony and the raid on Palmyra: reflections on Appian, *Bella Civilia* V.9", in *Latomus* 63 (2004), pp. 70-80. See now Edwell, P. (2013), "The Euphrates as a boundary between Rome and Parthia in the late republic and early Empire", in *Antichthon* 47, pp. 191-206.

[17] Appian, *BC* V, I.9, trans. White (1913, reprinted 1964).

This is the earliest known interaction between Rome and Palmyra, although Appian's account is confused, narratively convenient, appears to be partly based on Second Century AD information,[18] and is also rather inaccurate (Palmyra is in fact quite '*far from the Euphrates*'). We shall see that the settlement was in fact already established by this point, and perhaps an indication of what it was that the Palmyrenes retreated with – it certainly does not suggest that the fabric of the town was movable, if they retreated at all.[19] It is quite possible that Appian's attestation that Palmyra was important enough in the latter 40s BC to merit an expedition there was correct, despite the clear shortcomings of his account. His assertion that the Palmyrenes of the period were engaged in long-distance trade agrees both with our earlier evidence going all the way back to the Second Millennium BC,[20] and with later epigraphic evidence for trade in and via the city. He certainly suggests that in this period, Palmyra was not (yet) fully within the Roman sphere of influence.

Palmyra is also mentioned by Josephus, writing in the late First Century AD; he – almost certainly erroneously – attributes its foundation to Solomon, after a similar account related in the Bible:[21]

ἐμβαλὼν δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τῆς ἐπάνω Συρίας καὶ κατασχὼν αὐτὴν ἔκτισεν ἐκεῖ πόλιν μεγίστην δύο μὲν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ἄνω Συρίας διεστῶσαν, ἀπὸ δ᾽ Εὐφράτου μιᾶς, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς μεγάλης Βαβυλῶνος ἓξ ἡμερῶν ἦν τὸ μῆκος. αἴτιον δὲ τοῦ τὴν πόλιν οὕτως ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκουμένων μερῶν τῆς Συρίας ἀπῳκίσθαι τὸ κατωτέρω μὲν μηδαμοῦ τῆς γῆς ὕδωρ εἶναι, πηγὰς δ᾽ ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόπῳ μόνον εὑρεθῆναι καὶ φρέατα. ταύτην οὖν τὴν πόλιν οἰκοδομήσας καὶ τείχεσιν ὀχυρωτάτοις περιβαλὼν Θαδάμοραν ὠνόμασε καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἔτι νῦν καλεῖται παρὰ τοῖς Σύροις, οἱ δ᾽ Ἕλληνες αὐτὴν προσαγορεύουσι Πάλμυραν.

He [Solomon] *also advanced into the desert of Upper Syria and, having taken possession of it, founded there a very great city at a distance of two days' journey from Upper Syria and one day's journey from the Euphrates, while from great Babylon the distance was a journey of six days. Now, the reason for founding the city so far from the inhabited parts of Syria was that further down there was no water anywhere in the land, and that only in this place were springs and wells to be found. And so, when he had built this city and surrounded it with very strong walls, he named it Thadamora, as it is still called by the Syrians, while the Greeks call it Palmyra.*[22]

Both authors significantly understate the travel times to and from Palmyra – as we shall see, it is well over a hundred kilometres from the city to the Euphrates in any direction, north or east – not manageable

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[18] See for instance Millar, (1998), p. 131.
[19] See below, p. 200.
[20] See above, p. 11.
[21] I *Kings* 9, 15-19; II *Chronicles* 8, 1-6.
[22] Jos. *Ant.* VIII.6.2, trans. Thackeray and Marcus (1934, reprinted 1977).

in a day.[23]   Indeed, Palmyra's description in both works appears more to be a matter of narrative and stylistic convenience than anything else.[24]

Pliny, writing in the following century, describes Palmyra's situation much more accurately, but still in the stereotypical terms of an oasis:

Palmyra, urbs nobilis situ, divitiis soli et aquis amoenis, vasto undique ambitu harenis includit agros ac, velut terris exempta a rerum natura, privata sorte inter duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque est, prima in discordia semper utrimque cura. abest ab Seleucia Parthorum, quae vocatur Ad Tigrim, CCCXXXVII p., a proximo vero Syriae litore CCIII et a Damasco XXVII propius.	*Palmyra is a city famous for its situation, for the richness of its soil and for its agreeable springs; its fields are surrounded on every side by a vast circuit of sand, and it as if it were isolated by Nature from the world, having a destiny of its own between the two mighty empires of Rome and Parthia, and at the first moment of a quarrel between them always attracting attention from both sides. It is 337 miles distant from Parthian Seleucia, generally known as Seleucia on the Tigris, 203 miles from the nearest part of the Syrian coast, and 27 miles less from Damascus.[25]*

These three passages comprise virtually the entire Classical canon on Palmyra from our period; a passage in Polybius mentions an "*Arab*" military commander by the name of Zabdibelos serving under the Seleucids at the Battle of Raphia in 217 BC – his is a Palmyrene name, but we know nothing more of him.[26]   Aside from the mentions in the above extracts, the canon is silent until the close of our period.   In the meantime, Palmyra transformed from a modest Hellenistic town to a sprawling and lavishly-appointed city whose architecture rivalled any of its peers; it is the ruins of this city which remain to this day, largely intact barring alterations in subsequent eras (on which, see below).

Palmyra's last flourishing, both in reality and in the Classical canon, was a period of high drama: its rise under the leadership of Septimius Odenathus, followed by an Icarus-like ascent to Empire under Zenobia – and crushing defeat, its wings melted by Aurelian in 272/3 AD.   As this was beyond the time of historians such as Cassius Dio (whose history closes in 229), aside from the inscriptional record (on which more below), our knowledge of these events chiefly comes to us through fragments of the *Historia*

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[23] See among others the footnote to this effect in Thackeray and Marcus' translation of Josephus; Thackeray, H. St. J. and Marcus, R. (1934; reprinted 1977), *Josephus – Jewish Antiquities*, Vol. V, Loeb Classical Library, HUP, London, pp. 654-5. The closest major point is Sura, 140 kilometres northwest.

[24] Hekster and Kaizer (2004), *passim.*

[25] Pliny, *NH*, V.21, trans. Rackham (1945, reprinted 1968). Cf. above all Will (1995), pp. 525-31.

[26] Polybius, *Hist.* V.79 – "*The Arabs and neighbouring tribes numbered about ten thousand and were commanded by Zabdibelos*", trans. Paton (1923; revised 2011). The name is spotted by Yon, but mis-referenced. See Yon (2002), p. 1.

Augusta and the history of Zosimus, with supporting material in other sources.[27]   While the *Historia Augusta* is at least partly fictional, it cannot be completely discounted as fantasy and is corroborated at least in part both by Zosimus and the inscriptions, as well as by fragments of now-lost histories by Eutropius and Aurelius Victor.[28]   The story of Zenobia also appears in ancient Arabic texts assembled by al-Tabari in the Ninth Century AD,[29] although his account is, as Stoneman puts it, "*generally irreconcilable with the Latin and Greek accounts*".[30]   The last major historical work on the subject of Palmyra comes to us from the Twelfth-Century AD Byzantine scholar Zonaras; his sources for the period in question are not clear, but they are certainly lost to us today.[31]   Study of Palmyra's brief imperial florescence under Zenobia, and of Zenobia herself, remains dominant, and a major topic for Classical Reception into the modern day.[32]

Al-Tabari suggests that after the reduction, Palmyra became Christianised;[33] destruction of the major temples followed in the late Fourth Century.[34]   The Christianisation is also attested by Procopius, who describes Palmyra's "*convenient*" location, its almost utter desertion, and fortification and garrisoning under Justinian in the middle of the first half of the Sixth Century.[35]   After the Muslim conquest, Palmyra was reduced to a village in the temenos of the Temple of Bel, and for most of its existence thereafter, it remained a small settlement, occasionally enjoying brief periods of prosperity as a caravan halt before shrinking back into obscurity.[36]   Never truly abandoned, the site was passed between various Muslim

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[27] For a reasonably comprehensive corpus of literary and inscriptional material relating to Odenathus, Zenobia and the Palmyrene rebellion, see above all Dodgeon, M. H. and Lieu, S. N. C. (1991), *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 226-363)*, Routledge, London, Ch. 4, pp. 68-110.

[28] Ibid. On the *Historia Augusta* and sources for Palmyrene history in general, see Stoneman (1992), pp. 8-14.

[29] See now al-Tabari, *History*, trans. Bosworth, C. E. (1999), *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. 5, *The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids and Yemen*, State University of New York Press, Albany.

[30] Stoneman (1992), p. 11.

[31] See Dodgeon and Lieu (1991).

[32] See Stoneman (1992), *passim*; see also Schneider, E. E. (1993), *Septimia Zenobia Sebaste*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma; Southern (2008); Winsbury, R. (2010), *Zenobia of Palmyra – History, Myth and the Neo-Classical Imagination*, Duckworth, London; and now Sartre, M. and Sartre, A. (2014), *Zénobie de Palmyre à Rome*, Perrin, Paris.

[33] Bowersock (1983), p.140.

[34] On the post-Zenobian historiography of Palmyra, see Stoneman (1992), pp. 189-195.

[35] Procop. *Buildings of Justinian*, 2.11.10-12. He inaccurately states that it is near Lebanon, however.

[36] Stoneman (1992), pp. 192-3. A translation of the medieval Muslim history of Palmyra is offered in Le Strange, G. (1890), *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A. D. 650 To 1500. Translated from the works of the medieval Arab geographers*, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston, republished (2010), Cosimo, New York, pp. 540-2.

rulers before being sacked by Tamburlane.[37] After being integrated into the Ottoman Empire, this pattern only continued.

Insofar as European interest is concerned, the first recorded visits are those of merchants in the Seventeenth Century; French, Italian, Swedish, German and eventually English.[38] The culmination of this early interest came in the form of the expedition there of James Dawkins and Robert Wood, whose spectacular collection of woodcut engravings would foreshadow the lavish photographic tomes produced by Edwardian-era pioneers a century and a half later and allow the translation of Palmyrene Aramaic for the first time.[39] One of the more remarkable visits of the pre-Victorian period was that of Lady Hester Stanhope, who by all accounts enjoyed something of a triumphal parade upon her entry into the ruins on her voyage there in 1813.[40]

Archaeological work at Palmyra, as at many other sites in the Roman Near East, was begun by German pioneers in the 1900s, by Puchstein and Wiegand.[41] Passing under French control under the inter-war Mandate, work at Palmyra began in earnest under Henri Seyrig, who arranged for the pre-Ottoman village in the Temple of Bel to be bodily moved to a new, nearby site (now the site of the modern town of Tadmor) before commencing excavations there himself.[42] As we have seen, Seyrig himself published a vast series of articles on the subject of Palmyra and its religion in the journal *Syria*, which have become part of the bedrock of Palmyrene studies.[43] In the ensuing decades, a plethora of national teams and expeditions has excavated different parts of the city,[44] including the major temples. A Swiss expedition with UNESCO backing excavated the Temple of Baalshamin,[45] and that of Nabu was excavated by a Syrian team.[46] The particular contribution of the Polish mission is notable, under the

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[37] Stoneman (1992), pp. 192-3; Le Strange (1890), pp. 540-2.
[38] Stoneman (1992), pp. 7 & 193; Kaizer (2002), pp. 20-4; Southern, P. (2008), *Empress Zenobia*, Continuum, London, p. 13.
[39] Dawkins and Wood (1753).
[40] Stoneman (1992), pp. 7 & 193-4.
[41] Wiegand, T. (ed.) (1932), *Palmyra: Ergebnisse der Expeditionen von 1902 und 1917*, H. Keller, Berlin.
[42] See above all Seyrig, H., Amy, R. and Will, E. (1975), *Le Temple de Bel à Palmyre*, two volumes, Geuthner, Paris. See also du Mesnil du Buisson, R. (1966), "Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre", in *CRAI* 110.1 (1966), pp. 158-87.
[43] Seyrig (1931-65; 2013).
[44] For an overview of these, see for instance Kaizer (2008.a), pp. 14-15.
[45] Collart, P. and Vicari, J. (1969-1975), *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre*, six volumes, Institut Suisse de Rome, Rome.
[46] See Bounnī, 'A., Seigne, J. and Saliby, N. (1992), *Le Sanctuaire de Nabū à Palmyre (Planches)*, IFAPO, Beyrouth; Bounnī, 'A. (2004), *Le Sanctuaire de Nabū à Palmyre (Texte)*, IFAPO, Beyrouth.

direction of Kazimierz Michalowski and Michal Gawlikowski,[47] for its work on the temples of Bel and of Allat. Malcolm College's work on *The Art of Palmyra* remains an important study of the sculptural styles and items from the city,[48] while Jean-Baptiste Yon's *IGLS* volume comprises the most recent collection of Palmyrene inscriptions to date.[49]

Prior to this, Palmyra's extensive inscriptional record was published in part by Seyrig in his *Antiquites Syriennes*; a similarly venerable series is Cantineau's *Tadmorea*, again published in *Syria*.[50] Cantineau also oversaw the collation and publication of the *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*,[51] one of the principal repositories of Palmyrene texts. More recently, Hilliers and Cussini's contribution in the form of the *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* has likewise become essential.[52]

Study of Palmyrene religion has long been a dominant theme in scholarship on the city.[53] This owes in part to the spectacular remains of the city's temples, not least the aforementioned Temple of Bel. One of the first major treatments of Palmyra's religion was Javier Teixidor's *The Pantheon of Palmyra*;[54] in the decades since, new information and interpretative approaches have spawned numerous other works, perhaps the most important of which is Ted Kaizer's *The Religious Life of Palmyra*,[55] which remains the most comprehensive study to date. The substance of debate in studies on Palmyra's religious life is broadly similar to the wider ethnicity and identity debates identified in the main historiography above; the issue of identity, and to what extent Palmyra's religion was Hellenised, Romanised or essentially 'Eastern', while less current than before, remains a dominant feature of the scholarship, even when the focus of inquiry is on other aspects of Palmyrene life.[56] The nature of its polity, civic life, tribes and institutions has also

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[47] See above all Michalowski, K. (ed.) (1960-84), *Palmyre*, eight volumes, Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, Warszawa.
[48] Colledge (1976.a).
[49] *IGLS* XVII/1, Palmyra = Yon (2012).
[50] For a full listing see for instance Teixidor, J. (1979), *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, Brill, Leiden, p. xi.
[51] Commonly abbreviated as *Inv.* Twelve volumes; see Bibliography (p. 280).
[52] Commonly abbreviated as *PAT*. Hillers, D. R. and Cussini, E. (1996), *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.
[53] For a historiography on this, see Kaizer (2002), pp. 20-4.
[54] Teixidor, J. (1979), *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, Brill, Leiden.
[55] Kaizer (2002).
[56] See now Smith, A. M. (2013), *Roman Palmyra – Identity, Community, and State Formation*, OUP, New York.

been subject to continued study; this often focuses on the extent to which Palmyrene culture was informed by the nomads which many presume to have founded the city in the first place.[57]

Finally, the topic of Palmyra's long-distance trade and its study as a caravan city is a venerable academic debate generating a great deal of scholarship in its own right. We have already seen the extent of Rostovtzeff's shadow and the progress of the 'caravan cities' debate in which Palmyra plays a crucial part.[58] Crucial to an understanding of this debate, as we shall see, are understanding the Palmyrene tariff published by Waddington and subject to a major commentary by Matthews;[59] seminal papers by Gawlikowski and Millar also remain critical.[60] In recent times, a succession of major studies on long-distance trade in the Roman Near East have focused in one way or another on the Palmyrene trading network.[61] As with the 'caravan cities' debate more broadly, works focusing on other areas often make some contribution or other to the debate.[62]

The plethora of questions and debates surrounding Palmyra's trade network underscores its importance for our own investigation: as an extensive and relatively well-explored entity, a study of Palmyra's temples and long-distance trade network will afford an opportunity to explore the connections and relationships between the two, and the role of the temples in that network.

3. Region and Routes

ita fertur usque Suram locum, in quo conversus ad orientem relinquit Syriae Palmyrenas solitudines, quae usque ad Petram urbem et regionem Arabiae Felicis appellatae pertinent.

So the river flows on to the place named Sura, where it takes a turn to the east and leaves the Syrian desert of Palmyra which stretches right on to the city of Petra and the region called Arabia Felix.[63]

If the ninety-degree east-south curve of the Euphrates from Sura to Dura had been inscribed by a compass, Palmyra is not far from where that compass' point would have been set; it is almost as if the

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[57] Millar (1993), pp. 319 & 31. See for instance Yon (2002); now Smith (2013), *passim*, esp. pp. 33-54; see also Dirven, L. (1999), *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, Leiden, Brill.

[58] See above, pp. 55-7; see for instance the variety of papers in *AAAS* 42 (1996) from the *Palmyra and the Silk Road* Congress.

[59] See Waddington, W. (1882), in *Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique* 6 (1882), pp. 439-42; for commentary, see Matthews (1984). The Tariff relates exclusively to local trade and not long-distance trade; it therefore sheds light on Palmyra's relationship with its hinterland and the goods that hinterland produced, rather than the nature of the long-distance trade, most of the goods of which presumably never entered the city.

[60] See Gawlikowski (1994) and Millar (1998).

[61] Young (2001), Parker (2008), McLaughlin (2010; 2014), Seland (2013; 2014; 2015).

[62] See for instance remarks in Dirven (ed.) *Hatra*, or in Stoneman (1992).

[63] Pliny, *NH*, V.21., trans. Rackham (1945, reprinted 1968).

river deliberately avoids it. Palmyra is situated at the Eqfa spring, 140 kilometres south of Sura, 160 kilometres east of Emesa, 200 kilometres west of Dura-Europos and 250 kilometres northeast of Damascus, in a gap in the chain of uplands pointing north-west from the Anti-Lebanon.[64]

Its situation in the steppe of the Syrian Desert makes it something of an island between Emesa, its closest western neighbour – in the Homs Gap north of Damascus between the steppe and the clement Mediterranean coast – and Dura, Palmyra's closest eastern neighbour, situated on the west bank of the Euphrates.[65] To the west of Palmyra lies the fertile Phoenician-Lebanese coast and the cities which formed the heart of Roman Syria; to the north and east, the chain of settlements along the Euphrates, and Mesopotamia beyond. To the south, the Syrian Desert merges into the Arabian; there is nothing until – eventually – one reaches the Wadi Sirhan and the Nabataean caravanserais of the Incense Route at remote stations such as Dumat.

As a trading city, Palmyra's routes were its lifeline. It is located in the bottom-right corner of Segment IX of the Peutinger Map, which lists roads to Damascus and Apamea; a third route trails off into the desert in Segment X. The road from Palmyra to Damascus, formalised after the close of our period as the Strata Diocletiana which continued north to the Euphrates at Sura,[66] was obviously an important route for communication and travel; both Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions are found along its route, for instance at Dumayr and Nazala.[67] Palmyra's territory appears to have stretched to the Euphrates to the north and east (at least as far as the island of 'Ana, midway between Dura and Hit),[68] and at least as far as Khirbet-el-Bilas, 75 kilometres to the northwest, and at least sixty-five kilometres to the southwest, to Qasr-el-Hair, where it shared a border with Emesa.[69] A route led north from Palmyra to Seriane, at the crossroads of the routes between Palmyra and Beroea (modern Aleppo), and Calinnincum (modern Raqqah) and Epiphanaia (modern Hama),[70] although it is unclear which city's territory Seriane fell within.

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[64] Palmyra sits in the gap between the Jabal ar Ruwaq and the Jabal Abu Rujmayn.
[65] 155 km to Homs and 226 to Dura.
[66] See Edwell (2008), p. 88.
[67] Millar (1993), pp. 298-9.
[68] Gawlikowski (1994), pp. 30-1; see also Edwell (2008), pp. 41-2.
[69] Stoneman (1992), p. 53. See below, p. 251.
[70] See below, p. 213-4.

Palmyra's eastward routes have been less clear. In the 1930s, Antoine Poidebard took to the air over Syria and discovered what proved to be the Roman-era route between Palmyra and Hit; however, surprisingly, he found no evidence of such a route between Palmyra and Dura.[71] Further, no trace of the presumed caravan route between Dura and Palmyra has yet been found.[72] This is nevertheless consistent with Gawlikowski's suggestion that instead of following a binary relay between Palmyra and Dura and back again, the Palmyrene caravans followed a triangular route, with the first leg being between Palmyra and Dura, the second between Dura and Hit, and finally the return from Hit to Palmyra.[73] This allows for the passing of caravans between Palmyra and Dura, and incidentally allows for such caravans to have been involved in the local trade which we must presume to have taken place between the two cities. Only rafts and lighter boats could make the journey to and from Dura; heavier boats were restricted to no farther than Hit.[74] There is also evidence of a direct overland route from Palmyra to Vologesias or even the mouth of the Euphrates at Charax;[75] such a route would have been long (about a month's journey), and would presumably have been made when travel up the Euphrates was hindered by the spring spate and flood, which coincided with the arrival of ships from India at Charax.[76]

Recent evidence has come to light on the island of Socotra, known in Greco-Roman circles as the isle of the Dioscorides. Here, a wooden tablet dedicated in Palmyrene Aramaic in 258 AD was discovered in a cave alongside inscriptions in a number of languages of the period from Europe, India and beyond.[77] It is suggested that the dedication was by a merchant on the Red Sea-India route, although the wording of the inscription may indicate that the dedicant was in fact an envoy of some kind.[78]

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[71] See Poidebard (1934), pp. 105-114. This is possibly because he mainly flew at dawn and dusk, when shadows were longest – but a due east-west route such as that between Palmyra and Dura may not have shown clearly.
[72] Aside, of course, from the Temple in the Necropolis (on which, see below, pp. 238-42). For more on this, see Poidebard (1934), pp. 115-7.
[73] Gawlikowski, M. (1983.a), "Palmyre et l'Euphrate", in *Syria* 60 (1983), pp. 53-68. See now Seland (2015).
[74] See Gawlikowski, M. (1994), "Palmyra as a Trading Centre" in *Iraq* 46 (1994), pp. 30-1; again Seland (2015).
[75] Seland (2015); Poidebard (1934).
[76] Seland (2015). Indeed, many of the Charax inscriptions date from the spring months.
[77] Kaizer (2015), pp. 23-4; see Robin, C. J. and Gorea, M. (2002), "Les vestiges antiques de la grotte de Ḥôq (Suquṭra, Yémen)", in *CRAI* 146.2 (2002), pp. 409-45.
[78] Kaizer (2015), pp. 23-4.

4. Site and Hinterland

Figure 15 Plan of Palmyra

1: Temple of Bel.
2: Temple of Baal-Shamin.
3: Temple of Nabu.
4: Temple of Allath.
5: Theatre.
6: Tetrapylon.
7: Monumental Arch.
8: Baths of Diocletian.
9: Houses.
10: Caravanserai.
11: Diocletian Camp.
12: Tombs. (After Mikhailowski)
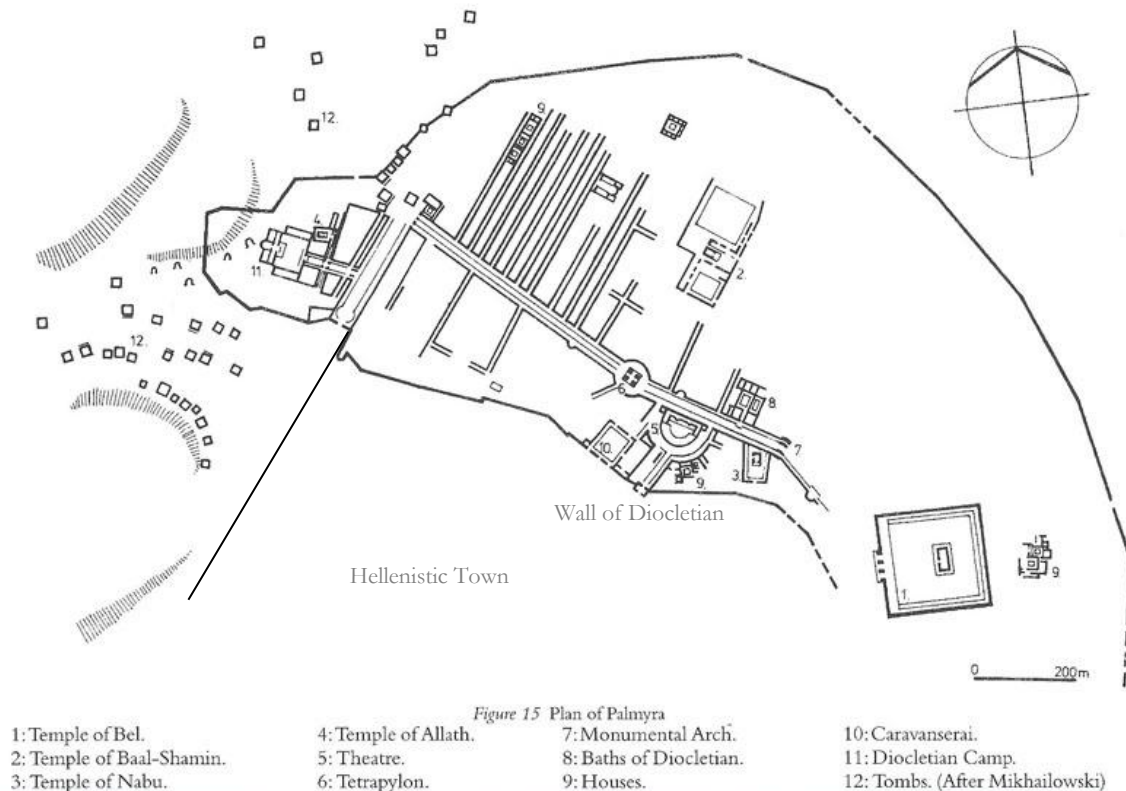
Fig. 19: A plan of Palmyra.

It is currently impossible to determine the point at which Palmyra was founded.[79] What pre-Roman evidence there is allows neither the establishment of continuity nor certainty that the sulphurous Efqa spring at Palmyra's heart was constantly inhabited in the millennia in which that evidence falls.[80] We can however be certain that the Efqa spring has been the site of human activity for thousands of years. Excavations in the court of the Temple of Bel suggest reasonably continuous activity there since the Middle Bronze Age.[81] In all probability, Palmyra has played host to habitation of some description for all or almost all of that time, but this cannot yet be definitively proven.

Aurelian's reduction of Palmyra appears to have involved a significant contraction of the city; the surviving plan seems to constitute less than half of the pre-272 city, the remainder of which – to the south of the wadi, the Agora and Wall of Diocletian along the line of the wadi – is now lost to us beneath the

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[79] See for instance, Kaizer (2002), p. 50.
[80] For a detailed overview of the pre-Roman evidence, see above all Dirven (1999), p. 18 n. 77.
[81] See du Mesnil du Buisson (1966), pp. 179-87.

oasis and the ruins of Diocletian's camp (see Figure 19 overleaf).[82] A recent campaign of excavations south of the wadi led by Schmidt-Colinet has shed some light on this portion of the ancient city,[83] using soundings and satellite imagery to build a picture of the area as a whole prior to conducting limited excavations.[84] These excavations discovered pottery dating at the earliest from the 3rd Century BC, and included types from the Eastern Mediterranean, Levantine coast, Babylonia, southern Mesopotamia, and wider Parthia, including a range of imports from the 3rd and 2nd Centuries BC;[85] some limited mudbrick architecture was dated to the 3rd Century BC;[86] these are the earliest known remains from the city, and suggest interconnection with and beyond the region even at this early stage.

The surviving city walls, with their familiar lemon-wedge shape north of the wadi, are a later addition by Diocletian, presumably in recognition of the site's continuing value for controlling the Syrian Desert, even if its all-important caravan trade had by then been irrevocably dispersed elsewhere. Outside the walls, significant enclosures have been identified as caravanserais and pens for camels;[87] given Palmyra's steppe surroundings, the probable extent of the caravan trade, and the pastoralism of the region, this should come as no surprise. If Appian's passage is to be believed, it was surely the goods staying with the camels in these pens prior to the trek west into Syria proper which were the goal of Marc Antony's raid – and which the Palmyrenes fled with in 41 BC, showing that they remained sufficiently mobile to be swiftly withdrawn from harm's way.

The earliest known Palmyrene Aramaic inscription dates from just before that time – 44 BC:

byrḥ tšry šnt 269	*In the month of Tishri (October, 44*
'qym[w] kmry'	*BC), the priests of Bel have raised*
dy bl ṣlm' dnh lgrymy	*this statue of Goraimai, son of*
4 br nbwzbd dy mn pḥd	*Nabuzabad, who is of the tribe of*
bny khnbw	*the Bene Kohennabu.*[88]

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[82] See for instance Starcky and Gawlikowski (1972), pp. 14-22 & Pl. III. See now Kaizer (2002), p. 17 & Pl. II. See also Gawlikowski (1973), pp. 9-12, fig. I.

[83] Schmidt-Colinet, A., and al-As'ad, W. (eds.) (2013), *Palmyras Reichtum durch Weltweiten Handel. Archäologische untersuchungen im bereich der Hellenistichen stadt*, two volumes, Verlag Holzhausen, Vienna; see also Kaizer, T. (2015.b), "On the origins of Palmyra and its trade", review article, in *JRS* 28 (2015), pp. 881-8.

[84] On the satellite imagery, see Schnädelbach, K. (2010), *Topographia palmyrena*, UNESCO, Damascus.

[85] Schmidt-Colinet and al-As'ad (eds.) (2013), Vol. 2, Chs. 1 and 3; cf. Kaizer (2015.b), pp. 884-5.

[86] Ibid., Vol. 1, Ch., 2; cf. Kaizer (2015.b), p. 884.

[87] Dentzer (1994).

[88] *PAT* 1524 = *Inv.* XI.100, after Gianto, A. (2005), "Variation in the Palmyrene Honorific Inscriptions", in Cussini, E. (ed.) (2005), *A Journey to Palmyra: Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R. Hillers*, Brill, Leiden, p. 85.

This is in many ways an inscription typical of Palmyra: honorific and religious inscriptions form much of the surviving corpus of Palmyrene Aramaic writing.[89] The mention of a Palmyrene tribe is also typical; we shall explore the tribes and their role – particularly with regard to trade – in due course.[90]

Eleven years after the first inscription from Palmyra, a sanctuary was dedicated on the outskirts of the town of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates, in 33 BC; just as the 44 BC inscription is the earliest known from Palmyra, so too is the 33 BC inscription the earliest known from Dura; it is also the oldest in Palmyrene Aramaic from anywhere outside the city itself.[91] Barely eleven years separate the earliest Palmyrene inscriptions at Palmyra and Dura, and barely twenty separate the fall of Dura to Sassanid forces and the fall of Palmyra to Aurelian's troops in 272/3 AD; the cities flourished contemporaneously.

It is likewise noteworthy that Palmyra's relationship with Rome in our period – at least in the literary sources – both begins and ends with the dispatching of military forces there. In the interim, the relationship between the two cities developed significantly, and the degree to which Palmyra became 'Romanised' feeds into the broader debate about ethnicity surrounding Roman Near Eastern studies.[92] Whether or not that relationship was built on trade is hotly debated.[93]

The earliest known inscription referring to the inhabitants of Palmyra collectively, as opposed to individual groups, is dated to 10/11 AD.[94] This inscription is difficult to interpret, but it is possible that it refers to an official responsible for the 'camel toll' on behalf of the whole community – presumably an office with some importance.[95] In later times, taxes and tolls would be levied by the Romans, making this inscription the last to mention taxes without also, implicitly or explicitly, mentioning Rome.

Fifty years after Pompey's annexation of Syria, there is evidence for the delineation of the bounds of Palmyrene territory under Creticus Silanus, the Roman Legate of Syria, in 11 AD.[96] A Latin dedication to

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[89] On honorific inscriptions in Palmyra in particular, see above all Dijkstra (1995), Ch. 3, pp. 81-170.
[90] Gawlikowski (1973), p. 59.
[91] See below, p. 240.
[92] See now Smith (2013) on exactly this topic.
[93] Compare Millar (1998) with Edwell (2008), Ch. 2, and Dirven (1999); see also Kaizer (2015), pp. 26-9.
[94] *PAT* 2636; see al-As'ad, K. and Gawlikowski, M. (1993), "Le péage à Palmyre en 11 après J. C.", in *Semitica* 41-2 (1993), pp. 163-72.
[95] See below, pp. 216-7.
[96] From the Khirbet el-Bilaas boundary marker on the road between Palmyra and Emesa; originally published in Schlumberger, D. (1939), "Bornes Frontières de la Palmyrène", in *Syria* 20 (1939), pp. 43-73, Inscription no. II, pp. 61-3 and Fig. 9; also see Edwell, (2008), pp. 41-2 and fig. 2.6.

Germanicus in Palmyra is dated to between 14 and 19 AD;[97] this date chimes well with the laying of the boundaries. The fact that it was left by a Legionary legate suggests that Palmyra was by this stage a client state of Rome. The commencement of construction of the Temple of Bel in this period has been viewed as proof that Palmyra was part of the Roman Empire by this period;[98] this in itself is unconvincing, however. More convincing is Southern's argument that the presence of a Legionary legate indicates that Palmyra was under a degree of Roman administrative control in that period.[99] Certainly, the coincidence of so much – the visit of Germanicus described by Tacitus,[100] the legate's dedication,[101] Silanus' setting of the boundaries[102] – strongly suggests Roman rule, at least to a degree, in this period.[103] Between April, 52 AD and September, 58 AD, a trio of rare trilingual inscriptions (in Latin, Greek and Palmyrene Aramaic) commemorate the erection of familial tombs,[104] and in 62-3 AD comes Palmyra's earliest dedication to a reigning emperor, in this case, Nero.[105] Palmyra's status as part of the Roman sphere is, by this point, beyond doubt.

On his grand tour of the empire in 129 AD, Hadrian endowed Palmyra with his name, and it was made a colony under the Severans in the early Third Century. Palmyra's relationship with Rome is thereafter characterised by the deterioration in relations between Rome and Sassanid Persia, significant military upheaval and a consequent drop-off in trade (inferred from the marked decrease in the number of caravan inscriptions from this period).[106] Aurelian's eventual, and crushing, response to Zenobia's rebellion in 272 is widely held to provide something of a full stop to Palmyra's history, but in truth it is

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[97] *IGLS* XVII.3 = *Inv.* IX.2.
[98] See for instance Stoneman (1992), p. 27, but compare Edwell (2008), pp. 34-7.
[99] See for instance Jones, A. H. M. (1937), *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, OUP, Oxford, p. 267.
[100] Tac. *Ann.* II.57.2.
[101] *IGLS* XVII.3 = *Inv.* IX.2.
[102] See above, n. 96.
[103] On Palmyra's early relationship with Rome, see Southern (2008), pp. 17-24, and Edwell (2008), pp. 31-62.
[104] See Gawlikowski, M and As'ad, K. (1997), *The Inscriptions of the Museum of Palmyra*, Varsovie, Paris, No. 113; also *CIS* 4235. On trilingual inscriptions at Palmyra see Millar, F. (1995), "Latin in the epigraphy of the Roman Near East", in Solin, Salomies and Liertz (eds.) (1995), *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini*, pp. 403-19, esp. pp. 408-14; see also Yon, J-B. (2008), "Bilinguisme et trilinguisme à Palmyre", in Biville, Decourt and Rougemount (eds.), *Bilinguisme gréco-latin et épigraphie*, pp. 195-211.
[105] In Seyrig, H. (1941), "Le Statut du Palmyre" in *Syria* 22 (1941), p. 175; Seyrig dates it to 63 AD but Yon brings it back to 62 AD (see Yon (2002), p. 250 tab. VII.).
[106] See Southern (2008), p. 42 for an excellent summary of evidence.

more of a semi-colon – as we have seen, the city continued being a site of some importance into the Ottoman period.[107]

In many ways, it was Palmyra's relationship with Rome that came to define it historically, with its rise and fall generally being viewed in a Roman context.[108] The degree to which Palmyra ever became a truly 'Roman' city is debated:[109] Latin never achieved dominance as a language of state, and nor did Greek ever entirely edge out Palmyrene Aramaic in public inscription. Although Palmyra displays aspects of Syrian, Greek and Roman organisation, at no point does it appear to have cloven entirely to any of these three models of governance.

Palmyra's territory – often referred to as the Palmyrena or the Palmyrène – comprised the largest single subdivision of Roman Syria.[110] Following the pioneering work of Daniel Schlumberger, study of Palmyra's hinterland has generally focused on the villages and farms to the northwest, upon whose produce the city itself is thought to have relied.[111] Much of Palmyra's hinterland is self-evidently steppe or desert, however, much of it cultivates well if provided with sufficient water. We have seen Pliny's description of the city surrounded by fields,[112] and based on the density of habitation, Smith estimates that at its zenith Palmyra and its hinterland supported a quarter of a million people, if not more.[113] The Tariff from Palmyra's agora records many of the goods this hinterland provided to the city, including staples and other goods such as myrrh and low-grade aromatics;[114] however, it is worth stressing that it does not concern itself with high-value imports, nor goods transiting the city en route to other markets (which, it is presumed, are unlikely to have entered the city proper, instead staying in Dentzer's caravanserais).

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[107] For more on this, see Stoneman (1992), pp. 189-193.

[108] For more on the Palmyrene revolt and its Third-Century history, see for instance Stoneman (1992), and Southern (2008).

[109] See for instance Ball (2000), p. 74; compare Edwell (2008), pp. 31-62; and now Smith (2013), *passim.*

[110] See Schlumberger (1939); idem. (1951), *La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest*, Geuthner, Paris. See now above all the work of the recent Syrian-Norwegian *Palmyrena* project: Seland, E. H. (ed.) (2009-2013), *Palmyrena: City, Hinterland and Caravan Trade between Occident and Orient*, University of Bergen, Online: http://www.org.uib.no/palmyrena/index.htm (accessed 17/04/2013).

[111] Ibid.

[112] See above, p. 192.

[113] Smith (2013), p. 81.

[114] See above all Matthews (1984).

4.1   The Tribes

We can say from the outset that Palmyrene civic institutions constitute something of an anomaly amongst the mostly-Hellenised Roman East, particularly with regard to its 'tribes'. The degree to which these tribes defined Palmyrene culture and activity is a matter of debate. Notably, there are claims that certain tribes in particular were involved in Palmyra's long-distance trade.[115] No-one yet, in so many words, seems to have offered the theory that the tribes were primarily religious institutions, used among others by priests and citizens holding religious office.[116] Whatever their character and function actually was, it is clear that they were of both some importance and some relevance to one's Palmyrene identity.

There is a large – circuitous – debate as to the number of tribes in Palmyra, and their hierarchy. Depending on which one reads, there may have been three of these tribes,[117] or the oft-cited figure of four,[118] or five,[119] or seventeen,[120] up to as many as fifty-five.[121] Recent studies reliably count fourteen[122] or sixteen tribes,[123] depending on which names one takes to refer to the same groups; most recently, Smith suggests there were seventeen.[124] Most of the debate focuses on the 'four tribes of the city' and which tribes constituted them.[125] The figure of four tribes is derived from a number of Palmyrene inscriptions dated to the latter part of the Second Century AD which refer to 'the four tribes' or 'the four tribes of the city';[126] the number four is often encountered in Palmyrene life, and inscriptions referring to four treasurers,[127] four altars and so on, have generally been taken to refer to the respective treasurers,

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[115] See for instance Dirven (1999), p. 32.

[116] Smith (2013), pp. 33-54 omits religious life from his discussion of the tribes' influence in civic participation.

[117] *PAT* 1385 (unknown date); a fragmentary inscription and the only known one to reference three tribes.

[118] *IGLS* XVII.149 = *PAT* 2769 (November, 171 AD); *IGLS* XVII.307 = *PAT* 1063 (February, 198 AD), discussed below, p. 226; and *IGLS* XVII.222 = *PAT* 1378 (January, 199 AD), discussed below, p. 246.

[119] E.g. Kaizer (2002), pp. 60-66.

[120] Gawlikowski (1973), pp. 16-40.

[121] E.g. Dirven (1999) p. 23; this number was reduced by Gawlikowski to the lower figure of 17, and then down to 14 by Piersimoni (see below, n. 122). The initial figure of fifty-five refers specifically to the number of known instances of Palmyrene-language inscriptions using the term *bny* ('bene') to denote a social grouping; for the most part "*probably referring to natural families.*" (Dirven, p. 23 – for a notable exception, however, see the discussion of *PAT* 1086, below).

[122] Piersimoni, P. (1995), "Compiling a Palmyrene prosprography: methodological problems", in *Aram* 7 (1995), pp. 252-60.

[123] Yon, (2002), pp. 251-2, tab. VIII.1; Yon keeps separate a few tribal names convolved by Piersimoni.

[124] Smith (2013), p. 45.

[125] See above, n. 118. For a discussion of the four tribes, see Kaizer (2002), pp. 55-55 & 60-66, and Dirven (1999), pp. 22-8 for an overview.

[126] See above, n. 118.

[127] E.g. *IGLS* XVII.17 = *PAT* 1353 (25 AD).

altars and so on of these four major tribes.[128]   Multiple sequences of inscriptions commemorate the erecting of honorific statues for various personages, in the 'four sanctuaries';[129] these are commonly taken as being associated with the four tribes of the city.   However, exactly which of the known tribes comprised these big four is a matter of some debate; the only one known for certain from the ancient inscriptions is the tribe of the Bene Komare.[130]

Yon provides a mostly-complete summary of known Palmyrene epigraphy relating to the tribes,[131] and we should note the correlation of the commonly-understood 'four tribes' to the number of surviving attributions.   Taking twelve of the sixteen tribes Yon recognises, one tribe has four attributions, one has three, four have two, and six have one, totalling twenty-one attributions among these twelve.   The remaining four tribes, however, account for a total of *fifty-two* attributions all told.   In other words, one quarter of the tribes account for more than two thirds of Yon's corpus of tribal inscriptions.   Combined with other arguments, such as those by Kaizer linking the four tribes to the four sanctuaries,[132] and that by Schlumberger synonymising the oft-mentioned Bene Ma'ziyan with the once-mentioned *phyle* Magernon,[133] I contend that this gives grounds to conclude that the 'four tribes' were probably those with the greatest number of surviving attestations, namely the Bene Komare (whom we know to have definitely counted among them), the Bene Mattabol, the Bene Mita, and the Bene Ma'ziyan.

All four of these tribes may be linked (in name, at least) to trade, or at least to the organisation of it.   For instance, an inscription dating from 10/11 AD may have commemorated a man of the Bene Mita, placed in charge of collecting a tax on caravans in Palmyra on behalf of its citizens.[134]   Further, members of the Bene Komare and Bene Gaddibol set up a temple-sanctuary and enclosure in the necropolis of

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[128] See for instance *PAT* 0340 (March, 114 AD; not in *IGLS*), also Kaizer (2002), pp. 199-200, n. 144.

[129] Kaizer (2002), pp. 48-51.

[130] See *IGLS* XVII.307 = *PAT* 1063 (February, 198 AD); see below, p. 226 (Aelius Bora).

[131] Yon (2002), pp. 251-2, tab. VIII.1; sadly he does not include an inscription dated to 137 AD, which mentions no less than three otherwise unattested tribes (Drijvers (1995b), p. 111 = Kaizer (2002), p. 249).

[132] Kaizer (2002), pp. 64-6.

[133] Schlumberger (1971), "Les Quatre Tribus de Palmyre", in *Syria* 48 (1971), p. 132. Kaizer (2002), p. 65 seems to reject this hypothesis, although is prepared to accept Schlumberger's proposition that Palmyrene tribes could go by multiple names. Having gone to great pains to argue the Bene Ma'ziyan having ownership over no less than two of the theorised four-or-five tribal sanctuaries, quite why he is not prepared to accept this for the Bene Ma'ziyan and the only-once-attested *phyle* Magernon is unclear.

[134] See As'ad and Gawlikowski (1993), fig. 1, p. 165 for the original; see also Aggoula, B. (1994), "Les mots BLW et BLWY' dans une inscription Palmyrénienne", in *Syria* 71 (1994), pp. 415-417 for an alternative reading suggesting it is instead a tomb of a pair of "*chameliers*" ("*camel-drivers*") of the Bene Mita. See also Kaizer (2002), p. 38, n. 15.

Dura in 33 BC,[135] and members of the Bene Komare are known to have participated in trade as far afield as Babylon.[136] Members of the Bene Mattabol traded at least as far as Seleucia and Charax, and in 81 AD, one of the Bene Ma'ziyan was commemorated for his activities in Charax.[137] Outside the four tribes, the Bene Gaddibol (which excepting the main four account for the largest number of tribal inscriptions)[138] are linked to Vologesias – a noted site for Palmyrene trade – in 108 AD,[139] as well as the temple in the Durene necropolis, which may have served a caravanserai function of sorts from 33 BC.[140]

It should be remarked that of the thirty-five caravan inscriptions, the vast majority do not mention tribal affiliation. Indeed, of the corpus assembled by Yon,[141] only the first five mention tribes, and no tribal affiliation is cited after August, 81 AD.[142] After this date, genealogies continue to be given, but tribes make no further appearance.[143] We cannot say that this evidence supports the theory that the Palmyrene tribes played a *central* role in the Palmyrene caravan trade, at least not during the Second Century AD when the trade appears to have been at its zenith. If the tribes did have a role to play, it appears to have been early. There is, however, sufficient evidence to say without any doubt that individuals prominent *within* the tribes were certainly engaging in, and linked to, long-distance trade.

4.2   The Temples

At least six temples are known from archaeology at Palmyra; a further four are attested in inscriptions, with the site of at least one, and of two other cultic sites, being suspected.[144] The first four temples – those of Bel, Allat, 'Nabu' and Baalshamin – are comparatively well-preserved and understood by modern scholars, even if their attributions are not all certain. The remainder are less well-preserved and in the cases of the final few, only known from inscriptions. We shall discuss each of these temples in turn:

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[135] See below, III.5.2.4, pp. 238-40.
[136] *IGLS* XVII.16 = *PAT* 1352, discussed below, p. 220.
[137] *IGLS* XVII.24 = *PAT* 0270 (Seleucia), discussed below, pp. 219-20; Cantineau (1930), no. 34 (Charax); *IGLS* XVII.241 = *Inv.* X.40 (Bene Ma'ziyan at Charax).
[138] *Four*: a fifth of the non-'four tribes' corpus. This is also their last known attestation. See Yon (2002), p. 251
[139] *IGLS* XVII.23 = *Inv.* IX.15 = *PAT* 0263; see Gawlikowski (1973), p. 73.
[140] See below, 5.2.4, pp. 238-40.
[141] See Yon (2002), pp. 263-4, tab. XI.
[142] The last, from 81 AD, is *IGLS* XVII.241, mentioning the member of the Bene Ma'ziyan honoured by Palmyrene merchants from Charax. (see above, n. 139). It is worth noting that the tribes do continue to be attested in other inscriptions after this point.
[143] This date coincides nicely with the accession of Domitian, but this does not seem to be of significance here.
[144] See above all Kaizer (2002), pp. 67-161; see also Degeorge, G. (2001), *Palmyre, metropole caravanière*, Imprimerie Nationale – Éditions, Paris, pp. 150-219.

Fig. 20: An eastward view of Palmyra from the Fakhr-al-Din al-Maani Castle. The large structure at the top left is the Temple of Bel, showing the results of its fortification under Muslim rule. Directly beneath the facing corner is the arch at the head of the Colonnaded Street, visible from top left to bottom right. The agora is visible on the middle-right, with the restored theatre wall visible between it and the Colonnaded Street. The Temple of Baalshamin is located below the triumphal arch; the Diocletianic-era city wall is visible along the bottom right of the picture.

4.2.1   Bel

The Temple of Bel (Gazetteer, 1; Figs. 1 and 20) dominates Palmyra to this day; it is one of the largest and best-preserved in the region, and is instantly recognisable.[145] At just over 200 metres across and with an area of approximately 43,000 square metres, its temenos constituted one of the largest open spaces in ancient Palmyra,[146] and is one of the best archetypical near-eastern temenoi to survive; see Figure 20 above.[147] While the temple itself has been extensively studied,[148] most notably by Seyrig, Amy and Will, the temenos plaza has never been studied in detail, although a trial excavation suggests that the site has been used for cultic activity for millennia, and contains the ruins of a Hellenistic temple dating to the Second Century BC.[149]

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[145] In the week that this thesis was completed, the inner sanctum of the Temple of Bel was destroyed with explosives. According to satellite images, only the portal of the inner sanctum remains.

[146] See Segal (2013), pp. 100-9.

[147] Fig. 1, p. 62.

[148] See above all Seyrig, Amy, and Will (1975). See also Colledge, M. A. R. (1976.b), "Le temple de Bel à Palmyre: qui le fait, et pourquoi?", in *Bilan*, pp. 45-52. Colledge's conclusions are now considered dated. See also Kaizer (2006.a), "Reflections on the dedication of the Temple of Bel at Palmyra", in de Blois, Funke and Hahn (eds.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religion*, pp. 95-105.

[149] Segal (2013), p. 104, n. 91; see also Pietrzykowski, M. (1997), *Les adytons des temples palmyréniens: Forme et function*, Uniwerstet Warszawski – Instytut Archeologii, Warsaw, p. 13, nn. 1-6 (non vidi; in Polish). See now Gawlikowski, M. (2015), "Bel of Palmyra", in Blömer, Lichtenberger and Raja (eds.), *Religious Identities*, pp. 247-254.

The temple itself is a curious configuration, with the entrance offset on one of the long sides as opposed to being opposite the *adyton* on one of the short sides (see Fig. 1). This is because the temple contains two *adyta*, one at either end; a very unusual arrangement.[150] The attribution to Bel is uncertain; it is proposed that the temple was dedicated to more than one deity as Palmyra's principal sanctuary.[151] A number of inscriptions are known – fifty-two are recorded in *IGLS* alone – both from the inner temple itself and from the broader temenos; some of these are displaced from their original location as they were cannibalised in later repair work, while others were discovered *in situ*. One of these inscriptions has permitted a tentative dating of the temple to 32 AD,[152] although a prior inscription commemorating a donation to the project suggests that it was well underway by 19 AD.[153] As we shall see, six or seven inscriptions from the Temple of Bel directly relate to long-distance trade.

4.2.2   Allat

The sanctuary and temple of Allat (Gazetteer, 2; Fig. 21) is situated at the far end of the ancient city from the Temple of Bel; after our period it was incorporated into the 'Camp of Diocletian', which obliterated and occupied all or part of the temenos.[154] Although the known temple was erected in the middle of the first half of the Second Century AD, it seems that it replaced an earlier temple on the same site.[155] Measuring 28 by 45 metres, the sanctuary is one of the smaller known in Palmyra. A cult statue of Athena strikingly like that described by Pausanias from
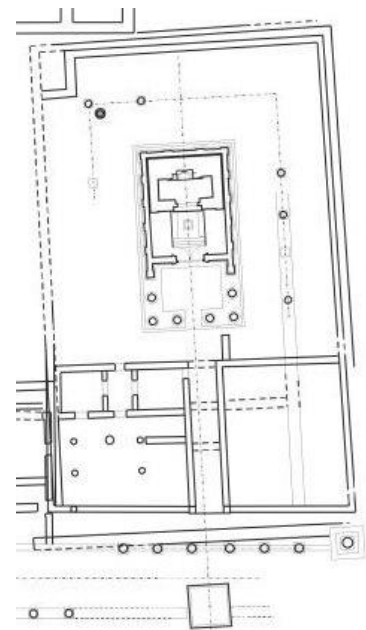
Fig. 21: A plan of the Sanctuary of Allat within the later 'Camp of Diocletian' at Palmyra.

Athens was discovered in the temple – a possible Athenian import from the final stage of occupation believed to have originally stood elsewhere in Palmyra.[156] Segal stresses the deliberate integration of the

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[150] Segal (2013), pp. 106-8.
[151] Kaizer (2002), pp. 67-79; see now Gawlikowski (2015), *passim*. Smith (2013), pp. 90-8, emphasises the collaborative effort required to build the Temple of Bel and the apparently communal nature of its cult. See also Kaizer, T. (2006.a), *passim*.
[152] *IGLS* XVII.206 = *Inv.* X.1 = *PAT* 1347.
[153] *IGLS* XVII.24 = *Inv.* IX.6 = *PAT* 0270, discussed below, pp. 219-20.
[154] Segal (2013), p. 90.
[155] Ibid., p. 91.
[156] See Gawlikowski, M. (1983.b), "Le Sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre. Aperau préliminaire", in *AAAS* 33 (1983), pp. 179-98. The temple is attributed to 'Athena' in Greek inscriptions where the Palmyrene Aramaic counterpart identifies 'Allat'. On the Athena statue see Gawlikowsky, M. (2008), "The Statues in the Sanctuary of Allat in Palmyra", in Eliav et al (eds.), *Sculptural Environment*, pp. 397-411.

earlier cult site into the Roman-era temenos design.[157] It was excavated by the Polish mission to Palmyra over the course of multiple seasons.[158] As we shall see, at least two of the famous caravan inscriptions are known to have been erected in the Temple of Allat.

4.2.3   'Nabu'

Fig. 22: The altar of the Temple of 'Nabu' at Palmyra (Gazetteer, 3), with a relief showing seven deities.

Located centrally in the ruins of Palmyra, the sanctuary attributed to Nabu (Gazetteer, 3; Figs. 22 & 23) is a highly conventional temenos temple with an odd trapezoidal plan. Its original footprint was curtailed by the laying down of the colonnaded street, although the temple itself was only completed in the late First or early Second Century AD; it was excavated by a German team in 1917 which initially attributed it to Atargatis;

the attribution to Nabu was a result of a find by a Syrian team in the late Twentieth Century.[159] As with the Temple of Bel, the attribution of the temple to Nabu is disputed, with at least three other deities attested at the site and a relief showing up to seven on the main altar (see Figure 7).[160] As no temple 'of Nabu' is known from inscriptions, it is possible that this is in fact one of a number of temples referred to in inscriptions but yet to be identified in the archaeology.[161] Even if the temple may not have been dedicated to Nabu, the cult of Nabu enjoyed a large following in Palmyra, as attested by a number of tesserae attesting to the cult, its worship, and its annual festival, in the month of Nisan (April),[162] a month it shared with many others in Palmyra alone. Tesserae 687 and 688 indicate religious officials overseeing the festival market, as outlined by Milik.[163] There is otherwise little linking the temple to trade, although there are indications that at least two families were heavily involved in sponsoring its construction.[164]

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[157] Segal (2013), p. 92.
[158] See Gawlikowski (1983.b); see also Gawlikowski and Tarara (2006).
[159] See now Bounnī (2004) and Bounnī, Seigne and Saliby (1992). See also Degeorge (2001), p. 196, n. 139.
[160] Kaizer (2002), pp. 91-9 – "*The conventional name of the temple 'of Nebu' is a gross oversimplification*", p. 91.
[161] See below; see also Kaizer (2006.a), p. 101.
[162] Ibid. See also Degeorge (2001), pp. 205-8; Kaizer (2006.a).
[163] Milik (1972), pp. 59-62; *RTP*, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII, see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.
[164] Kaizer (2002), p. 91.
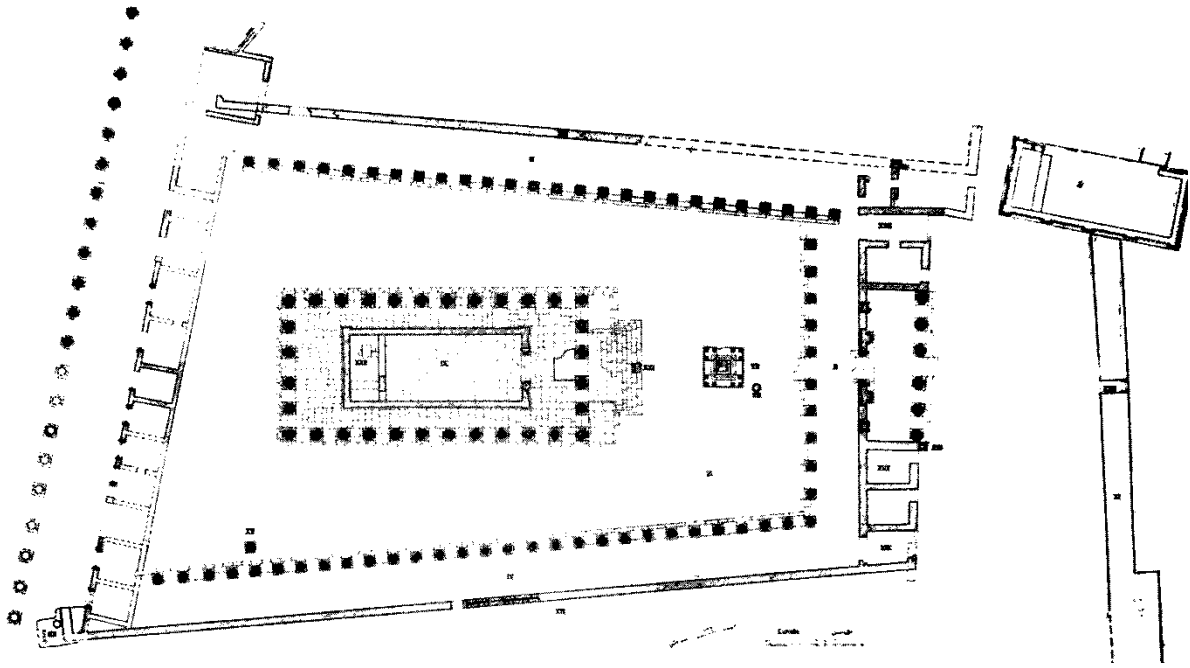
Fig. 23: A plan of the Temple of 'Nabu' at Palmyra (Gazetteer, 3).

4.2.4   Baalshamin

Situated about 200 metres north of the great colonnade, the Sanctuary of Baalshamin (Gazetteer, 4, Fig. 24) is unusual in that rather than comprising a single court-and-temple, it comprises a succession of courts and rooms, with the – rather small – temple itself tucked away in a small court towards the south.[165] A communal tomb included in the complex constitutes one of the oldest structures from Palmyra, dating from the Second Century BC.[166]   The very large number of euergetistic dedication inscriptions suggests that its sprawling layout was due to successive donations.[167]   The temple itself seems to have been dedicated in 131 AD,[168] and may have been the tribal sanctuary of the Bene Ma'ziyan;[169] a year later, it became the site of one of the caravan inscriptions dedicated to the synodiarch Soados.[170]

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[165] Shortly before this thesis was completed, the inner sanctum of the Temple of Baalshamin was destroyed with explosives. Very little remains. On its former architecture, see Segal (2013), pp. 95-9. See above all Collart, P. and Vicari, J. (1969-1975), *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre*, six volumes, Institut Suisse de Rome, Rome.

[166] Degeorge (2001), p. 210.

[167] Ibid., p. 212.

[168] Collart and Vicari (1971), vol. 3, *Les Inscriptions*.

[169] Ibid. See also Kaizer (2002), pp. 79-88.

[170] *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197; see also Kaizer (2002), pp. 60-1.

4.2.5   Rabaseire

A small temple (Gazetteer, 5), this was for a long time only known by the reference to it in the Palmyrene Tariff inscription erected opposite.[171] However, a new study by Gawlikowsky has positively identified the site and part of the structure of this temple on the southern side of the Agora.[172] A statue of Rabaseire in the National Museum of Damascus depicts a cuirassed warrior holding a long staff and two long chains in his left hand, flanked by a pair of lions, each with an eagle perched on its head;[173] the name *Rabaseire* can be literally translated as '*Master of the Chained*'.[174] The site Gawlikowsky proposes for the temple would have been obliterated by Diocletian's wall, which cut off most of the southern sector of the city from the ruins around the Colonnaded Street.[175] This site, upon which the remains of a building were found, was 4.3 metres across but of unknown depth (it may have been square); a marvellous eagle lintel was retrieved from the interior, which may have been that of a cult niche, perhaps containing the known relief from the Museum of Damascus.[176] He proposes that it dated from at least the First Century BC to some point between 137 AD and the reign of Aurelian, when it was curtailed by various remodellings of the Agora prior to its final obliteration under Diocletain.[177]

Fig. 24: A plan of the Temple of Baalshamin at Palmyra (Gazetteer, 4).

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[171] Published originally by Waddington (1882). Above all see Matthews (1984).
[172] Gawlikowski, M. (2012), "Le Tarif de Palmyre et le Temple de Rabʿasirê", in *CRAI* 2012, pp. 765-80. He also definitively establishes the original location of the Tariff inscription (see esp. pp. 768-72).
[173] Gawlikowski (2012), fig. 4; see also Starcky, J. (1952), *Palmyre*, A. Maisonneuve, Paris, p. 81.
[174] Gawlikowski (2012), p. 768. Given his name, chain imagery and his temple's presence next to the Agora, should we regard Rabaseire as a deity with ties to the slave trade?
[175] Ibid., pp. 775-6.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid., p. 778.

This temple bears similarities with the first Temple of Allat, referred to as a *ḥamana*;[178] it also bears strong similarities to the temple at Wadi Ramm and other small temples on the Nabataean King's Road, as well as the small temples at Hatra,[179] including Temple XI which we examined in Part I. Gawlikowsky goes on to suggest that "*it is perhaps not too brazen to suppose that these chapels had the origin of repositories constructed by nomads for protecting their idols in fixed points in the territory in which they roamed*".[180] Having been established once, these temples became monumentalised by sedentary populations – the term *ḥamana* was used for Canaanite cultic sites in the Bible and could explain other, yet-to-be-found temples in Palmyra such as that of the solar god, Shadrafa, and Anat, also purportedly not far from the Agora.[181] Gawlikowsky suggests that the Temple of Rabasiere was a rare survival of this early variety of temple, appearing to survive up to the reign of Zenobia and only being demolished for Diocletian's wall.[182] It is notable that despite its diminuitive size, the Temple of Rabaseire seems to have possessed a great deal of prestige – not only did it outlast similar temples which were later monumentalised, but also it and not the larger and grander Agora behind, was the point of reference for the Tariff inscription.[183]

4.2.6   Arsu

This is another small temple (Gazetteer, 6) close to the Agora, dating from at least 63 AD and containing dedications to a number of gods not widely attested in Palmyra.[184] Identified and excavated in the 1980s, an excavation report has not yet been published, although the temple is listed in caravan inscriptions listing the sanctuaries of the 'four tribes'.[185] Arsu is a martial deity popular with nomads and often associated with protecting caravans.[186] A large number of tesserae were discovered in the excavations there.[187] Given all this, the temple's proximity to the Agora is suggestive.

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[178] Ibid.
[179] See above, pp. 86-94.
[180] Gawlikowsky (2012), pp. 778-9; "*Il est peut-être pas trop téméraire de supposer que ces chapelles étaient à l'origine des reposirs construits par les nomads pour protéger leurs idoles dans les points fixes du terretoire qu'ils parcouraient.*"
[181] Ibid; he also suggests (pp. 779-80) that the Temple of Zeus at Gerasa was a monumentalisation of just such an early cultic site. On the unknown temples at Palmyra, see also Starcky, J. (1949), "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Sadrafa et à Du'Anat", in *Syria* 26, pp. 43-85, esp. pp. 51-5.
[182] Gawlikowsky (2012), p. 780.
[183] Ibid., p. 778.
[184] Kaizer (2002), pp. 60-3 & 116-24.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., p. 122; Dirven (1999), pp. 124 & 282-4.
[187] See al-As'Ad, K., Briquel-Chatonnet, F. and Yon, J.-B. (2005), "The Sacred Banquets at Palmyra and the Function of the Tesserae: Reflections on the Tokens Found in the Arṣu Temple", in Cussini (ed.), *A Journey to Palmyra*, pp. 1-10.

4.2.7   Other Temples

A number of other temples in Palmyra are known or suspected. A small temple of Bel-Hamon (Gazetteer, 7) was identified by Gawlikowski in 1973;[188] it is dated to 89 AD from an inscription and comprises a single room in the south-western tower of the old Hellenistic city wall, far to the south of the restored tetrapylon.[189] The site of a further temple is suspected south of the colonnaded street, where fluted Corinthian columns protrude from the ground; this has not yet been excavated, but based on the visible elements of its architecture it may have been the Temple of the Augusti attested in inscriptions.[190] Temples of Atargatis and the Sun are attested in inscriptions, the site of the Eqfa spring may have hosted a temple of Yarhibol, and a 'sacred wood' of Aglibol and Malakbel is also attested.[191] It is also possible that one or more of the temples named above is in fact one of these other known temples yet to be found – as Kaizer points out, no known 'Temple of Nabu' is mentioned in inscriptions, while a number of those which are attested have yet to be positively identified.[192]

4.3   The Hinterland

The Palmyrene hinterland was subject to a wide-ranging study by Daniel Schlumberger,[193] and a second one more recently by the University of Bergen. Both studies focused on the north-western quarter of Palmyra's territory.[194] They conclude that the hinterland was cultivated and provided the city with most of its consumables. Relatively few temples have been studied in this area – most settlements appear to have been too small to merit one. However, that of Seriane survives, and although it appears to have been beyond Palmyra's boundaries, its location and surrounds are essentially unchanged from the north-west Palmyrène.

Also known as Ithriyah, Esryie and Isriyah, Seriane is a ruined Roman-era village situated 120 kilometres north-west of Palmyra and 110 kilometres east-north-east of Emesa. It lies on roads between Palmyra and Epiphanaia (modern Hama), and also between Emesa and the Euphrates; it appears twice in

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[188] See now Gawlikowski (1973), pp. 12-14, 65-6, 83-4.
[189] Ibid. See also Kaizer (2002), pp. 108-16; du Mesnil du Buisson (1966), pp. 165-76.
[190] Kaizer (2002), p. 150; cf. Browning (1979), *Palmyra*, Chatto and Windus, London, pp. 158-9.
[191] See Gawlikowski (1973); see also Kaizer (2002), pp. 124-61.
[192] Kaizer (2006.a), p. 101.
[193] Schlumberger (1951).
[194] Seland (ed.) (2009-2013), *Palmyrena*.

the Antonine Itinerary as a road station.[195] The site is host to a small Roman temple (Gazetteer, 38) dating to the middle to later part of our period.[196] Seriane is located in relatively flat terrain, although it appears to have lain beyond the boundary of the Palmyrène, and does not show particularly Palmyrene elements in its construction or decoration.[197] A statue of 'Apollo' may suggest a dedication to Nabu;[198] the temple is otherwise quite well-preserved and has attracted interest in the past because of the curious presence of stairs in one of the main walls.[199]

The temple is situated amid a very large, over-sized enclosure with a cistern,[200] recalling the arrangement seen at Thoana and in the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura-Europos;[201] there are also numerous wells in the vicinity which presumably provided for the village. The value of finds from the village, including high-quality mosaics, indicates a relatively wealthy population.[202] Seriane is virtually equidistant between Emesa, the Euphrates, Palmyra and Epiphanaia; this combined with the other evidence from the site strongly suggests that it was a caravan station or at least a waystation, possibly used for taxation if it was indeed close to or at a boundary. Dura's Temple of the Necropolis is an obvious comparandum, although it is both larger and much closer to its nearest major settlement. The two temples at Thoana and Iram also bear similarities in their location, surrounds and facilities.

5. Material

Direct evidence for Palmyra's long-distance trade chiefly includes inscriptions, it is true, and we shall consider these shortly. But it is worth considering that there is a great weight of other evidence too; much of this comes from the city's tombs. Over five thousand fragments of silk have been recovered and studied from these tombs, many of which have been robbed out over the course of the centuries;[203] if nothing else, they put Palmyra's involvement in the silk trade beyond reasonable doubt. A number of

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[195] *Ant. Iter.* 194, 197.
[196] See above all Gogräfe, R. (1996), "The Temple of Seriane-Esryie", in *AAAS* 42, pp. 179-186.
[197] Gogräfe (1996), p. 180. Segal's characterisation of the terrain is misleading (Segal (2013), p. 75).
[198] Segal (2013), p. 76.
[199] See Amy, R. (1950), "Temples á Escaliers", in *Syria* 27 (1950), p. 107.
[200] Gogräfe (1996), p. 181.
[201] See above, p. 131 (Thoana); below, pp. 238-42 (Dura-Europos).
[202] Gogräfe (1996), p. 180.
[203] See above all Schmidt-Colinet, A., Stauffer, A., and al-As'ad, K. (2000), *Die Textilien aus Palmyra*, Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein.

funerary reliefs and busts also portray elements of long-distance trade – camels or even ships.[204] Material from outside Palmyra also attests to this trade, both directly and indirectly. However, it will remain clear that *direct* evidence for long-distance trade is uncommon. Consideration in the round of indirect evidence is therefore important. We shall consider such evidence – from Dura-Europos and farther afield – in due course; we turn first to the Palmyrene inscriptions.

5.1   Epigraphy

Thanks chiefly to surviving inscriptions, the bulk of Palmyrene trade is assumed to have been with, or through, the cities of Mesopotamia and the northern Persian Gulf: specifically Seleucia, Babylon, Vologesias, and Spasinou Charax at the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. In times past, this caravan trade was assumed to have carried on across the other side of Mesopotamia and linked up with the Silk Road to China;[205] however, as Gawlikowski says, "*there is strictly nothing to suggest that the Palmyrenes were interested in the land route through Iran and Central Asia*".[206] As a result, in the modern day, a consensus has developed that the caravans instead linked up with the riverine trade on the Euphrates, taking ship at Charax and linking up in turn with the Spice Route to India.[207]

There are at least thirty-five inscriptions from Palmyra which relate to long-distance trade;[208] eleven relate to trade via central Mesopotamia, or to Palmyrene communities there (mostly Vologesias). By comparison, twenty relate to trade with, or Palmyrene communities in, the Persian Gulf and beyond (mostly Spasinou Charax).[209] The corpus is comprised of honorific inscriptions, typically erected by grateful individuals, collectives or institutions, often to commemorate individuals who rescued caravans from hardship, difficulty, or attack en-route to Palmyra across the Syrian Desert; they are grouped together due to the common feature of their express reflection on long-distance trade, even though not all of them actually mention caravans. Of the inscriptions published in Yon's volume of the *IGLS* – the most recent corpus of inscriptions from Palmyra – there are thirty-four inscriptions which relate directly

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[204] See Fig. 16, p. 159.
[205] See Rostovtzeff (1932), also Millar (1998), pp. 120-2.
[206] Gawlikowski (1994), p. 29.
[207] See for instance Edwell, (2008), pp. 37-8 and Dirven (1999), pp. 34-40. See above, pp. 150-3.
[208] See Gawlikowski (1994), pp. 32-3; to which one is added by Yon (2002), pp. 263-4, tab. XI. See also below.
[209] The remainder do not mention specific locations, although they do mention trade and/or caravans.

to long-distance trade,[210] and at least another nine must have existed (the remaining instances of the various Soados inscription series). Of the thirty-four, ten were discovered in-situ in temples, or are otherwise known to have been erected in temples; seven of these are from the Temple of Bel. Excluding fragments, there are about 300 inscriptions from Palmyra proper recorded in the *IGLS*,[211] so in other words, 11-12% of those inscriptions which meaningfully survive are of relevance to our investigation. A larger proportion is observed within the Temple of Bel itself: there are 49 inscriptions excluding fragments, of which six directly relate to long-distance trade,[212] and one of which mentions Soados the synodiarch in a non-trade related context,[213] so over 12% of the corpus of inscriptions from the Temple of Bel directly relate to the caravan trade or long-distance trade.

We are additionally aware of entries in the three Soados inscription series which were erected in other temples in Palmyra, but which have not survived. Including those lost duplicates would add another nine inscriptions to our total (as it happens, one inscription from each sequence survives), and that is without including the Gennaes inscription detailed below from a caravanserai outside the city. In other words, adding the remaining Soados inscriptions would effectively double the corpus of long-distance trade inscriptions found in Palmyra's temples (admittedly from a small start).

While the inscriptions discussed here are collectively referred to as 'caravan inscriptions',[214] the fourth chronologically makes the first allusion to a caravan ("*the merchants who went up from Charax*"),[215] and the eighth is the first to use the word 'caravan' (*šyrh* in Palmyrene Aramaic),[216] as late as 135 AD.[217]

The earliest inscription relating to long-distance trade, "*of difficult interpretation*" to use Gawlikowsky's words, dates from 10/11 AD (322 of the Seleucid calendar) and was found in place along the southern

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[210] These being *IGLS* XVII nos. **16**, **22**, **23**, **24**, **25**, **26**, 67, 74, 87, 88, 89, **127**, **150**, **160**, 196, 197, 209, 222, 227, 240-253 inclusive, and **313**. Those listed in bold were discovered in temples; the first six from the Temple of Bel, and the middle three from the Temple of Allat, the Temple of Baalshamin, and an unknown temple which later became Church #3 in the north of the ancient city, respectively. The last was originally erected in the sanctuary of the Bene Komare, which has not yet been identified with a known site. The thirty-fifth inscription, not in *IGLS* as it has no Greek or Latin counterpart, is that published by al-As'ad and Gawlikowsky in 1993 and re-translated by Aggoula in 1994, provided overleaf.

[211] According to *IGLS* XVII/1 = Yon (2012).

[212] These being *IGLS* XVII.16, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26.

[213] That being *IGLS* XVII.29 (dated March, 147 AD).

[214] Assembled by Gawlikowski (1994), pp. 32-3.

[215] *IGLS* XVII.240 = *Inv.* IX.7 = *PAT* 1366, dated to between 28 and 88 AD (damaged dating formula).

[216] Hoftijzer, J. and Jongeling, K. (1995), *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* II, Brill, Leiden.

[217] *IGLS* XVII.209 = *Inv.* X.81 = *PAT* 1397, dated to December, 135 AD.

wall of the pre-Diocletianic city.[218] It does not appear in *IGLS* as it has no Greek or Latin counterpart,

and is the thirty-fifth long-distance trade inscription described above:

Aramaic:	al-As'ad & Gawlikowsky:	Aggoula:
1 ktl' dnh blw(y)' dy gmly' dy l'l mnh dy blw gbl tdmry' klhwn 'l 4 'tntn kptwt br br'' w'l ymlkw brh dy mn bny myt' lyqrhwn bšnt 7 CCCXXII.[219]	*(At) this wall, the taxes of the camels, so much as above the tax due to the Assembly of all the Palmyrenes (are for) 'Atenatan b. Kaffatut b. Bar'a and for Yamliku his son, (both) from the tribe of the Bene Mita, in the year 322.[220]*	*This wall of graves of the camel-drivers, which is uphill from the graves of all the Palmyrenes, for Atenaten Captut son of Bar'a and for Ymlichu his son of the Bene Mita, in their honour, in the year 322.[221]*

al-As'ad and Gawlikowsky interpret this inscription as describing members of the Bene Mita as tax

farmers collecting "*the taxes of the camels*"; Aggoula proposes that it denotes the grave of a pair of camel-

drivers (making no mention of tax).[222] Regardless of the reading one takes, and the text is indeed difficult,

the inscription is as Gawlikowsky puts it, "*the first direct proof of caravan movement in Palmyra*",[223] although it

would be patently ridiculous to claim that no such movement took place prior to this date.

The earliest of the eleven inscriptions for central Mesopotamia dates from 19 AD;[224] the last from 247

AD.[225] Inscriptions not mentioning a particular location book-end the latter date: the latest known

inscription mentioning the caravan trade dates from the last few years before Palmyra's reduction by

Aurelian, and mentions that Septimius Worod "*returned the caravans at his own expense and received testimony from

the archemporoi*", while simultaneously being Symposiarch of the priests of Bel.[226]

Let us examine these inscriptions in greater detail.

Eleven inscriptions explicitly refer to central Mesopotamia: of these, one mentions Babylon,[227] one

mentions Vologesias alongside Charax and the "*station of the Gennaes*",[228] two mention Seleucia,[229] two

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[218] al-As'ad and Gawlikowski (1993).
[219] Text from Aggoula (1994), pp. 415-6.
[220] Text from Gawlikowsky (1994), p. 28 = al-As'ad and Gawlikowski (1993).
[221] Trans. Aggoula (1994), pp. 415-6, originally in French.
[222] Aggoula (1994).
[223] Gawlikowski (1994), p. 28.
[224] *IGLS* XVII.24 = *Inv.* IX.6A = *CIS* 3925 = *PAT* 0270.
[225] *IGLS* XVII.89 = *Inv.* III.21 = *CIS* 3933 = *PAT* 0279; there are later inscriptions, but this one is the last to mention caravans from a specific Mesopotamian location (or, indeed, any location at all). *Inv.* III.7 (260 AD) is the last to mention a caravan at all.
[226] *IGLS* XVII.67 = *Inv.* III.7 = *CIS* 3942 = *PAT* 0288, provisionally dated to April, 266 AD; after Yon (2012), pp. 81-4.
[227] *IGLS* XVII.16 = *Inv.* IX.11 = *PAT* 0261.

mention Phorath and Vologesias,[230] and five mention Vologesias alone.[231] Prior to any of these, a half-ruined inscription found during the demolition of the village in the temenos of the Temple of Bel in 1930 appears to attest a Palmyrene being sent by Germanicus (i.e. in the period 17-19 AD) as an envoy to the petty kingdom of Mesene and the court of king Samsigeramus II of Emesa.[232] Mesene is the territory of Spasinou Charax, which many of the caravan inscriptions mention, and Emesa is Palmyra's closest western neighbour. It is likely that Germanicus' choice of a Palmyrene for the mission was by dint of Palmyra's trade with these cities even before the erection of the earliest surviving caravan inscriptions.[233]

The earliest inscription mentioning a location in central Mesopotamia dates from 19 AD, and was erected by the Palmyrene and Greek merchants of Seleucia, honouring a benefactor of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra. The inscription mentioning Babylon dates from 24 AD, and was dedicated by Palmyrene merchants in Babylon, in the sanctuary of the Temple of Bel. That both of our earliest inscriptions explicitly mention the Temple of Bel is worthy of note – in both inscriptions, individuals are honoured by traders, ostensibly for their benefaction of the temple's construction. Given the vast scale and enormous expense of the Temple of Bel, it is likely that groups, individuals and associations from all walks of Palmyrene life would have wished to associate themselves with it and its construction.

Next is a long inscription from 132 AD honouring the saviour of a caravan from Vologesias; this inscription is omitted by Gawlikowski in his initial list.[234] This inscription falls more than a century after the previous one referring to central Mesopotamia. Gawlikowski notes that this period – the first and second centuries AD – corresponds with a notable period of relative peace in the Roman Near East, hypothesising that it was this very peace which enabled the Palmyrene long-distance trade network to become established.[235] Peaceful or not, within this period fall seven other inscriptions, all but one

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[228] Mouterde and Poidebard (1931), *passim*.
[229] *IGLS* XVII.24 = *Inv.* IX.6A = *PAT* 0270; and *Inv.* X.89 = *PAT* 0307 = *IPSC* G23 (now lost, not in *IGLS*).
[230] *IGLS* XVII.246 = *Inv.* X.112 = *PAT* 1412; and *IGLS* XVII.25 = *Inv.* IX.14a = *PAT* 0262.
[231] *IGLS* XVII.247 = *Inv.* X.124 = *PAT* 1419; *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 (not in *Inv.*); *IGLS* XVII.127 = Kaizer (2002), pp. 62-3; *IGLS* XVII.88 = *Inv.* III.29 = *PAT* 0295; *IGLS* XVII.89 = *Inv.* III. 21 = *PAT* 0279.
[232] Cantineau, J. (1931), "Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du Temple de Bêl", in *Syria* 12 (1931), pp. 139-41. The presence of Germanicus indicates that the inscription dates from his trip to Syria in 17-19 AD.
[233] See Young (2001), p. 144.
[234] See Gawlikowski (1994), p. 32.
[235] Ibid., p. 31.

mentioning trade from Spasinou Charax at the head of the Persian Gulf. One from three years after this inscription is even dedicated to a Roman centurion who rescued a caravan in 135 AD.[236]

Fig. 25: A squeeze of IGLS *XVII.24*

Next in the Mesopotamian inscriptions come the inscriptions mentioning Vologesias and Phorath, dated to 140 and 142 AD respectively; the remaining Vologesias inscriptions date from 144, 145-6, 150, 211 and 247 AD in turn. Certain of these inscriptions are of greater interest than others; our objective here is to identify examples of temples in trade we come across.

5.1.1 *Early inscriptions and the Temple of Bel in Palmyra*

The earliest relevant inscription from the Temple of Bel, mentioning Seleucia in 19 AD (presumably Seleucia-on-the-Tigris),[237] offers a range of information. It was found in an ancient deposit in the sanctuary's main court (Fig. 25):

[- - - οἱ ἐν Σελευ]- [κείᾳ ἔμπ]ο[ρ]οι Πα[λμυρηνοί] [καί Ἕλλην]ες ἀνέσ[τη]σ[αν] 4 [τὸν ἀνδριάν] τα Ιεδειβ[ηλωι] [Αζιζου Παλ]μυρηνῶι φ[υλῆς] [Μανθβω]λειων ἐπεί [κατεσπο]ύδασεν εἰς τὴν 8 [κτίσιν] τοῦ ναοῦ Βήλου	*[- - - The Pal[myrene and Greek merchants of Seleucia] have ere[cted this stat]ue to Iedib[elos, son of Azizos, a Pal]myrene of the tribe of the Manthabo]lians because [he had been] zealous in the [construction] of the Temple of Bel.*
byrḥ ʾb šnt 330 [ṣlm' dnh dy] ydy'bl br 'zyzw br ydy'[bl dy mn] bny mtbw[l dy] 'qym[w lh tdmry'] 4 wywny' dy bslwky' [bdyl dy] qm wšmš bmgd' r[b' lbt bl].	*In the month of 'Ab of the year 330 (= August, 19 AD). This is the statue of Yedeibel, son of Azizu, son of Yedeibel of the tribe of Mattabol which the Tadmorenes and the Greeks from Seleucia have erected [to him] because he rose and served [the House of Bel] with a great gift.* [238]

Although it is generally referred to as the first of the 'caravan inscriptions',[239] this inscription does not technically qualify as one, as it makes no mention of a caravan. However, it is one of only six inscriptions

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[236] *IGLS* XVII.209 = *Inv.* X.81 = *PAT* 1397.

[237] As one of the most important Parthian cities at the date of this inscription, it is likely the only settlement of the name to have borne the name without a qualifier (such as Seleucia-at-the-Zeugma or Seleucia Pieria). Yon points out (2012, p. 38) that it has the advantage of being found on the familiar caravan routes from Palmyra.

[238] *IGLS* XVII.24 = *Inv.* IX.6A = *PAT* 0270, after Yon (2012), pp. 36-8.

[239] See Gawlikowski (1994), p. 32 and Yon (2002), p. 263.

in this corpus to make specific mention of a Palmyrene tribe in the dedicand's genealogical formula. Significantly, it attests that there was a trading community in Seleucia as early as 19 AD which was prepared to honour a Palmyrene in his native city and tongue for the construction of the Temple of Bel; from this, the conclusion that that community was Palmyrene of origin is straightforward. Further, a heavily damaged and now lost inscription from the Palmyrene Agora attested a dedication in Palmyrene Aramaic by merchants of Seleucia, at some point in the decade between 150 AD and 160,[240] showing a trading relationship of some kind with Seleucia existing well into the Second Century AD.

The next inscription in the chronological sequence dates to 24 AD. It was found on the console of Column 3 of the southern portico:

	Palmyrene Aramaic	English translation
4	b[yr]ḥ knwn šnt 336 ṣlm' dnh dy mlkw br nš' br bwlḥ' dq mtqr' ḥšš dy mn bny kmr' dy 'qymw lh t[g]ry' klhwn dy bmdynt bbl mn dy špr lhwn bkl gns klh w'dr bn[yn]' dy h[y]kl' dy bl wyhb mn kysh dy l' 'bdh 'nš bdyl kwt 'qymw lh ṣlm' dnh lyqrh.	In the month of Kanun of the year 336 (= November, 24 AD); this is a statue of Maliku, son of Nesa, son of Bolha, who is called Hasas of the tribe of the Bene Komare, which was erected for him by all the merchants of the city of Babylon, because he had done good to them in all kinds of ways and has helped [in] the building of the Temple of Bel and has contributed from his own purse, which nobody [else ever] did; for this reason they erected this statue for him, in his honour.
	Μαλιχον Νεϲα τοῦ βωλαα τοῦἐπικαλο-υμένου Αϲαϲου φυλῆϲ Χομαρηνων Παλ-μυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμοϲ εὐνίαϲ ἕνεκα.	(This statue of] Malikos (the son of) Nesa, the son of Bolaas, also called Hasasos, of the tribe of the Komarenes, (has been erected by) the people of the Palmyrenes, on account of his benevolence.[241]

This inscription shares many elements with the foregoing one erected by the merchants from Seleucia. As with the previous inscription, it appears to have been dedicated by an 'expatriate' trading community in a foreign city – in this case, Babylon – to an individual who made a significant contribution to the construction of Palmyra's Temple of Bel. As with the previous inscription, the dedicand is identified with a genealogical formula including a tribe – in this case, the Bene Komare. Again, this inscription does not specifically mention a caravan or caravans, but by explicitly identifying a group of Palmyrene merchants in a foreign city, it is included in the corpus of 'caravan inscriptions'. That the Greek text makes no mention of Babylon, satisfying itself with the phrase 'the people of the Palmyrenes' may suggest that the statue the inscription was part of was a wider effort which included Palmyrene

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[240] *Inv.* X.89 = *CIS* 3961 = *PAT* 0307 = *IPSC* G23; not in *IGLS*.
[241] *IGLS* XVII.16 = *Inv.* IX.11 = *PAT* 1352, after Yon (2012), pp. 25-7.

merchants in Babylon. It is likely, then, that the dedicands of both of these inscriptions were themselves involved in long-distance trade.
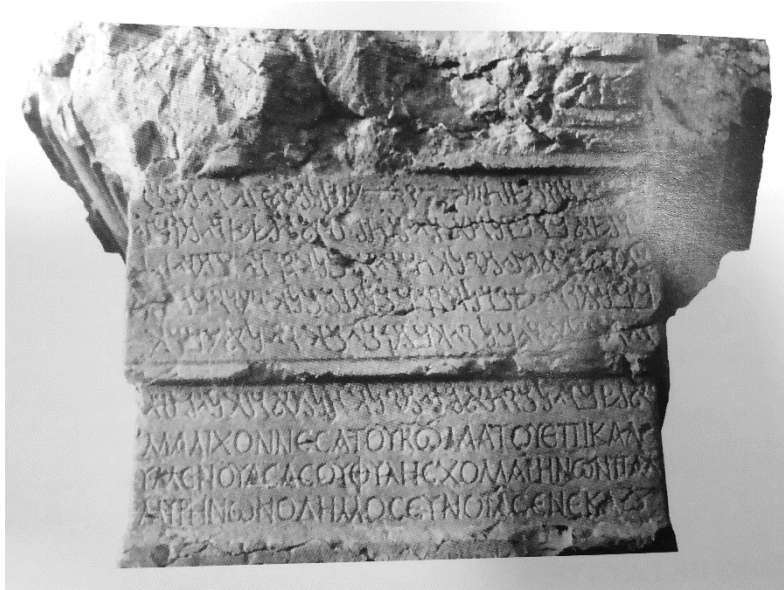
Fig. 26: A photograph of IGLS *XVII.16*

There are later inscriptions, mostly detailing trade in and through Spasinou Charax, which were also discovered in the Temple of Bel. Dating from April 142,[242] March 157,[243] and approximately 260 respectively,[244] taken with the two inscriptions above, they attest to an ongoing link between the Temple of Bel and long-distance trade. The inscriptions from 142 and 260 honour individuals involved in the trade as synodiarchs, while the dedicand of the inscription in 157 assisted the merchants; given the text of their dedications, it seems likely that the two above were honoured for their sponsoring of it in some way.

Here we can see the interplay between trade and the temple, with the Temple of Bel in this case acting as a venue for the honorific inscription. While we cannot say with certainty that the Temple of Bel was directly involved in trade – as a site, for instance of exchange (religious festivals would have used the temenos) – we can nevertheless perceive a link. It seems that the Temple of Bel benefited from the profits of long-distance trade given that so many of its sponsors can be so strongly linked with it. Kaizer notes a similar habit of donations and inscriptions from sanctuaries in Gerasa, as well as Zeus Bomos and even Jerusalem; these tend not to be explicitly from merchants, however.[245] The epigraphic habit was sufficiently widespread for him to remark that "*in general, the shrines and sanctuaries of the Roman Near East were built thanks to individual donations*".[246] The inscriptions we have surveyed above demonstrate that long-

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[242] *IGLS* XVII.25 = *Inv.* IX.14a, 23-25 = *PAT* 0262. Mentions a caravan from Vologesias and Phorath.
[243] *IGLS* XVII.26 = *Inv.* X.91+95 = *PAT* 2763, reconstructed by Milik (1972), pp. 32-3. Mentions a ship from Scythia (India).
[244] *IGLS* XVII.22 = *Inv.* IX.30 = *PAT* 1360. Mentions a synodiarch of a caravan of an unknown origin.
[245] Kaizer (2006.a), p. 97.
[246] Ibid., p. 99.

distance trade and its proceeds played a major role in funding the temple's construction, with those engaged in long-distance trade involved from the earliest stages.

5.1.2 *Honorific series, Vologesias and the Temple of the Augusti*

Most prominent for our purposes is a series of inscriptions that mention the now-lost port town of Vologesias on the Euphrates. Not only do the Vologesias inscriptions explicitly attest caravans, but some also attest their routes. The Vologesias inscriptions, with two exceptions, form the middle of the group: all aside from those two fall between 132 and 150 AD.

Quite what could account for this sudden spike in inscriptions is worth giving at least some consideration to; given the details of the Vologesias inscriptions, it has been suggested that instability following Trajan's adventures in Mesopotamia led to an upswing in banditry, but the first of these inscriptions is from fifteen years later.[247] It could simply be that it became the fashion to erect such inscriptions in stone.

Of these inscriptions, a trio at the beginning of the Vologesias group is exceptional. These three inscriptions commemorate the same dedicand, each for broadly the same reasons. Dating from 132, 144 and 145/6 AD (the dating formula on the third is damaged), they were erected to honour Soados for rescuing and aiding caravans from Vologesias.[248] The first two were erected by grateful caravan members, while the third was erected by the Council of Palmyra itself. Each appears to be part of separate cycles of honorific statues: the first, of four from 132, originated in the Temple of Baalshamin (Zeus in the Greek); the second also of four from 144 from the Temple of Allat (Athene), and the third of seven from 145/6, from Umm el-'Amad, 22 km from Palmyra.[249] A second individual– Ogeilu, son of Makkai, son of Ogeilu – is honoured in a series of four in January 199 AD, also for aiding caravans and *synodiarchs*.[250]

The wording of these inscriptions yields a great deal of useful information. Turning first to the Soados inscriptions, the earliest, from 132 AD, was found in fragments in the main court of the Temple

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[247] See McLaughlin (2010), pp. 97-102; Young (2001), p. 147.
[248] These are *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 (February, 132 AD, not in *Inv.*); *IGLS* XVII.127 = Kaizer (2002), pp. 62-3 (June, 144 AD, not in *Inv.* or *PAT*); & *IPSC* G16 = Mouterde and Poidebard (1931) (145/6 AD; not in *IGLS*).
[249] *IPSC* G16 = Mouterde and Poidebard (1931).
[250] *IGLS* XVII.222 = *Inv.* X.44 = *PAT* 1378. It is possible that this Ogeilu is related somehow to the Titus Aelius Ogeilu whose son had four statues erected to him the previous year, in *IGLS* XVII.307.

of Baalshamin. The Greek is followed by the Aramaic; the inscription is in many pieces but survives in the Palmyra Museum:[251]

Σοαδον Βωλιαδους τοῦ Σοαδου [εὐσεβῆ καὶ] φιλόπατριν καὶ ἐν πολλῖς καὶ [μεγάλοις] καιροῖς γνησίως κ[αὶ φιλοτείμας] 4 παραστάντα τοῖς ἐμπό[ροις καὶ ταῖς] συνοδί[α]ις καὶ τοῖς ἐν Οὐλογασια[δι] πολείταις καὶ π[ά]ντοτε ἀφειδήσαντα [ψ]υχῆς καὶ οὐσίας ὑπὲρ τῶν τῇ πατρίδι 8 διαφ[ε]ρόν[τ]ων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δόμασι καὶ ψ[ηφίσ]μασι καὶ ἀνδριᾶσι δημοσίοις καὶ ἐ[πιστολ]αῖς καὶ διατάγματι Ποβλικίου Μαρκ[έλλου τοῦ διασ]ημοτάτου κυρίου 12 ὑπατικ[οῦ κεκοσμη]μένον διασώσαντα δὲ καὶ τὴν [προσφ]άτώς ἀπὸ Οὐλογασια[δος] παραγενουμέ[νην σον]δίαν ἐκ τοῦ περιστάντος αὐ[τ]ὴν μεγάλου κινδύου. 16 Ἡ αὐτὴ σουνοδία [ἀρετ]ῆς καὶ μεγαλο- φροσύνης [καὶ εὐσεβείας ἕνεκ]α αὐτοῦ ἀνδρ[ιάντας τέσσαρας ἀνέστησ]ε· ἕν[α] μὲ[ν ἐ]νταῦθ[α ἐν ἱερῷ Διός], ἕνα δὲ 20 [ἐ]ν ἱερῷ ἄλσει, ἕνα δὲ [ἐ]ν ἱε[ρῷ] Ἄρεος καὶ τὸν τέταρτον ἐν ἱερῷ Ἀταργάτεος, διὰ Αγεγου Ιαριβωλεους καὶ Θαιμαρσου τοῦ Θαιμαρσου συνοδιάρχων, ἔτους 24 [γ]μʹ μηνὸς Περιτίου.	(For) Soados, son of Boliados, son of Soados, a pious man and friend of his city, who has nobly and generously rendered assistance on many important occasions to the merchants and the caravans and his fellow-citizens at Vologesias. He was always unsparing of his life and fortune in matters of importance to his city and for this was honoured by decrees and popular votes and public statues and letters and by an edict (read by) Publicius Marcellus the most illustrious consular governor. In that he saved the caravan which had recently arrived from Vologesias from the great danger that surrounded it, the same caravan, in recognition of his valour, magnanimity and piety set up four statues of him, one here in the sanctuary of Zeus (i.e. Baalshamin), one in the sacred grove, one in the Sanctuary of Ares (i.e. Arsu) and the fourth in the Sanctuary of Atargatis, through the services of Agegos son of Iariboles and Thaimarsos son of Thaimarsos, caravan leaders. In the year 443, the month Peritos (=February, 132 AD).
w[- - - - - - - -] bd/r m [- - - - - - - -] 4 wb[- - - - - - - -] wṭ' [- - - - - - - - - - -] mṣbt bšm bwl' [wdm] s '[- - - - - - - -] wyqryn šgy'yn w'[p pw]blwqyws mrql[ws] 8 hgmwn' mrn b'g[rt'] wbdy[ṭg]m' šhd lh wšbḥh wbd[y] sy' šyr[t'] dy [sl]qt mn 'lgšy' bmd'm [w]šwzbh mn qdns rb d[y] hwt bh [h]nwn bny šyrt' dh 'bdw lh 12 ṣlm[y' 'ln 'rb']' lyqrh 'ḥd tnn bt [b'lšmn w'ḥd bt 'r]ṣw w'ḥd bgnt' 'lym [w'rb't' bt 'tr'th brb]nwt šyrt' ḥ[ggw b]r [yrḥbwl' wtymr]ṣw br tymrṣu [byrḥ šbṭ] [šnt 4]43.	[...] statues in the name of the Council and (the Assembly of) the People [...] and many honours, and Publicanus Marcellus, the Hegemon, our Lord, in letters and by decrees testified concerning him and honoured him, because he helped the caravan which came down from Vologesias in every way and saved it from great peril in which it was. And they, the members of this caravan, erected these four statues to honour him: one, here, in the Temple of Baalshamin, one, in the Temple of Arsu; one in the Garden of the Gods; and the fourth in the Temple of Atargatis, by the caravan leader Hagegu son of Yarhibola and Taimarsu son of Taimarsu. In the month Shebat, the year 443 (= February, 132 AD).[252]

This is a caravan inscription of the exact type discussed in the previous Part: an inscription honouring an individual not necessarily directly connected with a caravan, but going out of his way to, in the inscription's own words "*generously render assistance*". If the wording of the inscription is an accurate representation of events, we should expect this aid to have involved the marshalling of significant funds

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[251] Exhibit No. 134.
[252] *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 = *IPSC* G14 (not in *Inv.*), after Yon (2012), pp. 159-61.

and wherewithal. Although in many other caravan inscriptions, the 'peril' commonly befalling caravans is attack by nomads, in this case, the threat is not explicitly a military one, although the 'valour' – literally, ἀρετῆς (*aretēs*)[253] in the Greek portion may suggest that it was. The wording of this inscription and others has fed into the debate about the tribes of Palmyra and the 'four sanctuaries'[254] – the fact that these statues and their inscriptions were erected in the temples and not in some other public space as the Colonnaded Street or the Agora is noteworthy, however. The date of the inscription – February – tallies with Seland's prediction about the caravan season.[255]

The second of the Soados inscriptions was found in the Temple of Allat and is very similar, although some key differences present themselves.[256] Both the Greek and Aramaic portions state that it was erected by "*the caravan of all Palmyrenes which came back from Vologesias*" (ἀπὸ Ὀλογασίας ἀναβᾶσα συνοδία πάντων Παλμυρηνῶν in the Greek)[257] in Daisios/Siwan – June – 144 AD. Quite what this means is unclear – it would be surprising to imagine that it comprised every Palmyrene from Vologesias – perhaps it refers to a caravan organised by the city as a corporate entity in its own right (i.e. by the '*boulé and demos*', or similar), in contrast to others arranged privately? Either way, in this instance, the threat Soados rescued the caravan from was expressly a military one: he led "*a large force*" "*against Abdallathos/Abdallat, a man from Eeithe/the Aiḥtaia, and the robbers that he brought together*" who had lain in ambush.[258] This is a rare instance of the – presumably nomadic – raiders being expressly identified. The caravan's leaders are expressly identified as συνοδιαρχούντων – synodiarchs – both sons of one Sumonos/Simon,[259] and the statues they erected in gratitude are in bronze beside the first four, in the same four sanctuaries.

The third inscription was discovered in Umm el-'Amad, which is thought to be the 'caravanserai of the Gennaes' mentioned in the inscription itself.[260] In this inscription, the Greek text (Fig. 27) is followed by the – heavily damaged – Palmyrene Aramaic:

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[253] 'Valour' is not the only workable translation; 'excellence', 'virtue' and 'goodness' are also viable from ἀρετῆς.
[254] See above, pp. 204-6.
[255] Seland (2015).
[256] *IGLS* XVII.127 = *IPSC* G15 (not in *Inv.* or *PAT*).
[257] L. 12 (Greek portion), after Yon (2012), pp. 137-40.
[258] Ll. 14-16 (Gk.), after Yon (ibid.).
[259] L. 18 (Gk.), idem.
[260] Kaizer (2002), p. 64; see also Mouterde and Poidebard (1931).

A

Ἔτο[υς ....]
ἡ βουλὴ [κ]αὶ ὁ δῆμος [Σόαδ]ον Βωλιάδους
τοῦ Ξ[ο]άδου τοῦ Θαιμισάμσου, εὐσεβῆ καὶ
φιλόπατριν, καὶ ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ μεγάλοις καιροῖς
γν[η]σίως καὶ φιλοτείμως παραστάντα τοῖς
ἐ[μπόρ]οις καὶ ταῖς συνοδίαις καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ὁλογασίᾳ
πολείταις, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις [ἐπισ]τολ[ᾷ] θεοῦ
[Ἁ]δριανοῦ καὶ τοῦ θειοτάτου Α[ὐ]τοκράτορος
Ἀντωνείνου υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ μαρτυρηθέντα,
ὁμοίως καὶ διατάγματι Ποβλικίου Μαρκέλλου
καὶ ἐπιστολᾷ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἑξῆς ὑπατικῶν,
καὶ ψηφίσμασι καὶ ἀνδριᾶσι τειμηθέντα ὑπὸ
βουλῆς καὶ δήμου καὶ τῶν κατὰ καιρὸν συν-
οδιῶν καὶ τῶν καθ' ἕνα πολειτῶν, καὶ νῦν τοῦτον
μόνον τῶν πώποτε πολειτῶν ὑπὸ τῆς
πατρίδος διὰ τὰς συνεχεῖς καὶ ἐπαλ[λ]ήλους
εὐποΐας τεσσάρων ἀνδριάντων ἐν τῷ
τετραδείῳ τῆς πόλεος ἐπὶ κείόνων δημοσίοις
ἀναλώμασι κατηχιωμένον, καὶ ἄλλων
ἀνδριάντων τριῶν ἔν τε Σπασίνου Χάρακι
[κα]ὶ ἐν Ὁλ[ο]γασιά[δι] καὶ ἐ[ν] Γεννάῃ καταλύματι
{συν-}
[ξ]νοδιῶν ὑπὸ β[ουλ]ῆς καὶ δήμου, καὶ κτίσαντα
[ἐ]ν Ὁλογα[σίᾳ ναὸν τῶν Σε]βαστῶν κ[α]ὶ κ[α]κ-
[ερώ]σαν[τα ....]

<Break>

B

[καὶ (?) πίστε]ω[ς (?) κ]αὶ μεγαλοφ[ρ]οσύνης
ἕ[νεκα] (?)
πά[ν (?) πᾶσα]ν ἐνχειρισθέντα δυναστείαν
[...]στωτο[...]ειρω
[...]ξ στασι[...]

In the year (...) the Council and the People (honour) Soados son of Boliades, son of Soados son of Thaimisamos, for his piety and love of his city, and for the nobility and munificence that he has on many important occasions shown to the merchants and the caravans and the citizens at Vologesias. For these services he received testimonial letters from the divine Hadrian and from the most divine Emperor Antoninus his son, similarly in a proclamation of Publicius Marcellus and letters from him and successive consular governors. He has been honoured by decrees and statues by the council and people, by the caravans on various occasions, and by individual citizens: and now, he alone of all citizens of all time is on account of his continuous and cumulative good services honoured by his city at public expense by four statues mounted on pillars in the tetradeion of the city, and by decision of the council and people another three, at Spasinou Charax and at Vologesias and at the caravanserai of Gennaes. In addition, he founded and dedicated at Vologesias a temple of the Augusti (...) and in gratitude for his loyalty and generosity in his management of (every) position of authority (...)

[byrḥ ...] šn[t] 4.100+40+10 +5+2
b[wl]' wdms [l]š'dw br [bl]yd' br š'd[w]
tymšmš dḥl 'l[ḥy' wrḥym] mdynth wbzb[nyn]
šgy'n wrbrbn ... yb. [......] nhw[ryt]
[...] tgry' wšy[rt]' wb[ny mdyn]th d[y]
[b'lgšy' ....]
[......................]
[............] ... [.................]
whgmnyn dy b'[trh ......]
wbdgmyn wyqryn wš[l]myn [....]
[l]šyryn [bkl ṣb]w klh
[......................]
[......................]
[......................]
['ḥ]d ṣlm [bkrk' dy myšn w'ḥd ṣlm]
b'lg[šy ....]
bwl' wdms dm[h l]'qmw[...]
[...]. yhk [...................]
mn bny šyr[t' ....]

(In the month ...) the year 457 (=145/6 AD), the council and people (give honour) to Soadu, son of Bolyada, the son of Soadu, the son of Taimisamas, (because he) reveres the gods and loves his city and on many important occasions (...) illustrious (...) the merchants and the caravans and the citizens of his city who at Vologesias (...) and the governors who in his place (...) and with decrees and honours and statues (...) (to) the caravans (in every) thing one statue (at Charax Maysan and one statue) at Vologesias (...) the Council and People in his (likeness?) erected from the members of the caravan. [261]

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[261] *PAT* 1062 = *SEG* 7, 135 = *IPSC* G16, after Matthews (1984), pp. 166-7. Not yet in *IGLS*. See Mouterde, R. and Poidebard, A. (1931), "La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît du IIe siècle ap. J.-C. D'après une inscription retrouvée au S.-E. de Palmyre (Mars 1930)", in *Syria* 12 (1931), pp. 105-15.

Inscription grecque.
Reproduction de l'estampage pris par M. Cantineau.

Fig. 27: A photograph of the Greek portion of PAT *1062.*

It is a shame the Palmyrene Aramaic text of this inscription is so damaged; nevertheless, the Greek alone is illuminating. The honouring of an individual by two successive Emperors is unusual. The *tetradeion* mentioned in the Greek section is unknown; Matthews and Kaizer believe it to be the Agora,[262] presumably after a tentative identification by Seyrig, who noted that the name was also given to a porticoed quadrangle in Delos where honorific statues were erected.[263] An obvious alternative is the Temple of Bel, which was the temple of the pan-Palmyrene religion; Delplace ingeniously suggests that the phrase is instead a shorthand for the previously-mentioned *four sanctuaries of the city.*[264]

While other individuals are dedicands of multiple separate caravan inscriptions (such as M. Ulpius Iarhai of the Characene inscriptions), and one other is the dedicand of one sequence of caravan inscriptions, Soados is the only dedicand of multiple linked sequences. One other individual, general Aelius Bôra, was the recipient of a sequence of four, again in the four sanctuaries, in the same manner as the first of Soados' sequences; one of his was reused in Byzantine fortifications east of the Temple of Bel, but was originally located in the sanctuary of the Bene Komare on February the 25th, 198 AD.[265]

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[262] Ibid.; Kaizer (2002), p. 64.

[263] Seyrig, H. (1940), "Rapport sommaire sur les fouilles de l'Agora de Palmyre", in *CRAI* 84, 3, pp. 248-9.

[264] See Delplace, J. and Dentzer-Feydy, J. (2005), *L'Agora de Palmyre*, IFPO, Beirut, esp. pp. 117-8; see also discussion in Kaizer, T. (2008.c), "Old and new discoveries at Palmyra", in *JRA* 21 (2008), pp. 652-64.

[265] *IGLS* XVII.307 = *PAT* 1063 (not in *Inv.*); after Yon (2012), pp. 259-61. Unfortunately, the inscription does not tell us which sanctuary the sanctuary of the Bene Komare actually was.

Each sequence seems to have been of four statues, and while the first two were restricted to Palmyra (and form, in turn, one of the bases supporting the 'four tribes' theories we explored previously),[266] the final sequence is the most interesting from our point of view, as it describes a group of four statues erected, not only in religious sanctuaries in Palmyra, but in locations throughout the Palmyrene sphere in Mesopotamia. The locations of these other statues bear particular scrutiny. There are three sites mentioned: Spasinou Charax and Vologesias were major centres of trade. The third location – the caravanserai of the Gennaes, is peculiar, insofar as the other statues were all erected in major settlements with known – presumably rather large – settled groups of Palmyrene merchants.[267] The obvious conclusion is that the caravanserai was significant, and one frequented by Palmyrenes; its location 22 kilometres to the southeast of Palmyra along Poidebard's ancient trade route to Hit strongly supports this theory.[268] If nothing else, the unusual location will have reminded the merchants of their benefactor; it would also either have been the first or last caravanserai on the journey, so would have had added significance.

It appears that in the case of this sequence at least, the entire commemoration resulted from Soados' assistance to the Palmyrene traders in and via Vologesias. The two other inscriptions in the triad both relate to specific instances of Soados rescuing individual caravans "*which recently arrived from*",[269] or "*came back from Vologesias*";[270] this one, however, seems to commemorate the totality of Soados' achievements. Given the extent of his involvement, it has been speculated that Soados was either a camel magnate or a member of the Palmyrene forces (the second inscription describes Soados taking "*a large force*" against a named bandit leader),[271] or both; we might speculate that he was a particularly successful synodiarch.[272] Either way, this commemoration appears to be driven by the Vologesiad traders. This implies that the links with Palmyra retained by this community were sufficiently strong, both in terms of wealth and influence, to ensure that such an extravagant commemoration took place, not only in the mother city, but

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[266] Kaizer (2002), pp. 60-6.
[267] As evidenced by the phrase "*the merchants and the caravans and the citizens at Vologesias*"; similar phrases relating to Seleucia, Bablyon and Spasinou Charax may be encountered throughout this corpus.
[268] See Matthews (1984), Map 2, p. 163.
[269] *IGLS* XVII.127, l. 13 (Greek).
[270] *IGLS* XVII.150, l. 11 (Greek).
[271] *IGLS* XVII.127, ll. 14-15 (Greek).
[272] See previous Part, p. 174.

across the Palmyrene diaspora. This in turn suggests that at least some of the dedicants were natives of Palmyra itself with interests across the trading network.[273]

The inscription specifically mentions Soados erecting *at Vologesias* a temple of the Roman imperial cult. This is particularly noteworthy as the imperial cult was for the most part less prominent in Syrian – and Palmyrene – religious life;[274] this is explicable in terms of a show of loyalty to Rome in a foreign city, and the implication that the trading community in Vologesias included Romans as well as Greeks and Palmyrenes. Either way, Soados' erection of a temple indicates that his status was more towards that of a successful synodiarch, instead of being merely an industrious guard captain. He appears to have been a powerful and wealthy individual able to wield economic, military and political force, which would fit perfectly well for a member of the Palmyrene trading nobility at this time.[275] Although Vologesias remained very much part of the Parthian world, that Soados was able to construct a temple to the Augusti in Vologesias implies that it was at least partly within the Palmyrene sphere of influence – and, of course, Palmyra was part of the Roman sphere.[276]

Here is a direct linking of a temple with long-distance trade: it seems that this temple was built specifically to serve a long-distance trading community. This foundation of a temple – by a general active in guarding caravans, no less – will have given the trading community a visible presence in the urban fabric of Vologesias. As a temple of the Augusti, that presence will have been explicitly Roman. Certainly these inscriptions show that the links between Palmyra and Vologesias in the mid-Second Century AD were very strong. We know of a pre-existing temple serving the Palmyrene community in Vologesias thanks to an inscription dated to Kanun (November), 108 AD,[277] which gives Soados precedent: an inscription from the ninth column of the south portico of the Temple of Bel describes one Akkeos/Aqîḥ, son of Noaraî, who erected a *ḥammana* (*ḥmnʾ*) and *andrôn* (*ʾdrwnʾ*) at Vologesias.[278] We have seen

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[273] This is in line with Terpstra's model; see Terpstra (2013).
[274] See Kaizer (2002), pp. 148-151 and Sartre (2005), p. 58.
[275] See Young (2001), pp. 149-57.
[276] This has particular relevance to the debate regarding the status of Spasinou Charax and whether-or-not 'Roman' vessels were permitted to use the Persian Gulf, and related arguments.
[277] *IGLS* XVII.15 = *Inv.* IX.15 = *PAT* 0263; see also Starcky, J. and Gawlikowski, M. (1985), *Palmyre (Édition revue et augmentée des nouvelles découvertes)*, Librarie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Paris, pp. 75-6.
[278] Ll. 3-4 (Aram.), after Yon (2012), pp. 35-6.

Gawlikowsky's use of the term *hammana* in relation to the Temple of Rabaseire, above;[279] Yon interprets *andrôn* as a room of a sanctuary, possibly for banquets.[280]

Alongside the Soados trio, we can consider another inscription to illustrate a small but critical point. This inscription was part of a wall console in the Palmyrene Agora:

	Νε[ση Αλ]α τοὺ Νεση τοὺ Αλα συνο[διάρχην] ἡ σ[υνκα]ταβᾶσα μετ'αὐτοῦ συνο(δ)ία εἰς ['Ολο]-γασίαν, μηνὶ Πειτίῳ τοῦ 4 αξυ' ἔτους, τειμῆς (κ)αὶ εὐχα-ρισεί(α)ς ἕνεκεν.	*(Statue of) Neses, son of Ala, son of Neses, son of Ala, the caravan which had come down with him to Vologesias (has erected this) for the sake of honour and (in) gratitude.*
	ṣlm' dnh dy (n)š' br ḥl' br nš ḥl' dy 'bdw lh bny šyrt' dy nḥtw 4 'mh mn tdmwr l'lgšy' bdyl [dy špr l]hwn w'drnwn bkl [ṣbw] klh lyqrh byrḥ [š]bṭ šnt 461.	*This statue which is of Nesa son of Hala son of Nesa son of Hala the caravan which went down with him from Palmyra to Vologesias has made for him in his honour because he was their leader and was helpful in every way in the month Shebet in the year 461 (= February, 150 AD).[281]*

Fig. 28: A photograph of inscription IGLS *XVII.247.*

This inscription here is also typical of the majority of the caravan trade corpus, but the crucial point here is one of fine grammar. Whereas the majority of the Vologesias inscriptions either mention Palmyrene residents of the city independently of caravans, or talk of caravans *from* Vologesias, this inscription is the first to mention a caravan *to* Vologesias. This is vital for understanding the nature of the Palmyrene trading network: Palmyra was not merely a destination for long-distance trade to flow into. As with the other inscriptions, it is a shame that it makes no mention of what, precisely, was carried by these caravans, a fact much bemoaned.[282] This inscription is relatively small when compared with the likes of the grand inscriptions

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[279] See above, pp. 211-2; see also Gawlikowsky (2012).
[280] Yon (2012), p. 36; see also Kaizer (2002), pp. 224-5. On banqueting rooms, see for instance al-As'ad, Briquel-Chatonnet and Yon (2005).
[281] *IGLS* XVII.247 = *Inv.* X.124 = *PAT* 1419, after Yon (2012), pp. 227-8.
[282] See for instance Millar (1998), p. 133.

and companion statues set up to honour Soados, but its erection in one of Palmyra's most public places indicates its importance.

This inscription is the last known to mention Vologesias for over sixty years: after this group of inscriptions between 132 and 150, Vologesias is mentioned twice more in the caravan inscription corpus. In March, 211 AD, a now-heavily damaged inscription was erected in Palmyra's Grand Colonnade by a grateful caravan from Vologesias,[283] and thirty-six years later, in April, 247 AD, a caravan of merchants (also going *to* Vologesias) erected an inscription there honouring their leader.[284] That inscription is the last inscription of the corpus to mention any specific location (except Palmyra itself). The logical conclusion from this is that Palmyra's long-distance trading relationship with Vologesias – and, implicitly, Mesopotamia – appears to have endured well beyond that of Spasinou Charax, its other significant trading partner:[285] the last-known inscription mentioning Charax is dated to April, 193 AD.[286]

The same Nesa, son of Hala, son of Nesa, son of Hala from the above inscription is also attested in an inscription from the Temple of Bel from April 142, in which he travelled to Palmyra from Vologesias and Phorath,[287] and another in which he came from Spasinou Charax and Vologesias.[288] This pair of inscriptions indicates a route directly between Palmyra and Vologesias, shown in Map 2.[289] If this was in fact the main caravan route, it would explain the difficulty others have encountered in attempting to incorporate Dura-Europos into Palmyra's long-distance trade, and indeed with finding a route farther north, for instance via Hit.

The explanation for the drop-off in inscriptions mentioning Vologesias is generally held to be the rise of the Sassanid Empire, which replaced the Parthian Empire in 224 AD and took an increasingly combative attitude to Rome for the remainder of the period of our investigation. The effect of this on Palmyra appears in the final analysis to have been terminal, in the context of the war against the Sassanids

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[283] *IGLS* XVII.88 = *Inv.* III.29 = *PAT* 0295.
[284] *IGLS* XVII.89 = *Inv.* III.21 = *PAT* 0279.
[285] Going by this corpus of inscriptions, anyway.
[286] Once again, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, although in this case the absence is telling.
[287] *IGLS* XVII.25 = *Inv.* IX.14a = *PAT* 0262.
[288] *IGLS* XVII.246 = *PAT* 1412 = *Inv.* X.112.
[289] p. 151.

propelling Setpimius Odenathus and his wife Zenobia, Palmyra's erstwhile queen, to prominence in the mid-Third Century and spurring her subsequent abortive secession.

The greater part of the caravan inscriptions date to those months identified by Seland as those most likely for the majority of caravan activity from Charax – i.e. between December and May.[290] This suggests that his hypothesis concerning the annual organisation of the caravan trade is correct. We should also remember that the month of Nisan was the time of a major festival at Palmyra;[291] the conjunction bears reflecting upon.

The caravan inscriptions give evidence for Palmyrene trading communities in at least three major cities of Mesopotamia, and evidence for the Palmyrene presence enduring in Vologesias until late in our period. Crucially, we also have an example of a temple in Vologesias – the one erected by Soados for the imperial cult – being constructed on the back of long-distance trade, and furthermore we have seen strong links between trading interests and the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, suggesting its role as a temple site supporting Palmyra's long-distance trade. These are both examples of temples playing roles in long-distance trade, as venues for traders, as institutions enabling trade, and as institutions supporting the network of trust upon which that trade relied.

The consistent and repeated erection of honorific statues to individuals at Palmyra's major sanctuaries, preferentially to other public spaces such as the Agora and the Colonnaded Street, also shows that the major temples themselves had a role to play in demonstrating the continuing efficacy, and fruits of, the network of trust underpinning Palmyra's long-distance trade. As well as demonstrating the piety of both the dedicant(s) and the dedicand, these inscriptions also attested that these individuals had successfully employed the network of trust explicitly in the context of preserving or extending long-distance trade, and the implicit approval of the community in so doing. Of course, by both aiding and rescuing caravans, and by establishing a new Temple of the Augusti in Vologesias, Soados managed both.

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[290] Seland (2015).
[291] Gawlikowski (1973), pp. 82-3. *IGLS* XVII.131 = *Inv.* VI.13 (32 AD) (not in *PAT*) institutes sacrifices on the 6th day of Nisan *"for ever"*. See Kaizer (2006.a), pp. 95-6; idem. (2002), pp. 207-9.

5.2   Dura-Europos

As Palmyra's closest eastern neighbour, the city of Dura is long thought to have been a critical point on the Palmyrene long-distance trading network, as well as its more-publicised role as a military fortress on the west bank of the Euphrates. In this section we shall examine relevant evidence from Dura, with a view to establishing exactly what its role was in Palmyrene trade, as well as investigating the city's Palmyrene-built temples.[292]

5.2.1   Historiography

Dura-Europos is poorly attested in ancient literature, generally only appearing incidentally – for instance, it does not appear on the Peutinger Map.[293] It was probably a Hellenistic foundation, initially settled in around 300 BC,[294] although the site may have been inhabited prior to the Macedonian conquest. Seized by the Parthians in 113 BC, it became a Parthian stronghold, was briefly captured by Trajan in 115 AD, remained in Parthian hands until 165, when it was decisively conquered for the Romans by Lucius Verus. It was retaken by the Sassanids in 256, whereupon it was depopulated and abandoned. By the time Julian's army passed it in 363, Ammianus tells us that it was a ruin.[295] For most of its time in Roman hands, Dura appears to have functioned principally as a fortified site on the Euphrates, defending against Parthian aggression; its role in guarding the caravan trade is inferred, but lent weight by dint of its position and its large Palmyrene community, which included merchants, and the extensive presence of Palmyrene as well as Roman soldiers.[296]

Stumbled upon in 1920 by the British Army, the site of Dura was swiftly excavated by teams under Franz Cumont and Michael Rostovtzeff.[297] Ever since Rostovtzeff, scholars have argued about the role of

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[292] After this Part was completed, the ruins at Dura-Europos were destroyed, making further work doubtful at best.

[293] This may simply be an error of omission – or it may indicate that no major regional routes went to Dura, which after all was mainly a riverine settlement. Either way, it is a very large site to be so omitted.

[294] Dirven (1999), p. 2. On Dura-Europos' history, see above all Welles, C. B. (1956), "The Chronology of Dura-Europos", in *Eos* 48 (1956), pp. 467-474; Dirven (1999), pp. 3-17. On the religious architecture of the period, see Downey (1988), pp. 76-88. On Hellenistic Dura, see Leriche, P. (2010), "Europos-Dura Sélucide", in *Electrum* 18 (2012), pp. 23-44, and idem. (2003), "Europos-Doura Hellénistique", in *Topoi* Supplement 4, *La Syrie Hellénistique*, pp. 171-91.

[295] Ammianus Marcellinus XXIIII 5.7-8.

[296] See for instance Edwell (2008), p. 93-148; Young (2001), pp. 159-166. On the military presence at Dura see for instance James, S. (2004), *The Excavations at Dura Europos; Final Report 7, Arms and Armour and Other Military Equipment*, British Museum, London.

[297] Dirven (1999), pp. xvi-xvii; see also Hopkins, C. (1979), *The Discovery of Dura-Europos*, YUP, New Haven. See above all *TEAD* (see Bibliography, p. 280). See Dirven (1999), p. xiii for a full listing. The site was already known, for instance, to Gertrude Bell; see Bell (1907).

Dura: was it a 'caravan city' like Palmyra, or a military fortress?[298] Did it have a role in Palmyra's trading network? Schlumberger argued with some force that it did not,[299] while others contend that it did.[300] Most of this debate is by necessity founded on archaeological rather than literary or epigraphic evidence, and that archaeological evidence has been subject to considerable revision over the years.[301]

As with Palmyra, much study of Dura has focused on its religious life; of crucial importance are Downey's 1988 inclusion of it in her survey of *Mespotamian Religious Architecture*,[302] and Dirven's 1999 study, principally on the relationship between Dura and Palmyra but incidentally surveying much of the city and its evidence and remains, in its own right.[303] A future work on the religious life of Dura-Europos is envisaged by Kaizer;[304] until then, Dirven's work remains the most recent major study. More recently, Peter Edwell provided a valuable analysis of Dura particularly as a military town.[305] An up to date survey of archaeology has recently been compiled by Simon James.[306]

5.2.2   Region and Routes

Dura is located on the River Euphrates 200 kilometres east of Palmyra. Its position on the Euphrates makes it an obvious point for travelling and traversing the river into Mesopotamia, and as we have seen, there are suggestions that a route led east from Dura in the direction of Hatra.[307] It likewise enjoyed good contacts with locations both up- and down-stream, such as 'Ana.[308] It is not clear whether

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[298] For overviews of the state of scholarship on Dura, see above all Dirven (1999), pp. xvi-xix; see also Millar (1993), pp. 445-6. See more recently Kaizer (2009), *passim*, esp. pp. 153-4; and Baird, J. (2014), *The Inner Lives of Ancient Houses: an archaeology of Dura-Europos*, OUP, Oxford.

[299] See Schlumberger, (1935), review of '*Caravan Cities*' by Rostovtzeff, in *Gnomon* 11 (1935), pp. 87-93. See also Leriche, P. (2008), "Rostovtzeff, Doura-Europos et les Caravan Cities", in Andreau, J. and Berelowitch, W. (eds.) (2008), *Michel Ivanovitch Rostovtzeff*, Edipuglia, Bari, pp. 195-203.

[300] Rostovtzeff (1932), pp. 93-104; Gawlikowski (1994); for an effective overview of the dispute, see Dirven (1999), p. 34, nn. 133-4. See now Young (2001), pp. 159-60.

[301] Dirven (1999), pp. xvii-xviii; Rostovtzeff, M. (1938), *Dura-Europos and its Art*, Clarendon, Oxford. The problem is related by Millar (1993), pp. 445-6.

[302] Downey (1988)

[303] Dirven (1999). On the sanctuaries see Leriche, P., Coqueugniot, G., and de Pontbriand, S. (2011), "New Research by the French-Syrian Archaeological Expedition to Europos-Dura and New Data on the Polytheistic Sanctuaries in Europos-Dura", in Chi, J. Y. and Heath, S. (eds.), (2011), *Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos*, PUP, New York, pp. 9-33. See also Leriche, P. (1997), "Matériaux pour une reflexion renouvelée sur les sanctuaires de Doura-Europos", in *Topoi* 7, Fasc. 2, pp. 889-913.

[304] Cf. Kaizer (2009), p. 153, n. 1.

[305] Cf. Edwell (2008), pp. 93-148.

[306] James, S. (2014), "Dura-Europos, Archaeology of", in Smith, C. (ed.) (2014), *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, Springer, New York, pp. 2208-15. See also, in the same year, Baird (2014).

[307] See above, pp. 74 & 77-8.

[308] See for instance Young (2001), pp. 165-6.

Dura had its own territory or fell within the ambit of the Palmyrene chora 165 AD.[309] Counter-intuitively, the one route which Poidebard failed to discern via aerial photography is that which must have existed between Dura and Palmyra.[310]

Indeed, what has historically been lacking is any explicit evidence for Dura's involvement in long-distance trade. Rostovtzeff claimed that Dura's riverine position and close proximity to Palmyra were evidence enough for its position as a 'caravan city' between Persia and Palmyra.[311] However, at least since Schlumberger, this has been questioned.[312] Just as it is held that there is little direct evidence for Palmyrene long-distance trade in Dura, there is a lack of Durene evidence from Palmyra itself: while there are inscriptions mentioning trade with Seleucia, Babylon and India,[313] and caravans to and from Spasinou Charax and Vologesias,[314] none mention Dura, and the caravan trade continued even after the fall of Dura.[315] That said, a relationship of some kind (presumed to be trading) between Palmyra and Dura is attested very early in the evidence. We should remember that the majority of caravan inscriptions were erected as thanks to individuals who assisted caravans in need or in danger; an absence of inscriptional evidence may be explained by a lack of danger along the route from which caravans could be rescued (hence a lack of dedications honouring rescuers), or alternatively by the loss of such inscriptions from the surviving corpus. Rostovtzeff hypothesised that at least some of the caravans passed through Dura, but that none originated there, hence its absence in the textual evidence.[316] Claiming that such caravans did not exist is unsatisfactory: it was the only realistic way to make such a journey in the first place.

The absence of a visible route to Palmyra has therefore proven vexing, and many have sought to explain this absence by way of minimising the proposed trade between the two cities.[317] A simpler solution might be to suggest that Poidebard was simply unable to spot it from the air, bearing in mind that

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[309] Dirven (1999), pp. 15-17.
[310] Ibid., pp. 34-40.
[311] Rostovtzeff (1932), p. 105.
[312] Schlumberger, D. (1935), Review of Rostovtzeff's *Caravan Cities*, in *Gnomon* 11 (1935), pp. 87-93.
[313] E.g. *Inv.* X.89 = *CIS* 3961 = *PAT* 0307 = *IPSC* G23; not in *IGLS* (Seleucia), *IGLS* XVII.16 = *Inv.* IX.11 = *PAT* 1352 (Babylon) and *IGLS* XVII.250 = *PAT* 1403 = *Inv.* X.96 = *IPSC* G20 (India).
[314] E.g. *IGLS* XVII.240 = *Inv.* IX.7 = *PAT* 1366 (Charax) and *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 = *IPSC* G14 (not in *Inv.*) (Vologesias).
[315] See for instance Young (2001), p. 166.
[316] See Rostovtzeff (1932), p. 93-104.
[317] See for instance Kaizer (2015), p. 27. On Dura's trade, see for instance Ruffing, K. (2007), "Dura-Europos: A City on the Euphrates and her Economic Importance in the Roman Era", in Sartre, M. (ed.) (2007), *Productions et échanges dans la Syrie grecque et romaine: actes du colloque de Tours, juin 2003*, *Topoi* Supplement 8, pp. 399-411.

since the route travels east-west, any shadows from eroded hollow-way style features would be difficult to spot at dawn or dusk, when features along other alignments tend to be best-illuminated. As we shall see, such a route must have existed between the two cities, even if it was not a major caravan route. Gawlikowski takes account of seasonal shifts in the navigability of the Euphrates (and its impassability upstream north of Hit) to propose a triangular route for the caravans between Palmyra, Hit and Dura.[318] This approach was recently lent weight by Seland, who completed the connection with the maritime route to India and realised that the arrival of ships at Charax would have coincided with the spring floods along the Euphrates. This would have made beating upriver a daunting prospect and suggests such an alternative overland route straight to Palmyra from Hit;[319] this has been lent weight by the 'Nesa son of Nesa' inscriptions discussed above,[320] which appear to detail a direct route between Vologesias and Palmyra, making no mention of Dura, or, indeed, Hit (see Map 2).

5.2.3   Site and Hinterland

Dura itself is located atop a scarp overlooking the Euphrates; it is a commanding site which allows it to dominate the stretch of river, although access to the river itself from the city was limited.[321] It is thought that in Antiquity its immediate surrounds were well-cultivated; the banks of the Euphrates are extremely fertile if irrigated, and remain so to this day – we know, for instance, that wine was cultivated in the area around ancient Dura.[322] It is clear that parts have eroded into the river (see Figure 9 below).

There are two candidates for the first Palmyrene structure that we know of from within Dura's city walls: a religious meeting-house on the site of the future 'Temple of the Gaddê' near the bazaar,[323] and the Temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin. Without the walls, a temple of uncertain worship (commonly but inaccurately assumed to be to Bel)[324] from the Durene necropolis predates both other temples by some decades, being dedicated in the 30s BC. The religious meeting-house on the site of the 'Temple of the

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[318] Gawlikowski (1994); see also Dirven (1999), pp. 34-40.
[319] Seland (2015).
[320] *IGLS* XVII.246 = *PAT* 1412 = *Inv.* X.112; and *IGLS* XVII.25 = *Inv.* IX.14a = *PAT* 0262; see above, pp. 230.
[321] Dirven (1999), pp. 34-40.
[322] Ibid., p. 38.
[323] Almost certainly a temple of Malakbel; see for instance Downey (1988), pp. 115-8.
[324] See for instance Kaizer (2009), p. 160.

Gaddê' was probably built around the middle of the First Century AD.[325] Although Dirven fudges the date of its construction to '*around the same time*' as the 20s AD in her discussion, the earliest possible dating of the building itself (based, incidentally, on purely stylistic arguments) places it in the '*late First Century CE*', and even this dating is uncertain.[326] However, the later phases of the 'Temple of the Gaddê' during the Roman period are very definitely Palmyrene, as we shall see shortly.[327] Dirven does concede that while there is evidence indicating that the preceding buildings were used by Palmyrenes, it is not enough to say whether the earlier phases were definitively Palmyrene in origin, or were simply used by them. Despite the presence of a sculptor with a Palmyrene name, the Temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin offers no direct evidence of trade, though it is possible that the worship of the cult travelled to Dura from Palmyra; its location close to the Palmyrene Gate should therefore come as no surprise.[328]

Specifically Palmyrene structures begin appearing in greater number after the middle of the Second Century AD,[329] during the Roman period of Dura's history. The Temple in the Necropolis was doubled in size in the year 173 AD;[330] after this point, the existing Palmyrene structures were rebuilt, and from this period, the character of Dura's Palmyrene community appears to have become more military by nature.[331] This does not necessarily mean that the Palmyrene community's economic activities were any less; what it *does* show is that a military layer appeared in the pre-existing Palmyrene community.

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[325] This is the Dura city block H1 meeting house discussed by Dirven (pp. 29 & 223-8). The 'ceramic evidence' Dirven refers to (1999; p. 228) is surmised to have been part of an earlier structure which cannot honestly be said to have been Palmyrene as so little is known about it – even whether or not it existed at all. See also Downey (1988), p. 117

[326] See Brown in Rostovtzeff, Brown and Welles (1939), *TEAD* Preliminary Reports VII-VIII, YUP, New Haven, pp. 268-71.

[327] Although again, the temple's modern name is probably mistaken. See Kaizer (2015), p. 27.

[328] For discussion of the Temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, see Dirven (1999), pp. 115-7 & pp. 211-22.

[329] Appearing in the archaeological record, that is; there is evidence to show that they are reconstructions of earlier buildings, which can justifiably be argued also to have been Palmyrene constructions.

[330] Cf. *TEAD* VII-VIII, 320-323, no. 918, pl. LV, 2 (revised reading); see also Dirven (1999), pp. 203-7.

[331] Cf. the establishment of the Palmyrene archers' Mithraeum and the evidence from the Cohors XX *Palmyrenorum*; see for instance Edwell (2008). On Palmyrenes in Dura see above all Dirven, L. (2011), "Stangers and Sojourners: the Religious Behaviour of Palmyrenes and Other Foreigners in Dura-Europos", in Hoffman, G. and Brody, L. (eds.) (2011), *Dura-Europos: Crossroads of Antiquity*, McMullen Museum of Art, Chestnut Hill, pp. 201-220.

A   Temple of Jupiter Dolichenus
B   Baths
C   *Principia* ('*praetorium*')
D   T. of Artemis Azzanathkona
E   T. of Bel ('Palmyrene gods')
F   *Mithraeum*
G   Amphitheatre
H   Baths
I   Military T.
J   T. of Zeus Theos
K   Baths
L   T. of Zeus Megistos
M   House of Lysias
N   H. of the Large Atrium
O   T. of Atargatis
P   T. of Artemis Nanaia
Q   T. of the Gaddé
R   H. of the Frescoes
S   H. of Nebuchelus
T   T. of Adonis
U   Synagogue
V   H. of the Roman Scribes
W   Baths
X   Christian Building
Y   T. of Zeus Kyrios
Z   T. of Aphlad

G   Amphitheatre
B   Baths
H   Baths
K   Baths
W   Baths
X   Christian Building
R   House of the Frescoes
N   H. of the Large Atrium
M   H. of Lysias
S   H. of Nebuchelus
V   H. of the Roman Scribes
I   Military Temple
F   *Mithraeum*
C   *Principia* ('*praetorium*')
U   Synagogue
T   Temple of Adonis

Z   T. of Aphlad
D   T. of Artemis Azzanathkona
P   T. of artemis Nanaia
O   T. of Atargatis
E   T. of Bel ('Palmyrene gods')

Q   T. of the Gaddé
A   T. of Jupiter Dolichenus
Y   T. of Zeus Kyrios
L   T. of Zeus Megistos
J   T. of Zeus Theos

Fig. 29: A plan of Dura-Europos and its archaeology.
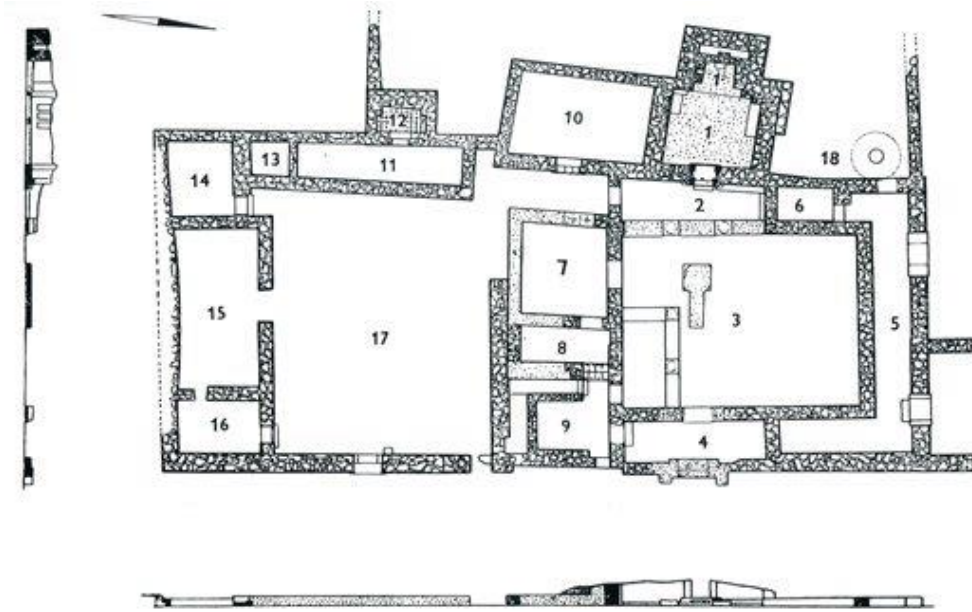
Fig. 30: A plan of the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura-Europos, with side elevations of remaining architecture. The large enclosure is at the top of the image; the well/cistern is feature 18 on the plan.

5.2.4   Material

Our earliest evidence for Palmyrene settlement anywhere outside the city itself – or, rather, for the establishment of a community abroad with a specifically Palmyrene self-identity – happens to come from Dura, in 33 BC. This is in the form of a temple-sanctuary (Gazetteer, 15) erected to the west of Dura proper, outside the city walls in the old necropolis, and dated by its dedication inscription, which we shall examine in due course. The building is referred to by Dirven and others as the 'Temple of Bel in the Necropolis';[332] Kaizer rightly points out that this is not a strictly accurate name,[333] although the name is oft-used, perhaps as more of a scholarly colloquialism for the sake of ease.[334] Regardless of attribution, the temple's situation in the necropolis should not be over-interpreted: it is a temple *in* the necropolis, not a temple *of* the necropolis, as the initial excavators were at pains to point out.[335] Its situation nevertheless remains of interest – not so much that it is in the necropolis, but that it is situated outside the Palmyra

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[332] Cf. Dirven (1999), Ch. 2 and *passim*; also for instance Colledge (1976.a), p. 226; and Downey (1988), pp. 96-9.
[333] Kaizer (2009), p. 158. While it is true that the excavation reports (*TEAD* VII-VIII, pp. 310-325) do not make the attribution to Bel, later scholars, most notably Dirven (upon whom Kaizer himself relies), *do*, presumably on the understanding that the epithet is a contraction based on the 33 BC dedicatory inscription.
[334] Insofar as we can identify any particular dedicands for the temple, Bel and Yarhibol are those whose statues were associated with it; in this case, 'temple of Bel' may simply be a contraction of 'temple of Bel and Yarhibol'.
[335] *TEAD* VII-VIII, pp. 323-5.

Gate in Dura's walls, set back a way from the road to Palmyra across the steppe of the northern Syrian Desert; Downey is thus minded to suggest that it was involved with trade between Dura and Palmyra.[336]

The temple itself is of at least two construction periods: the first in (or, more likely, shortly before) the initial inscription of 33 BC, and the second in or before 173 AD, with evidence (in the form of an inscription) for some kind of additional building work in or before 100 AD.[337] The later construction period in the 170s massively enlarged the initial structure and – literally – doubled its size. The sanctuary's peculiar location and disposition begs interpretation.

The western flank of the Temple in the Necropolis is dominated by a broad area enclosed by a wall and described as a "*court*" by the initial excavators,[338] extending out and away from the main complex (see Fig. 10 below). In the northeast corner of this area is a large "*cistern*", measuring 2.9 metres across at its broadest (for it is bottle-shaped) and at least 9 metres deep;[339] it is possibly in fact a well. This feature, which once held water, is, as Dirven points out, a logical feature of "*a resting place for animals and their attendants*";[340] certainly, its considerable volume – perhaps as much as 60 cubic metres or 60,000 litres[341] – would be of sufficient size for the watering of a very large quantity of both. Given the temple's location, not too far from the road to Palmyra, this certainly seems likely; if nothing else, it makes sense of its extramural location, which Dirven argues is as much by virtue of its dedicants' economic status and introduction of a new cult.[342]

The earliest Palmyrene inscription from Dura is therefore the dedication for a sanctuary presumably intended for the use of Palmyrenes (given the temple's location, disposition and dedicants) and designed with a view to resting and watering. It is worth pointing out at this stage that Dura's environs were likely cultivated, and that the steppe of the Syrian Desert was generally given to greater vegetation in the past than at present. Given this, the widespread pastoralism of the steppe, and that Dura is thought to have

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[336] Downey (1988), p. 98 – "*It seems more likely that the temple was designed to serve the needs of Palmyrene traders who camped outside the city.*"
[337] Ibid., pp. 322-3.
[338] Ibid., p. 315 and fig. 80.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Dirven (1999), p. 32.
[341] This is a notional volumetric figure based on the cistern's known width and minimum presumed depth; assuming the cistern was not vastly deeper than the 9m estimated by the excavators, the actual figure may have been rather lower, but still considerable in volume – around the 50,000 litre mark.
[342] Dirven (1999), pp. 41-3.

produced some of the food imported by Palmyra,[343] we should expect the herding of animals in Dura's surroundings, and it is worth tempering our conclusion with this caveat.

In light of this, let us examine the contents of the inscription:

	byrḥ sywn šnt 2	In the month Sivan, (in) the year
	79 hw zbdwl	279 (June 33 BC), Zabdibol, the
	br b'yṣw dy mn bny	son of Ba'yasu, of the Bene
4	gdybwl wmlkw br	Gaddibol, and Maliku, the son of
	rmw dy mn bny kmr'	Ramu, of the Bene Komare,
	'bdw hykl' lbl	made the shrine for Bel and
	wyrḥbwl	Iarhibol. [344]

This is, coincidentally, the second-earliest known example of Palmyrene Aramaic.[345] The inscription mentions the Bene Gaddibol and the Bene Komare: both are tribes of Palmyra; as we have seen, the Bene Komare are one of the 'four tribes', and the Bene Gaddibol are well-attested in Palmyra itself.[346] The inscription alone offers little directly relating to trade, although Edwell notes that the combination of factors implies its presence here, going so far as to talk of a "*Palmyrene trading dynasty*".[347]

We have already seen how the building itself may be linked to trade, and as we have seen above, members of both tribes in this inscription have been linked to long-distance trade. Indeed, Dirven attempts to link the Bene Komare to Palmyrene long-distance trade in the early 1st Century AD.[348] Her argument, however, based as it is on the brother of a dedicand in Palmyra being honoured in Babylon,[349] only really shows us that that one family was involved in trade – arguing from that that the entire tribe was so engaged is a stretch. That inscription *does*, however, usefully indicate that it was not merely Dura in which tribe membership remained a matter of importance for Palmyrenes outside their home city. Of course, whether or not the inscription was meant for a purely Palmyrene audience, or for a local one as

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[343] See Edwell (2008), p. 111.
[344] *PAT* 1067, after Dirven (1999), pp. 199-200.
[345] Cf. Dirven, pp. 7 & 42.
[346] The Bene Gaddibol are also attested in *PAT* 0263 (AD 108, in which they dedicate a statue in the Temple of Bel at Palmyra), 2779 (AD 39, famously equating the god 'El with the god Poseidon) and 2801 (AD 52, a dedication mentioning the mysterious decorator Hairan). For a Poseidon relief on a Palmyrene altar, see now Dirven, L. and Kaizer, T. (2013), "A Palmyrene altar in the Cincinnati Art Museum", in *Syria* 90 (2013), pp. 391-408.
[347] See Edwell (2008), p. 108.
[348] Cf. Dirven (1999), p. 27.
[349] The brother of the dedicand honoured in *PAT* 0261 by the Bene Komare and Bene Mattabol for making peace between them was honoured in *PAT* 1352 by merchants from Babylon.

well, is not a question we can answer (although it is written in Palmyrene Aramaic, this is not a decisive indication).[350]

Although it seems logical that each Palmyrene tribe would have had its own tutelary deity,[351] it appears that, removed as they were from Palmyra itself, Zabdibol and Maliku in the inscription above gravitated towards common ground in the erection of a shrine to Bel, a 'pan-Palmyrene' deity – Solin argues that this behaviour is typical among 'expatriate' merchant groups,[352] and Kaizer discusses other instances of recall of Palmyrene deities as a collective by those far from home.[353]

The name of Maliku features in significant later inscriptions to which we shall turn shortly, although the original excavators of the Temple in the Necropolis interpreted the fine wording of this inscription to indicate that Zabdibol, and not Maliku, had been "*the prime mover in the undertaking*".[354] For now, let us note a) the situation of the inscription and the attached building – outside the walls of Dura in the necropolis area,[355] and b) the character of the attached sanctuary:

The sanctuary initially only incorporated a single assembly room (or rather, only a single room of sufficient size to function as such). However, it was subject to at least two periods of enlargement following its initial construction: the first, dated to approximately 100 AD, appears to have been a relatively minor precursor to a further enlargement some time before 173 AD.[356] It is by this time that the temple sanctuary was massively enlarged – this enlargement corresponds, just about, to the Second Century surge in activity across the Palmyrene trade network, as we shall see shortly from Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf and Egypt; this would seem to lend weight to the notion that Dura was linked into the broader Palmyrene network, if nothing else through trade with the city itself. We have seen how this

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[350] See now Kaizer (2015), wrestling with just this topic, esp. pp. 29-30.
[351] And did (see Kaizer (2002), pp. 60-6 & Ch. 2).
[352] Solin, H. (1983), "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der romischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berucksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustande", *ANRW* II 29.2 (1983), pp. 624-5.
[353] Kaizer (2015), esp. pp. 21-2; cf. *PAT* 2740.
[354] *TEAD*, VII-VIII, pp. 318-20.
[355] To be precise, 150m north-west of the Palmyra Gate.
[356] See Dirven (1999), pp. 199-211, esp. pp. 210-11.

sanctuary's situation outside the Palmyra Gate would have been of natural benefit to those travelling between the two cities – Dirven highlights merchants and traders in this group,[357] as does Downey.[358]

The balance of probability weighs in favour of the notion that the cistern/well and enclosure were intended for the benefit of those making their way between Dura and Palmyra; given the scale of both enclosure and cistern, the implication is that they were intended for use by large-scale movements of animals, such as those found in a caravan. The sanctuary's situation at Dura's westerly extremity – one of the last features before the Syrian Desert proper[359] – combined with its location close to the road to Palmyra, *and* the sanctuary's links with that city, are persuasive. We can say, then, that the Temple in the Necropolis likely served as a resting and watering point for journeys between Dura and Palmyra; on that basis, and given its size, we can say that it is likely to have served that purpose for any caravans making the trip between the two cities. Given the weight of evidence, it would be no stretch at all to conclude that this was an example of a temple very much in trade: a temple built with the express ability to support trade between Dura and Palmyra, with the facilities to water and hold a caravan, by those who participated in that trade, even if only as passengers. This is therefore an example of a temple with more than merely a religious or ethnic role, specifically providing enabling infrastructure for trade between these two cities.

The dedication of a relief to the gods Asharu and Sha'd – horse- and camel-riding Arabian guardian deities popular in the Palmyrène[360] – by the market vendors of Dura in the latter part of the Second Century CE arguably provides further evidence of Palmyrene commercial involvement in Dura:

dkm ṭb l'šrw wš'd gny' 'bd bny šqqt'	*A good remembrance for Asharu and Sha'd, the gods. The* *people of the souk (market vendors) have made (it).* [361]

Strictly speaking, we are here presented with a group of (we may presume) market traders in Dura, leaving a dedication in Palmyrene Aramaic to a pair of gods heavily worshipped in the Palmyrène and

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[357] Dirven (1999), p. 32.
[358] Downey (1988), p. 98.
[359] We cannot strictly call the temple an 'urban' feature as, necropolis-bound as it was, it was extramural and not within Dura's city limits.
[360] See for instance Teixidor (1979), pp. 82-4.
[361] *PAT* 1086, after Dirven (1999), pp. 321-2; revised reading after Cantineau, J. (1938), "Tadmorea", in *Syria* 19 (1938) pp. 154-171, p. 164; see also Dirven (1999), pp. 97-8 & 321-5.

associated with Palmyrene culture.[362]   Despite the Palmyrene links, perhaps Dirven is unwise to automatically assume the market vendors were Palmyrene.[363] That the relief is locally-carved and of local stone is not necessarily decisive either way – all it indicates is that the relief was carved in Dura itself, which makes sense regardless of the self-identity of its commissioners.[364]

The relief appears to have been commissioned by a collective of individuals working together (and presumably, therefore, funding the relief jointly). From that, given the size and quality of the dedication, it could be argued that none of the dedicants was exceptionally wealthy; indeed, if we are to accept Cantineau's reading of the dedication as being from market vendors, then the implication is that we are dealing with a group without the means or inclination to leave a larger dedication. However, the meaning 'market vendors' may in some aspects be rather unimaginative: the Aramaic phrase *bny šqqt'* could be taken to include a much wider range of individuals with interests in the marketplace.

That said, however else the dedicants saw themselves, in this instance they explicitly self-identified as *bny šqqt'*: the people of the market. This is an uncommon choice of words; more often, groups of traders or merchants would dedicate joint inscriptions based on who travelled in which caravan with whom,[365] or would dedicate in groups according to their trade. So was this banding-together commemorating a particular event? Certainly this is an expression of a collective (we could even say corporate) identity which is not generally repeated in our period.

Although this inscription talks of the people of the market, we do not have evidence for long-distance trade here. The only caveat is that the dedicands of the inscription are guardian deities – however, while we may suppose that the merchants traded goods that were brought into Dura from beyond its confines, and be perfectly correct, this inscription does not evince the kind of long-haul, long-distance caravan trade associated with Dura after Rostovtzeff.[366]

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[362] Both Asharu and Sha'd (also Asaru and Saad, and variants thereof) are attested elsewhere in the Palmyrène and in Palmyra, but not together (see Dirven (1999), pp. 322-3, nn. 474-480, and Teixidor (1979), pp. 82-3).
[363] See Dirven (1999), pp. 97-8.
[364] See *TEAD* VI, 228-38.
[365] See for instance *Inv.* X.124 = *PAT* 1419 (above, p. 229).
[366] Rostovtzeff (1932), p. 105.

Moving to an inscription from the 'Temple of the Gaddê' (Gazetteer, 16),[367] we have evidence indicating that the Palmyrene aristocracy was present in Dura too. A series of inscriptions and pair of small reliefs dating from the reconstructed and final phase give us a lineage of four individuals: Nasor, his son Iarhai, his grandson Maliku,[368] and his great-grandson Hairan. Nasor, Iarhai and Maliku are known to us from the first of this series:

'bd mlkw br [yr]ḥy nṣwr	*Maliku, the son of [Iar]hai, (the son of) Nasor has made (it).*[369]

This inscription is from the niche-*aedicula* against the rebuilt *pronaos* façade. This rebuilding, of the *pronaos* and the rest of the temple, was completed shortly before 159 AD, a date given to us by the following inscription, from the relief of the Gad (or tutelary deity) of Dura from within the temple remains:

gd' dy dwr' 'bd ḥyrn br mlkw br nṣwr byrḥ nysn šnt 470	*The Gad of Dura. Hairan, the son of Maliku, the son of Nasor, made (it) in the month of Nisan of the year 470 (March/April 159 AD).*[370]

An almost-identical dedication appears on the corresponding relief of the Gad of Palmyra opposite.[371] However, the inscriptions from both reliefs miss out Iarhai from the previous inscription from the *pronaos*; one possible explanation, favoured by Dirven, is that Iarhai's was simply a less prestigious name than that of his father or son, and so was only commemorated on the architecture of the *pronaos* itself.[372] The Gaddê reliefs are both rather small (47 cm tall), and neither was the focal object of cult in the temple;[373] this was likely the shattered relief of Malakbel found in the naos.[374] Either way, a number of salient points arise from these of inscriptions:

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[367] No. 902 in *TEAD VII-VIII*, p. 275 and n. 31. See also Downey (1988), pp. 115-8.

[368] Another inscription – no. 907 according to Rostovtzeff et al (1939) – is specifically dated to the second quarter of 159 AD and mentions exactly the same individual.

[369] *PAT* 1104 (revised reading), after Dirven (1999), pp. 229-30.

[370] *PAT* 1094; *PAT* 1094-98 are part of this group, although *PAT* 1097 & 1098 are from the relief of the Gad of Palmyra, whereas *PAT* 1094-6 are from the relief of the Gad of Dura.

[371] *PAT* 1097 & 1098.

[372] Cf. Dirven (1999), p. 232.

[373] Cf. Ibid., pp. 245-248.

[374] See for instance Downey (1988), pp. 117-8.

- Given the degree to which they are remembered, the rebuilding and extension work would appear to have been financed wholly or at least in part by Nasor's family. This implies that the family was very wealthy.

- Given that Maliku appears in his own inscription as well as Hairan, we can infer that at least two generations of Nasor's family were involved in the funding of the works. This implies that multiple generations of the family had sufficient wealth to contribute.

- The fact that the same family appears to have financed both the relief of the Gad of Dura and that of the Gad of Palmyra implies that the family had interests in both cities.

A study of the dedicants' names is illuminating. All four are encountered in Palmyra,[375] and the name Hairan, being Arabic, is also encountered in Nabataea and Hatra.[376] The latter three names (Iarhai, Maliku and Hairan) are encountered in Dura as well; indeed, one of the dedicators of the very first Durene inscription – the dedication of the temple of Bel in the necropolis in 33 BC – bore the name Maliku.[377] The name of the great-grandfather, Nasor, however, is the most interesting. An Arabic name very uncommon in Palmyrene circles, it is not encountered elsewhere in Dura at all, and is only seen twice in inscriptions from Palmyra, both referring to the same man.[378]

That man, however – the Nasor from Palmyra – appears to have been the grandfather of one Septimus Odenathus, the erstwhile husband of the famous Queen Zenobia, as seen in a tomb lintel inscription from Palmyra, dated to April, 252 AD,[379] which lists Odenathus' geneaology as *Αιρανου Οναβαλλαθου τοῦ Νασωρου* in the Greek,[380] and *br ḥyrn whlbt nṣwr* in the Aramaic.[381] Indeed, Yon is satisfied that the Nasor in this inscription is the same man as that in the Durene inscriptions.[382]

Gawlikowski assumes that two individuals are described in this lintel inscription: Hairan and Wahballath Nasor. He explores the use of the phrase 'son of' in the inscription, suggesting that despite

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[375] Ibid.
[376] Cantineau, J. (1934), *Le dialecte arabe de Palmyre*, IFPO, Beirut, p. 15.
[377] See above, p. 240.
[378] Dirven (1999), p. 232.
[379] *IGLS* XVII.545 = *PAT* 0558 = *Inv.* VIII, 55. See also Gawlikowski (1985.a), "Les Princes de Palmyre", in *Syria* 62 (1985), pp. 257-61, no. 13.
[380] Son of Hairanes, son of Waballathos, son of Nasoros.
[381] Son of Hairan Wahballat Nasor.
[382] Yon (2012), pp. 410-1.

the wording, Hairan and Wahballath Nasor may have been more distant relatives of Odenathus. He goes so far as to suggest that if the meaning of 'son of' can be taken figuratively, the Hairan and Nasor mentioned in this inscription could be the same as those in our inscriptions above from Dura.[383] It is worth noting that the absence of the name Waballath from the Durene inscriptions is potentially problematic, and the name Hairan is sufficiently common as to be only so helpful in this instance. Given the century's gap between the two inscriptions, if the phrase 'son of' is to be taken at face value, we must conclude that the two inscriptions refer to different people.[384] However, we have already seen in Dura how the phrase may be used figuratively – consider the inscriptions on the Gaddê reliefs that described Maliku as the son of Nasor despite evidence for there being at least one generation between them.

Gawlikowski posits a tentative family tree for the house of Nasor,[385] supposing that the Wahballath Nasor from the lintel inscription is the brother of the Hairan from the 'Temple of the Gaddê' inscriptions from Dura; this would make the Hairan from the Gaddê inscriptions the great-uncle of Septimus Odenathus the elder, whom we know to have been the grandfather of Septimus Odenathus the king and husband of Zenobia. This argument only goes so far, however – are we to discount the literal meaning of 'son of' in one inscription only to assume its literal accuracy in another? The answer, of course, is no, and we must concede that it is possible that the inscriptions are generally somewhat loose in their interpretation of the word 'son'.

It is common for sons to be named after their grandfathers in many cultures, including our own – this was true here, as we have seen above in the four statues inscriptions;[386] indeed, two of the Palmyrene caravan inscriptions offer an extreme example of two names being repeated across four generations.[387]

I contend that the use of the name *Wahballath* Nasor in the Palmyrene Aramaic inscription casts doubt as to whether or not the two Nasors are in fact the same person. This, taken alongside the significant time difference between the two inscriptions, weighs against the two Nasors being one and the

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[383] Ibid. p. 260. See Ingholt, H. (1973), "Varia Tadmorea", in *Bilan*, pp. 136-7 on the varying uses of the words for 'daughter' with reference to Zenobia in Palmyrene inscription. A similar variety is observed here.

[384] In the interests of precision, ninety-three years exactly.

[385] Gawlikowski (1969), "A Propos des reliefs du temple des Gadde a Doura", in *Berytus* 18, pp. 105-9.

[386] *IGLS* XVII.222 = *PAT* 1378 (Ogeilu, son of Makkai, son of Ogeilu); *IGLS* XVII.150 = *PAT* 0197 (Soados, son of Boliades, son of Soados).

[387] *IGLS* XVII.25a = *PAT* 0262 = *Inv.* IX.14a, and *IGLS* XVII.247 = *PAT* 1419 = *Inv.* X.124. (Nesa, son of Hala, son of Nesa, son of Hala, son of Rafael, son of Abisai).

same. Given the foregoing arguments, I am not convinced that the two Nasors are the same person; however, we cannot overlook the rarity of the name Nasor, and the use of the name Hairan in the accompanying geneaology.

As a result, the probability that we are dealing with the same family here cannot be dismissed. Given this probable aristocratic connection, and combined with the three salient points that the 'Temple of the Gaddê' inscriptions raised (wealthy family, multiple generations, interests in both cities), the evidence of these dedications indicates the presence of a prominent Palmyrene family in Dura. At the very least, they were extremely wealthy; at most, they were the closest thing Palmyra ever had to royalty.

The presence of such a family in Dura shows that at least by the middle of the Second Century AD, the Palmyrene community in Dura included far more than just sculptors and auxiliaries. This was already indicated by our very first Durene inscription, from the Temple in the Necropolis, the construction of which appears to have been financed by the two Palmyrene dedicators of the inscription. Given that this phase of the 'Temple of the Gaddê' was built at least in part by a family with dealings in both Palmyra and Dura and, from its contents, presumably built as a location of worship for others with strong interests in the links between those two cities, it follows that it likely fulfilled the role of a networking temple for the regional trade between those two cities.

Although there is nothing to suggest that the Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos were involved in *long-distance* trade, they were nevertheless bound up in Palmyra's trading diaspora via connection to the mother city itself. There is a great deal to show regional trade between the two cities, some of which throws light on the question of the social extent of the Palmyrene community in Dura. The balance of the evidence we have seen shows that the Palmyrene community in Dura was at least to some extent a trading one, even if for much of our period it was increasingly military. Their links to wealth are attested by the increasing extravagance of their dedications; those to trade by their associations, names, stated occupations, and so on. Their links to temples are directly attested by their dedicatory inscriptions. Even if these temples cannot be directly linked to long-distance trade (and nor should they be), we can nevertheless see the same phenomena at work here as in temples involved in long-distance trade

elsewhere: the network of trust, familial links, and so on. In many ways therefore, the inter-city trade between Palmyra and Dura blurs somewhat the line between regional and long-distance trade.

I said earlier that peculiarities of the Temple in the Necropolis allowed for exciting interpretations: we have seen that the very first Palmyrene dedication in Dura – on the Temple in the Necropolis – was likely linked with trade, and furthermore how its dedicants may be linked with it. Its location, size, facilities, dedicants and disposition, taken with the other evidence from Dura, all point to a role in the Palmyrene trading network.

5.2.5   Conclusions

What we can say for certain, then, is that the Palmyrene community in Dura was established, at least to some degree, by the second half of the First Century BC; the dedication of the Temple in the Necropolis proves that by 33 BC, the Palmyrene community there had matured to the point of meaningfully contributing to the city's architectural furniture. This, taken alongside the evidence provided by Appian, shows that already in the latter half of the First Century BC, Palmyra had begun establishing a close relationship with Dura – it arguably follows that by the time the Temple in the Necropolis was dedicated, Palmyrene individuals, if not Palmyrene communities, had become established in Dura's neighbours in turn.

The inscriptions from the 'Temple of the Gaddê' show, if nothing else, that at least some of the Palmyrene inhabitants of Dura were very wealthy by the middle of the Second Century AD, and that the patronage of wealthy Palmyrenes extended here too, even if they did not live here themselves. That this evidence coincides with the height of Palmyra's economic success *and* the period of greatest Palmyrene building activity in Dura, cannot be anything other than proof that the fortunes of the Palmyrene community in Dura rose with those of the mother city.

None of this should be an enormous surprise.

The overall narrative told by the Durene evidence is one of a slow but progressive initial establishment of a Palmyrene presence in the city, followed by that community's evolution over the years as the city passed from Parthian to Roman control. The evidence from Dura comes to an abrupt halt at

the close of our period of investigation – the city was seized in a Sassanid attack in the middle of the Third Century CE and abandoned soon thereafter. Up until that point, however, there is evidence of a Palmyrene community there from at least 33 BC.

That there is no Palmyrene evidence of note between the initial flourishing in the 30s BC and the reconstruction of the major Palmyrene buildings in the 160s and 170s is not surprising, if, as Dirven suggests, the mid-Second Century constructions replaced – and therefore obliterated – pre-existing Palmyrene structures.

We can tell from the inscriptions that there was Palmyrene trade in, and with, Dura. As evidenced by the Temple in the Necropolis and its sanctuary, there was Palmyrene movement of animals on a large scale in Dura, from an early stage. From the inscriptions from the 'Temple of the Gaddê', we can posit that prominent Palmyrene aristocracy was involved at Dura; viewed alongside the marketplace inscription, we can say that Palmyrene trade at Dura was by no means limited to the upper classes.

That the Palmyrene community in Dura existed right up until the city's abandonment – and therefore must have existed for at least three hundred years – may be explained by a number of factors. Most obvious is the cities' close proximity. The links that came with that closeness may also be cited, these being links of culture and religion as well as 'simple' trade. In showing the links of cult and worship between the two cities, Dirven's study has gone some way to showing that the Palmyrene community in Dura arguably had an effect on Palmyra's religious development in turn.[388] Beyond that, it seems obvious that Dura's proximity to Palmyra and its role as a river-port on the Euphrates (if not the most important), combined to make it a contributor to Palmyra's economic success. As for its role in the Palmyrene trading network, it is clear that many trading Palmyrenes came to regard Dura as their home, from an early stage: in this regard, Dura may have been one of the first and most culturally important of the Palmyrene communities abroad. However, while there is evidence both for trade and the large-scale movement of animals, there is no evidence that would satisfy a positivist for Dura having been part of the *long-distance* trade network, as claimed by Rostovtzeff; nor is there any evidence to indicate that Dura was a *significant*

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[388] Dirven (1999), p. 66.

port. In light of this final point, we should therefore examine the evidence for Palmyra's trade with Mesopotamia more closely.

Nevertheless, we can take away from Dura our findings from both the Temple in the Necropolis and the 'Temple of the Gaddê': both are temples with a place in the world of trade, at least between Dura and Palmyra. The Temple in the Necropolis had a function as part of the infrastructure of that trade, with a location and facilities directly supporting it. The 'Temple of the Gaddê', on the other hand, was built by a community which appears to both have used the temple for some time and been comprised of individuals who identified as both Durene and Palmyrene. This would suggest a role for the 'Temple of the Gaddê' in maintaining the network of trust between these two cities – and, potentially, via Palmyra, to the rest of the Palmyrene network.

5.3   Other Cities in the Roman Near East

Evidence for Palmyrene trade with other cities in the Roman Near East is variable. Beroea – modern Aleppo – would have made a logical entrepôt for Palmyrene traders heading north to Antioch, while Emesa, lying as it does in the Gap of Homs, was the most logical entrepôt for caravans heading seawards. In the event trade from Palmyra had cause to travel south to Gaza and Egypt, it would have presumably done so via Damascus and, later in our period, would have travelled along the Via Traiana. In either case, Damascus and the cities of the Decapolis would have been significant destinations for trade in their own right. Direct evidence for Palmyrene involvement with its western neighbours is lacking in comparison to the evidence for its eastward entanglements; however, there remains some.

For a start, we have already seen an example of a Palmyrene being sent as an envoy to Emesa and Mesene by Germanicus.[389] As Palmyra's closest western neighbour, it makes sense that a large part of Palmyra's trade will also have travelled through Emesa en route to the west. It is likely also that a large part will have travelled north to Antioch on the Apamea road, and also to the south to the Decapolis via Damascus. However as the city on the shortest route between Palmyra and its closest Mediterranean port at Levantine Tripoli (which in Hadrian's time was a major naval base), Emesa would have been a vital station in Palmyra's westward network.

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[389] *IGLS* XVII.*3* = *Inv.* IX.*2*.

Indeed, the erection of a triple altar, paid for by the city of Palmyra, along the route to Emesa in 114 AD indicates that this was not a backwater route.[390] Further, the erection of a boundary marker along the route to Emesa, at Qasr-el-Heir, indicates that that route was significant in Roman times; although the marker cannot be precisely dated, its phraseology indicates that it was erected after 129/30 AD:

Fines inter Hadrianos Palmyrenos et Hemessenos | *Boundary between Hadriana Palmyra and Emesa* [391]

Because Palmyra only took Hadrian's name after his visit there – thought to have been around 129-30 AD – this boundary marker must have been erected after that time. Over time, Palmyra's use of the name Hadriana Palmyra declined (the boundary marker from Khirbet el-Bilaas does not use the name despite barely being 20 years later than this one),[392] so the balance of probability is that this marker was erected not too long after its adoption; this timing would coincide with the peak of Palmyrene commerce in the middle of the Second Century AD.

Just as Emesa lies on the direct westward route from Palmyra, Apamea lies on the chief north-western route, linking Palmyra with Laodicea on the coast and Antioch further north; this city, like Emesa, is one of Palmyra's closest ancient neighbours, and it is likely that it too benefited from close relations with Palmyra. The route there is attested on the Peutinger Table, as we have seen.

Damascus was the southernmost of Palmyra's major western neighbours, as the link between Palmyra and the cities of the Decapolis, and to Judea, the thriving port of Gaza, and Egypt and the Red Sea beyond. A number of finds relate to the extent of Palmyrene involvement in the area. The ancient village of Nazala – modern Qaryatayn – is a site of particular interest for the Palmyrene trading network. An inscription there, dated to 146 AD and dedicated by five Palmyrene brothers, coincides with the peak of the Palmyrene caravan trade.[393] A further Palmyrene Aramaic dedication from Nazala, this time dated to between 50 and 120 AD, shows the quintessential Emesan deity, Elagabalus. That such an inscription

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[390] Ingholt (1973), p. 129, n. 150.
[391] First reported by Schlumberger (1939), pp. 63-4 and Fig. 10; see also Edwell (2008), pp. 41-2.
[392] See above, n. 96; also Edwell (2008), p. 50.
[393] Millar (1993), p. 299.

should be found in Nazala, well to the south of Emesa on the road to Damascus, should come as no surprise, relating as it does two cities intimately involved with trans-Syrian trading networks.[394]

Farther afield in western Syria, Antioch played an important role in the trade of ancient Syria. As the largest city in the area, it was the seat of local Imperial power and also the location of a major mint, with cities as far away as Dura-Europos on the Euphrates yielding large quantities of Antiochene coins.[395] However, barring a single inscription from the latter half of the Second Century – which we shall discuss imminently – there is no known evidence for a Palmyrene trading presence in Antioch. That said, it is highly likely that at least some of the trade from Palmyra would have ended up either at the Antiochene market or there for transit to the wider Empire.

One of the only relevant inscriptions we have mentions a councillor of Antioch, who apparently levied the *tetarte* import tax[396] on Palmyrene trade in his role as *paralemptes*.[397] This is one of the 'caravan inscriptions', in this case dedicated in the Palmyrene Agora by merchants returning from Charax:

4	Μᾶρκον Αἰμίλιον Μαρκιανόν Ἀσκληπιάδην Ἀντιοχέων βου- λευτήν τεταρτώνην οἱ ἀναβάν- τες ἀπὸ Σπασίνου Χάρακος ἔμπο- ροι προηγουμένου αὐτῶν Νεσν Βωλι- αδους ἔτους βου΄ μηνὶ Πανήμωι.	*[A statue of) Marcus Aemelius Marcianus Asclepiades, a councillor of Antioch and tax-collector of the tetarte. The merchants who came up from Spasinou Charax (erected this). Their leader was Nese(s) (the son of) Boliades. In the year 472. In the month Panemos (= July, 161 AD)*
4	mrqs ʾmlyws mrqynws ʾsqlpydʾ blwṭ bʾnṭkyʾ dy rbʿ ʿbdw lh tgryʾ dy slq mn krkʾ dy slq bhwn rš šyrʾ nšʾ br blydʿ byrḥ qnyn šnt 474.	*Marcus Aemilius Marcianus Asclepiades, Councillor of Antioch, tax-collector. The merchants who came up from Karka (Spasinou Charax) made this for him, and Hesa, the son of Bolyada went up as the caravan leader over them. In the month Kanun and year 474 (July, 163 AD).* [398]

This inscription is from a column console found in the Agora at Palmyra. Irritatingly, the two halves disagree on the year of the dedication; although the formulae are confused, they are sufficiently close in time for that only to be a minor inconvenience for our purposes. Unfortunately, the leader of the caravan from Charax only gives the briefest of genealogies, only going back one generation, and unusually, the Palmyrene Aramaic text offers little more information than the Greek in this regard.

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[394] Kaizer (2015), pp. 21-2.
[395] *TEAD Coins*, pp. 196-8 & 203.
[396] The 25% Roman import tax.
[397] Young (2001), p. 149.
[398] *IGLS* XVII.196 = *Inv.* X.29 = *PAT* 1373, after Yon (2012), pp. 191-2.

The most striking feature of this inscription is that it is the only one of the caravan inscriptions to make mention of a city to the west of Palmyra – every other inscription that mentions a city either talks of Palmyra itself or some locale farther east. As we shall see below, quite how this fits in to our interpretation of this inscription has been the subject of some debate.

The dedicand of this inscription – and, we can assume, its attendant statue – is presumably Roman or Greco-Roman of origin, from his name; there is certainly nothing in his name to suggest he is a Palmyrene by birth. Of course, as a Roman tax farmer, he was probably one of the wealthiest and best-connected citizens of Roman Syria, and his seeking of bouletic office in Antioch is in that context much less surprising. This inscription can be viewed alongside the caravan inscription from 135 commemorating a Roman centurion,[399] as one of a small number of caravan inscriptions honouring non-Palmyrenes, indicating that the Palmyrenes were prepared to honour non-Palmyrenes who aided their trading interests and network. We could also consider an inscription from the Temple of Nabu mentioning a joint citizen of Palmyra and Antioch who was a member of a triple priesthood of Hera/Herta, Artemis/Nanaî and Rasafes/Rašaf, dated to November 99;[400] this suggests that Marcianus' was not an isolated case.

However, for all that, there is nothing in the inscription to say quite why the dedication was made in the first place – tax collectors have never been renowned for their popularity.[401] Other honorific inscriptions talk of the lengths individuals – such as that centurion – went to deserve their statue, and yet there is nothing for this man Marcianus. If it is merely his important station as both a councillor of Antioch and (an obviously farmed) tax collector, he would certainly have had a bearing on trade through the city, if not one looked kindly upon by the traders. But then did he in fact do anything at all to merit it, or was the erection of the statue merely an attempt to curry favour? This is not answerable given the evidence we have.

There certainly exist ancient routes between Palmyra and Antioch, Damascus, the Mediterranean, and the cities between. A direct east-west route between Palmyra and the coast is impeded by the Lebanon

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[399] *IGLS* XVII.209 = *Inv.* X.81 = *PAT* 1397 (see above, p. 219).
[400] *IGLS* XVII.177 – not in *Inv.* or *PAT*, but published in Bounni (2004), pp. 61-2, no. 17 & fig. 18.
[401] One might consider Zacchaeus, the unpopular *publicanus* encountered by Jesus in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (*Luke* 18:9-14).

Mountains, making the most direct route that via the Homs Gap at ancient Emesa,[402] although a large proportion of its trade also reached the Decapolis to the south via Damascus.[403] This wealth of destinations transformed what is commonly thought of as a 'trade route' and a line on a map, into a web, fanning out from Palmyra across Roman Syria and the neighbouring province of Judaea, as Palmyra's trade, and connections, linked up with its westerly neighbours. These links went farther west, to Rome and beyond, although our focus is on the east.

Whether or not the greater preponderance of evidence for Palmyrene links to the east can be said to reflect a Palmyrene preoccupation with the east, it should not be forgotten that for Palmyra's eastern trade to thrive, contacts and relations with the cities to its west were just as important: even as Palmyrenes acquired goods in the east, so too had they to dispose of them in the west. This raises the question of at what point the goods passed out of Palmyrene hands – this must have happened all along the route, although Palmyrene traders in Eastern goods are attested in Italy and on Hadrian's wall, [404] suggesting that a proportion of the goods passed out of Palmyrene hands very close to their point of consumption. The inscription commemorating the Antiochene tax collector likely supports this, exemplifying the relationship that Palmyrene traders had with Roman officials as their wares travelled westwards into the Empire. It is at present unclear whether the eastern weighting of evidence is down to a Palmyrene focus on the east or a comparative lack of attestation or survival farther west. Certainly, for now, the vast majority of evidence we have for the Palmyrene trading network relates to Palmyra's gaze towards the East.

5.4   The *tetarte* at Palmyra

The *tetarte* (the 25% import tax on high-end goods) was levied on trade crossing into Roman territory from Mesopotamia; Roman Syria was one of the relatively few areas where we know the *tetarte* to have been enforced – our other evidence for it comes from the Red Sea, implying that it was only levied on the most profitable of trade routes into the Empire from the east.[405] The inclusion in this select group, either

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[402] That this route is used in ancient times is well-known, and its importance to – or, at least, frequenting by – Palmyrenes may be exemplified by the triple Palmyrene altar erected by the city of Palmyra in 114 AD, approximately three hours' journey west from Palmyra (cf. Ingholt (1973), p. 129, n. 150).
[403] See Sidebotham (1986), pp. 71-6.
[404] See Terpstra (2013), pp. 152-60; Butcher (2003), p. 333.
[405] See Sidebotham (1986), pp. 102-110 for an in-depth discussion of the *tetarte* across the Roman Near East.

possibly of Palmyra itself, or undoubtedly of trade from it, shows that the routes established and maintained by the Palmyrene trading network were among the highest-value in the Roman East.

Because Marcianus was an Antiochene councillor, are we to take from this that he collected the *tetarte* there? Or are we to assume that because the statue was erected in Palmyra, that must have been where he was based, despite his role in Antioch? We know that the *tetarte* was levelled in major ports and entrepôts in the Roman east,[406] with evidence for its collection in port cities such as Myos Hormos or Berenike in Egypt.[407] And other Roman tax collectors are known from Palmyra: for instance, a Roman tax collector was present in Palmyra as early as 58 AD.[408] A rare, terse, trilingual inscription also from the Agora mentions Callistratus, a *tetarte*-collector from March 174.[409] Like Marcianus above, Callistratus has the same name in all three languages; the Greek and Aramaic names are simple transliterations from the Latin, suggesting that this actually was his name – again, there is no obvious Palmyrene connection. He is unambiguously referred to as '*manic*(ipi) *IIII merc*(aturae)' in the Latin and '*tetartoun*' (τεταρτώῃ) in the Greek, and there is no mention of Antioch: this would perhaps imply that Marcianus too was operating from Palmyra rather than Antioch; that, for instance, is the understanding accepted by Sidebotham.[410] The Callistratus inscription does somewhat lessen the doubt.

Nevertheless, the opposite reading – that Marcianus instead levelled the *tetarte* in Antioch – is supported by Young, who argues that Marcianus' status as a Councillor there indicates that Antioch was also where he worked.[411] However, Palmyra seems a more logical place for the Roman *tetarte* to have been collected, and it seems unlikely that any caravan would have stood for it being levelled twice – as Young says, it would have been "*suicidal*" for the Nabataeans to have charged the *tetarte* on trade thence entering the Roman sphere;[412] this presumably maintained for the Palmyrenes as well.[413]

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[406] Sidebotham (1986), pp. 102-12.
[407] As argued by Young (2001), pp. 95-6, after Raschke (1978), p. 664.
[408] L. Spedius Chrysanthus – see *IGRR* III.1056.
[409] *IGLS* XVII.197 = *Inv.* X.113 = *PAT* 1413, originally in Seyrig, H, (1941), "Inscriptions grecques de l'Agora de Palmyre", in *Syria* 22 (1941), pp. 263-6.
[410] Sidebotham (1986), p. 110.
[411] Young (2001), p. 149.
[412] Ibid., p. 96.
[413] Sidebotham (1986), p. 110, supposes that "*had Palmyra charged more, the caravans might have sought a less costly route bypassing the city.*"

We thus know of at least two *tetartones* (*tetarte*-collectors) mentioned in Palmyrene inscriptions, and the Tariff mentions Imperial as well as local taxes.[414] However, neither of the *tetartones* were explicitly based in Palmyra. Certainly, Palmyra is the logical place for the import tax to have been levied. However, Antioch's status as a major port and de facto capital of the Roman Near East also makes it a logical place for the *tetarte* to have been levied. Of course, it would not be a profound leap to suggest that the *tetarte* was in fact levied at both locations, and one paid at one or the other depending on which one reached first. Given the *tetarte*'s size, it is inconceivable that one would not have gotten a receipt, which would have spared caravans the iniquity of paying it twice.

A stronger indication that the *tetarte* was levied at Palmyra can be found in the form of an inscription from one of the tower tombs,[415] which as edited by de Romanis, appears to show the total value of the *tetarte* levied at Palmyra over the course of a single month,[416] although quite which month is not specified, and it is not clear why it should be recorded in a funerary tower.[417] Gawlikowski originally translated it as a record of a series of loans in the same style as those encountered in Egypt. De Romanis does not offer a translation, but Gawlikowski's is as follows:

'rbw' 'mkyl yrḥ 'ḥd zwz<u>yyn</u> rbw'n 'lpyn tryn wm'tn wtltyn wšt w'lpyn tš'h wštm'h w'rb'yn wḥd wm'yn <u>trtn</u> 4 hwyn sl'yn rbw'n ḥmšm'h wḥmšyn wtš' w'lpyn <u>tryn</u> w'rb'm'h wḥmš wzwz ḥd wm'yn trtyn hwyn kkryn 'lpyn tlt' wšb'm'h w'šryn wtmn' wmnyn 'šry Wšth wsl'yn ḥmš wzwz m'yn trtn	*Four accounts, one month. Drachmas: interest two thousand two hundred thirty-six and (capital) nine thousand six hundred forty and two obols; or shekels: interest five hundred fifty-nine and (capital) two thousand four hundred and five, a drachma and two obols; or three thousand seven hundred and twenty grains, and a shekel (capital) sixteen minae, five shekels, one drachma, two obols.[418]*

De Romanis' objections to Gawlikowski's reading are manifold. First, Gawlikowski misjudges the value of a talent (*kkr*), which should in fact be 6,000 drachmae (*zwzyn*) or 1,500 tetradrachms (*sl'yn*); that he misjudges the value of a mina (*mnh*), which should in fact be 100 drachmae or 25 tetradrachms.[419]

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[414] The Tariff mentions the imperial freedman Cilix, who levied 1 denarius per camel entering Palmyra – see Matthews (1984), p. 177, l. 92.

[415] Specifically, *"tower 70 on the Umm Belqis, engraved in gypsum in the room of its second floor,"* according to de Romanis (2006; p. 62), who personally checked it on two occasions in July 2004. It dated to the latter part of the 1st Century AD but was used into the early 3rd – see *Inv.* IV.1 = *PAT* 0562 = *CIS* 4206 (not in *IGLS*), de Romanis (2006), p. 65, n. 48.

[416] *PAT* 2634; see de Romanis (2006), pp. 62-9; Gawlikowski (1986).

[417] de Romanis (2006), pp. 62-9.

[418] *PAT* 2634, trans. Gawlikowski (1986).

[419] de Romanis (2006), p. 63.

Second, Gawlikowski misreads line 6.[420] Third, he excludes the translation 'myriads' for the word *rbw'n*, which de Romanis maintains is arithmetically "*required*".[421]

The figure arrived at by de Romanis is 22,369,141 drachmae 2 obols, also written as 5,592,405 tetradrachms 1 drachma 2 obols, and as 3,726 talents 16 minae 5 tetradrachms 1 drachma 2 obols.[422] This is obviously a very large sum; he notes that it is "*not a rounded figure*", "*huge and precise*", and that it is unusual for it to be expressed in three ways, showing "*an unparalleled, bombastic redundancy*".[423] He proposes that line 1 could in fact translate as "tetarte: *measure of one month*", the word *'rbw'* referring to the *dy rb''* attested in the Marcianus inscription above.[424]

Now, it is unclear whether this is the total amount liable to the *tetarte*, or the total amount levied by the *tetarte*: if the total value of the goods, then the value would be just over thirteen times that assessed in the Muziris papyrus;[425] if the amount levied, then the value of the goods would be more in the order of fifty times the value of the goods on Hermapollon's ship.[426] However, if only one figure is to be recorded, it surely makes more sense to note the amount levied, rather than the gross amount liable. It follows, then, that the figure of 3,726 talents plus change is the amount levied by the *tetarte* – implying that the total value of goods was four times that: i.e. a little under 850,000,000 drachmae or just under 15,000 talents.[427] This is a stupendous amount by any measure – but then, we have seen ample evidence to suggest that the scale of long-distance trade, and the revenues therefrom, were indeed stupendous. The tax would surely have been paid in kind rather than in coin: as de Romanis notes, a number this high was "*not exactly a negligible part of the monetary mass circulating in the province of Syria*".[428]

A number of points are worth considering: the caravan trade was highly seasonal, with the bulk of the trade appearing to occur in spring, early summer or late summer, as we have seen. The very large halts

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[420] Ibid., p. 64.
[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid., p. 65. There is in fact a 20 drachma discrepancy: the first figure should be 20 drachmae lower in order to correspond with the other two. De Romanis proposes that this is explicable by a simple drafting error in transcription. Ibid., p. 65, n. 45.
[423] Ibid., p. 65.
[424] Ibid., pp. 65-6.
[425] P. Vindob. G 40 822 verso.
[426] de Romanis (2006), pp. 66-7.
[427] 89,476,564 drachmae 8 obols, to be precise, or 14,904 talents plus change.
[428] de Romanis (2006), p. 69.

outside Palmyra indicate that a volume one order of magnitude larger than the Muziris papyrus seems, if anything, a little low. We have seen indications of the size of some caravans in Part II, suggesting that a single caravan could carry many, many times the cargo of a ship. Indeed, we have estimated that the value of a single caravan on the Incense Road could easily reach tens of millions of sesterces/drachmae, or millions of denarii/tetradrachms. Of course, we have no way of knowing what proportion of the total goods in any given caravan comprised the sort of high-value long-distance good liable to the *tetarte* in the first place. There is also no indication which month this record is for. If it were for a low-volume month, then it would imply that the peak of the caravan season involved a much higher tax yield even than this; on the other hand, if it were for a high-volume month such as Nisan/April, then it is possible that this one month's yield was a large proportion of that for the year overall.

But there is one other question we must surely ask: why, of all months' *tetarte* accounts, were this month's takings carved in stone (albeit a soft one) in a funerary tower? This kind of pedantic accounting – down to the last obol – is surely more common in papyri and other perishable media, not for permanent recording for public consumption. A stone inscription in a funerary tower, on the other hand, is surely intended to be seen, if not by the public at large, then at least by those attending the tower such as the family and descendants. It surely follows that there was something exceptional about this month's takings to merit their literal carving in stone. The obvious thing is their scale – perhaps, then, that month's takings were exceptionally high: a point of pride for a tax farmer such as Marcianus or Callistratus, worthy of remembrance. Why else set it in stone?

It is therefore likely that this represents an exceptionally good month for the Palmyrene *tetarte* – perhaps a particularly busy Nisan/April, which was not only at the height of the caravan season, but also the month of major religious festivals such as that in the Temple of Bel and in the Temple of 'Nabu', which, we should recall, had officials appointed to oversee the attendant market.[429] Even if we cannot say with any certainty which month the revenue is from, it at least affords us a snapshot of the scale of the long-distance trade at Palmyra itself.

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[429] Cf. Milik (1972), pp. 59-62; *RTP*, p. 89, nos. 687 & 688, pl. XXXIII; see also de Ligt (1993), p. 259.

But what of Palmyrene long-distance trade elsewhere? There was also a Palmyrene presence in the long-distance trade via the Red Sea in Egypt, which we shall now turn to.

5.5   The Red Sea and Beyond

As well as trading interests in the Persian Gulf, we also know of Palmyrene communities of one kind or another along the Egyptian Red Sea coast. In addition to the division of Palmyrene archers stationed in Coptos,[430] there also survives a small corpus of evidence pertaining to a community of Palmyrene 'Red Sea Traders' in the area. It appears that these Palmyrenes were indeed involved in maritime trade, either as ship owners or crew sponsors.

Two inscriptions, one from Coptos and a fragmentary one from Denderah,[431] indicate the presence of a collective of Palmyrene traders; furthermore, there exist at least two fragmentary inscriptions from Berenike, relating to the presence of Palmyrene auxiliary military units there.[432] The Coptos inscription is undoubtedly the most important of these; not only being complete, it was also discovered alongside twelve carved stelai and a pair of altars, in a frescoed chamber in a building commonly (though not universally)[433] interpreted as a trading centre, or funduq.[434] The inscription is in Greek, and although it is not dated, it is commonly attributed to the mid-Second Century thanks to the inscription's use of the name *Hadriana* Palmyra (therefore, post-Hadrian's visit of c. 130 AD), and a rough dating of the *terra sigilata* sherds found alongside the inscription:

[.] ΚΤΑΚ · ΤΟΝΑ […] ϱσιον Ζαβδάλα Σαλμά- νου χαί Ἀνείνα Ἁδρια- νῶν Παλμυρηνῶν ναυχλήρων Ἐρυθραιχῶν, 5 ἀναστήσαντα ἀπὸ θεμελίου τὸ προπύλα[ι]ον χαὶ τας στουὰς τρεῖς χαὶ τὰ θυρώ[μ]ατα ἐχ χαι- νῆς, τὰ πάντα ἐχ τῶν ἰδίων	*[The venerable?]* *Zabdalas, son of Salmanos, also* *Aneinas, of the Hadrianio-* *Palmyrene ship-owners of the* *Erythraean Sea, who has set up* *anew from the foundations the* *propylaea and the three stoas* *and the chambers, entirely* *from his own funds; his* *colleagues, the merchants of*

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[430] See Speidel, M. P. (1984), "Palmyrenian Irregulars at Koptos", *BASP* 21 (1984), pp. 221-4.

[431] *I. Portes* 103 (Coptos), and *CIS* II 3910 (Denderah), respectively.

[432] See Verhoogt, A. M. F. W. (1998), "Greek and Latin Textual Material" in Sidebotham and Wendrich, S. E. and W. Z. (eds.) (1998), *Berenike '96: Report of the Excavations at Berenike (Egyptian Red Sea Coast) and the Survey of the Eastern Desert*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 193-8, and Dijkstra, and Verhoogt, M. and A. M. F. W., "The Greek-Palmyrene Inscription" in Sidebotham, S. E. and Wendrich, W. Z. (eds.) (1999), *Berenike 1997: Report of the Excavations at Berenike and the Survey of the Egyptian Eastern Desert, including Excavations at Shenshef*, CNWS, Leiden, pp. 207-18.

[433] Eg. Seyrig, H. (1972), "Le prétendu fondouq palmyrénien de Coptos", in *Syria* 49 (1972), pp. 120-5.

[434] See for instance Sidebotham (1986), p. 95; Young (2001), p. 81.

	αὐτοῦ, φιλοχαγαθίας χάριν	*Hadriana Palmyra (set this up)*
10	[Ἀ]δριανοὶ Παλμυρηνοὶ συγ-	*to their friend, for his*
	Ἔμποροι τὸν φίλον.	*friendship and distinction.* [435]

We cannot strictly call this building a temple, but we must not overlook the religious connections: here was a building directly linked to some of the longest-distance trade in the ancient world, with a dual function as meeting house and ritual space. This is another instance of trading interests utilising ritual space, and the formula is familiar from the dedicatory inscriptions at Palmyra and elsewhere. Even if we cannot call this building a temple, its disposition points to a clear cultic function, suggesting that the building is a *Collegium*-style meeting house of the kind commonly found elsewhere, such as in Rome's port city of Ostia.[436] It is worth remembering that the *Collegia* of Delos and Osita had distinct cultic and religious aspects, and the physical description of the *funduq* in the inscription (*propylaea*, *stoas*, and the altars found with it) strongly recalls temple architecture and sites.

The Greek word for this Zabdalas' occupation used here is *naukleros*; it could be taken to mean 'merchant' in the English,[437] although theseafaring connection is lost in that translation: I prefer to use the term 'sea-merchant' or 'ship-owner'.[438] Of course, the implications of this – and the fact that it is used in the plural – are profound: just as we have seen that there were Palmyrene trading communities across Mesopotamia in the mid-Second Century, so too was there just such a community in Coptos. This inscription can be taken to refer to two separate groups: the ship-owners on the one hand, and the merchants on the other; however, the evidence suggests that these two groups of individuals are deeply entwined: the sea merchants of the Red Sea.

That there was a group of Palmyrene ship-owning – or at least, sea-trading – merchants operating from Roman Egypt is important for understanding the Palmyrene trade network; it affirms, for one thing, that Palmyrene trading interests were not limited to caravans (as we have seen),[439] and furthermore shows

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[435] *I. Portes* 103, after Bingen, J. (1984), "Une dédicace de marchands palmyréniens à Coptos", in *Chronique d'Egypte* 59 (1984), pp. 355-8.
[436] See Young (2008), p. 81; Terpstra (2013), Ch. 3.
[437] See, for instance, Young's translation – Young (2001), p. 80. I prefer 'merchant' as a translation of '*emporos*', however.
[438] And as Young himself goes on to do in the following paragraph – Ibid., p. 81.
[439] See above, n. 243.

that they were not limited to routes directly intersecting the mother city.[440]   The Coptos inscription, combined with its fragmentary cousin from Denderah – which also makes reference to Palmyrene *naukleroi* – shows that the Palmyrenes involved themselves in the sea-borne trade with India at both western termini: the Gulf (namely, Spasinou Charax),[441] and Egypt (namely, the Red Sea ports).[442]

There is evidence of a Palmyrene presence – if not habitation – farther afield still. On the island of Socotra (ancient Dioscurida) beyond the mouth of the Red Sea opposite the Horn of Africa, a Palmyrene Aramaic-language tablet dating to the middle of the Third Century has been cited as evidence for the continuing endurance of the Palmyrene trade network into that century.[443] We have already seen evidence that the Palmyrenes reached India repeatedly from Spasinou Charax; given the evidence from Socotra and the Red Sea, we may safely presume that this was more than just a one-off.[444]

What this evidence also tells us is that both positive references to Palmyrene traders operating in significant quantity in Egypt were doing so contemporaneously with the peak of activity observed in the 'caravan inscriptions' from Mesopotamia.[445] Young and others have argued that the development of the Palmyrene trading links in Egypt and the Red Sea came after, or at the expense of, their links in Mesopotamia, with friction between Rome and Parthia/Sassania in the late 2nd and early 3rd Centuries being cited as the probable cause.[446] What we can see from this, however, is that Palmyra's links with India, from Spasinou Charax and from Egypt, appear to have flourished contemporaneously. The drop-off in the 'caravan inscriptions' corpus towards the close of the 2nd Century AD does not necessarily imply a lack of trade. If nothing else, given the apparent size and wealth of the Palmyrene trading community in Coptos – sufficient, it would seem, to command a great deal of wealth, and, from their own inscription, a

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[440] Although there have been some arguments that the trade from the ships landing at Coptos – presumably from India – was then taken via Palmyra, or vice-versa, such a circuitous route is, at best, highly dubious. Compare Young (2001), p. 81, with Raschke (1978), p. 644, and Bingen (1984), p. 358.

[441] For instance, see *PAT* 1409 = *Inv.* X.107.

[442] See above.

[443] See Gorea and Robin, M. and C. (2002), "Les vestiges antiques de la grotte de Hôq (Suqutra, Yémen) (note d'information)", in *CRAI* 146.2 (2002), pp. 409-445, esp. pp. 432-444.

[444] For all that, we can probably discount the Palmyrene stelai at Merv' as modern imports; given their inclusion in a 19th Century art collection, the probability that they were imported there in modern times cannot be discounted; see Millar (1998), p. 132.

[445] The Denderah and Coptos inscriptions are both dated to the mid-to-late C2nd AD, and the India inscriptions of the 'caravan inscriptions' are both dated to 157 AD, with a high proportion of other inscriptions in that corpus dated to the same time.

[446] See, for instance, Young (2001), pp. 80-6.

large and well-appointed meeting house – we can argue that such a community must have taken time to establish itself, indicating that Palmyrene interest predated the establishment of the meeting house.

I contend we must view the development of the Palmyrene communities in the Red Sea in the context of the Gulf communities' success, and not of their presumed collapse. Instead of the notion that the collapse of the Gulf trade through Charax caused a concomitant shift to Egypt, it seems that the Egyptian communities were established *on the back* of the Gulf trade's success. Under this model, the Red Sea communities were established at the height of the Gulf trade: on the back of the booming trade from India via Spasinou Charax,[447] Palmyrene communities appeared in the Red Sea with a view to using pre-existing Palmyrene contacts and expertise to gain an additional foothold, this time in the Red Sea trade with India. This need not be the result of some grand plan by the Palmyrene state or any other official actor as Young would have us believe,[448] nor necessarily of any plan at all: merely the result of individual Palmyrene traders using existing contacts and knowledge bases to expand their enterprises. This was because they possessed or had access to the networks enabling them to operate this trade. This may well have come about due, among other things, to the stationing of Palmyrene auxiliaries at Berenike and the inevitable development of contacts and trust which would have ensued.

We can see from the other Palmyrene inscriptions from Berenike that Palmyrene troops were employed to guard caravans along the Eastern Desert routes between the Nile and the Red Sea;[449] it follows that they were so utilised by dint of their expertise in desert control and fighting nomadic raiders. Why not, then, apply the same logic to the Palmyrene traders operating from Coptos and Denderah? Under this argument, instead of the penultimate gasp of a collapsing trading network, we must instead view the establishment of the Red Sea communities as the high point in the Palmyrene trading network: for that short period in the mid-Second Century, the Palmyrene network and its member communities were at their zenith, funnelling goods from India to Roman ports along the Mediterranean coast from Alexandria to Antioch, and channelling their wealth, at least in part, back to Palmyra.

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[447] As evidenced both by the boom in inscription numbers in the corpus, and the twin India inscriptions from 157 AD, which would be contemporaneous with the earlier half of the window for the evidence we have for the Palmyrene communities in the Red Sea littoral.
[448] Young (2001), p. 80.
[449] See Verhoogt (1998); Dijsktra and Verhoogt (1999).

The communities in Coptos and Denderah, then, seem to have been the latest major outpost of the Palmyrene trading network in the east. We cannot say for certain how long the Palmyrene communities here endured in Egypt, but the temporal window for the evidence we have stretches from the middle of the Second Century to the early Third. Although there appears to have been a decline in trade at the Red Sea ports thereafter,[450] evidence from Palmyra itself in the form of the Marona tomb indicates that at least some Palmyrenes maintained their income through maritime trade well into the Third Century.[451]

We should not be under any illusion as to what the small corpus of evidence from Egypt shows. It points to a sophisticated and mature network of cooperating Palmyrene merchants and groups operating sea-borne enterprises which we must presume, given the nature of Coptos' general outlook, stretched as far as India. Given the evidence we have seen, I feel justified in dubbing their organisation a *Collegium*, a trading fraternity with strong cultic and religious elements alongside its purpose as an institution of long-distance trade.

One final piece of evidence is worthy of consideration. Taco Terpstra focused upon a Palmyrene building in Rome in the grounds of the Villa Bonelli which produced a number of inscriptions to Palmyrene deities, including an attestation of a temple to Palmyrene Bel,[452] and an altar dedicated to "*ancestral Arsû*", a caravan-guardian deity among other things.[453] There are many other Palmyrene finds from Rome as well, including an altar dedicated to 'Sol' in Roman and to 'Malachbel and the gods of Palmyra' in Aramaic.[454] He concludes that the building was a *statio*, a place for social, business and cultic gatherings, based not only on the pattern of similar constructions by other communities, but also given the building's size and location near Rome's river harbour; its location beyond the *pomerium* being explained by the cultic activities which took place within.[455] This lends weight to the institution of the Palmyrene *naukleroi* in Coptos.

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[450] For a summary, see Young (2001), pp. 82-6.
[451] Tomb #150; see Colledge (1976.a), p. 158 & Pl. 103; see also Sidebotham (2011), p. 203.
[452] Terpstra (2013), pp. 152-60; see inscription *CIS* II 3904.
[453] *IGUR* I.122.
[454] Terpstra (2013), pp. 157-8; *CIL* VI 710.
[455] Terpstra (2013), p. 159.

6. Conclusion

The overall pattern of evidence for the Palmyrene trade network is one of steady growth in the First Centuries BC and AD followed by a flourishing in the Second Century, into the Third. The network reached as far east as India, with major outposts in Mesopotamia and the Red Sea allowing the network a significant presence both over water and land. With these outposts in mind, it is striking that the earliest evidence from Dura and later evidence from as far afield as Coptos and Vologesias links this trading network strongly and repeatedly with temple sites and precincts.

Inscriptions commemorating individuals distinguishing themselves in long-distance trade or in the support of it were often erected in temples and elsewhere, demonstrating a role for temples both as exhibitionary (presumably at least somewhat public) spaces and as venues for the assurance and crystallising of the network of trust. The Temple of Bel, by attestation of numerous inscriptions, was funded at least in part by traders and groups of traders. To that extent at least, we can say that it had a relationship with trade. Its temenos also in all likelihood hosted the major annual festival and market in the month of Nisan, giving it a role in the hosting of trade activities as well.

Similarly, the Coptos inscription commemorates a single individual from a collective of merchants who through his own trading wealth was able to bodily contribute to the urban and religious fabric of this city. Another example is the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura; indeed, this is in many ways the archetype of the trading temple: a ritual space funded from the proceeds of, and designed to support, trade over a long distance, with space for both religious ceremonies and the accommodation of trading caravans. The Temple in the Necropolis was always a temple with a dual function; that its reconstruction coincided, or at least followed, the Second Century boom in Palmyrene trade shows that even in the decades following the establishment of the Coptos *funduq* (which we must regard as something of a high-water mark for the network), the Palmyrenes were still expanding their trade network and its capacity. That this expansion involved the construction of newer and bigger temple spaces should be seen as a function both of the increased amount of wealth (and consequent surge in euergetism) and, one must presume, an increased demand. These temples were important for both the network's success, and, it would seem, its longevity.

In their own ways, the Temple in the Necropolis and the Temple of the Gaddê at Dura, the Temple of the Augusti at Vologesias, the Temple of Bel at Palmyra and the *funduq* at Coptos are all examples of temples in trade. With the exception of our investigation into other cities in Roman Syria (which still turned up religious inscriptions and dedications that can be linked to trade), each zone of our investigation has yielded at least one significant instance of long-distance trade meaningfully intersecting a temple site. The fact that we have found a temple in trade in each of these areas shows that the phenomenon of temple trade was not particularly uncommon, so the fact that each major venue of the Palmyrene trading network appears to have sported at least one temple in trade should not strike us as surprising. We also have examples for the various roles played by temples in trade: those built *for* trade and traders (the Augusti in Vologesis; the Temple in the Necropolis in Dura; the *funduq* at Coptos) and those built *by* trade and traders (Bel at Palmyra; the Gaddê in Dura).

In both Dura and Palmyra, the construction of prominent temples in trade – the Temple in the Necropolis and the Temple of Bel respectively – appears to have heralded or at least coincided with a major boom in construction in their respective city. To what extent these subsequent booms may be put down to temple trade, or whether both are symptoms of the same success is unlikely to become clearer short of astounding new evidence. However, regardless of this ambiguity, temple trade nevertheless remains a reasonable barometer for local success. In both Dura and Vologesias, we have evidence for new temples being built, both directly on the back of long-distance trade and explicitly for the servicing of it: in Dura, the Temple of the Gaddê, and in Vologesias, the Temple of the Augusti. In both instances, the temples appear to have been built to service Palmyrene trading communities. Dura may have a second and earlier example of a temple built for this purpose in the form of the Temple in the Necropolis.

The Temple in the Necropolis and the *funduq* in Coptos played direct roles in the fabric of Palmyra's long-distance trade, as well as in the fabric of the settlement of which they formed part. In Palmyra and Vologesias respectively, the Temples of Bel and the Augusti – both built by individuals made wealthy in long-distance trade – served to support trading communities and showcase the infrastructure and individuals involved in that trade. As a result, we can begin to see past the purely cultic or ethnic purpose of the temples in the Palmyrene trading network, and grasp those temples in terms of their socio-

economic roles, as enabling institutional centres for long-distance trade and its infrastructure, and the operation of society in a networked fashion through these institutions.

CONCLUSION

Temples and religion in economy and society

1. Retrospective

This thesis is a study of the role of Palmyrene temples and sanctuaries in long-distance trade in the Roman Near East. We have seen how these two quite different phenomena interacted, whether (and to what degree) they shared space, and how we might begin to typify their relationship. In studying these forty-two temples, we have seen that temples and long-distance trade intersected in many different ways in the Roman Near East, through the temples' role as institutions operating in a networked society and a networked long-distance economy built largely on bonds of trust.

The thesis has proposed and tested three new models for how the relationships between Near-Eastern temples and trade (particularly Palmyrene temples and long-distance trade) can be conceived: the role of temples as sites hosting the network of trust, as sites hosting trade and commerce in its own right, and as sites supporting long-distance trade and communication through the provision of infrastructure. In this way, we can begin to see temples in new light: as institutions, venues and public assets in their own right, and as institutions bound into and critical to the network of trust connecting the ancient world.

We have now surveyed Palmyrene temples in the Roman Near East, and a range of selected comparanda – forty-two temples at twenty-three sites, as well as a variety of relevant non-temple sites. As stated in the Introduction, the intent of this thesis is to begin to situate temples of the Roman Near East in their economic context as well as the social, cultural and religious contexts we have seen already well-established in scholarship. As also stated, this thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of temples in the Roman Near East, Palmyrene or otherwise, but rather a study of the evidence for, of and from Palmyrene temples *as it relates to long-distance trade*. By studying a subset of the former in the context of a subset of the latter, the range of sites and evidence studied in this thesis has enabled us to begin to form a picture of how these two phenomena – temples and trade – interacted.

The three models this thesis proposes are those of 'networking' temples supporting the network of trust underpinning trade (and the economy and society more broadly); 'hosting' temples providing space for the exchange of goods and services, in effect for the trade itself; and 'supporting' temples providing infrastructure and services supporting long-distance trade.

We should return therefore to the core question raised in the Introduction – what role did Palmyrene temples have in long-distance trade? – and whether the evidence surveyed indicates an outline of such a role. There are a number of trends which appear consistently across the range of sites we have examined. We should discuss these before moving on to our final conclusions.

1.1 The three roles of temples in trade

The evidence we have surveyed indicates that, broadly speaking, Palmyrene temples fulfilled three distinct roles in long-distance trade: as sites of the assurance and exchange of information; as sites of the assurance and exchange of goods; and as sites supporting those engaged in the first two activities via the provision of infrastructure such as wells and enclosures along major routes. However, these three roles – that I have termed 'networking', 'hosting' and 'supporting' roles – must, in the Palmyrene context, be viewed very much in that order.

2. The Network of Trust

While we have seen ample indication of all three roles (networking, hosting, supporting) across the Roman Near East, evidence specifically from the Palmyrene ambit is, thus far, overwhelmingly dominated by networking temples and sites. There are three possible explanations for this: the selection of temples examined, some factor intrinsic to the Palmyrene diaspora, or else an underlying facet of the network of trust itself.

First, this may be due to the range of temples examined. Not every temple survives, and not every extant ruin has been published. The Palmyrene temples studied included those in Palmyra and Dura-Europos, in Egypt, and those attested elsewhere in the Roman Near East such as Socotra and Vologesias. With the exception of those in Palmyra – and then only really the temples of Bel, 'Nabu' and possibly Baalshamin – none of these sites is particularly grand, and in the absence of a role in the attraction of pilgrims or hosting of fairs (which if nothing else is implicit in the design of larger temples), the role of

these smaller temples as sites of communal worship is self-evident. Meanwhile, the temples selected as comparanda include a larger number of major temples such as those of Hatrene Shamash or Zeus Damascenus which, in the Palmyrene sphere, are only really comparable with the Temple of Bel (though they are nevertheless necessary as context for that temple). However, the range of smaller temples examined from Hatra and Petra suggests that there are in fact parallels in the Small Temples of both cities, while the smaller temples from the Nabataean sphere broadly had a distinct role from those in the Palmyrene (in that they tended to fulfil the supporting rather than networking role).

Second, this may be due to some factor intrinsic to the Palmyrene network. Seland described the Palmyrene trading diaspora as "*a network based on ethnicity*",[1] and worship of the Palmyrene gods is a recurrent aspect of Palmyrene epigraphy from abroad.[2] Consider the Palmyrene network in terms of its temples: a single large 'metropolitan' temple – Bel – in the home city, and a range of smaller, almost exclusively urban temples, in settlements which Palmyrenes frequented, as well as the home city itself. These temples and sites can be visualised as a network bound together if nothing else by their worshippers and epigraphy, which consistently reference institutions of the home city, such as tribes, guilds, and cults. Thus, Palmyrene temples themselves form nodes of a network bound by institutions of common belief and practice (potentially but not necessarily with the great Temple of Bel at their hub); this is the very same network which supported Palmyra's long-distance trade. It bears remembering that this networking may have reached between settled and non-settled communities, as we have seen with Temple XI at Hatra and as Gawlikowsky posited for the Temple of Rabaseire at Palmyra;[3] this may have been a role of extra-urban temples as well.

So, could this prevalence of networking temples in the Palmyrene sphere therefore be unique? I think not. On the strength of the evidence surveyed, this appears to have been a common role of smaller urban temples, as suggested by indications from Hatra and Petra. Further, we have seen examples in Vologesias, Muziris and pre-annexation Petra of Temples of the Augusti being erected outside Roman

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[1] Seland (2013), p. 381.
[2] Kaizer (2002).
[3] Gawlikowsky (2012).

territory;[4] these temples are likely to have fulfilled a similar networking role for any Roman merchants active in those cities.

3. Hosting and Supporting Trade

The other two roles elucidated by the evidence – those of temples 'hosting' exchange themselves, and providing physical infrastructure for its 'support' – are also seen in Palmyra's network, but to a lesser extent: the temples of Bel and 'Nabu' at Palmyra are the only indicated examples of the former, and the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura the only one of the latter. Again, this could be a matter of survival, of a unique aspect of the Palmyrene network, or a common feature. I am inclined here to argue that it is a matter of the latter.

Comparison can be drawn with Nabataean temples here: while a large number of them are known from the region around the city of Petra, comparatively few Palmyrene temples are known from the region around the city of Palmyra. Consequently, we are aware of numerous Nabataean temples which it is reasonably well-indicated fulfilled, by accident or design, a supporting role in Petra's long-distance trade; this does not appear to be the case for the Palmyrène – or at least not on the strength of the available evidence. It is possible that smaller extra-urban Palmyrene temples did, by accident or design, fulfil a supporting role in the Syrian steppe, but that these have not survived or yet been studied.

That said, while it is notably unclear whether any of Petra's major temples had a role hosting trade (although I am persuaded that the Great Temple did), we have distinct indications that the Temples of Bel and of 'Nabu' at Palmyra did fulfil that role.[5] This may be down to the different factors at work regarding the orientation of the Nabataean versus the Palmyrene trading networks. The Nabataean network appears principally to have revolved around incense, the acquisition of it from southern Arabia, and the vending of it in the Roman Near East and beyond, but not necessarily via the cities of Petra or Bostra. Meanwhile the Palmyrene network does not appear to have revolved around any one single good, but it *does* seem to have been more reliant upon Palmyra itself as a hub.[6] Indeed, the absence of a clear 'hosting' temple in Petra would be odd indeed considering their likely presence in other major Near-Eastern cities of the

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[4] Even though that in Petra can be explained in terms of a local elite wishing to display loyalty to client Nabataea's Roman suzerain, this cannot be an explanation for the other two.

[5] Milik (1972), pp. 58-63.

[6] See above, p. 113; see also Seland (2013).

time. The discovery in the last few weeks of what may be a temple with a very large temenos at Petra might resolve that particular conundrum.[7]

There is no reason to suggest that the proportion of networking to hosting to supporting temples in the Palmyrene sphere is particularly unique. Large temples often provided commercial space where the goods of long-distance trade might be sold; this was either permanent, as in the shops seen at the Great Temple in Petra or the Temple of Artemis in Gerasa, or temporary, most conspicuously in the form of fairs and festivals such as that held at the Temple of Zeus Baetocaece, and at major urban temenos temples as indicated at the Temple of Bel in Palmyra and the Sanctuary of Shamash in Hatra. However, in the Palmyrene network in particular, large and small urban temples appear to have provided space for participants in long-distance trade, reflected most obviously in the caravan inscriptions, but also in the form of honorific inscriptions and dedications found across the area of our investigation.

4. Provision of Facilities

The three different varieties of temple – networking, hosting, and supporting temples – each provided different services, attested in the evidence we have examined.

Of course, extra-urban temples such as Iram, Thoana, Sa'diyya and possibly the Temple in the Necropolis at Dura appear to have provided supplies and shelter to those actually undertaking the long-distance trade in the first place. This is attested in Pliny's description of the goods and services paid for at such caravanserais,[8] and also in the archaeology. The provision of food and water to the members – animal and human – of the caravan was of critical importance. Caravanserais also provided critical shelter for caravans while they rested. It also seems to be the case that caravanserai temples and extra-urban temples close to or on district boundaries were used for taxing and monitoring long-distance trade, including the temples at Wadi Sabra and Sa'diyya, but also probably including those at Seriane and Kadesh, for instance.

The term 'caravan city' can be a useful descriptor for a city's relationship with long-distance trade provided that it is defined in terms which are both realistic and testable against the information we have;

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[7] Parcak and Tuttle (2016).
[8] Pliny, *NH* XII.32.

Palmyra, Petra and arguably Hatra met the conditions for this revised, more realistic, definition. We have also seen that Seland's proposed organisation and timing of the caravan trade is lent significant weight by the dates on numerous caravan inscriptions, which coincide both with his proposed calendar for activity and with Palmyra's religious calendar. The proceeds of this long-distance trade are often the most likely source of the stupendous wealth of the largest sanctuaries, such as the Sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra or that of Shamash at Hatra; the absence of significant long-distance trade at certain other locales may also explain the lack of comparable structures, such as at Dura-Europos. It was also the method by which temples of all sizes acquired the materials for their construction and/or decoration, most conspicuously in the case of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Ba'albek, and the Small Temple at Petra.

We have not seen any direct evidence to suggest that the temples in our investigation provided banking services, although it cannot be ruled out. Inscriptions from Palmyra mention "*the four treasurers*", presumed to be officers of the four tribes, and possibly of the four sanctuaries,[9] and this practice, well-attested in Greece and Asia Minor, may well have been familiar in the Roman Near East.[10] We might expect it particularly in the more overtly Hellenised cities of Phoenicia and western Syria, however these are precisely the areas where the archaeological record for temples is poorest.

In providing all of these services, temples provided one more, very important, thing for long-distance trade and those engaged in it: security. This might be physical, in the form of wayside temples where one might find guards such as at Sa'diyya, or at least an enclosure like that at Dura's Temple in the Necropolis. The security might be economic, in the form of *collegia*, trusts and groups of individuals who could act in concert or take exceptional action to avert crisis or overcome threats, such as the Palmyrene *naukleroi* at Coptos or Soados and others taking exceptional action to rescue caravans. The security might be communal, in the form of cementing the position of groups and individuals in the immediate community of the temple or even in the wider community of the city or diaspora, as seen in the honorific inscriptions at Palmyra and elsewhere. The security might also, of course, be spiritual, in the form of asserting or confirming piety (and thereby action in the interests of wider society), or providing neutral or even sacred ground whereupon goods could be exchanged, and contracts entered into, in good faith.

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[9] Kaizer (2002), p. 65.
[10] See Debord (1982).

5. Placing Temples in the Palmyrene Trading Network

If we are to view Palmyra's trading network as a 'trade diaspora', to follow Terpstra,[11] and as an 'ethnic' network centralised on the mother city, to follow Seland,[12] then the presence of predominantly 'networking' temples in that network's nodes supplemented by one or two 'hosting' temples in the mother city makes a great deal of sense.

The prevalence of 'networking' temples in the Palmyrene sphere is thus an underlying structural aspect of the network of trust itself: the network of trust is ultimately one comprised of Douglass North's 'institutions',[13] which in the ancient world were lent greatest solemnity by incorporating religious and cultic aspects.[14] That merchants would therefore seek out or establish temples or other cultic sites as points about which to nucleate is thus a natural consequence. In North's terms, it was a matter of actors (merchants) seeking out or establishing common organisations about which they could cluster (temples), thus amplifying their collective power in their respective networks (long-distance trade). The indications we have seen from inscription *PAT* 2463,[15] and our own analysis of caravans in long-distance trade in Part II,[16] suggest that they were eminently successful in this regard.

6. Final Remarks

This thesis is an analysis of forty-two Palmyrene and other temples across twenty-three sites in the Roman Near East; its purpose is to determine the roles Palmyrene temples played in long-distance trade, as apparent from material and supporting evidence. As a result, it was necessary to examine these temples from a socio-economic and networking perspective, rather than the perspective of culture or identity. This thesis examined as wide a range of temples as possible. We examined both Palmyrene temples and comparable temples from the Roman Near East, and both temples which have been excavated or whose location is at least known, and temples which are attested in secondary evidence such as coins, epigraphy or literature, but which are now lost to us. This thesis examined both archaeological and written evidence

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[11] Terpstra (2013).
[12] Seland (2013).
[13] I.e. formalised relationships between individuals; see North (1990), and above, p. 111*.
[14] As argued previously by Rauh (1993).
[15] See pp. 256-8.
[16] See Part II, pp. 158-75.

so as to avoid textual or archaeological bias; the evidence from these temples was explored both separately and jointly in order to formulate the models provided.

Our focus in the main has been on the *long-distance* roles of Palmyrene temples, and those of the selected comparanda; it also explores the mechanisms of long-distance trade, and the roles of elites, trust, networks and institutions (legal and organisational) within that trade. Given the pervasiveness of religious life in the ancient world, there is a clear opening for a role for religious institutions in this context.

The degree to which Palmyrene temples differed from those elsewhere in the Classical Mediterranean has, as we have seen, been debated at length elsewhere. We have seen that the ethnicity/identity debate is of limited relevance within our investigation, but it is now worth folding our findings back into that debate. Insofar as the temples we have examined fulfilled roles in long-distance trade, to what extent did they differ from those elsewhere?

There is strictly nothing in the models established above to suggest that they were unique to Palmyrene temples, or to the period of our investigation. While temenos temples, as we have seen, were largely a feature of the Roman East, it is nevertheless the case that temples elsewhere were often erected within large open spaces (such as the Imperial-era fora in Rome) and in close conjunction with commercial space (such as the Athenian agora), particularly at Delos. Similarly, although caravanserais themselves were obviously a feature of desert and marginal terrain, the roles of rural temples and sanctuaries in supporting long-distance trade and transport, and the provision of the services we identified above, would have been important regardless of the terrain. The most universal of the three models presented, however, would seem to be the first – the role of temples as nodes in the network of trust; this was indeed the model found to be prevalent among Palmyrene temples.

We saw in Part II that Taco Terpstra has established that cultic and ritual activity in sacred space was a critical part of the maintenance and expansion of the network of trust in diasporal trading communities in Italy and elsewhere; similarly, Anna Collar has demonstrated the potential power of religious networks in the spreading of information and integration of dispersed communities across the Roman Empire. This thesis has seen that just as Palmyrenes, Near-Easterners and Syrians maintained these networks in Italy, so too did Roman communities maintain these networks in the Near East, most clearly

demonstrated by the Temples of the Augusti we have seen in Vologesias, Petra and Muziris. We have also seen that temples had a central role in the network of trust not only for diasporal trading communities abroad, but also in those communities' epicentres, as at the Temple of Bel at Palmyra.

We have also seen limited prior efforts to study temples in the context of their socio-economic function in the works of Beate Dignas and Klaus Freyberger. Dignas' work on the proximate socio-economic functions of sanctuaries, including that at Baetocaece, suggests that temple sanctuaries in our region and period were deeply woven into local economies, networks and political landscapes. This thesis, on the other hand, examined their role in the *long-distance* trade and economy of their region; we can reasonably conclude that temple institutions had major roles to play at all levels, not just the local. The models of networking, trade hubs and caravanserais are merely those most distinct in the evidence.

It might also be remarked that there appears in the main to be a great reluctance to acknowledge substantive links between temples and trade (particularly long-distance trade) in previous scholarship; indeed, from time to time, great pains have been taken to ensure that the two remain separate. This tendency is puzzling. It may simply be a function of focus: we have seen the relative scarcity of works considering both temples and trade in the same breath. It is possible that works principally concerning temples are focused too narrowly on religious explanations for the evidence they consider. Alternatively, this tendency may be due to the problems of explicit versus indicative evidence identified in this thesis. It may even derive from a desire to separate the religious from the commercial. Wherever it derives from, it is clear that such a separation *did not exist* in the ancient world. Indeed, as with most, if not all, other aspects of life in Antiquity, the religious and the commercial were deeply interconnected. It is to be hoped that this thesis will encourage this artificial separation of temples and trade to be redressed.

GAZETTEER OF TEMPLES

	Location	Dates		Dimensions		Setting	Discussion	Proposed role
	Temple	Constructed	Used	Temple	Temenos			in trade
	Palmyra							
1	Bel*	12/16 AD	to C 4th	38.91 x 64.5 m	43,000 m^2	City	III 4.2.1	Hosting
2	Allat	C1st BC?	385/6 AD	10.2 x 18.9 m	1,260 m^2	City	III 4.2.2	Networking
3	"Nabu"	C 1st/2nd AD	to C 4th?	9.15 x 20.6 m	3,200 m^2	City	III 4.2.3	Hosting?
4	Baalshamin*	C 1st AD	to C 4th?	10.8 x 17.2 m	9,000 m^2	City	III 4.2.4	Networking
5	Rabaseire	C 1st BC	137-C3rd AD	? (small)	? (small)	City	III 4.2.6	Networking
6	Arsu	63 AD	to C 4th?	? (small)	? (small)	City	III 4.2.5	Networking
7	Bal-Hamon	89 AD	to C 4th?	6 x 5 m	? (small)	City	III 4.2.7	Networking
	Apamea*							
8	Zeus	C 1st AD	to ~386 AD	? (large)	~60,000 m^2	City	I 3.7.1	Hosting
	Ba'albek							
9	Jupiter Heliopolitanus	C 1st BC/AD (N/C)	to C 4th?	57 x 97 m	10,605 m^2	Town	I 3.7.1	Hosting
10	"Bacchus"	Early C 2nd AD?	to C 4th?	36.15 x 83.81 m	? (middling)	Town	I 3.7.1	?
	Baetocaece							
11	Zeus/Baal	293-246 BC; 223/4 AD	to C 4th	13 x 24 m	12,056 m^2	Village	II 6.1	Hosting
	Bostra							
12	Temenos Temple	C 1st AD	to C 4th?	? (large)	? (large)	City	I 3.7.1	Hosting?
	Damascus*							
13	Zeus/Jupiter Damascenus	C 2nd AD?	to C 4th	? (large)	117-125,000 m^2	City	I 3.7.1	Hosting
	Dhiban							
14	Nabataean Temple	C 1st AD	to C 4th?	14.5 x 17.5 m	? (small)	Village	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai
	Dura-Europos*							
15	"Necropolis" Temple	33 BC	to 256 AD	46 x 23 m	? (large)	Rural	III 5.2	Networking
16	Temple "of the Gaddê"	~50-150 AD	to 256 AD	42 x 22 m	None	City	III 5.2	Networking
	Gerasa							
17	Artemis	C 2nd AD (N/C?)	to C 4th?	22 x 53 m	34,000 m^2	City	II 5.2.2	Hosting
18	Zeus	C 2nd AD (N/C)	to C 4th?	28 x 41 m	4,074 m^2	City	II 5.2.2	Hosting
	Hatra*							
19	Shamash	C 1st AD	to 240 AD	Multiple	146-152,000 m^2	City	I 3.6	Hosting
20	Temple V	C 1st AD?	to 240 AD	? (small)	? (middling)	City	I 3.6	Networking
21	Temple IX	Late C 1st AD?	to 240 AD	? (small)	? (small/none)	City	I 3.6	Networking
22	Temple XI	C 1st AD?	to 240 AD	? (small)	? (small)	City	I 3.6	Networking
23	Temple XIII	C 1st AD?	to 240 AD	? (small)	? (middling)	City	I 3.6	Networking
	Hierapolis							
24	Atargatis and Hadad	? By C 1st BC	to C 4th	? (large)	? (large)	City	I 1.5.1	Hosting
	Iram							
25	Nabataean Temple	31 AD or earlier	to C 3rd?	19 x 22.5 m	Open	Rural	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai
	Jerusalem*							
26	Temple on the Mount	C 6th to 4th BC?	to 70 AD	? (very large)	144,000 m^2	City	I 3.7.1	Hosting
	Kadesh							
27	Baalshamin	Early C 2nd AD?	to 363 AD?	20.66 x 31.25 m	4,400 m^2	Town	II 3.2.2	Supporting
	Khirbat-al-Tannur							
28	High Place	C 1st BC	to C 4th?	None	1,833 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Supporting?
	Khirbat-et-Dariyeh							
29	Temple	C 1st BC?	to C 4th?	16.8 x 22.8 m	5,175 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Supporting?
	Petra							
30	Qasr-al-Bint	9 BC - 40 AD	to 363 AD	32 x 32 m	14,400 m^2	City	II 3.2	Hosting?
31	Winged Lions	27 AD	to 363 AD	~20 x 25 m	? (middling)	City	II 3.2	Networking?
32	Small Temple	C 1st BC	to 363 AD	14.6 x 20.8 m	~800 m^2	City	II 3.2	Networking
33	Southern/Great Temple	C 1st BC	to 363 AD	35.5 x 42.5 m	7,800 m^2	City	II 3.2	Hosting
	Philadelphia							
34	"Heracles"/Great Temple	161-166 AD (N/C)	to mid-C 3rd?	> 7 x 21 m	8,882 m^2	City	I 3.7.1	Hosting?
	Qasrawet							
35	Central Temple	C 1st BC	to C 3rd?	19 x 19.50 m	? (middling)	Rural	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai
36	Western Temple	C 1st BC	to C 3rd	4.40 x 11.10 m	? (middling)	Rural	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai
	Sabra							
37	Main Temple	C1st BC?	to 363 AD?	10 x 8 m	2,200 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai
	Seriane*							
38	Temple	~200 AD	to C 4th AD?	11 x 27 m	? (large)	Village	III 4.3	Supporting
	Si'a							
39	South Temple	C 1st BC	to C 3rd?	7.8 x 12.8 m	3,840 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Hosting?
40	Dushara	C 1st BC	to C 3rd?	15 x 15 m	3,300 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Supporting?
41	Baalshamin	C 1st BC	to C 3rd?	18.8 x 19.5 m	1,300 m^2	Rural	II 3.2.2	Supporting?
	Thoana							
42	Temple	? Nabataean	?	20 x 23.7 m	12,040 m^2	Village	II 3.2.2	Caravanserai

* site now destroyed   N/C = Not completed

Notes	Notable Sources	
Palmyra		
Large numbers of caravan and trade inscriptions. Known caravan landmark. Destroyed.	Pietrzykowski (1997, in Polish); Seyrig, Amy and Will (1975)	1
Athenian import find. Caravan inscriptions.	Gawlikowski (1985.b; 1983.b, .c); idem. & Tarara (2006)	2
Northern end of temenos replaced with shops. Trapezoidal. Festival market indications.	Bounnī (2004); Bounnī, Seigne and Saliby (1992)	3
Successive courts and buildings. Theatron. Patchwork. Caravan inscriptions. Destroyed.	Collart and Vicari (1969-1975)	4
Close to agora. Important for Tariff inscription. Possible slave trade connections?	Gawlikowski (2012)	5
Close to agora. Cult has strong caravan connections.	Kaizer (2002); al-As'ad and Texidor (1985)	6
Single room in Hel'istic wall tower. Possible relationship w/T. of Bel; near Eqfa spring	Kaizer (2002); du Mesnil du Buisson (1966)	7
Apamea (destroyed)		
Abuts main agora and includes marketplace. Levelled in C 4th AD; minimal remains.	Balty (1997); idem. (1981)	8
Ba'albek		
Sequential courts. Pitch inscriptions in main court. On main road.	van Ess and Rheidt (2014); Hajjar (1985); Ragette (1980)	9
Close to Jup. Hel. Temple. Sanctuary predated temple. On main road. Not Bacchus.	van Ess and Rheidt (2014); Hajjar (1985); Ragette (1980)	10
Baetocaece		
Site of major trading fair. Successive royal/imperial fair decrees.	Dignas (2002); Baroni (1984)	11
Bostra		
Almost completely obliterated.	Dentzer (2007); idem. (2003)	12
Damascus		
Nested courts; outer court lined with shops. Linked to Agora. Vast outer peribolos.	Burns (2005); Will (1994); Freyberger (1989)	13
Dhiban		
Nabataean trade route station.	Tushingham (1972); idem. (1954)	14
Dura-Europos (destroyed)		
Outside city 350m W of Palmyra gate, just off main road. Large enclosure and cistern.	Dirven (1999); Rostovtzeff, Brown and Welles (eds.) (1939)	15
Replaced prior temple. Major Palmyrene finds/influences in both. Near Palmyra gate.	Dirven (1999); Rostovtzeff, Brown and Welles (eds.) (1939)	16
Gerasa		
Shops in main façade. At junction of main roads. Sequential approach.	Segal (1981); Negev (1977)	17
Faces onto oval plaza. Just by southern gate. Irregular layout.	Braun (1998); Negev (1977)	18
Hatra (destroyed)		
At central crossroads. Shop inscriptions. Vast temenos. No one central temple.	V. Ricciardi & Peruzetto (2013); F'berger (1998); Aggoula (1983)	19
On main road to north gate. Elite memorials; caravanier inscription. Hierapolitan links.	Jakubiak (2013); Kropp (2013); Aggoula (1991)	20
West of main road to south gate. Traders inscription.	Jakubiak (2013); Aggoula (1991)	21
South of main road to west gate. By original city wall. Nomads' oath inscription.	Jakubiak (2013); Dijkstra (1990)	22
Near eastern gate. Necropolis temple? Egyptian and Palmyrene finds.	Jakubiak (2013); Kropp (2013); Al-Salihi (1987)	23
Hierapolis		
No surviving ruins. Major festivals and rites. Recorded in de Dea Syria (unreliably).	Lightfoot (2003); Lucian, *de Dea Syria*	24
Iram		
Major caravan station. Springs and reservoir. Nabataean. Dedicated to Allat?	Negev (1977); Kirkbride (1960); Savignac (1932-5)	25
Jerusalem (destroyed)		
Hosted shops and commerce. Jewish temple. "Largest in Roman world."	Mazar (2002); Ben-Dov (1982)	26
Kadesh		
Strategic site. Large town. On major trade routes into Tyre.	Fischer, Ovadiah and Roll (1984)	27
Khirbat-al-Tannur		
Monumentalised high place; no temple (inner court 11.5 x 12.5 m). On King's Road.	Freyberger (1998); Negev (1977)	28
Khirbat-et-Dariyeh		
On King's Road. Extensive agricultural and water installations.	Freyberger (1998)	29
Petra		
Very long temenos at end of colonnaded street.	Larché and Zayadine (2003); Negev (1977)	30
Multiple long-distance finds. Decorated with imported marble. Trading workshops.	Hammond (2003)	31
Imperial Cult temple. Decorated with Pentelic/Marmaran marble.	Reid (2005)	32
Theatron in naos. Hosted a market in court. Huge amount of commercial finds.	Joukowsky (2003)	33
Philadelphia		
Situated on main thoroughfare w/T-junction in temenos. Not dedicated to Heracles.	Koutsoukou et al (1997); Kanellopoulos (1994)	34
Qasrawet		
Concentric temple. Important Nabataean trade station. Later fortified.	Zayadine (1985)	35
Small. Important Nabataean trade station. Later fortified.	Zayadine (1985)	36
Sabra		
At chokepoint on main road into Petra from south. Caravanserai; theatre.	Tholbecq (forthcoming)	37
Seriane (destroyed)		
Cistern and enclosure, by wells on main road between Palmyra and Emesa.	Gogräfe (1996)	38
Si'a		
Monumental road, gates and approach. Successive temenoi.	Steinsapir (2005); Dentzer (1985)	39
As South Temple. Concentric temple.	Steinsapir (2005); Dentzer (1985)	40
As South Temple. Theatron in forecourt. Concentric temple.	Steinsapir (2005); Dentzer (1985)	41
Thoana		
On major caravan route, with water installations.	Musil (1906)	42

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The remaining errors are my own.

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I. *Abbreviations*

AAAS   *Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*

AASOR   *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

ADAJ   *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*

AJA   *American Journal of Archaeology*

AJP   *American Journal of Philology*

ANRW   *Aufsteig und Niedergang der römischen Welt*

BAR   *British Archaeological Reports*

BASOR   *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

BASP   *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*

BICS   *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*

Bilan   Frézouls, E. (ed.) (1976), *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives, Colloque du Strasbourg (18-20 Octobre 1973)*, AECR, Strasbourg

BSOAS   *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

CIG   *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*

CIL   *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

CIS   *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*

CRAI   *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*

CUP   Cambridge University Press

EUP   Edinburgh University Press

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From Hellenism   Cotton, H. M., Hoyland, R. G., Price, J. J. and Wasserstein, D. J. (eds.) (2009), *From Hellenism to Islam – Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, CUP, Cambridge

H(number) see *IIH*

Hatra   Dirven, L. (ed.) (2013), *Hatra: Politics, Culture and Religion between Parthia and Rome*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart

HUP   Harvard University Press

IF(A)PO Institut Français (d'Archéologie) du Proche-Orient

IGLS   Jalabert, L, Moutered, R., Yon, J-B., et al (1929-2012), *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Syrie*, IFPO, Geuthner, Paris;

IGRR   Cagnat, R., et al (1901-27), *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes*, Leroux, Paris

IGUR	Moretti, L. (1968-90), *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, Istituto italiano per la storia antica, Rome
IIH	Aggoula, B. (1991), *Inventaire des Inscriptions Hatréennes*, Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, Paris
IMP	Gawlikowski, M. and As'ad, K. (1997), *The Inscriptions of the Museum of Palmyra*, Varsovie, Paris
Inv.	*Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*; vols. I-IX ed. Cantineau, J. (1930-1936), Damascus-Beirut; X ed. Starcky, J. (1949), Damascus; XI ed. Teixidor, J. (1965), Damascus-Beirut; XII ed. Bounni, A. and Teixidor, J. (1975), Damascus
IPSC	Fox, G. and Lieu, S. N. C. (2011), *Inscriptiones Palmyrenae Selectae ad Commercium Pertinentes*, ACRC, Macquarie University, Online: http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download.jsp?id=106178 (retrieved 17/03/2012)
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library*
Limes Report	Gregory, S. and Kennedy, D. (eds.) (1985), *Sir Aurel Stein's Limes Report*, *BAR* Supplement 272, Oxford
OUP	Oxford University Press
PAT	Hillers, D. R. and Cussini, E. (1996), *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London
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Petra Rediscovered	Markoe, G. (ed.) (2003), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, Thames and Hudson, London
PUP	Princeton University Press
RTP	Ingholt, H., Seyrig, H. and Starcky, J. (1955), *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, Geuthner, Paris
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TEAD Coins	Bellinger, A. R. (1949), *The Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Final Report VI: *The Coins*, YUP, New Haven
Textile Trade	Droß-Krüpe, K. (ed.) (2014), *Textile Trade and Distribution in Antiquity / Textilhandel und -distribution in der Antike*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden
UCP	University of California Press
YUP	Yale University Press

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