The vignette on the cover shows the reverse of the seal of Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem (A.D.1100–1118). From left to right: the Dome of the Holy Sepulchre, the Tower of David and the Dome of the Rock.

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'Village Government' in Roman Syria and Arabia

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The great quantity of inscriptions on stone from Roman Arabia needs to be studied systematically if the information contained therein is to be properly understood. Sorting and ordering the inscriptions with rigid reference to chronological and geographical distribution, and to the context in which they appear, reveals changes in the use of administrative terms through the Roman period, eliminates some earlier hypotheses concerning urbanization and government, and shows that certain terms were specific to Arabia, to religious foundations, or otherwise specialized. The sidelight thus thrown on the history of Roman Syria and Arabia helps to illuminate this corner of ancient history.

1. Introduction

The great number of inscriptions of Roman date which have been recovered and published from the Jabal ad-Druz region of southern Syria and northern Jordan has provided the basis for a series of studies in which a theory of Roman administration at a local level has been developed. The major study remains that of Harper (1928). A more recent one by MacAdam (1986), who has published a summary article also (MacAdam 1983), partially covers the same ground, as does an early and very balanced discussion by Prentice (1912). Jones (1931, 1971) produced a series of comments on the subject. Sartre (1982, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1993) has also used them to some purpose, and they form the basis of the two volumes edited by Dentzer (1988), the first of which has been reviewed in detail by Graf (1992). In general, it is Harper's conclusions which have been accepted, presumably largely due to his apparent thoroughness.

The evidence consists almost entirely of inscriptions found in the area which lies astride the boundary between the Roman provinces of Syria and Arabia, and attempts have been made to use them to locate that boundary (Freeman, in MacAdam 1986, 38–40, with references). It divides into a number of sub-regions: Trachonitis (the lava plateau now known as al-Leja), Auranitis (the Jabal proper), Gaulanitis (the Golan Heights), Batanaea, and Arabia (see Map 2): here I shall use the general name 'Hawran' for the whole area, and the ancient names for the sub-divisions.

The inscriptions survive on a variety of ancient buildings, or are re-used in later buildings, and frequently name those responsible in one way or another for erecting the original buildings. Rather less frequently, they also date the construction. Within the inscriptions, a variety of terms are used to identify the men named, and it is these terms which have formed the basis for the various studies.

Two theories lie at the basis of all the work done. First is the concept of 'urbanization', especially associated with the work of Jones (1931, 1971), and now taken up vigorously by MacAdam. This holds that it was settled Roman governmental policy to encourage the establishment of cities in the area, and that the Hawran region and its inscriptions provide evidence for that policy. The second theory is that the offices held by the men named in the inscriptions provide evidence for a regular system of local government at village level in the Roman period. Harper argued that the evidence from the Hawran could be applied to the rest of the Roman East, and that Syria (and perhaps Palestine) had a similar system whose traces have vanished because the inscriptional evidence has not survived. His argument is, however, somewhat dangerous, for it involves a convoluted triple negative: '. . . we must not infer the nonexistence of certain officials in other parts of Syria merely because we have no mention of them.' (Harper, 1928, 141). Sartre (1993, 120–131) has now also discussed these matters, emphasising the evidence which shows villages acting in a communal capacity.

2. Cities (Maps 1 and 2).

The matter of urbanization is the simplest to deal with, since the essential element in the theory is the idea that the process was deliberate, that the Roman government consciously encouraged the development of settlements into cities (Jones 1971, *passim*). In the Hawran some cities already existed when the Romans annexed the area, such as those which had been part of the Decapolis—Kanatha, Adraa, and so on—and there were others which acquired city-status under Roman rule (see Sartre 1987, for a summary discussion). The first group are out of consideration since they already existed: Roman responsibility was limited to reviving them. Of the new cities, Bostra was the old capital of the Nabataean kingdom in its final phase, and became the seat of the Roman governor of the Arabian province (Peters 1977, 265–266, 272–274). It was thus already an urban agglomeration. Its inscriptions show that it gained a substantial population of Latin-speaking veterans in the Roman period (*IGLS*, XIII, 1, *passim*). Despite these advantages, it did not become a *colonia* until the reign of Alexander Severus (Bowersock 1983, 121), a century and a quarter after the Roman annexation.

By that time, other cities had already appeared. Soada became Dionysias in the second half of the second century, certainly by 182 when an inscription records work done by the city (Waddington 2308). The really odd thing here is that the new city is no more than 8 km. from the already existing city of Kanatha (one of the Decapolites), yet the rest of the Jabal remained uncitified. MacAdam (1986, 68–74) suggests that Soada was promoted to Dionysias because the road from Damascus passed through it. This is a strange reason indeed; it is best to say we do not know why Soada was promoted. Chronologically, the next city-foundation in the Hawran was Philippopolis, promoted from a village because it was the home of the Emperor Philip the Arab (244–249) (*PAES* 400, 401). Again it is terribly close to an existing city, being only 11 km. from Kanatha. Finally two more cities, Constantia and Maximianopolis, were founded between *c.* 300 and *c.* 320 at the present Buraq and Shaqqa respectively (Waddington 2537a; *SEG* VII, 1055; Jones 1971, 285). As with Soada-Dionysias we have no information as to the reasons for the promotion of these places, but once again, Maximianopolis was no more than 8 km. from Philippopolis. The 'urbanization' of the Jabal ad-Druz, in other words, consisted of the foundation of four new cities over a period of about two centuries (106–*c.* 320), and three of these new cities were within 20 km. of an already-existing city. This process cannot be called deliberate urbanization.

There is a second element in the urbanization theory: that villages were promoted, not to full *poleis*, but to an intermediate stage, as *metrokomiai*, translated literally by MacAdam as 'mother-villages' (MacAdam 1986, 55; Jones 1971, 286–289; Harper 1928, 158). Several villages in Trachonitis are referred to as *metrokomiai* in inscriptions: Phaene (modern Mismiya) at the northern point (*IGRRP* III, 1119), Zorava (Zor'ah) at the south-west corner (id, 1115), Borechath Sabaon (Brakah) at the south-east corner (Waddington 2396b), Saura (Sur) in the centre-west (*PPAS* 797, 2). The other two are villages in
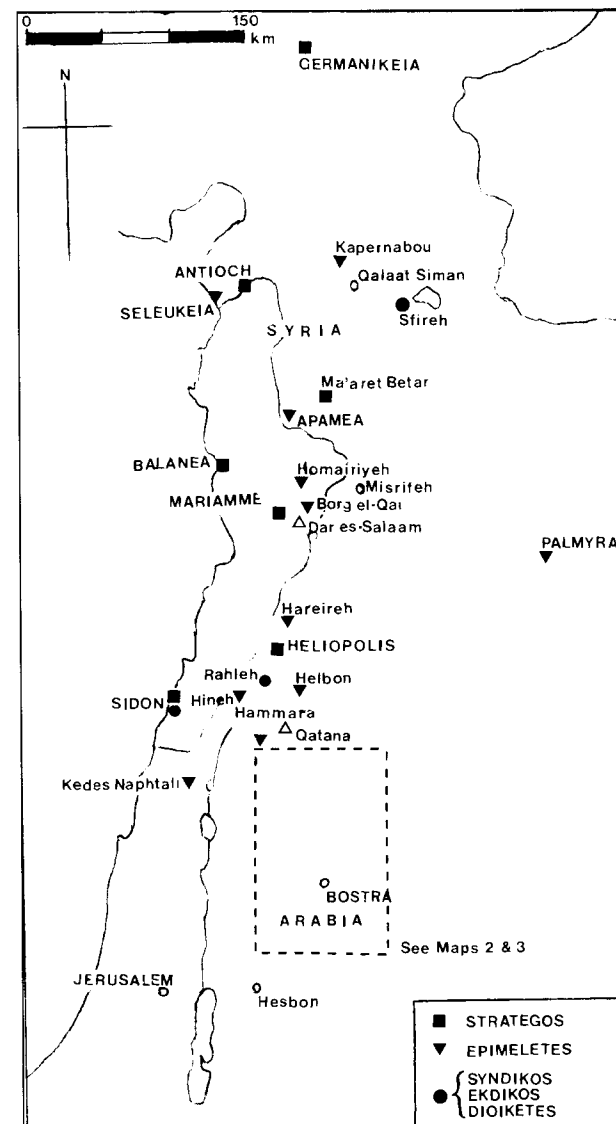
Figure 1. *Hawran: cities and officials.*
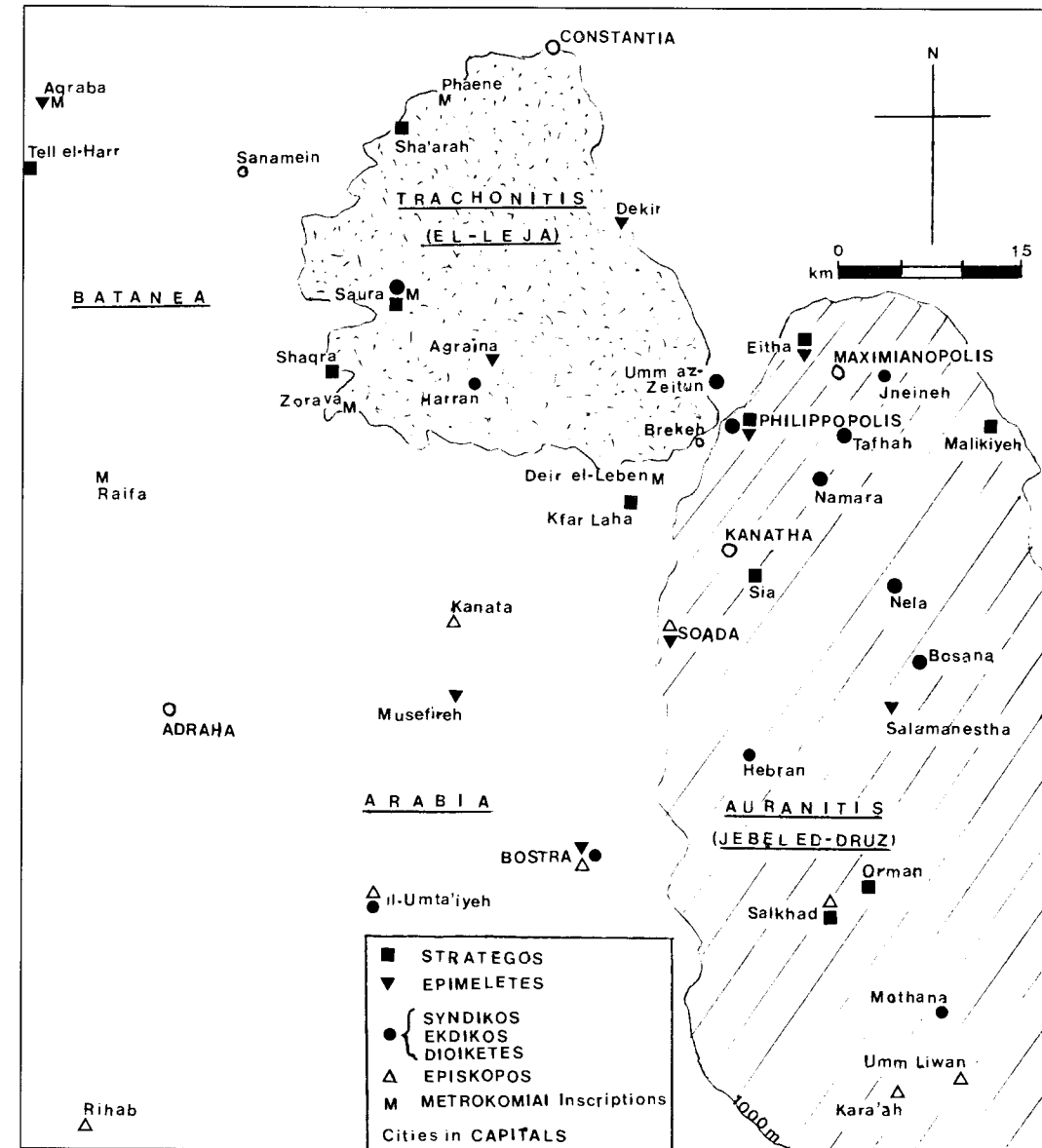
Figure 2. *Syria and Arabia: cities and village officials.*

Batanaea, to the west of Trachonitis: Aqraba (*IGRRP* III, 1112) and Raifa (Fossey, 54 = *SEG* VII, 948). This distribution suggested to MacAdam that their origin lay in the brief Herodian domination of the area in the first century A.D. If so, the actual use of the term is later than this.

The meaning of the term is a problem. The obvious analogy is with *metropolis*, and it may well be that *metrokomia* is merely an honorary rank; but appointment as an honorary village seems unlikely. It is best to assume that there was some clear Roman purpose behind the designation, and the title does imply that the designated village was to be a central place to which other villages were subject. Yet there is no sign that the other villages were so subject, and none of the inscriptions hint that any authority is being wielded. Indeed in one example, from Dayr al-Laban, a set of inscriptions records the construction of a temple by

a group of villages, one of which was the *metrokomia* of Borechath Sabaon (Waddington 2393–2398), but that village is not distinguished from the rest in any other way, nor is it the site of the new temple. What the precise functions of a *metrokomia* were, therefore, is unknown (see the comments of Millar 1993, 425–427).

MacAdam claims that 'these inscriptions are a precious witness to a process of civic development unknown elsewhere in the Roman east'. *Metrokomiai*, he says, 'represent an intermediate stage of urbanization' and he further claims that the urbanization process 'developed successfully' (MacAdam 1986, 79 and 81). If this were so, one would expect these *metrokomiai* to be promoted to *polis*-status after some time. But none were. Instead, when two new cities appear in the fourth century, Constantia and Maximianopolis, both at sites near to the *metrokomiai* of Phaene and Borechath Sabaon, neither had actually been *metrokomiai*. If there was any deliberation in the Roman policy towards urbanization in this area, it is odd, to say the least, that the original *metrokomiai* were not promoted. In fact, no *metrokomiai* ever became *poleis*. It is best, therefore, to assume no more than the facts warrant, that certain villages were designated as *metrokomiai* for Roman administrative purposes, but that those purposes are invisible to us. However, since the enforcement of law and the collection of taxes were the major concerns of the Roman provincial administration, it is not difficult to guess that these were the 'invisible' purposes.

A better argument might be that the use of the term *metrokomia* was an implicit confession of the inability of the Roman government to see a way to urbanize the Hawran. The designation was thus a recognition that these places will not become cities, and it is thus evidence of a *lack* of urbanization rather than of its promotion. The *metrokomiai* were thus indications of the Roman provincial government's adaptation to local conditions, rather than its determination to impose its own pattern on an alien community.

The available evidence does not support the theory of urbanization as a deliberate Roman policy: by contrast it does suggest that urbanization in the Hawran was a product of obscure, even whimsical, reasons, which produced an appallingly unbalanced geographical distribution of cities. By concentrating three of the five cities of Roman foundation in a line no more than 25 km. long, the political influence of the cities was limited to that small area, and their necessarily small territories would similarly keep them economically weak. *Metrokomiai* cannot be considered as part of the (presumed) urbanization policy, since not only did none of them become cities, but the

very name proclaims that they remained villages. It must be accepted that there was no Roman policy of 'urbanization'.

3. Villages

Within the greater part of the Hawran, therefore, villages remained the normal community, and the records of buildings there provide some evidence for their internal organization. It is these records which have provided the bases for the theories of village government put forth by Harper and others. Yet these theories exhibit some basic flaws, above all in their failure to consider contexts—physical, constructional, inscriptional, and geographic. All studies tend to lump together every office into one mass, assuming that only the names are different, not the functions of the offices named (e.g. MacAdam 1983, 107–108 (a list); Sartre 1993, 123–127, calls them 'magistrats villageoises'). Three aspects in particular need to be taken into account: the work which the various officials actually did, their chronology, and the geographical distribution of their offices. These elements may seem excessively basic, once stated, but no previous studies have considered them systematically.

The most straightforward of these approaches is the geographical, in order to test Harper's claim that all the Roman East was once subject to the operation of officials whose only record is now in the Hawran. Harper (1928, 105–116) even prefaced his work on Syria with a lengthy discussion of aspects of fifth and fourth century B.C. Greece, but the relevance of this to Roman Arabia is doubtful, to say the least. Instead I will confine myself to Syria, Arabia and Palestine since, if the Hawran experience is typical, some sort of evidence would most likely appear in these geographically adjacent areas. Since Harper's work appeared, the successive volumes of the *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie* have been published. These now cover all Syria from the Taurus to the Lebanon mountains, with outliers for Bostra and part of Jordan. The earliest volumes, for north Syria, are now somewhat out-of-date, but they can be supplemented by collections made in particular areas, principally by Jarry (1967, 1969) and Wagner (1974). These collections thus allow Harper's assumption to be tested for the areas geographically adjacent to the Hawran (though, as it happens, neither Jarry's nor Wagner's publications produce anything significant for this study). I will consider the officials' titles one by one, and these have been listed in tables to avoid cluttering the text with too many detailed references.

A. *Epimeletes* (Table 1, Maps 1 and 2).

Twenty-two inscriptions have been recorded in Syria, Arabia and Palestine in which the term *epimeletes* is applied to named men. Geographically the inscriptions are evenly spread throughout the whole area, from Seleukeia-in-Pieria in the north to Kedes Naphthali in Palestine and Bostra in Arabia in the south. They are found both in cities (Seleukeia, Apamea, Soada, Bostra) and in villages. The term was clearly in general use throughout the Roman East, but there were chronological limits to its use. The earliest of the dated examples is of the time of King Agrippa II, who ruled various sections of the Hawran between *c.* 50 to *c.* 92; two more are from the early second century, seven are concentrated between 160 and 230, and one other is of the second half of the third century; one more is dated to the mid-sixth century. This last is so out of the sequence that it must be discarded; the term is, after all, a normal Greek word, so it could well crop up in casual use. So, ignoring that one 'sport', all the examples are dated between 50 and 250. Given that 11 out of the 21 examples are dated, it is likely that the undated ones fall within these extremes as well.

However, it is the actual operations performed by the *epimeletai* which are most instructive. Disregarding the very late example, 15 out of 21 are directly connected with religious sanctuaries. Of the remaining six, the context of two is unknown; the two from Apamea are honouring individuals, of which the imperial loyalty inscription, dedicated to Julia Maesa in 218, might be considered at least quasi-religious; two others are records of honorary decrees by cities, in which the dedicator is given the title of *epimeletes*, which says nothing of the duties of the post. So, of the six, four have no context and one is imperial, but none of them is specifically non-religious. There is sufficient uniformity here to state that, as a general rule, *epimeletes* was the title of an official post used in relation to pagan sanctuaries, that its use was widely accepted in Syria, and that its use faded out as the pagan religion declined.

It is well to point out some of the deficiencies in the evidence—apart from the 10 undated examples. The precise functions of an *epimeletes* are not clear. The connection with buildings and finance, possibly as a churchwarden type of office, may be a reflection of the sources. Nor is there any indication of how these officials achieved office, by inheritance, election, or appointment. This office of *epimeletes*, therefore, confirms one of the conclusions of Harper in that it was clearly in use all over Syria, Arabia and Palestine. Yet Harper failed to consider the chronological limits, and did not bring out the clear

contextual limitations which confined the office to pagan sanctuaries. It cannot be said to be part of the village administration, given its occurrence in cities in seven out of 22 examples, and its specialized competence.

B. *Strategos* and Centurion (Table 2, Maps 1 and 2).

Strategos is a term with equally clear connotations, this time military and governmental. It was the old Hellenistic title for a governor, and in the Roman period it was used in some of the Syrian cities as a title for one of the civic offices. Thus it is recorded in inscriptions at Balanea, Mariamme, and Sidon, all Phoenician cities. In the same area an inscription from Heliopolis (Baalbek) shows that in the fifth century A.D. *strategos* was an annual office. Only in the Hawran, however, does the title appear in use in villages. The one exception, at Ma'aret Betar, is a very doubtful reading.

The early Hawran examples are associated with two client kingdoms, that of Agrippa II, who ruled the northern Hawran from 50 to *c.* 92 (Liebeman-Frankfort 1962) and that of Commagene. In the latter, an inscription from Germanikeia (Marash) mentions one *strategos*, implying it to be a governor's title. In the Hawran there are three inscriptions recording *strategoi* of Agrippa II, again apparently local governors (one is 'of Batanaea') appointed by the king. This use of the term is clearly an inheritance from the similar Seleukid usage even earlier. One of Agrippa's men claims to have been his centurion, and then to have been *strategos* for Trajan, both at Si'. The title was used in the second century, again in its military sense, for the commander of nomad forces (Waddington 2196 = *OGIS* 616), and in a strange inscription from the desert where a man is called '*strategos* of the hoplites' (*SEG* XVI, 819; Mowry 1953; Schwabe 1954; Sartre 1982, 123–124; Sartre 1993, 131–135, briefly discusses the presence of nomads in the area.)

Other uses of the term are clearly governmental in character rather than military. There is an apparent continuity though, in that the office of *strategos*, established in the area by Agrippa II, continued in use after his rule ended. The last occasion of its use is dated to 244. By then, in at least two places, Sha'arah and Kfar Laha, it had become a collegiate office. Elsewhere, it had specialized into a civil office, as at Shaqra. The evolution of the title is the most significant aspect here: it was a powerful institution of government in Agrippa II's time, when the area was notoriously a

haven for bandits (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XVI, 130, 273–86, XV, 344, and XVII, 23–8), but it steadily dissipated its power into multiple or civic offices by the mid-third century. Yet an inscription from Orman, in which a man proudly records his descent from a *strategos* (Ewing 104), suggests that it had been an office of high prestige, but only in the past. There is no evidence of its continued existence in the Hawran villages after *c*. 260. (The Orman example is dated 334, but the *strategos* in question was two generations earlier, and thus at least 50 years before that date, perhaps more.)

What these later, civilian, *strategoi* actually did is vague. One, at Eitha, has a religious context, at Kfar Laha three *strategoi* built something. Perhaps not coincidentally, these two are among the latest examples. Otherwise the very unspecificity of the office suggests, as the Orman man remembered, high office of a general nature.

This evolution from military to civilian, and from single to collegiate, is presumably the result of the Roman annexation. Under the kings, the *strategoi* were local governors—one called himself '*strategos* of Batanaea'—but under direct Roman rule, the Roman governor had military authority, leaving civilian office to other officials, who, in this area, sometimes (at least) called themselves *strategoi*. The prestigious title, therefore, would seem to have been appropriated to civilian use, once its military connotations were superseded by the Roman governor's assumption of responsibility.

There has been a theory, however, that the Roman army, in the persons of a number of centurions, assumed a civilian authority as well. Jones (1931, 268) suggested this, and MacAdam has recently extended it further (MacAdam 1986, 54–6). The theory is based on the occurrence of a group of inscriptions which record building by a centurion by the authority of a governor ('*epi* [the governor] *ephestotos* [the centurion]'). It is based on inscriptions using the formula, from Aerita, to record the building of a gateway (Waddington 2438 = Ewing 104) and from Phaene, where a temple was built (Waddington 2528); in both cases the centurion involved was T. Aurelius Quirinalius, acting for the governor Avidius Cassius. Also at Phaene the centurion Egnatius Fuscus acted for the same governor, and used the same formula (Waddington 2525). Another centurion, Quirinalius Gemellus, in 171, again mentioning Avidius Cassius, set up a tablet at Nela recording devotion to the emperor, but built without using the formula (Waddington 2212 = *PAES* 380a).

The formula implies that authority has been devolved to these centurions by the governor. From

there the theory claims that such authority was actually governmental and that the centurions were acting as local governors in these places. But this is to ignore what each centurion was actually doing. At Phaene he built a gateway, at Aerita a temple. Later the same formula was used in an inscription at Nela for the construction of an 'upper room' in 185 (Waddington 2213) and in 177–178 at Shahba in another imperial dedication in which the local *strategos* signed the inscription which presumably recorded work done and mentioned the governor and a centurion (*PAES* 392). These two men are also recorded at Kfar (*IGRRP* III, 1290). But at Sanamain an inscription of the same reign (Commodus') calls the centurion Iulius Germanos the benefactor of the community for founding an enclosure for a Tychaion (*PPAS* 652). Apart from not mentioning the governor and therefore not using the formula, there is no essential difference between this centurion's activity and that of the Quirinalii.

So far the theory. But it is based on a selective use of evidence. There are later uses of the formula, and other occurrences of army officers in similar capacities which cannot be ignored. The formula was in use 50 years later in three inscriptions at Adraha. In this case two of the operators were *beneficarii*, working on behalf of the governor in the fortification of the city in co-operation with the local city authorities (*OGIS* 614, 615; *SEG* XVI, 805; Pflaum 1952). A generation later still, in 295/296, the *primus pilus* Flavius Cornelianus is recorded as constructing a pool at Qraiyya (Waddington 1963 = *CIG* 4643); and about the same time the *primus pilus* M. Arrius Frigidus delineated the boundary between two villages during the cadastral survey and is recorded in the village of Namer (*OGIS* 612); another generation later still the centurion Claudius helped with the construction of a 'façade' at Bostra (*IGLS* 9112). These three men exhibit exactly the same mixture of private and public functions as the earlier group of centurions, and over about the same length of time. Yet there are no suggestions of the extension of 'centurion-rule' to that time and to those places.

The small group of centurions active in 169–189 are thus not unique. They were part of the continuing pattern in which the skills of such officers were used on behalf of the villages and cities of the area, on an *ad hoc* basis. Because the records we have are records of building, inevitably these men appear to be building things, and in one case, T. Aurelius Quirinalius at Aerita says he paid for the gateway from his own resources. It is not legitimate to extrapolate an administrative function from such records. There is no clear evidence that Roman officers were used as administrators in the Hawran.
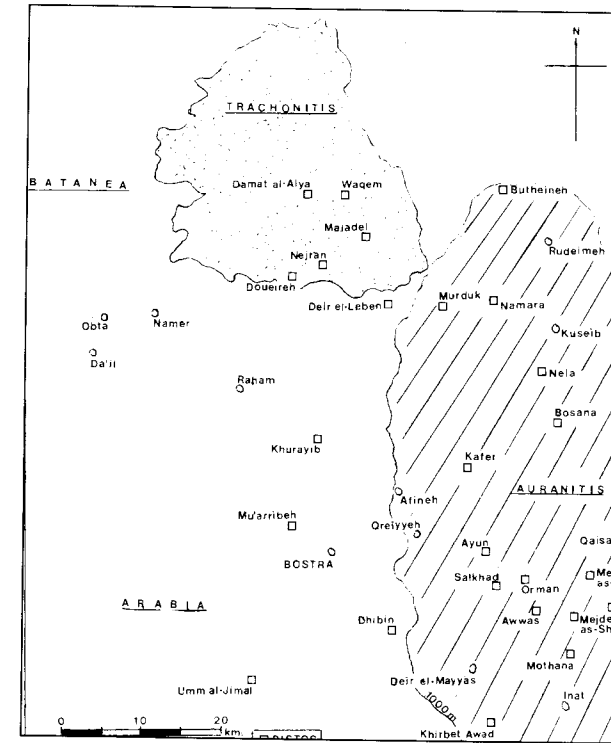

Figure 3. *Hawran: occurrences of 'Pistos'.*

C. 'Forethought and Zeal' (Table 3, Maps 2 and 3—these occurrences are not distinguished on the maps: virtually every place on both maps has produced examples.)

The evolution of the meaning of the term *strategos* from governor to a college of civilians is mirrored in the development of another formula, the commonest one of all. The conqueror of the Nabataean kingdom and first governor of the Arabian province, A. Cornelius Palma, saw to the construction of an aqueduct, and his inscriptions record that it was built by his 'forethought' (*pronoia*). This became the regular formula for gubernatorial activity in Arabia in the next two centuries, with 14 examples between 181 and 306. Variants on this simple 'forethought' develop later. 'Forethought and zeal' (*pronoia kai spoudes*) appears in 320 and is then used apparently interchangeably with 'forethought' alone. Eventually *spoudes* ('zeal') alone was also used, but not till the fifth century. A further variation was to convert the 'forethought' into a title or an office, '*pronoetes*', and again this is used alongside the others. Since these variations cannot effectively be separated by context, it has seemed most useful here to consider them as a group.

Geographically, only one example lies outside the Hawran; out of 67 examples, this concentration is impressive: the single exception is a very late one from Jerusalem in 534/535: it will be disregarded here. Considered chronologically, the formula started life as an official one, for it was used exclusively by governors until 278/279. The builders of the *kalybe* for the Emperor Probus at Umm az-Zaitun in 282 are described as *pronoeton*, and this is the first non-gubernatorial use of the formula. (The example from Bostra of the same date may or may not be by a governor.) Then in 306 the formula was used by three men who recorded the building of something at Da'il, and from then on it is regularly used by private individuals until 439. In that time only two governors used the formula, in building towers at Inat in 348 and a fortress at Umm al-Jimal in 412/413. This change is abrupt— the last gubernatorial use (apart from these two examples) was in 282/283: the first private use is 282. (The building of a reservoir at Qraiyya by a *primus pilus* in 295 must be 'official'.) The end is almost as sudden: it is used more or less regularly until 397, but then there are only scattered examples over the next two centuries. The high proportion of dated examples (46 out of 66—ignoring the late Jerusalem example) gives some confidence to this chronological distribution.

The continuance of the use of the small variations on the formula well into the fifth century contrasts with the cessation of the examples of the use of *strategos* and *epimeletes* by *c*. 260. The geographical concentration in the Hawran is also a contrast with the Syria-wide spread in the use of those terms. It is also notable that the use of the formula peters out during the early fifth century. This may, of course, be a result of a change in the 'epigraphic habit' in the region; if so, the habit was clearly only suspended, for there are five local examples of the sixth century. Another possible explanation is that the century-long gap between 439 and 534 may be the result of the suspension of building activities in the area. The evidence cannot carry conjecture further, but the chronological pattern is worth remarking. Of course, some of the undated examples might have helped fill that gap, though it would be even more remarkable if they did not reflect the pattern of the dated inscriptions. The strong probability must be that they reflect the chronological distribution of the dated stones just as they reflect the geographical distribution.

Clearly the actions of governors and *primi pili* in seeing to the construction of buildings are public acts, whether or not they are funded by public money. But the non-gubernatorial examples of 'forethought and zeal' are by no means necessarily of the same type. All too often, however, it is difficult to identify the precise

construction which was put up. Basilicas at Awwas and Jnaina, and a public hostel at Harran are obviously public buildings, and several altars and temple works are referred to. In four cases all that can be said is that a building was put up. But in one case the building is actually a tomb erected by the 'forethought and zeal' of the deceased's widow and sons. This is hardly an act to be classified in any way as that of a public official. It seems, therefore, that where a public official is not involved, the forethought and zeal is very likely to be exercised on a private matter (Prentice 1912). The origin of the formula, however, is clearly among the public officials, reflecting the public rhetoric of service espoused by those in power; its adoption into more general usage is an indication both of its wide use and of the general acceptability of the sentiment.

D. *Episkopos* (Table 4, Maps 1 and 2).

The term *episkopos* has an early start, in the reign of Trajan, in a religious context at Qatana, just to the north of the Hawran. It is used twice to describe an official of the governor who inspected something in Soada, in the 180s and the 260s—and thus in a city-context. Otherwise the use of the term looks to be very much religious, though there are only four more datable examples of the term; three of these are in religious contexts and all are in the Hawran. The latest date is 337, in connection with a *temenos* at Dar as-Salaam, in Syria, the only example outside the Hawran. Given the infrequency of the examples, it is likely that this distribution only reflects the survival rates of inscriptions generally; that is, it is possible that *episkopos* was a term in use throughout Syria on an occasional basis to describe a man who had a vaguely supervisory or inspectional role. It seems to be as much a description of a job as the title of an office.

The use of the term in a pagan context is clearly distinct from its use to mean 'bishop' in a Christian context in these inscriptions: a generation separates them. The earliest appearance of the title meaning a bishop in an inscription is at Fafirtin in Syria in 372, a generation after its last use in a pagan context. Thereafter it is common in its Christian meaning throughout Syria, Arabia and Palestine, in cities and in the villages; the latest example is dated 639, after the Arab conquest. The rise to power of bishops in the fourth century clearly pre-empted the use of *episkopos* in its more general meaning, and the use of the term in this Christian context clearly precluded its use in any other.

E. *Syndikos* and *Ekdikos* (Table 5, Maps 1 and 2).

Two terms which may well be synonymous, *syndikos* and *ekdikos*, with legal connotations, were sparingly used, mostly in association with other men. An inscription naming five *ekdikoi* from Hebran is dated to 155, but otherwise the dated examples of both terms are all within the period 244 to 378/379. However, the large proportion of undated examples (7 out of 12), as well as the small overall total, renders generalization even more tentative than in other cases. The example dated 244–249 is one of the few from a city (Philippopolis) and is one of the few not associated with another official. The post is also mentioned in an inscription from Sidon. Otherwise all inscriptions of these are from villages in the Hawran, four *ekdikoi* and 11 *syndikoi*. Yet even here there are peculiarities, for no less than eight of the *syndikos/ekdikos* inscriptions are from Philippopolis and villages nearby. It seems clear that the title was specialized and perhaps very local. The variety of buildings associated with these two titles is also very striking.

F. *Dioiketes* (Table 6, Maps 1 and 2).

Very similar comments can be made about *dioiketes*. This is another old Hellenistic term, but in inscriptions in the Roman East it appears only in the Hawran area, and, with one exception, only in the fourth century. The exception is dated to 203/204 and comes from Sfira in northern Syria. Otherwise a similar variety of buildings is involved as with *syndikoi* and *ekdikoi*. It may well be that these three titles should be considered together: their function, chronology, and geographical distribution are much the same (and I have combined them on the maps). Similarly, the few examples extant make it difficult to draw any strong conclusions. Lumping all three groups together produces a total of 11 dated and nine undated inscriptions, with two located outside the Hawran. It seems, therefore, that these can be counted as terms, like *episkopos* in its pagan manifestations, which were in general use throughout Syria, though the small numbers presumably reflect the relative scarcity of their actual use. The early examples cannot be ignored: there is a heavy bias in the total of dated inscriptions to the third and fourth centuries, which makes the early dated ones the more significant. It has to be assumed that the terms were in use in Syrian villages from at least the second century.

G. *Pistos* (Table 7, Map 3).

The final title to be considered is *pistos*, of which there are 34 examples, 19 of them dated. All except one of the inscriptions are dated to within the period 294 to 445 (and only two of these are later than 388); the other is from the sixth century. Geographically all are localized to the Hawran. It also occurs in its actual meaning of 'faithful' or 'trustworthy' at Qaryatayn (*PPAS* 993) and Baalbek (*IGLS* 2859) and, by extension, it appears as a personal name at Byblos and Bhadidat (Renan 1860, 177, 237).

It was a collegiate office—there is not one example of a *pistos* operating alone—with the actual numbers of men involved ranging from two to seven. The inscriptions only rarely say what task is being accomplished, though most are, inevitably, concerned with buildings. That is to say, this is the commonest of these terms, apart from the 'forethought and zeal' formula, yet it is also the least specific. Further, it is the latest to appear, and continued in use to a later date than any of the others. It is clearly of similar use to the *pronoia* terms in implying care for the public welfare.

4. Conclusions

Geographically only one of the titles was certainly used throughout the Roman provinces of Syria and Arabia: *epimeletes*, used as a technical term for officials operating in connection with temples and sanctuaries. All the other titles were limited in their geographical range to the Arabian province and the small area north of it, the 'Hawran', with occasional exceptions. These exceptions—the *dioiketes* at Sfira, the *episkopos* at Dar as-Salaam—suggest that they might have been in general Syrian use, but they are not numerous enough to do more than emphasize the concentration in the south.

Chronologically, three periods can be distinguished, overlapping slightly. *Strategos* and *epimeletes* were effectively the only terms used from the time of the annexation of these lands, and the *pronoia* formula remained an official one until the mid-third century. *Episkopos* was also used as a general supervisory title. About A.D. 250, a set of new terms came into use (*syndikos/ekdikos* and *pronoetes*) and these were joined later, about 300, by *pistos* and *dioiketes*. The *pronoia* formula and its derivatives changed about the end of the third century from a gubernatorial to a more general usage. *Episkopos* changed from use in a pagan context to the title for a Christian bishop during the fourth century (at least, in these inscriptions), and this specialization of meaning effectively divides its history into two parts. Of all these terms only *pistos* (and

Christian *episkopos*) continued to be used into the fifth century, and even that had ceased to be used by 450—and this makes the third period.

How these officials were chosen is unknown. The earliest *strategoi* were appointed by the kings, but the appointment of their civilianized successors by Roman governors is unattested. There is no indication, in any inscription, of election. They managed funds of the villages, and inscriptions record collective deeds by the villagers (MacAdam 1986, 149–4; Sartre 1993, 127–128). One case shows a panel of officials being succeeded by another (Ewing 84 and 85), but this is scarcely sufficient basis for theories of election or permanence. It is essential to bear in mind the very grave limitations of the evidence; it is very easy to read too much into it, and the temptation must be resisted. The only conclusion that can be reached is that these officials held office for the duration of the work they had to do.

In terms of that work, little can be distinguished. The same repertory of buildings appears in connection with all the titles. Only in the cases of *epimeletes* and *episkopos* is there a clear specialization in religious work, at shrines, temples, or churches. The rest are generalists. Once again, this is a function of the general practice in the society: these are the buildings which received inscriptions. Wider conclusions are scarcely possible.

The localization and chronological limitations of these titles must be accepted as an accurate reflection of their actual use in the Roman world. It is no longer possible to explain their absence in northern and central Syria, Palestine, and Phoenicia as due to our ignorance of the epigraphies of those areas. The epigraphic publications since Harper's day contain only isolated instances of most of these titles outside the Hawran/Arabia area. The only safe conclusion is that they were mainly, indeed overwhelmingly, confined to that area. Only *epimeletes* is certainly province-wide, with *episkopos*, *syndikos/ekdikos*, and *dioiketes* possibly used throughout Syria early in the period.

These chronological boundaries and divisions have not previously been noted, yet they are as particular as are the geographical limits. During the period 250–300 the titles used for these officials changed completely: the old titles were discontinued and new ones emerged. Where one formula actually continued in use—*pronoia kai spoudes*—its usage was drastically altered: a clear case of an exception proving a rule. An explanation is called for.

The abandonment of the term *epimeletes* is the clearest case—its specialization in the context of the old pagan religion meant that it died when that religion became officially unacceptable. This is also the explanation for the alteration of the use of *episkopos*,

whose Christianization also involved specialization. So it is reasonable to ask if this is the explanation also for other changes.

It seems thoroughly unlikely. None of these other titles has any exclusively religious connotation. There is no visible evidence for any connection between the advent of Christianity and the changes. The occasional use of one of these titles in a Christian context cannot hide the fact that all the rest are non-religious, neither pagan nor Christian. So it is not a matter of Christianization. The explanation must lie elsewhere. Once again the chronology should be examined.

The change began about the middle of the third century, when several events occurred which affected the whole area: in 244 a native of Shahba, Philip the Arab, became emperor and he sentimentally made his home village into a city, Philippopolis; a decade later the area was powerfully affected by the warfare involving the brief Palmyran empire; several cities were newly fortified at that time, Adraha and Bostra amongst them. It was just then that the old titles give way to the new ones; and the production of inscriptions grew rapidly. Of the dated inscriptions used here, 33 are dated between A.D. 50 and 250, a

production rate of one every six years. In the next century and a half there are 67, a rate of one every 2.25 years. This is a crude measure, to be sure, but it does represent a clear increase in the rate of building as between the period before and after 250, and it also represents a conspicuous expenditure of wealth in an area which had been desert or steppe until the first century B.C. and even later.

Some at least of this expenditure was by the Roman state. Apart from the city walls at Adraha and Bostra, there were two forts, two towers, a fort, and a fortress. Some at least of the unknown buildings are also likely to have been military in function. There are also occasional examples of the use of these titles for military officers, such as the 'syndic of the nomads'. But these are numerically few in total—less than a dozen out of the 178 here under consideration (omitting *episkopos* as 'bishop'). On the other hand, the buildings with inscriptions mentioning these officials are by no means the only ones constructed at this time. The increased menace of Sassanid Persia from the 220s onwards, brought an increased Roman military presence in the whole East. This may have brought some reassurance to the local populations, but it will more certainly have brought more money

Table 1. *Occurences of* Epimeletes *(ancient names in capital letters)*

Location	Date	Context	References
Helbon	50–92	Stoa for a temple	SEG VII, 217[1]
KEDES NAPHTALI	117/118	Dedication to a god	SEG IX, 2
SELEUKIA	121/122	City honorary decree	IGLS 1185
PALMYRA	162	Altar	Waddington 2571c
APAMEA	180–192	Monument to Licinius Sabinianus	IGLS 1315
EITHA	193/194	'Near a temple'	Waddington 2115[2]
Borg al-Qai	196/197	Building a temple	IGLS 2089
APAMEA	218	Dedication to Julia Maesa	AE 1974, 649[3]
KAPERNABOU	224	Building an oil mill for the god	IGLS 376
Homairiya	226	Building a temple	IGLS 2118
BOSTRA	250–300	Record of a building by a priest	IGLS 9113[4]
SALAMANESTHA	586–574	Building a church	Waddington 2261
AGRAINA	—	(No context)	Ewing 68
Aqraba	—	Building work for a god	Waddington 2413c
Dekir	—	From a temple	Clermont-Ganneau 1902, 30
EITHA	—	Gift of a door for the god	Waddington 2117
Hammara	—	Building a temple	IGLS 2986
Haraira	—	For the god of the village	Waddington 2556
Hinah	—	Wall for a temple	Fossey 1897, 70
Musafirah	—	(No context)	Waddington 2070c
PHILIPOPOLIS	—	Honorific inscription	Waddington 2077
SOADA	—	Altar for Dionysos	Dunand *Soueida* 10

(1) Dated by internal reference to King Agrippa II.
(2) So Waddington, describing it as "sur un petit édifice à deux arcades, près du temple".
(3) The dedicator, Aurelius Sabinus, calls himself '*epimeletou bouleutou*'.
(4) The date is the editor's (Sartre), presumably on stylistic grounds.

Table 2. *Occurences of* Strategos
(* = Occurrences outside the Hawran.)

Location	Date	Context	References
SAURA	69	Commander for Agrippa II	Ewing 65 & *PPAS* 797-1
*GERMANIKEIA	50–70	Local governor	IGLS 86
Tell al-Harr	50–92	"*Strategos* of Batanaea"	Sourdel, 1952, 45
SIA	100–110	Centurion/*Strategos*	Seyrig, 1965
Sha'arah	161/169	3 *strategoi*; imperial dedication	PPAS 803
Shahba	177/178	1 *strategos*; building by centurion for governor	PAES 393
Malikiyah	second century	"*strategos* of the nomads"; grave stele	OGIS 616; Waddington 2196
*MARIAMME	218/219 or 272/273	*Strategos* as magistrate; statue base	IGLS 2114
EITHA	235	1 *strategos*; religious building construction	Waddington 2114
Kfar Laha	236	"*Strategeia* of . . ."; imperial dedication	Waddington 2399
Shaqra	244–249	*Strategos* of Philippopolis	Waddington 2506
*Ma'arat Betar	250	Tomb of *strategos* of the village (?)	PAES 150[1]
*PETRA	200–300	2 *strategoi* of the city	Starcky and Bennett 1968, 8
*SIDON	324–337	*Strategos* of the city	Renan, 1860, 370
Orman	334	Grandson of a *strategos*	Ewing 163
*HELIOPOLIS	430/431	*Strategeia* of . . .	IGLS 2831
*ANTIOCH	—	*Strategeia* of . . .	IGLS 881
*BALANEA	—	*Strategos* named	IGLS 1303
Jathum	—	*Strategos* of the hoplites	SEG XVI, 819
Malikiyah	—	*Strategos* of the camp of the nomads	PPAS 752
Salkhad	—	(No context)	Waddington 1991b[1]

(1) Doubtful reading.

Table 3. *Occurrences of 'Forethought and Zeal'.*
This list is a composite of occurrences of pronoia (p), pronoia kai spoudes (ps), spoudes (s), pronoetes (pr), and some connected formulae.
* Work done on the instructions of a governor.

Location	Formula	Date	Context	Reference
Afineh	(p)	106/107	*Aqueduct work of A. Cornelius Palma	Waddington 2296, SEG VII 979[1]
BOSTRA	(p)	181	*Altar	IGLS 9104
SOADA	(p)	184/185	*Building of workshops	Waddington 2309
Rudaimah		244	*Building a fort	SEG VII 1061[2]
ADRAHA	(p)	255/256	*Building a tower	OGIS 615
ADRAHA	(p)	259/260	*Fortification of city	SEG XVI 805–809
SOADA	(p)	261/262	*Building (city wall ?)	PAES 432c
ADRAHA	(p)	262	*Building a tower	PPAS 636
ADRAHA	(p)	263/264	*Building (city wall ?)	OGIS 614
SIA	(p)	264–274	*Building courtyard, door, wall	PAES 431[3]
ADRAHA	(p)	276–282	*Building (city wall ?)	SEG VII 951
BOSTRA	(p)	278/279	*Building city wall	IGLS 9108
BOSTRA	(p)	282/283	Unknown building	IGLS 9109
Umm az-Zaitun	(pr)	282	Building *kalybe* for Emperor Probus	PPAS 795-13
Qraiyyah	(p)	295	Building reservoir	Waddington 1963
Da'il	(p)	306	Building	Fossey, 37
Ayun	(pr)	309	Building	Waddington 1984d
Awwas	(pr)	310	Building	Waddington 2042
BOSTRA	(ps)	320/321	City archons build *temenos*	IGLS 9111
Dair al-Laban	(p)	320	Building *temenos* for the local god	Waddington 2393
Awwas (?)		324	Building apse	PPAS 685[4]
Douairah	(p)	326	Building barn and enclosure	Dunand *Soueida* 163
MOTHANA	(pr)	327	Building	Dussaud 37
Awwas	(ps/pr)	330	Building basilica and door	PPAS 701[5]

Table 3. *Continued*

Location	Formula	Date	Context	Reference
Umm az-Zaitun	(p)	331	Probably building a reservoir	Waddington 2547[6]
Mu'arribah(p)	(p/pr)	336	Unknown building	PPAS 611
MOTHANA	(p)	343	Improvements to village	Waddington 2034
Inat	(ps)	348	*Building tower	PPAS 224
Kafar	(p)	350	Unknown building	Ewing 151
Qraiyyah	(ps)	355	Unknown building	Waddington 1964
BOSANA	(ps)	358	A public building	PPAS 732
Madjal as-Shor	(ps)	362	A public building	PPAS 705; Waddington 2029
Jnainah	(p)	363	Repair of temple	Waddington 2187
Orman	(pr)	367	(No context)	Dunand 183a
Orman	(pr)	372	Four buildings	PPAS 696
Awwas (?)	(ps)	387	Pagan shrine	PPAS 693[4, 6]
BOSANA		388	Building workshops	PPAS 734[7]
Harran	(p)	397	Building a public hostel	Ewing 84, 85
Umm al-Jimal	(s)	412/413	*Building fortress	PPAS 237
Raham	(s)	414	Unknown building	Dunand 288[8]
Raham	(p)	439	Unknown building	Dunand 289[8]
HESBON	(s)	500–600	Church mosaic	SEG XXIX 1610
Jerusalem	(ps)	534/535	Unknown building	SEG XXVII 1015
BOSTRA	(pr)	539	Goldworkers build	IGLS 9129
BOSTRA	(s)	540	*Unknown building	IGLS 9130
BOSTRA	(s)	527–565	Unknown building	IGLS 9135
SALAMANESTHA	(p)	566/574	Building a church	Waddington 2261
Aqraba	(pr)	—	Pagan temple	Waddington 2413c
BOSTRA	(ps)	—	Unknown building	IGLS 9114
BOSANA	(p)	—	Unknown building	Dussaud 20
Buthainah	(p)	—	Building a fort	Waddington 2129
Buthainah	(p)	—	Building a fort	Dunand 2
Dair al-Mayyas	(ps)	—	Altar	Dunand 61
Dair al-Mayyas	(p)	—	Building a courtyard	Waddington 2053b
Jnainah	(p)	—	Building a basilica	Waddington 2189
Jnainah	(ps)	—	Unknown building	Waddington 2188
Jnainah	(p)	—	Dedication of a temple	SEG VII 1052
Kafar	(p)	—	Unknown building	Dunand 160
Kusaib	(p)	—	Grave stele	Waddington 2204
Namar	(p)	—	Unknown building	Dunand 365
NELA	(ps)	—	Building an apse	Waddington 2219
NAMARA	(p)	—	Unknown building	Waddington 2184
NAMARA	(p)	—	Building walls	Waddington 2173
Najran	(p)	—	Unknown Building	Waddington 2427
Obta	(s)	—	Unknown building	Dunand 336
Qaisamah	(p)	—	Unknown building	Dunand 215
Tafhah	(p)	—	Repair of a house	PAES 387, 388

(1) There are other examples of this work; this is a sample; all employ the same formula.
(2) The term here is *ek pronoias kai diatuposeos*.
(3) The *praeses* Iulius Heraclitus is named on the inscription, and he appears to have been in office between these dates (cf. Bowersock 1983, App. III).
(4) Found at Orman, but said to have come from Awwas.
(5) This is the date given by Harper; the work done is not certain; the inscription was found close to a large ancient reservoir.
(6) The date is not certain; for a pagan shrine it is altogether unlikely; but this is the reading given by Littmann.
(7) The reading here is *ex epimelias kai spoudes*.
(8) A Christian inscription.

Table 4. *Occurrences of 'Episkopos'.*
(a) In a pagan context.

Location	Date	Context	Reference
Qatana	106–113	Temple dedication	OGIS 611
SOADA	182	Furnishing a temple	Waddington 2308
SOADA	186	Building workshops	Waddington 2309
Salkhad	252	Building of the god	Waddington 1990
KANATHA	254	(No context)	Waddington 2412f
BOSTRA	259–260	(No context)	Waddington 1911
il-Umta'iyah	330/331	(No context)	PPAS 37[1]
Dar as-Salaam	322/323	Building a temenos	IGLS 2100[2]
Kara'ah	—	Building a temenos	PPAS 220
Rihab	—	(No context)	Mittmann, 20
Salkhad	—	(No context)	Dunand 253
Salkhad	—	(No context)	Waddington 1989
SOADA	—	(No context)	Waddington 2310
Umm Liwan	—	(No context)	PPAS 222

(1) A religious connection here, the building being paid for from 'the funds of the lord'.
(2) Completed in 337.

(b) Bishops.
This list of dated inscriptions naming bishops identified as episkopoi is incomplete, though no earlier examples are known from Syria; it is designed only to illustrate the geographical and chronological spread of the term (cf. also IGLS XXI).

Location	Date	Reference
Fafirtin	372	IGLS 389
ANTIOCH	387	IGLS 774
Abu Haniyah	406/407	IGLS 1605
Sayh Barakat	412/413	IGLS 1739 bis
ARETHUSA	498/499	IGLS 2081
Rasm al-Bouz	506	IGLS 270
MARIAMME	518	IGLS 2108
Tayibah	536	IGLS 2121
Bashmisli	536/537	IGLS 571
NIHA	539	IGLS 2954
Borq al-Qai	539/540	IGLS 2098
Shahba	552	PAES 403
Tell Amari	555	IGLS 2507
Khanasir	579	PAES 318
Khirbat at-Tin	592	IGLS 2611
SOBATA	639	SEG XXXI 1446

into circulation, more employment, and more opportunities for military supply contracts. The increased incidence of inscriptions thus reflects the increased prosperity of the Hawran, as does the quantity of surviving buildings.

One hypothesis for explaining the changing pattern of offices in the Hawran is thus that the active intervention of the Roman state in the middle of the third century, in response to the several political and military crises of the period, triggered off an economic boom, which manifests itself to us as a great expansion of building. This followed a longer period of slower economic growth since the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom and before, which included the expenditure of resources by the client kings in the processes of pacification and the sedentarization of the nomad population of the desert margins. If the dated inscriptions are a reliable guide, this period of economic boom had largely run its course by the end of the fourth century. So the change in the use of the

Table 5. *Occurrences of* 'Ekdikos' *(E) and* 'Syndikos' *(S).*

Location		Date	Context	References
Hebran	(E)	155	Building a temple	PPAS 659
PHILIPPOPOLIS	(S)	244–249	Foundation of city	PPAS 401a
SAURA	(S)	326	Building a house	PPAS 797-2
MOTHANA	(E)	343	Street restoration	Waddington 2034
BOSANA	(S)	378/379	Building shops	IGLS XIII, 1, p.362
BOSANA	(S)	—	Building a vault	Waddington 2240
NAMARA	(S)	—	Building walls	Waddington 2173
NELA	(S)	—	Building a vault	Waddington 2220
NELA	(S)	—	'Syndic of the nomads'	PAES 383
SIDON	(E)	—	Column fragment	Renan, 1860, 375
Tafhah	(E)	—	Building a house	Waddington 2169
al-Umtaʿiyah	(E)	—	Building a church	PPAS 44

Table 6. *Occurrences of* 'Dioiketes'.

Location	Date	Context	References
Sfirah	203/204	Building a temple	CIG 4258a
SAURA	326	Building a house	Ewing 60
Umm az-Zaitun	331	Probably building a reservoir	Waddington 2547[1]
BOSTRA	352/353	Workshops	IGLS 9439
Rahlah	360	Temple dedication	Mouterde, 1959, nos 16, 17, 18
Harran	397	Building public hostel	Ewing 84[2]
Jnainah	—	Unknown building	Waddington 2188
NAMARA	—	Building a gate	Waddington 2184

(1) The date is Harper's; the stone was found near a large ancient reservoir; it is assumed they were connected.
(2) These two inscriptions bear the same date and refer to the same building; they have different groups of *dioiketon* named; probably the only example of successive panels of officials in the whole area.

various titles of the offices in the villages is a reflection of the great, slow revolution which engulfed the whole Roman world in the later third century—of which Christianization was only a minor part.

There is a gap in the dated sequence between c. 420 and c. 530, in which there are only six inscriptions mentioning officials (three bishops and three *pistoi*), and three more using versions of the *pronoia* formula. (For comparison with earlier phases, this is a rate of one inscription every 18 years.) Again, this cannot be an accidental gap in the record. When the dated sequence recommences the inscriptions are all Christian, almost all recording the building activities of bishops—an incomplete search produced 13 in the sixth century without serious effort, compared with only three non-episcopal inscriptions. That is, the initial building boom petered out by, say, A.D. 400, by which time most of the villages will have been equipped with the requisite buildings expected of them. Those buildings remained in use for a long time; some, indeed, are still standing and still in use. The buildings still to be constructed were the churches, made necessary by the new religion, so the later

building activity is overwhelmingly concentrated on those. The surplus wealth of the area was channelled into the hands of the bishops whose priority was to see that churches were built, and these bishops very largely were the later representatives of the various local officials discussed here. This phase again took a century or so, and came to an abrupt end with the Persian conquest in the early seventh century.

Finally, to address the original issue. The theory of a policy of urbanization by the Roman state fails when put to the practical test of the establishment of actual cities, and the desperate measure of enlisting the *metrokomiai* to assist the failing theory cannot work, just as the selective use of centurion-inscriptions cannot be used to develop a theory of a specifically military government. So also the theory of a pattern of village administration by the officials studied here must fail. None of these officials, apart from the early *strategoi*, can be shown to be actual administrators: the inscriptions record only their building activities. The theory that villages in the Roman East had an elaborate system of self-government cannot be sustained

Table 7. *Occurrences of* 'Pistos'.

Location	Date	Context	References
Salkhad	294	Unknown building	Dunand Soueida 222
Waqam	316	Unknown building	PPAS 788
Dair al-Laban	320	Temple wall	Waddington 2394
Douairah	326	Building a barn and enclosure	Dunand Soueida 163
al-Muʿarribah	336	Unknown building	PPAS 611
MOTHANA	343	Improvements to street	Waddington 2034
Umm al-Jimal	344	Grave stele in church	PPAS 262[1]
BOSANA	358	Construction of a public building	PPAS 732
Orman	359	Building a tower	Dunand 183
Madjal as-Shor (?)	362	Construction of a public building	PPAS 705[2]
Dhibin	370/371	Unknown building	Dussaud 70
BOSANA	378/379	Building of workshops	IGLS XIII, 1, p. 362
Awwas (?)	387	Completion of a pagan shrine	PPAS 693[3]
Dhibin	388	Unknown building	Dunand 182
Waqam	316–396	Unknown building	PPAS 788-1
Khirbat Awad	426	Unknown building	Dunand 242
Buraq	445	Unknown building	PPAS 174
Khurayib	569	Unknown building	PPAS 59
Ayun	—	Unknown building	Waddington 1984
BOSANA	—	Building a vault	Waddington 2240
Buthainah	—	Unknown building	Waddington 2130
Buthainah	—	Unknown building	Waddington 2127
Damat al-Alya	—	Building an apse (Christian)	PPAS 800-5
Kafar	—	Unknown building	Dunand 160
Majadal	—	Unknown building	PPAS 787-7
Majadal	—	Unknown building	PPAS 787-8
Mallah as-Sarrar	—	Unknown building	PPAS 709
Murduk	—	Unknown building	Dunand 67
Najran	—	Unknown building	Ewing 111
NELA	—	Building an apse	Waddington 2219
NAMARA	—	Construction of a public building	Dussaud 12
Waqam	—	Unknown building	PPAS 788-1

(1) Date uncertain; not official, since it refers to a 12-year-old.
(2) Seen at Orman by the Princeton expedition; Waddington (2029) saw it at Majdal as-Shor.
(3) Found at Orman, said to come from Awwas.

on the evidence of these inscriptions. It should be discarded.

In its place we should instead take the common-sense view that villages were ruled by headmen, by informal gatherings of well-respected local men, and by the major landowners and their bailiffs. These various groups will in many cases have been identical, or at least will have overlapped. In many areas also their names will have been preserved in the inscriptions here discussed, in the guise of 'officials charged with public works' as Prentice put it. The power of the Roman governor overshadowed them all, exercised either in person or by his deputies, who were often, of course, military men—it was a frontier area, after all. This was the general pattern of village rule in all Iron Age societies, from Assyria to the Industrial Revolution. There is no reason to assume that the Roman East should be in any way different.

Table 8. *'Headmen' and Elders.*

Title	Origin	Date	Reference
Komarchos	Misrifah	344	IGLS 1908
Protias	Buraq	335	PPAS 173
Kometos	Qalaat Siman	—	IGLS 413
Protokometos	al-Umtaʿiyah	—	PPAS 38
Protokometos	Agraina	—	PPAS 793/9[1]
Dekadarchoi	MOTHANA	327	Dussaud 37
Dekadarchoi	NAMARA	—	Waddington 2270
Dekaprotoi	NAMARA	—	Dussaud 12

(1) The inscription reads 'prot[. . .] [.]om[. .]' ; other interpretations have been made.

In this connection I will add a further list, of a set of titles which imply headship, or a group of village elders (Table 8). It is only a short list, and the titles are various, but they span the whole of Syria, includ-

ing the Hawran, from the north (Qalaat Siman) to the Jabal ad-Druz (Mothana). It seems likely that these represent the essential element of government which is missing from the inscriptions recording the various 'officials'. It is ironic, of course, that this should be the very shortest of all the lists.

Abbreviations used in references to inscriptions

AE: Année Épigraphique
CIG: *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*
Clermont-Ganneau: Clermont-Ganneau (1902)
Dussaud: Dussaud and Macler (1901)
Dunand: M. Dunand, 'Nouvelles Inscriptions du Djebel Druze et du Hauran', consecutively numbered but published in five groups: nos 1–138 in *RB* 1932, 397–416 and 561–580; 139–243 in *RB* 1933, 235–254; 244–310 in *Mélanges Offerts à René Dussaud*, Paris 1939, 559–576; 311–372 in *ArOr* 18, 1950, 144–164.
Dunand, *Soueida*: Dunand (1930)
Ewing: Ewing (1895)
Fossey: Fossey (1897)
IGLS: Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie
IGRRP: Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes
Mittmann: Mittman (1970)
Mouterde: Mouterde (1959)
OGIS: Orientis Graeci Inscriptones Selectae
PAES: H. C. Butler, R. Garrett, E. Littmann and H. C. Prentice (1909) *Publications of the American Archaeological Expedition to Syria, 1899–1900*, vol. III, *Greek Inscriptions*. New York.
PPAS: H. C. Butler, E. Littmann, D. Magie and H. C. Prentice (1921). *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909*, Vol III, *Greek Inscriptions*. Leiden.
Renan, 1860: Renan (1860)
SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecarum
Seyrig: Seyrig (1965)
Starcky and Bennett: Starcky and Bennett (1968)
Waddington: W. H. Waddington and P. LeBas (1870)

Acknowledgements

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