

IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND STATE FORMATION AT ROMAN
PALMYRA

by

Andrew M. Smith II

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2004

Advisory Committee:

Professor Kenneth G. Holum, Chair
Professor Arthur M. Eckstein
Professor Hayim Lapin
Professor Marjorie S. Venit
Professor Madeline C. Zilfi

©Copyright by

Andrew M. Smith II

2004

Preface

In this study I have utilized an array of sources in various languages, which includes Latin, Greek, and Aramaic, so a few prefatory remarks on the conventions for transliteration that I have employed are necessary.

I presented the Latin in lower case except for proper names. I also transliterated all Greek into Latin characters, while using the macron (̄) to distinguish the long vowels eta (η = ē) and omega (ω = ō). I then followed the Latin conventions for proper names. When short phrases containing important syntax were presented I retained the Greek characters. When supplying Greek names, I have opted to present the Latin equivalents. Instead of Aurēlius, for example, I use Aurelius, and so forth.

I presented all Aramaic in standard transliteration in lower case, by following the same conventions employed by D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). Reference to texts in Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, follows the convention P#####. Also, in order to limit disruptions to the narrative, I have vocalized all proper names. Further, in order to stress the significance of kinship terminology in designations of tribal relationships, I have retained throughout the transliterated term *bny* (Banai or Benē), which means literally, “sons of,” but also carries the sense of membership in extended

groups.

Finally, unless otherwise stated, all translations of inscriptions or text, in addition to photographs presented here, are mine.

To Family and Friends

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to a great many individuals and institutions who aided this endeavor and contributed to my intellectual growth. I am especially thankful for all of the support I received while conducting research in Syria, from Dr. Abdal Razzaq Moaz, former Director-General of Antiquities and Museums Syria, and from Dr. Tammam Fakouch, current Director-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria, both of whom granted me permits to study and to publish objects in Damascus and Palmyra. I also thank Dr. Khaled al-As‘ad, former Director of the Palmyra Museum and his son Waleed al-As‘ad, the current Director. Their kindness, generosity, and all the assistance they provided to ensure the successful completion of my research at Palmyra were unsurpassed. I especially benefitted from conversations with Dr. Khaled al-As‘ad, whose deep knowledge of Palmyra and its antiquities can only be described as extraordinary. I further thank the entire staff of the Palmyra Museum for their assistance.

I am also been fortunate to have had great mentors over the years, individuals who have taught me wisely how to invest my intellectual capital. Professor Kenneth G. Holum has been both a mentor and a true friend, whose warm support and encouragement, in addition to long discussions about the ancient city,

guided me through the years. I thank Professor Hayim Lapin, in whose seminar, led jointly with Professor James Brooks, this dissertation first developed. I thank Professor Arthur Eckstein for discussions on the ancient world that were illuminating and pertinent to this study. I also thank Professor John Peter Oleson for years of support and encouragement and for his persistent push to have me complete this degree. Further, I am especially grateful to Professor S. Thomas Parker, a first mentor, whose guidance I benefitted from greatly early in my career. Also, for their contributions to my intellectual growth, I thank Professor John M. Riddle and Professor Ronald H. Sack at North Carolina State University, and Professor Steven H. Rutledge at the University of Maryland.

Several organization funded this research or provided institutional support. My work in Syria was funded in 2001 by a Hearst Travel Fellowship awarded through the Department of History of the University of Maryland, and in 2003 by a second Hearst Fellowship and a research grant through the Explorers Club of Washington DC. A Mary Savage Snouffer Dissertation Fellowship, awarded through the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Maryland, provided a year of uninterrupted research and writing. My research abroad received support from the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan, whose staff has been like a second family over the years. I am especially grateful to its Director, Dr. Pierre M. Bikai, for his support and encouragement, and to Dr. Patricia M. Bikai. Both supported my research in Jordan, during the time in

which I had insight for this project. My work in Jordan, which provided a comparative basis for this study, was funded by three USIA/ACOR Research Fellowships awarded over the years.

I was fortunate while completing this dissertation to have benefitted from discussions with several colleagues. I extend a warm thanks to Professor David Graf, Professor David Potter, Professor Traianos Gagos, Professor Andreas Schmidt-Colinet, Professor Cynthia Finlayson, Professor Jodi Magness, Professor Benjamin Isaac, Professor Stephen H. Savage, Professor Burton MacDonald, Professor Fred M. Donner, Professor Paul Burton, Ms. Jennifer Stabler, Ms. Jennifer Ramsay, Ms. Lisa Helfert, Mr. John Barry, and Mr. James Cook. I also want to thank Darlene King, Catalina Toala, and the entire staff of the Department of History at the University of Maryland.

My mother and sisters have been encouraging over the years, for which I am forever grateful. I want also to thank my adopted family in Raleigh, NC, Kenton and Mary Bea Kolbe, who have stood behind me every step of the way. Further, I am extremely fortunate to share the kindness, support, drive for academic excellence, and friendship of Elise A. Friedland, to whom I owe more than I could ever express here.

Finally, I extend further thanks to the members of my dissertation committee for their patience and endurance in reading this dissertation.

Table of Contents

Preface	ii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Figures	x
List of Tables	xiv
List of Abbreviations	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Setting	1
What are Identity and Community?	11
A Framework for Constructing Palmyrene Identity and Community	22
State Formation at Roman Palmyra	25
Palmyrene Studies	33
Sources	35
Summary of Palmyra's History and Urban Development	42
Summary of Chapters	61
Chapter 2: Tribes and Tribalism	64
Introduction	64
Conceiving Tribes and Tribalism	67
Family and Tribal Structure at Palmyra	72
City and Countryside	97
Conclusion	112
Chapter 3: Growth of Community	114
Introduction	114
The Nature of Community at Palmyra	115
Palmyra as Religious Center	120

Palmyra as Economic Center	145
Conclusion	174
Chapter 4: Social Identities	177
Introduction	177
The Palmyrene Family	179
Marriages Patterns	192
Women at Palmyra	202
Slaves, Freedmen, and Freedwomen	214
Occupational Identities	223
Voluntary Associations and Ritual Dining	229
Friends and Patrons	248
Conclusion	258
Chapter 5: Civic Institutions	262
Introduction	262
City and Citizenship	263
Government and Institutions	273
Four Tribes, Four Sanctuaries	296
Palmyra's Military and Caravan Guards	324
Conclusion	336
Chapter 6: Palmyrene Identity and Community Abroad	339
Introduction	339
The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos	341
Palmyrene Merchants Abroad	363
Palmyrenes in Foreign Services	370
Conclusion	400
Chapter 7: Conclusions	403
Odenathus, Zenobia, and the Crisis of Identity	403
Retrospect and Broader Implications	421
Figures	436
Appendix I: Index of Palmyrene Aramaic Texts	475
Appendix II: Short Concordance of Text References (<i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum, and PAT sigla</i>)	495
Bibliography	510

List of Figures

Figure 1:	General map of the Near East	437
Figure 2:	Satellite image of Palmyra—north at top ([C] CNES/SPOT Image 1992-1994)	438
Figure 3:	City plan of Palmyra (courtesy of Waleed al-As‘ad)	439
Figure 4:	Ancient city of Palmyra looking southeast. Note the oasis in the immediate background and the sabkha in the distance.	440
Figure 5:	Territory of Palmyra (after Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 163, map 2)	441
Figure 6:	Statue of unidentified Palmyrene male (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	442
Figure 7:	Great Colonnade looking north. Note the presence of consoles on the columns, on which statues of the Palmyrene elite were set. Honorific inscriptions identifying these individuals were generally inscribed on the face of the console or on the column below it.	443
Figure 8:	Temple of Bel looking west. Note the date palms of the oasis in the foreground.	444
Figure 9:	Sanctuary of Bel in the temple precinct looking east	445
Figure 10:	Sanctuary of Baalshamin looking north. Note the presence of consoles on the columns supporting the roof of the sanctuary, on which statues of the temple’s benefactors were displayed . . .	446
Figure 11:	Aerial view of the restored theater and of the agora looking	

	west (photograph by Waleed al-As‘ad)	447
Figure 12:	Temple of Allat looking south. Note the Great Colonnade leading to the temple of Bel in the background	448
Figure 13:	Monumental Arch looking northwest. The arch masks a sharp bend in the colonnade	449
Figure 14:	Tetrapylon looking north. The monument marks an intersection of two colonnaded streets. Its columns, one of which is original, are of pink granite shipped from Egypt	450
Figure 15:	Valley of the Tombs looking west. The visible tower tombs are among the oldest monuments at Palmyra. Also present though not visible in the photograph are the numerous <i>hypogea</i> which replaced the tower tombs as the preferred method of burial in the second century C.E.	451
Figure 16:	Tower tombs looking southwest	452
Figure 17:	Monumental sarcophagi from the <i>hypogeum</i> of the three brothers depicting a typical <i>triclinium</i> arrangement that mimics a Roman dining setting	453
Figure 18:	Loculi in the <i>hypogeum</i> of Artaban	454
Figure 19:	Palmyrene merchants (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). Note their distinctive native dress	455
Figure 20:	Palmyrene camel relief (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	456
Figure 21:	Camels at Palmyra today	457
Figure 22:	Palmyrene ship with long oars, perhaps for navigating up the Euphrates (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	458
Figure 23:	House 35 at Palmyra (after Gabriel, “Recherches archéologiques à Palmyra,” pl. 15)	459
Figure 24:	Mosaic from the house of Cassiopeia highlighting Greek cultural inclinations among the Palmyrene elite (courtesy of the National Museum, Damascus, Syria)	460

Figure 25:	Genealogical chart showing the descendants of Manai Elahbel. Note the endogamous parallel cousin marriages	461
Figure 26:	Palmyrene funerary sarcophagus from the <i>hypogeum</i> of Bolha in the southwest necropolis depicting as the central figure a certain Nabushuri, son of Ogeilu, whose father is depicted on his right (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). The woman sitting at the feet of Nabushuri is Aqme, daughter of a certain Baratai, presumably his wife and clearly in a subordinate position. The children, who are set in smaller relief in the background, are not identified	462
Figure 27:	Relief of reclining Palmyrene couple, a certain Malē (right) and Bolaya (left), from the southeast necropolis (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	463
Figure 28:	Relief of reclining Palmyrene woman with servant (courtesy of the National Museum, Damascus, Syria)	464
Figure 29:	Right side of relief of a processional scene from the temple of Bel. Note the train of women swathed in veils	465
Figure 30:	Left side of relief of processional scene from the temple of Bel. Note the veiled women in the upper-left scene	466
Figure 31:	Relief of a Palmyrene sacrificial scene from the temple of Allat depicting veiled women in procession, perhaps priestesses (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	467
Figure 32:	Archaic relief from the agora that depicts two veiled women in a sacrificial scene (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). The woman on the far right holds a two-handled cup, and before her another woman holds what appears to be a incense burner . .	468
Figure 33:	Relief of an unidentified Palmyrene woman with a <i>stylus</i> (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)	469
Figure 34:	View of Euphrates from Dura Europos looking south. Note the agricultural fields along the bank of the river	470
Figure 35:	Relief of 159 C.E. depicting the Gad of Dura Europos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos	

	Collection)	471
Figure 36:	Relief of 159 C.E. depicting the Gad of Palmyra (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection)	472
Figure 37:	Fresco depicting in the lower left scene the <i>tychai</i> of Palmyra and Dura Europos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection). The <i>tychai</i> in addition to three other Palmyrene deities receive a sacrifice from the tribune Julius Terentius alongside members of the <i>cohors XX Palmyrenorum</i> and the priest Themēs, son of Mokimos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection)	473

List of Tables

Table 1: Palmyrene Tribal or Familial Associations	78
Table 2. Known Palmyrene Clans and Tribal Associations	79

List of Abbreviations

<i>AA(A)S</i>	<i>Les Annales archéologiques (arabes) syriennes</i>
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	Vogt, J., H. Temporini, and W. Haase, eds. <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972 -
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BRGK</i>	<i>Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>
<i>CIS</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i>
<i>CRAIBL</i>	<i>Comptes rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>Dura Final Report 3.1.2</i>	Downey, S. B. <i>The Stone and Plaster Sculpture</i> . The Excavations at Dura Europos, Final Report. Vol. 3.1. fasc. 2. Los Angeles : Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 1977
<i>Dura Final Report 5.1</i>	Welles, C., R. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam, eds. <i>The Parchments and Papyri</i> . The Excavations

- at Dura Europos, Final Report. Vol. 5.1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959
- Dura Preliminary Report 2* Bauer, P. V. C., and M. I. Rostovtzeff, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Second Season of Work, October 1928 - April 1929*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931
- Dura Preliminary Report 4* Bauer, P. V. C., M. I. Rostovtzeff, and A. R. Bellinger, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season of Work, October 1930 - March 1931*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933
- Dura Preliminary Report 5* Rostovtzeff, M. I., ed. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season of Work, October 1931 - March 1932*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934
- Dura Preliminary Report 6* Rostovtzeff, M. I., et al., eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Sixth Season of Work, October 1932 - March 1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936
- Dura Preliminary Report 7-8* Rostovtzeff, M. I., F. Brown, and C. Welles, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons of Work, 1933-1934 and 1934-1935*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939
- FHG* *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*
- IDR* *Inscriptiile Daciae Romanae*
- IG* *Inscriptiones graecae*
- IGLS* Jalabert, L., and R. Mouterde. *Inscriptions graecae et latines de la Syrie*. Paris, 1927 -

<i>IGR</i>	Cagnat, R., ed. <i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i> . Paris, 1911-27
<i>ILS</i>	Dessau, H., ed. <i>Inscriptiones latinae selectae</i> , 1892-1916
<i>Inventaire 1-9</i>	Cantineau, J., ed. <i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre</i> . 9 vols. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1930-6.
<i>Inventaire 10</i>	Starcky, J., ed. <i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre</i> . Vol. 10. Damascus: Publications de la Direction Générale des Antiquités de Syrie, 1949.
<i>Inventaire 11</i>	Teixidor, J., ed. <i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre</i> . Vol. 11. Beirut: Institut Français d'Archeologie de Beyrouth, 1965.
<i>Inventaire 12</i>	Bounni, A., and J. Teixidor, eds. <i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre</i> . Vol. 12. Damascus: Publications de la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées de la République Arabe Syrienne, 1975.
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
Maricq, <i>RGDS</i>	Maricq, A. "Res Gestae Divi Saporis." <i>Syria</i> 35 (1958): 295-360
Moretti, <i>Inscriptiones</i>	Moretti, C. L. <i>Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae</i> . Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto italiano per la storia antica, fasc. 17. Rome: 1967
<i>MUSJ</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph</i>
<i>P.Oxy.</i>	<i>Papyri Oxyrhynchus</i>
<i>RIC</i>	Mattingly, H., et al., eds. <i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> . London: Spink, 1923-81

<i>RMD 1</i>	Roxan, M. M. <i>Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977</i> . London: Institute of Archaeology, 1978
<i>RMD 2</i>	Roxan, M. M. <i>Roman Military Diplomas 1978 to 1984</i> . London: Institute of Archaeology, 1985
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i>
<i>SHA</i>	Scriptores historiae augustae
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Setting

This study addresses the issues of identity, community, and state formation in Palmyra, a city in eastern Syria midway between Damascus and the Euphrates that flourished in the second and third centuries C.E. (fig. 1). I examine these issues by means of a comprehensive analysis of the extant epigraphic and archaeological sources within their urban contexts. I also study these issues more broadly in terms of the development of Palmyra as a frontier community in the borderlands between the Roman Empire to the west and the kingdom of Parthia to the east and south, and as a regional center of political interaction and commercial exchange (fig. 2). Both approaches seek to identify the factors that led pastoral peoples to develop an urban center and the corresponding influences, both internal and external, that were adopted (or rejected) as the settlement grew. The aim of this study is to elucidate the nature of the transformation of Palmyra from a small settlement that represented the coalescence of a few disparate tribes into an impressive urban center with distinct Mediterranean features (fig. 3). Further, the aim is to explain the corresponding social and political transformation from a tribal

confederation into an urban community with a social hierarchy that was distinctively Mediterranean in its makeup, where public affairs were conducted in the style of Mediterranean urbanism, and finally into a community that could successfully compete with neighboring imperial powers.

Writing in the first century C.E., the Roman writer Pliny presented Palmyra within its ecological niche, while also providing a political context for the community's early development:

Palmyra, a city famous for its position, the richness of its soil, and its pleasant waters, incorporates fields encircled on all sides by a vast circuit of sand; and, as though removed by the natural order from other lands, and enjoying a separate lot between two supreme empires, that of the Romans and that of the Parthians, in times of discord, it is always the first concern on both sides.¹

Pliny may never have visited Palmyra, and the source of his information was no doubt outdated by a generation or more, but his depiction of the settlement nonetheless retained some contemporary relevance. Indeed, from the Augustan period on, Palmyra had flourished in the borderland between two great empires. The Romans maintained a powerful presence to the west of Palmyra,² and toward

¹ Pliny *Natural History* 5.21.88: *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*. For commentary, see E. Will, "Pliny l'ancien et Palmyre: Un Problème d'histoire ou d'histoire littéraire?" *Syria* 62 (1985): 263-69.

² General studies of Rome in the east include F. Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.-A.D. 337* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); and B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Cf. W.

the east the Parthians prevailed until their eventual overthrow by the Sassanian Persians in 224 C.E.³ Palmyra was closely connected with the strategic and commercial interests of both empires, and, though isolated in the Syrian desert, the city and its territory bridged the distance between them.⁴ Palmyra became, as Pliny perceived, a center of interaction and exchange, a crossroads between east and west. As a community comprised largely of merchants, the Palmyrenes prospered in their role of supporting and protecting the flow of caravan traffic between east and west.⁵

Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire* (London: Routledge, 2000), who provides a more art historical overview stressing eastern influences on western cultural development.

³ General studies of the Parthians and Sassanians include M. Colledge, *The Parthians* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967); N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); J. Gagé, *La Montée des Sassanides et l'heure de Palmyre* (Paris: A. Michel, 1964); and R. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984).

⁴ The available ancient evidence and modern scholarship are heavily biased toward a Roman perspective with respect to frontier strategy. See, for instance, M. Bertinelli, *Roma e l'oriente: Strategia, economia, società e cultura nelle relazioni politiche fra Roma, la Giudea e l'Iran*, 2nd ed., *Problemi e ricerche di storia antica*, no. 7 (Rome: <<L'Erma>> di Bretschneider, 1979); N. Hodgson, "The East as Part of the Wider Roman Imperial Frontier Policy," in *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols., edited by D. French and C. Lightfoot, B. A. R. International Series, no. 55 (Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, 1989), 177-89; E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); and P. Freeman and D. L. Kennedy, eds., *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine Near East*, B. A. R. International Series, no. 297 (Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, 1986).

⁵ Important studies of the eastern trade include J. Miller, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); M. Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); M. Raschke, "New Studies in Roman Trade with the

They secured their trading interests by policing the routes across the desert and by maintaining strong diplomatic and commercial ties with other communities abroad.⁶

The Palmyrenes, a secure and stable presence in an otherwise volatile desert frontier, controlled not only the movement of material goods across the frontier but the exchange of information as well.

In evaluating the ecological niche to which Pliny refers, the modern situation seems comparable. The oasis of Palmyra is situated in the middle of the Syrian desert, midway between Damascus, ca. 200 kilometers to the southwest, and Dura Europos, ca. 230 kilometers to the east on the banks of the Euphrates river. A vast circuit of sand surrounds Palmyra, and the oasis appears from any approach as

East,” *ANRW* 2.9.2 (1978): 604-1378; E. Martin, *Cargoes of the East: The Ports, Trade, and Culture of the Arabian Seas and Western Indian Ocean* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1978); and S. Sidebotham, *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa, 30 B.C. - A.D. 217*, Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava, Supplement no. 91 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986). More recently, see G. Young, *Rome’s Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy, 31 B.C. - A.D. 305* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001). For more a comprehensive assessment of Palmyra’s role in the eastern trade, see J. Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert: Palmyre et son commerce d’Auguste à Caracalla*, Semitica, no. 34 (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1984). More generally, see M. Gawlikowski, “Palmyra and its Caravan Trade,” in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, AAAS, no. 42 (Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996), 139-45; and J. F. Healey, “Palmyra and the Arabian Gulf Trade,” *Aram* 8 (1996): 33-37.

⁶ For instance, on relations between Palmyra and Dura Europos, see L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999); and idem, “The Nature of the Trade between Palmyra and Dura-Europos,” *Aram* 8 (1996): 39-54. See also M. Gawlikowski, “Palmyre et l’Euphrate,” *Syria* 60 (1983): 53-68.

a large, isolated island of palms (fig. 4). Moreover, its climate is typical of desert environments. The days are very hot and evenings are cool. Also, although wells are today the primary source of water, the oasis is not without springs. The Efqa spring, for instance, which was the main water source for irrigation in antiquity, dried up only in the nineteenth century as a result of tectonic activity. Furthermore, Palmyra is near the limit of the zone of 200 millimeter rainfall. Thus it lies in an area of limited agricultural viability. Springs and wells, then, chiefly sustain Palmyra's agricultural programs, which center upon date production.

The territory of ancient Palmyra was vast (fig. 5). Some sixty kilometers southwest of Palmyra, at Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi, the limit of Palmyrene territory touched upon that of the city of Emesa, identified by a boundary marker with the following inscription: *fin[es] | inter | Hadriano[s] | Palmyrenos | et | [He]mesenos.*⁷ The territorial boundary is also demarcated roughly 75 kilometers northwest of Palmyra at Khirbet el-Bilaas, which lies along the road from Palmyra to Apamea at the northwest edge of the Jebel Chaar and the Jebel Bilaas. A column discovered at the site from the reigns of Trajan and Antoninus Pius bears three separate inscriptions, one of which refers to a rescript by Creticus Silanus, the *legatus pro praetore* of Syria in 11-17 C.E., which established the "limits of Palmyrene

⁷ *L'Année épigraphique* 1939, no. 180. Emesa, or modern Hama, lies ca. 150 kilometers west of Palmyra.

territory” (*finēs regionis Palmyrenae*).⁸ It is, however, unclear to what city the adjoining territory belonged. On the same column, a second inscription identifies the locale as the “arable fields of the city of . . .” (*[a]rva civitat[is] | [. . .]enorum*), which could be restored as *[Hemes]enorum* (Emesa), *[Apam]enorum* (Apamea), or as *[Palmyr]enorum*, though this latter reading is far less likely because of inadequate space for supplementing the letters.⁹ The eastern territorial limits, unfortunately, are more difficult to define. There are no boundary markers east or southeast of Palmyra, and we have only vague references to territorial limits in two Palmyrene inscriptions. One was found near the Euphrates valley (south of Dura Europos) in the vicinity of the Iraq Petroleum Company Station T-1. The undated inscription reads: “May Abgar be remembered, son of Shalman son of Zabdibol, who came to the end of the boundaries when Yarhai was *stratēgos*.”¹⁰ More important is an undated inscription from the Qa‘ara depression roughly 200

⁸ *L’Année épigraphique* 1939, no. 179.

⁹ *L’Année épigraphique* 1939, no. 0178. J. F. Matthews, “The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a City of the Roman East,” *JRS* 74 (1984): 162, suggests the likely restoration of *[Apam]enorum*, given the space available for restoring the missing letters.

¹⁰ P2810: *dkyr ’bgr br | šlmn br zbdbwl | dy ’t’ brš qst’ b ’s | trṭgwt yrhy*. For commentary, see J. Starcky, “Une Inscription palmyrénienne trouvée près de l’Euphrate,” *Syria* 40 (1963): 47-55. The Palmyrene term *qsh* also bears the meaning of a “military unit,” so another possible translation for *dy ’t’ brš qst’ b ’s | trṭgwt yrhy* would be, “who came at the head (or lead) of a military unit during the campaign of Yarhai (or when Yarhai was *stratēgos*).” See D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 407, s.v. “*qsh*.”

kilometers southeast of Palmyra, which identifies a group of “harvesters” (*ḥsdy*) with a certain Abgar, son of Hairan, at the “border” (*qst*).¹¹ These two texts, then, suggest that boundaries to the east of Palmyra were not imaginary but real.

Matthews, on the other hand, maintains that no territorial boundaries existed to the east of Palmyra. He claims, rather, that the Palmyrenes sought only to command strategic resources, such as water, and their associated settlements.¹² This view, I would argue, ignores the essence of Roman provincial organization and the administration of cities and their territories. Roman involvement in establishing the territorial boundaries of Palmyra is evident, most likely as a measure to assess the tax burden of the city, and the presence of boundary markers to the west does not exclude their presence to the east. The Palmyrene tariff inscription indicates that the taxes collected by the city derived from the traffic in commodities across all of its territorial borders.¹³ For example, the tax on camels brought into Palmyrene territory at its borders was carefully regulated, and it hardly needs emphasis that most of our evidence of camels entering the territory of Palmyra relates to that of

¹¹ P2730. Again, this may rather refer to men in a military unit; see n. 10 above. For the inscription, see p. 154, n. 96 below. On the routes to the south, see E. Will, “Palmyre et les routes de la soie,” in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 125-28. See also R. Dussaud, “La Palmyrène et l’exploration de M. Alois Musil,” *Syria* 10 (1929): 52-62.

¹² See Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 163.

¹³ See p. 105 below.

the eastern trade and the arrival of caravans from the east.¹⁴ This suggests, then, that an administrative zone existed to the east, demarcated by territorial boundaries, which the city maintained above all for purposes of taxation. Thus, Palmyrene territory was vast, stretching from its western boundaries with Emesa and Apamea to its eastern boundaries, perhaps as far as the Euphrates.

As Pliny observed, Palmyra was strategically situated between the Roman and Parthian empires, which provided a context for Palmyra's communal development. The Palmyrenes were masters of the desert, for instance, and their command over its resources attracted Roman and Parthian interests, whether motivated by commercial or military concerns. The Palmyrenes also maintained strong foreign relations in communities and with officials of both empires. Furthermore, experiences of Palmyrenes abroad, whether in the Parthian or Roman Empires, included their exposure to diverse cultural habits, many of which they adopted and imported to their native city. Remotely, then, in the Syrian desert, the Palmyrenes forged their own very distinctive cultural identities, individually and communally, which were a striking blend of Roman, Iranian, and Arab characteristics.¹⁵ In this light, I offer here an analysis of two aspects of Palmyrene

¹⁴ The taxes throughout the tariff inscription are assessed according to the type of goods, their weight as related to their method of containment, and their means of transport. For a discussion of the caravan trade, see pp. 159-69 below.

¹⁵ For discussions of the Parthian and Roman cultural influences, see M. Colledge, "Parthian Cultural Elements at Roman Palmyra," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987): 19-28; idem, "Roman Influence in the Art of Palmyra," in *International*

civilization during the first three centuries of the Common Era. These are the emergence and subsequent development of Palmyra as a commercial and political community in the desert frontier between Rome and Parthia (and later Sassanian Persia), and the making of Palmyrenes. This study is thus concerned with the creation, structure, and maintenance of Palmyrene identity and that of Palmyra as an urban community in a volatile frontier zone.

The history of Palmyra's communal development, from its humble origins as an oasis community to its rise to prominence as a cosmopolitan center under Roman patronage, would be wholly obscure were it not for the archaeological and epigraphic materials that testify to Palmyrene achievements and prosperity at home and abroad. These, complemented by the literary evidence, also provide insight into the relatively obscure historical process of sedentarization and of the relationships between pastoral and sedentary communities in the Roman Near East.¹⁶ Aided by an apparent influx of pastoral groups, the community of Palmyra

Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road, 363-70; and I. A. Richmond, "Palmyra under the Aegis of Rome," *JRS* 53 (1963): 43-54. On the mosaics, see J. Balty, "Composantes classiques et orientales dans les mosaïques de Palmyre," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 407-16.

¹⁶ General studies of sedentarization and of relations between pastoral and settled communities include C. Nelson, ed., *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*, Research Series, no. 21 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1973); P. C. Salzman, ed., *When Nomads Settle: Processes of Sedentarization as Adaptation and Response* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); J. G. Galaty and D. L. Johnson, eds., *Settling the Desert* (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1981); and M. J. Casimir and A. Rao, eds., *Mobility and Territoriality: Social and Spatial Boundaries among Foragers, Fishers,*

grew over the course of the first few centuries C.E. The oasis and city were focal points of interaction between settled and pastoral peoples, where many of the former had been themselves pastoralists in the recent past.¹⁷ Indeed, Palmyra owed its distinctiveness as a desert community in part to such interaction. Also, Palmyra's unique historical development was due to various interrelated factors, such as its mastery of the desert, the extension of its influence over pastoral peoples of the steppe, and the quasi-independence which the city enjoyed as a result of its relative isolation in a frontier zone between empires.

Thus my intent is to examine the expression of Palmyrene identity, both in an individual and corporate sense, in inhabited space, as evident in archaeological remains, inscriptions, and literary sources. I intend to examine Palmyra within two

Pastoralists, and Peripatetics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). On the reversal of the process of sedentarization, nomadization, particularly in relation to the role of central states, see W. Caskel, "The Bedouization of Arabia," in *Studies in Islamic Cultural History*, edited by G. von Grunebaum, *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, no. 76 (Menshasha, WI: George Banta, 1954), 36-46; W. Lancaster and F. Lancaster, "Thoughts on the Bedouization of Arabia," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 18 (1988): 51-62; and idem, "Tribal Formation in the Arabian Peninsula," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1992): 145-72. More generally on bedouin life and culture, see W. Dostal, "The Evolution of Bedouin Life," *Studi semitici* 2 (1959): 11-34.

¹⁷ This constant interaction between settled and pastoral peoples is reflected in Palmyrene religion, as elaborated, for instance, in J. Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979); and idem, "Cultes tribaux et religion civique à Palmyre," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* 197 (1980): 277-87. See also D. P. Crouch, "A Note on the Population and Area of Palmyra," *MUSJ* 47 (1972): 241-50; D. Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 49 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1951); and idem, "Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène," *Syria* 20 (1939): 43-73.

contexts for the purposes of analysis. One regards Palmyra as peripheral to the centers of Roman and Parthian power, yet more bound at the communal level by Roman authority. Situated remotely between these imperial powers, where it enjoyed a *privata sors*, Palmyra's communal and urban development were nevertheless largely dependent on political relations between these states, on their respective imperial ambitions in the frontier zone, and on specific imperial attitudes toward the indigenous communities of the region.¹⁸ The second looks at Palmyra as a center of its own network of power and influence, in which the Palmyrenes maintained an array of social, economic, political, and cultural relations with a host of "others" that shaped the city's historical development and gave great distinctiveness to their corporate and individual identities. It was this interplay of identities that gave Palmyrene history its distinctive character. This study thus serves as a contribution to Roman frontier studies by joining the diplomatic and political history of the Roman and Parthian empires with the historical ethnography of Palmyra as a frontier community.

What are Identity and Community?

Before I begin, however, there is the issue of semantics. It is necessary, for instance, to clarify what I mean by the terms identity and community. Such

¹⁸ See discussion by J. Ch. Balty, "Palmyre entre orient et occident: Acculturation et résistances," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 437-41; and H. Seyrig, "L'Incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain," *Syria* 13 (1932): 266-77.

clarification will also help to set the theoretical framework for this study of identity and community at Roman Palmyra. Currently, there is little agreement among scholars about what either term means, but there are properties intrinsic to each that can be elaborated. For the most part, understanding these properties involves some illumination of their symbolic contexts, and the recognition that the generation and maintenance of identity and community occur at the level of the individual, in a person's cooperative and competitive associations with others, and in the manner in which a person classifies his or her environment into categories of sameness and difference. This is an anthropological interpretation of identity and community that ultimately serves to illuminate the social landscape for historical reconstruction.

In modern settings, scholars have come increasingly to contemplate the meaning of social and cultural identity.¹⁹ Why the interest? Why has it become so important, almost fashionable, to study how social and cultural boundaries are generated? Does this contemplation reflect reaction on the part of the social actor involved? Focus on identity may be, as many now argue, a product of nationalism and the dual processes of globalization and modernization, which tend to blur

¹⁹ The literature on the topic is vast and growing and the issues addressed are pertinent to any historical analysis. For recent discussions, see A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); C. Calhoun, ed., *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); M. Castells, *The Power of Identity*, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998); and A. Smith, ed., *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology*, vol. 60 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

cultural boundaries over time.²⁰ It may represent fear of cultural uniformity, as individuals and groups seek to preserve their uniqueness, by force if necessary, in a climate of progressive homogenization. In varying contexts, a number of commonalities have been emphasized for the creation of distinctiveness. Language, gender, race, and shared religious association, for example, have all been employed to generate inclusive and exclusive frameworks for social action.²¹ But, while it may be true that such frameworks are more keenly highlighted today, the interest in social and cultural identity is not itself a modern phenomenon.²²

Unfortunately, the pseudo-enlightenment of the postmodern era has

²⁰ See, for instance, E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Z. Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 95-171. More specifically on the impact of globalization and modernization, see Castells, *Power of Identity*, 5-109; and J. Campbell and A. Rew, eds., *Identity and Affect: Experiences of Identity in a Globalizing World*, Anthropology, Culture, and Society (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

²¹ This is evident in the vast literature on ethnogenesis: see, for example, the synthetic discussion by J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 26-33. See also, J. Leman, *The Dynamics of Emerging Ethnicities: Immigrant and Indigenous Ethnogenesis in Confrontation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998); J. Edwards, *Language, Society, and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); and E. Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*, *Frontiers of Anthropology*, vol. 5 (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989).

²² See, for instance, I. Malkin, "Introduction," in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001), 1-28.

obscured our understanding of identity, whether in ancient or modern contexts.²³

Who are we in relation to other social groups? Who am I in relation to other individuals? These are old, basic questions that structure identity. They have been asked repeatedly in many different situations and settings, both wittingly and not. And, importantly, responses to these questions can be grasped. Symbolic imprints of constructed identities are apparent in our literary, archaeological, and epigraphic sources.²⁴ As we attempt to grasp these, objectivity is a prime concern. We must determine that the identities apparent in the sources are themselves contemporary constructions by the social actors involved rather than our own projections of identities onto the evidence. To promote objectivity, scholars have clarified the concept of identity, debating at length about how identities are constructed, maintained, dissolved, and recreated in different contexts.²⁵ Anthropologists and

²³ I say this specifically from a historian's perspective and as a strong advocate of the position that the historian's task is to reconstruct (objectively and not subjectively) the events of the past in past terms. Our task is not to impose any moral or political agenda onto the evidence, and not to force the evidence to support a dialectic employed to substantiate contemporary discourse that denies historical objectivity. On the negative impact of postmodernist discourse in the humanities, and specifically on the discipline of history, see R. Evans, *In Defense of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997); and K. Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996).

²⁴ This is particularly evident among the essays in R. Laurence and J. Berry, eds., *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1998). See also G. J. Oliver, ed., *The Epigraphy of Death: Studies in the History and Society of Greece and Rome* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

²⁵ See n. 19 above.

sociologists have led these debates, while the more cautious historians have followed. The results have been rewarding. We are now more closely integrated with the past than ever before, and the historical enterprise itself holds far greater contemporary relevance than ever.

What, then, defines identity? As we conceive of identity, certain aspects seem basic. Identity derives from an awareness that every object of our perception or person has a basic property or essence, and that these properties can be classified, based on their characteristics, into categories of sameness or difference. Identity, then, is a result of classification, whether based on inherent or apparent qualities. It is also clear that before an object can be classified it must first be internalized by the one engaged in the process of identification. Identity is thus formed in action, “or rather interaction, in the process of exchange of messages which we send, receive, and interpret until a general, relatively coherent image is achieved.”²⁶ The process of identification is, therefore, dynamic, interpretive, and contextual, and identity itself is a social construct.

How does one define oneself, either individually or socially, and how might a person be defined by others? A catalog of distinctions may be compiled, one that stresses social or cultural preferences, but this would only provide a snapshot of how one might be identified at any given moment. Identity is not static. Who I am today may be very different from who I will be tomorrow or next year. Indeed,

²⁶ Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, 5.

personal identity adjusts as responses to external stimuli accumulate. Such experiences actually shape the symbolic framework that influences the processes of identification and classification. Identity, in fact, is contingent on particular settings and contexts, no less than on the perceptions and evaluations of the identifier. Also, identity “is always defined in relation to a partner and to his or her identity, and therefore the same person or group may assume and express a different identity in different situations.”²⁷ Given that identity is dynamic, interpretive, and contextual, it follows that a plurality of identities may exist for individuals and groups at any given moment. The key, then, to our understanding of how one might define himself or herself, or be defined by others, lies in our elaboration of each specific context at particular moments and the manner by which the social actors themselves engage in the process of identification.

How are we to define identity in specific historical contexts, a task complicated by the fact that an individual or group may have multiple identities at any given moment?²⁸ If we are to examine, for instance, the identity of a first century C.E. male living in Palmyra, Syria, what steps must we take? A first step would be to generate a catalog of apparent qualities or characteristics, such as age,

²⁷ Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, 9.

²⁸ For a discussion of the distinction between personal and group identity, see H. Tajfel, “Introduction,” in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, European Studies in Social Psychology, edited by H. Tajfel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1-11.

social status, and profession. Then, by recognizing that identity is created in relation to other social partners, we might map these characteristics onto the social world of our subject in order to see how they relate to his contemporaries. Basically, we are seeking how our subject is similar to and different from his contemporaries who are themselves, in varying degrees, similar to and different from him. The whole process generates a multiplicity of possible identities, some more apparent than others. We can narrow the scope by recognizing that within this world of individuals several identities might overlap, generally in terms of shared qualities or interests, and associations may form. Then, the discussion of group identities in social contexts becomes more feasible. As a final step, we must determine, with some measure of objectivity, whether the identities we arrive at are those defined internally by our subject, or whether these are externally defined by his contemporaries (or perhaps even imposed on the subject by our own arbitration of the evidence).

It helps to recognize that all identity is constructed, and the social construction of identity, from an anthropological perspective, always takes place in a context of power relationships.²⁹ This means the establishment of relations between a dominant individual or group and a subordinate one, wherein the constructed identity itself “serves as a justification and legitimization of relations

²⁹ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 6-7.

between people and groups and of a social order in general.”³⁰ In other words, identity informs the relations between an individual and his or her social environment. These relations can vary. They can be political, economic, cultural, or an array of other possibilities or combinations. Also in the context of power relationships, identity is negotiable. Since, as I have noted, identity is formed in action, any restriction on freedom of action or any limitation on the zone of activity for any social actor effectively narrows the range of possible identities that might be formed. Often, boundaries are established to demarcate these zones and to guarantee specific activities within prescribed limits.³¹ Boundaries are rarely static but normally fluid and negotiable. They form in the context of power relationships and thus serve to delineate and sustain identities.

Boundaries, then, which can be real or perceived, define group identities and establish patterns of interaction among groups. As Cohen states, a boundary encapsulates the identity of a community and, like the identity of an individual, arises from social interaction. “Boundaries,” he explains, “are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or

³⁰ Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, 6.

³¹ See, for instance, F. Barth, “Introduction,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, edited by F. Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), 9-38.

wish to be, distinguished.”³² Thus, boundaries, while set up in the course of constructing group identities, result from a process of mutual identification and classification, as members from diverse groups seek to preserve their own apparent distinctiveness. In other words, identities are constructed around a network of meaningful contexts, often of a symbolic nature (e.g., political ideology, language, ritual), and boundaries function to protect this network from outside manipulation, whether direct or indirect. Boundaries thus serve to maintain group identities, generating contexts in which “the others” are consistently defined and divisions between “us” and “them” are drawn.³³ Where they exist, there can be antagonism and conflict, but generally, “partners of social relations . . . adapt to each other, establish relatively stable norms of contacts, and coexist on terms which depend on the balance of power between them.”³⁴ Boundaries thus inform the power relationships between groups.

Different boundaries enclose different types of social entity. As I have discussed, identity is a dynamic, interpretive, and contextual phenomenon, and a multiplicity of identities can exist for an individual or group at any given moment.

³² A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Tavistock, 1985), 12.

³³ An intriguing exposition on this theme is provided by E. Sampson, *Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

³⁴ Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, 14.

In addition to this, social identities form at local, regional, and national levels. Some boundaries, for instance, are generated within local communities in order to regulate relations between individuals and groups in a shared communal context. These boundaries might encapsulate group identities based, for instance, on lineage, wealth, professional or religious association, or race. Other boundaries are generated on the peripheries of established communities in order to regulate relations between groups in broader regional contexts, e.g., between cities or between cities and states. Such boundaries generally encapsulate larger social entities whose identities are more culturally derived, while political and economic factors also play important roles.

How are boundaries negotiated, given that these serve to support distinct group identities, and since identities are themselves constructed through a process by which individuals internalize and classify objects of their environment? Who is involved in the process of communication across boundaries that sustains particular divides between social entities? In other words, who assigns the boundaries? The answers are apparent in the network of power relationships that support group identities. Since boundaries represent, as it were, a balance of power between individuals and groups, the terms by which boundaries are generated tend, generally, to favor those who are strongest in any given context. We can thus gain insight into the construction and maintenance of boundaries within and between communities by analyzing the apparent strengths each possesses relative to the

other and by identifying those who appear to monopolize power at local and regional levels.

I have examined very generally how personal and group identity are constructed and maintained, but what about community? What do we mean when we refer to community? Quite simply, we may regard as community an association of individuals or groups that inhabits a specific locale and generally pursues common interests. Moreover, a community is comprised of individuals and groups in daily interaction, and the uniqueness of the community is related to the distinctiveness of their various identities, which tend to be multifarious. As I have discussed, identity is basically a symbolic construction in a social context generated and accepted at the individual level. Also, when individuals form associations, often with others for cooperative or competitive purposes, they tend to develop group identities that determine levels of participation or exclusion. Generally, as individuals and groups interact, boundaries form to maintain the distinctiveness of each, and these boundaries tend to reflect the power relationships between individuals and groups. Community may then be regarded as the sum of the various individuals and groups comprised therein and of the boundaries generated by their interaction. Often, the community may take on a more political aspect in order to regulate the power relationships that generated such boundaries in the first place. Finally, since identity serves to generate social order, each community may be regarded as having its own unique identity that defines collective association and

participation.

A Framework for Constructing Palmyrene Identity and Community

Isolated in an oasis in the Syrian desert, the Palmyrenes constructed and maintained a distinctive social and group identity in a community setting that persisted for more than two centuries. They did so in the no man's land between two great empires, that of Parthians to the east and the Romans to the west, whose relations with one another were only intermittently peaceful. Between these two empires, the Palmyrenes were a constant source of tension for each, most likely for reasons of frontier security. As the Romans advanced further and further eastward, even to the point of launching military campaigns south along the Euphrates, and as Palmyra became more firmly incorporated into the Roman orbit of direct power and influence as a result of imperialist expansion, Palmyrene cultural identity persisted.³⁵ This is reflected, for instance, in the continued use of the Palmyrene dialect of Aramaic as a formal language of government and administration alongside Greek.³⁶ This was itself a unique feature of Palmyrene society

³⁵ For issues of identity and Romanization, see G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); idem, "Beyond Romans and Natives," *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 339-50. Cf. J. Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces," *AJA* 105 (2001): 209-25.

³⁶ Though outside Roman provincial authority, we find similar phenomena further to the east on the fringes of Roman influence, at Edessa for instance. See S. Ross, *Roman Edessa: Politics and Culture on the Eastern Fringes of the Roman Empire, 114-242 C.E.* (London: Routledge, 2001), 5-45.

unparalleled elsewhere in the Roman Empire.

How is it that an indigenous culture could emerge and thrive so remarkably and for so long in an environment of expansionist imperialism? As mentioned, I propose to answer this question through an analysis of Palmyrene identity and community at the local, provincial, and international levels. This project requires a suitable framework for analysis.

In our discussion of identity, we have seen that all identity is formed in an individual process of internalization and classification, and that the process of identification is itself an active one, dynamic, interpretive, and contextual. Thus, an analysis of Palmyrene identity must first take place at the local and personal level. It must begin with the individual social actors themselves in order to elucidate interaction between them. As a paradigm, we may follow the analytical approach outlined above in constructing the identity of a hypothetical first century C.E. male from Palmyra. Aware of the fact that identity is formed in the context of power relationships, we must identify those individuals or groups who appear more or less dominant in the social order. These have the power to generate and sustain social boundaries or at least to regulate where particular boundaries are set. An overview of personal and group identities, then, forms the basis of an analysis of Palmyra as a community.

Palmyra, however, existed as a community within an interactive matrix of regional identities. We may begin to explore these by analyzing first the boundary

between city and territory. What were the relationships between those who dwelled within the city and those who populated the countryside, whether as pastoralists or as inhabitants of towns and villages within the *territorium*, or subject countryside, of Palmyra? Regional identities may also be examined based on boundaries between territories and other cities. For example, what were the relations between Palmyra and Emesa, the nearest city to the west of Palmyra, which played an important historical role regionally and internationally during the period of Palmyrene prosperity? Once the seat of a local dynasty and client of the Romans in the first century C.E., Emesa grew to become an impressive urban center and the home of an imperial dynasty in the late second and early third centuries C.E.³⁷ Furthermore, since we have seen that a multiplicity of identities can exist for individuals and groups at any given moment, we must explore all of these relationships as they are manifested culturally, economically, politically, and socially.

Identity and community at Palmyra were also shaped by its geographic position and relations with its imperial neighbors. I propose that we analyze these relations from two perspectives. First is the role of Palmyra as a frontier community and the imperial attitudes, both Parthian and Roman, toward the city and its people. What functions, for instance, did the community and its people

³⁷ See R. D. Sullivan, "The Dynasty of Emesa," *ANRW* 2.8 (1977): 198-219; and Millar, *Roman Near East*, 300-309.

serve in a frontier zone that was politically volatile, economically lucrative, socially stratified, and culturally mixed? Another perspective is Palmyrenes abroad, within both the Parthian and the Roman Empires, and the manner in which many seem to have preserved their identities and cultural distinctiveness in foreign contexts. From either perspective, we must recognize that identity is formed in action, or rather during interaction with others. Since the Palmyrenes both created and maintained a distinctive identity in the Syrian desert, their freedom of action must have been remarkable. The Romans and Parthians apparently were comfortable with an arrangement that permitted the Palmyrenes to operate virtually without hindrance within both Roman and Parthian territory. It remains to explore what these arrangements were and how they may have been modified over time. At any rate, it is clear that when limits were imposed on the Palmyrenes' freedom to sustain their individual and corporate identities, their distinctiveness as a community soon faded. This clearly happened when the Sassanian Persians gained power in the east.

State Formation at Roman Palmyra

The foregoing discussion of identity and community, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, creates a framework for an analysis of tribalism at Palmyra and within its rural hinterland, which, in turn, will permit a synthetic treatment of Palmyrene state formation. Relationships between tribes, as a unique form of community, and states are complex, upon which elaboration is required. In this

section, I seek only to provide an overview of these relationships in a general discussion on state formation that focuses on Roman Palmyra and its development as a tribal society.

Most scholars view the tribe, a distinctive form of group identity, and the state as stages in an evolutionary process in which primitive societies become more complex as egalitarian social and political organization becomes more hierarchical.³⁸ In this anthropological view, chiefdoms, which often form through the consolidation or coalescence of tribes, are routinely regarded as an intermediate stage in the formation of states. Examples of chiefdoms abound in the ancient world, but these need not be elaborated here.³⁹ It suffices to recognize that leadership, exemplified by the role of the chief, or the emergence of hierarchical institutions of other sorts (see below), were pivotal to state development. Moreover, tribes or tribal leaders coalesced to form chiefdoms for various reasons, which included the need to combat seasonal hardships, to mediate feuds among tribal members, to distribute surplus production, or for territorial expansion by

³⁸ See discussion by E. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975), 3-22. For a more concise summary on theories of the state, see L. Krader, *Formation of the State* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 22-28. On the relationships between tribes and states, see M. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 4-13.

³⁹ Several examples from the Roman Near East may be presented, which include the Nabataeans, Emesenes, and others. With regard to the Nabataeans, see G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 14-23. For the most part, there are no synthetic works that elaborate on the process of state formation among Arab tribal groups in the Roman Near East.

conquest. Accordingly, should we accept this view, an analysis of tribal structures or identities in their political and social contexts, and as they developed over time, is important for the study of state formation.

Not everyone, however, holds an evolutionary view of state formation from tribal origins. Some scholars prefer, for instance, to emphasize the coexistence of tribes and states and their common association. As Khoury and Kostiner suggest, “over time, states accommodate tribes in varying degrees of social integration and political participation. As tribes also change over time and form a variety of social categories within a state, they maintain varying levels of autonomy and subordination.”⁴⁰ They stress the fact that tribal and state formation are indeed interrelated, particularly in political contexts.⁴¹ From this position, which has influenced this study, the origins of the state among politically disparate tribes are revealed as dynamic and actual. This view appears to explain the dynamics of state formation less as an evolutionary process in which tribes are inexorably linked than as a process of social and political development controlled through human decision and intent. Further, this view illuminates the nature of the relationships of power

⁴⁰ P. S. Khoury and J. Kostiner, “Introduction: Tribes and the Complexities of State Formation in the Middle East,” in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, edited by P. S. Khoury and J. Kostiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 7.

⁴¹ See also R. Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East,” in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 52.

and authority among coexisting tribes and states.

Ultimately, the problem with state formation lies in our definition of the state. Proposed definitions vary widely.⁴² For the purposes of this study, the state will be viewed as a social organism associated with a particular bounded territory, within which it exercises the central and highest political authority over society.⁴³ In general terms, it helps to regard the state as “force, power, and authority.”⁴⁴ The state is force in that it exists by virtue of its ability to monopolize instruments of force in society, both material and psychological. The state is power when it applies force under the qualification of law. Once force is qualified as power under the law, the state becomes legitimate as authority. Thus, the state is an autonomous organization that exercises power and authority within prescribed territorial and lawful limits with a monopoly of force. Individuals and groups within society, then, in their recognition of the state, must decide whether to accept or reject its authority in the governance of their actions through force or the threat of force.

As definitions of the state vary, so do explanations of why states form in the

⁴² Summarized by Krader, *Formation of the State*, 26-28.

⁴³ For instance, see Khoury and Kostiner, “Introduction: Tribes and the Complexities of State Formation in the Middle East,” 3; and A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, eds., *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 7. Cf. See Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople,” 50.

⁴⁴ As outlined and discussed by A. d’Entrèves, *The Notion of the State: An Introduction to Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1-11.

first place. Although the scope of our inquiry into Palmyrene state formation does not require a full evaluation of these issues, some remarks are warranted. To begin with, I am inclined to agree with Krader's view that states form in stratified and complex societies, where stratification is marked by the development of hierarchy in social, economic, and political organization (based on status, prestige, or wealth), and complexity is marked by the existence of non-kinship units of association (e.g., villages, townships, *collegia*) in cooperative or competitive coexistence.⁴⁵ Further, in most societies, those who comprise the higher social stratum tend to exercise the most control over these associations. Thus Krader observes that "the hierarchical order of society in which the state is formed, the hierarchical order of the state organization, and the role of the state in maintaining the hierarchical order of society, all are interrelated,"⁴⁶ since the power of the state is usually in the hands of the social elite. While it seems valid to examine state formation in pre-modern settings in similar terms, Martin van Creveld has argued recently that the state, as an abstract entity, is a modern construct not applicable to any discussion of periods before the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ This view, however, features an irrelevant distinction

⁴⁵ See Krader, *Formation of the State*, 26-28. Cf. d'Entrèves, *The Notion of the State*, 71-102.

⁴⁶ Krader, *Formation of the State*, 27.

⁴⁷ See M. van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-2, whose methods are best applied in analyses of modern nation-states.

between government and state and the unnecessary opinion that states are best studied as corporations in the most modern sense of the term. Krader's analysis of state formation, in fact, applies to ancient contexts. We may, for instance, study the rise of the Greek *polis* along the same lines. We need only to caution ourselves to make clear the distinction between what we now regard as nation-states in the modern era and city-states (*poleis*) in the ancient world.⁴⁸

The ancient Greek *polis* was not an "imagined community," in the sense that Benedict Anderson characterizes the modern nation.⁴⁹ It was a tangible community, in which its inhabitants engaged in face-to-face association on a daily basis. According to Morris, the *polis* "was almost a stateless society, autonomous from all dominant class interests by being isomorphic with the citizen body. The citizens were the state . . . [and] the source of all authority was . . . the community . . . [and] force was located in the citizen body as a whole."⁵⁰ The maintenance of internal security and external defense, accordingly, were communal responsibilities. In Aristotelian terms, the *polis* formed a natural association for men who were, after

⁴⁸ See, for instance, M. H. Hansen, ed., *The Polis and City-State: An Ancient Concept and its Modern Equivalents* (Symposium, January 9, 1998), Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1997), 114-23. Cf. I. Morris, "The Early Polis as City and State," in *City and Country in the Ancient World*, edited by J. Rich and A. Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1991), 25-57.

⁴⁹ See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

⁵⁰ I. Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.

all, political creatures.⁵¹ The *polis* was sovereign and held priority over any individual and all households. Even in wider political contexts, such as with the federations of states that developed later (see below), Greek *poleis* were remarkable for their staunch independence and competitiveness.

But, the Greek *polis* as described by Aristotle and as realized by his predecessors was an ideal (if not archaic) form that underwent change. After the conquests and death of Alexander the Great, his generals and successors incorporated many independent Greek *poleis* into their fledgling kingdoms.⁵² Many other *poleis* willingly sacrificed their independence and incorporated themselves into federations, which emerged to counterbalance the centralized authority of the Hellenistic monarchies. The two most important federal states were in Achaea and Aetolia. This rise in regionalism led to more broadly based associations and alliances among the various *poleis*. It also represented a shift in power away from individual city-states. These no longer monopolized the forces of their respective communities. Rather, the forces of state were concentrated in the hands of the monarchs or federal assemblies.⁵³ Nevertheless, the *poleis* retained nominal

⁵¹ Aristotle *Politics* 1.4.

⁵² These included many cities founded by Alexander himself. For a treatment of the sources, see P. M. Fraser, *Cities of Alexander the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵³ See F. W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 46-59 and 141-58.

independence, measured largely by the rights and privileges each had been granted.⁵⁴ The competitiveness and divisiveness between *poleis* also persisted.⁵⁵

When the Romans advanced into Greece and the Near East, they incorporated Greek communities into their system of rule, whether directly or indirectly, without significant disruption of the political climate. The Romans adopted the legacy of Hellenistic rule in the region, which had been based mostly on personal relationships between communities and rulers.⁵⁶ The Romans even encouraged the Greek *polis* as a model in the founding of new communities in the Near East.⁵⁷

I will examine state formation at Roman Palmyra largely in these terms, as the development of a political community with the institutional structure of a *polis*.⁵⁸ The Greek nature of the Palmyra's institutions, in fact, is evident in its

⁵⁴ It was, in fact, the duty of a king to be seen as an advocate for the freedom of Greek communities within his territories. See, for instance, G. Shipley, *The Greek World after Alexander, 323 - 30 B.C.* (London: Routledge, 2000), 73-86.

⁵⁵ See Walbank, *Hellenistic World*, 143-45.

⁵⁶ See Shipley, *Greek World after Alexander*, 59-107. Cf. M. Sartre, *L'Orient romain: Provinces et sociétés provinciales en Méditerranée orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères (31 avant J.-C. - 235 après J.-C.)* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 121-26.

⁵⁷ G. Woolf, "The Roman Urbanization of the East," in *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997), 3.

⁵⁸ See M. H. Hansen, ed., *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community (Symposium August, 29-31 1996)*, Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, vol. 4 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1997).

tripartite governmental structure of magistrates, council, and assembly, fully developed in the first century C.E. at the latest. I will discuss Palmyra's institutional development in Chapter 5, where I will also examine Roman influence on the social, political, and economic structures of the Palmyrene community. It suffices, for the moment, to recognize that Palmyra resembled a *polis* in most respects, although clear influences from societies further to the east are apparent in its communal structure and development. For the most part, the Palmyrenes incorporated these influences, operating with relative freedom in the development of their community and the structure and maintenance of their individual and corporate identities. The Palmyrenes were sufficiently isolated from the centers of Roman and Parthian imperial power, but their community, as a hybrid form of the Greek *polis*, was itself a regional center of force and power in a politically sensitive frontier zone.

Palmyrene Studies

There are no detailed studies that explore the collective issues of Palmyrene identity, community, and state formation. In fact, few monographic studies exist about Palmyra and its communal development, and most provide only general treatments of the evidence.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ For instance, see I. Browning, *Palmyra* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979); J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, Édition revue et augmentée des nouvelles découvertes (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1985); E. Will, *Les Palmyréniens: La Venise des sables (Ier siècle avant- IIIème siècle après J.-C.)* (Paris: A. Colin, 1992); G. Degeorge, *Palmyre: Métropole du désert* (Paris: Libr.

For the most part, Palmyrene studies have focused on four main themes. First, and most importantly, the vast majority of what has been published consists of collections, interpretations, and commentaries of Palmyrene epigraphy, such as the corpus of Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions recently published by Hillers and Cussini;⁶⁰ second, a great deal of work, both historical and archaeological, focuses on Palmyrene art and architecture;⁶¹ third, a wealth of information is available on Palmyrene religion;⁶² and fourth, there are works that treat the events of the third

Séguier: Archimbaud, 1987); and R. Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

⁶⁰ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, with references to other collections incorporated in their work. See also D. R. Hillers, "Notes on Palmyrene Aramaic Texts," *Aram* 7 (1995): 73-88. On the language of the inscriptions, see J. Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique*, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger, no. 4 (Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1935); and idem, *Le Dialecte arabe de Palmyre*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Institut Français de Damas, 1934).

⁶¹ Important synthetic studies include M. Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien: Étude d'épigraphie et de topographie historique* (Warsaw: PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1973); and M. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). For more specialized studies on Palmyrene sculpture and reliefs, see A. Sadurska, "L'Art et la société: Recherches iconologiques sur la sculpture funéraire de Palmyre," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 285-88; A. Sadurska and A. Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, Supplementi alla RdA, no. 13 (Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1994); and W. Schottruff, *Palmyrenische Grabreliefs* (Frankfurt am Main: Liebieghaus, 1979).

⁶² See M. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre," *ANRW* 2.18.4 (1990): 2605-58; H. J. W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra*, *Iconography of Religions*, vol. 15: Mesopotamia and the Near East, no. 15 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976); Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*; and J. Février, *La Religion des Palmyréniens* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin., 1931).

century and the specific careers of Odenathus and Zenobia at the expense of engaging in any sort of comprehensive analysis of Palmyra as a community and its development over the course of the first two centuries of the Common Era.⁶³ What is missing in this literature, in fact, is a proper historical analysis of the extant data, archaeological, epigraphic, and literary sources, in which the Palmyrene community and its origins are the focus.

Sources

Literary sources about Roman Palmyra are sparse but useful.⁶⁴ Among narrative sources, Josephus in the first century C.E, and Appian and Pliny the Younger in the second century, all make passing references to Palmyra in their narratives, and all provide a glimpse into the social and economic development of the community in the first century. When these are combined with other narrative sources, including Strabo in the first century C.E., Tacitus and Suetonius in the second, Cassius Dio and Herodian in the third, roughly a century before the scandalous *Historia Augusta* was supposedly published, a more comprehensive

⁶³ Cf. Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire*, who provides an excellent review of the evidence. See also M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 226-363): A Documentary History* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁶⁴ H. J. W. Drijvers, "Hatra, Palmyra und Edessa: die Städte der syrisch-mesopotamischen Wüste in politischer, kulturgeschichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *ANRW* 2.8 (1977): 799-906, provides a useful summary of the sources. See also Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 68-110.

understanding of Palmyra's communal development emerges. These sources also provide an important point of reference for the evaluation of the archaeological and epigraphic data.

Since narrative sources lack detail, however, the basis of this study is the growing corpus of epigraphic material. A substantial number of inscriptions have been recovered at Palmyra. In the most recently published corpus, there are 2832 inscriptions in Palmyrene Aramaic, including twenty-one bilinguals in Palmyrene and Greek,⁶⁵ nine in Palmyrene and Latin, and two trilinguals in Palmyrene, Greek, and Latin.⁶⁶ In addition there are a few unilingual Latin and Greek texts. These inscriptions cover an array of situations and contexts. The corpus just mentioned classifies 1357 inscriptions as funerary, 503 as dedicatory, 183 as honorific, and five as legal, while 103 are unclassified and forty-nine are described simply as graffiti. Most of the inscriptions are short and consist of only a few fragmentary lines mentioning a name. In contrast, there is the tariff inscription, which provides a wealth of data on Palmyra's regional economy.⁶⁷ Moreover, there is a large of

⁶⁵ There is some dispute over which language depends on the transcription of the other. For the view that the Greek is subordinate to the Aramaic, see H. J. W. Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions," in *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches*, edited by M. Geller, J. Greenfield, and M. Weitzman, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Supplement no. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 31-42.

⁶⁶ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*.

⁶⁷ The best treatment of the Greek text remains that of Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 157-80. See also commentary on the Aramaic portion of the tariff by J.

corpus of 633 inscribed tesserae, small clay tokens utilized to gain entrance to banquets and other gatherings.⁶⁸ The vast majority of the tesserae, however, are uninscribed but no less important because of their art historical value. Whether public or private, these inscriptions are central to any analysis of Palmyrene identity, community, and state formation. Tomb inscriptions, for example, identify individuals, families, and tribes; and the tombs themselves attest to efforts to maintain group coherence, in the practice (for example) of family and associates of the deceased congregating at the tomb for cultic meals.⁶⁹ Also, honorific and dedicatory inscriptions provide valuable insights into the community's infrastructure and civic operations. These reveal the personal achievements of the more prominent Palmyrenes as public figures at home and abroad.⁷⁰ These also reveal the relationships of power and dependence that these citizens promoted in order to create a social hierarchy typical of a Mediterranean *polis*.

Teixidor, "Le Tarif de Palmyre: I. Un Commentaire de la version palmyrénienne," *Aula orientalis* 1 (1983): 235-52.

⁶⁸ On the tesserae from Palmyra, see R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre* (planches) (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1944); idem, *Les Tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre* (texte) (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1962); and H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig, and J. Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 58 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1955).

⁶⁹ See p. 59 below.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, D. Schlumberger, "L'Inscription d'Herodien, remarques sur l'histoire des princes de Palmyre," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 9 (1942-43): 35-50; and M. Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre," *Syria* 62 (1985): 251-61.

The archaeology of Palmyra complements the epigraphy, since the inscriptions must be interpreted within their original contexts in order to be understood fully. Also, the archaeological record speaks volumes about Palmyrene identity and community, and how these were constructed and maintained. From the smallest pottery sherd, which may or may not indicate cultural and economic contacts abroad, to the largest urban edifice, these are all artifacts of Palmyra's communal development. These assert the uniqueness of Palmyrene identity and community. Among the material evidence, for example, the sculptural remains are significant, because they provide snapshots of the Palmyrenes intended for public display (fig. 6). Further, they provide visual documentation of the cultural symbiosis that distinguished the Palmyrene community. This symbiosis can be seen, for example, in the funerary reliefs that reveal family members reclining together in which some are dressed as Romans and others are wearing Parthian attire.⁷¹ While such evidence raises many questions about the nature of Palmyrene identity and its public expression, it also serves to highlight the role of the Palmyrenes as cultural pioneers in a frontier zone. Culturally, they may have

⁷¹ Discussed by H. Seyrig, "Palmyra and the East," *JRS* 40 (1950): 3. For the Palmyrene clothing habits, see idem, "Armes et costumes iraniens de Palmyre," *Syria* 18 (1937): 4-26; and A. Taha, "Men's Costume in Palmyra," *AAS* 32 (1982): 117-32. More generally, on textiles from Palmyra, see R. Pfister, *Nouveaux textiles de Palmyre découverts par le Service des antiquités du Haut-commissariat de la République française dans la nécropole de Palmyre (tour d'Élahbel)* (Paris: Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1937); and A. Stauffer, "Textiles from Palmyra: Local Production and the Import and Imitation of Chinese Silk Weavings," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 425-30.

become more Roman than Parthian, or perhaps, as some would judge, more Parthian than Roman, but by adopting from their neighbors specific cultural habits that were deemed most suitable to their own circumstance, and by grafting these onto their own cultural norms, the Palmyrenes emerged, in the end, as distinctively Palmyrene. Moreover, the architectural remains reveal information about urban development and associated processes of community formation. The urban landscape includes monumental temples, a theater, colonnaded streets, an agora, and other public buildings, in addition to a variety of tombs, that attest to the community's aspirations and achievements (fig. 4). There are also the domestic structures that reveal an aristocratic lifestyle attuned to Mediterranean values.⁷² Yet the domestic quarters of the city have been largely neglected by archaeologists, particularly those sectors not inhabited by the well-to-do. In fact, systematic excavations have concentrated on the monumental remains within the city and on the tombs just beyond the civic boundary.⁷³ While the data is weighted in this

⁷² For instance, see E. Frézouls, "A Propos de l'architecture domestique à Palmyre," *Ktēma* 1 (1976): 29-52.

⁷³ Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, provides an excellent synthesis of the monumental remains of Palmyra from religious contexts. On the funerary monuments, see the synthetic treatment by M. Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*, Travaux du Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, no. 9 (Warsaw: PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1970). More specific investigations of the funerary remains include T. Higuchi, *Tombs A and C Southeast Necropolis Palmyra Syria: Surveyed in 1990-92*, Publication of Research Center for Silk Roadology, vol. 1 (Nara Japan: Research Center for Silk Roadology, 1994); and A. Sadurska, *Le Tombeau de famille de 'Alainê*, Palmyre, no. 7, edited by K. Michalowski (Warsaw: PWN-Éditions

manner, it is, nonetheless, sufficient to examine how the civic environment evolved over time.

In addition to evidence from the city, a substantial number of pre-Islamic graffiti abounds in the desert region around Palmyra.⁷⁴ These texts are important for the details they provide of the social landscape of Palmyra's hinterland. Most are shorthand accounts of local conflicts (largely between the pastoralists themselves) or laments of dire resources and of the parched landscape.⁷⁵

Frequently, these reveal the tensions between the desert and the sown, in a region where the cultivation of crops is complicated by the harsh arid environment and competition over limited resources. Above all, these texts provide a contemporary

scientifiques de Pologne, 1977).

⁷⁴ See E. Littmann, "Safa-Inschriften," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 2, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 30 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), 661-71; idem, *Semitic Inscriptions*, Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900, pt. 4 (New York: The Century Co., 1904); idem, *Thamud und Safa: Studien zur altnordarabischen Inschriftenkunde*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, vol. 25, no. 1 (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag F. A. Brockhaus, 1940); A. Jamme, *Safaitic Notes* (Washington: [s.n.], 1970); W. G. Oxtoby, *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*, American Oriental Series, no. 50 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1968); and F. V. Winnett and G. L. Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

⁷⁵ M. C. A. MacDonald, "Nomads and the Ḥawrān in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence," *Syria* 70 (1993): 303-413, provides a synthetic analysis of this data. See also M. Sartre, "Tribus et clans dans le Hawran antique," *Syria* 59 (1982): 77-91. Further discussions of the rural landscape may be found in J. -M. Dentzer, ed., *Hauran I: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 124 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1985).

context for Palmyra's communal development, because there was constant interaction between the Palmyrenes settled in the oasis and the pastoralists of the countryside. These also provide a framework for an analysis of Palmyra's earliest development when the community was in the first stages of communal expansion.

To sum up, archaeological and epigraphic sources provide the bulk of the material available for this study. These sources are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. In fact, no inscription can be understood fully outside of its physical context, and no building or sculptural artifact can be assessed fully without an accompanying inscription to provide proof of identity, function, and patronage. Therefore, in order for these sources to be assessed properly in relation to Palmyra's communal development, it is important that they be evaluated within their original contexts as their creators intended. As mentioned, for instance, one objective of this study is to assess how the Palmyrenes built their city, which must be judged from the physical remains. The civic architecture must be evaluated in relation to the physical landscape and in association with other architectural remains. Further, the inscriptions must be placed in their monumental contexts relative to the urban topography. It is insufficient simply to read an honorary inscription, and only a slight enhancement of understanding to know that the inscription is from a statue base of a prominent citizen whose career or public benefactions become apparent in it. The knowledge that the statue and its associated inscription were set up along a public thoroughfare (fig. 7) to honor a public figure among many others is critical

to understanding how the inscription together with the statue functioned in a communal setting. It is also clear from reliefs that banquets were often held within the tombs erected on the outskirts of the city, and this explains the function of the inscriptions in these tombs. Thus, interpreting inscriptions in their urban contexts reveals communal activities, and it is from the elucidation of these activities that personal and group identities can be understood in their civic contexts.

Finally, just as the archaeological and epigraphic sources can only be assessed properly within their urban contexts, Palmyra as a community and an urban center must be evaluated within its environmental and geographical setting and with relation to outlying peripheral settlements and other urban centers. Accordingly, we must assess carefully Palmyra's hinterland in order to learn about resource distribution and subsistence strategies. We must also analyze the nature of the interaction between the desert and the sown and the local processes that shaped Palmyra's development in a desert frontier. This will allow us to elaborate on how the regional environment conditioned the strategies for economic subsistence or advancement, and how these strategies in turn affected individual or corporate identities at Palmyra, as they evolved in non-civic as well as civic settings.

Summary of Palmyra's History and Urban Development

I have thus far provided only a cursory treatment of Palmyra's history, stressing mainly its geographic situation between the Roman and Parthian (later Persian) Empires and describing its ecological niche. I have also, in my review of

archaeological sources for this study, discussed the urban monuments of Palmyra as artifacts of community formation without providing much in terms of a chronological context for their development. At present, I wish to give a summary of Palmyra's history together with its urban development.⁷⁶ This will provide a much needed framework for the chapters that follow.

My focus is on Palmyra primarily during the Roman period, because most of our evidence for the formation of a Palmyrene identity and that of community at the oasis is no earlier than the last half of the first century B.C.E.⁷⁷ From the first half of the first century B.C.E. and earlier, the evidence is too fragmented and of little value for making anything but broad generalizations about settlement at the oasis, though it is clear that people lived there, presumably Aramaeans mixed with Arabs.⁷⁸ Pompey's annexation of Syria in 64 B.C.E., apparently, had little effect on

⁷⁶ For studies of Palmyra's urban development, see D. Schlumberger, "Études sur Palmyre, I. Le Développement urbain de Palmyre," *Berytus* 2 (1935): 149-62; E. Frézouls, "Questions d'urbanisme palmyrénien," in *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg [18-20 octobre 1973] à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)* (Strasbourg: AECR, 1976), 191-207; and Browning, *Palmyra*, 77-214.

⁷⁷ Only recently have excavations intent on documenting the Hellenistic settlement commenced, see A. Schmidt-Colinet and K. al-As'ad, "Archaeological News from Hellenistic Palmyra," *Parthica* 4 (2002): 157-66; and idem, "Zur Urbanistik des hellenistischen Palmyra. Ein Vorbericht," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 12 (2000): 61-93. See also P. Collart, "Le Rôle de Palmyre à l'époque hellénistique et romaine d'après les découvertes récentes," *Atti del settimo Congresso internazionale di archeologia classica* 1 (1961): 427-35.

⁷⁸ For the evidence, see Schmidt-Colinet and al-As'ad, "Zur Urbanistik des hellenistischen Palmyra," 61-63. For a general discussion on the Hellenistic origins

Palmyra, since there is nothing on record. The first documented encounter between Romans and Palmyrenes, in fact, was in 41 B.C.E. when the Roman general Mark Antony raided the settlement.⁷⁹ Ostensibly, Antony's intent was to punish the Palmyrenes for their persistence in assuming a neutral position between the Romans and Parthians. According to Appian, however, Antony solely wanted to plunder the city in order to enrich his horsemen. His attack, nonetheless, was in vain. The Palmyrenes were forewarned, and they transported themselves and their property hastily to the opposite bank of the Euphrates. Then, Antony's men, when they entered Palmyra and found nothing, retreated. An important implication of this account is that the wealth of the Palmyrenes was moveable, which would suggest that the settlement itself, whether as yet it qualified as a *polis* or not, was perhaps at a primitive stage in its development. It may, in fact, though Appian refers to it as a *polis*, only have qualified as a substantial village at the time, an assessment that the archaeology of Palmyra thus far supports.⁸⁰ Importantly, at this early stage in Palmyrene history, the seeds for Palmyra's future prosperity had been planted. According to Appian, the Palmyrenes, "being merchants, bring the

of Palmyra, see Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 33-38.

⁷⁹ See Appian *Bella civilia* 5.9.

⁸⁰ We must take into account that Appian wrote this narrative in the second century C.E., when Palmyra was near the peak of its urban development.

products of India and Arabia from Persia and distribute them in Roman territory.”⁸¹

Following 27 B.C.E., the emperor Augustus brought peace and security to the Roman state, and in 20 B.C.E. he established peaceful relations with the Parthians. Concurrently, set in her Syrian niche, Palmyra began to prosper. The cornerstone of Palmyrene prosperity was trade, and Palmyra at this time established or confirmed trade relations with distant emporia such as Seleucia on the Tigris and Babylon. Then, as wealth channeled into the city and as Palmyra’s population began to grow, monumental building activity was initiated.⁸² The earliest record for the monumentalization of Palmyra is in a bilingual building inscription, in Greek and Aramaic, from 19 C.E., which commemorates a statue to a certain Yedibel, son of Azizu, for his contributions to the construction of the temple of Bel (figs. 8 and 9).⁸³ Greek and Palmyrene merchants in Seleucia on the Tigris sponsored the dedication. Merchants in Babylon similarly honored a certain Malku, son of Nesha, in 24 C.E. for his own contributions.⁸⁴ Actually, these references are to the building of the *cella*, or central sanctuary, of the temple, which we know was completed in

⁸¹ Appian *Bella civilia* 5.9: ἔμποροι γὰρ ὄντες κομίζουσι μὲν ἐκ Περσῶν τὰ Ἰνδικὰ ἢ Ἀράβια διατίθενται δ’ ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων.

⁸² I will discuss in Chapter 3 reasons for population growth at Palmyra.

⁸³ P0270. On the excavations of the temple of Bel, see H. Seyrig, R. Amy, and E. Will, *Le Temple de Bél à Palmyre*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 83 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1975).

⁸⁴ P1352.

32 C.E.⁸⁵ Moreover, during construction of the temple of Bel, a temple precinct was being planned for the god Baalshamin north of the town.⁸⁶ Work on the colonnades in the temple of Baalshamin dates back to 23 C.E., and an early sanctuary appeared by 67 C.E.⁸⁷ The existing sanctuary was not dedicated until 132 C.E. (fig. 10). This early building activity, as I have noted, coincides roughly with the time during which the Romans directly involved themselves in establishing the limits of Palmyrene territory (*regio Palmyrena*), between 11 and 17 C.E., and during which, perhaps, they incorporated Palmyra into their empire.⁸⁸ Augustus had died in 14 C.E., and his adopted son, Tiberius, became the new emperor. In 18 C.E. Tiberius sent his adopted son Germanicus to the Near East for purposes of provincial reorganization and to settle contentions over the rule of Armenia. While

⁸⁵ See P1347.

⁸⁶ On the excavations of the temple of Baalshamin, see P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 1-2: Topographie et architecture*, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana, no. 10 (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1969); P. Collart, "Le Sanctuaire de Baalshemên," *Archeologia* 16 (1967): 52-56; C. Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 3: Les Inscriptions*, Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966 (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1971); R. Fellman, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 5: Die Grabanlage*, Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966 (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1970); and R. Fellman and C. Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 6: Kleinfunde objets divers*, Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966 (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1975).

⁸⁷ An inscription from 23 C.E., for instance, records the dedication of two columns to the god Baalshamin by three women; see P0167. For the dedication of the early sanctuary in 67 C.E., see P0158.

⁸⁸ See n. 8 above.

in Syria, Germanicus received an embassy from the king of the Parthians, Artabanus III, requesting that peaceful relations between the two empires be confirmed.⁸⁹ Whether the two leaders ever met has not been established, but Germanicus, concurrently, sought to establish friendly relations with the Parthian vassal state of Mesene using a Palmyrene envoy. An undated and badly preserved inscription records the event, which mentions a Palmyrene ([*td*]mry') surnamed Alexandros whom Germanicus sent to a certain Orabzes of Mesene and to Sampsigeramus, king of Emesa.⁹⁰ While we presume that diplomatic activities were involved, it is also likely that economic motives played a role, since the Palmyrenes, as merchants, maintained various commercial contacts in the Parthian Empire, a subject to which I will return in Chapter 6.⁹¹ Furthermore, whether Germanicus ever visited Palmyra cannot be confirmed, although the evidence presuming that such a visit occurred is suggestive. P0259, the Palmyrene tariff inscription, for instance, refers to some pronouncement regarding tax assessments that Germanicus made in a letter addressed to a certain Statilius, perhaps a Roman

⁸⁹ For a summary of Germanicus' activities in the East, see Tacitus *Annales* 2.43-58.

⁹⁰ P2754.

⁹¹ For discussion, see H. Seyrig, "L'Incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain," 267-68; and M. Schuol, *Die Charakene: Ein mesopotamisches Königreich in hellenistisch-parthischer Zeit*, *Oriens et occidents*, no. 1 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2000), 47-48.

procurator in Syria.⁹² Further Roman involvement in the economy of Palmyra is suggested by a trilingual (Latin, Greek, and Palmyrene) sepulchral inscription, which dates to 58 C.E., in which L. Spedius Chrysanthus is given the title of *mks'*, or tax-collector in Palmyrene.⁹³ Also, sometime before Germanicus' death in 19 C.E., the imperial legate of the *legio X Fretensis*, Minucius Rufus, had statues set up in the temple of Bel to honor Germanicus, his brother Drusus, and Tiberius, all of whom were designated as *imperatores*.⁹⁴ Thus this evidence, while it records direct Roman involvement in the affairs of Palmyra, also suggests the likelihood that Palmyra at the time had become officially a part of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, Palmyra still enjoyed a privileged status and was permitted to continue the use of its own language in official contexts and to support security forces which safeguarded its territorial and commercial interests.

In the second half of the first century C.E., there was increased Roman involvement in the affairs of Palmyra coupled with accelerated building activity in the city. A milestone inscription from Arak in Syria, for instance, records the

⁹² See P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.102-5; and P0259 (Tariff): Greek 181-84. See also Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 128, n. 30.

⁹³ P0591. Chrysanthus, a Roman citizen, may have been a Roman *publicanus* collecting Roman indirect taxes or tribute as opposed to a local contractor for city taxes. For discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 324. On the suggestion that the Palmyrenes probably paid tribute to Rome throughout the first two centuries C.E., see A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 458, n. 52.

⁹⁴ *Inventaire* 9.2.

completion of a road from Palmyra northwest to Sura on the Euphrates by Marcus Ulpius Traianus, then *legatus* of Syria and father of the future emperor Trajan.⁹⁵ This confirmed Palmyra's position within Rome's sphere of direct influence, by integrating the city closely into the eastern provincial structure. This road construction also coincided with the earliest inscriptions from the agora of Palmyra, the central market and meeting place of the Palmyrenes, which date from 75/76 and 81 C.E. (fig. 11).⁹⁶ Concurrently, as Bowersock suggests, the Palmyrenes, perhaps at Roman instigation, attempted to enclose their city with a fortification wall.⁹⁷ The wall itself encloses a substantial area south of a shallow wadi that runs through the ancient site. The wall pre-dates 89 C.E., when a sanctuary to the god Belhammon was completed on the top of Jebel Muntar, the ridge which commands the Efqa spring, and post-dates 41 B.C.E., when Antony found the city undefended and, presumably, without walls.⁹⁸ Elsewhere in the city north of the ancient settlement,

⁹⁵ *L'Année épigraphique* 1933, no. 205; Seyrig, "L'Incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain," 276-77. For the elder Trajan in the Near East, see G. W. Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian," *JRS* 63 (1973): 133-138.

⁹⁶ See P1375 (75/76 C.E.) and P1376 (81 C.E.). See also H. Seyrig, "Rapport sommaire sur les fouilles de l'agora de Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1940): 240.

⁹⁷ See Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian," 137.

⁹⁸ For the dedication of the sanctuary, see P1561. R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1966): 165-69, provides a brief account of the excavations of the sanctuary. See also T. Kaizer, *The Religious Life of Palmyra: A Study of the Social Patterns of Worship in the Roman Period*, *Oriens et occident*, no. 4 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 108-16. For the suggestion that the early walls were constructed during Tiberius' reign, see D. Van

construction of the temple of Nabu probably began in the last quarter of the first century C.E., as did the building of the temple of Arsu southwest of the agora.⁹⁹

While these projects were initiated, embellishments of the temples of Bel and Baalshamin continued. All of this evidence thus suggests that, in the last half of the first century C.E., Palmyra became increasingly embedded in Rome's sphere of influence, and the Romans, apparently, established conditions conducive to urban growth to which the Palmyrenes responded.

Palmyra's urban development peaked in the first half of the second century C.E., when most of the monuments preserved today were constructed. This coincided with Hadrian's imperial visit to Palmyra in 129/30 C.E.¹⁰⁰ Hadrian had reversed the expansionist policies of his predecessor, Trajan, who campaigned against the Parthians from 114 until his death in 117 C.E. Trajan's war with Parthia may have destabilized Palmyra's eastern trade, since there are no caravan inscriptions of the second century earlier than 131 C.E. Hadrian's decision, then, to advance peace with the Parthians and to stabilize the region perhaps benefitted

Berchem, "Le Premier rempart de Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1970): 235-37. In general, see M. Gawlikowski, "Les Défenses de Palmyre," *Syria* 51 (1974): 231-42.

⁹⁹ On the excavation of the temple of Nabu, see A. Bounni, "Le Sanctuaire de Nabû à Palmyre," in *Petra and the Caravan Cities*, edited by F. Zayadine (Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1990), 157-67. For further discussion and references, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 89 and 116-24.

¹⁰⁰ Hadrian's imperial visit is mentioned in P0305 from 130/31 C.E. See Millar, *Roman Near East*, 106.

Palmyra's commercial endeavors, profits from which financed the monumentalization of the city. Furthermore, above all, Hadrian promoted Hellenism throughout the region. The response at Palmyra was to adopt the civic name of *Hadriana Palmyra*, attested for the first time in the earliest caravan inscription of the second century.¹⁰¹ Also, it has been suggested that Hadrian granted Palmyra its freedom, making it a *civitas libera*, which would have relieved the city of its fiscal responsibilities to Rome, but the evidence is inconclusive.¹⁰² In short, Hadrian provided a situation conducive to urban expansion in a distinctively Greek fashion. The theater (fig. 11) was built at this time adjacent to the ongoing construction of the temple of Nabu and concurrent with the building of the temple of Allat (fig. 12).¹⁰³ In addition, the central *cella* of the temple of Baalshamin was completed in 132 C.E. and embellishments of the temple of Bel and of the agora

¹⁰¹ See P1374. The Palmyrene tariff of 137 C.E. identifies the city in Palmyrene as Hadrian's Tadmor (*hdryn' tdmr*); see P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.1.

¹⁰² On the suggestion that Palmyra became a *civitas libera* under Hadrian, see Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 47; Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 175, n. 10; and H. Seyrig, "Le Statut de Palmyre," *Syria* 22 (1941), 155-74. For opposing views, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 324-25; and Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 143, with additional literature cited. I will discuss the institutional situation at Palmyra more fully in Chapter 5.

¹⁰³ See College, *Art of Palmyra*, 88-89. On the excavations of the temple of Allat, see M. Gawlikowski, "Le Temple d'Allat à Palmyre," *Revue archéologique* (1977): 253-74; idem, "Réflexions sur la chronologie du sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 1 (1983): 59-68; and idem, "Le Sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre. Aperçu préliminaire," *AAS* 33 (1983): 179-98. For further discussion, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 99-108.

continued.¹⁰⁴ Construction also began of the Great Colonnade that connected the temple of Bel to the new theater and to the developing, monumental core of the city (fig 4). Thus, as the evidence suggests, in the first half of the second century C.E. the Palmyrenes clearly had the impetus to build on a monumental scale, which they did under increasing Roman influence.

The late second century C.E. was a period of consolidation and completion of ongoing projects, rather than a period of great expansion, while Roman interests in the city were confirmed with the imposition of a military garrison.¹⁰⁵ A major war broke out between the Romans and Parthians from 162 to 165 C.E., when Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius were emperors, and this significantly disrupted Palmyra's caravan trade.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, at this time, both the temple of Nabu and the temple of Allat were completed and baths dedicated to the gods Aglibol and Malakbel were constructed.¹⁰⁷ Also, the latest evidence we have of building

¹⁰⁴ For the dedication of the temple of Baalshamin in 132 C.E. by Male Agrippa, see P0305.

¹⁰⁵ For the evidence of the Roman garrison, see Seyrig, "Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine de Palmyre," *Syria* 14 (1933): 152-68. See also below, Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁶ The war was a counteroffensive against the aggressive campaigns of Vologeses IV in Armenia and Roman Syria. For further discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 111-15; and below, Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁷ For the baths dedicated to the gods Aglibol and Malakbel in 182 C.E., for which we have no archaeological evidence, see H. Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, I," *Berytus* 3 (1936): 109-12, no. 11. See also J. Milik, *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à*

activity in the temple of Bel dates from 175 C.E., when the temple precinct had probably reached its final, monumental form.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, near the close of the century, embellishments along the Great Colonnade included the construction of the Monumental Arch (fig. 13) and the Tetrapylon (fig. 14), monuments which both articulated bends in the Great Colonnade and which were primarily ornamental.¹⁰⁹ By the close of the century, Palmyra admittedly reached the apogee of its urban development.

Finally, the third century C.E. was a period of great transition for Palmyra, politically, socially, and economically. It was also a period of diminished urban development. Palmyra adopted new institutions and became a Roman *colonia* in this period, a privilege granted either by Septimius Severus (193-211 C.E.) or by Caracalla (211-17 C.E.).¹¹⁰ The Severans were, for the most part, a North

l'époque romaine, Recherches d'épigraphie proche-orientale, vol. 1 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1972), 31-32; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 128-29.

¹⁰⁸ See P0260.

¹⁰⁹ M. Baranski, "The Great Colonnade at Palmyra Reconsidered," *Aram* 7 (1995): 37-42, argues that the central section of the Great Colonnade, between the Tetrapylon and the temple of Nabu, was constructed in the second half of the third century C.E. in order to organize pre-existing urban space. See also M. Zuchowska, "Quelques remarques sur la Grande Colonnade à Palmyre," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 52 (2000): 187-93.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of Palmyra as a Roman colony, see F. Millar, "The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: A Study of Cultural Relations," in *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History: Proceedings of a Colloquium at Tvärminne, 2-3 October 1987*, edited by H. Solin and M. Kajava (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1990), 42-46; and idem, *Roman Near East*, 143-44

African/Near Eastern dynasty with eastern tendencies. They were linked to neighboring Emesa through family ties, and their foreign policy with respect to the Parthians was aggressive. Between 194 and 217 C.E., for instance, the Severans launched three invasions of Parthia, actually sacking the capital in 197 C.E.¹¹¹ These events, apparently, did not stop the caravans of Palmyra, though the trade seems to have been reduced.¹¹² Yet the wars and their aftermaths certainly created conditions of regional insecurity, to which the Palmyrenes responded by strengthening their own military abilities.¹¹³ Commands against nomadic bandits of the desert, largely to safeguard the caravans, are attested as early as 199 C.E., and the threat of banditry probably did not diminish over the course of the third century, as is perhaps suggested by the increased significance of the post of *stratēgus*, or general, in this period.¹¹⁴ The Severans clearly favored Palmyra and its strategic role in the desert. The Palmyrenes, in turn, paid tribute to the dynasty by setting up

and 326-27.

¹¹¹ On Severus' attack of Ctesiphon, see Cassius Dio 75.9.1-4, SHA *Severus* 16.2; Herodian 3.9.9-11. For a general account of the Parthian Wars of Septimius Severus, see A. R. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor*, rev. ed. (1988; reprint, New York: Routledge, 1999), 129-34. On the Parthian Wars of Caracalla, see Cassius Dio 78.1 and Herodian 4.9.10.

¹¹² See M. Gawlikowski, "Palmyra and its Caravan Trade," 139-45.

¹¹³ See pp. 324-36 below.

¹¹⁴ See P1378. See also H. Ingholt, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre," *Syria* 13 (1932): 289-92.

a series of portraits of Septimius Severus and the imperial family above a monumental gate into the agora.¹¹⁵ The relationship between Palmyra and the Severan dynasty was strengthened by the emperor Severus Alexander's visit to the city before his death in 235 C.E.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, the pace of monumentalization within Palmyra diminished. Apart from the addition of elite housing in the city, especially in the area of the temple of Bel, there was little new civic development beyond sculptural embellishments.¹¹⁷

The last half of the third century C.E. witnessed limited urban development as the city, which had advanced to the rank of metrocolony, reached the apogee of its involvement in Roman affairs.¹¹⁸ The Sassanid Persians, who had succeeded the Parthians in 224 C.E., proved far more aggressive and expansionist than their predecessors.¹¹⁹ The founder of the Sassanid dynasty, Ardashir I, campaigned against the Romans from 230 to 232 C.E., but his successor, Shapur I, proved more vehement in his aggressive tendencies. Between 243 and 260 C.E., Shapur launched three large-scale campaigns into Roman territory, eventually capturing the

¹¹⁵ See *Inventaire* 10.64.

¹¹⁶ The imperial visit is attested in a bilingual inscription from 242/43 C.E.; see P0278.

¹¹⁷ On the elite housing near the temple of Bel, see Browning, *Palmyra*, 99.

¹¹⁸ On Palmyra as a *mētrokolōneia*, see P0287, P0288, and P1369.

¹¹⁹ See Gagé, *La Montée des Sassanides*, 157-64.

Roman emperor Valerian. The Roman state, meanwhile, was in a state of disarray, a condition that had persisted after the death of Severus Alexander in 235 C.E. Following Valerian's capture, Odenathus of Palmyra, at the head of an army Palmyrenes, peasants, and dispossessed soldiers who had survived the Persian raids, mounted a successful counter-offensive against Shapur. It was rumored beforehand that Odenathus approached Shapur with lavish gifts, perhaps intent on buying peace or securing Palmyra's trade interests, but the offer was scoffed at and rejected.¹²⁰ At any rate, Odenathus' repeated military successes earned him the title of *corrector totius orientis*, which he received from the emperor Gallienus, and, posthumously, the Persian title "King of kings."¹²¹ His murder in 267 C.E. left his wife Zenobia and their son Vaballathus in a position of great power, both locally within Palmyra and regionally.¹²² The events between Zenobia's rise to power and

¹²⁰ Petrus Patricius frag. 10, *FHG* vol. 4, 187. For discussion, see pp. 404-11 below.

¹²¹ See J. Chabot, "Un Corrector totius orientis dans les inscriptions de Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1930): 312-18; J. Cantineau, "Un *Restitutor orientis* dans les inscriptions de Palmyra," *Journal asiatique* 222 (1933): 217-33; S. Swain, "Greek into Palmyrene: Odaenathus as 'Corrector Totius Orientis'?" *ZPE* 99 (1993): 157-64; and Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 179-81. The title "King of kings" was held by Odenathus' son Vaballathus and, perhaps, was applied to Odenathus only posthumously. For discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 159-73; D. Potter, "Palmyra and Rome: Odenathus' Titulature and the Use of the *Imperium Maius*," *ZPE* 113 (1996): 271-85; and U. Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2001), 146-61 and 176-85.

¹²² On the murder of Odenathus, see now Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 218-31.

the eventual sack of Palmyra by the emperor Aurelian in 272 C.E. have been documented and discussed at length by other authors and need not be repeated here. Surprisingly in this period, Palmyra experienced little urban development on a monumental scale. In fact, it suffices only to mention that the wall paralleling the wadi west of the agora, which delimited the late Roman and Byzantine city, was probably a result of Diocletian's effort to reinforce the defenses of Palmyra in the late third century C.E., although the suggestion that Zenobia constructed it, presumably setting it up hastily before Aurelian advanced upon the city, remains.¹²³

Thus far, the narrative presented here of Palmyra's history together with its urban development has centered on the city of the living, having reserved for now a more synthetic treatment of the monumentalization of the "city of the dead" (*necropolis*) that developed to memorialize the deceased.¹²⁴ Burials, which in fact exist all around the oasis, concentrate northwest, southwest, and southeast of the city. To the northwest, the distinctive Valley of the Tombs attracts the most attention (fig. 15). The monumentalization of these areas happened in three overlapping phases according to the types of burials constructed, from tower tombs,

¹²³ See Browning, *Palmyra*, 156.

¹²⁴ See R. Amy and H. Seyrig, "Recherches dans la nécropole de Palmyre," *Syria* 17 (1936): 229-66; and A. Sadurska, "Nouvelles recherches dans la nécropole ouest de Palmyre," In *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives*, 11-32.

underground tombs, or *hypogea*, and temple or house tombs.¹²⁵ Tower tombs are the oldest and predominate in the northwest necropolis (fig. 16).¹²⁶ The oldest dates to 9 B.C.E., which is that built for a certain Atenatan by his sons, who were all members of an important Palmyrene tribal group, the *bny myt*.¹²⁷ These tower tombs were impressive, large, and ornately decorated.¹²⁸ Their construction was continuous until 128 C.E., interestingly one year before the *adventus* of the emperor Hadrian in 129/30 C.E. Because tower tombs seem to have represented an indigenous tradition, Schmidt-Colinet has suggested that their discontinuation represented a “reorientation of the Palmyrene upper class towards the west,”¹²⁹ an assessment that seems accurate.

¹²⁵ The most recent discussion of the evidence is that of A. Schmidt-Colinet, “The Tomb Architecture at Palmyra and its Decoration,” in *Early Roman Empire in the East*, 157-77. See also idem, “L’Architecture funéraire de Palmyre,” in *Archeologie et histoire de la Syrie, vol. 2: La Syrie de l’époque achéménide à l’avènement de l’Islam*, edited by J. -M. Dentzer and W. Orthmann, *Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, no. 1 (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1989), 447-56; and Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires*.

¹²⁶ See M. Gawlikowski, “Classement, chronologie et évolution de la Tour funéraire à Palmyre,” *Études et Travaux* 3 (1969): 168-91; and E. Will, “La Toure funéraire de Palmyre,” *Syria* 26 (1949): 87-116.

¹²⁷ P0457.

¹²⁸ See Schmidt-Colinet, “Tomb Architecture at Palmyra,” 161-63. See also B. Filarska, *Études sur le décor architectural à Palmyre*, edited by K. Mikalowski and T. Dzierzykraj-Rogalski, *Études palmyréniennes*, no. 3 (Warsaw: PWN: Editions scientifiques de Pologne, 1967); and Sadurska, “L’Art et la société,” 11-23.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

Hypogea were built from around the last quarter of the first century C.E., and their construction continued until at least 232 C.E. These underground chambers were ornately carved and decorated, and some had monumental sarcophagi installed, which were sometimes arranged around three walls to form a *triclinium*, the arrangement for a Roman dining room (fig. 17).¹³⁰ In a few cases, an underground chamber was attached to an existing tower, although most *hypogea* were separate constructions.¹³¹

The most elaborate of all funerary monuments were the temple tombs or house tombs constructed at Palmyra between 143 and 253 C.E., which essentially replaced the tower tombs as the standard form of burial among the elite.¹³² In them the dead were interred either in *loculi* or in sarcophagi set on stone benches along the walls (fig. 18). Some tombs also had an open peristyle courtyard in their center. Significantly, these tombs bear close affiliation with western architectural traditions, although eastern Parthian elements, e.g. in funerary sculpture and temple decoration, were incorporated in the building tradition.¹³³ In reference to Tomb No.

¹³⁰ See Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 60; and Schmidt-Colinet, “Tomb Architecture at Palmyra,” 163.

¹³¹ Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 59.

¹³² See Schmidt-Colinet, “Tomb Architecture at Palmyra,” 165-70; Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires*, 129-46; and Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 60-61.

¹³³ See Schmidt-Colinet, “Tomb Architecture at Palmyra,” 165.

36, Schmidt-Colinet suggests that the “building testifies to the obvious social, economic, and cultural power of its commissioner, as well as his desire to demonstrate political and religious ambitions.”¹³⁴ Apparently, because these tombs post-date Hadrian’s visit when Roman influence on the city was more direct and immediate, the tendency was to mimic closely western cultural habits. Palmyrenes were, perhaps, attempting to appear more Roman without entirely abandoning indigenous habits.

Finally, it must be stressed that much of what we know of Palmyrene society derives from inscriptions found in these various tombs. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, the funerary inscriptions provide a great deal of information pertaining to family relationships at Palmyra. For example, whereas honorific or dedicatory inscriptions from the city itself provide greater information on social relations between individuals and groups not related by kinship and blood, the funerary inscriptions overwhelmingly provide the opposite view. We see in these texts familial relations also, which permits a broader analysis of Palmyrene society.

To sum up, Palmyra’s history from the first to third century C.E. is best reviewed in the context of Rome’s gradual influence on and then control over of the city, as measured against the relative independence the city seemed to have enjoyed throughout this period. This history involved the eventual empowerment of a Palmyrene aristocracy attuned to Mediterranean values, who conscientiously sought

¹³⁴ Ibid.

to transform their city to fit Roman cultural norms while preserving many indigenous components. Palmyra's urban development, then, was partly a response to Roman power and influence. The impetus behind this development may have been the desire of the Palmyrene aristocracy to communicate with the imperial core. Visits by individual emperors, first Hadrian and then Severus Alexander, no doubt further encouraged Palmyrene aspirations to become Roman.

Summary of Chapters

This study is arranged in seven topical and chronological chapters. Chapter 1 has framed the argument and established the theoretical basis for discussing identity, community, and state formation. It also provides a critical overview of the sources and summarizes the state of research in Palmyrene studies. Chapter 2 examines the nature of tribalism at Palmyra and the relationship between city and countryside in the structure and maintenance of tribal identities. I regard this relationship to be more mutualistic than antagonistic, taking issue with the conception of sedentarization as a unidirectional process in which nomads settled and abandoned their pastoral connections. The Palmyrene community consisted of interdependent associations of individuals and groups bonded by familial and tribal relations that permeated the city boundary.

Chapters 3-5 form the heart of the dissertation. Chapter 3 is an analysis of the mechanisms that facilitated growth of community at Palmyra. I emphasize the role of Palmyra both as a center for religious associations and a nexus of economic

activity. I also focus on the power networks generated by those who directed the religious and economic life of the community. Chapter 4 treats Palmyrene social relations following communal development. I explore personal and group identity through a comprehensive review of the daily face-to-face interactions among individuals and groups. I discuss the structure of the Palmyrene family and the role of women, slaves, freedmen, tradesmen, and craftsmen in local society. Chapter 5 explores the development of civic institutions at Palmyra that controlled social, economic, political, and cultural relations within the city and its hinterland. I discuss the institutional development of Palmyra as a hybrid form of the Greek *polis* and later a Roman *colonia*, the emergence of political institutions that regulated Palmyrene social relations, and the development of less formal networks of friendship and patronage.

Chapter 6 moves beyond Palmyra to study the structure and maintenance of Palmyrene identity in foreign contexts. I detail the various mechanisms the Palmyrenes employed to generate and preserve their uniqueness, individually and collectively, as their social and cultural boundaries expanded. My initial focus is on the Palmyrene community of Dura Europos, for whom we have the greatest evidence. I then proceed to discuss the Palmyrene merchants communities abroad and, finally, the evidence of Palmyrenes in foreign services, notably those who served in *numeri*, or ethnic military units, throughout the Roman Empire.

Chapter 7 concludes my dissertation. In it, I discuss the regional

significance of Palmyra as a frontier community, its gradual incorporation into the Roman world, and its eventual bid for empire. I also respond synthetically to the issue of Palmyra's cultural distinctiveness. Essentially, Palmyra retained its indigenous character, despite foreign influences and civic transformations. The Palmyrenes were pioneers in their ability to adopt and assimilate foreign customs and traits without losing their own cultural integrity.

Chapter 2: Tribes and Tribalism

Introduction

Fergus Millar states that Palmyra represents an archetypical example of Arab sedentarization in the Near East, claiming that the Palmyrenes shifted from a true nomadic society to a settled one.¹ This assessment, though perhaps accurate, requires qualification. To begin with, scholars do have a tendency to divide desert populations into two distinct segments, pastoral nomads and sedentary groups, but this rigid dichotomy rarely conforms to reality.² Most desert environments, in fact, sustain an interactive mix of individuals and groups involved in agricultural or pastoral modes of production, or in both concurrently. These may be categorized as agriculturalists, agro-pastoralists, pastoralists who engage in dry farming, or pure nomads. The complexities of classification in such contexts are evident, and in no case is it clear that the subsistence strategies employed represent intermediate

¹ F. Millar, "Empire, Community, and Culture in the Roman Near East: Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabs," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 38 (1987): 143-64; and idem, *Roman Near East*, 319 and 331.

² See Finkelstein and Perevolotsky, "Processes of Sedentarization and Nomadization in the History of Sinai and the Negev," *BASOR* 279 (1990): 68.

stages in an active transformation toward more or less nomadic or sedentary lifestyles. The tendency, then, to regard “sedentarization” as a unidirectional process, often dichotomized with “nomadization,” must be rejected. Yet, the notion, gleaned from examination of Palmyra’s art and epigraphy, that the core of Palmyrene society consisted of Arab nomadic tribes who came over the course of time, chiefly in the first century B.C.E., to settle at the oasis, where they encountered other less nomadic or sedentarized inhabitants of the site, cannot be discounted.³ Why this settlement happened is not clear, though I suggest in Chapter 3 that economic and religious factors were involved. Also, there seems to be no evidence to suggest that this slow integration was anything but peaceful. The implications are, nonetheless, obvious. On the one hand, Palmyra, from its earliest stages of communal development, was primarily a tribal society deeply influenced by nomadic or bedouin traditions, and, on the other, the Palmyrene’s subsistence strategies prior to the formation of community at the oasis centered on pastoralism, which persisted as a mainstay of the economy long afterwards. Furthermore, a central debated issue in Palmyrene studies is the extent to which, as settlement at the oasis increased, tribal identities in the city evolved from their primordial

³ Cf. J. Teixidor, “Nomadisme et sédentarisation en Palmyrène,” in *Sociétés urbaines, sociétés rurales dans l’Asie Mineure et la Syrie hellénistiques et romaines (Actes du colloque organisé à Strasbourg, novembre 1985)*, edited by E. Frézouls (Strasbourg: AECR, 1987), 49-55; and M. Gawlikowski, “Les Arabes de Syrie dans l’antiquité,” in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*, edited by K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1995), 83-92.

foundations, i.e. kinship ties, to more superficial ones, e.g. civic co-residence.

In this chapter I will discuss tribalism and the tribal nature of Palmyrene society. Also, I will assess the pastoral component of the Palmyrene countryside and discuss the social and economic relations between Palmyra and its hinterland. My main objective is to provide a framework for a discussion of communal development at Palmyra as a kinship based society, in addition to elucidating the relationship between the Palmyrenes and the people of the steppe, who employed an array of subsistence strategies, and their shared identities. This will entail a comprehensive analysis of the structure of pastoral society itself using anthropological perspectives. Also, I will examine documentary sources in order to ascertain how outsiders tended to conceive of these pastoralists. What, for instance, was the Greek and Roman opinion of the Arabs, *skēnitai*, Saracens, or pastoral nomads in general,⁴ and how did these people relate to other indigenous inhabitants of the region, whether settled or nomadic, and to one another? Further, I will also examine, in terms of relationships of power, how individuals within familial or tribal groups presented their identities to one another and how these identities were read by the wider community. I will also contest here the extent to which tribal

⁴ Preliminary work in this area has already been attempted. See, for instance, H. MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria: Three Views of Ancient Arabia and its Peoples," in *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, edited by T. Fahd, *Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce Antiques*, no. 10 (Strasbourg: Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1989), 289-320.

identities at Palmyra transformed from their primordial foundations as kinship based groups, if at all, during Palmyra's urban growth, a subject upon which I will return in much more detail in Chapter 5.

Conceiving Tribes and Tribalism

In our understanding of Palmyra as a tribal society, our conceptualization of "tribes" is clearly important. To begin with, tribal membership confers identity upon individuals. This, in turn, gives them access to a cultural infrastructure around which communities form.⁵ How we perceive of the early tribal contingents of Palmyra, in terms of their structure and their interrelationships, frames our own conceptions of Palmyrene identity and community. Unfortunately, we are in no position to understand fully how Palmyrene tribal structures were built or maintained. Our sources are virtually silent. Nonetheless, we can gain some insights by examining what fragmentary bits of information there are that depict tribal relations within Palmyra, and by reviewing this information in light of contemporary epigraphic data from the broader region that depict more vividly tribal activities and identities. We can also promote this discussion by drawing on modern ethnographic studies of tribal identities and activities under relatively similar climatic and environmental conditions.

But first, what is a tribe? Or, to put it another way, what constitutes a tribal

⁵ See, for instance, W. Lancaster and F. Lancaster, "Tribal Formation in the Arabian Peninsula," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1992): 145-72.

society? These are difficult questions to answer. Anthropologists and historians disagree over how such terms as “tribe” or “tribal” are to be defined, and both have employed these terms to describe various distinct social formations and social contexts.⁶ Usually, the tribe is treated as both a cultural-linguistic unit and as a type of political unit defined by territory.⁷ Also, in most cases, tribes are designated as groups in which kinship and descent play primary roles in processes of political and social organization that are generally characterized as tribal in nature.⁸ An alternative to these classifications, according to Marx, would be to view tribal formations not as products of descent or politics, but rather as products of the environment and the subsistence patterns dictated within particular ecological zones.⁹ Marx views the tribe as “a social aggregate of pastoral nomads who jointly exploit an area providing subsistence over numerous seasons . . . [the tribe] is a kind of political organization, in the sense that it controls territory and permits

⁶ See discussion by P. Khoury and J. Kostiner, “Introduction: Tribes and the Complexities of State Formation in the Middle East,” in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 4-6.

⁷ R. Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East,” in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 50-51. Cf. E. Marx, “The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East,” *American Anthropologist* 79 (1977): 343.

⁸ See now H. Scheffler, *Filiation and Affiliation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001).

⁹ Marx, “The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence,” 343-63.

members access to the resources in its various parts.”¹⁰ Yet, for Marx, kinship and territory continue to serve as cohesive factors in social organization at group levels.

The problem of defining tribes derives largely from their multifarious origins. In some instances, tribes may form by the willing coalescence of tribal segments, such as families and clans. The ideology of tribal existence, in fact, is often based on kinship, but there are occasions when shared interest, advantage, and service form the real basis for tribal formation and solidarity.¹¹ In other instances, tribes may form directly through state intervention.¹² As power relations fluctuate, and the need for administrative control of a specified territory increases, states can, and often do, intervene to superimpose their own organizational frameworks onto local societies, which may or may not accommodate or reflect existing realities.¹³ Such artificial development of tribes took place, apparently, in various communities of the Roman Near East.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid., 358.

¹¹ See Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople,” 58.

¹² Khoury and Kostiner, “Introduction,” 6.

¹³ See, for instance, D. Bates, “The Role of the State in Peasant-Nomad Mutualism,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 44 (1971): 109-31. See also M. Fried, *The Notion of Tribe* (Menlo Park: Cummings Publishing Co., 1975), who views tribes created in this manner as “secondary,” whereas “pristine” tribes are created through myth and legend.

¹⁴ For discussion, see Sartre, “Tribus et clans dans le Hawran,” 77-91. There are no detailed studies of the artificial development of tribal groups in the Roman Near East.

However tribes are defined—and no consensus is forthcoming—we must be cautious not to explore their structure solely at the group or corporate level. To be sure, tribes are social groups, but these form through the coalescence of individuals and families, mostly in agreement, in an environment of shared experiences. Kinship, cultural or religious preferences, subsistence strategies, and territory can all serve to support a tribal identity. The problem, then, becomes not so much one of defining the “tribe” as it is one of identifying the commonalities that bond individuals and families into large corporate units in the first place.

What sort of commonalities might serve to create cohesion between individuals and groups and generate a tribal infrastructure? First of all, it seems that subsistence strategies in areas of marginal resources do serve to support unification and cooperation among individuals and groups, whether of common descent or not. This may appear to have arisen from needs to manage pasture and water and to coordinate defensive schemes against poachers. Often, however, cooperation devolves into competition. This is usually the case when resources are near depletion, usually the supply of water, or when tribal contingents are displaced and a particular ecological subsistence zone is invaded.¹⁵ Also, among individuals and groups within a given subsistence zone, access to available resources is rarely balanced. Usually, power relationships exist that communicate status and privilege, which appear necessary to regulate resource exploitation. Personal networks of

¹⁵ See Marx, “The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence,” 355-58.

power, whether formed through close association by marriage, kinship, or friendship, tend to acquire regulatory authority in given territories.

Power relationships fluctuate over time. Consequently, tribal affiliations are continuously modified to recreate the status quo when power fluctuations occur. In some instances, tribal affiliations may break down altogether, or may at least be modified sufficiently so as not to reflect their primordial nature. Presented with a different social, economic, or political environment, for instance, where privileges and security are assured through associations no longer managed by the tribe, individuals and families may realign their allegiances with little hesitation.¹⁶ The same transformation may occur at the corporate level, if influences on the tribe or on tribal leaders are greater than the tribal organization can withstand. Either tribes disintegrate or they are reconstituted to face new realities based on new assurances. At other times, tribes might coalesce even further and form larger corporate groups or confederations. Tribal conglomerations provide more bountiful material for discussing tribal relationships in wider social and political contexts, since the influence of external agents cannot be discounted in processes that effect such change.

Finally, in reaction to scholars who equate tribalism with nomadism and pastoralism, Richard Tapper warns that “there is little in either pastoralism as a

¹⁶ As shown by A. Cohen, *Arab Border Villages in Israel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965).

production system or nomadism as a way of living that necessarily leads to organization in ‘tribes,’ whether defined politically in terms of territory . . . or culturally in terms of descent.”¹⁷ We may explore Palmyra’s communal development in terms of the sedentarization of Arab tribes and the subsequent transformation of their tribal ethos as decreasingly nomadic, but the results would be insufficient without greater elaboration and elucidation of the nature of Palmyrene tribal organization and development. As I will show, tribal affiliations clearly affected communal structures at Palmyra. These established the framework for interaction and participation in the social, economic, and political arenas. An analysis then of tribal identities at Palmyra, in terms of how these were created and maintained, dissolved, and reconstituted, is key to any discussion of Palmyrene communal development and social relations. Moreover, since these identities were formed in the context of power relationships, we can elucidate further the nature of the developed Palmyrene community by examining who negotiated power and how.

Family and Tribal Structure at Palmyra

For Palmyrene communal relations, inscriptions are our primary source of information. These employ a terminology that reveals the importance of kinship and descent in the structure and maintenance of individual and group identity at Palmyra. In fact, familial and tribal relationships are cast consistently in genealogical terms from the first through third centuries C.E. Thus, in order to

¹⁷ Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople,” 54.

understand tribalism at Palmyra, we must examine the genealogical designations found in the inscriptions more closely to discover how individuals defined their collective associations, whether in familial or tribal contexts, and the power relations involved.

The terminology Palmyrenes used to denote familial and tribal relations was varied, and, while the terminology was consistently cast in genealogical terms, the inconsistent use of specific expressions to denote kinship affiliation now complicates any classification of the evidence. For example, the standard Palmyrene term for denoting the tribe was *phd*, and a typical expression to indicate that someone was “a member of tribe X,” is *dy mn phd bny X*, or literally, “who is of the tribe of the sons of X.”¹⁸ As I will discuss further below, too often this expression was limited simply to “*bny X*” or “*dy mn bny X*” so that we have to infer that tribal identities likewise were intended even when *phd* does not appear. The Greek inscriptions, though less ambiguous, shed little light on the situation. The equivalent expression for tribe in Greek, for example, is *phylē*, which occurs with only five known groups designated as tribes in Palmyrene, but again we must infer from the Palmyrene equivalents that these were kinship based groups (see below). The only clear indication in Greek that we are dealing with a descent group, perhaps at the level of clan, is the identification of someone as “*eggenēs X*,” literally, “born of the same race, or a natural descendant, of X,” which occurs only

¹⁸ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 399-400, s.v. “*phd*.”

in a series of inscriptions from 179 C.E. that indicate ancestry to a certain Zabdibōl.¹⁹ Despite this variation, however, the fact remains that tribal identities were cast solely in genealogical terms, which would seem that these groups remained predominately kinship based. An analysis of the genealogies demonstrates this.

Immediate familial relations figure most prominently in the inscriptions. Individuals at Palmyra derived their identities, for instance, in direct relation to their parents, grandparents, and other ancestors, and, occasionally, in relation to their siblings or those of their parents or grandparents. The expressions *br* or *brt*, which are translated in genealogies respectively as “son of” or “daughter of,” appear consistently. The genealogies provided often span several generations, and these are almost always tracked along the male line since the Palmyrene family was patrilinear. Women also figure prominently in the inscriptions, but it is generally alongside their male counterparts, whether sons, fathers, or brothers. A funerary relief now at the Louvre, for example, represents Hagat, daughter of Bolha Atenatan Ahitur, mother of Aqme, daughter of Dionysios Sadai, and mother of Ataḡab, son of Shadai.²⁰ Also, at the end of many genealogical designations, relationships between individuals with a common ancestry are denoted by the

¹⁹ See p. 81 below.

²⁰ P0644: *hbl hgt | brt bwlh' | 'tntn | 'hytwr | 'm 'qm' | brt dynys | s'dy w'm | t'qb | br šdy*. Cf. P0096 (see also H. Ingholt, “Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, II,” *Berytus* 5 [1938]: 127) and P0101.

ubiquitous term *bny*, often translated as “sons of” and preceding the name of a remote ancestor. This usage does not designate a tribe, or at least not always. For example, according to P0306, Hairan, son of Yarhai, son of Taima, and Habibi, son of Yarhai, son of Hairan, who jointly set up a statue on a column console in 157 C.E. to honor their friend Marcus Ulpius Yarhai, son of Hairan Abgar, are likely to have been distant cousins whose grandfathers were the sons of a certain Anubat (*bny 'nwbt*).²¹ Many attestations of the *bny mqymw* and the *bny mlkw* must be treated likewise as designations of immediate familial relations.²² There are also instances when the term *bny* is employed not in its usual sense as the “sons of” but more accurately to denote the relationship of male and female siblings as the “children of” a particular parent. This is apparent, for instance, in an inscription of 229 C.E. that records the cession of part of a tomb (Tower 70) by Julius Aurelius Bolma to Julia Aurelia Oga and to Shalma, children of Shalma (*bny šlm'*), son of Taima, children of his maternal uncle.²³ Furthermore, there is one instance when the reference is not to the sons, or more generally even to the children, but

²¹ See P0306. The text reads: *hyrn br yrh | br tym' whbyby br | yrh br hyrn bny 'nwbt*.

²² For the *bny mqymw*, see P0543, P1506, P1509, and P2822 (see also K. As'ad and J. Teixidor, “Quelques inscriptions palmyréniennes inédites,” *Syria* 62 [1985]: 277, no. 7). For the *bny mlkw*, see P0044, P0045, P0048, P0050 (see also H. Ingholt, “Five Dated Tombs from Palmyra,” *Berytus* 2 [1935]: 91-99), P0064, P0178, P0324, P0471, P0612, P1525, and P1786.

²³ P0562. The text reads: *ywlys 'wrllys bwlm' br zbdbwl br bwlm' nyny' rhqt lywl' 'wrlly' 'g' wšlm' | bny šlm' br tym' br nbwmmr hllh*.

specifically to the daughters of a distant relative. According to P1068, in 52 C.E., Amtallat, daughter of Baraa, son of Atenatan, who is of the daughters of Mita (*dy mn bnt myt*'), wife of Taima, son of Belhazai son of Zabdibel, who is of the tribe of the *bny m 'zyn* (*dy mn phd bny m 'zyn*), dedicated a column to the god Baalshamin.²⁴

As is clear in this inscription (P0168), the genealogies found in these texts often go beyond identifications with immediate kin and include associations with other social entities such as clans, used here in the sense of extended family units, or tribes, which still employ kinship terminology to denote membership.²⁵ The term *bny*, for instance, which usually bears the meaning of “sons of” or, more generally, “children of,” as I have noted, is frequently to be understood as “members of” to designate clan or tribal identities (see below).²⁶ Judging from this

²⁴ P0168: *byrh tbt šnt 363 | 'mwd' dnh qrbt 'mlt b[r]t | br'' br 'tntn dy mn bnt myt' | 'tt tym' br blhzy br zdbbl dy | mn phd bny m 'zyn lb 'lšmn 'lh' | t̄b' wškr' 'l hyyh whyy bnyh | w'hyh*. We may contrast this example with several other enigmatic inscriptions that exclude familial recognition of women altogether and emphasize solely that of male progeny. For instance, Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*, 184-85, notes that *bnwhy* often should be rendered “children” in view of those texts that explicitly refer to *bnwhy dkry*’, “those who are males:” see P0024, P0511, P0570 (*dkr*), P1216, and P2760. Ingholt, “Five Dated Tombs from Palmyra,” 60-62, prefers to render *bnwhy* as “sons” and regards the emphasis on male children as a rhetorical device to show which of the heirs was preferred.

²⁵ The Palmyrene expression *byt 'b*, which means literally, “father’s house,” may have held the meaning of a clan; see p.191, n. 28 below.

²⁶ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 349, s.v. “br.” There are instances, however, where *bny* denotes the proper name of an individual, Banai. See, for instance, P0218, P0470, P0794, P0795, P0796, P0947, P1073, P1074, and P1517.

consistent use of kinship terminology, the clear implication is that these groups were predominately kinship based. At present, the Palmyrene corpus includes 96 names which are preceded by the expression *bn̄y* (Table 1). Most of these, however, denote relationships to immediate familial units and must not be regarded as designations for tribal affiliations, as the examples given above of the *bn̄y 'nwb̄t*, the *bn̄y mlkw*, and the *bn̄y mqymw* make clear. As noted, when tribal identities are intended in Palmyrene, the association is usually expressed as *dy mn bn̄y X* or *dy mn ph̄d bn̄y X*, which we often translate as “who is a member of X” or “who is a member of the tribe (*ph̄d*) of X,” respectively.²⁷ There are 43 Palmyrene inscriptions that employ the expression *dy mn bn̄y X*, and seventeen are known that refer to *dy mn ph̄d bn̄y X*.²⁸ Table 2 provides a listing of the known clans and tribal groupings from Palmyra based on these references.

Again, the consistent use of kinship terminology to denote social relations at Palmyra, whether to indicate immediate familial relations or to designate extended social groups such as clans or tribes, makes it difficult to distinguish between any one of these larger groups. Many designated by the expressions *dy mn bn̄y X* or *dy mn ph̄d bn̄y X*, for instance, are also referred to simply as *bn̄y X*. We are assisted with making the proper identifications by the frequency of certain expressions in

²⁷ Literally, *dy mn bn̄y X* should be translated as “who is of (belongs to) the sons of X,” and *dy mn ph̄d bn̄y X* as “who is of (belongs to) the tribe of the sons of X.”

²⁸ This summation includes P1134, which refers to *dy mn ph̄z bn̄y kmr'*.

Table 1: Palmyrene Tribal or Familial Associations

1. <i>bny 'dynt</i>	36. <i>bny knbt (d[y</i>	66. <i>bny r 'šmhr</i>
2. <i>bny 'wtk'</i>	<i>mn] phd)</i>	67. <i>bny rb 'l</i>
3. <i>bny 'lhš'</i>	37. <i>bny lwy</i>	68. <i>bny š 'dy</i>
4. <i>bny 'nwbt</i>	38. <i>bny lšmš</i>	69. <i>bny šz'</i>
5. <i>bny 'ylmy</i>	39. <i>bny mgdt (dy mn</i>	70. <i>bny šlm</i>
6. <i>bny 'ly</i>	<i>phd)</i>	71. <i>bny šmwn</i>
7. <i>bny bwdl'</i>	40. <i>bny mzy'</i>	72. <i>bny šm 'wn</i>
8. <i>bny bwlh'</i>	41. <i>bny myš'</i>	73. <i>bny šm 'r/šm 'd (</i>
9. <i>bny bwly</i>	42. <i>bny myt' (phyle)</i>	<i>. .dly mn phd)</i>
10. <i>bny bwl''</i>	(<i>dy mn phd)</i>	74. <i>bny š 'd'</i>
11. <i>bny bwn'</i>	43. <i>bny mkn'</i>	75. <i>bny š 'dw</i>
12. <i>bny bwr'</i>	44. <i>bny mlkw</i>	76. <i>bny š 'dy</i>
13. <i>bny bhr</i>	45. <i>bny m 'zyn (dy</i>	77. <i>bny š 'rn'</i>
14. <i>bny blnwry</i>	<i>mn phd)</i>	78. <i>bny tym'</i>
15. <i>bny blšwry</i>	46. <i>bny mqymw</i>	79. <i>bny tymršw</i>
16. <i>bny b''</i>	47. <i>bny mškn'</i>	80. <i>bny tymš'</i>
17. <i>bny brkyw</i>	48. <i>bny mtbwl</i>	81. <i>bny whby</i>
18. <i>bny brnbw</i>	(<i>phyle) (Μαθ-</i>	82. <i>bny whblt</i>
19. <i>bny br 'th</i>	<i>θαβωλίοι) (dy</i>	83. <i>bny ydy 'bl</i>
20. <i>bny bršmš</i>	<i>mn phd)</i>	84. <i>bny ywlys</i>
21. <i>bny gd'</i>	49. <i>bny nbwzbd</i>	85. <i>bny ymlkw</i>
22. <i>bny gdybwl (dy</i>	50. <i>bny nbwm'</i>	86. <i>bny y 'qwb</i>
<i>mn phd)</i>	51. <i>bny nwrbl</i>	87. <i>bny yrhbwl'</i>
23. <i>bny gwg'</i>	52. <i>bny nš'</i>	88. <i>bny yrhy</i>
24. <i>bny gwgw</i>	53. <i>bny skn'</i>	89. <i>bny yšw 'l'</i>
25. <i>bny grmn'</i>	54. <i>bny 'bd[.]</i>	90. <i>bny ytr'</i>
26. <i>bny hgg</i>	55. <i>bny 'gylw</i>	91. <i>bny zbdbwl (oi</i>
27. <i>bny hggw</i>	56. <i>bny 'grwd (dy</i>	<i>έγγένους Ζαβ-</i>
28. <i>bny htry (dy mn)</i>	<i>mn)</i>	<i>διβωλείων)</i>
29. <i>bny hyrn</i>	57. <i>bny 'wydlt</i>	92. <i>bny zbd 'th</i>
30. <i>bny hkym</i>	58. <i>bny 'lyy</i>	93. <i>bny zbwd</i>
31. <i>bny hl'</i>	59. <i>bny 'sr</i>	94. <i>bny zbyd'</i>
32. <i>bny hnwr (or bny</i>	60. <i>bny 'št[rg]'</i>	95. <i>bny zgwg</i>
<i>hnwd)</i>	61. <i>bny 'tn 'tn</i>	96. <i>bny zmr' ([. . .]</i>
33. <i>bny hšš</i>	62. <i>bny 't 'qb (dy kl</i>	<i>mn phd)</i>
34. <i>bny khnbw (dy</i>	<i>gbr mn)</i>	97. <i>φυλής</i>
<i>mn phd)</i>	63. <i>bny 'tr (dy mn</i>	<i>Κλαυδιάδος</i>
35. <i>bny kmr' (phyle)</i>	<i>phd)</i>	98. <i>φυλής</i>
(<i>[X]ομαρήνοι</i>	64. <i>bny ptrt</i>	<i>Μαγερηών</i>
<i>(dy mn phz)</i>	65. <i>bny qšmyt</i>	

Table 2. Known Palmyrene Clans and Tribal Associations

1. *bn̄y gdybwl (dy mn phd)*
2. *bn̄y ḥtry (dy mn)*
3. *bn̄y khnbw (dy mn phd)*
4. *bn̄y kmr' (phyle) ([X]ομαρῆνοι) (dy mn phz)*
5. *bn̄y knbt (d[y mn] phd)*
6. *bn̄y mgdt (dy mn phd)*
7. *bn̄y myt' (phyle) (dy mn phd)*
8. *bn̄y m'zyn (dy mn phd)*
9. *bn̄y mtbwl (phyle) (Μαθθαβωλίτοι) (dy mn phd)*
10. *bn̄y 'grwd (dy mn)*
11. *bn̄y 't'qb (dy kl gbr mn)*
12. *bn̄y 'tr (dy mn phd)*
13. *bn̄y šm'r/šm'd- (. . .d]y mn phd)*
14. *bn̄y zbdbwl (οἱ ἐγ γένους Ζαβδιβωλείων)*
15. *bn̄y zmr' ([. . .] mn phd)*
16. φυλῆς Κλαυδιάδος
17. φυλῆς zΜαγερηνῶν

Palmyrene, whether they are accompanied by equivalent expressions in Greek or Latin, and by the context of the inscription itself. More difficult, however, is assessing the relative size of a particular social group and determining whether the association exceeds that of the family or clan and represents a tribal group, generally taken to be an amalgamation of families and clans in a single corporate unit.

We can be more sure of Palmyrene tribal associations when these are rendered in the Greek portion of bilingual texts with the expression *phylē*. Known examples are listed in Table 2. The *bny kmr'*, who are designated in Greek both as of the “tribe of the Khomarēnoi” (φυλὴ Χομαρηνῶν)²⁹ and as of the “tribe of the Khōneitōi” (φυλὴ Χωνειτῶν),³⁰ the *bny myt'*,³¹ and the *bny mtbwl'*³² are the only groups expressly distinguished as tribes in both Palmyrene and Greek. Two additional tribes appear in Greek inscriptions without Palmyrene equivalents, the Klaudiad tribe (φυλὴ Κλαυδιάδος) and the “tribe of the Magerēnoi” (φυλὴ

²⁹ P1134, P1352, and P1353.

³⁰ P1063. See Milik, *Dédicaces*, 36.

³¹ P1356, and P2801. See also M. Rodinson, “Une Inscription trilingue de Palmyre,” *Syria* 27 (1950): 137-42. The latter is trilingual in Latin, Greek, and Palmyrene, and the relevant Latin designation reads: *palmirenus phyles mithenon*.

³² φυλὴ Μανθ(α)βωλείων: see P0270 and P0271. φυλὴ Μαθηθαβωλίων: see P0543 and *Inventaire* 3.24; see also Cantineau, *Inscriptions palmyréniennes*, no. 52.

Μαγερηνῶν).³³ The former, from a funerary inscription of 79 C.E. that records the erection of a tower tomb by Malku, son of Moqimu, son of Bolbarak Haumal, hints of direct Roman influence in tribal formation.³⁴ Unfortunately, we know so little of this tribe that this one reference cannot be placed into any more meaningful context. Perhaps, as Milik suggests, the Klaudiad tribe was foreign to Palmyra, having come from a community elsewhere in Syria or Phoenicia where it probably adopted its name from a member of the Augustan dynasty.³⁵ But, this is pure speculation. It may well have been an indigenous development, perhaps suggesting that tribal identities at Palmyra were somewhat malleable.

The use of the Greek term *genos* also characterizes a social group based on descent, which may be either a clan or a tribe. A series of honorific inscriptions from one of the colonnaded cross-streets, for instance, each dating to 179 C.E., refer to the natural descendants of Zabdibōl (οἱ ἐγγένους Ζαβδιβωλείων) having set up statues in honor of members of their clan or tribe. Among those

³³ φυλὴ Μαγερηνῶν: see P0469. φυλὴ Κλαυδιάδος: see P0471.

³⁴ As suggested by the designation of a member of the Roman imperial family. The Palmyrene text of P0471, which makes no mention of tribal affiliation, reads: *qbr' dnh wm'rt' dy bn' | mlkw br mqymw b[r] b[wlbr]k hwml | lh wlbwhy wl'hwhy lyqrhn | dy 'lm' šnt* 391, “this tomb and *hypogeum* is that which Malku, son of Moqimu, son of Bolbarak Haumal, built for himself, his children, and his brothers, in their honor, forever, the year 391 (79/80 C.E).” Also, as noted, throughout Palmyrene history dates were given in the Seleucid Era, starting from October 312 B.C.E. Thus 391 of the Seleucid Era corresponds to 79/80 of the Common Era.

³⁵ See Milik, *Dédicaces*, 259-61.

whom the *bny zbdbwl* honor were Alaine, son of Hairan, son of Alaine Sephera, and his nephews, Yadē, son of Sharaiku, and Hairan, son of Sharaiku.³⁶ Chief honors, in fact, went to Sharaiku himself, son of Hairan, son of Alaine Sephera, who received a statue dedicated by the council of Palmyra, for his having set up seven columns replete with their ornamentation along with a bronze brazier.³⁷ These are the only occurrences of the Greek term *genos* used to designate extended familial groups. In other instances, proper nouns are used in the Greek texts to denote tribes or clans. Known examples, in addition to those mentioned, are the *bny gdybwl* (οἱ Γαδδειβώλιοι)³⁸ and the *bny 'grwd* (οἱ Αγρουδήνοι),³⁹ both of whom are designated as tribes in Palmyrene.⁴⁰

Moreover, since tribal identities were indeed malleable, we must address the hypothetical issue of an apparent shift from tribal affiliations based predominately on kinship to those based more on territorial co-residence within the city. This view, recently supported by Dirven, suggests direct Roman involvement in institutional reforms of the later first century C.E. that included the reorganization

³⁶ See P0296, P0297, and P0299.

³⁷ P0298.

³⁸ P0263.

³⁹ P1425.

⁴⁰ For *dy mn phd bny gdybwl*, see P2801. For *dy mn phd bny 'grwd*, see P1226.02.

of the body politic, for political and administrative reasons, into four regions headed by four tribes headquartered in four distinct urban sanctuaries.⁴¹ This hypothesis, however, remains unproved. This development, in fact, I will argue was an indigenous one, and influence by Roman authorities may have been only indirect. I will discuss the enigmatic evidence for this reform in Chapter 5, where my attention will be on the civic institutions of Palmyra. There I will argue that the organization of four tribes as an institutional body was an indigenous response, based on pre-existing social structures, to political, social, and economic crises that began in late second century C.E. At this time, it is sufficient only to mention that the evidence does not support the contention that tribal affiliations completely lost their essential character as kin-based associations. Moreover, even though four tribes apparently came to dominate public affairs, headquartered in four sanctuaries, there is no evidence to suggest that incorporation of other clans or tribes into any one of these four, on the assumption that all known tribes at Palmyra came to associate themselves with one of these four, depended upon territorial co-residence. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, not all of the four sanctuaries have been identified archaeologically on the ground, so their “neighborhoods” cannot be assessed. This

⁴¹ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 22-28. See also D. Schlumberger, “Les quatre tribes de Palmyre,” *Syria* 48 (1971): 121-33; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 45-52. The “four tribes of Palmyra” are mentioned in P1063 (see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 36), P1378, and P2769. The four sanctuaries are mentioned in both P0197 and Drijvers, “Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions,” 34-38, pl. 2.

view, then, of a hypothetical shift in the primordial basis of tribal relations is simply a modern construct to give meaning to some very enigmatic data.

While the tribes of Palmyra were predominately kin-based associations, shared cult was an important factor in establishing tribal identities. In fact, many of the clans or tribal groups that we can identify prioritized worship of one or more deities and monopolized the administration of their respective cults. Close associations, for instance, appear to have existed between the *bny zdbwl* and the god Shamash,⁴² who also had adherents among the *bny mgdt*,⁴³ the *bny kmr*’ and the gods Aglibol and Malakbel,⁴⁴ in addition to Herta and Nanai,⁴⁵ the *bny myt*’ and the god Yarhibol,⁴⁶ the *bny zmr*’ and the gods Shadrafa and Du‘anat,⁴⁷ the *bny ‘grwd* and the god Belhammon,⁴⁸ and between the *bny m ‘zyn* and the goddess Allat and

⁴² P0297, P2144, and P2147.

⁴³ P0324.

⁴⁴ P1504, P1509, P1942, and P1944.

⁴⁵ P2766. For their association with the god Bel, see P1067; with the gods Bel and Yarhibol, see P1347 and P1352.

⁴⁶ P1099. For their association with Baalshamin, see P0168 .

⁴⁷ P1429 and P1539.

⁴⁸ The *bny ‘grwd* built a sanctuary to the god on top of Jebel Munta northwest of the temple of Bel. For the dedication, see P1561.

the gods Baalshamin and Durahlun.⁴⁹ The *bny ydy'bl* were also associated with the cult of the god Baalshamin.⁵⁰ Moreover, many of the cults of these deities were shared with the god Bel and hosted in his sanctuary.⁵¹ I explore the civic cult of Bel more fully in the following chapter, where I examine the role of Palmyra as a cult center and discuss how shared religious experiences facilitated community formation. At present it is important simply to recognize this communal aspect of paganism to be an essential feature of Palmyrene tribalism.

Finally, in terms of kinship terminology, not every occurrence of *bny* precedes the name of a remote ancestor and serves to denote familial relations or tribal membership based on shared kinship. The term is also used to designate collective membership in an association defined by shared interests or activities. Most popular at Palmyra, given the status of trade ventures to the economy of the city, are the *bny šyrt'*, or members of caravans.⁵² There are also the *bny mrzh'*, or members of *symposia* devoted to the various gods and goddesses of the city.⁵³

⁴⁹ For the association of the *bny m'zyn* with the god Baalshamin, see P0158, P0168, P0169, P0180, P0329, and P1130; with Allat, see P1941; and with Baalshamin and Durahlun, see P0164, P0170, P0179, P0193, and P0194.

⁵⁰ See P0305.

⁵¹ Discussed by Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 1-28.

⁵² See P0197, P0262, P0274, P0279, P0294, P0309, P1062 (see also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 13), P1397, P1412, and P1419.

⁵³ See P0177, P0326, and P2279.

Moreover, residents of particular communities, whether of cities (*bny mdynt*) within the Palmyrene hinterland or abroad, or of villages (*bny qyrt*), are attested similarly in terms of their collective association.⁵⁴ I will discuss the communal nature of these Palmyrene associations more fully in Chapter 4.

To sum up, there appear to have been at least 17 substantial clans or tribes at Palmyra. By all appearance, these were predominately kin-based associations. They are identified in Palmyrene texts, for instance, by the expressions *dy mn bny X* or *dy mn pḥd bny X*, and occasionally by the single expression *bny*. It is often difficult, however, to distinguish between immediate familial relations, extended familial relations or clans, or even the more complex social grouping of tribes. When these are rendered in the Greek texts with the term *phylē*, we can more safely assume that tribal affiliations are intended.

Furthermore, the genealogies found in the inscriptions, as I have noted, denote both familial and tribal relationships. But what is their further significance? How do these increase our understanding of Palmyrene social relations more generally, especially of how power was negotiated in the community?

At the level of the household, the evidence is explicit. Primarily, the Palmyrene family was patriarchal. Every Palmyrene male was the head of his own household, inheritance followed the male line, and wives were obligated to live with their husbands. The Palmyrene household, in fact, consisted of the husband,

⁵⁴ Cities: see P0305 and P1062. Villages: see P1746.

who, in classical terms, may be regarded as a *pater familias*, along with the wife, children, slaves, and others, such as freed slaves bound to the family by necessity or obligation. We should not lose sight of this basic household organization in our efforts to understand the nature of tribalism at Palmyra. As I will discuss more fully in Chapter 4, it shows similarities to familial organization in other Mediterranean communities.

Beyond immediate families, as has been suggested for societies with a tribal social structure, genealogies may have designated larger kinship based groups and have established an individual's status and position in them.⁵⁵ At Palmyra, for example, genealogies identified immediate and extended family relations; and, as Dijkstra suggests, they also designated clans, or groups of associated families. Supposedly, this was the case when names appeared consecutively in genealogies without any associative connections between them (e.g. “*bn*,” “*bt*,” or “*bny*”) and the last name became a clan designation.⁵⁶ In these situations, identifying oneself with a remote ancestor may have enhanced one's social position. It would have defined clan membership, on the one hand, but it would also have established a direct line of descent from a distant relative, who, by virtue of being named, likely held a perceived position of social prominence. Any status once assumed by the

⁵⁵ This is a common feature of tribal society. For instance, see Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 12-14.

⁵⁶ See Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 81-170.

ancestor may then have been regarded as inheritable. Furthermore, the lengthening of genealogies may also have bonded disparate clans together, based on principles of kinship, as they identified themselves, perhaps only superficially, with an eponymous ancestor to legitimate their collective organization.

There is some evidence for power relations at the familial and tribal levels of social organization at Palmyra. The enigmatic expression *rb*’, for instance, the emphatic form of the adjective *rb*, appears in thirty inscriptions attached to the names of individuals (see below). The term has been variously translated. In its adjectival form, there are several examples of *rb* attached to a substantive to denote leadership. For example, we find *rb šwq* for “chief of the market” (*agoranomos*),⁵⁷ *rb šyrt*’ for “chief of the caravan” (*archemporos*, or *synodiarchēs*),⁵⁸ *rb hyl*’ for “chief of the army” (*stratēlatēs*),⁵⁹ *rb ‘yn* for “chief of the spring,”⁶⁰ and *rb mrzḥ*’ for “chief of the symposium” (*symposiarchēs*).⁶¹ By contrast, in its emphatic form

⁵⁷ P0278.

⁵⁸ P0282 and P0294. Cf. P0261 and P0262: *wqm bršhwn*, “and was their leader.” For *archemporos*, see P0282 and P0288. For *synodiarchēs*, see P0197, P0262, P0294, P1360, and P1419. Alternatively, see P1373 for *rš šyr*’ “caravan leader.”

⁵⁹ P0292 and P0293.

⁶⁰ P1918 and P1919.

⁶¹ P2033, P2036, P2037, P2038, P2039, and P2041. For *brbnwt mzhwt* (during the term as *symposiarch*), see P0265, P1358, P2040, and P2743 (see also H. Ingholt, “Un Nouveau thiase palmyrénien,” *Syria* 7 [1926]: 129). Cf. P1357 and *Inventaire* 9.27.

the connotation seems not to be one of leadership but of status or maturity. When attached to a name in a genealogy, for instance, *rb* ' is usually translated as "the Great," or "the Elder," as opposed to "Chief."⁶² Invariably, the term conveys the sense of preeminence. Depending on its usage, whether in familial or occupational contexts, the term indicates an individual's position of power in relation to a particular social group. We only need to examine the various occurrences of the emphatic or adjectival *rb* ' when attached to personal names in the inscriptions to determine how it may be best translated in specific social contexts.

There are many occurrences of the term *rb* ' in a genealogical context attached either to the first or second name in a person's designation. Along the portal of the tomb of Malku, for instance, five inscriptions appear in which *rb* ' is attached to the second name of a genealogy. Each of these is the concession of part of the tomb by the children of Malku *rb* ', son of the Malku who built the structure.⁶³ There are other instances where *rb* ' appears attached to the second name of a genealogy. On the reverse of a tessera, for example, we find inscribed "Ta[b]ut, the sons of (*bny*) Shalam *rb* "; the obverse depicts a loaded camel along with the divine name Arsu.⁶⁴ Also, an important inscription on an altar reads:

⁶² See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 408-409, s.v. "*rb*."

⁶³ P0044, P0045, P0048, P0049, and P0050.

⁶⁴ P2184 (see also Ingholt, Seyrig, and Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, no. 184, pl. x): *t[b] 'wt | bny šlm | rb* '.

To the Lord of the World, the Good and Merciful, Manai, son of Malku *rb'*, son of Manai Ruma, offers praise, for his life, the life of his sons and of his brothers, in the month Shebat, the year [5]46 (or [4]46) (February 235 or 135 C.E.).⁶⁵

Moreover, a relief of Bolha, son of Nabushuri *rb'* rests in the *hypogeum* of Bolha in the southwest necropolis of Palmyra.⁶⁶ In other instances, however, *rb'* appears attached to the first name in a genealogy, as on a relief of Habibi *rb'*, son of Yarhibola, son of Nurbel;⁶⁷ on an inscribed relief fragment now in Copenhagen that mentions Elahsha *rb'*, son of Moqimu Zebaida Elahsha Sadai;⁶⁸ and on a funerary bust of Taimarsu *rb'*, son of Ataqab, son of Yedibel, son of Ataqab Aqabai, who lived to be 76 years of age, having died in 162 C.E.⁶⁹ Furthermore, there is mention of Zabda *rb'* from a graffito on the wall of the *hypogeum* of Abdaastur in the southwest necropolis of Palmyra.⁷⁰ Finally, we find on the obverse of a tessera, below an image of two gods flanking an altar, mention of Taimarsu Ogeilu, and, on the reverse, an image of a priest reclining on a couch, below which are five priests

⁶⁵ P0335: *lmr' 'lm' ṭb' wrḥmn' | mwd' m'ny br mlkw rb' br m'ny | r'wm' 'l ḥ[y]why why[y] b[n]why w'ḥwhy | byrh šbt šnt [4/5]46.*

⁶⁶ P1871.

⁶⁷ P1760.

⁶⁸ P0544.

⁶⁹ P0923. See also P0922 for his brother who died in 141 C.E. We might also include here P1506, a fragmentary stone block on which is inscribed, “[. . .] *rb'* son of Zabdibol Arima.”

⁷⁰ P0110.

and the following inscription: Ataqab *rb'*.⁷¹ Ingholt, who synthesized most of this data, suggests that the appearance of *rb'* on this tessera probably refers to the status of Ataqab as a high priest.⁷²

More often, *rb'* appears at the end of genealogies. The list of such occurrences is extensive.⁷³ In a foundation inscription from tower tomb 44 in the Valley of the Tombs, for instance, the owner is identified as “Kitut, son of Taimarsu, son of Kitut, son of Taima *rb'*, who is of the tribe of the *bny mtbwl*.”⁷⁴ We find further examples of *rb'* at the end of a genealogy on an altar dedicated in 218 C.E. to “The One Whose Name Is Blessed, the Good and the Merciful,” by Malē son of Oga Neshā *rb'*;⁷⁵ on altar fragments recovered in the area of the Camp of Diocletian, which mention Matanai son of Qainu son of Attai *rb'*;⁷⁶ on a statue base in honor of Zabdibol, son of Abaihan, son of Zabdibol, son of Lishamsh, son

⁷¹ P2227. See also H. Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû at Palmyra,” in *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*, edited by M. Bernhard (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966), 471-72.

⁷² See Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 471. With *rb'* in its emphatic state, this would seem unlikely.

⁷³ Fragmentary attestations to *rb'* at the end of genealogies where we cannot determine the actual individual designated include P0646 and P2359.

⁷⁴ P0463 (cf. Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*, fondation no. 6). The text reads: *kytwt | br tymrṣw br kytwt br tym' rb' dy mn pḥd bny | [mt]bwl*.

⁷⁵ P1901: *[b]'dr šnt 529 | bryk šmh l'lm' | ṭb' wrḥmn' 'bd | [w]mwd' ml' br | 'g' ns' rb'*.

⁷⁶ P1929.

of Makna *rb'*, who is of the tribe of the *bny mtbwl*;⁷⁷ and on a funerary stele that mentions Malku, son of *zbd'y rb'*.⁷⁸ More frequently, we find *rb'* at the end of genealogies on funerary busts. One refers to Shagal, daughter of Shakaiei, son of Shalman, son of Taimarsu *rb'*.⁷⁹ On two separate busts now in the British Museum we can identify Moqimu, the son of Gadaia Ataqab Zabda *rb'*,⁸⁰ and Taibol, son of Lishamsh Taibol *rb'*.⁸¹ On a bust in Geneva, we find reference to a certain Taima, son of Halaphata, son of Taimarsu, son of Halaphata, son of Shemaūn, who is called Qoqah *rb'*.⁸² On a bust from the southeast necropolis, we find Sassan, son of Malē, identified as the owner of a *hypogeum*, within which another bust has been recovered with the inscription, “Aqamata, daughter of Baruq[a], son of Taimsha, wife of Belshurai, son of Mattai *rb'*, alas!”⁸³ Furthermore, on a bust once in Aleppo

⁷⁷ P1584. The text reads: *šlm' dnh dy zbdbwl br 'byhn | br zbdbwl br lšmš br mkn' | rb' dy mn pḥd bny mtbwl*.

⁷⁸ P1167.

⁷⁹ P0501.

⁸⁰ P0467.

⁸¹ P0645.

⁸² P0634: *tym' | br ḥlpt' | br tymršw | br ḥlpt' | br šm'wn | dy mtqrh | qwqh | rb'*.

⁸³ P1019 (see also N. Saliby, “L’Hypogée de Sassan fils de Malê à Palmyre. Mit einem bibliographischen Anhang von Klaus Parlasca,” *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 6 [1992]: no. 5): *ḥbl ssn br ml' rb'*; and P1043 (see also Saliby, “L’Hypogée de Sassan,” no. 33): *'qmt brt brwq[] br tymš' 'tt blšwry br mty rb' ḥbl*.

but now lost there is mention of a certain Ashtur Gadnabu *rb'*.⁸⁴ Other examples of *rb'* occurring at the end of a genealogy include graffiti etched on plaster from the temple of Baalshamin, which serves to memorialize several individuals, among them Abinu *rb'* and Yedibel *rb'*, the latter of whom is mentioned again in a fragmentary inscription on a stone block from the same site.⁸⁵ These attestations to Yedibel are of particular interest since he is described as *rb'* as well as *'bwn rb'*, which may be translated as “our ancestor.”⁸⁶

There is some uncertainty about the translation of *rb'* in genealogical contexts. Ingholt, for instance, who reviewed this evidence, concludes that *rb'*, as it appears in each of these genealogies, must mean “the Elder” as opposed to “the Great,” which he had suggested earlier.⁸⁷ He observes that occurrences of *rb'* may represent the name of an ancestor or instances of unusual longevity, but that the term is applied also to distinguish between individuals with the same name and

⁸⁴ See Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 473; and J. Chabot, “Glanures palmyréniennes,” *Journal asiatique* 12 (1918): 282, no. 6.

⁸⁵ See P0208 and P0209.

⁸⁶ Perhaps used in the sense of “our grandfather.” See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 333, s.v. “’b.” Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 98-99. Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, 76-77, translates *'bwn rb'* as “our father, Rabba,” although he admits that “the Elder” may be an alternative. Cf. *Inventaire* 11, 48-49, no. 81, where Teixidor also suggests that *rb'* be interpreted as a proper name.

⁸⁷ Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 473-76.

lineage. Yet, he cites no specific examples to support this particular contention.⁸⁸

There is no firm evidence, for instance, in any of the examples given above of other individuals with the same name and lineage from whom the individuals designated as *rb'* must be distinguished. The term *qšyš'*, in fact, conveys the sense of “the Elder” in Palmyrene. For example, we find on a funerary bust in the Louvre an inscription bracketed in a *tabula ansata*: “Image of Malku, son of Hagegu, son of Malku, the elder of the community, alas! And Hadira, his wife, alas!”⁸⁹

Interestingly, *qšyš'* appears often in inscriptions from Hatra as a title to denote either religious or civic functions.⁹⁰ Perhaps, then, we may regard Malku as a priest or *symposiarch*, or even as a prominent member of the *boulē* or city council.

Instead of meaning “the Elder,” it is possible that *rb'* in all of the known

⁸⁸ He does, however, cite numerous examples of where father and son bear the same name. See *ibid.*, 473, n. 70.

⁸⁹ P0862: *šlm mlkw br ḥggw br | mlkw qšyš' dy | dyr' ḥbl whdyr' | 'tth ḥbl*. In contrast, there are cases where we find individuals designated as “the Younger,” and we assume that the distinction is based on age relative to an older counterpart. This is indicated by the term *tly*, as inscribed on the interior wall of tower tomb 13 within the Valley of the Tombs, where we find the following inscription: “Image of Manai, the younger, son of Vaballathus, son of [. . .]” (P0491: *šlm m 'ny br tly' br whblt br* [. . .]). This term also appears on an altar set up by Hairan, the Younger (*[ḥ]yrn tly'*), in 219 C.E. to the Anonymous God of Palmyra (see P1442). The term *z'wr* also conveys the meaning of “the Younger,” as on the relief of a certain Malē in Copenhagen (see F. Hvidberg-Hansen and G. Ploug, *Palmyra Samlingen: Katalog, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* [Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1993], no. 62; and P1633: *ml' z'wr'*).

⁹⁰ See Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 184, n. 35. See also J. Segal, “A Syriac Seal Inscription,” *Iraq* 49 (1967): 8, who emphasizes the religious functions implied by the term.

Palmyrene examples actually retains the basic meaning of “the Chief,” as Ingholt himself suggests in reference to the priest Ataqab *rb*’ of P2227.⁹¹ This is clearly the case in two inscriptions of 271 C.E., where Septimius Zabai, a general of the army (*rb hyl*), is distinguished from Septimius Zabda, a chief general of the army (*rb hyl rb*’).⁹² Furthermore, in the Arab community of Hatra, Segal believes that the chiefs of tribal groups were consistently designated by the term *rb*’.⁹³ Such may be the case at Palmyra as well. In fact, we may have evidence to suggest that *rb*’, as the designation of a position of status in society, was inheritable. From a memorial inscribed on a stone block from the temple of Baalshamin, for instance, which is dated to 11 C.E., we find mention of Vaballathus, son of Matanai, son of Gadarsu, son of Matanai, son of Qainu, son of Attai, son of Yedibel, who may well be the same Yedibel designated later in the same inscription as “the elder, our ancestor (?)” (*rb*’ *bwn rb*’) as well as in P0209.⁹⁴ Several generations later, in 115 C.E., Gadarsu, son of Yarhai, son of Gadarsu, son of Attai, set up an altar on which he mentions an idol of the “Lady of the Temple” erected earlier by Matanai, son of

⁹¹ Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 471-72.

⁹² See P0292 and P0293.

⁹³ J. Segal, “Arabs at Hatra and the Vicinity: Marginalia on New Aramaic Texts,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31, no. 1 (1986), 59.

⁹⁴ See P0208 and P0209. For the interpretation, see Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 333, s.v. “’b.”

Qainu, son of Atai *rb'*.⁹⁵ Could this Matanai be the same as the individual mentioned in the inscription above of 11 C.E.?⁹⁶ Perhaps. If so, then the status or position of chief (*rb'*), or whatever it is that *rb'* denotes, appears to have passed from the father Yedibel to his son Attai.⁹⁷

However we choose to regard *rb'* in these inscriptions, whether as a generic designation for “the Elder” or “the Great,” or as a more specific identification of status and position in society as a “chief” of sorts, each appearance of the term seems to reflect a relationship of power within the community. At the familial level, a sense of priority and preeminence between individuals is apparent, which perhaps identifies someone within the household, in Roman terms, with superior *potestas* or power over others. More often, though, the term appears in a genealogy attached to the name of an ancestor of the individual testified by the inscription. Such cases may reflect the attempts of individuals to increase their own status and prestige by identifying themselves publicly with an ancestor of clear distinction,

⁹⁵ See P1929. Cf. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 123, who prefers to read for “son of Attai” the proper name Baratai. See also Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 84-85.

⁹⁶ We must, however, bear in mind that genealogies frequently overlap. See Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 473-76.

⁹⁷ These texts are also discussed at length by M.Gawlikowski, “Le Premier temple d’Allat,” in *Resurrecting the Past: A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni*, edited by P. Matthiae, M. Loon, and H. Weiss (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 101-8, who suggests that Yedibel and his son Attai must be regarded, respectively, as patriarchs of their clan.

whose memory may still resonate within the community. At the level of the tribe, or that of clans or extended families, *rb'* may serve as a title to reflect social distinction, or perhaps civic or religious obligation as a tribal elder. We find tribal chiefs at Hatra identified by the title *rb'*, for instance. If a similar function may be assumed at Palmyra for those styled *rb'*, then we have in this case an interesting example of tribalism represented in an urban context. We can gain a more complete understanding of tribalism within Palmyra by examining the manifestation of tribal identities more broadly in the Syrian countryside.

City and Countryside

In order to advance our understanding of tribalism at Palmyra, it is essential to examine how tribalism manifested itself in the Palmyrene countryside and to discuss the integrated nature of the city and its hinterland, particularly the manner in which the former managed tribal activity in the latter. To begin with, while there is agreement that social groups in desert environments tend to be organized in tribes, there is, as I have noted above, considerable debate about what is meant by “tribe” or “tribal,” because their meanings change in different contexts. This is especially true regarding degrees of settlement or subsistence strategies. For example, in the desert frontier where Palmyra is set the tendency is to speak of social relations as a dichotomy between the desert and the sown, that is, between the interaction of nomads and sedentary peoples, but this approach has led to generalizations that are often imprecise and misleading and prevents a full appreciation of the integrated

nature of desert cities and their hinterlands. What is lacking in discussions of social relations in the desert frontier is the manner in which tribal identities permeated the desert and the sown. Even among disparate tribal groups, while they may not share identities, they may recognize common traditions, which provides a context for communal interaction. In this sense I would argue that it is necessary to challenge the popular notion that relations between nomads, if in fact there were true nomads in the region, and sedentaries were marked by competition and conflict as opposed to cooperation and more peaceful interaction.⁹⁸ I would also challenge the tendency to delineate regional zones of activity based on agricultural viability, as defined by ecological or political variables, where nomads are viewed as those from outside persistently pressuring the boundaries, because, in fact, it is nearly impossible to validate that nomads, though I prefer to use the term pastoralists, were not in the agricultural zone in the first place.⁹⁹ When there was infiltration by external tribal

⁹⁸ For example, see J. Dentzer, "Développement et culture de la Syrie du sud dans la période préprovinciale," in *Hauran I: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, vol. 1, edited by J. Dentzer, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 124 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1985), 387-420. (especially p. 399). This is the central issue behind the debate between E. Banning, "Peasants, Pastoralists and the *Pax Romana*: Mutualism in the Southern Highlands of Jordan," *BASOR* 261 (1986): 25-47; and S. T. Parker, "Peasants, Pastoralists, and *Pax Romana*: A Different View," *BASOR* 265 (1987): 35-51. See also E. Banning, "*De bello paceque*: A Reply to Parker," *BASOR* 265 (1987): 52-55.

⁹⁹ For example, see R. Dussaud, *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1955). Indeed, such infiltration of nomads into regions of increased fertility in antiquity and the security issues involved are common themes in Roman frontier studies; see S. T. Parker, *Romans and Saracens: A*

groups, only in isolated cases, it happened generally under harsh climatic conditions, economic stress, or political pressure. The Palmyrene evidence indeed supports this assessment. It suggests mutual cooperation between the inhabitants of the city, the villages of the Palmyrene hinterland, and the pastoralists of the countryside, at least through the first century C.E. Only in the late second century C.E. and beyond did their relationships breakdown somewhat, when, for instance, banditry increased, which happened under great social, economic, and political stress mostly beyond Palmyrene control. I will discuss this breakdown, its causes and its effects, more fully in subsequent chapters. For now, I will examine how tribalism manifested itself in the Palmyrene countryside and how the city managed this tribal activity.

The evidence for this discussion, however, is fragmentary and allows for only a general analysis. For example, we have very little direct evidence for the range of subsistence patterns discussed here, from agriculturalists, agro-pastoralists, to pure pastoralists. Evidence for the latter is particularly evasive since

History of the Arabian Frontier (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986), who views the nomadic menace as the central reason for the Roman military presence along the eastern frontier; and idem, "The Nature of Rome's Arabian Frontier," in *Roman Frontier Studies 1989*, Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, edited by V. Maxfield and M. Dobson (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), 498-504. B. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, however, views the nomadic threat to be of little significance. See also D. Graf, "Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace," in *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, edited by T. Fahd (Strasbourg: Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1989), 341-400, whose views align closely with those of Isaac.

archaeological remains of pastoralism tend to be overlooked; thus we are reliant on comparative analogy with evidence from neighboring desert areas, not necessarily archaeological but also epigraphic and literary. The presumption of course is that the different groups on the desert fringe developed similar patterns of behavior conditioned by their ecological setting. The archaeological evidence for agriculture, however, is more abundant, especially to the north and west of Palmyra (fig. 5).¹⁰⁰ Though a desert community, Palmyra included agricultural lands and villages within its hinterland. Importantly, in these villages, whose inhabitants were probably also organized into tribes, Palmyrene was the predominate language used, which suggests strong and personal links to Palmyra itself. Also, according to Schlumberger the economic subsistence patterns among the villagers never rested solely on agriculture but combined with pastoralism, which illustrated the close integration of this rural population of Palmyrenes with the steppe. Furthermore, although we know little of who owned the lands that were farmed or grazed, most of the land may have belonged to the city, because we know the city generally managed the patterns of land use. This would then indicate that it was essentially tribal territory. I will discuss the implications of this observation below in my assessment of tribalism in the Palmyrene countryside, especially regarding economic subsistence patterns and their management.

¹⁰⁰ See Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, 1-5. To the southwest of Palmyra, see T. Bauzou, "Épigraphie et toponymie: Le Cas de la Palmyrène du Sud-Ouest," *Syria* 70 (1993): 27-50.

But first, in order to provide an initial social and historical context for the evidence of tribalism in this region, we should recognize a bias generated by ancient authors that still resonates, one that regards individuals and groups who are less settled as uncivilized. Both Strabo and Pliny expounded this view.¹⁰¹ While they agreed that the Syrian countryside was divided between sedentary peoples, on the one hand, and nomads and bandits, on the other, they clearly favored the virtuosity of the former over the latter.¹⁰² Also, both described these peoples, for the most part, as Arabs, and they distinguished between them based on their perceived stage of political development.¹⁰³ According to these authors, the least developed and most problematic in terms of loyalty were the *skēnitai* (Σκηνῖται οἱ νομάδες), Arab pastoralists who dwelled in the Syrian desert and grouped themselves in small bands “in wretched, waterless territories, farming little or none, but herding various animals, particularly camels.”¹⁰⁴ Strabo did not make this distinction between Arabs and *skēnitai* simply because he considered the former

¹⁰¹ See MacAdam, “Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy,” 289-320.

¹⁰² See G. Tate, “The Syrian Countryside During the Roman Era,” in *Early Roman Empire in the East*, 55-57.

¹⁰³ MacAdam, “Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy,” 297-98.

¹⁰⁴ Strabo *Geographia* 16.3.1: ἐν λυπροῖς χωρίοις διὰ τὰς ἀνυδρίας, γεωργοῦντες μὲν ἢ οὐδὲν ἢ μικρά, νομάς δὲ ἔχοντες παντοδαπῶν θρεμμάτων, καὶ μάλιστα καμήλων.

sedentary and the latter nomads, a view commonly put forth.¹⁰⁵ Strabo also, while a geographer, lacked the keen ethnographic insight over which modern historians and anthropologists delight. The *skēnitai*, in fact, were not strictly nomads, at least in the modern sense of the term since some engaged in dry-farming on a limited scale, though primarily they were pastoralists. They were one element in a complex social and economic network that involved various subsistence strategies, which included agriculture, trade, and pastoralism, just as the transhumant pastoralists who dwelled in or near the villages of Palmyra's hinterland to the north and west were.

An examination of the interrelationships between agriculture and pastoralism illuminates regional tribalism and the integrated nature of Palmyra and its hinterland. These two modes of economic subsistence are intimately connected, and, as Khazanov observes, an economy based on the latter "is not infrequently an economy of relatively high involvement in the market."¹⁰⁶ Assessing various scholarly contributions on the theme of "pastoral economies in classical antiquity," Whittaker drew the conclusion that pastoralism, in fact, "must always start from

¹⁰⁵ For instance, see I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 55, n.19. See also P. Briant, *État et pasteurs au Moyen-Orient ancien* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 113-25; and Gawlikowski, "Syrian Desert Under the Romans," in *Early Roman Empire in the East*, 41.

¹⁰⁶ A. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 202.

agriculture.”¹⁰⁷ Competition and conflict between agriculturalists and pastoralists might arise over resources, especially water in arid environments, but this does not deny the interdependency of the two groups. The former, whether based in villages, townships, or cities, relied on the raw materials and animal products that pastoralists provided (e.g., wool, milk products, meat), in addition to their labor and mules at the harvest and for plowing and transportation of removable resources and commodities between communities (e.g., wood for fuel, trade goods).¹⁰⁸ Concurrently, they supplied pastoralists with flour, barley, pulses, poultry, and various products of handicraft. This is not an exhaustive assessment but suffices to leave the impression of the interdependence between agriculturalists and pastoralists. More importantly, rarely were these occupations exclusive of one another.¹⁰⁹ Many farmers, for instance, engaged in limited pastoralism, and herders, conversely, engaged in limited agriculture, which tends to be the case in areas of marginal resources. In fact, Strabo’s observation that the *skēnitai* are known to

¹⁰⁷ C. Whittaker, “Introduction,” in *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity*, Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society, Supplement no. 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1988), 3, with references to contributors.

¹⁰⁸ We may add to this assessment of the role of pastoralists the provision of animals to support urban and rural cults, to supply armies with food and wool, and to serve as scouts in remote areas.

¹⁰⁹ See J. Black-Michaud, *Sheep and Land: The Economics of Power in a Tribal Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

farm on a limited basis is a case in point.¹¹⁰ The situation around Palmyra was likely to have been comparable.

Palmyra had a mixed economy based on agriculture, pastoralism, and trade, which indicates its social and economic integration with its rural hinterland. The problem with assessing any of this economic activity, however, is a lack of data on patterns of land tenure in the countryside. The question of how much of the land was public versus private simply cannot be answered. One would expect that the aristocrats of the city owned vast stretches of land in the countryside, particularly in fertile areas, perhaps even renting plots out, but there is no compelling evidence to suggest that this was the case. Instead, the city itself probably possessed the most land, as its collection of grazing dues on pasture lands would suggest (see below). It is also likely that much of the land remained essentially tribal, whether administered by the city directly, through the various tribal sanctuaries that emerged over the course of time (see pp. 308-13 below), or by some other means. The implication, then, would be that the tribes drawn to Palmyra from the countryside retained power and possession of their lands, whether by their own means or through various public institutions that they helped to develop and over which they retained control. The city was certainly a hub of interaction for individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds. It provided an environment of shared cult and a central market for the exchange of goods, in addition to being a focal point for

¹¹⁰ See n. 104 above.

coordinating settlement activity and subsistence strategies in the countryside. In this sense, Palmyra was a true classical city in that it managed its own territory through public institutions that the Palmyrene tribes supported. Though the evidence is sparse, this may have been true in the second century B.C.E. It became progressively more evident as the city developed from the first century B.C.E. to the mid-third century C.E.

Aspects of Palmyra's land tenure patterns, mixed economy, and the interchanges between city and countryside are manifested in the bilingual (Greek and Palmyrene) tariff inscription.¹¹¹ The tariff, published in 137 C.E. by the council of the city of Palmyra, regulated the dues levied on goods brought into and exported from Palmyra and its hinterland, as well as on services provided within the city. Not surprisingly, then, the law alludes to the question of grazing rights in the *territorium* of the city. It distinguishes between those who graze their animals in the territory, who pay no dues for grazing rights, and those who cross into

¹¹¹ The tariff inscription (P0259) was discovered inscribed on a single stone block in Palmyra in 1882. It was subsequently cut into four sections and transported to Leningrad, and now it is part of the collection of the Hermitage Museum. The inscription was published in its entirety in 1926 by J. Chabot in *CIS* 2.3913, who provided a Latin translation and commentary on the Palmyrene text. Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 157-58 and 174-78, summarizes the various editions of the texts and provides an English translation of the Greek text. Teixidor, "Le Tarif de Palmyre," 235-52, provides a French translation and commentary of the Palmyrene text, which is reprinted in idem, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 99-104. Both the Greek and Palmyrene versions were edited and provided with a full commentary and concordance by I. Shifman, *Pal'mirskii poshlinnyi tarif* (Moscow: Izd-vo "Nauka," 1980).

Palmyrene territory from outside for the same purpose, and who must therefore pay for the privilege; indeed, according to one clause, officials were empowered to capture and brand any animals conveyed into Palmyrene territory without proper registration:

It has been agreed that payment for grazing rights is not to be exacted [in addition to the normal?] taxes; but for animals brought into Palmyrene territory for the purpose of grazing, the payment is due. The tax collector may have the animals branded, if he so wishes.¹¹²

This is direct evidence of an official attempt to protect the interests of Palmyrene tribal pastoralists (no less than the land on which grazing occurred) by the regulation of resource distribution in the hinterland.

This regulation also sheds light on a group of inscriptions that demonstrate regional interaction between Palmyrenes and tribal pastoralists. The inscriptions are in both Palmyrene and Safaitic. They date to 98 C.E. and come from Wadi Rijelat Umm-Kubar, in the desert ca. 50 kilometers southwest of Hadita on the Euphrates, near Wadi Hauran. The texts mention a certain Zebaida, son of Haumal, presumably a Palmyrene, who led a small party of men, of mixed Palmyrene and Arabic nomenclature, into the area where they pitched their tents and pastured their

¹¹² P0259 (Tariff): Greek 233-37: Ἐννόμιον συνεφωνήθη μὴ δεῖν πράσσει[ιν ἐκτὸς τῶν] | τελῶν· [τ]ῶν δὲ ἐπὶ νομὴν μεταγομένων [εἰς Παλ|μυρηνηὴν θρεμμάτων ὀφείλεσθαι· χαρ[α]κτῆ|ρίσασθαι τὰ θρέμματα ἐὰν θέλῃ ὁ δημο[σιώνης] | ἐξέστω. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene II.149. See discussion by Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 173.

animals.¹¹³ It is unclear, in this instance, whether Zebaida and his men camped in order to tend their sheep or to pasture their camels, or whether perhaps Zebaida alone was present in a more official capacity to regulate or monitor the pastoral activities in the area. The enigmatic authors of the Safaitic texts, who remain at the center of every debate concerning the nature of relations between individuals and groups more or less sedentary in the Roman Near East, were themselves tribal pastoralists.¹¹⁴ This is evident in the remains of their inscriptions and graffiti from the desert, in which many actually identified their tribal affiliations. Safaitic inscriptions, in fact, increase in number the greater the distance from settled

¹¹³ See F. Safar, "Inscriptions from Wadi Hauran," *Sumer* 20 (1964): 9-27 (P2732, P2733, P2734, P2735, P2736, P2737, P2738, P2739, P2740, P2741, and P2742). Note the strange dating formula of the year to Zebaida himself, especially in the Safaitic. Cf. P2810, which does not provide a date but references the term of Yarhai as *stratēgos*. M. Gawlikowski, "Le Commerce de Palmyre sur terre et sur eau," in *L'Arabie et ses mers bordières: Séminaire de recherche 1985-1986*, edited by J. -F. Salles (Lyon: GS-Maison de l'Orient, 1980), 169; and idem, "The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987), 80, proposes to identify these inscriptions as evidence for the route of the caravan trade between Palmyra and the Euphrates. This may be, or, as I have mentioned above, it may be the case that this evidence reflects Palmyra's administrative activities in monitoring pastoralist movement.

¹¹⁴ For a critical evaluation, see M. MacDonald, "Nomads and the Ḥawrān," 303-413. Unfortunately, a clear definition of the community the authors of the Safaitic texts represent is lacking. According to MacDonald, the term "Safaitic" is a misnomer and refers to the script itself and the dialect which it expresses rather than any homogenous community of bedouins or tribes. A useful introduction to the Safaitic texts remains that of Oxtoby, *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*, 1-8.

communities.¹¹⁵ The bulk come from the basalt desert (*ḥarra*) of southern Syria—south of Damascus—and northeastern Jordan known as the Hauran, and from the desert of northern Saudi Arabia (fig. 1). Inscribed as graffiti on large basalt boulders, they typify the lifestyle of the tribal pastoralist. Most are the personal names of the authors themselves accompanied by their genealogies, apparently for the sake of remembrance. Many record blessings and appeals for prosperity, relief, or security, generally by invoking a deity for the benefit of the author. Also, many record a range of curses against anyone who should efface the texts. Furthermore, the authors frequently mention their activities, whether migrating, pasturing their herds of camels and sheep, or limited sowing of grain. They also mention raids, the bulk of which would have been directed against fellow pastoralists rather than settlements or caravans, which surely were targeted as well.¹¹⁶ Finally, many of the texts are accompanied by illustrations, generally of sheep, goat, horses, camels, wild animals, and men armed for the hunt.¹¹⁷ Taken as

¹¹⁵ As observed by Littmann, *Semitic Inscriptions*, 104; cf. MacDonald, “Nomads and the Ḥawrān,” 311.

¹¹⁶ See MacDonald, “Nomads and the Ḥawrān,” 313-14 and 328, who emphasizes that most of the raids depicted were not against settlements but other tribal pastoralists, with only few exceptions (see especially p. 314, n. 72). Also, on inter-tribal raiding among pastoralists, see W. Lancaster and F. Lancaster, “Thoughts on the Bedouinization of Arabia,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 18 (1988): 51-62.

¹¹⁷ For a straightforward assessment of these illustrations, see MacDonald, “Nomads and the Ḥawrān,” 327-28.

a whole, then, this evidence from Wadi Rijelat Umm-Kubar reinforces the integrated nature of Palmyra and its countryside, in addition to providing potential proof for the civic management of tribal contingents in the desert.

Furthermore, while the Safaitic texts reflect a pastoral society in the isolation of the desert, it is noteworthy that their authors were not completely dissociated from the settled communities of the region and further afield. Both Graf and Sartre express the view that the authors of these texts had their homes and families in the Hauran (mainly in the vicinity of the Jebel Hauran southeast of Damascus), and that they traveled eastward into the *ḥarra* only during their seasonal migrations.¹¹⁸ In fact, the view has had wide support that the authors of the Safaitic texts are to be identified either as part of the settled population of the region engaged in pastoralism or as pastoralists in the late stages of sedentarization.¹¹⁹ MacDonald, however, who rejects this notion categorically, maintains that the authors of the Safaitic texts were almost exclusively nomads with

¹¹⁸ Graf, "Rome and the Saracens," 368; Sartre, *L'Orient romain*, 333; and idem, "Transhumance, économie et société de montagne en Syrie du sud," in *La Montagne dans l'antiquité (Actes du Colloque de la SOPHAU, Pau (Mai 1990), Cahiers de l'Université de Pau*, no. 23 (Pau: Publications de l'Université de Pau, 1992), 43-44.

¹¹⁹ For instance, see Dussaud, *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie*, 62, who views the authors of the Safaitic texts as in the process of sedentarization; see also Ryckmans, "Langues et écritures sémitiques," *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, fasc. 25 (1952), cols. 322-25; and J. Milik, "La Tribu des Bani 'Amrat en Jordanie de l'époque grecque et romaine," *ADAJ* 24 (1980): 41-54.

little to no contact with the settlements in the Hauran.¹²⁰ According to him, they dwelled, for the most part, in the eastern *ḥarra*, and migrated more frequently into the true desert further to the east and southeast. Admittedly, the virtual absence of any Safaitic texts from the villages of the Jebel Hauran supports MacDonald's view, as does the infrequent and doubtful mention of the Hauran in known texts.¹²¹ Nonetheless, the provenance and content of the Safaitic texts suggests that their authors did not live in complete isolation from the settled areas. They were aware, for instance, of external events and often used them to date their texts.¹²² Furthermore, we can confirm that they visited regional urban centers such as Palmyra,¹²³ as well as major towns such as Rushayda,¹²⁴ Umm el-Jimal,¹²⁵ and Dura

¹²⁰ MacDonald, "Nomads and the Ḥawrān," 311-22 and 342.

¹²¹ In response to Sartre's question, "pourquoi les écrit-on dans le désert et pas dans les villages sédentaires?" ("Transhumance, économie et société," 45), MacDonald responds quite simply, "because they lived in the desert and not in the villages" ("Nomads and the Ḥawrān," 312). For a list of texts found in settlements and critical remarks, see MacDonald, "Nomads and the Ḥawrān," 311, n. 50. For texts that mention the Hauran, with commentary provided, see *ibid.*, 339-42.

¹²² Several texts include references to Roman territory and the Romans. For instance, *CIS* 5.4866 refers to "the year of the struggle between *rm* and the Nabataeans" (*snt wsq bn rm nbṭ*); *CIS* 5.4448 refers to "the year the Persians fought the '*l rm* at Boşra" (*snt ḥrb h mdy 'l rm b bşr[y] qṭrz*); and Littmann, *Safaitic Inscriptions*, no. 406 mentions "the year *wdn* escaped from *rm*" (*snt ngy wdn m rm*). MacDonald, "Nomads and the Ḥawrān," 328-34, provides a summary of relevant texts. Cf. Graf, "Rome and the Saracens," 375-80.

¹²³ For references to Palmyra in Safaitic texts, see *CIS* 5.0663, 5.1649, 5.1664, 5.1665; Littmann, *Safaitic Inscriptions*, no. 717; and Winnett and Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, no. 2833a. For Safaitic texts from the hinterland of Palmyra, see H. Ingholt, J. Starcky, and G. Ryckmans, "Recueil

Europos,¹²⁶ and that they did not abstain from more adventurous travels further abroad, as far afield, in fact, as Pompeii in Italy.¹²⁷

The point to be stressed is that the authors of the Safaitic texts, who were predominately tribal pastoralists, lived in close association with the inhabitants of the villages, towns, and cities of Roman Syria. The extent of their interaction in these areas cannot be gauged accurately, since the evidence remains fragmentary and sparse. But, to be sure, they were a prominent component of the regional, indigenous society. Moreover, the various groups, among both the pastoralists and agriculturalists, were, as elaborated above, interdependent upon one another economically. Also, all seem to have shared similar social structures that were tribally based. Thus the cultural infrastructure around which their communities formed were akin. At Palmyra, set deep in the desert in an environment where agriculturalists, agro-pastoralists, and pastoralists interacted, this economic interdependency and social and cultural kinship permeated city and countryside.

épigraphique,” in Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, nos. 2 quarter, 21 bis, 34 ter, 54 (b), 60, 63 bis, 63 quarter, 80, 81 a-c, and 82 a-b.

¹²⁴ See Sartre, “Transhumance, économie et société,” 41.

¹²⁵ See Littmann, *Safaitic Inscriptions*, 1269-79.

¹²⁶ See *CIS* 5.5175, *CIS* 5.5177, *CIS* 5.5179, and *CIS* 5.5180.

¹²⁷ See J. Calzini Gysens, “Graffiti safaitici a Pompei,” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 107-17.

Conclusion

To sum up, we now recognize that most of the communities of Roman Syria (and Arabia for that matter) supported social structures that were essentially tribal. The tendency has been to identify this tribalism as an artifact of sorts, having survived the process of sedentarization, again as if this were a unidirectional transition. In some instances, however, tribal identities were actually shared between individuals in communities of the agricultural zone and those of the steppe, which seems to exemplify the well-attested phenomenon of “dimorphism.”¹²⁸ Indeed, tribalism reflects the commonalities between individuals and groups in an environment sufficiently harsh to require greater effort and cooperation to acquire and maintain even the basic necessities of life. The harsh environment also promoted greater competition over what few resources were available, which might have turned to conflict and thereby required corporate measures to maintain security and peace. As mentioned, tribal membership conferred identity upon individuals, which, in turn, gave them access to a cultural infrastructure around which communities formed. We can identify the impact of the local ecology upon the type of culture developed in a particular society, as in the case of Palmyra, where we recognize the intimate integration of the city and the countryside discussed in Chapter 1 and elaborated upon here. When we speak of

¹²⁸ Discussed by Millar, *Roman Near East*, 429. More generally on dimorphism, see F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), chapter 1.

local communities, then, it is inadequate to regard them as simply a group of “sedentaries” associated with a particular village, town, or city, but instead they were diverse individuals and groups amalgamated together in an environment of shared experiences, each practicing different strategies for basic subsistence, but still in common association. The communities thus formed consisted of an interactive mix of individuals and groups bonded, in many instances, by familial and tribal relations, but also by their employment in various occupations, including pastoralism, farming, and mercantilism, which were, ultimately, interdependent upon one another.

Chapter 3: Growth of Community

Introduction

The early communal development of Palmyra involved the gradual buildup of the population as individuals from among pastoral groups of the Palmyrene hinterland settled in the city, a process that began in the second century B.C.E., if not earlier, and peaked in the first and early second centuries C.E. This begs the question of motivation. Why did these individuals, mostly Arab pastoralists, migrate to Palmyra in the first place, accompanied, in due course, by a swell of immigrants from communities further afield than the Palmyrene hinterland? What were their personal motivations? What social or economic incentives prompted them? Also, what sort of relationships structured associations between city and countryside in the context of community growth and urbanization?¹ How did this

¹ Again, we must be careful to avoid couching Palmyra's communal development in terms of a dichotomy between the desert and the sown and that of the sedentarization of nomads. As stressed in the previous chapter, relations between city and countryside were highly integrated. And, in many cases, peasants, whether in villages, towns, or cities, shared tribal identities with pastoralists, whose presence in any given settlement may have been sporadic at best. We cannot measure with any accuracy the frequency of interaction between these communities, but it is apparent that both lived in close association and interdependence. Also, an increase in the urban population of Palmyra does not necessarily correlate to an

settlement affect the structure and maintenance of personal and group identity, whether in the city or countryside? Such questions, though rhetorical, shape any discussion of the growth of community at Palmyra and the process of urbanization. In this chapter, I intend to discuss the two chief factors that attracted individuals and groups to Palmyra. In the first instance, I will elaborate on Palmyra's longstanding status as a center for common religious association (and shared cult) in the Syrian desert, to which many of the countryside were naturally and customarily drawn. I will then examine how and why the Palmyrenes, in relation to their patterns of settlement, opted no longer to employ strategies for economic subsistence as pastoralists or agriculturalists in a village or rural setting, but rather entrepreneurial strategies for their own personal and group advancement within an urban setting. In this instance, I will elaborate on the growth of Palmyra's primacy as an economic center in the Near East.

The Nature of Community at Palmyra

I presented an anthropological framework for a general study of the creation and maintenance of identity and community in Chapter 1. The current discussion, however, requires a more focused examination of community specifically derived from the Palmyrene evidence. This will provide a better context for the discussion in this chapter of the two primary factors that led to community formation at

equal decline among pastoralists in the countryside. We simply lack the data for such assessments.

Palmyra, the cultic and economic significance of the settlement.

In general terms, community at Palmyra consisted of individuals and groups in collective association, whether for cooperative or competitive reasons. Set within a chronological framework, however, the Palmyrene community evolved as Palmyra developed. Changes occurred in the power relationships and organizational structures that shaped communal relations. As Palmyra developed into a *polis* from the first century B.C.E. onward, for instance, a subject I will revisit in Chapter 5, an aristocracy emerged attuned to Mediterranean values and attracted to Roman customs. This is apparent in the monumentalization of the city, which peaked in the second century C.E. with the construction of the Great Colonnade (fig. 7) and nearby structures, as the elite of Palmyra engaged in standard acts of civic *euergetism*. On occasion, the city itself, though generally at the behest of its elite members, engaged in acts of architectural or sculptural embellishment. Such acts provided structure to social relations in the city, showing that those empowered to make decisions for public benefaction did so.

For a discussion of community formation at Palmyra, then, we must recognize that the available evidence overwhelmingly derives from contexts related to Palmyrene urbanization and the city's institutional development as a *polis*. Again, the evidence is primarily epigraphic. In their public, monumental contexts, numerous inscriptions, in both Palmyrene and Greek, refer explicitly to the Palmyrene community, in terms of a collective political and social identity. Set in a

chronological context, this evidence illuminates community formation.

A Palmyrene inscription from 10 C.E. is the earliest reference to the Palmyrenes as a community. The inscription was found in 1989 in a garden of the oasis southwest of the ancient settlement. The text refers to a wall (*ktl*) and, apparently, relates to a tax on camels brought into the city proper and somehow connected to the “funds of the people of Palmyra” (*blw | gbl tdmry*).² The Palmyrene term for people, *gbl*, appears again in a bilingual inscription from 25 C.E. honoring a certain Malku, son of Nesha, who was a member of the *bny kmr*, a prominent Palmyrene tribe. His statue was dedicated by the people of Palmyra (*gbl tdmry*), rendered in Greek by Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος.³ The last known occurrence of the term *gbl* is in a bilingual text of 51 C.E. honoring a certain Moqimu, son of Ogeilu. “All the people of Palmyra” (*gbl tdmry’ klhn*), according to the Palmyrene text, sponsored the dedication, while the Greek text identifies the sponsor most likely as “the city of the Palmyrenes” ([Παλμυρη]νῶν ἡ

² P2636. K. al-As‘ad and M. Gawlikowski, “Le Péage à Palmyre en 11 CE,” *Semitica* 41-42 (1991): 163-72, make the suggestion that the text refers to a tax on camels. The text, however, is problematic and may refer to a wall constructed from the revenues of men from the remote settlement of Gamla on the Euphrates; see, for instance, *ibid.*, 164-66; and Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 353, s.v. “*gmly*.” For a different reading, see B. Aggoula, “Les Mots *blw* et *blwy*’ dans une inscription palmyrénienne,” *Syria* 71 (1994): 415-17, who finds the inscription as evidence of a separate cemetery of camel-drivers at Palmyra.

³ P1353.

[π]ό[λις]).⁴ Significantly, both Malku in 25 C.E. and Moqimu in 51 C.E. were honored for their contributions toward the construction of the temple of Bel (figs. 8 and 9), which, as I will discuss below, was the single most important monument indicating community formation.

Equating the Palmyrene word for people, *gbl*, with the Greek term *dēmos* at this stage in Palmyra’s history would seem to suggest a political formation. We tend, for instance, to regard occurrences of the Greek *dēmos* in the context of the *polis* as representing a group of citizens assembled for political ends—thus the classic translation of *dēmos* as a people’s assembly. Yet, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, Palmyra in the early first century C.E., by all appearances, still was at a primitive stage in its development as a city with a constitution. The *dēmos* at the time probably did not yet refer a formal political institution. Indeed, the word *dēmos* may well have been used here to identify the “people” of Palmyra more generically as a collective association as a community of citizens. The earliest reference, in fact, to the *dēmos* of the Palmyrenes is in a bilingual inscription from 24 C.E., on a column console in the temple of Bel, honoring the same Malku, son of Nesha. According to the Palmyrene text, “all the merchants who are in the city of Babylon,” (*t[g]ry’ kllhwn dy bmdynt bbl*) sponsored the dedication, whereas the Greek text identifies the sponsor solely as the *dēmos* of the Palmyrenes

⁴ P0269.

(Παλμυρηῶν ὁ δῆμος).⁵ Furthermore, the sense of *dēmos* as a community of citizens rather than as a political assembly seems to be confirmed in a trilingual inscription from 74 C.E., in which a council or *boulē* is first attested at Palmyra. The Greek text reads, “ἡ [βουλ]ῆ καὶ ὁ [δῆμος],” which the Palmyrene transliterates, for the first time, as *bwl’ wdms*.⁶ The Latin text, interestingly, transliterates the Greek *boulē* but translates *dēmos* as the “*civitas* of the Palmyrenes,” which would suggest a reference to the state at large, or perhaps the community of citizens as a whole, as opposed to any formal political assembly.⁷ Finally, whatever Palmyra’s institutional situation may have been in the first century C.E., the institutions typical of a standard Greek *polis* were established by the early second century, which included not only a council and assembly but also a number of high offices.⁸

Thus our evidence for community formation at Palmyra is from inscriptions that indicate shared identity as a community of citizens. Those named *gbl* or *dēmos*

⁵ P1352.

⁶ This became a standard transliteration. Basically, this was a formulaic expression. It should not be taken to assume that actual power rested with the assembly of citizens to enact decrees, although it may have sanctioned them. For discussion, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 177-79.

⁷ Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933), 174-76, restores the Latin text to read: *bu[le et civi]tas Palmyrenorum*. See also Millar, *Roman Near East*, 324.

⁸ See pp. 279-89 below.

were collectively the people of Palmyra. Further, the architectural and sculptural embellishment of the city reflected the emerging social order and power structures. These monuments crystallized community forming processes. The honors, for instance, bestowed upon Malku, son of Nesha for his public munificence, in particular his contributions to the construction of the temple of Bel, which was the chief sanctuary and the center of cult activity in the city, indicate communal cooperation and participation in *polis* life (see below). Also, in terms of community formation, it is the development of the temple of Bel that most reflected the nature of Palmyra as a center for shared religious association. Moreover, it was mostly as an economic center that Palmyra acquired the wealth to fund such building projects in the first place.

Palmyra as Religious Center

Common religious association bridged city and countryside, and, unified by shared cults, many were drawn to Palmyra, whether for permanent settlement or otherwise. The gods surely favored the oasis, or so popular opinion would have been inclined to believe. One of few permanent water sources in the Syrian desert, the oasis of Palmyra was known for its fertility and pleasantness, and it served as a locus for human interaction, particularly in cultic contexts, in all known periods. The oldest physical remains that testify to human activity at the site, in fact, were

found near the central spring of the oasis, the source called Efqa.⁹ Moreover, the Hellenistic settlement, which was probably just a substantial village, was discovered between the spring and the temple of Bel, the central civic sanctuary of the Palmyrene community from the first through third centuries C.E.¹⁰ When Augustus gained supreme power in 27 B.C.E., the settled population of this remote Syrian oasis had already achieved a certain measure of cultural complexity. Amorites, Aramaeans, and Arabs had all come, in this order, to settle at the oasis, and their assimilation and acculturation into its community are reflected in the complex religious associations that emerged as a result.¹¹

As a center for shared cult, then, Palmyra served the needs of a diverse population. Many migrated to the oasis from outlying settlements at varying distances and joined the indigenous community, while others, mostly Arabs, were drawn to the settlement as a refuge from the surrounding desert. No doubt their reasons for migration were as diverse as the cultural backgrounds of the migrants themselves. Moreover, by all appearances, each group brought its own gods, as the

⁹ See R. Du Mesnil du Buisson, "Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1966): 160-62.

¹⁰ See Schmidt-Colinet and al-As'ad, "Zur Urbanistik des hellenistischen Palmyra," 61-73; Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 33-38; D. Van Berchem, "Le Plan de Palmyre," in *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives*, 168-70.

¹¹ Indeed, set as a crossroads between peoples and cultures, Palmyra was essentially a community of migrants. This cultural complexity that resulted is discussed at length in Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, vii-x.

long list of deities of the Palmyrene pantheon attests. For example, Bel, Belti, Nabu, Nergal, and Nanai are of Babylonian origin; Baalshamin and Belhammon seem to be from Phoenicia; Ishtar and Atargatis are Aramaean; Shadrafa and Elqonera are probably Canaanite; and Arab deities include Shamash, Allat, Abgal, Manawat, and a host of others.¹² Also popular were the protecting spirits of a particular place or people, referred to as individual Gad or genii (*gny'*).¹³ Much of the religion of the Palmyrenes remains enigmatic, due to the absence of texts that illuminate communal reasoning in theology and mythology.¹⁴ Thus it is difficult to assess the manner in which associations and alliances in the divine realm manifested social realities in the Palmyrene community. For instance, we can turn to the inscriptions, to the *tesserae* or tokens that permitted entrance to sacred banquets, or to sculpted statuary and reliefs, but these are open to interpretation and are frequently of insufficient detail to be useful. Nonetheless, while we cannot illuminate the details of the assimilation of diverse peoples and their personal beliefs into the communal life of the oasis, a general assessment of this process can be made.

¹² Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 1-114; Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 9-22; and College, *Art of Palmyra*, 24-25.

¹³ On the cults of the tutelary deities, see Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 77-100.

¹⁴ For general remarks on the problems of approaching Palmyrene religion, see Kaizer, *Religion of Palmyra*, 24-27.

I will examine in this section Palmyra's role as a religious center in the Syrian desert. Diverse peoples, having migrated to the oasis whether for permanent settlement or otherwise, generated and sustained a complex environment for shared religious association. This development was one aspect of community formation. I will examine how Palmyra functioned as a cult center in the context of community growth, primarily, by discussing the evidence we have for the foundation of the temple of Bel and the various cultic associations attached to it. This will include an overview of the cults of Yarhibol and Aglibol, gods associated with Bel in a divine triad.

We can elucidate the role of Palmyra as a cult center, in relation to settlement activity at the site and the growth of community, by examining more closely the physical evolution of the temple of Bel and the observance of ritual and cult within its sacred precinct, particularly as this evidence reflects religious syncretism.¹⁵ The temple, as it exists today, is a massive complex. It consists of an

¹⁵ Syncretism is the process by which elements from one culture are taken over by another. These elements are then reinterpreted to make sense in a new cultural framework with different power structures. For comments on syncretism at Palmyra, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 24-27. See also J. Webster, "Necessary Comparisons: A Post-Colonial Approach to Religious Syncretism in the Roman Provinces," *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 324-38, who advocates a study of syncretism through comparative analogy. For a general discussion, see C. Stewart, "Relocating Syncretism in Social Science Discourse," in *Syncretism and the Commerce of Symbols*, edited by G. Ajmar (Göteborg, Sweden: IASSA, 1995), 13-37; and R. Shaw and C. Stewart, "Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism," in *Syncretism / Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, edited by C. Stewart and R. Shaw (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-26.

enclosed *temenos* or paved court with a *propylaeum* or monumental gated entrance along its west side.¹⁶ The *cella* of the temple, the actual shrine of the god, surrounded by a peristyle of Corinthian columns, lies on a platform in the middle of the *temenos* and to which a large stepped platform leads. Within the *cella* are two *adytons* or inner shrines. Communal, cultic features in the courtyard of the *temenos* before the *cella* include the remains of a large basin, an altar, and a dining hall, along with a building with niches. Also, in the northwest corner of the *temenos* lies a ramp along which animals were brought into the temple precinct for ritual slaughter. The entire temple complex rests on a low-lying tell whose stratification goes back to the third millennium.¹⁷

The existing temple of Bel was not conceived of or completed as a single building project.¹⁸ It went through various phases of construction that lasted nearly a century during the formative years of the Palmyrene community. The earliest inscription we have recording building activity, most likely of the *cella*, is bilingual

¹⁶ The *temenos* measures ca. 202 m NS x 282 m EW. Nothing remains of the *propylaeum*, which was replaced, as an inscription above the entrance attests, by an Islamic citadel in 1132-33 C.E. (see *Inventaire* 9.54). For a detailed description of the temple, see Browning, *Palmyra*, 99-128.

¹⁷ Most of the early evidence comes from a foundation wall in the court of the present *temenos*, summarized by Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 56-60.

¹⁸ For a recent discussion of the historical and architectural development of the temple of Bel in the Common Era, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 67-79; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 51-57.

in Greek and Aramaic and dates to 19 C.E.¹⁹ The inscription commemorates a statue to Yedibel, son of Azizu, specifically identified as a Palmyrene of the tribe of the *bny mtbwl*. Palmyrene and Greek merchants in Seleucia on the Tigris, because of Yedibel’s contributions to the construction of the temple of Bel, sponsored the dedication. Construction continued into 24 C.E., according to P1352 referred to above, which honors Malku, son of Nesha, of the *bny kmr’*. The inscription states that “he had helped them in everything and he helped with the construction of the temple of Bel and he gave from his own funds more than anyone before him.”²⁰ In 25 C.E., as noted, the treasurers and the “people” (*gbl / dēmos*) of Palmyra honored Malku with a second statue in the temple precinct “because he was pleasing to them, to their city, and to the house of their gods.”²¹ Significantly, a few years earlier in 21 C.E., the brother of Malku, a certain Hashash, also received a commemorative statue in the precinct of the temple. Both the *bny mtbwl* and the *bny kmr’* set up the statue to Hashash “because he was their leader and made peace

¹⁹ P0270. Cf. P0271, a bilingual honorific inscription from the temple of Bel that records this same Yedibel having dedicated a statue to his father Azizu in 17 C.E. He is identified in the Greek text of this inscription specifically as a “Palmyrene from the tribe of the *Manth(a)bōleioi*” (Παλμυρηνὸν φυλῆς Μανθῶβωλείων).

²⁰ P1352: *mn dy špr lhwn bkl gns klh w‘[d]r bny n’ | dy h[y]kl’ dy bl wyhb mn kysh dy l’ ‘bdh | ‘nš.*

²¹ P1353: *[mn d]y špr lhwn wlmḥwzhwn wlb t’lhyhwn.*

between them and assisted them in everything, great and small.”²² This inscription traditionally has been interpreted as evidence of two distinct tribal groups settling down, one or both may or may not have been ethnically Arab, who gradually developed a collective identity as Palmyrenes.²³ The inscription may also, more simply, relate to Hashash’s role in spearheading the cooperative economic endeavor of constructing the temple in the first place and his assistance in settling disputes that may have arisen in association with the temple’s construction.²⁴ This would indicate, then, that the construction activity was a collective effort, partly driven by the shared interests of both the *bny kmr’* and the *bny mtbwl*, while other tribal groups also contributed.²⁵ In 32 C.E. another member of the *bny kmr’*, a certain Lishamsh, son of Taibol, consecrated the completion of the *cella* of the temple,

²² P0261: *mn [dy] qm | bršhwn w ‘bd šlm’ bynyhwn wprns | brmnhwn bkl [s]bw klh rb’ wz ‘r’*.

²³ See the cautionary remarks by Millar, *Roman Near East*, 322, followed by Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 44.

²⁴ The fact that he assisted both the *bny kmr’* and the *bny mtbwl* in all things great and small does not discount, perhaps, that he assisted with economic disputes over expenditures or aesthetic disputes over the temple’s decoration and embellishments.

²⁵ According to P0268 a certain Ogeilu, son of Taimai, of the *bny kmr’* received a statue in the temple complex. Other tribal groups associated with the temple of Bel include the *bny myt’* (see P1356 and P2762; see also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” [1933], 175-76, no. 2b), the *bny zbdbwl* (see P0269), and the *bny šm ‘r* or *šm ‘d* (see P1355).

dedicated to the divine triad of Bel, Yarhibol, and Aglibol.²⁶ Though the central sanctuary was completed in the middle of the first century C.E., construction of the temple complex continued into the second. In 108 C.E., the Gaddeibōlioi, or *bny gdybwl*, honored a benefactor because he had made for them the gate and doors, presumably of the *cella*.²⁷ As late as 175 C.E., a certain Yarhibola and his cousin Awida received statues from the council and the people (*bwl' wdms*) for their having paid for six brazen doors for the “great portico of the house of Bel.”²⁸

The evidence thus shows that the construction of the temple of Bel was a cooperative venture among different tribal groups at a time when the inhabitants of the oasis were expressing themselves, epigraphically at least, as sharing a common identity as Palmyrenes. This process of community formation, in fact, had begun long before construction of the existing temple. A common sanctuary, or holy precinct, for instance, was established before the consecration of the monumental temple of Bel in 32 C.E., which accommodated communal worship among the

²⁶ See P1347. The inscription dates to 45 C.E. and records the dedication of a statue to Lishamsh by his children. M. Pietrzykowski, *Adyta świątyni palmyreńskich: Studium funkcji i formy*, edited by M. Gawlikowski (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, Instytut Archeologii, 1997), 134, suggests that the dedication of 32 C.E. was of the north *adyton*, arguing that the south *adyton* was built some twenty years later. See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 68-70.

²⁷ P0263. For a discussion of the identification of the gate and doors referred to in this inscription, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 68; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 73.

²⁸ P0260: *bbslq' rbt' | dy bt bl / ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ βασιλικῇ | τοῦ Βήλου.*

inhabitants of the oasis.²⁹ From the foundation wall of this early sanctuary, an archaic inscription confirms the worship of Bel in the first century B.C.E., presumably on the same site upon which the Palmyrenes built the later temple. The inscription reads:

In the month Tishri, the year 269 (October 44 B.C.E.), the priests of Bel erected this statue to Goraimai son of Nebuzabad, of the tribe of the *bny khnbw[l]*.³⁰

Beyond this evidence of the existence of a priesthood to the god Bel, we know little of the nature of his cult in this early period, whether of its regulations or rituals. We do know, however, that Bel shared his sacred precinct with a host of other deities. Archaic inscriptions from foundation trenches of this early sanctuary, in addition to Bel, refer to the gods Herta, Nanai, Reshef, Yarhibol, Belhammon, Manawat, the “daughter of Bel” (*brt bl*), “the goddess” (*’štr*’), Belastor, “the demons” (*šdy*’), and Baaltak.³¹ Apparently, these gods were the patron deities of

²⁹ On the temple in the Hellenistic period, see Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 53-66.

³⁰ P1524: *byrh tšry šnt 2 | 69 ’qym[w] kmry’ | dy bl šlm’ dnh lgrymy | br nbwzbd dy mn pḥd | bny khnbw[l]*. For the interpretation of *khnbw[l]* as the “priests of Bol,” see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 31 and 55, as opposed to the “priest of Nabu” suggested by Starcky in *Inventaire* 11.100. See also Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 35-36, for support of Starcky. For further discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 46, n. 28. On excavations carried out in the temple of Bel, see Seyrig, Amy, and Will, *Le Temple de Bêl*, 7-40; and Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 3-4.

³¹ For Herta, Nanai, and Reshef, see P2766; for Yarhibol, see P2768, P2774, and P2775; for Belhammon and Manawat, see P1461 and P1523; for the “daughter of Bel” (*brt bl*), see P2723 (see also J. Starcky, “Inscriptions archaïques de

specific groups in residence at Palmyra or of those in transit, and the holy precinct of Bel served as a focal point for the integration of their respective cults into the communal life of the oasis. In some instances, these people built shrines and altars around the *temenos* to honor their gods.³² This evidence, though not abundant, confirms the communal aspects of worship at Palmyra and illuminates the temple of Bel as a center for shared cult.

Even before its consecration in 32 C.E., the Palmyrenes themselves regarded the temple of Bel, or “house of Bel” (*bt bl*) as it was also regarded, as a communal sanctuary and as a center for common worship (figs. 8 and 9).³³ By 25 C.E., as I have noted above, the temple of Bel had assumed the epithet, “the house of the gods” (*bt 'lhy'*). The inscription is worth quoting in full:

Palmyrene: In the month Siwan, the year 336 (June 25 C.E.), this statue is that of Malku, son of Nesha, son of Bolha Hashash, of the *bny kmr'*, which was erected for him by the treasurers and the people of the Palmyrenes, because he was agreeable to them, to their city and to the house of their gods.

Greek: (To) Maliko (son of) Nesa (son of) Bōla (son of) Asasos, of the tribe of the *Komarēnoi*, the treasurers and the *dēmos* of the Palmyrenes (made this) on account of his benevolence.³⁴

Palmyre,” in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* [Rome: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1956], 512); for “the goddess” (*'štr'*), see P1511; for Belastor and “the demons” (*šdy'*), see P2749 (cf. P2780); and for Baaltak, see P2750.

³² For instance, see P2774, P2749, P2766, and P2768.

³³ For the “house of Bel” (*bt bl*), see P0260 and P1358.

³⁴ P1353: [b]yrḥ sywn šnt 336 šlm' dnh dy | [ml]kw br nš' br bwlḥ' ḥšš dy mn bny kmr' | [dy] 'qymw lh 'nwš 'nwšt' wgbl tdmry' | [mn d]y špr lhwn wlmḥwzhwn

Similarly, P0269 of 51 C.E., set up in honor of Moqimu, son of Ogeilu, for his contribution of cultic items, refers to the temple of Bel as the “house of the gods” (*bt ’lhyn*).³⁵ We find another reference to the *bt ’lhyn* in an inscription of 48/49 C.E. from a few years earlier, in which members of the *bny myt’* honor the god Belastor with a portico in the temple precinct.³⁶ These texts show that for the community of Palmyra the temple of Bel was the house of their own gods. The temple made it possible for the Palmyrenes from diverse backgrounds and different tribal affiliations to locate their religious observances into a one cult center. This common location facilitated community formation. The temple provided a unified cohesive setting that framed, perhaps even appeased, social, political, and cultural differences.

There is also evidence to suggest that the priests of Bel were organized in an inter-tribal *thiasos* in the Common Era, which strengthens the argument for communal aspects of worship at the temple. From the foundations of the Hellenistic temple of Bel, three undated stone fragments, which may form part of a single inscription, seem to comprise one of the so-called sacred laws of the community. Twice these fragments refer to the individuals named in the text as

wlbt ’lhyhwn / Μάλιχον Νεσᾶ τοῦ Βωλάα τοῦ Ἄσά|σου φυλῆς Χομαρηνῶν
οἱ ἀργυρο|τομίαι καὶ Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος | εὐνοίας ἔνεκα.

³⁵ P0269. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 154.

³⁶ P2749.

Palmyrenes.³⁷ The suggestion that they formed an inter-tribal *thiasos* is based on the onomastics, which reflects different cultural backgrounds, and on the collective identification of the persons as Palmyrenes, though tribal affiliations are not given for any of the individuals mentioned in these texts. In light of the fact that we know of various individuals of different tribal affiliations honored with statues in the temple precinct, and that we know that the temple served the entire Palmyrene community, the suggestion that its organization was tribally based is a compelling one.³⁸

The evidence thus shows that the construction of the temple of Bel was a cooperative venture among different tribal groups. It also shows that this building activity coincided with the time that the inhabitants of the oasis began to express themselves, epigraphically at least, as sharing a common identity as Palmyrenes. As a focal point for religious observance, then, the temple of Bel served the needs of the entire Palmyrene community and enhanced the role of Palmyra as a regional cult center. Moreover, in its role as a cult center, the temple of Bel served to unify

³⁷ The texts are P2774, P2775, and P1521. It may be that P2775 and P1521, as Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 56-58, suggests, join with P2774 to form a single inscription. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 300-309. Also, Gawlikowski, “Tadmorean,” 97, rejects the suggestion of Milik, *Dédicaces*, 28-90, that P2767 be included in the reconstruction as well. More recently, for a discussion of these texts, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 172-75. On the inter-tribal nature of the priests of Bel, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 109-10.

³⁸ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 28-29 and 46-47, also advocates the inter-tribal nature of the priesthood of Bel.

city and countryside. Since tribal affiliations were maintained among individuals and families in both civic and rural contexts, as discussed in Chapter 2, attendance at festivals and other celebrations hosted by the temple would have served to strengthen social cohesion despite one's particular residence. In such a way, common religious association strengthened social solidarity, tribal and otherwise. And while there appears to have been a preference for Bel in the city and that of Arab and local deities in the countryside, as observed to the northwest of Palmyra, there were few exclusions of any god from either milieu.³⁹ Such preference simply highlights the civic aspects of the sanctuary of Bel and the urban nature of his cult.

The cult of the god Yarhibol also illuminates community formation at Palmyra and the integration of city and countryside.⁴⁰ As mentioned, the earliest human activity attested at Palmyra is at the Efqa spring, which seemed to have had a divine presence, presumably that of Yarhibol, otherwise known as "Lord of the Spring."⁴¹ On an altar now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, for instance,

³⁹ See Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, 124-28.

⁴⁰ On the cult of Yarhibol at Palmyra, see Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 112-20; idem, "Les Dieux de Palmyre," 2616-19; Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 29-34; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 47-51; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 143-48.

⁴¹ For the etymology, see S. Dalley, "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere in the Parthian Period," *Aram* 7 (1995): 140; Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 145; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 48, n. 37.

we find inscribed “to the Gad of the blessed spring” (*lgd’ dy ‘yn’ brykt’*).⁴² In addition, there are two altars dedicated to the “idol of the spring” (*mšb’ dy ‘yn’*) now in the Palmyra Museum, both of which refer specifically to the “priest of the idol” (*’pkl’ mšb’*), who is not identified and there is nothing to suggest his social status or the nature of the cult over which he presided.⁴³ We identify the Gad or *mšb’* of the spring with the god Yarhibol based on the text of an inscription from Dura Europos that reads, “Yarhibol, the good god, sacred stone of the spring, set up by the *bny myt’*, the archers.”⁴⁴ As for the relationship between the cult of Yarhibol and urbanization, it is relevant that one of the earliest sanctuaries at Palmyra was that of Yarhibol, located in the vicinity of the Efqa, which likely served as a center for common religious association among many who were attracted to the oasis in the first place. Unfortunately, the remains of the sanctuary have not been discovered, and all the evidence we have of it and of the cult of Yarhibol is epigraphic and conjectural.⁴⁵ P2774 provides a reference to a “dwelling” (*dwr’*) of Yarhibol, but whether this refers to a sanctuary near the Efqa is not certain. The only structures identified at the spring are in an inscription of 205 C.E., which

⁴² P0322.

⁴³ P0410 and P0411.

⁴⁴ P1099: *yrhbwl ‘lh’ | ṭb’ mšb’ dy | ‘yn’ ‘bd bny myt’ qšṭ’*. For discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 233-35.

⁴⁵ For discussion, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 143-48.

reads:

[Front] While curator of the spring, Bolha, son of Hairan, son of Ataqaḅ Haumal, whom the god Yarhibol had chosen, built this structure of the spring, and the wall that is before the pool, and the outer wall, and wall of bricks (?), in the month Nisan, the year 516 (April 205 C.E.). May Taima‘a, son of M[. . .] (son of) Taimaa Bōliados (and) Hairan, son of Moqimu [and Malk]u, whom Bolha, curator of the spring, had chosen.

[On the right face] And Bolha made this altar at his own expense for his life and the lives of his children and his brothers.⁴⁶

This text documents a late stage of urbanization at Palmyra, but it nonetheless indicates the continued significance of the Efqa spring as a water source and Yarhibol’s divine associations with it. It may be that the waters of the Efqa were used primarily for irrigation and that Yarhibol’s protection of the spring by association extended to the cultivated fields. Although discovered in a village 28 km northwest of Palmyra, an altar was dedicated “to Yarhibol, to the irrigator of the earth, to the Gad of the village, to the rewarding god.”⁴⁷ Traditionally, however, Yarhibol was a god of oracles and justice, who later developed into a solar deity as

⁴⁶ P1919: [b]r^bnwt ‘yn’ dy bwlḥ’ br ḥyrn br | ‘t’qb ḥwml dy ‘ḥd yrḥbwl ‘lh’ | bn’ bnyⁿ’ dnh dy ‘yn wktl’ dy qd[m] | bt gb’ wktl’ dy br’ w’bd ktl’ dy | [l]bn’ byrḥ nysn šnt 516 | wd^kyr t[y]m ‘‘ br m [. . .] tym ‘‘ blyd[] | [w]ḥyrn b[r] m^qym[w mlk]w dy ‘ḥd lh bwlḥ’ dnh rb ‘yn. [On the right face] w’bd bwlḥ’ dnh ‘lt’ dh mn kysh ‘l | ḥywhy whyy bnwhy w’ḥwhy. See also D. al-Hassani and J. Starcky, “Autels palmyréniens découverts près de la source Efca (suite),” *AAS* 7 (1957): 111-14. Cf. Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 115-16.

⁴⁷ P1622: ‘lt’ dy ‘bd | mlkw br | mrbn’ | lyrḥbwl | lšq’ l’r[q] | lgd’ dy qrt[] | l’lh’ škr[] | šnt 52[. . .] | byrḥ nysn.

one of the triad of Bel.⁴⁸ Interestingly, Teixidor claims that the preference for Yarhibol as a sun god, as opposed to the Arab deity Shamash, who was also worshiped at Palmyra, stems from the fact that Yarhibol had already been installed at Palmyra as a traditional god of justice by the Aramaeans long before Arab immigration to the oasis.⁴⁹

Yarhibol's public association with the god Bel likewise manifests his importance to community formation at Palmyra, both in terms of urbanization and *polis* development. The oldest known Palmyrene inscription from Dura Europos, which dates to 33 B.C.E., attests to the antiquity of this divine association. It records the construction and dedication of a shrine to the gods Bel and Yarhibol by Zabdibol, son of Baayahu, of the *bny gdybwl*, and Malku, son of Ramu, of the *bny kmr*.⁵⁰ This dedication in Palmyrene, though it was made in Dura Europos, remains a quintessential example of the development of community through joint acts. As a testament of cooperation between two individuals from different tribes, according to Dirven, the association between the gods Bel and Yarhibol and their joint cult appears to have been of a communal nature and more socially cohesive

⁴⁸ For Yarhibol as one of the triad of Bel and as a god of justice and oracles, see Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 31-34.

⁴⁹ Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 34, who also stresses the civic importance of Yarhibol.

⁵⁰ P1067. For commentary, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 199-202. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 304 and 369; Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 2-3; and *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 318-20, no. 916, pl. 55, 1.

than common worship at the tribal level.⁵¹ At Palmyra, both the *bn̄y kmr'* and the *bn̄y gdybwl* contributed to the construction of the temple of Bel. Also, while Yarhibol was among the gods worshiped in the sacred precinct that preceded construction activity of the new temple, perhaps either the *bn̄y kmr'* or the *bn̄y gdybwl*, or both, facilitated Yarhibol's elevation into the divine triad with Bel.⁵² The prominent role Yarhibol played in the community, in association with Bel, is reflected in the following inscription on a column console in the temple of Bel:

This statue is that of Zebaida, son of Soadu Taimashamas, which the council made for him in his honor, and the god Yarhibol gave a testimony concerning him (*wshd lh yrḥbwl 'lh'*), during his term as *symposiarch* of the priests of Bel (*brbnwt mrzḥwth dy kmry bl*), in the month of Nisan, the year 428 (April 117 C.E.).⁵³

A public testimony given by the god Yarhibol Zebaida during his term as *symposiarch* of the priests of Bel clearly reflected the close association between the two gods and Yarhibol's communal significance.

We know little of Yarhibol's cult or of who maintained it before the Common Era. Nevertheless, in the first century C.E. and progressively more so in the second, as the city of Palmyra developed and as its community grew, Yarhibol became more of a communal deity with a significant public role to play in

⁵¹ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 43.

⁵² P2768.

⁵³ P0265: *šlm' dnh dy zbyd' br š'dw | tymšmš dy 'bdt lh bwl' | [ly]qrh wshd lh yrḥbwl 'lh' | brbnwt mrzḥwth dy kmry bl | byrḥ nysn šnt 428.*

Palmyrene society. As noted, in his role as patron and tutelary deity of the Efqa spring, Yarhibol appointed curators to safeguard the source of the spring and its associated sanctuary. The inscription quoted above honoring Zebaida in 117 C.E. is the earliest known example. Curatorial appointments are also attested in 162 C.E. and in the early third century C.E.⁵⁴ We can assume, then, that this was an important public post, since the discharge from the spring would have required regulation if it was to support, for instance, public irrigation projects. Furthermore, near the close of the second century C.E. and into the early third, Yarhibol's role as a god of the city manifested itself in his numerous testimonies to public officials. A bilingual inscription of 198 C.E., for instance, identifies a certain Aelius Bora, son of Titus Aelius Ogeilu, who received a statue by decree of the council and the people (*bwl' wdms*) and at the expense of the *bny kmr'*, and whom the Greek text states also received a testimony from Yarhibol, the ancestral god, because of Aelius' services to the state.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Greek text of a fragmentary inscription of 193 C.E., presumably from the agora, records the testimony of Yarhibol, again identified as the ancestral god, to an unspecified public official who completed his

⁵⁴ P1917 (162 C.E.), P1918 (162 C.E.), P1919 (205 C.E.), and P1557 (206 C.E.). Perhaps the source of the spring was in the same location in antiquity as it is today, deep in the cave at Efqa.

⁵⁵ P1063. For discussion, see Ingholt, "Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre," 279; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 36-37; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 27-28; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 46-47 and 147.

term as *stratēgos* and chief of the market (*agoranomos*).⁵⁶ The latest inscription in which Yarhibol gave a testimony is bilingual in Palmyrene and Greek and dates to 242 C.E. The inscription is on a column console along the Great Colonnade and honors Julius Aurelius Zabdila, who had served as *stratēgos* when the emperor Alexander Severus visited the city in 229 C.E., who had assisted the Roman general Rutilius Crispinus, commander of the *vexillationes* in the city, and who had saved the city great sums of money in his capacity as *agoranomos*. Due to his public munificence, Zabdila received testimonies from the god Yarhibol, the Roman prefect Julius Priscus, and the city of Palmyra itself.⁵⁷ In most cases, the individuals to whom Yarhibol gave his testimony had all served as *stratēgoi*, or generals of the Palmyrene militia, which was a very important official post in the late second and third centuries C.E., and many also had served the city as *agoranomoi*.⁵⁸ Furthermore, as the cult of Yarhibol increased in public significance, the god himself retained his ancestral character. He is never identified with any Greek deity, as others Palmyrene gods were, and his name was

⁵⁶ P1398. The Greek reads: ὧς καὶ ὑπὸ Ἰαριβ[ώ]λου | [τοῦ π]ατρ[ώ]ου θ[ε]οῦ μαρτ[υ]ρηθῆναι. See also H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," *Syria* 22 (1941): 246-48.

⁵⁷ P0278.

⁵⁸ See also P1415. As these inscriptions suggest, in addition to P1099, Yarhibol's popularity among Palmyrene soldiers grew over the course of the second century C.E.

consistently transcribed in Greek inscriptions.⁵⁹ He was also from the late second century onward consistently called in Greek an ancestral god (*patrōios theos*). Why suddenly the Palmyrenes began confirming Yarhibol as ancestral is not known, but it may be significant that it occurred at a late stage of community development when the Palmyrenes began to experience numerous hardships due to wars and plague (see below).

Thus the importance of Yarhibol as an ancestral god of the Palmyrenes stems from his position as guardian of the Efqa spring. From a regional perspective, people were naturally drawn to the oasis, but in particular to the spring as a source of water. The oldest settlement activity at Palmyra is attested here, and, not surprisingly, the spring became a center of religious observance. Although we know little of the early cult of Yarhibol or the nature of his sanctuary, his later association with Bel, chief god of the Palmyrene pantheon, as one of the triad, suggests his importance to the community.⁶⁰ Moreover, the orientation of the temple of Bel, the entrance of which faces the spring, in addition to the location of Palmyrene settlement in the Hellenistic period, also suggest the importance of the Efqa spring and the sanctuary of Yarhibol at the site.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See Milik, *Dédicaces*, 44-46.

⁶⁰ See H. Seyrig, "Bêl de Palmyre," *Syria* 48 (1971): 89-94. Cf. Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre," 2611 and 2625, who rejects the notion of a triad altogether.

⁶¹ As observed by Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 48.

As the third member of the triad alongside Bel and Yarhibol, the moon god Aglibol and his cult further attest that Palmyra was a religious center, bridging city and countryside, and the role of shared religious association in community formation. The evidence, again, is primarily epigraphic. The earliest inscription associates Aglibol with the sun god Malakbel, whose joint cult appears closely associated with the *bnv kmr'*.⁶² The inscription is from 17 B.C.E. It commemorates the erection of a statue by the gods Aglibol and Malakbel and the *bnv kmr'* to a certain woman by the name of Attam.⁶³ Similarly, in a bilingual inscription from 122/23 C.E. the divine pair and the *bnv kmr'* sponsor a dedication to a certain Manai to reward his piety.⁶⁴ P1509 also records a dedication sponsored by both the *bnv kmr'* and the gods Aglibol and Malakbel.⁶⁵ Furthermore, several inscriptions identify the *bnv kmr'* or individuals of this group themselves making donations to the two gods or honoring those who did so. In an inscription from the late first or early second century C.E., the *bnv kmr'* honored a certain Yarhibola, for instance,

⁶² On the cult of Aglibol and Malakbel, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 1-77; Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 34-52; Gawlikowski, "Dieux de Palmyre," 2620-21 and 2630-32; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 60-63; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 124-43.

⁶³ P0315. See Milik, *Dédicaces*, 62.

⁶⁴ P1942. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 76, who reads the date as 22/23 C.E. See also Gawlikowski, *Recueil d'inscriptions palmyréniennes*, no. 159, who prefers the late date, followed by Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 130.

⁶⁵ P1509. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 75.

identified as a “heater of water” (*mḥm my*’), for his apparent consecration of a garden to the two gods.⁶⁶ In 182 C.E., a certain Thomallachis, daughter of Haddoudanos, of the tribe of the *Khōneitōi*, contributed 2500 *denarii* towards the construction of the bath of Aglibol and Malakbel and was honored for her benefaction.⁶⁷ Finally, an undated inscription now in the Palmyra Museum identifies a member of the *bn̄y kmr*’ having dedicated a column to the two gods.⁶⁸ While the *bn̄y kmr*’ were not the only social group at Palmyra to worship Aglibol and Malakbel, they were certainly the most active.⁶⁹ Teixidor interprets the evidence of these two gods as suggesting strong Phoenician and Aramaic influences within the Palmyrene community, and claims that Aglibol and Malakbel were “committed to vegetation and to the welfare of the flocks, which makes their cult more suitable to the mores of settled tribes than those of nomads.”⁷⁰ I doubt that it is necessary to strike such a dichotomy between sedentaries and nomads, but the

⁶⁶ P1944. See also M. Gawlikowski, “Nouvelles inscriptions du camp de Dioclétien,” *Syria* 47 (1970): 319-25; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 128.

⁶⁷ Ingholt, “Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, I,” *Berytus* 3 (1936): 109-12, no. 11. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 31-32; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 128-29. The tribe referred to as the *Khōneitōi* in Greek is the same as the *bn̄y kmr*’; see P1063.

⁶⁸ P1504. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 38.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of other groups worshiping Aglibol and Malakbel, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 130.

⁷⁰ Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 35.

evidence does suggest that the *bn̄y kmr'*, who apparently managed the cult of the two gods, should be regarded as an old tribe with indigenous ties to the oasis. Their role in community formation probably centered on their devotion to Aglibol and Malakbel, as the *bn̄y kmr'* persisted in maintaining the cult of these gods and in advancing its civic recognition. This is evident in the elevation of Aglibol as one of the divine triad, confirmed by the dedication of the temple of Bel in 32 C.E. In the formative period of community development, the *bn̄y kmr'*, as Kaizer observes, “formed one of the most important groups within the society of Palmyra, [and they] managed to have one of their own ‘ancestral’ deities worshiped alongside the important gods Bel and Yarhibol in a ‘new formation.’”⁷¹ This “new formation” thus reflected existing social and cultural realities—as groups became progressively “Palmyrene,” so did their gods.

The cult of the gods Aglibol and Malakbel also pertains to urbanization at Palmyra, since we know that they shared a sanctuary known as the “Sacred Garden” (*gnt' 'lym*) or the “Grove” in Palmyrene (*hlss*), or the “Sacred Wood” in Greek (*alsos*).⁷² The epigraphic evidence for this sanctuary all dates to the second century

⁷¹ Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 139.

⁷² The relevant texts are P0197, P0314, P1505, and P1944; see also Drijvers, “Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions,” 34-38. For a recent discussion of the sanctuary and the evidence for it, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 124-28. See also Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 49-50. Representations of the sanctuary include a tessera depicting two altars with an ox to the left and a cypress to the right (Ingholt, Seyrig, and Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, no. 162) and a relief in the peristyle of the *cella* of the temple of Bel (see Seyrig, Amy, and

C.E., which further illuminates the monumentalization of the city as a community formative process. As I will examine in the Chapter 5, at the time the sanctuary of Aglibol and Malakbel was one of four principle sanctuaries of the city that gained prominence.⁷³ It seems, however, that a sanctuary to these gods may also have existed in the first century C.E. Aglibol and Malakbel are identified in an inscription from 29 C.E., for instance, on the rim of a large crater that probably served to mix wine for ritual banquets or *symposia*. The inscription reads:

In the month Shebat, the year 340 (February 29 C.E.), Shemaūn and Lishamsh, sons of Taimarsu, son of Hattait, offered this mixing-vessel and altar to Aglibol and Malakbel, the gods.⁷⁴

Also an altar inscription from 34 C.E. lists members of a religious confraternity or *thiasos*, identified in Palmyrene as *bny mrzḥ*’, devoted to these gods and possibly united for attendance at a symposium:

[In the month] Shebat, the year 345 (February 34 C.E.), [the *bny m]rzḥ*’ erected this altar to Aglibol and Malakbel, the gods: Wahbai, son of Atenuri Awida; Hagegu, son of Zabdilah Komarē; Nabuzabad, son of Malku Matanai; Taimu, son of Ogeilu Rabbat; Malku, son of Yarhibola Hattai; Yarhibola, son of Taimarsu Abruq; Zabdibol, son of Yedibel Elahu; Ogeilu, son of Nurai Zabdibel;

Will, *Le Temple de Bêl* , 86, pls. 42, 2 and 43, 1, Album 89).

⁷³ This is evident in the two inscriptions from the second century C.E. that refer to the four sanctuaries of the city; see P0197 and Drijvers, “Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions,” 34-38.

⁷⁴ P1553: *byrḥ šbt šnt 340 qrbw šw ‘wn wlšmš bny tymršw br ḥty[t] gb’t’ w’t’ ‘ln l’glbwl wlmkbl ‘lhy’*.

Malku, son of Moqimu Taimaamad.⁷⁵

Teixidor observes that the names mentioned in this inscription show a mix of Aramaeans and Arabs, and he suggests, accordingly, that ethnic divisions within the community must have become blurred prior to 34 C.E.⁷⁶ Whether the Palmyrenes would have perceived such ethnic distinctions amongst themselves in the first place is unanswerable. What is apparent, though, is that the cult of Aglibol and Malakbel, while administered by the *bny kmr*’, embraced the entire community from the first century C.E. onward, owing perhaps to its antiquity. Also, the *symposium* attached to the cult of these gods, in addition to other religious *symposia* at Palmyra, were community-forming events, providing opportune moments for cooperative social union and shared cult.

Community formation at Palmyra was intimately connected to the role of the city as a center for shared religious association. Many were drawn to Palmyra, for permanent settlement or otherwise, where they participated in the religious life of the oasis. Whether for festivals or feasts, the attraction was apparent. Also, many drawn to Palmyra maintained close ties to those in the countryside, where

⁷⁵ P0326: [byrḥ] šbt šnt 345 ‘lt’ dh [‘bdw] | [bny m]rzḥ’ ‘ln l’glbwł wmlkbl ‘lh[y’] | [wh]by br ‘tnwry ‘wdw whggw br zbdlh kmr’ | [wn]bwzbd br mlkw mtn’ wtymw br ‘gylw rbbt | [w]mlkw br yrḥbwł’ ḥty wyrḥbwł’ br tymrṣw | ‘brwq wzbdbwł br ydy‘bl ‘lhw w‘gylw br | nwry zbdbł wmlkw br mqymw tym ‘md. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 119; Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 40; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 133.

⁷⁶ See Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 40.

they often either imported or exported divinity. Thus, shared cult bridged city and countryside, and many of the gods imported into Palmyra found their residence in the house of Bel, the central urban sanctuary. Shared cult, in fact, facilitated and provided structure for community development. Finally, as one facet of urbanization, we should recognize that the sanctuaries and cults within the city, including the temple of Bel dedicated in 32 C.E., developed their monumental aspects in consequence of increased settlement at the site and as one of the more apparent byproducts of community formation. How the Palmyrenes funded this monumentalization of their city will be treated in the second part of this chapter.

Palmyra as Economic Center

The growth of community at Palmyra, in addition to the role of the city as a center for shared religious association, depended on the city's attraction as a center for economic opportunity, which was due primarily to the caravan trade. Many were drawn to Palmyra, whether from the surrounding hinterland or beyond, whether for permanent settlement or transient visits, because the city was a hub of economic significance. As a center of consumption, the city was a central market for goods produced regionally and an emporium for exotic goods derived from the caravan trade. Furthermore, the wealth generated through long distance trade and the local exchange of goods enriched the local elite who funded most of the building projects that gave Palmyra its monumental character. In this sense too, the urbanization of Palmyra provides a valuable framework for an analysis of

community formation. I will contrast in Chapter 4 the aristocrats who sponsored this monumentalization of Palmyra with the supporting artisans and craftsmen, who found in Palmyra an excellent market for their skills and labors. I will attend now to the factors that facilitated Palmyra's development into a consumer city and a center for economic opportunity within the context of community formation. I will begin this analysis at the local level, primarily in terms of the interrelationship between the city and its hinterland, and of the various factors that may have inspired migration to the oasis. This will entail a careful examination of the Palmyrene tariff inscription, perhaps the single most important document for understanding Palmyra's local economy. I will then carry the analysis to the regional or provincial level, for the commercial position of Palmyra had important and transparent effects on its urban development and the growth of community at the site, particularly in social stratification. What is most apparent in this context, as the literature on Palmyra emphasizes, is the obvious significance of the caravan trade to the city's economy and the attraction to trade among both the urban and rural population.

Bowersock observes that "the urbanization of Roman Syria may be described overall as due fundamentally to the economic requirements of the villages and to the religious needs of their inhabitants. The society of the cities was essentially designed at the outset to provide services for the residents of the large

territories.”⁷⁷ Though I would caution against comparing Palmyra too generally with other urban centers in Syria, because of its relative isolation in the desert, its vast hinterland, and its unique communal development, Bowersock’s assessment is essentially correct. In the remoteness of the desert, Palmyra served primarily as an important economic and administrative center. The urbanization of Palmyra, in fact, and the advent of monumental construction in the period of the late Roman Republic, stemmed directly from the wealth the community gained through commerce. Palmyra was an important nexus on an east-west route that supported caravan traffic and trade in exotic goods. In addition to the primary function of the city as an economic center, Palmyra also served a secondary function as an administrative center providing services (e.g. organizing common cult, resolving legal disputes) to all of its inhabitants and to those of the countryside, *both* peasants and pastoralists. Indeed, as Palmyra grew more prosperous after the first century B.C.E., as the urban population grew and a body of aristocrats and powerful merchants emerged, and as the city developed gradually its monumental urban aspect, a dependency between city and countryside became apparent.

As I will show, Palmyra’s growth and prosperity as a community depended

⁷⁷ G. W. Bowersock, “Social and Economic History of Syria under the Roman Empire,” in *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie, vol. 2: La Syrie de l’époque achéménide à l’avènement de l’Islam*, edited by J. -M. Dentzer and W. Orthmann (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1989), 67. See also Millar, *Roman Near East*, 299, who states that Palmyra “cannot be understood simply as an isolated oasis, but, like almost all other cities, as the most important point in a terrain of villages.”

on its management of the human and material resources within its hinterland. Conversely, peasants in villages and pastoralists in rural areas were attracted to Palmyra as an economic and administrative center. They relied, for instance, on the security provided through the city's administration and on the economic opportunities that Palmyra afforded. For example, though industry may have centered in the villages, Palmyra, as a consumer city, was a central market for manufactured goods. It also attracted skilled labor to build the monuments the elite funded. Most importantly, though, Palmyra's growth and prosperity depended on its command over the desert caravan trade, from which the economic benefits were immense. The evidence even suggests that those of the countryside not merely supported the trade ventures of the Palmyrene community, but actively participated in them as well and, with some variation, shared in their profits (see below). This enhances our understanding of the interrelationship between city and countryside that characterized Palmyrene communal development. Thus, we can best illuminate the growth of community at Palmyra, initially, through an analysis of the role of the city both as a locus for economic activity and as an administrative center, particularly in an analysis of the services the city provided that supported the domestic economy and rural population. Ultimately, the growth of community at Palmyra was tied to the caravan trade and the opportunities for advancement this trade supported.

The single most important document for the study of the domestic economy

of Palmyra is the Palmyrene tariff inscription.⁷⁸ The tax law, published in 137 C.E., was drawn up in Greek and Palmyrene by order of the council of the city of Palmyra. It was intended as a revision of an older tariff, part of which appears in the newer version. As we have it, the tariff is preserved in four large panels which, when discovered in Palmyra in 1882, once comprised a single stone block. The Palmyrene text inscribed at the top of the central panels identifies the document as “the tax law of the fiscal area⁷⁹ of Hadriana Tadmor and of the water sources of Aelius Caesar.”⁸⁰ Its basic purpose was to regulate the taxation scheme of the city in order to avoid disputes between the tax collectors and the merchants, craftsmen, pastoralists, farmers, and all others from whom taxes were owed. It regulated the flow of goods brought into or exported from the city and its territory. It also regulated important local resources such as salt and water, in addition to services

⁷⁸ The basic fact is that the tariff inscription illuminates above all the local economy of Palmyra. See discussion by Seyrig, “Le Statut de Palmyre,” 155-75; and Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 172-73.

⁷⁹ The word translated here by “fiscal area” is in Palmyrene *lmn*’, which is a transliteration of the Greek *limēn*, a fairly explicit term for a harbor or port. Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 175, translates *lmn*’ as “exchange” and stresses the close association with Latin *portus*, as a place where a *portorium* was exacted. Cf. Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 59. But, as M. Rostovtzeff, “Seleucid Babylonia,” *YCS* 3 (1932): 79-80, argues, *limēn* had taken on the sense of a “tax district” already in the Hellenistic period, which is the meaning applied here. Bowersock, “Social and Economic History,” 71, agrees with Rostovtzeff on this issue.

⁸⁰ P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.1: *nmws’ dy mks’ dy lmn’ dy hdryn’ tdmr w’ynt’ dy my’ [dy ’y]ls qysr*. Aelius Caesar referred to here is the emperor Hadrian himself.

provided in the city (e.g., prostitution). Everything that could be sold for profit, apparently, was liable to be taxed and required regulation.⁸¹

Fortunately, because of the tariff inscription, we are well-informed of the care that the city, as a center of administration, took to support the domestic economy and to sustain communal development. First of all, this took the form of the city's direct management of regional resources; the two most important of which that required regulation were water and salt, as the preamble to the old Palmyrene tariff attests:

Tax law of Tadmor and the water sources and of the salt which is in the city and its borders, according to the agreement made in the presence of Marinus the governor.⁸²

Water and salt are obviously important for basic human survival in a desert environment.⁸³ Salt was extracted from the sabkha, or mud-flat, region to the south of the oasis, though no archaeological evidence has been found of this activity (figs. 4 and 5).⁸⁴ The tariff inscription, however, is very explicit regarding the

⁸¹ As indicated in the justification for the tax on grasses or fodder; see P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.122.

⁸² P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.63-65. Additional resources or commodities that appear in the tax law include olive oil, wine, animal fat, salt fish, wheat, and pinecones.

⁸³ On the importance of salt to the Mediterranean economy and social development, see P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 195-200.

⁸⁴ Today, however, there are regulations that prevent salt exploitation from this area primarily because of the excessive amount of water required to generate

management and taxation of salt resources. The new law of 137 C.E. reads:

As for salt, it seems to me that it should be sold in the public place where the people assemble, and any Palmyrene who buys it for his own use will pay one Italian *assarius* for each *modius*, as is written in the law. The tax on salt which is found at Palmyra must be exacted in *assarii*, as in [that law], and the salt put on sale to the Palmyrenes, according to custom.⁸⁵

This amended the old law that apparently distinguished salt bought in Palmyra versus that which was purchased in the territory of the Palmyrenes ([*bthw*]m' d[y] | t[*dmry*]').⁸⁶ Water was necessary to sustain population growth. Palmyrenes tapped groundwater by means of wells or exploited surface discharges from springs. For example, the Efqa spring was a primary water source for the ancient city.⁸⁷ They exploited surface runoff from sporadic rainfall by capturing the rain water in

deposits.

⁸⁵ P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.130-36: 'l mlh' | qšt[']]thzy ly dy b'tr dy dms thw' | mtzbn' b'tr dy mtknšyn wmn mn tdmry' | yzbn lhš[h]th yhw' yhb lmdy' 'sr 'ytlq['] | hyk bnmws' w'p mks' [m]lh' dy hwy' | btdmr hyk bh[. . .]' 'py 'sr yhw' | mtqbl wl[tdmry]' yhw' mzbh hyk 'yd'. For a discussion of the salt trade in Palmyra, see Teixidor, "Le Tarif de Palmyre," 243-46.

⁸⁶ See P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.69-73. The text states that "good [salt] will be taxed an *assarius* per *modius* of sixteen *sextarii*, and what is requested will be given to them for use, and those who [. . .] pay for each *modius*, according to this law, [two] *sesterces*. Those who buy salt either in Palmyra or in the territory of the Palmyrenes, he will measure it out to [the tax collector] according to the *modius*, one *assarius*": [mlh] tb [ytg]b' 'sr' hd lmdy' dy qstwn | šr w[š]t [w]m' dy ytb 'ytn [lh]n ltšmys' | w[dy] l' y[. . . y]pr' lkl md' mn nm[ws]' dnh sštrtyn [trn] | md dy yhw' lh mlh btd[mr] 'w bthw]m' d[y] | t[dmry]' ykylnh l[mks]' [']py mdy' b'sr' hd. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Greek 116-20.

⁸⁷ For other springs in the area, see D. Crouch, "The Water System of Palmyra," *Studia Palmyrenskie* 6-7 (1975), 153-58.

cisterns or reservoirs. According to Schlumberger, the settlements in the hills and mountains northwest of Palmyra relied more on cisterns than those settlements in the valleys, which depended on springs.⁸⁸ Cisterns, wells, springs, aqueducts, underground chains of wells (*foggaras*), fountains, water pipes, and sewage lines together comprised the water management system of Palmyra and its hinterland.⁸⁹ Owing to the fieldwork of Schlumberger, we are well-informed about this system to the west and north of Palmyra.⁹⁰ Within Palmyra, Dora Crouch has documented the elaborate water management system with attention given to the exploitation of regional water resources for urban use. The evidence she presents of aqueducts and *foggaras* extending many kilometers from the city highlights the integrated nature of city and countryside and the city's need to regulate and safeguard these rural water resources.⁹¹ Finally, it is clear from this evidence that the water management system, urban and rural, developed in conjunction with the growth of the Palmyrene community. Indeed, the demand for water corresponded to need, and the city of

⁸⁸ Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, 129-34.

⁸⁹ See Crouch, "The Water System of Palmyra," 151-86.

⁹⁰ At Qaṣr el-Ḥeir, for instance; see Schlumberger, "Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène," *Syria* 20 (1939): 43-73; idem, "Les Fouilles de Qaṣr el-Ḥeir el-Gharbi (1936-1938): Rapport préliminaire," *Syria* 20 (1939): 195-238 and 324-73. Cf. A. Musil, *Palmyrena: A Topographical Itinerary*, American Geographical Society Oriental Explorations and Studies, no. 4, edited by J. Wright (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), 135-37.

⁹¹ See Crouch, "The Water System of Palmyra," 160-73.

Palmyra required the most, both for subsistence and conspicuous use such as in baths and in the gardens of private residences.⁹² Palmyra's need for water, in addition to its demand for salt, in fact, grew as its population increased.

Water also enabled agriculture which supported the urban and rural population, and the tariff inscription is very explicit about Palmyra's management and taxation of locally derived or imported produce. Unfortunately, there have been few attempts to explore archaeologically Palmyra's agricultural regime, whether of the oasis or of the countryside. The single exception is Schlumberger's work to the northwest of Palmyra, and the archaeological evidence he presents finds support epigraphically.⁹³ From Khirbet el-Bilaas about seventy five kilometers northwest of Palmyra, for instance, an inscribed column drum was found that identifies the boundaries of the territory of the Palmyrenes, the *fines regionis Palmyrenae*, as well as, possibly, "arable fields of the city" ([*a*]rva civitat[is]).⁹⁴ Elsewhere, as I discussed in Chapter 1, the boundaries of Palmyra's territory are difficult to define, though they may have extended as far as the Euphrates.⁹⁵

⁹² See, for instance, Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 122-24; and Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 14-27.

⁹³ See Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, 129-34.

⁹⁴ For *fines regionis Palmyrenae*, see *L'Année épigraphique* 1939, no. 0179; and for *arva civitatis*, see *L'Année épigraphique* 1939, no. 0178. This evidence validates Strabo's observation of the importance of farming to the economy of the Syrian countryside; see Strabo *Geographia* 16.749.

⁹⁵ See p. 5 above.

Southeast of the city, the desert expanse was populated mainly by pastoralists, but, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, it would not have been unnatural of them to engage in limited farming where and when appropriate, such as in wadi beds or along sabkhas, areas that retain residual rainfall and where groundwater levels are generally high. In one such area, the Qa‘ara depression roughly 200 kilometers southeast of Palmyra, a Palmyrene inscription was found that identifies a group of “harvesters” (*ḥsdy*). The text reads:

Be remembered and blessed these harvesters who were with Abgar, son of Hairan at the border, here. Peace! Taimai, son of Taimai, son of Belyahab; Yarhai, son of Taimarsu, son of Shatē; Malku, son of Nabula, son of Aqzaman; Moqimu (of the tribe of) *m‘zyn*, the herald; Abgar, son of Malē, son of Zabdath. Be remembered Maher son of Atashat.⁹⁶

While this text shows Palmyrenes engaged in agricultural activity far from Palmyra, other related texts were found including many Safaitic ones that suggest cooperation with and among pastoralists.⁹⁷ This evidence further highlights the integration of city and countryside, and it demonstrates the cooperative action, in particular that related to food production, necessary to sustain community

⁹⁶ P2730: *dkyryn wbrykyn | ḥsdy’ ’ln dy hww | ’m ’bgr br ḥyrn | bqšt’ tnn šlm | tymy br tymy br blyhb | yrhy br tymrsw br št’ | mlkw br nbwl’ br ’qzmn | mqymw m‘zyn krwz’ | ’bgr br ml’ br zbd’tḥ | dkyr mhr br ’tš’t*. For discussion and commentary, see J. Teixidor, “Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes du musée de Bagdad,” *Syria* 40 (1963): 33-37. Cf. idem, “Three Inscriptions in the Iraq Museum,” *Sumer* 18 (1962): 63-65, where Teixidor provides “settlers” as a translation for *ḥsdy*’. For significance, see Bowersock, *Social and Economic History*, 68.

⁹⁷ See pp. 106-11 above.

development.

Within its territorial limits, Palmyra monopolized power and exercised authoritative control, providing security and assurances to the residents of the countryside, all of whom worked to support the domestic economy. It is clear from the Palmyrene tariff, for instance, that boundary maintenance, both civic and territorial, was of great importance to Palmyra's ability to regulate the exploitation and distribution of regional resources. Trade and transport in the hinterland of Palmyra were strictly monitored, and taxes were collected when appropriate. Indeed, their ability to support this administrative activity was a sure sign of community formation and *polis* development. Yet, though it seems that the Palmyrenes sought to manage local resources for the economic benefit of their city, they seemed not to have neglected the welfare of the peasants and pastoralists dwelling in the hinterland, with whom they maintained close ties. This is apparent in the following pronouncement of the regional governor, the *legatus pro praetore*, preserved in the Palmyrene tariff, which reads:

As for provisions, I decree that a tax of one *denarius* should be exacted according to the law for each load imported from outside the borders of Palmyra or exported there; but those who convey provisions to the villages or from them should be exempt, according to the concession made to them . . . As for camels, if they are brought in from outside the borders whether loaded or unloaded, one *denarius* is due for each camel according to the law, as was confirmed also by the excellent Corbulo in his letter to Barbarus.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ P0259 (Tariff): Greek 187-97: τῶν βρωτῶν τὸ κα(τὰ) τὸν νόμον τοῦ γόμου δην[άριον] | εἴστημι πράσσεσθαι ὅταν ἔξωθεν τῶν ὄρων

The concern for the welfare of the villages is thus obvious, with the concession that no charges would be owed on produce conveyed to and from the villages within the territory of Palmyra, which differed considerably from the conditions set at the borders. This illuminates the special relationship that existed between the city and the villages of the hinterland and the steps taken to stimulate the domestic economy. A similar relationship also existed between the city and the pastoralists of the countryside. The city took care to distinguish between those engaged in pastoralism within its territory, whose rights were carefully protected, from those without. As noted, the tariff states explicitly that no payments were to be exacted for grazing rights from those indigenous to the region, although payment was owed from those who brought animals into the territory of the city for the purpose of grazing.⁹⁹ All of this evidence illustrates the integration of Palmyra with its hinterland, and it demonstrates the active role the city played to protect and manage the exploitation of its regional resources. In particular, the city took care not to neglect the economic requirements of the peasants and pastoralists, whether in

εἰσά[γεται] | ἢ ἐξάγεται. τοὺς δὲ εἰς χωρία ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν [χω]ρίων κατακομίζοντας ἀτελεῖς εἶναι, ὡς καὶ συνεφώ|νησεν. . . καμήλων ἐάν τε κενὰ ἐάν τε ἔνγομοι εἰσάγωνται ἔξωθεν | τῶν ὄρων ὀφείλεται δηνάριον ἐκάστης κατὰ τὸν | νόμον ὡς καὶ Κουρβούλων ὁ κράτιστος ἐσημι|ώσατο ἐν τῇ πρὸς Βάρβαρον ἐπιστολῇ. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene II.109-13 and 118-23. The *legatus* in question was probably Gaius Licinius Mucianus, governor of Syria in 67-69 C.E., as Seyrig, “Le Statut de Palmyre,” 165-67, suggests. See also Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 179, n. 28.

⁹⁹ See P0259 (Tariff): Greek 233-37; Palmyrene II.149. For discussion, see p. 106 above.

villages or otherwise, within its territory. Indeed, the city provided the security necessary to ensure that competition over regional resources did not devolve into conflict, although, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, peace was never a certainty, particularly in the turbulent years of the late second and early third centuries C.E. Nevertheless, it is evident that the city under the leadership of its elite members set the conditions that fostered communal growth as an economic and administrative center.

Thus Palmyra in its organizational capacity as a *polis* took care to provide services and support to the rural population, those engaged primarily in both agriculture and pastoralism. The peasants and pastoralists of the countryside, in turn, provided goods and services to the city. The relationship between city and countryside, then, was integrative and supported the growth of community. Also, while direct control over the exploitation of regional resources benefitted the city financially, rural communities would also have benefitted since competition over limited resources would have been less acute due to the city's dominance. Furthermore, the city served both as an important regional market and as a regional center of justice capable of handling legal disputes over such issues as local taxation and property rights. Because of this people gravitated to the city. Meanwhile, power and authority emanated from Palmyra, and force, or at least the threat of force, guaranteed compliance with civic interests. For instance, the regulation of resources requires control over them, which the Palmyrenes

maintained with diligence, and it was, then, as a guarantor of peace and security in the countryside that the city made its most important contribution to the domestic economy and its own communal development.

While Palmyra prospered because of the revenues from its expansive hinterland and the agricultural and pastoral activities carried out in it, the city accrued greater wealth as a result of commerce and through trade which, in turn, fostered community growth and urbanization. Again, people were drawn to Palmyra because it was an economic and administrative center, in particular for the hope it offered some of social and economic advancement through involvement in its lucrative trade network. This would explain why a significant part of the population of Palmyra, presumably, shifted into occupations that supported the caravan trade (fig. 19). For example, according to Gawlikowski, the Arab contingent of Palmyra's population multiplied considerably in the first century C.E.¹⁰⁰ This contingent included, for instance, the pastoralists who kept watch over the pack animals required for extended land transport (figs. 20 and 21), in addition to the more settled inhabitants of the various communities within Palmyrene territory and abroad who maintained lines of communication, contacts, and supplies. All performed acts, in one form or another, that supported Palmyrene trade, and all seem to have benefitted. In fact, in most cases, those who supported the trade, irrespective of residence, publically regarded themselves as Palmyrenes

¹⁰⁰ Gawlikowski, "Arabes de Syrie," 84-85.

and openly supported Palmyra's urban growth. In this sense, then, the growth of a Palmyrene community was closely linked to the caravan trade, and much of the wealth accrued from this trade, whether by the city directly or by private means, was channeled into building projects for the embellishment of Palmyra. My intention, however, is not to provide here an exhaustive treatment of the Palmyrene caravan trade, aspects of which will recur in later discussions, but rather to examine its impact specifically on community growth (and decline) and the urbanization of Palmyra.¹⁰¹

To begin with, a brief historical sketch of the caravan trade will illuminate its impact on community formation at Palmyra and highlight the city's role as an economic center. Already in the Hellenistic period, Palmyra was a nexus of trade. During recent excavations of the Hellenistic settlement, imported ceramics were found which included amphorae from as early as the end of the third century B.C.E. The total pottery corpus included material imported into Palmyra from as far afield to the west as Egypt, north Africa, Greece, and Palestine, and to east from Parthian Mesopotamia.¹⁰² The amphorae suggest the importation of such items as wine,

¹⁰¹ For instance, the civic measures taken to ensure the safety of the caravans will be discussed in Chapter 5, which presents a comprehensive analysis of community at Palmyra in terms of the development of its civic institutions. Moreover, Chapter 6 provides a more synthetic treatment of Palmyrenes abroad in pursuit of commercial endeavors, while focusing on how they managed to maintain their social and cultural identity as Palmyrenes in foreign contexts.

¹⁰² See Schmidt-Colinet and As'ad, "Zur Urbanistik des hellenistischen Palmyra," 81-93; and idem, "Archeological News from Hellenistic Palmyra," 165-

olive oil, and possibly *garum* or salted fish. We may assume, then, that other perishable goods were imported into the settlement in less durable containers, although there is no evidence of exports in this early period. After the battle of Philippi in 41 B.C.E., the Roman general Mark Antony decided to sack and plunder Palmyra, suspecting of course that the city possessed great wealth because it had assumed a direct role in the eastern trade. Appian, for example, who records the episode, mentions that the Palmyrenes were direct marketers of Indian and Arabian goods in the first century B.C.E.¹⁰³ The Palmyrenes learned of Antony's impending attack in advance and retreated quickly to the opposite bank of the Euphrates in Parthian territory. Upon entering the city, Antony found nothing of value. This account, then, suggests that the Palmyrenes, though engaged in trade, were mobile and their wealth portable. It may also suggest that Palmyra itself had not yet reached the formative stage of a *polis* and may have been nothing more than a substantial village in the first century B.C.E. Community development then intensified in the first century C.E. when, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, Palmyra emerged as a *polis*. Again, as Gawlikowski notes, this coincided with an influx of Arabs in the urban population.¹⁰⁴ This development was also concurrent with the earliest stages of urbanization at Palmyra, when the city began

66.

¹⁰³ Appian *Bella civilia* 5.9.

¹⁰⁴ See n. 100 above.

to acquire its monumental aspect, as observed earlier with the construction of the temple of Bel. Most important for illuminating the significance of the caravan trade to community formation at Palmyra and urbanization, however, was the development of the agora in the mid-first century C.E. This important monumental feature of the city bears the quality and appearance of a caravanserai. It was an excellent area for staging caravans and for distributing goods. It also provided a good backdrop for the monumental display of honorific portraits to the local notables who facilitated the caravan trade. Then, over the course of two centuries the Palmyrene community grew, increasing in importance as an economic center, and, as the epigraphy attests, monumental construction activity practically never abated. The inscriptions which I will discuss below show that wealth derived from the caravan trade contributed significantly to the growth of community and urban development.

Several inscriptions from Palmyra and its hinterland, emphasizing the role of the city as a commercial nexus, refer directly to the caravan trade and of the involvement of notable Palmyrene merchants in the monumentalization of their city through architectural and sculptural embellishments. The earliest published inscription that relates to the caravan trade is bilingual in Palmyrene and Greek and dates to 19 C.E. As I have noted, it records the dedication of a statue that the Palmyrene merchants in Seleucia on the Tigris made, in conjunction with their Greek colleagues, to a certain Yedibel, son of Azizu, a Palmyrene of the tribe of the

bny mtbwl, because of his contributions to the construction of the temple of Bel.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Malku, son of Nesha, who was honored in 24 C.E., received a statue to honor his contribution to the construction of the temple of Bel. In this instance, Palmyrene merchants in Babylon sponsored the dedication.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, numerous inscriptions of the first two centuries C.E. mention direct communication and trade between Palmyra and the major port of Spasinou Charax in Mesene, now lower Iraq, where Palmyrenes themselves maintained a small community (fig. 1).¹⁰⁷ In 50 C.E. (or 70 C.E.), for example, Palmyrene merchants in this remote port honored with a statue at Palmyra a certain Zabdibol, son of Abaihan, son of Zabdibol, son of Lishamsh, son of Makna *rb*’, of the tribe of the *bny mtbwl*.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, another Zabdibol, a member of the *bny m’zyn*, was honored in the agora at Palmyra with a statue by Palmyrene merchants upon their return from Spasinou Charax in 81 C.E.¹⁰⁹ Other statues in the agora at Palmyra were dedicated to

¹⁰⁵ P0270. This is the only mention of Seleucia in the corpus of inscriptions. See p. 125 above.

¹⁰⁶ P1352. See p. 118 above.

¹⁰⁷ In addition to the texts mentioned below, *Inventaire* 10.19 refers in Greek to Spasinous Charax but, due to its fragmentary state, lacks any indication of the individual honored or of date. On Mesene, see D. Potts, “Arabia and the Kingdom of Characene,” in *Araby the Blest*, edited by D. Potts (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1988), 137-67. I will discuss this community further in Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁸ P1584.

¹⁰⁹ P1376.

important individuals by caravan members or Palmyrene merchants associated with Spasinous Charax in 88 (or 28); in 89 (or 189); in 131; in 135; in 140, when the merchants passed through the remote emporium of Vologesias; in 156; in 157; in 159; in 161; and in 193 C.E.¹¹⁰ Several dedications record trade relations between Palmyra and Vologesias, the earliest of which is from 132 C.E.¹¹¹ Others include dedications in 142, in 144, and in 150 C.E.¹¹² As the lack of relevant epigraphic data attests, Palmyra's caravan trade seems to have declined in the later second century C.E. When the caravans resumed in the early third century C.E., Vologesias was their destination. An honorific inscription set up in 210 C.E. along the Great Colonnade, for instance, associates a certain Yaddai with Vologesias.¹¹³ Also, in 247 C.E., the merchants who descended to Vologesias with Julius Aurelius Zebaida, son of Moqimu, son of Zebaida, honored him with a statue in the Great Colonnade.¹¹⁴ Many of these texts will be discussed in later sections because they

¹¹⁰ See P1366 (88 or 28 C.E.), P0309 (89 or 189 C.E.), P1374 (131 C.E.), P1397 (135 C.E.), P1412 (140 C.E.), P1411 (156 C.E.), P1399 (157 C.E.), P1409 (159 C.E.), P1373 (161 C.E.), and P0294 (193 C.E.). P1397 (135 C.E.) records the dedication of a statue to Roman centurion, Julius Maximus, which a certain Marcus Ulpus Abgar and members of a caravan from Spasinous Charax set up;

¹¹¹ P0197.

¹¹² P0262 (142 C.E.), P1419 (150 C.E.), and Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions," 31-42 (144 C.E.).

¹¹³ P0295.

¹¹⁴ P0279.

reveal important details about the nature of Palmyrene social and political relationships at home and abroad.

Among the inscriptions, some Palmyrenes appear exceptional as citizens and facilitators of the caravan trade. These were the elite who prompted the architectural and sculptural embellishment of the city. One individual associated with the eastern trade, and particularly that which passed through the remote emporium of Spasinou Charax, was Marcus Ulpius Yarhai, the recipient of honors in the dedications of 156, 157, and 159 C.E., who had an impressive career further distinguished by dedications in his honor.¹¹⁵ He received recognition by merchants in the Parthian city of Choumana in 157 C.E., for example;¹¹⁶ and in the same year, merchants who had returned from Scythia by sea (in the boat of Honaino, son of Haddudan) erected a statue to him in the agora at Palmyra (fig. 22).¹¹⁷ A near

¹¹⁵ See also P0307, in which he is honored by merchants but the text is too fragmentary to identify their association. Also, in addition to the texts mentioned, Marcus Ulpius Yarhai also appears in P1395, P1396, P1397, and P1422, the significance of which will be discussed in the following chapter as evidence of social relations at Palmyra and abroad.

¹¹⁶ P0306.

¹¹⁷ P1403. The Greek text of P2763 alludes to another sea voyage from Scythia, but the text is too fragmentary to allow further elaboration of the individual honored, or of who the shipwrights were, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 32; *Inventaire* 10.91; *Inventaire* 10.95; and Cantinua, “Tadmorea,” *Syria* 14 (1933): 187. Also, in a relationship characteristic of classical patronage, Marcus Ulpius Yarhai is again honored in 159 C.E. by a certain Haddudan, son of Haddudan Firmon, for his having given this individual assistance in Spasinous Charax, see Cantinua, “Tadmorea,” *Syria* 19 (1938): 75.

contemporary of Marcus Ulpius Yarhai, the Palmyrene Soados, son of Bōliados, son of Soados, was similarly honored for his services that supported Palmyra's caravan trade. Soados was well connected in the remote emporium of Vologesias, a Parthian city south of Babylon. The earliest reference to Vologesias, in fact, is in an inscription from 132 C.E. once displayed in the courtyard of the temple of Baalshamin. This important inscription records the erection of four statues at Palmyra to Soados, son of Bōliados, which were sponsored by members of the caravan upon their return from Vologesias, when Hagegu, son of Yarhibola and Taimarsu, son of Taimarsu, were chiefs of the caravan. Soados, son of Bōliados, was honored for his having saved the caravan from a "great risky endeavor" (*qdns rb*) and for his having given assistance to the merchants, caravans, and to the citizens in Vologesias.¹¹⁸ Soados was honored again with four statues in 144 C.E. by a caravan of Palmyrenes having arrived from Vologesias.¹¹⁹ Another prominent Palmyrene, Nesha, son of Hala, son of Nesha, was twice honored for his role in the caravan trade with Vologesias. In 142 C.E., merchants erected a statue in the temple of Bel to honor Nesha for his role as chief of their caravan from Phorat and

¹¹⁸ P0197. The tendency is to translate *qdns rb* as "great danger" but the essence of κίνδυνος in Greek may retain the alternative meaning of a risk or venture, or perhaps an experiment of sorts, which could imply that Soados assisted in some manner that benefitted the caravan economically and not necessarily militarily.

¹¹⁹ Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions," 31-42. For a dedication to Soados from 145 C.E. sponsored by the council and the people, see p. 167 below.

Vologesias.¹²⁰ Nesha was again honored with a statue (in the agora) in 150 C.E. for his having served as chief of the caravan that descended to Vologesias by members of the same.¹²¹

This impressive body of evidence documents the caravan trade of Palmyra and highlights its public nature. These inscriptions record the public honors the benefactors, local notables who facilitated the trade, received from the merchants or the caravan members who profited. Without exception, this involved the dedication of statues in public places, which contributed to Palmyra's sculptural and architectural embellishment. For the development of community, these actions were clear acknowledgments of the power and influence that certain individuals within the community possessed and of the dependency that others, specifically groups of merchants, had on them. Thus social and economic ascendancy is apparent among individuals connected to the caravan trade.

While it was common for Palmyrene merchants, whether at Palmyra or in remote emporia, as well as for members of caravans, to erect statues to their benefactors, to such prominent individuals as, for instance, Marcus Ulpius Yarhai and Soados, son of Bōliados, the city of Palmyra itself also sponsored dedications to those whose services supporting the caravans enhanced the city's role as a commercial nexus. This attests directly to the public significance of the caravan

¹²⁰ P0262.

¹²¹ P1419.

trade to the city and its development. In fact, the earliest record of the council bestowing an honor upon a citizen is in a bilingual inscription in Greek and Palmyrene of 86 C.E. dedicated to a certain Yarhai for his benevolence and attentiveness to the merchants.¹²² Most likely, however, this inscription, which was found in a pit in the agora, represents an honor to Yarhai for his presumed public role as controller of the market. In 138 C.E., the council of Palmyra also honored Yarhibola, son of Lishamsh, (son of) Aabei, with a statue in the agora in 138 C.E. for his having assisted merchants from Spasinous Charax.¹²³ In later inscriptions it is the council and the people combined who sponsored the erection of statues to important public figures in honor of their contributions to the caravan trade. Soados, son of Bōliados, for example, received four statues at Palmyra in 145 C.E., which the council and the people had set up for him at public expense, in addition to separate statues in the caravanserai of Gennaes, in Spasinous Charax, and in Vologesias.¹²⁴ Also, the four statues that Ogeilu, son of Maqqai (son of) Ogeilu,

¹²² P1421.

¹²³ P1414. His public dedication was probably associated with his role in leading an embassy to a certain king Worod of Elymaide (?). Also, there is mention in the Greek text of the governors Bruttius Praesens and of Julius M[. . .]. For an individual with the patrimony of A'bei identified as an *archōn* of [Maish]an, see M. Rostovtzeff, "Une Nouvelle inscription caravanière de Palmyre," *Berytus* 2 (1935): 143-48; and D. Schlumberger, "Palmyre et la Mésène," *Syria* 38 (1961): 256-60. See also Chapter 6.

¹²⁴ Palmyrene: P1062. Greek: *SEG* VII.35; see also R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, "La Voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît, au IIe siècle ap. J.-C.," *Syria* 12 (1931): 101-15.

received in 199 C.E., which were set up by the four principal tribes of Palmyra, were ordered by the council and the people.¹²⁵ Most examples, however, are of the third century C.E. In 257 C.E., for instance, Julius Aurelius Shalamallat, son of Malē, son of Abdai, chief of the caravan, received a statue in his honor,¹²⁶ and in 266 C.E., the council and the people similarly honored the renowned Septimius Worod.¹²⁷ These dedications sponsored by the city to its leading citizens and merchants are not numerous. Nevertheless, they do indicate the public nature of the caravan trade and suggest that great economic benefits accrued from this trade. Furthermore, these dedications highlight the extensive connections powerful Palmyrene notables maintained in distant communities to support the caravan trade and the role of Palmyra as a commercial nexus.

Thus all of this evidence attests that the caravan trade was important to the community of Palmyra and to its urban development. The inscriptions discussed above are all honorific, and their appearance in urban contexts highlights the public nature of the caravan trade and the significance of Palmyra as an economic center. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, community formation and urbanization were interrelated processes, and as I would stress here, population growth was linked to

¹²⁵ P1378. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 23 and 258.

¹²⁶ P0282. Cf. P1360, which may also be of the third century C.E.

¹²⁷ P0288. The career of Septimius Worod is discussed more fully in the following chapter.

Palmyra's role as a commercial nexus, since many were drawn to Palmyra, apparently, because of the economic opportunities the city afforded. In terms of urban growth, the various monuments of the city that arose served a variety of communal needs, and as the community expanded over the course of three centuries these needs increased. Thus the monumentalization of Palmyra was a product of communal growth, and many of Palmyra's architectural and sculptural embellishments were financed by elite individuals or groups enriched by commercial endeavors mostly associated with the caravan trade.

Moreover, I would argue that the growth and decline of the community at Palmyra can be "read" from the chronology of the caravan trade as outlined in the inscriptions presented above. This chronology also mimics more or less intensive phases of building activity within the city. For example, only six inscriptions date firmly to the first century C.E., which may represent the fact that Palmyrene influence and contacts in foreign contexts were less developed yet expanding. Profits gained through trade with Babylon and Spasinous Charax were channeled into building projects at Palmyra, as inscriptions recording the construction of the temple of Bel attest. Construction of the agora in the first century C.E. also attests to the expanding significance of the caravan trade. Interestingly, the inscriptions that attest to Palmyrene caravans overwhelmingly date between 131 and 161 C.E. This is most likely due to the pacification of the eastern frontier and the expansion of foreign relations under Hadrian and his successors, and prior to the aggressive

eastern policies of Marcus Aurelius and his colleague Lucius Verus to counter the more aggressive activities of the Parthian ruler Vologeses IV.¹²⁸ After 161 C.E., the caravans seem to have ended, and there is no further indication that they resumed until 193 C.E. Thereafter, the caravans are attested, but only sporadically, until 266 C.E., when, apparently, they ceased altogether.

If this outline is valid, there seems to have been a thirty-two year gap in the caravan trade between 161 C.E. and 193 C.E. General opinion on this issue is that the aggressive tendencies of Vologeses IV, Parthian ruler from 147 to 191 C.E., were at fault.¹²⁹ In 162 C.E., Vologeses IV invaded Armenia, where he replaced its ruler with an Arsacid prince. He then invaded Syria. This precipitated a Roman response, which came in 163 C.E. with the recapture of Armenia and Rome's subsequent penetration into Parthian territory down the Euphrates over the next few years.¹³⁰ While such conflict apparently halted caravan traffic—as we would expect—for a short time, it does not explain adequately why the caravan trade took so long to resume once again, more than thirty years later. I would argue that this gap of more than thirty years reflects some sort of decline in the Palmyrene

¹²⁸ For more on the activities of Vologeses IV and relevant dates, see D. Potter, "The Inscriptions on the Bronze Herakles from Mesene: Vologeses IV's War with Rome and the Date of Tacitus' *Annales*," *ZPE* 88 (1991): 277-90.

¹²⁹ For instance, see Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre* 74-83; and Gawlikowski, "Palmyra and its Caravan Trade," 141.

¹³⁰ For a general treatment of the events, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 111-12; Colledge, *Parthians*, 166-69; and Debevoise, *Political History of Parthia*, 249-53.

community, but due to what? One possible factor may have been the Mediterranean-wide impact of the plague that struck Roman forces while on campaign in Parthia, in the region of Babylon, in 165 C.E. (fig. 1).¹³¹ Its effects were devastating, as it was widespread and of long duration (165-89 C.E.). The plague probably came from further east and may be related to the eastern trade. Reports of the plague in China, for instance, date as early as 161 C.E., and Roman forces brought the plague home after campaigning in Parthia, where it spread rapidly throughout the Empire and endured for decades.¹³² As late as 189 C.E., the plague was reported in Rome.¹³³ Unfortunately, its impact on the general population is difficult to assess, but modern estimates hold that many communities lost nearly a third to half of their populations.¹³⁴ Accordingly, we would expect to find such eastern communities that lay along the path of the Roman legions

¹³¹ On the Antonine plague, as it is generally regarded, see the insightful discussion by R. Duncan-Jones, "The Impact of the Antonine Plague," *JRA* 9 (1996): 108-36; cf. W. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (1976; reprint, New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 130-34.

¹³² For Chinese accounts of the plague, see F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient* (Leipzig: G. Hirth, 1885; New York: Paragon, 1966), 175. Also, on relations between Rome and China, see J. Ferguson, "China and Rome," *ANRW* 2.9.2 (1978): 581-603. Many Roman soldiers died in Parthia when the plague initially broke out; see Cassius Dio 71.2.4. Those who survived the retreat from Parthia carried the disease to the Roman world where it reached the Rhine and Gaul; see Ammianus Marcellinus 23.6.24. Additional sources in Duncan-Jones, "Impact of the Antonine Plague," 118-20.

¹³³ Cassius Dio 72.14.3-4; Herodian 1.12.1.

¹³⁴ Summarized by Duncan-Jones, "Impact of the Antonine Plague," 120-21.

returning from Parthia, or those with close ties to the communities where the plague is said to have broken out, to have had some exposure to the disease. Though we have no direct evidence, it is likely, then, that the plague struck Palmyra. If not at Palmyra, the plague almost certainly affected Palmyrenes living abroad in the communities where it initially erupted. The decline in trade, then, may reflect the loss of life among the very Palmyrenes who supported the vast trade network that extended down the Euphrates, and whose ships traveled to Scythia. Such losses may well explain a decline in caravan trade not directly related to political affairs between Rome and Parthia. Nevertheless, since our intent is to examine Palmyra as an economic center as related to the growth of community at the site (to the extent that the caravan trade facilitated communal development), such incidents as the plague of 165 C.E., if we choose to regard Palmyra and Palmyrenes as having been affected in some way, would have had a negative impact on growth and resulted in population decline.

Finally, we can observe that a broad cross-section of the Palmyrene community was supported by and benefitted from the caravan trade, at least when the trade routes were operational. Thus the caravan trade supported the economic growth and subsistence of Palmyra. The powerful patrons at Palmyra and within the various emporia in Roman and Parthian (later Persian) territories, those whose investments financed many of the caravans, surely benefitted most of all. They not only invested in the commodities transported but also contributed to the supply and

protection of the caravans. Also, those who led the caravans and those hired to guard them benefitted as well, although their position and status in society were probably far less than the local notables funding the endeavor. We can deduce this from the fact that caravan leaders often bestowed honors upon their patrons, which required some disposable wealth in the first place, or had honors bestowed upon their patrons by the community. In addition, the humble but no less influential merchants at home and abroad, who daily maintained face-to-face contacts with foreigners, benefitted from the profits derived from trade, particularly as the recipients of rewards and assistance bestowed upon them by powerful patrons. In recognition of this generosity, these merchants consistently returned honors upon their patrons. We may also add to this list the far more humble pastoralists whose task was to care for the pack animals in on and off seasons. The caravan trade thus benefitted many individuals at Palmyra and abroad, who may be differentiated with respect to their occupations and social positions. According to their collective interests, they gathered in common association in order to pursue a commercial endeavor which yielded mutual benefits to them all. Ultimately, the communities that sponsored this trade and supported the responsible individuals reaped huge rewards, because those who profited tended to channel portions of their wealth into public projects of civic embellishment, architectural and sculptural. This was classical *euergetism*, a topic to which I will return in Chapter 4.¹³⁵ The urbanization

¹³⁵ See p. 250 below.

of Palmyra, then, must be understood in such a context.

Moreover, while the economy of Roman Palmyra was based on trade, agriculture, and pastoralism, these supported a range of economic opportunities within the city that drew people to Palmyra, a major center of consumption. These opportunities are apparent in a range of occupations at Palmyra that we may classify in terms of craft and industry, and which are best identified by their productive output. A cursory list includes pottery, glassware, textiles, sculpture, jewelry, coinage, woodwork, and foodstuffs. In addition to material evidence from archaeology, the tariff inscription is very informative for illuminating craft production and industry in the villages of Palmyra's hinterland and perhaps in the city of Palmyra itself, particularly when taxes are listed for specific merchandise likely to have been produced locally. We must, then, recognize that a diverse population existed within the city employed in a wide range of occupations, whether manufacturing goods or selling them. Their collective association and interaction within a communal context will form the basis of discussion for the following chapter.

Conclusion

To sum up, the growth of community at Palmyra and its vibrancy were the result of the city's importance as an economic and religious center in the Syrian desert. At the peak of its prosperity, one scholar believes that the population of Palmyra may well have reached around 150,000-200,000 individuals in the second

century C.E., a figure that does not include the inhabitants of the countryside.¹³⁶

This calculation, however, seems excessive. A more modest estimate for the same period, according to a recent calculation, is that Palmyra accommodated from 40,000 to 60,000 people in the city, with an additional population of 250,000 in the wider hinterland.¹³⁷ Whatever the figures were, the population of Palmyra in the second century C.E. was clearly substantial, which was a radical change from the village community that grew up near the Efqa spring in the first century B.C.E. I have examined the presumed factors that attracted people to the oasis in the first place, mainly in terms of the cultic significance of the site as a center for shared religious association, but also in terms of the city both as a locus for economic opportunity and an administrative center. The caravan trade, with its apparent promise of profits and rewards, was, perhaps, the most attractive aspect of Palmyra. Moreover, it seems probable that individuals were drawn to the city in order to connect in some way with the network of associations that supported the caravan trade so that they themselves might extract some benefits. In any event, the growth of community at Palmyra extended the framework for the construction and maintenance of individual and group identity. The complex network of these

¹³⁶ See D. Crouch, "A Note on the Population and Area of Palmyra," 241-50. See also Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 170-71.

¹³⁷ See E. Savino, *Città di frontiera nell'Impero romano: Forme della romanizzazione da Augusto ai Severi, Pragmateiai 1* (Bari: Edipuglia, 1999), 69-75.

various identities forms the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Social Identities

Introduction

As the Palmyrene community grew, social diversity within the city increased. I examined in the previous chapter two important factors that instigated the growth of community at Palmyra: the attraction of the city both as a religious center and as a locus for economic opportunity. But once groups and individuals settled in the city, what structured their social identities in civic contexts. As I discussed in Chapter 1, identity is constructed in relation to others. Indeed, those who settled in the city, who formed the community, shared a range of similarities and differences with one another. Each had his or her own personal identity, and each had his or her own network of associations with others. Personal and group identity at Palmyra, in fact, are revealed by the nature and the composition of the interactions between the various individuals and groups who peopled the settlement.

In addition, from a village settlement in the first century B.C.E. Palmyra developed over the course of three centuries into an impressive urban community replete with monumental architecture, amenities, and the social and political

institutions characteristic of large cities. This transformation from village to city set Palmyra within a broader cultural, political, economic, and social milieu of generally like-minded people dwelling in other cities of comparable status in the Near East. Differences, however, were noticeable and inherent, for instance the distinct cults or the varied social backgrounds from those of the inhabitants of other cities. The Palmyrenes, nonetheless, as their community expanded, embedded themselves in this broader world and increasingly became attuned to Mediterranean values and customs. They did so, however, without fully abandoning ancestral habits and their eastern tendencies, since they continued to maintain relations in both Parthian and Roman territories. Still the greatest influence on the social life of the city seems to have been directed from the west.

Indeed, this transformation from village to city had direct and transparent effects on the social life of the city, evidence for which can be gleaned from the epigraphy. Familial associations, apparently, took preeminence over clan and tribal identities, though the latter were staunchly supported. Also, voluntary associations formed that were unique to city life and apparently Mediterranean in their conception and organization. I intend in this chapter to analyze the epigraphy for evidence of social diversity within Palmyra and the extent to which Greek and Roman customs influenced Palmyrene social development. My method will be to outline the various categories of social organization and involvement in the life of the community, beginning with the Palmyrene family and moving on to the roles of

women, slaves, freedmen and freedwomen, occupational groups, and, finally, ending with an analysis of voluntary associations and the prevalence of ritual dining. Furthermore, I will introduce here cursorily the nature of the power relations, specifically patronage and friendship, that governed personal and group interaction within the Palmyrene community.

The Palmyrene Family

Humans are social creatures. They live in groups in association with one another, and the social organization of individuals and groups is connected to their conceptions of relatedness. These may be based on a diverse set of criteria. Descent, residence, shared occupation, and social status, along with a host of other aspects of life on which to base distinctions, whether real or perceived, can serve as bases for forming social groups. Yet, among such criteria, some hold greater relevance than others. In virtually every social context, for instance, kinship, as defined by relationships between individuals based on marriage or descent, has universal significance.¹ It is through relationships based on kinship that families form. At Palmyra, the basic unit in social organization was the family, which in its simplest form consisted of the father, mother, and children, if any.

I discussed in Chapter 2 the role of genealogies in mapping out familial relations. Descent, I observed, was patrilineal, since it followed links along the

¹ L. Stone, *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 5.

male line. But where the family physically resided in relation to other kin, in terms of spatially aggregate groups, is a far more problematic issue that affects the extent to which we can compare familial relations at Palmyra with those of other communities. Dirven asserts that the Palmyrene family was patrilocal, which she takes to mean that wives went to live with their husbands.² In the Mediterranean world, this seems obvious, but it is also misleading. Patrilocal residence generally refers to situations in which a married couple live at or near the parental home of the groom. I can find no evidence in the inscriptions to support this notion.

Moreover, there is no evidence to contest the possibility that the typical Palmyrene family was either virilocal, meaning that wives moved to the location of their husbands wherever they might be living, or that they were neolocal, meaning that the married couple moved to a new location altogether, not necessarily one in close spatial proximity to either parental home.³ Unfortunately, we lack the data to make any assessment of who lived where in relation to different units of agnatic or cognatic kin. Thus, the prevalence of extended family units living in close spatial proximity is uncertain, although the presence of large aristocratic houses may suggest this to be the case on a limited scale (see below). Also, while there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the Palmyrene household consisted of several

² Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 22-28.

³ For the anthropological terminology on the various forms of residence, see Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 15-17.

large nuclear families living under the authority and in the same or near the household of a elderly patriarch, mature sons may well have maintained households independent of their fathers, and brothers may have resided independent of one another, though again where they lived in relation to one another cannot be determined. This lack of evidence for residential locality limits any analysis of familial relations above the level of the nuclear family, though personal relationships existed between siblings and their relations (see below). Moreover this lack of evidence limits the scope of any cross-cultural comparison of Palmyrene familial relations with those of other communities.

This deficiency of residential data stems from the lack of archaeological investigations of domestic housing within the city, and the meager evidence available favors solely an analysis of aristocratic living. Indeed, whether these families were patrilocal, virilocal, or neolocal, the archaeological evidence of the homes excavated to date shows that at least some lived lifestyles attuned to Greek and Roman lifestyles. This is evident, for example, in the architectural style and ornamentation of the known housing. Only three areas of domestic housing within the city have been investigated, one north of the Great Colonnade and the Tetrapylon, another southeast of the theater, and the third east of the temple of Bel (fig. 3).⁴ The domestic structures north of the Great Colonnade lie in a zoned area

⁴ For a general introduction to the domestic space of Palmyra, see Frézouls, “A Propos de l’architecture domestique à Palmyre,” 29-52, who suggests on p. 31 that additional domestic areas may lie east of the temple of Baalshamin and beyond the

with clearly planned streets, which probably suggests their development in the second century C.E.⁵ Albert Gabriel, who examined a dozen houses there in 1925, provides a short review of the data.⁶ For the most part, the houses follow the conventional Hellenistic arrangement of a peristyle court surrounding a spacious courtyard with a large room at one end corresponding to a Greek *oikos*, the principal living area. Gabriel's House 35 provides an excellent example (fig. 23). The structure is organized around a spacious courtyard measuring 16.80 meters on a side. The *oikos* is to the north divided into a main living chamber with two flanking rooms, and additional rooms align against the east and west walls of the house with an entrance from the east through two small vestibules, which emphasizes the private nature of the home. What may be a *pastas*, or porch, is set before the *oikos*, which highlights the Hellenistic style of the house.⁷ In contrast to House 35, the domestic structures southeast of the theater and those east of the temple of Bel are larger and more opulent. The most famous are the latter, the house of Achilles, which covers an area of nearly 1000 square meters, and the

city walls. See also Browning, *Palmyra*, 99.

⁵ See Frézouls, "A Propos de l'architecture domestique à Palmyre," 51. For the urban development of this area in the second century C.E., see pp. 48-53 above.

⁶ A. Gabriel, "Recherches archéologiques à Palmyra," *Syria* 7 (1926): 71-92.

⁷ J. W. Graham, "The Origins and Interrelations of the Greek House and the Roman House," *Phoenix* 20 (1966): 17, suggests that this feature is an archetypical example of Greek houses as Vitruvius *De architectura* 4.7 describes.

house of Cassiopeia, so-called because of the rich mosaics discovered within them (fig. 24).⁸ The iconographic details of these mosaics suggest that whoever crafted them was heavily versed in Greek tradition, according to Henri Stern, who dates them to the third century based on comparison of their subject and craftsmanship with other mosaics in the Roman Near East.⁹ Indeed, the grandeur of these structures, which qualify more as villas than as houses, the elaboration of their architectural plans, and their artistic embellishments, indicate that their aristocratic owners were genuinely attuned to the elite customs of a broader Mediterranean milieu. Also, the sheer size of some of these houses may suggest that extended familial units resided within them, but again this remains conjectural.¹⁰

With this better understanding of nuclear families and the evidence for the lifestyles of some of the elite, we can move on to examine a second level of social organization at Palmyra, the Palmyrene household. Indeed, every nuclear family comprised a household, but the level of incorporation was greater than father, mother, and children. Slaves, for instance, and others living in the house would have been included as well. In one particular case, a slave was sufficiently regarded

⁸ For a full description of the mosaics, see H. Stern, *Les Mosaiques des maisons d'Achille et de Cassiopée à Palmyre*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 101 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1977).

⁹ See Stern, *Les Mosaiques des maisons d'Achille et de Cassiopée*, 25-42.

¹⁰ It is noteworthy that these great houses were constructed literally adjacent to the temple of Bel, the central civic sanctuary, which would suggest a prominent status for the aristocratic families residing in them.

as a member of the immediate family of his master to merit inclusion in the family tomb. In Tower 44 in the Valley of the Tombs, for example, an inscription dated 44 C.E. refers to the images of a certain Kitut and to those of his household:

[In the month Siwan], the year 355 (June 44 C.E.), [these statues are those] of Kitut, son of [Taimarsu, and of Maisha], daughter of [Malku], his wife, and of Lishamsh, [his son, and of Shalman], his son, and of Malku, his slave.¹¹

The Palmyrene expression for “members of the household” is *bny byth (bt)*,¹² and, more often, we find emphasis on including “every single member” (*bny byth klhwn*).¹³ This emphasis on everyone may be interpreted to include all those in the house and who were dependent upon the father, which would have included children and slaves. It may, in addition, refer to related kin residing in different households. Furthermore, these examples are from altars, so the associated cultic context provides partial evidence for the fact that social cohesion was achieved by shared religious observance within households or between related familial members in separate residences. Finally, the overt structure of the Palmyrene household seems compatible with that of other Mediterranean communities.

¹¹ P0464: [byrḥ sywn] šnt 352 | [šlmy' 'ln] dy kytwt br | [tymršw wdy myš] 'brt | [mlkw 'tt]h wdy lšmš | [brh wdy šlmn] brh wdy | mlkw 'lymh. See also P0463 for the genealogies.

¹² For example, see P0379, P0393, and P1445. See also Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 346, s.v. “by.”

¹³ For example, see P0318, P0382, P0394, P0400, P1446, P1448, P1452, P1900, P1911, and P1920.

Despite uncertainty as to where individual family members resided, relations between them were strikingly close. Indeed, a strong sense of kinship pervaded Palmyrene society. Brothers, sisters, uncles, cousins, and grandparents are frequently attested or commemorated in the inscriptions, which indicates the significance of lineage groups as unique social entities. The closeness between and among families, for example, is evident in the various funerary monuments, which served primarily the burial needs of related kin. Thus, at least in death we can be more certain of where members of familial groups resided. The construction of these monuments was often a collective endeavor that siblings supported for their immediate families. Since their construction was an expensive enterprise, it was not uncommon to share the costs with a brother or some other close relative.¹⁴ Wealthy individuals also constructed funerary monuments at their own expense, generally to serve the burial needs of their children and the children of their children, but uncles, cousins, and brothers often appear among the list of commemorative recipients as well. We see this, for instance, in P1787, which records the construction of a family tomb by Lishamsh, son of Moqimu, son of Harshu, in 123 C.E. for his children, his brothers, and his cousins, and in which he had buried his sister Shaba and Hanat his wife.¹⁵ The fact that many families or

¹⁴ In general, on the ownership of tombs, see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 73-91.

¹⁵ P1787. Similarly, see P1784.

lineage groups shared funerary properties in common and that they inherited privileges to be buried within them exemplifies their closeness and cohesion.

Lineage ties also appear in religious contexts, particularly on altars as families worshiped common deities, which again shows how shared cult can reinforce social relationships. On an altar found near the Efqa spring, a dedication of 243 C.E. to the Anonymous God reads:

The One Whose Name Is Blessed, the Good and Merciful. Made in thanksgiving, Hairan, son of Yamlē , for his life and the life his father and that of his uncle and of his brother(s), the year 555.¹⁶

Similarly, on an altar from 135 C.E., Manai, son of Malku *rb'*, son of Manai Ruma (*r'wm'*) renders praise to the Lord of the World, the Good, and the Merciful (*lmr'* *lm' tb' wrhmn'*), for his life, that of his sons, and of his brothers.¹⁷ Also, to the gods Baalshamin, Durahlun and to Rahim, and to the Gad of Yedibel, Hairan, son of Ogeilu Aitibel, a member of the *bny m'zyn*, dedicated an altar in 62 C.E. for his life, that of his sons, and of his brothers.¹⁸ Likewise in 63 C.E., Baraa, son of

¹⁶ P1909: *bryk šmh l'lm' | tb' wrhmn' 'bd | wmw'd' hyrn br yml' | mqymw 'l hwywhy | why' 'bwhy wddh | w'hwhy šnt 555*. For additional dedications to the Anonymous God which commemorate kin, in particular brothers, see P0344, P0402, P1002, P1435, P1436, P1442, P1447, P1455, P1619, P1898, P1900, P1902, P1904, P1906, P1907, and P1914. For P1619, see also J. Starcky, "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Sadrafa et à Du'anat," *Syria* 26 (1949): 52. Similarly, but where the dedication is to the "Lady of the Temple," see P1928 and P1929; and where the dedication is to Belastor, see P2780 and P2781.

¹⁷ See P0335. Similarly, see P1918.

¹⁸ See P0179. See also P2798.

Moqimu, son of Turai, son of Baraa, a member of the *bny mtbwl*, offered altars in the temple of Arsu to the patron god of the temple, to Qasmaia and to the daughters of El, the good gods, for the life of his father, his own life, and the lives of his sons and brothers.¹⁹ Communal worship of an ancestral god among close kin is also evident on an altar dedicated in 85 C.E. to the god Shamash now at Oxford in the Ashmolean Museum. The inscription reads:

In the month Elul, the year 396 (September, 85 C.E.), Lishamsh and Zebaida, sons of Malku, son of Yedibel, son of Nesha, who is called the son of Abdibel (*dy mtqr' br 'bdbl*), who is a member of the tribe (*dy mn pḥd*) of the *bny mgrt*, have made and offered for Shamash, the god of the house of their fathers (*byt 'b*), this shrine and this altar (*ḥmn' dnh w'lt' dh*) for the life of themselves and the life of their brothers and sons.²⁰

Significantly, this inscription illustrates the manner in which a single pious act could reinforce a social relationship between siblings, familial associations with a common ancestor three generations removed, perhaps a clan identity, and, ultimately, a tribal identity. Indeed, while the dedication may have provided Lishamsh and Zebaida with a sense of piety, it also confirmed various social boundaries that each brother maintained—specifically by establishing social

¹⁹ See P0992: *byrh 'lwl šnt 3 | 75 'lwt' '[n] | qrb br'' br mqymw br | twry br br'' dy mn bny | mtbwl l'ršw wlqsm'y' | [w]lbnt'l 'lhy' tby' 'l | ḥyy mqymw 'bwhy whywhy | whyy bnwhy [why] w'ḥwy*. See also K. al-As'ad and J. Teixidor, “Un Culte arabe préislamique à Palmyre d'après une inscription inédite,” *CRAIBL* (1985): 286-93.

²⁰ P0324: *[b]yrḥ 'lwl šnt 380|+16 ḥmn' dnh w'lt' dh | ['bdw wqrbw lšmš wzbyd' | bny mlkw br ydy'bl br nš' | dy mtqr' br 'bdbl dy mn | pḥd bny mgdt lšmš | 'lh byt 'bwhn 'l | ḥyyhwn whyy 'hyh[wn] | wbnyhwn*.

identities based on family and tribal associations. In addition to men, women also commemorated their families, those of their fathers and their husbands. The daughter of Malku, son of Wahballat, and wife of Malku, son of Oga, for instance, dedicated an altar in 89 C.E. (possibly 189 C.E.) to the god Baalshamin, for her life, that of her children, and that of the children of her brother.²¹ Thus the evidence attests the importance of lineage, especially in religious contexts, since shared cults, which exemplify incorporation and cooperation, tend to confirm social relationships. Uniquely, the inscriptions span the entire period covered in this study, which means that familial relationships, even ancestral ones, remained significant in a Palmyrene's perceived social identity.

Furthermore, it is important to note that lineage solidarity was not restricted to kin solely descended along the male line. It was also not exclusive to active religious contexts. In some late examples, maternal uncles and cousins on the mother's side are attested. Julius Aurelius Bolma, for instance, twice ceded (in 229 and again in 234 C.E.) a portion of his tomb to the children of his maternal uncle.²² In 251 C.E., Seleukos, son of Theophilos, son of Seleukos transferred ten niches within the *exedra* of his tomb to Yarhibola, son of Sabeina, the army veteran, son of Taima, his maternal uncle.²³ Among patrilineal descent groups such as those at

²¹ See P0334.

²² See P0562.

²³ P0071. Cf. P0398.

Palmyra, some scholars maintain that a sense of formality and duty existed in relationships traced patrilineally, which was “often offset by informal, warm, and affectionate relationships traced through the mother—especially those between a male and his mother’s brother.”²⁴ This has been observed in ancient Rome, for instance.²⁵ Unfortunately, the type of evidence that we have at Palmyra, primarily epigraphic, does not permit us fully to assess relations among members of immediate familial groups, that is, between and among family units. They appear to have been cooperative and congenial, but relations as such tend to be memorialized more often on stone than competitive and conflicted ones.

Clans and tribes provide the remaining categories of social organization at Palmyra based on kinship, whether real or perceived. I discussed the nature of tribes and tribal identities in Chapter 2, and I will have more to say regarding these in the following chapter. For now, I will examine clan identity at Palmyra, as well as make the distinction between clan and lineage.

The basic difference between clan and lineage “is that lineages are perceived by the peoples themselves as grounded in known or presumed genealogical connections, whereas clans mark an identity of general relatedness and

²⁴ See Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 73.

²⁵ See M. Bettini, *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul*, translated by J. van Sickle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 39-66.

common descent.”²⁶ Clan associations can be mapped with ease but are difficult to confirm. We can generate clan identities, for instance, directly from the genealogies, as shown in Chapter 2. Presumably, the mapping of one’s ancestry to several preceding generations served at each stage to generate broader kin-based associations with other social groups. For those who acknowledged a common ancestor along their lineage chains, then, beyond that of a grandfather, relatedness must have seemed apparent. But this observation must remain hypothetical. The brothers Lishamsh and Zebaida, who dedicated an altar to Shamash in 85 C.E. and who confirmed their tribal affiliation by identifying their great-grandfather Nesha as a member of the tribe of the *bny mgrt*, for example, may be regarded as belonging to a clan, as descendants of their grandfather Yedibel, only if we claim that the genealogy is not based on known or presumed kinship ties, which it appears to be. Indeed, more often Palmyrenes identified themselves in the context of immediate familial relations. It was common, for example, to record one’s identity in a lineage linked to a paternal grandfather, or perhaps great-grandfather, but why the genealogy would be extended further cannot be answered. As has been suggested, perhaps it did involve a conscious effort to generate prestige of some sort, whether economically, politically, or socially motivated, and to bind other social groups to one’s own, a tradition common among bedouin groups.²⁷ Yet still the closest

²⁶ Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 68.

²⁷ See, for instance, Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 12-14 and 81-170.

associations were maintained between brothers, sisters, and their offspring, that is, between individuals closely descended from one another, usually within a generation. At times, classificatory designations provide evidence of extended familial associations such as clans, as when the term *bny* appears before the name of a remote ancestor.²⁸ But, as I have noted, the same term appears often to denote tribal identities as well, which further complicates our understanding of clan identities at Palmyra and how clan affiliations operated outside of close familial associations.²⁹

Above all the epigraphy highlights the significance of the family as a basic unit of social organization at Palmyra. Extended families and clans, however, while these existed, are more difficult to identify because of a lack of explicit evidence. Even the archaeology of domestic houses within Palmyra, which remains limited, is sufficient only to suggest that the Palmyrene family in the second and third century C.E., at least among the wealthy, favored western culture. We know nothing, for example, of the occupancy of these homes, except that the nuclear

²⁸ There is no specific term for “clan” in Palmyrene, though the expression *byt 'b*, literally meaning “father’s house,” may be so translated (see Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 347, s.v. “*byt 'b*”). I would argue, however, that *byt 'b* does not bear the same definition of a clan identity as I have presented it. The single occurrence of *byt 'b* is in P0324 which from the context of the inscription refers to an ancestral deity; see p. 187 above. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 2, the Greek term *genos* also characterizes a social group based on descent, which may be either a clan or a tribe. The translation of the term in Palmyrene, however, is simply *bny*; see P0296, P0297, P0298, and P0299.

²⁹ See p. 76 above.

family may have been the basic social unit within each. Indeed, according to the epigraphy, throughout the period under discussion the Palmyrenes consistently emphasized immediate familial relations, both of the nuclear family and of the household. Since the evidence is primarily from urban contexts, this may suggest that the city fostered more intimate relationships between close kin than those between more distant relatives, perhaps, as a conjecture, because subsistence living required lower levels of cooperation in the city. When larger familial associations or lineage groups appear, the contexts tend to support group cohesion, such as when individuals and groups shared cult or held burial rites in common. Finally, as social organisms organized patriarchally, Palmyrene families seem not to be too dissimilar from families in other communities of the Roman Near East. Comparison of how families perpetuated themselves through marriages, the primary method of generating extended families and clans, will further illuminate this point.

Marriages Patterns

Marriage is a common feature of most developed societies. Marriage unifies unrelated or related people and creates in-laws. Just as marriage generates the nuclear family, for example, it also generates immediate familial associations through the joining of the two discrete family units of each couple. Further, in patrilineal descent groups, marriage serves in many cases to legitimize children. At Palmyra, for the most part, marriage patterns supported kin solidarity. These varied

significantly. Marriages, for instance, were both exogamous, meaning unions outside of one's particular group, and endogamous, unions within one's group. Furthermore, cross-cousin and parallel cousin marriages at Palmyra were not uncommon.³⁰ I will examine now the marriage patterns at Palmyra, and in particular how and why marriages were carried out between and among distinct groups. I will then discuss where Palmyrene marriage patterns fit within a broader cultural milieu.

When we speak of endogamous and exogamous marriages at Palmyra, we must be clear about the specific groups to which the rules of inclusion and exclusion applied. Such rules had a direct bearing on a number of important issues pertaining to group maintenance. Issues of inheritance were particularly acute. Wealth, status, privilege, power, and authority could all be transmitted through marriage. They could also be enhanced or depleted through their transmission.³¹ It is important, also, to recognize that different rules may have applied to different social entities, whether it is a religious group, a descent group, or a language group, for instance, among a host of possibilities. Furthermore, from the perspective of the individuals involved, since they may have been affiliated with more than a single

³⁰ Cf. B. Shaw and R. Saller, "Close-Kin Marriage in Roman Society?," *Man*, New Series 19.3 (1984): 432-44, who make the argument, at least for the western Roman Empire, that close-kin marriages were rare among aristocrats and those less affluent.

³¹ See P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), throughout.

group at any given moment, various rules of marriage may have applied simultaneously. Therefore, we must assess carefully the associations involved between individuals and groups and prioritize the influence of each. It is doubtful that we can reveal fully the marriages patterns at Palmyra, however. The best that we can hope to achieve is a general outline of what the situation was, and from that we can speculate on the causes.

As noted, marriages can be exogamous or endogamous. Among patrilineal descent groups, the tendency is to be exogamous; that is, marriages occur among individuals who do not share a common paternal ancestor. The rules of exogamy are such that groups are forced “to look beyond themselves for spouses and develop alliances with other groups.”³² Indeed, exogamous marriages tend to promote interdependency between independent groups and to facilitate cooperative intergroup relationships.³³ We may note, however, that if two groups are in conflict, marriage does not necessarily lead to a resolution of the issues involved.³⁴ Endogamy, on the other hand, among patrilineal descent groups represents patterns of marriage in which individuals do share a common paternal ancestor. In societies influenced by pastoral traditions, those in which descent is traced patrilineally,

³² Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 202.

³³ See B. Pasternak, *Introduction to Kinship and Social Organization* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 69.

³⁴ See, for instance, Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 205-7.

endogamy is a characteristic feature, in particular the practice of parallel cousin marriages joining the children of two same sex siblings. Such marriages, for example, are common among Arab pastoralists, a phenomenon that sociologists and anthropologists cannot adequately explain.³⁵ Rosenfeld emphasizes the economic incentives for intermarriage, and he speculates that parallel cousin relations serve to keep property intact by locking it within the kin group.³⁶ Barth, on the other hand, in reference to the Kurds, suggests that parallel cousin marriages serve a more important role in “solidifying the minimal lineage as a corporate group in factional struggle.”³⁷ Thus, “an ambitious man may use parallel cousin marriage to solidify, politically, his close patrilineal relatives.”³⁸ Within a patrilineal descent group engaged actively in parallel cousin marriages for more than three generations, however, the practice tends to be divisive and diminishes group solidarity.³⁹ In contrast, cross-cousin marriages, which involve the espousal of the children of siblings who are of the opposite sex, are another method of forming alliances with

³⁵ See, for instance, Pasternak, *Introduction to Kinship*, 74-77, and the discussion that follows.

³⁶ For example, see H. Rosenfeld, “An Analysis of Marriage Statistics for a Moslem and Christian Arab Village,” *International Archives of Ethnography* 48 (1957): 32-62.

³⁷ F. Barth, “Father’s Brother’s Daughter Marriage in Kurdistan,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 10 (1954): 171.

³⁸ Pasternak, *Introduction to Kinship*, 74.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

closely associated descent groups.⁴⁰ I will present now evidence that illustrates exogamous and endogamous marriage patterns at Palmyra, and I will then elaborate on its significance.

At Palmyra, it seems, marriages were, for the most part, exogamous, and the tendency was to marry within a particular class or social group based on rank or distinction.⁴¹ Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that marriages served as a form of social alliance between groups. For example, this seems to be the case at the tribal level with the marriage between Amtallat, daughter of Baraa, son of Atenatan, of the *bny myt*’, and Taima, son of Belhazai, son of Zabdibel, of the tribe of the *bny m’zyn*, attested in an inscription dated to 52 C.E.⁴² Also, P2801 commemorates the renowned Hairan, son of Buna, son of Rabbel, son of Buna, son of Atenatan, son of Taimai, of the tribe of the *bny myt*’, and his mother, Baaltega, daughter of Belshurai, of the tribe of *bny gdybwl*.⁴³ Both texts correspond to a period of great change in the history of the city, particularly in terms of its

⁴⁰ See Pasternak, *Introduction to Kinship*, 69-74; and Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 200-207.

⁴¹ For examples, see the genealogies provided in Sadurska and Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, 11, 23-24, 38, 42-43, 70-72, 91, 102, 113, 118, 122-3, 137, 142, 150, and 172.

⁴² P0168. Note that the Palmyrene text actually reads, “Amtallat, daughter of Baraa, son of Atenatan, who is of the daughters of Mita” (*’mtlt b[r]t | br’’ br ‘tntn dy mn bnt myt’*), as opposed to *bny myt*’, “sons of Mita.”

⁴³ P2801. See also discussion by Rodinson, “Une Inscription trilingue de Palmyre,” 137-42.

institutional development, and both correspond roughly to the time when we know of tribal conflicts within the community.⁴⁴ These marriages, then, would have facilitated cooperative inter-tribal relationships and may have ameliorated ongoing conflicts or prevented potential ones from occurring. Moreover, at the familial level, exogamous cross-cousin marriages, a means by which to form alliances with closely associated descent groups, were practiced at Palmyra. Cross-cousin marriages are evident in the funerary inscriptions from the *hypogeum* of Artaban, son of Oga (tomb 5 in the southeast necropolis), for example. The founder of the tomb, Oga, son of Artaban, son of Oga, whose mother was Hertabu, daughter of Bara, was married to his first cousin Barrata, daughter of Yarhai, son of Bara. Thus Hertabu and Yarhai were siblings.⁴⁵ In addition, from the tomb of Elahbel and his brothers (Tower 13) in the Valley of the Tombs, it seems that one of the brothers, Malku, married the daughter of his father's sister, Attai.⁴⁶ Thus exogamous marriages, whether of a cross-cousin or not, were common at Palmyra and reveal

⁴⁴ See P0261, an honorific inscription found in the temple of Bel, which dates to 21 C.E. and records the erection of a statue of Hashash, son of Nesha, son of Bolha Hashash, by the *bny kmr'* and the *bny mtbwl*, because he made peace between them and assisted them in all of their affairs.

⁴⁵ See P2664-73. In fact, this was a second marriage for Oga. He was also married to a certain Shalmat, daughter of Shamshigeram, whose relations were buried in the same tomb. For the genealogy of Shalmat, daughter of Shamshigeram, see Sadurska and Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, 23.

⁴⁶ See P0498.

important aspects, as noted, of social interaction within the community.

Endogamous parallel cousin marriages, on the other hand, were practiced among some of the Palmyrene elite. The most striking examples derive from the tomb of Elahbel and his brothers (Tower 13) in the Valley of the Tombs. The foundation inscription dates to 103 C.E. and records the erection of the tomb by Elahbel, Manai, Shakaiei, and Malku, sons of Wahballat, son of Manai Elahbel (fig. 25).⁴⁷ Their mother was probably Shagal, daughter of Shakaiei, son of Shalman, son of Taimarsu *rb*.⁴⁸ Among the brothers, Malku had a son, Wahballat, who married his cousin Shagal, daughter of Elahbel;⁴⁹ and Belaqab, the son of Elahbel, married his cousin Shagal, daughter of Shakaiei.⁵⁰ Another daughter born to Shakaiei, Amta, married her cousin, Wahballat, son of Manai, her uncle.⁵¹ Curiously, one of the four brothers, Shakaiei, appears to have married his niece, Amta, the daughter of his brother Elahbel.⁵² Furthermore, in the *hypogeum* of Shalmallat, son of Malku, in the Valley of the Tombs, an ornate funerary bust depicts Hana, daughter of Barikei, son of Nabuzabad, who was married to her first

⁴⁷ P0486.

⁴⁸ See P0501.

⁴⁹ See P0494 and P0507.

⁵⁰ See P0495 and P0500.

⁵¹ See P0496 and P0505.

⁵² See P0497.

cousin, Barikei, son of Nebuzabad, son of Nebuzabad.⁵³ Also, in *hypogeum* no. 3 of the southeast necropolis, a funerary bust of a young woman was found identified as Salmat, (daughter of) Tama, and the wife of Sharaiku, her cousin, who was the son of Belhazai. In this situation, Tama and Belhazai were apparently brothers, both sons of a certain Malku.⁵⁴ This is not an exhaustive summary of known examples from Palmyra, but it does show that endogamous parallel cousin marriages were practiced by members of Palmyrene society, which may reflect a continuation of pastoral customs. Admittedly, though, the evidence is biased in that it represents only a fraction of the elite of Palmyra. Nonetheless, the marriage patterns among the elite are significant, because these individuals were the arbiters of power and authority within the community.

An important question remains. To what extent did marriage patterns and familial structures at Palmyra mimic those of a wider cultural milieu, or were they local phenomena and particular to Palmyrene tribalism? As I have discussed in the previous section, family structures seem to have been comparable, and I would argue that marriage patterns were likewise. Given the progressive expansion of Roman influence on the political structures of the Palmyrene community (detailed in the next chapter), however, the question may be rephrased to address Rome's

⁵³ P1830. See also Sadurska and Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, 159-60, no. 209, fig. 160.

⁵⁴ See P2637 and P0121-26. See also M. Gawlikowski, "Palmyrena," *Berytus* 19 (1970): 77-80, no. 7, sub 7.

potential influence on the social structure of traditional familial associations. Is it valid, for instance, to examine Palmyrene familial relations in the same context as the Roman *familia* or *domus*? Again unfortunately, the same limitation exists. A paucity of data hinders any comparative analysis. Among non-aristocratic groups, for example, only general remarks can be offered but with little substantiation. The legal aspects of family relationships are the most difficult to grasp, in particular the makeup and management of power relations within family units. Can we regard the position and authority of the father in a Palmyrene family as similar to that of a *paterfamilias* in a Roman family? In a few cases, such comparisons seem valid, but again only among the Palmyrene aristocracy. For example, a comparative approach is possible among those families who, for whatever reasons before 212 C.E., became Roman citizens.⁵⁵

The aristocratic family of Elahbel and his brothers, Manai, Shakaiei, and Malku, all sons of Wahballat, son of Manai Elahbel, were among those Palmyrenes for whom marriage alliances forged even closer associations in a manner akin to the Roman aristocracy. Elahbel himself became a Roman citizen in the reign of Trajan, as indicated in an honorific inscription from the temple of Nabu where he is addressed as Marcus Ulpus Elahbel, Sergia.⁵⁶ He was among only a handful of the

⁵⁵ For a summation of individuals at Palmyra granted Roman citizenship, see D. Schlumberger, "Les Gentilices romains des Palmyréniens," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 9 (1942): 66-79.

⁵⁶ Milik, *Dédicaces*, 163.

local elite to enjoy Roman citizenship at the time, and he merits our attention as an ambitious, somewhat resourceful individual. Consider, for instance, the marriage patterns discussed above. As head of his branch of the family, Elahbel married one daughter to the son of his brother Malku, another daughter to his brother Shakaiei, and his son to a daughter of this same Shakaiei. Furthermore, Shakaiei himself also had a daughter, perhaps from the union with his niece, who betrothed Wahballat, son of his fourth brother Manai. We can only speculate on what prompted this fusion of patrilineal descent groups. What seems apparent, though, given his elevated social status as a Roman, is the likelihood that Elahbel sponsored the initiative to bind the patrilineal descendants of his brothers to himself, thereby enhancing his own position within the family.⁵⁷ Moreover, such intermarriage would have facilitated the decision of Elahbel to lock properties within the kinship group. However we choose to interpret this evidence, though, we must add the qualification that the situation with Elahbel and his brothers may have been unique at Palmyra, even among the Palmyrene aristocracy. Interestingly, Elahbel acted both as a Palmyrene and a Roman citizen.

Thus the marriage patterns at Palmyra varied. Though exogamous marriages seem to have predominated, endogamous marriages, whether among aristocrats or perhaps among others steeped in pastoral traditions, were not

⁵⁷ Perhaps modeled on Roman marriage patterns, those of the Julio-Claudians, for instance. See Stone, *Kinship and Gender*, 208-28.

uncommon. Moreover, none of these patterns of marriage seem to be peculiar to Palmyra, though motivations behind specific unions would have differed depending upon varying contexts. These marriage patterns, nonetheless, illuminate the power relations between and among kinship groups and the nature and method by which alliances might be forged or dissolved to promote economic, social, or political ambitions. In this sense, since we are dealing with social groups organized on the basis of descent, it is important to analyze the role of women at Palmyra, both within familial contexts and outside of them.

Women at Palmyra

As in all communities, the most obvious social distinction at Palmyra was that between men and women. The former dominated Palmyrene society. The latter maintained prestige and prominence in their social roles as mothers, wives, and daughters of men of greater or lesser importance. Where social status was clearly important, women were an integral part of the political and economic life of Palmyra, because they exerted power and influence comparable to their male counterparts. Women, as well as men, contributed to the architectural and sculptural embellishment of Palmyra throughout the city's history. I present here a short review of women as a distinct social group within Palmyra and I discuss their role and status in Palmyrene society, both in the home and in public.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ On the role of women more generally in the Roman world, see S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (1975; reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 149-226. See also idem,

The basic Palmyrene household, as I have mentioned, consisted of a husband, wife, and children and slaves, if any. How these households came into being may be discerned from the marriage patterns discussed above. But what was the role of women, generally, in the context of marriages? Women were clearly important in the forging of alliances between distinct social groups, although we do not have sufficient information to elaborate fully on why such unions were forged. The cooperative aspects of most marriages, nonetheless, seem obvious. Also of interest is the extent to which women were subordinated in the betrothal process, if at all. Based on a handful of funerary portraits of women with their children in the tombs of their fathers, Cynthia Finlayson recently argued that *mot'a* marriages were practiced at Palmyra, which means that women had the option to contract a marriage with a male sexual partner for reproductive purposes.⁵⁹ In this arrangement, the woman remained in the home of her father and children conceived during the contract did not belong to the husband. This seems to stretch the evidence, however. I doubt that we can discern in any case why some women had their remains placed in their father's tomb and not in that of a spouse. Also, since

“Women’s Identity and the Family in the Classical *Polis*,” in *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*, edited by R. Hawley and B. Levick (London: Routledge, 1995), 111-21.

⁵⁹ See C. Finlayson, “Veil, Turban and Headpiece: Funerary Portraits and Female Status at Palmyra” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1998), 754-60. Her theory is based on the observations among Arab tribes of W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, new ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903).

these contracts tended to be verbal, the potential of discovering written evidence for them is low.⁶⁰ The suggestion that *mot'a* marriages were practiced at Palmyra, then, is hypothetical, though intriguing nonetheless. If true, it would certainly illuminate an indigenous aspect of Palmyrene society that reflects bedouin traditions. At any rate, whether marriages were contracted or not, or whether some households were permanent or not, women at Palmyra were mostly honored for their social roles as wives and mothers.

Because Palmyrene society was patriarchal, women held subordinate roles to their husbands and fathers in familial associations. The inferior status of women is evident in the funerary reliefs on sarcophagi. For example, there are numerous examples of males depicted as large figures reclining on a couch, with their respective wives depicted much smaller and seated honorably at their feet (fig. 26).⁶¹ Occasionally, the husband's mother appears in these depictions in the same position as the wife but seated on the opposite side of her daughter-in-law.⁶² There are, however, reliefs that depict the position and size of husbands and wives equally, which would suggest that women indeed were empowered somewhat

⁶⁰ See Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 86.

⁶¹ For example, see Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, pls. 61-62 and 102; Sadurska and Bounni. *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, figs. 222, 237, 246-48, and 249; and A. Schmidt-Colinet, *Das Tempelgrab Nr. 36 in Palmyra: Studien zur palmyrenischen Grabarchitektur und ihrer Ausstattung*, vol. 2, Damaszener Forschungen no. 4 (Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1992), figs. 71a and 73a.

⁶² See Sadurska and Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, fig. 247.

within the household (fig. 27). This is clear in those reliefs that depict children in positions subordinate to both parents, generally behind them and much smaller (fig. 26). Interestingly, in these reliefs children seem to have been regarded equally, whether they were male or female, since neither tends to dominate in position or stature.⁶³

Despite the patriarchal aspects of Palmyrene society, maternal connections were important for extended group interaction. Occasionally, women listed their brothers as beneficiaries after their sons.⁶⁴ This suggests that each maintained a strong link to her original family, or clan, which would imply that the privileges and protection afforded due to continued association with maternal kin passed on to her offspring. Finlayson makes this argument in relation to the matriarchal pattern of Palmyrene headdresses in funerary reliefs.⁶⁵ While headdress types and styles may have marked a social identity based on kinship, however, this theory assumes that dress patterns systematically signaled clan or tribal affiliations or displayed efforts to maintain lineage ties. Also, relief portraits of Palmyrene women appear often in the tombs of their husbands, but no less frequently in the tombs of their paternal kin. Further, even in a more public setting, bonds among a woman's

⁶³ See Sadurska and Bounni, *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*, figs. 246 and 247; and Schmidt-Colinet, *Das Tempelgrab Nr. 36 in Palmyra*, fig. 71a.

⁶⁴ See P0167 and P0168.

⁶⁵ Finlayson, "Veil, Turban and Headpiece," 754.

familial relations might be reinforced. A striking example is a double console *in situ* in the agora. The inscription on the console, bilingual in Palmyrene and Greek, records the dedication of two statues which a certain Hagga set up for her father, Taima, son of Halaphata Barathē Allatai, and her brother Halaphata.⁶⁶ In this instance, then, and perhaps often at Palmyra maternal lineage groups were recognized and supported.

Furthermore, while most women were clearly subordinate to their husbands, and, before their betrothal, to their fathers, they still might attain positions of social and economic prominence, as reflected in the dedications they made and the honors they received. In a few cases, women received statues in their honor acknowledging their achievements and contributions to the community. For example, a fragmentary inscription found in a garden near the Efqa spring commemorates a statue to Attam, the wife of a certain Bolha, which was set up to her in 17 B.C.E. by the gods Aglibol and Malakbel and the *bny kmr*.⁶⁷ Also, Sharaiku, son of Hairan, set up a statue in 179 C.E. to honor his deceased wife, Martai, daughter of Yadē, son of Wahballat, son of Shemaūn (*šm 'wn*).⁶⁸ Moreover, the famed Zenobia herself, not surprisingly, was honored with a statue set up in 271 C.E. along the colonnaded street and adjacent to a statue of her deceased husband,

⁶⁶ P1417.

⁶⁷ P0315. On the date, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 62.

⁶⁸ P0300.

Odenathus.⁶⁹ Each of these women was an important public figure. Moreover, although women were subordinate to their fathers and husbands, some managed to gain a measure of independence. Women at Palmyra, for example, had the right to own property and to dispose of it, apparently, at their discretion.⁷⁰ Thus some had an economic basis upon which to contribute to the embellishment of the city as benefactors, and funerary portraits of women reclining on couches in banquet scenes would seem to depict such privileged individuals (fig. 28).⁷¹ Indeed, several examples of civic *euergetism* among women at Palmyra may be cited. According to a Greek inscription found near the temple of Bel and dated to 182 C.E. those of the tribe of the *Khōneitōi* honored a certain Thomallachis, (daughter of) Haddoudanos, (son of) Yarhibōleos, for having given 2500 *denarii* for the building of the baths of the gods Aglibol and Malakbel.⁷² Also, for the embellishment of the temple of Baalshamin in 23 C.E., Atai and Shabhai, daughters of Shahara, and Atta, daughter of Perdash, set up two columns to Baalshamin, the good god, for the life of themselves, their sons, and their brothers.⁷³ Similarly, as we have seen, a certain Amtallat, daughter of Baraa, set up a column to Baalshamin, the good and generous

⁶⁹ Zenobia: see P0293; Odenathus: see P0292.

⁷⁰ See E. Cussini, "Transfer of Property at Palmyra," *Aram* 7 (1995): 246.

⁷¹ See Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, pl. 107.

⁷² Ingholt, "Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, I," 109, no. 11.

⁷³ P0167.

god, for her life and the lives of her sons and brothers.⁷⁴ This evidence of major dedications offered by women at Palmyra is exceptional. More often, especially in religious contexts, women sponsored minor dedications, especially small altars for burning incense.⁷⁵ Importantly, whether for public or private benefaction, women at Palmyra enjoyed sufficient prominence to afford such dedications.

I have elaborated so far on the social roles of women primarily as wives and mothers. What of the various other occupations in which women at Palmyra engaged, not necessarily in the homes but outside of them? What of the minority of women who performed important social roles, for instance as priestesses and prostitutes?

With regard to the role of women in Palmyrene religion, generally, and as priestesses, in particular, I can draw few conclusions. The evidence is too sparse. There are no inscriptions that detail the actions of women as priestesses in religious contexts.⁷⁶ Moreover, there seem to be no portraits that convincingly depict priestesses *per se*, whereas their male counterparts are easily distinguished by their

⁷⁴ See n. 42 above.

⁷⁵ Among the altars dedicated by women at Palmyra, see P0334, P0356, P0373, and P1001. See also P0065, a votive plaque that mentions a certain Aqamata, daughter of Malē, invoking the Anonymous God in completion of a vow.

⁷⁶ Cf. Sadurska, “L’Art et la société,” 285-88, who attempts to recognize priestesses in certain reliefs.

priestly headgear, the so-called *modus* (fig. 6).⁷⁷ Yet, there are depictions of women in sacrificial or processional contexts, which confirms their participation in the religious life of the community. For example, a relief on the cross-beam of the peristyle south of the entrance to the *cella* of the temple of Bel depicts the popular scene of a religious procession attended by women entirely swathed in ritual veils (fig. 29).⁷⁸ The procession centers on a camel bearing a cloaked pavilion, which probably housed the idol, led by a driver partially leaning on his staff and holding the camel's reins. A donkey or horse, with reins trailing on the ground, wanders ahead of the camel driver, perhaps under divine guidance.⁷⁹ This completes the lower scene. Above, on the same relief, a second scene depicts additional women swathed in veils (fig. 30). Dirven suggests that this relief records the arrival of the goddess Allat in Palmyra, a thesis supported by the discovery of a similar scene on a fragmentary relief from Allat's temple, which also depicts a group of veiled women following a camel (fig. 31).⁸⁰ The reverse depicts what may be a cult statue

⁷⁷ See Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra*, 22. More recently, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 235-36.

⁷⁸ Seyrig, Amy, and Will, *Le Temple de Bêl*, 89-90, pl. 42, Album 91 and 143. Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 82, suggests a date of 80 C.E. for this relief.

⁷⁹ For the interpretation of the horse or donkey in this relief as a divine medium, see H. Seyrig, "Bas-reliefs monumentaux du temple de Bêl à Palmyre," *Syria* 15 (1934): 165.

⁸⁰ E. Ruprechtsberger, *Palmyra: Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der syrischen Oasenstadt: Einführende Beiträge und Katalog zur Ausstellung*, Linzer archäologische Forschungen, vol. 16 (Linz: Gutenberg, 1987), 314, no. 37. For

conveyed by a wagon, probably an image of the goddess. Will examines the appearance in these reliefs of completely veiled women.⁸¹ He suggests that the costume represents that of a specific ethnic group at Palmyra, presumably of Arab origin given the association with Allat, and offers the possibility that all Palmyrene women dressed themselves in this manner during processional rites.⁸²

Unfortunately, the evidence is insufficient to permit either conclusion.

In addition, images of women appear in various other reliefs that depict their role in the religious life of the community. Several fragmentary reliefs associated with the temple of Bel may be cited. One presents a woman in profile wearing a simple tunic and cloak, part of which is draped over her left arm, and carrying a jug; to her right stands a man in similar dress beside an altar, holding an incense box and a libation jug.⁸³ A second relief depicts a woman in profile, with her right hand raised in worship. A man in profile stands before her holding a libation jug over a pyre, and the mutilated figure of a second male is to his right.⁸⁴

discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 83-4.

⁸¹ Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 109-10.

⁸² More generally, see R. de Vaux, "Sur le voile des femmes dans l'Orient ancien," *Revue Biblique* 44 (1935): 407-23.

⁸³ J. Sabeh, "Sculptures palmyréniennes inédites du Musée de Damas," *AAS* 3 (1953): 17-18, pl. 1.1.

⁸⁴ H. Seyrig, "Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques," *Syria* 22 (1941): 32-33, fig. 2. See also M. Morehart, "Early Sculpture at Palmyra," *Berytus* 12 (1956): 56-57, fig. 2.

A larger, better preserved relief depicts a procession toward a sacrificing priest who is holding an incense box and libation jug in his left hand and casting incense onto an altar with his right (fig. 32).⁸⁵ A priestly figure approaches the altar from the right offering a crown or wreath, followed by two women, each wearing a tunic and cloak like those of the men, but partly veiled. The first carries an incense burner in her upraised right hand, while the second carries an upraised two-handled cup. This sculptural evidence indicates that women performed important roles in the religious life of the community, but without liturgical texts or other written sources a critical assessment of these roles is nearly impossible.

Among the women of Palmyra, those generally depicted in portraits come from aristocratic families. Their opulent dress and jewelry betray their privileged social status. But not all women of Palmyra were affluent. Clearly, women of lesser means filled the streets of the city, some dressed more or less opulently. Consider, for instance, the inspired words of Artemidorus, “to dream of wearing colorful and flowery clothing is a good thing for a woman if she is rich, or a courtesan, since courtesans, because of their profession, and rich women, because of their lives of luxury, wear flowery clothing.”⁸⁶

As in all ancient cities, there were prostitutes at Palmyra. We know from

⁸⁵ Found in the agora, but presumably from the temple of Bel and connected to the aforementioned reliefs. See Seyrig, “Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques,” 32-33, pl. 1.1.

⁸⁶ Artemidorus *Onirocriticon*. 2.3.

the Palmyrene tariff that their activities were subject to taxation, and it seems evident that a hierarchy existed among the various prostitutes based on the value of their labor.⁸⁷ Some charged more than others. For example, those who received six *asses* for their services each owed six *asses* to the tax collector, and, similarly, those who received eight *asses* for their services owed eight *asses*. Among the more prominent prostitutes, those who received one *denarius* or more for their services each owed one *denarius* in taxes. Presumably, these taxes were assessed monthly.⁸⁸ This hierarchy among the prostitutes subject to taxation is clear, but beyond that, our knowledge of the nature of prostitution at Palmyra is slight.⁸⁹ Archaeologically, no brothels have been identified (though the site remains only partially excavated), but these probably existed. The least we can say is that some organization of prostitution is apparent. We may consider, for instance, the Palmyrene section of the tariff that records the tax on slave girls (*lymh*). It declares that “the tax collector will exact from slave girls who take a tax of one *denarius* or more, a tax of one *denarius* for each woman; and if she receives less, he will exact

⁸⁷ P0259 (Tariff): Greek 75-79.

⁸⁸ Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 177. For a more complete discussion on the rate of the tax, see T. A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 282-86, who argues that the tax was assessed daily.

⁸⁹ For a lucid study of the role of prostitution in Classical Athens, see J. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

whatever sum she receives.”⁹⁰ Prostitutes are clearly meant here, whom Dessau suggests were the slaves of a *leno* or pimp.⁹¹ If correct, this supports the notion that there was organized prostitution at Palmyra, although it remains possible that some women operated as private entrepreneurs. Moreover, in terms of their tax liabilities, McGinn points out that these were equivalent for both pimps and prostitutes throughout the Roman Empire.⁹²

Prostitution was one of many occupations in which women, particularly those among the lower classes, might engage at Palmyra. Unfortunately, the nature of our evidence does not permit any elaboration of women’s other occupations. For instance, as discussed below, we know of bakers, weavers, fullers, and vendors, among others, at Palmyra, but there is no indication that women filled these positions, however probable. The recent discovery of a funerary relief of a woman holding a *stylus*, or writing implement, is an indication of literacy and suggests that some women may have worked as scribes (fig. 33). Whatever their occupations were, we might presume that employment opportunities were dictated by their

⁹⁰ P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.125-127: *mks’ dy ‘lymt’ hyk dy nmws’ mwh’ pšqt | hw mks’ yg[b’ mk]s’ mn ‘lymt’ dy šqln dnr | ’w ytyr l’[t’ dn]r whn ḥsyṛ thwh šql’*.

⁹¹ H. Dessau, “Der Steuertarif von Palmyra,” *Hermes* 19 (1884): 517-18. See also McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law*, 284; and Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 180. Palmyrene *lymh’* is the equivalent of the Greek *hetaira*, meaning a prostitute, as shown in P0259 (Tariff): Greek 203. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene II.74, which employs the Palmyrene term *znyh* to designate a prostitute.

⁹² McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law*, 284.

social class, whether enslaved or free.

Thus an obvious social distinction existed at Palmyra based on gender. Males dominated Palmyrene society; women were subordinates. This was, in fact, a social reality in most ancient communities and throughout Palmyra's history. Nevertheless, whether in the home or in the streets, women were not stripped completely of power. Women were matriarchs of their respective homes who could, potentially, yield great influence on their male relations. Outside of the home, as I have noted, women were active in the religious and secular life of the city. Women of means contributed to the sculptural and architectural embellishment of Palmyra not unlike their male counterparts. Women of lesser means filled the streets of the city as vendors or prostitutes pandering to the lascivious needs of others. Clearly, the status among women varied as did their social roles. Because of limitations in the evidence, I have discussed here only the most common roles of wives, mothers, priestesses, and prostitutes. I reserve for the conclusion a discussion of how a single woman, Zenobia, could arise in the third century C.E. and claim the title of queen.

Slaves, Freedmen, and Freedwomen

Slaves and those manumitted from slavery, who comprised distinct social groups at Palmyra, operated in the general framework of the familial associations outlined above. A discussion of these individuals, slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen, in fact, completes our discussion of the Palmyrene household.

There is nothing to suggest that slavery at Palmyra was any different than in other parts of the Mediterranean world.⁹³ Slaves were incorporated into the household as property, and the heads of households held absolute authority—the power of life and death included—over the person and the labor of their slaves.⁹⁴ According to Peter Garnsey, this is the most basic component of slavery. He adds two others. Slaves were kinless, “stripped of [their] old social identity in the process of capture, sale and deracination, and denied the capacity to forge new bonds of kinship through marriage alliance.”⁹⁵ The social identity of slaves, then, was bound to that of their owners, to whom they were perpetually obligated and owed service.

Within the household, slaves were absorbed by domestic service. Occupied primarily as the personal servants of their masters within the home (fig. 28), many slaves were employed outside the home as well in their master’s interest. In some instances, slaves were entrusted with secretarial and managerial positions. More often, though, slaves were employed in agriculture and industry, again to the sole

⁹³ For definitions of slavery, see P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-2; and M. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 67-92.

⁹⁴ Gaius *Institutes* 1.52: *in potestate itaque sunt servi dominorum. quae quidem potestas iuris gentium est: nam apud omnes peraeque gentes animadvertere possumus dominis in servos vitae necisque potestatem esse, et quodcumque per servum acquiritur, id domino acquiritur.*

⁹⁵ Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*, 1-2.

benefit of their masters.⁹⁶ In fact, slaves were fully integrated into the work force. They worked alongside free laborers, with whom they shared membership in the same voluntary associations.

The prevalence of slavery at Palmyra is difficult to gauge. Can we assume, for instance, the presence of at least one slave in each Palmyrene household, at least within those not gripped by poverty? It was not uncommon for even the poorest in ancient society to possess a slave. At Antioch in the fourth century C.E., for instance, Libanius illuminates this fact as he pleads for his lecturers, who, despite their extreme poverty, still have two or three slaves.⁹⁷ At Palmyra, however, the evidence is too sparse and fragmented to make any such assessment. To my knowledge, only four inscriptions speak of slaves or servants. Most important is the tariff that records the traffic in slaves. Taxes are due from those importing slaves into Palmyra or the borders of Palmyra, from those selling slaves (a distinction is drawn between regular and veteran slaves), and from those who opt to export slaves purchased at Palmyra.⁹⁸ The rate of taxation, at twenty-two *denarii* per head for imported slaves, suggests that the slave trade was a lucrative enterprise. But still this does not inform us that every household possessed a slave.

⁹⁶ See discussion by A. H. M. Jones, "Slavery in the Ancient World," in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity*, edited by M. I. Finley (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1956), 1-15.

⁹⁷ Libanius *Oratio* 31.11.

⁹⁸ P0259 (Tariff): Greek 1-8; Palmyrene, II.2-6, 86.

The remaining three inscriptions, which speak of slaves or servants, are even less useful in this regard. One is on an altar from the temple of Abgal at Khirbet Semrin. It was dedicated in 270 C.E. by Shalman, servant of Ogeilu Kilaiūn, in fulfillment of a vow to the helpful genie and in remembrance of his brothers, Qamla, Taima, and Soadu.⁹⁹ This inscription illustrates the importance of kinship ties since Shalman, despite his enslavement, sought openly to remember his family connections. The second inscription, quoted above, refers to Malku the slave of a certain Kitut.¹⁰⁰ The third inscription dates to 272 C.E. and does not refer to domestic servants at all, but rather it mentions slaves (or oblates) (*tly'*) of the temple of Bel.¹⁰¹ This is the only reference to temple slaves at Palmyra. Finally, while the epigraphic evidence is meager, a greater number of sculptural representations of slaves or servants may further suggest the prevalence of this social institution at Palmyra.¹⁰²

We are somewhat better informed of those manumitted from slavery, however. Freedmen and freedwomen are attested in several inscriptions, mostly from funerary contexts. Who were these individuals? What were their roles in the

⁹⁹ P1677.

¹⁰⁰ P0464.

¹⁰¹ P1358.

¹⁰² For example, see F. O. Hvidberg-Hansen, *The Palmyrene Inscriptions: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1998), nos. 85 and 126; and Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, figs. 75 and 94

city? Also, what were their relationships with their former owners, and with others?

The Roman law of persons distinguished between individuals who were either free or slaves. Among the former, there was a distinction between those who were freed (*libertini*) and those who were free-born (*ingenui*).¹⁰³ Once Palmyra became a Roman *colonia* in the late second or early third century C.E., we can assume that similar legal distinctions prevailed there as well, and perhaps beforehand among families who enjoyed the privilege of Roman citizenship. Also in Roman law, whatever the manner of manumission, customs dictated that freed slaves remain obligated to their former owners. Such obligation was called *obsequium* and *officium*. In turn, former owners extended their protection over their freed slaves. The rules of patronage, in fact, governed the relationships between former owners and their freed slaves. Yet a freed slave was more than an ordinary client. He remained intimately connected to the household of his former owners. As Duff observes, “the relation of patron to freedman approximated to that of father to son.”¹⁰⁴ This familial relationship was reinforced by the fact that

¹⁰³ Gaius *Institutes* 1.9-11: *et quidem summa divisio de iure personarum haec est quod omnes homines aut liberi sunt aut servi. rursus liberorum hominum alii ingenui sunt alii libertini. ingenui sunt qui liberi nati sunt; libertini qui ex iusta servitute manumissi sunt.*

¹⁰⁴ A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), 36-49. See also P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 120-21.

freedwomen of whatever age and freedmen under the age of twenty were under the guardianship (*tutela* and *cura*) of their patrons. Unfortunately, except for third century C.E. contexts, we cannot be certain of the applicability of Roman legal distinctions and regulations within Palmyra.

Nonetheless, what would have been the social status of a freedman or freedwoman? As I have discussed, there was in Roman contexts a social and legal distinction between freed and free-born individuals. At Palmyra, freed slaves identified themselves as such. Even the children of freed slaves identified the servile origins of their parents. For example, on a funerary relief fragment now in the Palmyra Museum, a certain Ogeilu is identified as the son of Yarhai, freedman (*br ḥr ʿ*) of Hairan.¹⁰⁵ Also, two inscriptions from the family tomb of Malku *rb ʿ* record the cession of three niches in 213 and 214 C.E., respectively, to Julius Aurelius Agrippa, who is identified as the son of a certain Agathapūs, freedman of Heliodoros Yarhibola,¹⁰⁶ and to Julius Aurelius Ogeilu, the son of a certain Aphrahat, freedman of Zabdibol.¹⁰⁷ P1624 informs us that Julius Aurelius Ogeilu was illiterate and that he and the same Julius Aurelius Agrippa mentioned above formed a partnership in 214 C.E. to manage the area of the tomb between their

¹⁰⁵ P1247.

¹⁰⁶ P0050.

¹⁰⁷ P0049.

respective niches.¹⁰⁸ Curiously, the family of Malku *rb* ' appears to have favored former slaves. Earlier in 186 C.E., for instance, Nurbel (identified as Julius Aurelius Nurbel in 213 C.E.)¹⁰⁹ and his sister Aqamata Habba ceded a portion of their family tomb to a certain Nahashtab, freedman of Hannata Wahbai Halaphata, and Ruhabel, freedman of Amatshalma, who was herself a freedwoman of Shagal, daughter of Zebaida.¹¹⁰ Whether one's identification as a freedman or a freedwoman, or the son or daughter of someone once enslaved, had any impact on the status of the individual concerned is difficult to detect. Most likely, by virtue of identifying oneself as once enslaved (or in direct relation to a former slave), some sort of social stigma of one's former position remained. This identification may also have shielded the individual from possible re-enslavement.

After 212 C.E. and the issuance of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, many freed slaves, or the children of freed slaves, boasted of their newly acquired status as Roman citizens by adopting the *praenomen* of Julius (or Julia) and the *nomen* of Aurelius (or Aurelia).¹¹¹ Both P0049 and P0050, cited above, are examples.

¹⁰⁸ P1624. See also H. Ingholt, "Palmyrene Inscription from the Tomb of Malku," *MUSJ* 38 (1962): 106. The Palmyrene actually identifies the individual as Julius, son of Aurelius Ogeilu, but this would seem to be in error given the date of the inscription.

¹⁰⁹ P0050.

¹¹⁰ P0044.

¹¹¹ The evidence is summarized by Schlumberger, "Les Gentilices romains," 66-79.

Moreover, in 232 C.E., a certain freedman named Julius Aurelius Hermes had sufficient wealth to build a *hypogeum* for himself and for Julia Aurelia Thaimē, freedwoman of Aurelia Aqme, daughter of Antiochos Olaiphos, and her children.¹¹² In 242 C.E., another freedwoman of Aurelia Aqme, Julia Aurleia Pharima, ceded part of a tomb to a certain Julius Aurelius Zabdibol.¹¹³ Both P0072 of 186 C.E. and P0075 of 228 C.E. provide the most conspicuous example of freedman receiving Roman citizenship and benefitting from his new status. The former records on a door lintel the cession made by Lishamsh, son of Lishamsh, and by Amdai, son of Yedibel, half-brothers (sons of the same mother), of a portion of the family tomb to a certain Wardan, freedman of Antiochos Raphabol.¹¹⁴ The latter records (42 years later) the cession of a portion of the same tomb by this same Wardan, now having adopted the *nomen* Aurelius, to a certain Aurelius Malku, son of Shalman.¹¹⁵ In this instance, Wardan probably adopted the new name as a boast after he had received citizenship in 212 C.E.

Furthermore, though the evidence is admittedly slight, it appears that freedmen and freedwomen of Palmyra, at least in some instances, maintained close

¹¹² P1142.

¹¹³ P2725. See also M. Gawlikowski, “Trois inscriptions funéraires des camps de Dioclétien,” *Studia Palmyrenskie* 6-7 (1975): 131-32.

¹¹⁴ P0072.

¹¹⁵ P0075.

connections to the families of their former owners. In the *hypogeum* of Bolha, for example, an inscription records that the freedmen of the family (*bny ḥry*) were included among the benefactors of the construction.¹¹⁶ They were given burial rites. Also, a certain Hermes, freedman of Malku, is depicted on a sarcophagus in the northern exedra of the same tomb.¹¹⁷ As noted, it would not have been uncommon for freedmen or freedwomen to remain intimately connected to the households of their former owners.

This sums up our evidence for the position and status of slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen at Palmyra. For the most part, it appears that their position was akin to that of their counterparts in Roman and Hellenistic society. Perhaps this is because the earliest dated inscription mentioning either a slave or a freed slave is of 143 C.E. (most are of the late second and early third century C.E.), after the civic institutions of Palmyra had become more comparable with those of other Mediterranean communities (see Chapter 5). Even among the undated inscriptions there are none to suggest that slaves were not integral components of the Palmyrene household, or that those freed from slavery did not retain important connections with their former owners in a manner that mimicked Roman patronage. Unfortunately, the fragmented nature of the evidence does not permit any further elaboration of the mechanisms that governed relations between slaves and their

¹¹⁶ P1896.

¹¹⁷ P1894.

owners, the manner by which slaves obtained their freedom, or the subsequent relations between freed slaves and their former owners. Nonetheless, slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen were socially distinct. In the sense that they identified themselves in relation to their servile present or past, they accordingly set boundaries that demarcated themselves in a socially stratified environment.

Occupational Identities

By the second century C.E. and perhaps earlier, Palmyra was a cosmopolitan city supported by a host of individuals variously occupied. The streets buzzed with activity, commerce and industry flourished, and Palmyra prospered. The business of gainful employment was, I suspect, common among other Mediterranean communities and, as I have discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of Palmyra as an economic center, a feature that attracted civic settlement. I present here an overview of the occupational groups known to have existed in the city based on epigraphic evidence. Importantly for this study, occupation provided a framework for the construction of a social identity above kinship relations. As I will show in the following section, occupation also provided a framework for the development of voluntary associations, a community of like-minded individuals mutually supporting one another.

From the tariff inscription, as Matthews points out, we gain the “impression of the normal economic and social life of a middle-eastern city.”¹¹⁸ Workshops

¹¹⁸ Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 173.

(*ergastēria*) of various sorts, particularly those dealing in leather goods, and bazaars (*ptply*)¹¹⁹ abounded in the city. Venders filled the streets, selling oil, wine, salt, salted fish, animal fat, various articles of clothing, leathers and skins, among a host of materials and goods derived from the regional environment. There was a legal distinction between tailors (*hyt* ') who operated from fixed workshops and those who moved about the city selling clothing.¹²⁰ Who manned the workshops? In addition to the metal-smiths,¹²¹ shoemakers occupied shops, as did makers of rafts (or inflatable skins),¹²² and perhaps even a certain Maqqai, a butcher (*tḥ* ') who dedicated an altar to the Anonymous God, operated out of one of these local workshops.¹²³ Similarly, a certain Basa, a baker who also dedicated an altar to the Anonymous God, may have had a shop in the city.¹²⁴ Sculptors (*glwp* ') are also

¹¹⁹ Apparently a loan word from the Greek *pantopōlion*; see Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 177, n. 18.

¹²⁰ P0259 (Tariff): Greek 139. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Greek 86-7; Palmyrene, II.57.

¹²¹ The obverse of one tessera, P2042, depicts a smith at work. For workers of gold and silver, see P0291. See also n. 148 below.

¹²² See p. 231 below.

¹²³ P0415. Cf. P0259 (Tariff): Palmyrene, II.102-3, which refers to the tax on "butchers" or "sacrificial victims" (*qsb* '). On the problematic interpretation of *qsb* ', see M. Zahrnt, "Zum Fiskalgesetz von Palmyra und zur Geschichte der Stadt in hadrianischer Zeit," *ZPE* 62 (1986): 283, n. 18. Cf. A. Piganiol, "Observations sur le tarif de Palmyre," *Revue historique* 195 (1945): 10-24.

¹²⁴ P1458. See also B. Aggoula, "Remarques sur l'inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, Fasc XI et XII," *Semitica* 29 (1979): 113.

attested at Palmyra, and they probably had shops in the city as well.¹²⁵ One sculptor, a certain Yarhai, etched a short remembrance of himself at the end of a dedication to the two gods Arsu and Azizu, which Baalai son of Yarhibola, a priest of Azizu, sponsored.¹²⁶ Similarly, Halipha, son of Yarhai Elahu, the sculptor, identifies himself at the end of an inscription that commemorates a statue in honor of a certain Zabdilah of the *bny m'zyn*, which was set up for him by the goddess Allat and the *bny nwrbl*.¹²⁷ Furthermore, some craftsmen inherited their trade, perhaps even their workshops or family business, from their fathers. For example, a fragmentary relief dated 148 C.E. and now in the Damascus National Museum portrays a certain Moqimu, the master craftsman, son of Nurbel, son of Zabda, the master craftsman (*'mn'*) next to his wife, Tadmor.¹²⁸ A second relief dated 146 C.E. and now in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art also depicts Tadmor, wife of Moqimu, whose father Nurbel, in this instance, is described as a master

¹²⁵ For Palmyrene sculptors employed outside the city, see P1719 and P1113.

¹²⁶ P0320. See also Ingholt, *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels, 1928), 42-47, no. 22, who provides a date of 213 C.E. for the inscription.

¹²⁷ P1941. For a discussion of the text, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 79-82; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 250-51. P1410, a fragmentary inscription from the agora, mentions an unnamed sculptor.

¹²⁸ P0005. See Sabeh, "Sculptures palmyréniennes inédites," 19. See also P0617 and P0618.

craftsman.¹²⁹ Moreover, in far less specific terms, merchants (*tgr* ') of all types populated the streets and workshops of Palmyra, in particular within the agora.¹³⁰ Attested most are those involved in the caravan trade, which is not at all surprising. They either set up statues themselves and made dedications to honor their patrons, those benefactors who protected the caravans and aided Palmyrene merchants at home and abroad, or they are themselves mentioned in such dedications.¹³¹ All of these people populated the industrial and commercial sectors of the city.

Not everyone in the city in need of employment occupied him or herself in commerce and industry, however. Other professions are attested that might have served to support occupational identities or acted as bases for collective association. The more educated, for instance, might pursue careers as teachers (*sbr* ') or physicians ('sy '), professions that were socially heterogenous and to which individuals of varied social status were attracted.¹³² As van Nijf emphasizes,

¹²⁹ P0614. For related evidence, see P0615, P0616, P0619, P0620, and P0621.

¹³⁰ At Dura Europos, for instance, as recorded on a stele, "the people of the suq" or "market vendors" (*bn̄y šqqt* ') made a dedication to the gods Asharu and Shaad, which suggests that they functioned as a corporate group. See Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 32-33. For discussion and alternate translations, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 321-24.

¹³¹ For dedications supported by merchants and traders, see P0262, P0279, P0306, P1352, P1366, P1373, P1374, P1376, P1403, P1409, P1584, *Inventaire* 10.19, and *Inventaire* 10.97. Merchants are mentioned in P0197, P0282, P0288, P1062, P1378, P1414, and P1421.

¹³² For general details, see O. M. van Nijf, *Civic World of Professional Associations*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, vol. 17

“despite their social heterogeneity, physicians and teachers presented themselves, and were recognized, as status groups in society which could act and merit privileges collectively.”¹³³ We can say little regarding the position of teachers at Palmyra. The only inscription that mentions a teacher of any sort is on a stone slab in the temple of Bel, which served as a memorial to a certain Antiochus, generically identified as “the teacher” (*sbr*).¹³⁴ We are only slightly better informed regarding physicians at Palmyra. The best known is Nurbel, the physician, who lived in the mid-first century C.E., and whose son, Abdaastur, built a tomb for himself in 98 C.E.¹³⁵ Malku, the grandson of this same physician, constructed an elaborate tomb for himself and his family in 120 C.E., the inscriptions from which provide a long history of Nurbel’s descendants.¹³⁶ Several examples record cessions of part of the ancestral tomb of Malku, son of Malku, son of Nurbel, the physician, by the

(Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1997), 171-76.

¹³³ Ibid., 173.

¹³⁴ P1349. The inscription is bilingual and the Greek employs the term *kathēgētēs* for the designation of “teacher,” which also carries the sense of “one who leads or guides.” According to Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 391, s.v. “*sbr*,” the exact sense of *sbr* remains uncertain.

¹³⁵ P0094. See also Gawlikowski, *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*, 191, no. 26. For the date of Nurbel and his depiction on a stele, see Ingholt, “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû,” 460-63.

¹³⁶ See P1218, which identifies the tomb as that of Malku, son of Malku, son of Nurbel, the physician.

children of Malku *rb'*, son of the same Malku who constructed the tomb.¹³⁷ The daughter of another physician is depicted on a funerary relief now in the collection of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.¹³⁸ Furthermore, an inscription on a stone slab found near the Efqa spring mentions a dedication to the Anonymous God in 243 C.E., and “to the friends who are the chosen ones of the temple of Bel” (*lwd' dy 'hdy hykl' d[y] bl*),¹³⁹ by a certain Malku, son of Moqimu, a personal (or private) physician (*'sy' gwy'*).¹⁴⁰ It is, in fact, unclear exactly what meaning *gwy'* conveys in this instance, whether it refers to a private, personal, or perhaps a trusted physician of an inner circle of friends.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, however we choose to describe Malku the physician, his association with the temple of Bel clearly attaches some prominence to him. This reinforces the somewhat socially ambiguous class physicians and teachers comprised in antiquity, at Palmyra and

¹³⁷ These texts span the years from 186 to 214 C.E.; see P0044 (186 C.E.), P0045 (186 C.E.), P0050 (186 C.E.), P0048 (213 C.E.), and P0049 (214 C.E.).

¹³⁸ See P0874, which identifies Habba, daughter of Malē, the physician.

¹³⁹ Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 153, n. 88, reads the inscription as a dedication to the Anonymous God and to Wadda, an Arabian deity.

¹⁴⁰ P1558.

¹⁴¹ Suggested by the enigmatic expression *wšb 't' dy wd'* in P1558, which Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 361, s.v. “*wd*,” translate as “and for the seven of the friends.” Cf. J. Teixidor, “L’Inscription palmyrénienne Inv. XII, 45,” *Semitica* 30 (1980): 61-62, who translates the phrase as “et pour l’épanouissement des amis.” See also Aggoula, “Remarques sur l’inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre,” 116.

elsewhere. Whether they formed common associations at Palmyra is impossible to detect in the available evidence.

Thus the varied nature of Palmyra is apparent from the host of occupations that supported life within the city. In commerce, industry, education, or medicine, a plethora of individuals supported themselves, some more prosperous than others. Importantly, these occupations provided their own frameworks for identity construction that permeated kinship relations. Nurbel's assertion of being a physician, for example, was a social stamp that marked him out as different from others, even in familial contexts. It remains to examine the extent to which individuals used their occupations as a basis for forming social groups. To what extent, for example, did they group themselves collectively in voluntary associations?

Voluntary Associations and Ritual Dining

Voluntary associations (*collegia*) played a vital role in the social development of cities in the Roman East, and Palmyra was no exception.¹⁴² They were one of many social organisms that regulated personal and group interaction. Importantly, these provided access to social engagement for individuals whose direct participation in civic affairs would otherwise have been diminished because

¹⁴² For a recent discussion, see van Nijf, *Civic World of Professional Associations*, throughout. See also S. G. Wilson, "Voluntary Associations: An Overview," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, edited by J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 1-15.

of their inferior class or status. Voluntary associations were essentially mutual aid societies for the benefit of their members, individuals of humble or moderate means.¹⁴³ Whether organized around the cult of a specific deity or formed around a common trade or shared interest, these associations provided basic necessities for their members. Most common was the provision of burial for their dead, although there is no evidence that voluntary associations at Palmyra operated in such a capacity. These also organized banquets for the living, a common feature of Palmyrene society. Socially and legally, voluntary associations operated as single group entities and their members shared a common identity. The corporate unit itself was treated as an individual. In most communities, for example, these associations often had seats together in the theater, but I cannot confirm this to be true at Palmyra. Also, since the wealthy often patronized associations, members of associations, as a group of individuals of humble or moderate means sharing a common social identity, were granted access to a social network that allowed interaction with more elite individuals and groups. Thus, as a group integrated in a system of patronage, members of associations participated in the fundamental social networks of civic life.¹⁴⁴

Four inscriptions of 257/58 C.E. mention explicitly voluntary associations

¹⁴³ Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 156-58.

¹⁴⁴ See R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 57-87.

among craftsmen at Palmyra, each of which records honors bestowed upon Odenathus or his son Hairan for their patronage.¹⁴⁵ On a console along the Great Colonnade, the first inscription, in Greek only, records a dedication to Septimius Hairan, son of Odenathus. It reads:

[To Septimius] Hairan, the illustrious son of Odenathus, the illustrious consul, (erected by) the symposium of shoemakers (or leather-workers) and makers of leather rafts (συμπόσιον σκυτέων καὶ ἀσκοναυτοποιῶν), for their patron, the year 569 (257/58 C.E.).¹⁴⁶

The second inscription, also on a console along the Great Colonnade, is bilingual in Palmyrene and Greek and records the dedication of a statue to Septimius Odenathus, the illustrious consul, in his honor by an association of metalworkers of gold and silver:

Greek: [To] Sep[timius Odenathus], the illustrious consul, (erected by) the association (*syntechnia*) of workers of gold and silver, (to their) lord, the year 569, the month Xandikos (April, 258 C.E.).
Palmyrene: Statue of Septimius Odenathus, the illustrious consul, our lord (*mr*'), which the association (*tgm*') of smiths, workers of gold and silver, set up for him, in the month Nisan, the year 569

¹⁴⁵ For discussion of these texts, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 215-20. See also Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre," 251-61; and Milik, *Dédicaces*, 159-60.

¹⁴⁶ See H. Seyrig, "Les Fils du roi Odainat," *AAS* 13 (1963): 161. The text reads: [Σεπτίμιον] Αἰράνην τὸν | λαμπρότατον υἱὸν Ὀδαι|νάθου τοῦ λαμπρο|τάτου ὑπατικοῦ τὸ | συμπόσιον σκυτ(έ)ων καὶ ἀσκοναυτο|ποιῶν τὸν πάτρωνα | ἔτους 569. See also Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre," 254, no. 5; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 217. On the *askonautopoiios* as builders of inflatable goatskins, see Seyrig, "Les Fils du roi Odainat," 159-66.

(April, 258 C.E.).¹⁴⁷

The remaining two inscriptions further honor Odenathus. On a column console in a portico north of the temple of Baalshamin, an inscription records the dedication of a statue to Odenathus by an association presumably of metallurgists (συμπόσιον τῶν κονετῶν).¹⁴⁸ Another inscription, somewhat fragmented and discovered out of its original context near the Tetrapylon, records the dedication of a statue to the same distinguished consul by an association identified as the *ouannoï* (συμπόσιον τῶν ουαννῶν).¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, both the συμπόσιον τῶν κονετῶν and the συμπόσιον τῶν ουαννῶν remain enigmatic associations, although, as Kaizer

¹⁴⁷ P0291: Σεπ[τίμιον Ὀδαίναθον] | τὸν λαμ[πρότατον ὑπατικ]δὸν | συντε[χνία τῶν χρυσοχ]όων | καὶ ἀργυ[ροκόπων τ]ὸν δεσπότη | τειμῆς χάριν [ἔτ]ους 569 | μηνεὶ Ἐανδικῶ / *šlm sptmyws 'dynt | nhyr' hptyq' mrn dy | 'gym lh tgm' dy qyny' | 'bd' dnb' wksp' lyqrh | byrh nysn šnt 569*. See also Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 255, no. 9; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 216.

¹⁴⁸ See Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, 66-67, no. 52; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 160-61; Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 255, no. 7; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 217. Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, 67, identifies *kovetoi* as a geographical or ethnic name. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 159, on the other hand, identifies *kovetoi* with the transliterated Palmyrene term *qynt'* which he translates as “first-class players on the lyre.” Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 36, prefers to translate the terms as “metallurgists.” For discussion, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 219, n. 22.

¹⁴⁹ *Inventaire* 12.37. See also Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, 66, n. 2, fig. 2, who identifies *ouannoï* as a geographical or ethnic name; Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 255, no. 8, who translates the term as “winnowers” but without commentary; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 217-18 and 219, n. 23 for discussion.

suggests, they were likely to have been organizations of craftsmen as well.¹⁵⁰

Whether other voluntary associations based on shared occupations in craft and industry existed at Palmyra cannot be confirmed, however probable. As I have noted, numerous occupational groups were present in the city and each potentially could have formed the basis of an association. At any rate, it is interesting that the only evidence for voluntary associations among craftsmen is of the mid-third century C.E., a time of crisis in the Roman East and transformation for Palmyra. What this signifies, if anything, is not clear. It is also unclear what led Odenathus and his son to act as patrons to these groups, though it is evidence of their concern for the economic well-being of these craftsmen and for that of the city, a topic to which I will return in Chapter 7. What is important, nonetheless, is that these associations provided a unique social context for the development of identities that may have risen above kinship, particularly since craft workshops tended to aggregate in set areas of the city and individuals might then have associated with their neighbors with whom they shared at least one commonality in their profession.

The voluntary associations at Palmyra were, for the most part, however, religious clubs, or *thiasoi*, organized around the cults of specific deities, which would have provided a cultic context for shared identities. In the inscriptions of Palmyra, however, there is no set terminology to denote these various cult

¹⁵⁰ Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 218.

associations.¹⁵¹ Chief among the Palmyrene terms used to designate a religious club is *mrzḥ*. An inscription from 34 C.E. provides an early example, in which nine men are identified as the members of a *mrzḥ* (*bny mrzḥ* ') who dedicated an altar to the gods Aglibol and Malakbel.¹⁵² Later in 67 C.E., members of a *mrzḥ* offered a banquet hall (*smk*) to the gods Baalshamin, whose temple received the consecration, and to Durahlun.¹⁵³ More frequently, though, religious clubs are identified on various tesserae, small clay tokens required for entrance into ritual meals. Dunant published one that refers to a *mrzḥ* to the goddesses Baaltak and Taima.¹⁵⁴ There is also a reference on a tessera to a *mrzḥ* of the god Nabu.¹⁵⁵ On another tessera, the reverse reads, “Hairan Atenuri Salmai, chief (*rb*) of the *mrzḥ*” and depicts a priest reclining. The obverse of this same tessera reads “the priests of [Bel]” (*kmry' dy [bl]*) and depicts two priests reclining.¹⁵⁶ More often, however, there is mention of cultic associations on tesserae where the term *mrzḥ* is used to

¹⁵¹ For a thorough discussion of the terminology of dining and drinking societies at Palmyra, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 220-34.

¹⁵² P0326. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 119; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 133.

¹⁵³ P0177. For the members of the *mrzḥ*, see P0178.

¹⁵⁴ C. Dunant, “Nouvelles tessères de Palmyre,” *Syria* 36 (1959): 105, no. 12; and P2807.

¹⁵⁵ P2279.

¹⁵⁶ P2033: *kmry' dy [bl]* (obverse); *hyrn 'tnwry | ṣlmy rb mrzḥ* (reverse).

identify officials presiding over the banquets (either in terms such as “chief of the symposium” [*rb mrzḥ*] or “during the term as symposiarch” [*brbnwt mrzḥ*]) but with no indication as to which divinity the cultic gathering was associated.¹⁵⁷ This is true of P1128, a Palmyrene inscription on a relief that reads, “these images were made (by) Samga, son of Yarhai, at his own expense and he painted (them), during his presidency of the *mrzḥ*, in the month Iyar, the sixteenth day, forever, for his life.”¹⁵⁸ In addition, Hillers and Cussini interpret the enigmatic expression *qnyt nbw*, which appears on four tesserae, as the association of Nabu, but this interpretation remains problematic.¹⁵⁹ Another enigmatic term is *’gn*, which is

¹⁵⁷ For example, see P2036-41. The general opinion is that these tesserae ought to be associated with the *mrzḥ* of the priests of Bel since they all derive from the temple of Bel. See, for instance, Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 229, n. 78.

¹⁵⁸ P1128: *mšby’ ’ln ’bd smg’ br yrḥy mn kysh wšb[.] | brbnwt mrzḥwth byrḥ [yr] ywm 16 l’lm’ ’l ḥyw[hy]*. See also H. Drijvers, “De Matre inter leones sedente: Iconography and Character of the Arab Goddess Allât,” in *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren: Recueil d’études offert par les auteurs de la série Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain à Maarten J. Vermaseren à l’occasion de son soixantième anniversaire le 7 avril 1978*, edited by M. Vermaseren, M. de Boer, and T. Edridge, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 331-51, plate 73. Whether the cultic association that Samga presided over was that of Allat or Bel remains uncertain; see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 230-31.

¹⁵⁹ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 406, s.v. “*qhyh*.” The tesserae mentioned are P2284-87. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 160, who suggests “lyre players” as the interpretation of *qnyt*, supported by the identification of Nabu with Apollo. Recently, E. Lipiński, “*Maqlūta’*, *qinita’* et *plug qduš* à Palmyre,” in *Intertestamental Essays in Honour of Józef Tadeusz Milik* (Kraków: Enigma Press, 1992), 308-10, suggested that *qnyt* refers to a sacred payment in kind consumed during banquets. For further discussion, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 219.

often translated as “symposium” and thus a gathering for dining and drinking.¹⁶⁰ The Greek term *symposion*, meanwhile, which appears to specify voluntary associations, may have denoted religious clubs as well, but indirectly rather than directly. When reference is made to the official presiding over a particular banquet, for example, he is usually described as the *symposiarchos* or translated in Palmyrene as the *rb mrzh'*.¹⁶¹ More often, however, the term *symposion* appears to denote the actual setting or facility in which religious associations dined and drank, a banquet hall perhaps (see below). Interestingly, such ambiguity in the terminology is absent from Strabo, when in his description of the Nabataeans he adheres to the standard definition of *symposion* as the banquet itself.¹⁶² Yet, despite the difficulty with the terminology, religious clubs at Palmyra were undoubtedly numerous and a mainstay of the Palmyrene communal experience. They provided a shared identity in a community setting. They were examples of social cohesion.

While associations organized themselves around the cults of specific deities,

¹⁶⁰ See, for instance, Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 334, s.v. “’gn.” See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 108-19, who convincingly argued that ’gn must refer to the “crater” used during ritual meals for holding or mixing wine and water. The term, for example, appears inscribed on the side of a stone crater from the Palmyrene hinterland, see P1714. See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 225. For a discussion of ’gn in Nabataean contexts, see J. F. Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans: A Conspectus*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 136 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 167.

¹⁶¹ See, for instance, P0316. Cf. P1357, with restoration of text in Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 233. Also discussed more fully below.

¹⁶² Strabo *Geographia* 16.4.26.

they mostly assembled for purposes of drinking and dining, which reflected social solidarity above all. As the epigraphy attests, banquets were numerous. Some may have been secular gatherings of family or friends, but most were overwhelmingly cultic in nature and festive as the religious and social life of Palmyra joined, perhaps in funerary contexts as families, friends, and colleagues assembled to honor the dead or more often in communal settings at temples or other sacred grounds.¹⁶³ As Kaizer remarks, “ritual dining and drinking . . . fulfilled certain functions of redistributing material goods and exchanging immaterial concepts within a wider society, and accordingly participation could have a wide range of effects on the way in which worshippers conceived their position within that society.”¹⁶⁴ Public episodes of festive dining and drinking (no less than private banquets), in fact, reflected and supported the existing social order.¹⁶⁵ Public banquets, for example,

¹⁶³ See D. TARRIER, “Banquets rituels en Palmyrène et en Nabatène,” *Aram* 7 (1995): 165-82. More generally, on dining with the dead, see H. LINDSAY, “Eating with the Dead: The Roman Funerary Banquet,” in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, edited by I. Nielsen and H. Nielsen, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, no. 1 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 67-80. See also van Nijf, *Civic World of Professional Associations*, 53-54.

¹⁶⁴ Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 221.

¹⁶⁵ Public banquets were highly structured affairs with strict rules and regulations. One of the most comprehensive inscriptions (preserved in three fragments) that establishes the guidelines for a ritual banquet was discovered in 1972 at the northern city wall (P0991). It concerns a banquet presided over by the priests of Belastor and Baalshamin. The inscription reads:

In the month Adar (March), the year 3[. . .], | the priests of Belastor and of Baal[shamin? . . .] | someone amongst them, the days on

were often funded by the great and wealthy of the city, whose sponsorship many regard as yet another facet in the system of patronage that prevailed in the ancient city under Roman influence (see below).¹⁶⁶ Moreover, in that these festive occasions were communal events, the patronage of drinking and dining societies

which there will be ban[quets . . . the members of] (*ywm' dy yhwn sm[ky' . . . gbr' dy]*) | the *mrzh* who will be their leader for the burnt-offering | [. . .] but the man who will be chosen as [their] leader [. . .] | three Tyrian selas (?) of gold (to the treasury?) (*s[l'n] 3 sry ldhb'*) and whoever among them [. . .] | in the '*drwn*' an agreement written on [. . .] | and whoever will collect their votes (?) will make known (?) (*wmn dy y'd šbynyhwn yhw l* [. . .]) to [. . .] | who will be chosen to be in charge of the gold and will be entrusted (?) (*wyhy[m]n*) [. . .] | who is entrusted for his year's term and also they established [that no-]one will be entitled [. . .] | an oath by/in the '*drwn*' and whoever swears by/in the *hmn* (shrine?) owes a penalty of *d[enarii]* (?) . . . and they also] | established that for any man of the *bny 't'qb* who steals from the house of B[elastor?] [. . .] | over him who owes a penalty of *denarii*, in gold (to the treasury?) (*ldhb'*) and after seven [. . .] | the member (*gbr'*) will be entitled to [participate?] (*ygwr*) in the drinking in the '*drwn*' until [. . .] | that if it is necessary to distribute food (?) (*'pr*) at the house of Bel and the *bny 't'qb*, the priests (*bny 't'qb kmry*) [. . .] | or to give to Belastor anything that he measures out to the members (*gbr'*) of [the *mrzh* . . .] | measures out in the midst of the inner group (?) to the account (?) and nothing else (?) (*ymd ms't gw' l[hš]bn' wmd'n 'hrn l'ym* [. . .]) [. . .] | to make inquiry and to inform [on who] have sinned (?) (*htyw*) and to do [. . .] | anyone who [. . .] and whoever [.]

This inscription reflects not merely the strict regulations adhered to but also the cooperative nature of religious clubs. For the text, see P0991 and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 168-69. J. Teixidor, "Le Thiase de Bêlastor et de Beelshamên d'après une inscription récemment découverte à Palmyre," *CRAIBL* (1981): 306-14, who initially published the inscriptions suggests a date in the early first century C.E.

¹⁶⁶ See van Nijf, *Civic World of Professional Associations*, 109-11, who emphasizes the manner in which banquets supported the existing social hierarchy in their detailed regulations.

mimicked the public benefactions of aristocrats to their communities. This was true at Palmyra as in every other Mediterranean city.

Moreover, in areas both sacred and profane, the setting for these public banquets was visible and structured, which also highlighted the cooperative communal nature of the festivities. The terminology for the location in which banquets took place varies from the Palmyrene *smk* or *'drwn* to the Greek *symposion*.¹⁶⁷ These terms themselves can have varied meanings, e.g. *symposion* can be taken to mean a voluntary association, a drinking party, or a dining hall, so the context of each inscription must be evaluated carefully in order to understand the correct use of specific terms. At any rate, most banquet halls were associated with temple complexes.¹⁶⁸ One example mentions the dedication of a banquet hall

¹⁶⁷ For a comprehensive review of the terminology, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 220-29.

¹⁶⁸ Numerous other facilities complemented these dining halls and with their attendant staff provided for the easy management of public banquets. Most sanctuaries were equipped with kitchens and areas for storage. In 6 B.C.E., for example, the priests of Herta honored a certain Ogeilu, son of Aidaan, of the *bny kmr'*, for his having offered, along with part of a portico, three other features that seem to be interpreted as a parlor (*mšl'*), a building for cultic slaughtering (*bt nḥry'*), and a dining hall ([*'d]rn'*); see P2766; Cantineau, "Tadmorea," *Syria* 17 [1936]: 26-71, no. 17; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 60-62; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 219-21; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 76-77). Kitchens were also important as staging areas for cultic meals; see, for instance, Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 111 and 188-89. For example, one interesting inscription of 243 C.E. (P2743) honors the symposiarch Yarhai Agrippa and refers to a certain Zabai, son of Shada, "the one in charge of the house of the kettles (i.e. kitchen)" (*dy hw 'l bt dwd'*), in addition to a certain Yarhibola, "the one who mixes" (*mmzgn'*), presumably wine; see also Ingholt, "Un Nouveau thiase palmyrénien," 129. For tesserae that mention the distribution of wine, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of*

(*smk*) to the gods Baalshamin and Durahlun.¹⁶⁹ This inscription remains *in situ* on a low bench north of the *cella* of the temple of Baalshamin and illuminates how this area of the temple functioned as a setting for ritual banquets. Also, the Palmyrene text of a bilingual inscription records the dedication of an altar and a banquet hall (*[l]’ dh wsmk’*) to the god Baalshamin.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, a fragmentary Greek inscription found near the Efqa spring mentions the erection of an altar and a *symposion* to Zeus, but this does not confirm Baalshamin as the divine recipient of the dedication.¹⁷¹ This is true of another fragmentary Greek inscription published by Seyrig, which mentions a *symposion* dedicated to Zeus, the Highest and

Palmyra, 190, n. 94. Additional personnel for facilitating banquets would have included bakers, butchers, cupbearers, musicians, smiths, among a host of others, all joined for a common festive occasion as part of a single religious family. For discussion, see J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God: Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 133-35; and, more generally, R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 42-48.

¹⁶⁹ See n. 153 above.

¹⁷⁰ P1571. See also Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 127; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 92-93. The Greek text of the same inscription identifies Baalshamin as Zeus, the Highest and Listening.

¹⁷¹ See Ingholt, “Inscriptions and Sculpture from Palmyra, I,” 105-6, no. 10, who suggests that this may have been a dedication to either Baalshamin or the Anonymous God of Palmyra, who is often associated with Baalshamin. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 149. For further discussion of this divine association, see Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 115-19.

Greatest, which could refer to Bel.¹⁷² To my knowledge, however, there is no explicit mention of a banquet hall or *symposion* attached to the temple of Bel, but there is archaeological evidence and the numerous tesserae do suggest festive gatherings occurred at the temple.¹⁷³ Furthermore, as a banquet hall or dining room, *symposion* bears the same meaning as *'drwn* in Palmyrene, which is a transliteration of the Greek *andrōn*, a room for men.¹⁷⁴ The terminology itself reflects the Hellenistic ambience in which Palmyra took shape. Further, P0991, an inscription which regulated the symposium of the priests of Belastor and Baalshamin and established guidelines for the men who participated in the drinking, is interesting in that the term *'drwn* appears multiple times.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, in addition to those banquet halls attached to temple complexes, two have been discovered elsewhere in the city. One is along the Great Colonnade between the temple of Bel and the Monumental Arch and the other is adjacent to the southwest

¹⁷² H. Seyrig, "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens des cultes de Bêl et de Baalshamîn," *Syria* 14 (1933): 276. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 144-45; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 226-27.

¹⁷³ See E. Will, "Les Salles de banquet de Palmyre et d'autres lieux," *Topoi* 7 (1997): 873-87. A list of tesserae associated with Bel may be found in Ingholt, Seyrig, and Starcky, *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*, 192-93.

¹⁷⁴ P1131 provides the only example of *'drwn* transliterated into the Greek *andrōn*. See also Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 80-81; and E. Will, "Le Développement urbain de Palmyra: Témoignages épigraphiques anciens et nouveaux," *Syria* 60 (1983): 69-71.

¹⁷⁵ See n. 164 above. For further discussion of the evidence which identifies *'drwn* in the Palmyrene texts, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 224.

corner of the agora (fig. 11).¹⁷⁶ Unfortunately, we know nothing of the festivities at these “secular” establishments, so such questions as to who met there, on what occasions, and for what purpose must remain unanswered. Nevertheless, whether in these secular settings or in temple precincts, the public banquets were cooperative and an overt display of social solidarity.

Among all the religious clubs at Palmyra, the cult association devoted to the communal worship of Bel far surpassed all others in significance, and those who led the symposium of the priests of Bel held a position of social preeminence. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Bel was a city god for all Palmyrenes, and his sanctuary was shared with all other Palmyrene gods. Thus festivals and banquets associated with the temple of Bel were community endeavors that aggregated individuals together as Palmyrenes, despite the fact that these people maintained a plethora of other social identities, whether based on kinship or some other group association. Accordingly, the symposiarchy of the priesthood of Bel became one of the most prestigious civic posts at Palmyra, with the primary responsibility of organizing public festivals and ritual banquets. Numerous cases may be cited of prominent individuals who served as the symposiarch of the priests of Bel.¹⁷⁷ For example, in

¹⁷⁶ For the banquet hall along the colonnade, see A. Bounni and M. Saliby, “Six nouveaux emplacements fouillés à Palmyre (1963-1964),” *AAS* 15 (1965): 121-38. For the banquet hall in the agora, see Seyrig, “Rapport sommaire sur les de l’agora,” 237-49.

¹⁷⁷ Hairan Atenuri Salmai, who is depicted on a tessera reclining at a banquet and identified as *rb mrzh*, is one such individual who served as the symposiarch of

117 C.E. the council set up a statue for Zebaida, son of Soadu Taimashamas, who had received testimonial from the god Yarhibol, during his term as symposiarch of the priests of Bel (*brbnwt mrzḥwth dy kmry bl*).¹⁷⁸ Also, much later in 193 C.E., while symposiarch of the priests of Bel, a certain Malku, surnamed Mezabbana, set up at his own expense a statue to honor the Roman emperor, which we learn from a bilingual inscription.¹⁷⁹ The Greek text identifies Malku as both a chief priest (*archiereus*) and symposiarch (*symposiarchos*), which may suggest that the posts were not necessarily the same.¹⁸⁰ These examples would suggest also that the post was a lucrative one available to the most prestigious and wealthy aristocrats.¹⁸¹ Importantly, since Bel's was the central civic sanctuary, those who served as symposiarch spoke for the community and represented the city in their actions. As I will discuss in the following section, an ethic of reciprocity permeated Palmyrene society; thus the honors Malku bestowed upon the emperor, for example, may be interpreted as an expression of loyalty and a gesture of hope for reciprocal benefaction, not necessarily for Malku himself but for his city. Similarly, in 203

the priests of Bel; see P2033.

¹⁷⁸ P0265. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 228-29.

¹⁷⁹ P1357. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 254, who identifies the emperor referred to as Pescennius Niger.

¹⁸⁰ For further discussion, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 233-34.

¹⁸¹ See Jones, *Greek City*, 229.

C.E., a certain Shalma, son of another Malku, while symposiarch of the priests of Bel, honored the imperial family of Septimius Severus with statues set up at his own expense.¹⁸² Likewise, the Roman senator Septimius Haddudan, son of Ogeilu Maqqai, who had served two terms as symposiarch of the priesthood of Bel in 272 and again in 273 C.E., in some capacity “helped the troops of Aurelian Caesar our Lord” (*dy ‘dr [h]yl’ dy* | []*wrlynws qsr [m]r[n]*).¹⁸³ Furthermore, while a lucrative post, we know nothing of the procedures by which individuals were elected or appointed to the symposiarchy. Presumably, the process was highly competitive. Perhaps in order to serve individuals had to make promises of personal benefaction to the temple and its priesthood. For example, in 243 C.E., the symposiarch Yarhai Agrippa was honored, “because he served the gods and presided over the divination throughout the year and because he brought matured wine for the priests throughout the year from his house, and the wine in skins was not from the west.”¹⁸⁴ His

¹⁸² P0316. On the relationship between the Palmyrene aristocracy and the Severan family, see H. E. Herzog and A. Schmidt-Colinet, “Two recently discovered Latin inscriptions from Palmyra,” *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 5 (1991): 68-69.

¹⁸³ P1358 and P2812. See also M. Gawlikowski, “Inscriptions de Palmyre,” *Syria* 48 (1971): 412-21; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 232-33. The father of this Haddudan may be the same Ogeilu Maqqai who honored the illustrious Odenathus with a major dedication years earlier; see P2753.

¹⁸⁴ P2743: *brbnwt mrzhwt yrhy ‘grp’ yrhy* | *ydy‘bl ‘g’ y’t dy šmš ‘lhy’ wytb ‘l* | *qsm’ št’ klh w’sq hmr’ ‘tyq’* | *lkmry’ št’ klh mn byth whmr bzqyn* | *l’ ‘yty mn m ‘rb’*. See also H. Ingholt, “Les Thiasés à Palmyre d’après une inscription inédite,” *CRAIBL* (1925): 355-61; and idem, “Un Nouveau thiasé palmyrénien,” 128-41. It is possible that the wine came from the Euphrates region. For *whmr bzqyn* | *l’ ‘yty*

personal expenditure, then, despite the likelihood that the temple maintained its own treasury, may have resulted from an obligation connected to his original appointment, but this is hypothetical. Importantly, though, the inscription does indicate that the term of service was annual, which would have enabled others to attain the post. Finally, the full significance of the symposiarchy of the priesthood of Bel is evident from a Greek honorific inscription of 267 C.E. to the eminent Septimius Worod during his tenure in office. The inscription reads:

The council and people set up this statue to Septimius Worod, most excellent *procurator* of Augustus, *ducenarius*, law-giver (*dikeodotēs*) of the *metrokolōneia*, who brought back the caravans from his own purse, who has received (worthy) testimony from the chiefs of the merchants, who brilliantly served as *stratēgos* and as *agoranomos* of the same *metrokolōneia*, who spent great sums from his own personal fortune, who has been pleasing to the council and the people, and who now, with brilliance, serves as symposiarch of the priests of the god Zeus Bel, on account of his integrity and honor, in the year [577], in the month Xandikos. (April 266/67 C.E.).¹⁸⁵

Clearly, the inclusion of symposiarch of the priests of the god Bel in such a long list

mn m'rb', Milik, *Dédicaces*, 153, reads “and the wine (was) in skins, it was not mixed.” See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 190, n. 93. It is unclear, however, if this was the symposiarchy of the priesthood of Bel.

¹⁸⁵ P0288: Ἡ βου[λὴ καὶ ὁ δῆ]μος | Σεπτίμ[ιον Οὐορώδη]ν τὸν κρ[ά]τιστον ἐ[πί]τροπον | Σεβαστοῦ | δουκην[άριον, δι]κεοδότην | τῆς μητρ[οκολω]νείας, καὶ ἄ | νακομίσαν[τα τ]ὰς συνοδίας | ἐξ ιδίων, καὶ μαρτυρηθέντα | ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχεμπόρων | καὶ λαμπρῶς στρατηγήσαντα | καὶ ἀγορανομήσαντα τῆς αὐτῆς | μητροκολωνείας, καὶ πλείστα | οἴκοθεν ἀναλώσαντα, καὶ ἀρέσαν | τα τῆ τε αὐτῆ βουλῆ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ | καὶ νυνεὶ λαμπρῶς συμποσίαρχον τῶν το[ῦ θεοῦ] Διὸς Βήλου ἱε[ρ]ρέων, ἀ[γ]νείας καὶ | τειμῆς ἔνε|κεν, ἔτ[ους ζοφ' μη]νεὶ Ξανδικῷ.

of honors and positions of merit testifies to its public importance. Also, this position must have had some personal significance to Septimius Worod himself as one of many stages in his *cursus honorum*. Importantly, the fact that Worod attained the post late in his distinguished career suggests that the symposiarchy of the priesthood of Bel was truly a prestigious office.

While individuals patronized numerous cults simultaneously, the civic cult of Bel remained preeminent in the religious life of the community at Palmyra.¹⁸⁶ What, then, was the relationship between the association based on the cult of Bel and those of other deities at Palmyra? Milik views the relationship as hierarchical, in the sense that the cultic association of the priesthood of Bel superseded all others at Palmyra and that the symposiarch of the priests of Bel stood also at the head of

¹⁸⁶ A long inscription from the temple of Allat, which is dated to 137 C.E. and commemorates a statue set up for an unknown child of a certain Aakai by the goddess Allat herself and the *bn̄y nwrbl*, provides a good example of individual religious pluralism. The inscription records the patronage of this one Palmyrene, who, some ten years prior to the date of the dedication, had a bowl of gold and silver made for “his goddess” Allat (*l’lt ’štr’ ’lth | mḥd’ dy dḥb’ wksp’*); for Bel, Yarhibol, Aglibol, and Astarte, the good and generous gods, he had a bowl made completely of gold (*lbl wlyrḥbwl wl’glbwl wl’štrt | ’lhy’ ṭby’ wškry’ mḥd’ dy klh dḥb*); and to the gods Baalshamin and Durahlun and the goddess Belti he offered a silver bowl (*qrb lb’lšmn wdrḥlwn | wlblyt’ ṣtr’ mḥd’ dy ksp’*); see H. J. W. Drijvers, “Inscriptions from Allât’s Sanctuary,” *Aram* 7 (1995): 111. It seems that all the bowls were intended for a special occasion designated in the inscription as “the *ḥlq* on the twelfth day of Siwan (June)” (*ḥlq lywm ’šr’ wtrn bsywn*). The *ḥlq*, Drijvers suggests, was the occasion when certain civic and religious officials were elected at Palmyra on one particular day in June, and the bowls served as receptacles for the casting of lots. Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 251-52, provides an alternative translation for the *ḥlq*, based on the associated root in Syriac, as the time during which divination occurred.

all other cultic associations in the city. According to Milik:

Dans la vie pratique ce fait de l'association du patron divin d'un thiasse au «grand dieu Zeus Bêl» se traduisait par le contrôle administratif du symposiarque de Bêl, qui s'exerçait sur tous les symposia de la ville. Il n'était pas seulement *rabb marzêhâ* des prêtres de Bêl, mais aussi *rabb marzêhê*, «chef de (tous les) thiasse», et il disposait d'un bureau approprié qui s'appelait *bt qsm*, «maison des distributions».¹⁸⁷

This view, however, seems to presuppose that individuals did not participate in multiple religious associations simultaneously, which seems not to have been the case. Nevertheless, the likelihood that the symposiarch of Bel superceded all other symposia of the city highlights the religious pluralism discussed in Chapter 3. It would also seem to reflect the inter-tribal character of the priesthood of Bel.¹⁸⁸

Indeed, the temple of Bel was a communal sanctuary for all Palmyrenes, the setting for cultic festivals and celebrations. As I have noted, the temple of Bel was considered by the Palmyrenes themselves as the “house of their gods” (*bt 'lhyhn*).¹⁸⁹ It was a civic sanctuary in which tribal deities co-mingled (figs. 8 and 9). When the Palmyrenes assembled in the temple of Bel for purposes of ritual dining, however, it is not clear how they organized themselves. Perhaps they congregated in distinct areas based on their specific cultic allegiances, whether familial, tribal, or based on

¹⁸⁷ Milik, *Dédicaces*, 110.

¹⁸⁸ See p. 131 above. See also Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 28-29 and 46-47, who advocates the inter-tribal nature of the priesthood of Bel.

¹⁸⁹ See p. 129 above.

some voluntary association. Unfortunately, since individuals could patronize numerous cults simultaneously, we do not know how they would have prioritized their participation during cultic events at the temple of Bel in light of the involvement in other associations. Most importantly, though, the civic nature of the cultic association of the god Bel cannot be discounted, and the symposiarchy of the priesthood of Bel, perhaps the most important annual post in the religious life of the community, held great political significance and superseded cultic associations based more on familial or tribal affiliations.

To sum up, voluntary associations at Palmyra, especially religious clubs devoted to the cults of specific deities, were numerous. As mutual aid societies, these provided a shared group identity for their individual members. Above all, these reflected social solidarity as bodies of cooperative association. Most often, these associations met during festive events for purposes of ritual dining and their organization was hierarchical. Leading each, for example, was a *symposiarchos* or *rb mrzḥ*, the respective patron of his association. The most important among these was the symposiarch of Bel, a position for which most aristocrats likely competed. As symposiarch of Bel, one represented his city as patron and, apparently, directed all other symposia. Indeed, power and prestige awaited any who attained the position.

Friends and Patrons

I conclude with a brief analysis of the informal power relationships that both

generated and helped to maintain social identities between different individuals and groups. I refer to the network of dependency relations based on principles of patronage as well as the more (or less) equal relations between friends and colleagues. I have stressed at the outset that in an analysis of state formation at Palmyra, in its development as a Greek *polis*, we must not regard Palmyra as an “imagined community,” in the sense that Benedict Anderson characterizes the modern nation, but rather as a real and tangible community, in which its inhabitants engaged in face-to-face association on a daily basis.¹⁹⁰ An analysis of this sort reveals the most about power relationships within the community, which, in turn, informs us concerning the structure and maintenance of identity and community. Essentially, we gain a sense of how the “haves” of the community acquired and maintained their privileged status and how the “have nots” struggled to improve their lot, generally in their drive to associate with the well-to-do. In this way, Palmyra shared a great deal with other communities in the Roman Near East.

To begin with, an ethic of reciprocity permeated Greek and Roman society, which the Palmyrenes seem to have borrowed. One who receives must give in return, whether of goods or services. This was true of individuals, groups, and states. In the structured, communal environment of the *polis*, this exchange was equitable only in the sense that one offered in return goods or services that one theoretically had the means to provide. The humble classes, for instance, would

¹⁹⁰ See p. 30 above.

never have been expected to fund public works, unlike the wealthy and powerful, whose resources were consistently tapped by the state. In exchanges between individuals and their communities, indeed, this ethic of reciprocity became institutionalized in a system of liturgies. Basically, men of substance were obligated to serve the state at their own expense, which, ultimately, rendered legitimate their control of local society and politics.¹⁹¹ Also, this system of liturgies channeled the competitive tendencies of the rich, in their pursuit of offices, honors, and prestige, to the benefit of their community. This spirit of competition, in fact, often pervaded the civic consciousness sufficiently to inspire a rich benefactor (*euergetēs*) to give voluntarily. *Euergetism*, “the public display of generosity by individuals,”¹⁹² was a significant byproduct of elite competition that led to the embellishment of the classical city in the Roman Near East.¹⁹³ It also reflected an ethic of reciprocity that governed relationships between individuals and their

¹⁹¹ See Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 32-34.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 101-2.

¹⁹³ The classic studies are P. Veyne, *Le Pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1976); and P. Gauthier, *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs (IVe-Ier siècle avant J.-C.)*, Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, supplément 12 (Athens: Ecole Française d'Athènes, 1985). The latter defines *euergetism* as “l'action, l'influence et le prestige des notables, citoyens et étrangers, au sein des cités” (Gauthier, *Les Cités grecques*, 1). See also Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 23-28. For a discussion of civic *euergetism* at Palmyra, see J. -B. Yon, “Euergetism and Urbanism in Palmyra,” in *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, edited by L. Lavan, JRA Supplementary Series, no. 42 (Portsmouth, R.I.: JRA, 2001), 173-81.

communities. Indeed, Palmyra is a living museum of these practices.

Furthermore, the same ethos governed personal relationships, such as those between friends or patrons and clients. We distinguish between friendship and patronage based on the social statuses of the individuals involved and the resources available to each, which dictates their capacity to engage in reciprocal exchange.¹⁹⁴ A convenient definition of patronage, for example, is that it is an asymmetric friendship relation between men of unequal status and resources of some duration that involves a reciprocal exchange of goods and services.¹⁹⁵ This may be distinguished from friendship, generally, in the sense that the individuals involved as friends tend to be of comparable status, although some may yield greater or lesser power and influence.¹⁹⁶ Also, it seems that individuals entered into these

¹⁹⁴ See, for instance, R. Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by A. Wallace-Hadrill, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1989), 49-62.

¹⁹⁵ See R. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1; and T. Johnson and C. Dandeker, "Patronage: Relation and System," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, 224. For further discussion, see Wallace-Hadrill, "Patronage in Roman Society: from Republic to Empire," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, 63-87.

¹⁹⁶ For discussion, see D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and P. Burton, "Amicitia in Roman Social and International Relations, (350 - 146 B.C.)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2000).

relationships, more or less, voluntarily.¹⁹⁷ Conceptually, the notion that these personal exchange relationships were voluntary, despite apparent inequalities in social rank and power, helped to prevent them from becoming overtly exploitative. In the maintenance of these social networks, the myth, more or less apparent, was that everyone benefitted.

Networks of patronage and friendship, in addition to social networks generated through kinship, integrated Palmyrene society at home and abroad. It is tempting to regard this as a truism and characteristic of most, if not all, ancient societies. What is the evidence from Palmyra, though, and can we place it into any meaningful context?

In terms of patronage and friendship as personal relationships of reciprocal exchange, the epigraphic evidence is limited to the second and third centuries C.E. and largely to relationships between Palmyrenes and foreigners or between Palmyrenes and their compatriots with perceived power and influence abroad.¹⁹⁸ In 147 C.E., for instance, the renowned Soados, son of Bēliados, who was honored by his city on numerous occasions, received a statue set up by his friend (*philos, rḥm*)

¹⁹⁷ See, for instance, P. Garnsey and G. Woolf, “Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, 153-70.

¹⁹⁸ I omit from this analysis the evidence of patronage between individuals and the greater community that falls within the range of the system of liturgies and of civic *euergetism*.

Yarhai, son of Ogeilu, son of Taimha.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, in 157/58 C.E., Marcus Ulpius Yarhai received two statues in the agora set up by individuals who denoted themselves as his friends.²⁰⁰ These statues were among many others set up between 156 and 158 C.E. to honor this same great man by Palmyrene merchants and caravans.²⁰¹ At about the same time, Marcus Ulpius Yarhai himself dedicated a statue to a Roman military officer, a prefect of the *ala I [Ulpia] dromedariorum Palmyrenorum*, whom he designated as his friend (τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον).²⁰² Also, an undated text from the agora records that a certain Marcus Ulpius Malchos set up a statue to honor his friend and compatriot Marcus Aelius Athenodoros, who is identified as a tribune of the *cohors I Ulpia Petraeorum*.²⁰³ In addition, two fragmentary texts from the agora record statues of a soldier of the *ala Herculania* and a centurion of the *legio III Gallica* set up by individuals who regarded themselves as “friends” of these men.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ P0115. See also Gawlikowski, “Palmyrena,” 66, no. 1.

²⁰⁰ See P0306 and P1396.

²⁰¹ See P0307, P1399, P1403, P1409, and P1411.

²⁰² P1422.

²⁰³ *Inventaire* 10.108. Cf. *Inventaire* 10.109, which records a statue dedicated to the same Marcus Acilius Athenodoros, set up for him by the council and the people on account of his excellence as a citizen.

²⁰⁴ For the *ala Herculania*, see *Inventaire* 10.117; and for the *legio III Gallica*, see *Inventaire* 10.1.

The specific language of patronage, at times coupled with that of friendship, only begins in the third century C.E. For example, numerous statues were set up in the third century C.E. in honor of Septimius Worod, the illustrious senator, by individuals identifying him either as their friend (*philos*) or as both their friend and patron (*prostatēs*).²⁰⁵ Interestingly, these are the only examples of an individual designated as a *prostatēs* at Palmyra in terms of personal relations.²⁰⁶ Since these examples all date to the period after Palmyra was elevated to the status of a Roman colony, the question at hand is whether we may regard a *prostatēs* as comparable to a Roman *patronus*, which had a strict technical meaning and status in Roman law.²⁰⁷ Epigraphically, the Greek term *patrōn* as an equivalent of the Roman

²⁰⁵ For *philos*, see P0283 and P0285; for *philos* and *prostatēs*, see P0286, P0287, and P0289.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *Inventaire* 3.18, which records the city honoring a certain Septimius Apsaios as both a citizen and protector/patron (Σεπτ. "Αψαιον τὸν πολείτην | καὶ προστάτην ἢ πόλις). The Palmyrene equivalent of *prostatēs* is *qywm*, or "patron," and in each of the bilingual inscriptions (P0286, P0287, and P0289) *philos* and *prostatēs* is translated as *rḥmh wqywmh*, or "friend and patron." A number of texts, however, employ the Palmyrene term *gr*, which may be translated as either a client, patron, or, more generally, as a host; see Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 354, s.v. "gr." The only example that employs terminology comparable to *rḥmh wqywmh* is a dedicatory inscription (P0319) on an altar set up by a Nabataean soldier for his god Shaialqawm [šy 'lqwm], in which he identifies a certain Zebaida, son of Shemaūn, son of Belaqab, as his "host/patron and friend" (*gyrh wrḥmh*). Cf. P0318, P0381, and P0574.

²⁰⁷ See Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 151-54; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1; and J. Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," *Hermes* 108 (1980): 365-85, who discusses the formal and informal aspects of classical patronage.

patronus appears only four times at Palmyra. On a column along the Great Colonnade, an inscription dated to 251 C.E. honors Septimius Hairan, son of Odenathus, who is described as a senator and *exarchos* or “chief” of Palmyra, as well as a patron to the Roman legionary soldier who sponsored the dedication.²⁰⁸ This is the only example of the term *patrōn* used to denote a relationship between individuals. The other texts, which all date to 257/58 C.E., are dedications by voluntary associations within the city, the *σμπόσιον τῶν ουαννῶν* and the *σμπόσιον τῶν κονετῶν* to their patron Septimius Odenathus, and the *σμπόσιον σκυτέων καὶ ἀσκοναυτοποιῶν* to their patron Septimius Hairan, son of Odenathus.²⁰⁹ It is noteworthy that in a similar text, one in which Odenathus is honored by an association of goldsmiths and silversmiths, he is identified not as their patron but more explicitly, in an obvious relationship of power, as their master (*despotas*) or “lord” (*mrn*), which is a vivid reflection of his exalted status in the community.²¹⁰ In all of these examples, it is significant that the language of patronage is limited to third century C.E. contexts after Palmyra had adopted a colonial constitution, and the only individuals who are referred to as patrons, whether of individuals or groups, happen to be the most powerful men within the

²⁰⁸ P0290.

²⁰⁹ For discussion with references, see p. 231 above.

²¹⁰ See P0291. Cf. P0292 (271 C.E.), which describes Odenathus as a “lord” or master (*mrn*), and P0293, which identifies his wife, Zenobia, as a *despoina*.

community at the time. It is also noteworthy that the only examples that employ the Greek term *patrōn* as a transliteration of the Roman *patronus* happen to be in dedications to Palmyrenes who had attained the exalted rank and status of Roman senator. Thus it is clear that while Palmyra in the first and second centuries C.E. had adopted Hellenistic social patterns, which they grafted onto their own indigenous forms, in the third century the evidence points more specifically to their becoming more culturally Roman.

Finally, there are a handful of texts that further reflect an ethic of reciprocity but are unique in that they employ the language of public benefaction in personal contexts. An honorific inscription from the agora, for instance, which dates to 157 C.E., identifies a certain Thaimeis, son of Thaimarsos, having set up a statue to his benefactor (*euergetēs*), the renowned Marcus Ulpius Yarhai.²¹¹ Similarly, in an undated text retrieved from the agora, Zebeidas, Abdas and Abdaasthōrēs, sons of a certain Neshā, dedicated a statue to Gaius Licinius Flavianus Malichos, son of Burrus, whom they regarded as their benefactor.²¹² Also on a column along the Great Colonnade, a Greek inscription honors a certain Gaius Sedatius Velleius Priscus Macrinus, who is identified as an honest and just protector (*sōtēr*) and a benefactor to Mannos, surnamed Mezabbanas, son of Thaimē, who sponsored the

²¹¹ P1395.

²¹² P1424.

dedication.²¹³ More often, we expect to find dedications of this sort sponsored by the city to honor its great men. In commemoration of their benefactions to the community, for example, civic *euergetai* are conventionally described as lovers of the fatherland or their city (*philopatin, rhym mh wz h*),²¹⁴ lovers of honor (*philoteimia*),²¹⁵ or, more generally, they are acknowledged for their excellence as citizens.²¹⁶

To sum up, an ethic of reciprocity apparently structured social relations at Palmyra, which is visible in the networks of patronage and friendship attested epigraphically. Most of the inscriptions are honorific and reflect reciprocal exchanges between individuals and the community. They serve as a public expression of honor and exaltation of a benefactor or *euergetēs*. Relationships of patronage and friendship between individuals are attested as well, but we are less certain of what motivated the various individual dedications to compatriots or to

²¹³ *Inventaire* 3.23 (CIG 4494). Cf. *Inventaire* 10.34, which records a statue set up by the council and the people to an imperial legate, Fulvius Titianus, who is identified as a “protector and benefactor of the city” ([σωτήρα] | καὶ εὐεργέτην τῆς [πόλεως]).

²¹⁴ For instance, see P0260, P0276, P0277, P0278, P0298, P1359, P1404, and P1414; see also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 174-75, no. 2b; and *Inventaire* 10.59.

²¹⁵ For instance, see P0260, P0270, P1375, P1384, P1389, P1407, P1415, and P1421.

²¹⁶ See Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1938): 76; *Inventaire* 3.18; *Inventaire* 9.23; and P1423.

foreign dignitaries, mostly military men. Clearly, an important aspect of civic life was to associate oneself with someone who might be perceived to have the power and resources to be of assistance should the need ever arise. Such associations would also have increased an individual's social prestige. More importantly, though, is the question of whether an increase in informal relationships that fell outside the range of associations based on kinship is, possibly, a byproduct of Palmyra's communal development. The answer is unclear. It is, however, of great interest that "formal" patronage relationships do not appear epigraphically until the third century C.E., which would suggest greater Roman influence upon Palmyrene social institutions.

Conclusion

At Palmyra over the course of the first three centuries C.E., individuals interacted with one another in a progressively cosmopolitan communal context. Indeed, a complex network of interactions among individuals and groups, some more or less familiar with one another, defined the Palmyrene communal experience. Personal and group identities were structured within such a network, in that limits of inclusion and exclusion defined the boundaries that supported particular identities. As we have seen, the basic social unit at Palmyra, above the level of the individual, was the family, followed by extended familial groups such as clans and tribes. Relationships based on principles of kinship (both real and artificial), in fact, dominated social organization within the community. Other

social groups emerged as well, not necessarily organized around principles of kinship, in conjunction with Palmyra's urban development and social stratification. Various voluntary associations (*collegia*), for example, most notably religious clubs (*thiasoi*), formed to organize further individual and group incorporation and participation within the Palmyrene community. Thus the city hosted a plethora of personal and group identities, some more prominent than others.

In this chapter I examined social identities at Palmyra and the extent to which these were comparable to other Mediterranean communities. I began with a discussion of the nuclear family as the basic social unit. I then discussed marriage patterns and the role of women in Palmyrene society both in their homes and outside of them. From the Palmyrene family I turned to the Palmyrene household, which incorporated slaves and those freed from slavery. Extended familial groupings such as clans and tribes, to which I will return in the subsequent chapter, were treated briefly here so as not to repeat information presented already in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, the evidence assembled here is sufficient to show that kinship remained a primary component of every Palmyrene's social identity. Next, I examined the numerous associations that formed at Palmyra. These included occupational groups, which, by all appearances, did not reflect familial or tribal loyalties, and religious clubs based on the cults of specific deities, some tribal in nature. My discussion of the various associations at Palmyra focused on their functions as social groups assembled for purposes of dining and drinking. Such

atmospheres of communal interaction, hierarchical in nature, provided ample support for the generation of social boundaries between individuals and groups and the subsequent maintenance of their respective identities. Where one sat at a banquet, assuming of course one had the right to attend, reflected one's social status vis-à-vis the "others" of the community. Finally, I concluded with a review of the informal power relationships of friendship and patronage that structured personal and group interaction. I have shown that by the third century C.E. and supported by its colonial status Palmyra adopted a more openly "Roman" character, as opposed to its "Palmyrene" or "Greek" aspects in the preceding centuries. This is apparent in the patronage relationships that developed in response to the city's growth. For example, clearly something had changed when the friends and patrons of preceding centuries were supplanted by at least one individual whom one would have expected to regard as lord or master. Power within the city had shifted. Fewer and fewer men dominated communal affairs. These men, indeed, were empowered to determine the rules of inclusion and exclusion that generated and sustained personal and group identities within the city, at familial levels and otherwise.

Finally, a number of other social relations at Palmyra will or have been examined in other chapters. For example, Relationships between those settled within the oasis and the pastoralists of the Palmyrene countryside were detailed more fully in Chapter 2. Moreover, there was a whole class of individuals resident in the city who undoubtedly influenced its cultural development, namely, the host

of foreigners, soldiers and civilians, who resided within the oasis at various dates and for different lengths of time. I will discuss these individuals and groups, in addition to their influence on Palmyrene society, more fully in Chapter 6 when I examine civic development and the growth of community at Palmyra in a regional and provincial context.

Chapter 5: Civic Institutions

Introduction

In the preceding chapters I discussed various factors that influenced the growth of community at Palmyra and the social relations that evolved as the community expanded, in order to provide an preliminary understanding of how personal and group identities were structured and maintained. I have emphasized throughout that personal and group identities were marked by the boundaries that were themselves regulated through relationships of power and authority between individuals and groups. The emergence of a Palmyrene state, then, marked an advanced stage in the development of community and a collective identity, because the state, as I stressed in Chapter 1, essentially operated as an autonomous organism that exercised power and authority within prescribed territorial and lawful limits and held a monopoly on force. Furthermore, by exercising its authority, the state, essentially the authoritative presence of the city's elite, established a host of boundaries that generated and supported a range of social identities. In this way, the state, mainly in how it structured and wielded its power and authority, was central to the manner in which personal and group identities were constructed,

maintained, dissolved, and reconstituted at Palmyra.

In this chapter I will examine the infrastructure of the Palmyrene state through an analysis of its civic institutions. My goal is to elucidate how Palmyra's civic institutions regulated social, economic, political, and cultural relations within the city, in its hinterland, and beyond, and how these affected Palmyrene urbanization and the growth of community. To begin with, I will examine the institutional development of Palmyra as a hybrid of the Greek *polis* and the emergence of formal institutions designed to regulate personal and group activity. These institutions were the governing bodies of the community, which included the city council (*boulē*), the assembly (*dēmos*), and an array of magistracies. Further, I will present this examination in the context of the emergence and possible transformation of a collective "Palmyrene" civic identity taking into account increasing Roman influence upon the city from the first to third centuries C.E. I will then discuss the development of the "four tribes" of Palmyra as a social and political organism, while I examine concurrently the issues of tribal versus civic constructions of identity and forms of worship at Palmyra. I will conclude with an analysis of Palmyrene military institutions as an obvious manifestation of the city's power and authority.

City and Citizenship

In Chapter 3 I stressed that any study of community formation at Palmyra must recognize that the available evidence derives primarily from contexts related

to Palmyrene urbanism and the city's institutional development as a *polis*. I reinforced this assessment with a short discussion of the nature of community at Palmyra that reviewed the terminology for communal formations. I intend here and in the following section to expand upon this discussion by examining Palmyra's growth as a hybrid of the Greek *polis* and, eventually, its reconstitution as a Roman *colonia*. My interest again lies in the emergence of Palmyra's civic institutions and the manner in which these affected the growth of a citizenry willing to identify themselves collectively as "Palmyrenes." What, for instance, did it mean to identify oneself as a citizen of Palmyra, when and how did this framework for a group identity begin, and with what forms and in what manner did emerging civic institutions, which were increasingly influenced by the Romans, structure and maintain this civic identity?

The evidence that specifically identifies Palmyra as a *polis* in Greek or the people of Palmyra as citizens of their city (*poleitēs*) is not extensive, although it spans three centuries of communal development and illustrates continuous Roman influence on the city. The earliest reference seems to be in a bilingual inscription of 51 C.E. on a column console in the temple of Bel. The inscription commemorates a statue to a certain Moqimu, son of Ogeilu, for his generous donations to the "house of the gods" (*bt lhy*), set up for him by "all the people of the Palmyra" (*gbl tdmry klhn*), or, according to the Greek text, "the city of the Palmyrenes"

([Παλμυρη]νῶν ἡ [π]ό[λις]).¹ The people of Palmyra constituted the *dēmos*, a term which probably referred at this time to the community of Palmyrene citizens as opposed to an institutionalized political assembly.²

A trilingual inscription from 74 C.E. appears to confirm this assessment. Whereas the Greek and Palmyrene portions of the inscription refer both to the *boulē* and to the *dēmos*, the Latin text, apparently, transliterates the former as *bule* and translates *dēmos* as the *civitas*, or community of citizens, of the Palmyrenes.³ This is an excellent example of Roman influence on Palmyra's political formation, because, I would argue, the designation *civitas Palmyrenorum* suggests that the Palmyrenes sought consciously to identify themselves in the wider urbanized and political world of the Romans. Indeed, this coincided with the time when the *legatus* of Syria, Marcus Ulpius Traianus, had completed road construction that placed Palmyra within Syria's provincial infrastructure, and also during the time in

¹ P0269.

² See p. 118 above.

³ See Cantineau, "Tadmorea," (1933): 174-75, no. 2b. The inscription honors a certain Hairan for being pious (*eusebēs*) and one who loves his country (*philopatrin*). The Palmyrene's use of the Latin term *civitas*, which equates the city-state with the sum of its citizens, as a substitute for the Greek *dēmos* is such a broad designation that it suggests that no organized political assembly, as a representative cross-section of the population, existed at all and that the citizenry in their totality acted as one political body under the council's leadership; see p. 119 above.

which the agora was being developed.⁴ Interestingly, this inscription of 74 C.E. is the earliest attestation of the *boulē* of Palmyra, which would indicate that the elite members of Palmyrene society had formally begun to consolidate power into their hands, perhaps in response to more direct and frequent relations with Roman officials. These relations intensified in the second and third centuries C.E. especially with the arrival of a Roman garrison. An important example of increased Roman influence on the city, one in which Palmyra is depicted as a *polis* in Greek, is in a bilingual inscription from the agora that records honors received by a prefect of the *cohors I Augusta Thracum equitata*, who was described as “a citizen of the city of the Palmyrenes” ([πολείτη]ν τῆς Παλμυρη[ν]ῶν πόλεως).⁵ Yet the most conspicuous example of Palmyra designated in Greek as a *polis*, one that manifests Roman influence on the city in the late second or early third century C.E. as well as the city’s efforts to flirt with the imperial core, is from the agora and

⁴ See p. 49, n. 95 above.

⁵ See P1422. There are other references to Palmyra as a *polis* in Greek that honor Roman citizens or military officials. For example, a certain Marcus Acilius Athēnodōros, son of Acilius Mokimos, of the tribe Sergia, who served as tribune of the *legio X Fretensis* and tribune of the *cohors I Ulpia Petraeorum*, was honored (probably in the second century C.E.) by the council and the people for his having been pious and patriotic toward the city in every respect (πά[ντα τῆ] πόλει ζῶντα εὐσεβῆ καὶ [φιλό]πατριν); see *Inventaire* 10.109. Similarly, in the third century C.E., Julius Aurelius Neboumaios also received honors from the council and the people, because he had been “pleasing to the city” (ἀρέσαν[τα] τῆ πόλει); see P1360.

reads, “the City (honors) Julia Maesa, sister of Julia Augusta.”⁶ The effort to win over the Severans was not in vain, because the city was in fact soon rewarded. Palmyra was transformed from a Greek *polis* into a Roman *colonia*, a clear product of centuries of Roman influence upon and interest in the city. No longer referring to itself as a *polis*, the city began to transliterate its new status directly from the Latin *colonia* into *kolōneia* in Greek and *qlny’* in Palmyrene.

Concurrent with the emergence and development of Palmyra as a *polis*, individuals and groups began to express a common socio-political identity as citizens of their city. The importance of citizenship is obvious in that it defined an individual’s ability to participate in the active life of the community. Presumably, citizenship was determined by birth as opposed to residence. We need to observe, however, that in most cases the distinction cannot be made between a political identity of being a “Palmyrene” versus an ethnic identity of the same. For example, in 64 C.E. the goddess Allat and those identified as “Palmyrenes” (Παλμυρηνοί / *tdmry’*) of the tribe of the *bny m’zyn* set up a statue and a column to honor a fellow tribal member, a certain Salamallathos.⁷ Although these tribesmen identified themselves as Palmyrenes, we can only assume that this reflected their recognition of being citizens of Palmyra. Conversely, as I will show in Chapter 6, numerous

⁶ *Inventaire* 10.67: ’Ιουλίαν Μαίσαν ’Ιουλίας | Σεβαστῆς ἀδελφῆν | ἡ πόλις.

⁷ P0312. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 82-85; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 100-101.

instances of people identifying themselves as Palmyrenes in foreign contexts would suggest ethnic self-recognition. For example, P0270 of 19 C.E. records that “Palmyrene traders” and their Greek colleagues ([ἔμπ]ο[ρο]ὶ Πα[λμυρηνοὶ καὶ Ἑλληνο]ἄδεις) in Seleucia (*bslwky*) set up a statue to honor their chief Yedibel, son of Azizu, a member of the *bny mtbwl* and, according to the Greek text of the inscription, a Palmyrene, because he assisted with the construction of the temple of Bel at Palmyra. In this instance, the designation “Palmyrene” would seem to have been an ethnic distinction juxtaposed with “Greek.”⁸ We can be certain that citizenship is referred to when the language is explicit, which happens only in Greek. In 84 C.E., for example, a certain Abgar, son of Patroclus, also called Astourga, son of Lekeisou, was honored by the council with a statue for his having been, among other things, a good “citizen” (*poleitēs*).⁹ Likewise, in the second century C.E., a Roman *praefectus* was honored specifically as “a citizen of the city of the Palmyrenes” ([πολείτη]ν τῆς Παλμυρη[ν]ῶν πόλεως)¹⁰ at about the same time that the city itself honored Septimius Aphaios as both a citizen and

⁸ A similar problem exists in Jewish contexts because Jewish identity can have both an ethnic and a geographic basis; for discussion, see S. J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, and Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 70-81.

⁹ P2778 *in situ* from the temple of Bel at Palmyra. See also J. Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1938): 76, no. 29.

¹⁰ P1422.

protector/patron (*prostatēs*).¹¹ Also, the council and the people together set up in 108 C.E. along the Great Colonnade a statue to a certain Gaius Julius Hairan, son of Elahbel, whom they identified in Greek as a “pious and generous citizen” (εὐσεβῆ καὶ φιλότειμον πολεῖτην).¹²

Interestingly, the *adventus* of the emperor Hadrian in the early second century C.E. marked a partial transition in Palmyra’s political self-expression, when individuals began to recognize themselves as citizens of *Hadriana Palmyra*. In 131 C.E., for example, according to the Greek text of a bilingual inscription in the agora, merchants from Spasinou Charax in the kingdom of Mesene honored their patron Yarhai, son of Nebozabad, whom they identified specifically as a citizen of *Hadriana Palmyra*.¹³ Again, this confirms Roman influence on Palmyra’s civic

¹¹ *Inventaire* 3.18: Σεπτ. Ἐφαιῖον τὸν πολεῖτην | καὶ προστάτον ἢ πόλις, “the City (honors) Septimius Aphaios, a citizen and protector.”

¹² P1423. Generosity as a citizen, as I discussed in Chapter 4, fell within the framework of classical *euergetism*, a clear example of which occurred in 131 C.E. when Malē (also called Agrippa), son of Yarhai, received a statue by order of the council and the people, because, during the *adventus* of the emperor Hadrian, he provided oil to the citizens of Palmyra and to the strangers accompanying the emperor, and because he provided fully for the hospitable reception of the imperial troops; see P0305, and Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, no. 44.

¹³ P1374: [Ἐ]δριανὸν Παλμυρηνόν. Also, curiously, the Greek text of a bilingual inscription on a stele discovered in Trastevere, Rome, and dated to 236 C.E. records a dedication made to the gods Aglibol and Malakbel by a certain Aurelius Heliodorus Antiochus, who identified himself as a Ἐδριανὸς Παλμυρηνός (see P0247). Cf. Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 39, n. 25, who draws attention to the peculiarity of this inscription in that it was produced some thirty years after Palmyra was made into a *colonia*. For discussion of the titles, see M. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton

identity. Occasionally, citizenship was extended to foreigners, including Romans. A fragmentary inscription from the west portico of the temple of Bel, for example, honors a certain G. Vibius Celer, Roman commander of the *ala* based in the city (date uncertain), in which he is identified as both a citizen and colleague on the city council.¹⁴ Thus as Palmyra developed as a *polis*, individuals and groups within the city began to express openly their citizenship status. This affirmation was significant, because it defined their presence as members of the civic community. It was also an acknowledgment of the city's governance over their communal affairs. Yet, although the city served as a frame of reference for the construction of a new socio-political identity, there is no firm evidence to suggest that other identities such as those based on kinship were ever supplanted.

A common Palmyrene identity was also expressed in Palmyra's hinterland, which reflects the integration of city and countryside (fig. 5). From Qaryatein, Syria, for example, a settlement about 110 kilometers southwest of Palmyra en route to Damascus, an inscription was found that records a dedication of 146 C.E. made by a group of five brothers to the local god of the village. The inscription reads:

In the year 457, in the month Kanun (November, 145 C.E.), this column and the roof that is on top of it, made (by) Zabdibol and Atenur and Malku and Amru and Yedibel, sons of Barshamash, son

University Press, 2000), 104-5.

¹⁴ *Inventaire* 9.23.

of Zabdibol, the Palmyrenes (who are) in Nazala, for the great god of Nazala, for the life of themselves and the life of their sons and the life of Belhai, daughter of Amru, their mother.¹⁵

This inscription represents more than an instance of individuals identifying themselves as Palmyrenes, however. Both Dirven and Dijkstra stress the fact that these band of brothers sought to integrate themselves and to settle in their new community, while at the same time preserving their own identities as Palmyrenes.¹⁶ Moreover, Dijkstra ventures to claim that:

since they and their sons act as chief beneficiaries, in answering the dedication, the blessings of the *Great God of Nazala* guarantee their longed for social integration. Certainly, five brothers and their sons, together with their wives and daughters, clients and slaves, constitutes a whole clan, which had moved from Palmyra, presumably to try their fortune elsewhere.¹⁷

This may be a compelling assessment. We know little of the relationship between Palmyra and the village of Nazala, however, except to note that the latter lay within the *territorium* or hinterland of Palmyra and housed an important local cult.¹⁸ In fact, it is equally plausible that the family of Barshamash were patrons of the local

¹⁵ P0257: *b[š]nt 457* (146 C.E.) | *byrh qnyn 'mwd'* | *dn' wttlyl' dl'l* | *mnh 'bdw zbdbwl* | *w'tnwr wmlkw w'mrw* | *wydy 'bl bny bršmš* | *br zbdbwl tdmry'* [dy] | *bnzly l'lh' rb'* | *dnzly 'l hyyhn wh[yy]* | *bnyhn whyy blhy* | *brt 'mrw 'mhn*. See also Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 125, n. 100; Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 135-36; and Milik, *Dédicaces*, 89.

¹⁶ See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 125; and Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 136.

¹⁷ Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 136.

¹⁸ See Millar, *Roman Near East*, 299-300.

cult without their having been permanent residents of the village. It is also possible that this family (and I see no evidence of a “clan” inclusive of clients and slaves) was originally from Nazala where they may well have retained kin but resided in Palmyra, whether for most or all of the year. Perhaps some members of the family split their residence between both communities. Still, it remains significant that, wherever their primary residence, whether at Palmyra or in its hinterland, these individuals considered themselves primarily Palmyrenes. Again, however, whether this was an assertion of citizenship attested beyond the city or of an ethnicity cannot be determined.

Thus, concomitant with Palmyra’s growth as a *polis*, the development of a Palmyrene civic identity began probably in the first century B.C.E. and flourished in the first century C.E. and afterwards. This does not imply, however, that a shared communal identity did not exist among those inhabiting the oasis before Palmyra became a city. A key difference between pre-urban and urban identity would have been in the institutions that regulated communal affairs. Once Palmyra was settled and grew as a *polis*, these institutions would have provided a host of new restrictions and opportunities for the city and its citizens, whether for economic, social, or political advancement. Moreover, it is clear that Palmyra’s development as a *polis* was due primarily to Roman influence, although I would stop short of suggesting where the impetus for this development originated. Quite possibly, the Palmyrenes themselves sought to form a city in order to participate in wider cultural

contexts, with other cities and with their imperial neighbors, for instance. At any rate, the process of city formation gave shape to a unique communal identity that was distinctively Palmyrene. An important question remains, however. How did this communal identity as Palmyrenes change, if at all, over the course of three centuries and Palmyra's evolution as a *polis*? I will respond to this question by reviewing the evidence for Palmyra's institutional development and city governance.

Government and Institutions

There remains debate over the institutional development of Palmyra as a Greek *polis*.¹⁹ The problem lies in estimating the "Greekness" of Palmyra, versus, for example, its "Roman" or eastern aspects. Institutionally, Palmyra may have become a "Greek" city by at least 74 C.E., in that by this date there is evidence that it possessed both a council (*boulē*) and allegedly an assembly (*dēmos*), in addition to a group of magistracies. Nearly three generations would pass, however, before the "Greekness" of Palmyra manifested itself outwardly in terms of the city's urban development. For example, noticeably absent at Palmyra until the development of a theater in the mid-second century C.E. was a setting for agonistic performances,

¹⁹ See M. Sartre, "Palmyre, cité grecque," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 385-405, and for the following discussion on the institutional development of Palmyra.

whether in athletics, music, or poetry.²⁰ This illuminates an important civic context of community formation and allows us to question how Palmyra evolved culturally in relation to its political transformation. In this section I intend to focus on the latter. I will analyze the development of Palmyra as a hybrid of the Greek *polis*, which later transformed into a Roman *colonia*, through a careful review of the city's institutional structure and methods of governance. Since the constitution of any city is the makeup and organization of its public officials, the politically privileged elite who ruled, I will discuss the various political bodies of the Palmyrene state beginning with the citizen assembly.

We know very little about the alleged assembly of Palmyrene citizens if there was one. When did the political assembly form, how did it evolve, where did it meet, what was its organization, and what powers did it possess beyond ratification of public honors? In response to these questions, we can only speculate. Some hints as to when the assembly developed seems to be embedded in the evidence that I presented in Chapter 3, which illuminates community formation at Palmyra. Again, however, the terminology is obscure, since we have to deal with a number of expressions that seem to equate with one another, e.g. the “people of

²⁰ Stressed by G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 7. On the general process of Palmyrene urbanization, see Savino, *Città di frontiera nell'impero romano*, 47-93. More specifically on Palmyra's urban development, see Schlumberger, “Études sur Palmyre, I,” 149-62; van Berchem, “Le Plan de Palmyre,” 165-73; and Frézouls, “Questions d'urbanisme palmyrénie,” 191-207.

Palmyra” (*gbl tdmry*’), the *dēmos*, or the *polis* itself. Reference to the “people of Palmyra” first appears in an inscription of 10 C.E., which is also the earliest evidence for a community treasury.²¹ In 25 C.E. the people of Palmyra or *gbl tdmry*’, which the Greek text renders as Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος, in cooperation with the “men of the treasury” (*nwš ‘nwšt*) or treasurers (*argurotomiai*) set up a statue to honor their fellow citizen Malku, son of Nesha, of the *bny kmr*’.²² A year earlier in 24 C.E., this same Malku received a statue erected by “all the merchants in the city of Babylon” (*t[g]ry’ klhwn dy bmdynt bbl*), who are themselves identified in the Greek text of the bilingual as Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος.²³ In this instance, it may be that the *dēmos* meeting in assembly ratified publicly an honor sponsored by the merchants in Babylon. The ambiguous nature of the *gbl* or the *dēmos* of Palmyra is reflected in a bilingual inscription of 51 C.E. that probably associates “all the people of Palmyra” (*gbl tdmry’ klhn*) with the city (ἡ [π]ό[λις]) itself, and in a trilingual inscription of 74 C.E. that translates *dēmos* as *civitas* in Latin.²⁴ The evidence seems to suggest that the city of Palmyra was the sum of its citizens, and that the popular assembly of the Palmyrenes included only those who

²¹ P2636. This difficult text, which may relate to a tax on camels driven into the city, refers to the “funds of all the people of Palmyra” (*blw gbl tdmry’ klhwn*). For discussion, see p. 117, n. 2 above.

²² P1353. See p. 129, n. 34 above.

²³ P1352.

²⁴ P0269. See n. 1 above.

were politically privileged, specifically the merchants notables. Where they met cannot be stated for certain. The assembly of citizens most likely convened in the temple of Bel, or in other local sanctuaries, as well as in the theater once this was constructed in the second century C.E. Also, since Palmyra was a tribal society, we would expect that its citizenry was organized accordingly. As I will discuss in the next section, this is apparent in the social organization in the second century C.E. of the “four tribes” of the city. Finally, the evidence suggests that “all the people of Palmyra,” in their initial gatherings as a community, met for reasons related to issues of the economy and perhaps of cult under the leadership of the city secretary.²⁵ Yet their responsibilities probably went no further than ratifying decisions made by its leading citizens, the tribal leaders and urban elite, men who would have constituted the *boulē* or city council.²⁶

The political organization at Palmyra became more attuned to that of a

²⁵ On the economy, see n. 2 above, which refers to the “funds” (*blw*) of the Palmyrenes. The cultic aspect may be seen in three fragmented and undated inscriptions from the foundations of the Hellenistic temple of Bel, which seem to form part of a single inscription that comprises one of the so-called sacred laws of the community and twice refers to the individuals named in the text as Palmyrenes. The texts are P2774, P2775, and P1521. See also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1936): 351-53, nos. 25 and 26; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 56-58, who suggests that these form part of a single inscription. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 300-309. More recently, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 172-74. These Palmyrenes clearly acted in a collective manner for some cultic purpose. On the role of the city secretary, see p. 281 below.

²⁶ On the declining significance of citizen assemblies in the Roman period, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 177-78.

Greek city institutionally with the first evidence of a council (*boulē*) in 74 C.E.²⁷ This was essentially the governing body of the city which carried out various important responsibilities. For example, if comparisons may be drawn with Mediterranean communities further afield, the council probably supervised public works contracts (construction, maintenance, and repair), appointed magistrates, approved expenditures of civic funds, and managed the collection of taxes.²⁸ In theory, the assembly of citizens was politically empowered. Actual control over the state, however, rested with the council comprised of the local elite, which most often acted in the name of the *dēmos* without calling it together. Often at Palmyra, the council is attested granting honors to leading citizens and benefactors, based on their own authority but generally in conjunction with the assembly.²⁹ This is represented by the standard decree formula ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ, “it was enacted by the council and the people.” The formulation itself, Hellenistic

²⁷ See Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 174, no. 2b. For a general discussion of the *boulē* at Palmyra, see Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 388-90.

²⁸ See Jones, *Greek City*, 164-65 and 176-78.

²⁹ The list of references is extensive. Briefly, for the council acting independently, see P0268, P0298, P1375, P1384, P1387, P1389, P1392, P1408, P1414, P1421, *Inventaire* 10.37, *Inventaire* 10.46, and *Inventaire* 10.60. Also, for enactments of the council and the people (*bwl wdms*), see P0197, P0260, P0267, P0276, P0277, P0278, P0280, P0281, P0282, P0284, P0288, P0305, P1063, P1359, P1360, P1368, P1370, P1378, P1382, P1407, P1415, P1423, P2769, *Inventaire* 3.5, *Inventaire* 3.26, *Inventaire* 9.23, *Inventaire* 10.14, *Inventaire* 10.34, *Inventaire* 10.55, *Inventaire* 10.59, *Inventaire* 10.80, *Inventaire* 10.109, *Inventaire* 10.120, and *Inventaire* 12.20; see also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 175.

in its inception, stemmed from the recognition that the *dēmos* required leadership through the council, essentially the ruling body of the state. The council probably consisted of at least 600 men, although this figure is hypothetical.³⁰ Moreover, when the council was formed, it is likely that its members were those of the local elite, whether elders or heads of important families or clans, or perhaps tribal chiefs. Surprisingly, there are few instances of a Palmyrene identified specifically as a council member. Neither the Palmyrene term *bylwt* or the Greek *bouleutēs* appear in the inscriptions to designate any local individual as a council member until the mid-third century C.E. Even then, each term occurs only once inscribed on a column along the Great Colonnade commemorating Aurelius (Septimius) Worod, where he is identified both as an equestrian and a council member of Palmyra (ἰππικὸν καὶ βουλευτὴν Παλμυρηνὸν / 'wrl̄ys [w]rwd hpq' wbylwt' tdmry').³¹ In a few instances, however, the Greek term *synedros*, which also denotes membership on the council, is used in commemorations of individual service to the community.³² A bilingual inscription *in situ* on a wall console in the

³⁰ Libanius *Orationes* 48.3, for example, suggests that the average size of city councils in Syria is about 600 men.

³¹ P0283 of 258/59 C.E. On the career of Septimius Worod, see p. 289 below. The only other reference to a *bouleutēs* is that of P1373, which honors Marcus Aemilius Marcianus Asklepiades, a member of the city council of Antioch, which was set up by merchants from Spasinou Charax in the agora at Palmyra.

³² In addition to the examples cited in the text, *Inventaire* 10.59, a fragmentary Greek inscription, may refer to a *synedros* at Palmyra.

agora, for instance, records the council having set up a statue to the son of a certain Taimarsu, son of Malku, on account of his piety and generosity as a councillor (ε[ύ]σεβῆ [καὶ φιλότειμ]ον [σ]ύνεδρον).³³ The council member Hagegu, son of Yarhai, son of Oga, was honored similarly in 112 C.E.³⁴ Teixidor, however, contends that the *synedros* was not a council member at all but rather the representative of the Roman governor in attendance at sessions of the city council.³⁵ Yet this contention seems not to be supported by the evidence.³⁶ In one exceptional case, though, a certain Vibius Celer, who was identified as the “prefect of the *ala* (stationed) here” (ἑπαρχον τῆς ἐνθάδε εἰλης) was also described both as a citizen (*poleitēn*) and as a council member (*synedron*).³⁷ The fact that Vibius Celer was a citizen is significant, because it highlights the incorporation of Romans into the city’s citizenry and Roman involvement in Palmyra’s civic institutions. It also illuminates the demography of the city, since veterans of the Roman units garrisoned in the city were likely to remain and assume roles as prominent citizens, which would have expanded the pool of candidates for high office.

The council required leadership so a president (*proedros* / *plhdrwt*) was

³³ P1384.

³⁴ P1389.

³⁵ Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 63-64.

³⁶ For discussion, see Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 389.

³⁷ *Inventaire* 9.23

appointed to supervise its activities and perhaps that of the assembly of citizens as well. The ratification of the Palmyrene tariff in 137 C.E., for example, was at a “statutory meeting of the council” (βουλῆς νομίμου ἀγομένης) during the presidency of Bōnneōs, son of Bōnneōs, son of Hairanos (ἔπι Βωννέου Βωννέου τοῦ Αἰράνου προέδρου).³⁸ Another *proedros*, a certain Zenobios, is mentioned in a fragmentary Greek inscription from the agora, but his term in office cannot be dated.³⁹ Also from the agora, an important Greek inscription was found in which the council and the people honored a certain Malchos (son of) Barea, son of Malichos, son of Sēmanaios, “who served as president of the council with integrity and honor and who received the testimony of Aetrios Severus, the distinguished governor.”⁴⁰ Presidency over the council is also indicated by the Palmyrene term *mwtbh*, as suggested by two additional inscriptions from the agora. One identifies a certain Elahbel, son of Elahbel, son of Zabdibol, whom the council honored with a statue during his term as president (*bmwtbh*).⁴¹ The other inscription dates to 119 C.E. and also records honors bestowed upon an

³⁸ P0259 (Tariff): Greek I(a): 2; Palmyrene, I.1.

³⁹ See *Inventaire* 10.45: Ζηνο[βί]ου προέδρ[ου].

⁴⁰ *Inventaire* 10.55: [ἡ βουλῆ κα]ὶ ὁ δῆμος | Μάλχον Βαρέα τοῦ Μαλίχου τοῦ Σημαναίου προε|δρεύσαντα ἀγνώως καὶ ἐπισ|ήμως καὶ μαρτυρηθέντα ὑ[π]ὸ Αἰτρίου Σεουήρου το[ῦ] | λαμπροτάτου ἡγεμόνο[ς] | [ἔτους . . . Λ]ώου. See also Seyrig, “Inscriptions grecques de l’agora de Palmyre,” 244-46, who suggests a Severan date for the inscription.

⁴¹ P1387.

unidentified individual, the son of a certain Malku, during his presidency.⁴²

Unfortunately, we know nothing of how the president of the council was appointed or of the term of his office. It is possible that he was either appointed by the preceding president or selected by the council itself, perhaps followed by the approval of the assembly.⁴³

Another magistracy within the council held by individuals of prominence was that of secretary (*grammateus* / *grmwš*), whose authority extended to the assembly as well. The Palmyrene tariff, for instance, identifies Alexandros, son of Alexandros, son of Philopater, as secretary of both the council and the assembly (' Ἀλεξάνδρου ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Φιλοπάτορος γραμματέως βουλῆς καὶ δήμου).⁴⁴ Six years earlier in 131 C.E., the council and the people honored the prestigious Malē, surnamed Agrippa, son of Yarhai, for his having served two terms as secretary.⁴⁵ In fact, it was in his capacity as secretary that Malē secured appropriate provisions and made all formal arrangements for the reception of the emperor Hadrian and his entourage, acts which surely enhanced his public status.⁴⁶

⁴² P1408.

⁴³ For discussion of procedures, see Jones, *Greek City*, 179-88.

⁴⁴ P0259 (Tariff): Greek I(a): 2-3; Palmyrene, I.2.

⁴⁵ P0305. See also Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, no. 44. Cf. P2756, which refers to an individual, whose name cannot be restored, serving more than a single term as secretary. See also Cantineau, "Tadmorea," (1933): 177, no. 3.

⁴⁶ See n. 12 above.

The office of secretary seems to have developed concurrently with the formation of the council, since the earliest reference to a *grammateus* at Palmyra is from a bilingual inscription of 75 C.E. in the agora, which commemorated a statue to a certain Zabdilah, son of Shamshigeram Iyusha, the secretary, for his generosity and demonstrable zeal toward the city and for having performed his secretarial functions with integrity.⁴⁷ Another inscription from the agora provides the latest attested date of the public office. This inscription is from 218 C.E., and in it a certain Taibol is honored for his having served the community as a *grammateus* and for his generosity.⁴⁸ Again, although there is evidence of the public office of secretary and its responsibilities, we know nothing of how the position was filled, whether individuals were elected or appointed and by whom.

The Greek character of Palmyra's political structure is further attested in the list of offices mentioned in the Palmyrene tariff. In addition to those of *proedros* and *grammateus*, these include two archons (*archontes* / 'rkwny'),⁴⁹ public advocates or syndics (*syndikoi* / sdqy'),⁵⁰ and the board of ten municipal officials concerned with local taxation and financial transactions within the city, the

⁴⁷ P1375.

⁴⁸ P1370.

⁴⁹ P0259 (Tariff): Greek I(a): 3-4, 8, 12; Palmyrene, I.2, 7, 10.

⁵⁰ P0259 (Tariff): Greek I(a): 12; Palmyrene, I.11.

dekaprōtoi or ‘*šrt*’, i.e. the ten leading men of the state.⁵¹ The *syndikoi* and the *dekaprōtoi* appear in no other text from Palmyra. There is, however, mention of an *archōn* from a Palmyrene inscription on a cross-beam from the temple of Baalshamin.⁵² This fragmentary text refers to a congregation of the *bny m‘zyn* involved in selection procedures and an *archōn* appointed from among them. It seems evident, however, that the *archōn* referred to in this case was probably not one of the civic magistrates but rather the leader of a specific cult group associated with the temple of Baalshamin. Also, there may have been an edifice in which the city’s archons operated. According to Gawlikowski, two Palmyrene texts (P2759 and P2760) refer to the “house of the archons” (*bt ‘rk*’).⁵³ Hillers and Cussini, however, among others, prefer to identify the *bt ‘rk*’ with the “house of the archives” or, more simply, as “the public records.”⁵⁴ P2759, in fact, mentions

⁵¹ P0259 (Tariff): Greek I(a): 8, 12; Palmyrene, I.7, 10. For discussion of the *dekaprōtoi*, see Jones, *Greek City*, 139-40 and 327, n. 85; and Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 174, n. 5.

⁵² P0187: . . . [b]ny m‘zyn klhn lmn dy yhdnh [. . .] | [. . .] dy yhw h ‘rkwn mn [b]ny m[‘zyn . . .], “all the [b]ny m‘zyn, to whomever he will choose . . . who was an *archōn* of the [b]ny m[‘zyn].” See also Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 43; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 167-68.

⁵³ See Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 43-44, with reference to P2759 and P2760. See also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 183-84, no. 7a-b. For the possible restoration of *bt rk* in P2774, see Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1936): 351-52, no. 25.

⁵⁴ See Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 347, s.v. “*byt ‘rk*’.” See also Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 391, who agrees with this assessment.

specifically a document (*ktb*) in the *bt 'rk'*, and it is not unusual for a Greek city to have an official repository for public and private records.⁵⁵ Generally, temple precincts were a favorite place for depositing official documents (e.g., deeds, contracts, wills).⁵⁶ So far, however, no edifice has been found at Palmyra that might be interpreted as either a public archive or an office for the archons. At any rate, mention of these various magistracies in the Tariff, although their duties are not elaborated upon, gives us a sense of how Palmyra developed as a Greek city.

There were various other civic posts available to individuals at Palmyra to advance their social prestige, many of which would have been, more or less, liturgical in nature, and these further highlight the Greek character of the city.⁵⁷ We know, for instance, of a *gymnasiarch* (*gmnsyrks*) at Palmyra from a fragmentary inscription discovered in the agora. This interesting text refers also to a reigning emperor, Antoninus or Hadrian, and, vaguely, to some honor associated with the “purple” (*'rgwn*).⁵⁸ Importantly, the presence of a gymnasium as a center for

⁵⁵ P2759: *ktb bt 'rk'*. See also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 183, no. 7a. For discussion, see Jones, *Greek City*, 239-40.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the Nabataean evidence, see J. F. Healey, *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Supplement no. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 41-43.

⁵⁷ On the social importance of liturgies, see Sartre, *L'Orient romain*, 139-47. See also, in the Palmyrene context, Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 95.

⁵⁸ P1406: [. . . *qr*]tstš wgmssyrks [. . . | . . . 'wt]qrṭwr ṭnynys q[sr . . . | . . . y]qrh b 'rgwn' [. . . | . . .] rhym md[yth . . . | . . .], “. . . excellent and *gymnasiarch* . . . the Emperor Antoninus C[aesar . . .] . . . honor of the purple . . . who loves his [city

physical and intellectual education was a key Hellenistic feature of Palmyra's institutions in this period.⁵⁹ Another position of civic importance was that of *agoranomos* (*rb šwq*), or chief of the market, who ensured the equitable exchange of goods. There are few texts that identify individuals having served as overseers of the market, and those we have date to the late second and early third century C.E. The earliest is a bilingual inscription of 193 C.E. from a rampart southeast of the agora, while the latest inscription is of 267 C.E. and currently *in situ* along the Great Colonnade.⁶⁰ These official positions were common in Greek *poleis*, and to the extent that they were honors and not burdens, it was not unusual for individuals to compete for them in order to advance their social prestige. We cannot be certain, however, how acute the competition at Palmyra may have been.

Yet, among all civic posts at Palmyra and most common in Greek *poleis*, that of *stratēgos* (*'strtg*) possessed the most immediate and viable access to power and authority.⁶¹ Initially, the title denoted leadership over the Palmyrene military (see below), as is evident in a series of texts that range in date from the late first to

...].”

⁵⁹ According to Jones, *Greek City*, 220, “any barbarian community which aspired to the status of a Greek city must found a gymnasium.”

⁶⁰ The texts are, from the earliest to the latest, P1398 (193 C.E.), P0288 (242 C.E.), and P0278 (267 C.E.). P1415 and *Inventaire* 12.29 belong to this same group but are not dated.

⁶¹ Briefly, see Ingholt, “Varia Tadmorea,” in *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives*, 124-27, who distinguishes between the *stratēgoi* and the archons at Palmyra.

the late second century C.E. In 98 C.E., for instance, Zebaida, son of Haumal, presumably a Palmyrene, led a small group as *stratēgos* into the distant Wadi Rijelat Umm-Kubar near Wadi Hauran, which is roughly 50 kilometers southwest of Hadita on the Euphrates.⁶² There was also a detachment of Palmyrene soldiers at Dura Europos whose leaders were identified as *stratēgoi*. A small Mithraic relief of 169 C.E., for example, bears an inscription indicating that it was made by Atpanai, the *stratēgos*, son of Zabdea, who was commander of the archers based at Dura.⁶³ Also, a relief dated to 170/71 C.E. identifies a certain Zenobios as “*stratēgos* of the archers” (στρατηγὸς τοξοτῶν).⁶⁴ From Palmyra itself, a bilingual inscription dated to 198 C.E. (cited below) found east of the temple of Bel identifies a certain Aelius Bora, son of Titus Aelius Ogeilu, “who very often served as *stratēgos*” (στρατηγήσαντα πλειστάκις) and “who made peace in the territory of the city” (*dy ‘bd šlm’ bḥwmy mdyt’*).⁶⁵ Another bilingual inscription

⁶² P2732. See also Safar, “Inscriptions from Wadi Hauran,” 13, no. 1. Cf. P2810, another Palmyrene text (undated) from the same vicinity that refers to the time when Yarhai was *stratēgos*.

⁶³ P1085: *’tpny ’str[’tg]’ | br zbd’h dy ‘l qšt’ dy bdwr’*. See also *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 82-84, no. 845. For a recent discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 262-63, nos. 27-28.

⁶⁴ See *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 84-85, 97-98, no. 846. For a recent discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 264-65, no. 29.

⁶⁵ P1063. For the text of the inscription and further references, see n. 97 below. See also P1398 of 293 C.E., which, according to Seyrig, “Inscriptions grecques de l’agora de Palmyre,” 246-47, may honor an unnamed individual for his having served as *stratēgos* in addition to his service as *agoranomos*.

found outside the agora identifies the likely source for such uneasiness in the countryside (cited below), encountered by the *stratēgoi* of Palmyra at the close of the second and throughout the third century C.E. The inscription commemorates a statue set up by the council and the people of Palmyra in honor of a certain Ogeilu, son of Maqqai, (son of) Ogeilu, who, in addition to his support of the Palmyrene merchants and caravans, held many military commands “against the nomads” (κατὰ τῶν νομάδων).⁶⁶ Thus the official post of *stratēgos*, which was common in Greek communities, was one of the most important at Palmyra. Although we do not know the criteria for their appointment, it is certain that *stratēgoi* as military commanders wielded great power and authority, perhaps in the city but certainly in the countryside.

After the grant of Roman *colonia* status to Palmyra under Severus, or more probably under Caracalla early in the third century C.E., the city retained much of its Greek character despite its new institutional status. Even the terminology designating its public officials remained largely unchanged. For example, while there is no further evidence for the archonship, *stratēgos* or *’str̄tg* came to designate one of the annual pair of magistrates, the *duumviri*, who headed the new colonial constitution.⁶⁷ The earliest reference is in an honorific Greek inscription

⁶⁶ P1378. See n. 98 below for the text and further references.

⁶⁷ There is a possible Greek translation of the Latin term *duumvir* in a bilingual inscription of 254 C.E. (P0280), but this is not surprising given that Palmyra was a Roman *colonia* at the time. The Palmyrene text indicates that a certain Julius

from the Great Colonnade, which identifies Julius Aurelius Seiba Atheakabas and Titianus Athenodorus as *stratēgoi* in the year 536 (224/25 C.E.).⁶⁸ More specifically, according to a bilingual inscription of 242/43 C.E. *in situ* from the Great Colonnade, a certain Julius Aurelius Zēnobius, who was also called Zabdilās, was honored for having served as “*stratēgos* of the colony” (*’str̄tg lqlny’*) during the *adventus* of the emperor Severus Alexander a decade beforehand.⁶⁹ Similarly, in an undated text from the agora, Julius Aurelius Malku, son of Washu, was honored for his service as *stratēgos* of the colony (στρατη[γήσαντα τῆς κολωνείας] / [*b’ str̄tgwt’ dy*] *qlny’*) and for having performed, along with his father, all the public liturgies.⁷⁰ Three other texts specifically identify the eminent Septimius Worod as a former *stratēgos* of the colony of Palmyra, but it is the sum

Aurelius Oga, surnamed Seleukos, was honored by the council and the people for having pleased them during his term as *stratēgos* (*wšpr lhwn b’str̄tgwth*), while the Greek text gives the title for this office as *dua[ndrikos]*. For further discussion, see Ingholt, “Varia Tadmorea,” 125, n. 130; and Millar, “Roman *Coloniae*,” 44.

⁶⁸ *Inventaire* 3.5. A *stratēgos* is also mentioned in a fragmentary Palmyrene text (P2757) discovered at Umm es-Selabikh, near where Wadi el-Miyah intersects the caravan track between Palmyra and Hit and dated to 225 C.E. Unfortunately, the individual is not identified, although he is mentioned as *stratēgos* of Ana and Gamla along with his successor, a certain Kapatut. Whether we should interpret this individual as a commander of a military unit or as one of the two *stratēgoi* of Palmyra is not clear, although the former seems most likely; see, for instance, Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 392.

⁶⁹ P0278.

⁷⁰ P1415: . . . κα[ῖ] Ούασέω πατρὶ αὐτοῦ πάσας λειτουργίας ἐκτελέσαντι . . . , “. . . and to his father Ouaseos, for their having performed all the liturgies . . .”

of all of his public service that most highlights the liturgical system at Palmyra and the preservation of the city's Greek character.⁷¹ The latest inscription is from the Great Colonnade, which was set up by the council and the people of Palmyra in 266/67 C.E. to honor Septimius Worod for his long career in public service, in which he is identified as the eminent *procurator ducenarius* of Augustus, *dikeodotēs* of the *metrokolōneia*,⁷² as someone who received high praises from the chiefs of the caravans, a former *stratēgos*, a former *agoranomos* of the same *metrokolōneia*, and as the current symposiarch of the priests of Bel.⁷³

Indeed, highlighting the public career of Septimius Worod raises several important issues regarding Palmyra's institutional development, particularly when viewed alongside the illustrious careers of his contemporaries, notably the family of Septimius Odenathus. From a political standpoint, Palmyra was a Greek city

⁷¹ The texts are *Inventaire* 3.3, P0285, and P0288. *Inventaire* 3.3 is an honorific dedication of 260/62 C.E. to Hairan, son of Odenathus, king of kings, for his victory over the Persians, sponsored by Julius Aurelius Septimius Worod, *stratēgos* of the colony, and his colleague. For restorations of the text, see Schlumberger, "L'Inscription d'Herodien," 35 and 60; and Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre," 255, no. 10. See also Schlumberger, "Vorod l'agoranome," 339. P0285 is from the Great Colonnade and dates to 262 C.E. In it Worod is identified as *procurator ducenarius* of the emperor ([κράτιστ]ον ἐπίτρο[πον Σεβαστοῦ διοικητῆρα] and *stratēgos* of the distinguished colony ([στρατ]ηγὸς [τῆς] λαμπροτά της κολωνείας).

⁷² *Dikeodotēs* would seem to imply some role in the judicial affairs of the community. For discussion, see E. Will, "A Propos de quelques inscriptions palmyréniennes: Le Cas de Septimus Vorôd," *Syria* 73 (1996): 113-14.

⁷³ P0288.

throughout the late first and second centuries C.E., but what was the basic character of the civic community in the third century? What were its social and cultural aspects? Indeed, Millar stresses the difficulty in understanding what Palmyra “was” in the third century since it was “to be ‘Oriental,’ ‘Greek,’ and ‘Roman’ all at once.”⁷⁴ This is reflected, for instance, in the list of public posts held by Septimius Worod. In an inscription from 258/59 C.E., for example, Worod is honored as an equestrian and a member of the city-council (*bouleutēs*).⁷⁵ Then, in three texts dating from 260/61 to 262 C.E., he is identified as *stratēgos* of the colony and as *procurator ducenarius*;⁷⁶ in three texts dating from 265 to 267 C.E., he is identified both as *procurator ducenarius* and as *argapet* (*argapētēs* / *'rgbt*);⁷⁷ and, as shown above, his public titles listed in an inscription of 266/67 C.E. included *procurator ducenarius*, *dikeodotēs*, *stratēgos*, *agoranomos*, and symposiarch.⁷⁸ Among the public posts held by Worod, only those of *dikeodotēs* and *argapētēs* seem irregular. Mommsen has argued that the two terms are synonymous and that they later derived

⁷⁴ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 144.

⁷⁵ See n. 31 above.

⁷⁶ For *stratēgos*, see *Inventaire* 3.3; for *stratēgos* and *procurator ducenarius*, see P0285; and for *procurator ducenarius*, see P0284.

⁷⁷ See P0287 (265 C.E.), P0286 (264 [267(?)] C.E.), and P0289 (267 C.E.). See also P0453, a fragmentary text that reads only, “Worod, argapet.”

⁷⁸ P0288.

from the Persian title that designated the “governor of a city.”⁷⁹ It remains, however, uncertain what this would have meant within Palmyra’s institutional structure, though it clearly signified Worod as a leading figure in the community.⁸⁰ What is noteworthy, nonetheless, in the context of Septimius Worod as an *argapētēs*, is that Persian traditions and political terminology had been incorporated into Palmyra’s civic organization. Indeed, Palmyra was an intermediary between empires and responded to both western, which happened to be the greatest, and eastern influences upon its civic structure and institutions.⁸¹

A contemporary of Worod, Septimius Odenathus, who married Zenobia, had a somewhat more irregular public career but one that highlighted Palmyrene incorporation into the Roman world. According to a bilingual inscription of 252 C.E. from the Great Colonnade, Odenathus held the rank of a Roman senator

⁷⁹ See T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Weidmann Buchhandlung, 1874), 434, no. 1. See also Schlumberger, “Vorod l’agoranome,” *Syria* 49 (1972): 340, n. 4; and idem, “L’Inscription d’Herodien,” 61. Cf. Will, “A Propos de quelques inscriptions palmyréniennes,” 114, n. 24. The term *arkapatēs* appears in a transaction from Dura Europos, a Greek parchment of the second century C.E. from the village of Paliga; see *Dura Final Report* 5.1, no. 20; and H. M. Cotton, W. E. H. Cockle, and F. Millar, “The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey,” *JRS* 85 (1995): 223, no. 166.

⁸⁰ See, for instance, Millar “Roman *Coloniae*,” 45. See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 49, n. 69, who translates the term *argapētēs* as “commander of the fortress.”

⁸¹ For discussion, see Swain, “Greek into Palmyrene,” 157-64.

(*lamprotatos*) in addition to that of *exarchos* or “chief of Palmyra” (*rš dy tdmwr*).⁸² According to an inscription of 251 C.E. also from the Great Colonnade, Odenathus shared senatorial rank with his son, Septimius Hairan.⁸³ These honorific inscriptions, which bear the titular distinctions of Odenathus and his son, and the fact that the dedication to Hairan was set up by a centurion from the adjacent province of Arabia, signify that the family of Odenathus had attained real prominence, within the city and beyond. Unfortunately, we are at a loss as to what the title of *exarchos* (*rš dy tdmwr*) actually meant, whether it signified a military command distinct from the Roman army or perhaps designated the fact that Odenathus and his son, at the time, held a priestly office at Palmyra.⁸⁴ By 257/58

⁸² Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 257, no. 13. See also K. al-As‘ad and M. Gawlikowski, “New Honorific Inscriptions in the Great Colonnade of Palmyra,” *AAAS* 36 (1986): 169, no. 10; and, for *rš dy tdmwr*, see Cantineau, “Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du temple de Bêl.” 138, no. 17. Cf. P0558, an undated text which refers to “Septimius Odenathus, the illustrious senator” (Σεπτίμιος Ὀδαίναθος ὁ λαμπρότατος συνκλητ[ικός]), who has been thought to signify the father of the renowned Odenathus who married Zenobia. The same uncertainty is connected to the Septimius Odenathus mentioned on a statue base from the Roman colony of Tyre. For the inscription, see M. Chéhab, “Tyr à l’époque romaine,” *MUSJ* 38 (1962): 19-20; and Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 254, no. 3. For discussion, with the previous identifications, see G. W. Bowersock, “Roman Senators from the Near East: Syria, Judaea, Arabia, Mesopotamia,” *Tituli* 5 (1982): 651-68; and Ingholt, “Varia Tadmorea,” 130-36. For revisions, see Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 251-61.

⁸³ See P0290 of 251 C.E.

⁸⁴ For discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 157-58. An undated inscription (P2753) discovered in the gardens near the temple of Bel also identifies Odenathus as *rš dy tdmwr*. For restoration of the text, see Cantineau, “Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du temple de Bêl,” *Syria* 12 (1931): 138, no.

C.E., Odenathus had another ubiquitous title, that of *hypatikos* (*ἡπαγ*), the equivalent of *consularis* in Latin, which would suggest that he had become the *legatus* of the province Syria Phoenice under the authority of the Roman emperor.⁸⁵ Interestingly, P0291, which dates to April 258 C.E., identifies Odenathus as a local “lord” or “master” (*despotēs / mrn*), but, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, this probably referred to some special relationship with the professional association that sponsored the dedication as opposed to his domination over the city.⁸⁶ At any rate, from this date until his assassination in 267/68 C.E., Odenathus extended his political presence in the region and accumulated more prestigious titles. As I will

17; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 317; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 78; and idem, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 253.

⁸⁵ The inscriptions of 257/58 C.E. include 1) one from the Great Colonnade set up by the *συμπόσιον σκυτέων καὶ ἄσκοναυτοποιῶν* (see Seyrig, “Les Fils du roi Odainat,” 161); 2) one on a column console in a portico north of the temple of Baalshamin set up by the *συμπόσιον τῶν κονετῶν*, see Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, 66, no. 52; and Milik, *Dédicaces*, 160-61; and 3) another set up by the *συμπόσιον τῶν σουαννῶν* (see *Inventaire* 12.37). Also, two other inscriptions from the Great Colonnade identify Odenathus as a *hypatikos* (see text in Seyrig, “Les Fils du roi Odainat,” 161, which identifies the dedicant as Worod, the *bouleutēs*, but the inscription is undated; and P0291, which dates to April, 258 C.E.) See also Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 254-55, nos. 5-9; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 215-17. On the ubiquitous nature of the term *hypatikos* in the context of Odenathus and Palmyra in the third century C.E., and the possibility that he was *legatus* of the province, see Gawlikowski, “Les Princes de Palmyre,” 258-61; and Millar, *Roman Near East*, 165-67. For further discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 104-5.

⁸⁶ See, for instance, Millar, *Roman Near East*, 165. Cf. D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Book of the Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 388-89.

discuss in the final chapter, he did so mostly in reaction to regional instability in the wake of the Shapur's capture of the emperor Valerian in 260 C.E.⁸⁷ Indeed, the career of Odenathus, more than that of any of his fellow citizens, crystallized Palmyra's progressive integration into the Roman state that accelerated in the third century C.E. Surely his status as a Roman senator was not lost upon his contemporaries, those who understood the power and authority he wielded and especially those who regarded him, in purely Roman fashion, as their patron.⁸⁸

Thus, after the elevation in Palmyra's civic status to that of a Roman *colonia*, the issue of Palmyra's "Greekness" is obscured. A new, largely Roman aspect pervaded the community. In the third century C.E., for instance, the city became infused with prominent individuals and families who had adopted the two Roman imperial *nomina* of Julius and Aurelius, while a few among them had adopted the name Septimius as well.⁸⁹ Curiously, though, soon after Palmyra became a Roman *colonia*, Latin disappeared altogether as a language of public expression, while Palmyrene and Greek continued unabated. Although the Latin term *colonia* itself was transliterated in Greek as *kolōneia*, with the equivalent transliteration in Palmyrene as *qlny'*, the public offices of the Roman *colonia* did not adopt Roman titles, but retained their local ones. The *stratēgoi*, for instance,

⁸⁷ For discussion, see pp. 404-11 below.

⁸⁸ See p. 255 above.

⁸⁹ For the evidence, see D. Schlumberger, "Les Gentilices romains," 53-82.

came to designate the *duumviri* of the colonial constitution, and the *agoranomos* or *rb šwq* equated with the office of *aedilis*.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the third century witnessed the first appearance of a Palmyrene, Septimius Odenathus, having advanced to the rank of a Roman senator.⁹¹ His career, in addition to that of Septimius Worod, exemplified Palmyra's progressive integration into the Roman Empire and the cooperation of its leading citizens with imperial officials, although it would be legitimate to question whether the positions held by these men were not more exceptional than customary. Furthermore, such cooperation with Roman authorities was neither new or unusual.

An eastern aspect, however, also pervaded the Palmyrene community, no doubt influenced by their extensive and continued contact with fellow citizens and colleagues in Parthian and Persian territories. In terms of Palmyra's civic organization and its institutional development, as I have noted, the Palmyrenes looked not only to the west but also to the east. This was also true of Palmyra's social and cultural development. In fact, as the third century progressed and the Palmyrenes adopted more and more Roman ideals and norms, they also maintained certain indigenous and eastern habits, such as their dress and language. This

⁹⁰ For further discussion, see Millar, "Roman *Coloniae*," 42-46.

⁹¹ The only other Roman senator attested at Palmyra is a certain Septimius Haddudan, who was a supporter of the emperor Aurelian in 272 C.E.; see P1358 and P2812, both discussed by Gawlikowski, "Inscriptions de Palmyre," 413-20. For a senatorial list and further discussion, see Bowersock, "Roman Senators from the Near East," 651-68.

eastern gaze, in the face of progressive Roman influence, is best illuminated in the cultural habits exhibited in Palmyrene art.⁹²

Yet, there were elements regarding Palmyra's civic organization that remained distinctive and unique to the Palmyrene community, which reflected its development in an environment where tribal and familial associations remained strong and fundamental to the structure and maintenance of personal and group identity. The civic institutions of Palmyra, in fact, were not entirely divorced from the primordial relationships that bonded individuals and groups to one another, particularly those based on kinship, whether real or perceived. We may examine these relationships, for instance, in the civic structure of the Palmyrene tribes and their respective sanctuaries.

Four Tribes, Four Sanctuaries

Another central civic institution of Palmyra which will shed further light on the city's urbanization and community development is its organization into four tribes associated with four or five of the city's major sanctuaries.⁹³ Various

⁹² See, for instance, Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*; and idem, "Parthian Cultural Elements," 19-28. Cf. idem, "Roman Influence in the Art of Palmyra," 363-70; and H. Ingholt, *Palmyrene and Gandharan Sculpture: An Exhibition Illustrating the Cultural Interrelations between the Parthian Empire and its Neighbors West and East, Palmyra and Gandhara, October 14 through November 14, 1954* (Yale University: Art Gallery, 1954).

⁹³ As a precursor to this discussion, it is important to note the futility of separating the secular from the religious aspects of communal life in pagan society. Gods, men, and women all existed in the same social context, and all were subjected to the same principles of social organization. Rank and status prevailed.

interpretations have been put forth regarding the emergence and development of the “four tribes” as a distinct social and political entity. For the most part, these interpretations have hinged on two fundamental and interconnected issues. First, there is the issue of whether the four tribes were artificial, in response to which scholars have concentrated their assessments of the presumed influences that led to this social development, particularly the extent to which it reflected Roman involvement in Palmyrene affairs. A second related issue is the impact of this reorganization on existing social structures. As the city developed, for instance, did the adoption of a civic identity, as Palmyrenes structured into four tribal groups, effect relationships between families, clans, and tribes that were more traditional and primordial? Generally, it has been suggested that in the first century C.E. Palmyrene tribal bonds lost their primal character and traditional relationships

Ethnic origins were also important, since ancestral and local deities tended to retain their communal preeminence, just as individuals and families tended to highlight their civic ancestry in order to enhance their social prestige. Furthermore, the same dichotomies and prejudices existed between urban and rural inhabitants, whether of gods or men. Those of the countryside, for instance, were consistently regarded as crude and simple in their ways. Regardless, city and countryside were integrated. Civic gods often acquired rural sanctuaries, just as rural gods and their respective cults often were established in towns and cities. Similar residence patterns can be observed at Palmyra, among individuals and families who maintained social links to the countryside. Most supported the caravan trade, as discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, while social relations between city and countryside were managed at the civic level, tribal relationships remained essential in both settings. Indeed, the tendency to view developments within the city as independent of rural influences and outside of a regional context, in a situation, for instance, where tribal affiliations were maintained consistently between city and countryside, is misguided.

between members of a tribe based on kin and blood were superseded by civic bonds based on territorial co-residence within the city. Thus the “four tribes” were nothing more than artificially derived civic tribes that, apart from name only, bore no real connection to previous tribal groups. Dirven, for example, remains a strong proponent of this view. She argues that those Palmyrene tribes that are identified as *phylai* in the Greek texts, in fact, were:

. . . new and artificial constructions based upon territorial co-residence. During the reign of Nero (54-68 C.E.) the city was divided arbitrarily into four quarters . . . Each quarter was named after one of the existing Palmyrene clans . . . Each neighborhood was assigned an extant sanctuary, which probably functioned as a focal point for the clan that gave its name to the quarter . . . Eventually the four ‘tribes’ and the clans existed side by side. In the course of time, however, the civic ‘tribes’ replaced the multitude of clans that had formerly characterized Palmyra’s social landscape . . . Although kinship terminology remained popular to denote social relations in Palmyra, the notion of the clan lost its importance in the second century CE, and disappeared almost completely in the subsequent century, as the result of an ongoing process of urbanization in which the city gradually replaced the clan as the most important frame of reference. Eventually, the original genealogical connotations of the ‘tribes’ became blurred and only the civic connotation remained: saying that you belonged to one of the four ‘tribes’ or that you were an inhabitant of Palmyra were two ways of saying the same thing.⁹⁴

To a certain extent, this is a valid assessment, but only in the sense that the city did emerge as one of many “frames of reference” in the development of group identity. All else is conjectural. In fact, there is no direct evidence of any arbitrary division of the city into four separate districts, neither in the reign of Nero nor later, which

⁹⁴ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 25-26. Cf. Schlumberger, “Les Quatre tribus,” 121-33, who argues along the same lines.

were administered by four generic “tribes” each from four different sanctuaries, only one (perhaps two) of which has been discovered and excavated.⁹⁵

My goal now is to present the evidence regarding the existence of the “four tribes” and the tribal sanctuaries of the city. I will place this material into its proper chronological context and then discuss it in relation to the ongoing debate regarding tribal versus civic forms of worship within the city. I will argue that the Palmyrenes did not lose their core identities based upon kinship and blood as their civic identities strengthened, but that a different interpretation is warranted to explain the emergence of the “four tribes” as a distinct social organism. While the “four tribes” may have developed during a period of increased Roman influence on the city, they did not appear until the second century C.E. when they emerged from pre-existing social structures and under very unique social and economic conditions. In this section I will discuss what these conditions were and describe the pre-existing social structures out of which the “four tribes” grew. I will show that the development of the four tribes did not represent any arbitrary reorganization of the citizenry for political reasons. Instead, the development was related to issues of trade and increased military activity, when the Palmyrenes were responding in the second century C.E. to regional pressures of insecurity and commercial decline.

⁹⁵ See also Chapter 2, n. 41 above. Dirven stresses the thesis advanced by Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 26-52. Both emphasizes the artificial development of the four tribes in a civic context specifically to meet the needs of the municipal government (whatever these may have been).

Only three inscriptions refer to the “four tribes” explicitly. All date to the second half of the second century C.E. and all are bilingual in Greek and Palmyrene. The oldest inscription is from the temple of Baalshamin and dates to 171 C.E. Interestingly, the Greek text of this inscription deviates from the standard formulation of the “four tribes” and refers instead to the “four tribes of the city,” as quoted below:

Palmyrene: [. . .] Yarhibol [. . .] Lishamsh [.] and he labored personally, the council and the people testified on his behalf by decree (*shdt lh bdgm*) [. . .] with the governor on four occasions (?) (*lwt hygmn' bqblyn 'rb'*) and made for him [. . .] an equestrian statue (*šlm mrkb swsy*), a statue in the house of Bel (?), (a statue) of bronze, and also, with the honor (?) of the council and the people (*'m yqr' dy bwl' wdms*), the four tribes made for him, each tribe in the house of their god, a statue of bronze (*'bd lh ['rb'] phzy' phz phz bt 'lhyh šlm dy nhš*), in his honor, because he did good [. . .], in the month Kanun, the year 483 (November, 171 C.E.).

Greek: [. . . the fatherland (*patris*) has set up] in the *Kaisareion* an equestrian statue, and in the temple of Bel a statue, in the name of the council and the people, and by decree through testimonials (καὶ διὰ ψηφισμάτων καὶ ἰσ[το]ρέων) they witnessed before Avidius Cassius, the distinguished governor; and the four tribes of the city (αἱ δὲ τῆς πόλεως τέσσαρες φυλαὶ), each in their own sanctuary (ἐν ἰδίῳ ἱερῷ), set up a statue, in his honor and for his most excellent political action (or citizenship) (*politeumatōs*) [. . .], the month Dios (November).⁹⁶

⁹⁶ P2769: [. . . | . . . yr]hbwl' [. . . | . . .] lšmš [. . .] | w' [. . .] yn [. . .] 'br [. . .] lh | w' ml bswmh shdt lh bdgm bwl' wdms [. . .] | lwt hygmn' bqblyn 'rb' w' bd lh [. . .] | šlm mrkb swsy šlm bt bl [. . .] | nhš w' p' 'm yqr' dy bwl' wdms 'bd lh ['rb'] | phzy' phz phz bt 'lhyh šlm dy nhš lyqrh bdyl dy špr | [. . .] byrh knwn šnt 483 / [. . .] | ω [. . .] πο [. . .] | πα [. . .] [ἐ]ν τῷ Καισαρείῳ ἐφ' ἵππον ἀνδριάντα · ἐν δ[ἐ] | τῷ τοῦ Βήλου ἱερῷ ἀνδριάντα ὄνομα [τι β]ου[λῆς καὶ] | δήμου · καὶ διὰ ψηφισμάτων καὶ ἰσ[. . .] ρεων ἐ[μαρ]|τύρησαν παρὰ 'Αουιδίῳ τῷ διασημοτάτῳ | ὑπά[ρχ]ω · αἱ δὲ τῆς πόλεως τέσσαρες φυλαὶ ἐκάσ[τη] | ἐν ἰδίῳ ἱερῷ ἀνδριάντα ἀνήγειρεν τιμῆς καὶ βελτίστου

The second text was discovered east of the temple of Bel and dates to 198 C.E.:

Palmyrene: By decree of the council and the people, this statue of Aelius Bora, son of Titus Aelius Ogeilu, the *stratēgos*, who made peace in the territory of the city (*dy 'bd šlm' bthwmy mdyt'*), and who did not spare himself for his city, the *bny kmr'* set up for him, just as (?) the rest of the tribes in the house of their gods (*nwyt š'wr phz' bt 'lhyhwn*), in his honor, in the month Shebat, the year 509 (February, 198 C.E.).

Greek: [. . . because he] made a settlement of peace (he was honored) by Maneilios Phouskos and Venidios Roupfos, the *consulares*, and by the fatherland (*patridos*), and (because) he displayed much zeal and courage, and (because) very often he served as *stratēgos*, and (because) he preserved the same courage and excellence, and with regard to these he is witnessed by Yarhibol, the ancestral god, and by commanders and by the decrees of the fatherland, and in exchange for these things the fatherland (*patris*) voted fitting honors for him, an equestrian statue, and the four tribes in their own sanctuaries, at their own expense, four statues, of which this one (was set up by) the tribe of the *Khōneitōi* (φυλή Χωνειτῶν), on account of his excellence and courage, the year 509, Peritios 25 (February, 198 C.E.).⁹⁷

πολιτεύ[ματος χάριν . . .] μηνὸς Δεῖου. See also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1936): 277-82, no. 20; Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn*, no. 48; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 26-27; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 309-12; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 44-46.

⁹⁷ P1063: *mn twhyt bwl' wdms šlm' dnh dy 'lys | bwr' br tyts 'lys 'gylw 'strtg' dy | 'bd šlm' bthwmy mdyt' wl' 'h[y]s npšh | 'l mdyth dy 'qymw lh bny kmr' nwyt š'wr | phz' bt 'lhyhwn lyqrh byrh šbt šnt 509 / [. . . | . . . | . . .] | εἰρηνῆς κατασταθέντα ὑπό τε | Μανειλίου Φούσκου καὶ Οὐενιδίου | Ῥόυφου ὑπατικῶν καὶ ὑπο τῆς πα|τρίδος καὶ πολλὴν σπουδὴν καὶ ἀνδρείαν ἐνδειξάμενον καὶ στρατηγήσαντα | πλειστάκις καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀνδρείαν | καὶ ἀρετὴν σώσαντα καὶ ἐπ' οὗτοις μαρ|τυρηθέντα ὑπό τε Ἰαριβώλου τοῦ πατρίου θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἡγησαμένων καὶ ὑπο | τῆς πατρίδος ψηφίσμασι ἐφ' οἷς ἀμειβομέ|νη αὐτὸν ἡ πατρίς τὰς πρέπουσας αὐτῷ | τειμᾶς ἐψηφίσαστο ἔφιππον ἀνδριάντα καὶ | αἱ τέσσαρες φυλαὶ ἐν ἰδίῳ ἱεροῖς ἐξ ἰδίων | ἀνδριάντας τέσσαρες ὧν τοῦτον Χωνει|τῶν φυλὴ ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀνδρείας ἔνεκεν ἔ|τους ΘΦ Περειτίου ΚΕ. See also Ingholt, “Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre,” 279; Milik, *Dédicaces*, 36-37; Gawlikowski, *Le**

The latest inscription to mention the four tribes was found near the agora. The inscription, which dates to 199 C.E., records a decree of the council and the people authorizing the four tribes to set up statues in honor of a certain Ogeilu, son of Maqqai. Of interest is the common association between Ogeilu and the four tribes in activities related to the caravan trade:

Palmyrene: By decree of the council and the people, these four statues are those of Ogeilu, son of Maqqai Ogeilu Shewira, which the four tribes made for him, in his honor, because he did good to them on many campaigns and enterprises (?) (*b'strtgwn šgy'n wbsryhyn*) and caravans on which he accompanied them (*wšyryn dy slq bhn*), because he spent, of his own funds, great sums, and he helped the merchants in every affair (*wsy' tgy' bkl šbw klh*), and he conducted his public life (?) (*plty'*) in a praiseworthy and brilliant manner, in the month Tebet, the year 510 (January, 199 C.E.).

Greek: By command of the council and the people, the four tribes (set up for) Ogēlos, son of Makkaios, son of Ogēlos, son of Agegos, son of Sewiras, because of (his) complete excellence and courage, and because he engaged in unceasing campaigns against the nomads and always provided security (τὴν ἀσφάλιαν παρασχόντα) for the merchants and the caravans, in all of his commands of the caravans, and because he spent much on these from his personal resources, and he led his entire public life brilliantly and in high esteem, in his honor, the year 510 (199 C.E.).⁹⁸

Temple palmyrénien, 27-28; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 46-47.

⁹⁸ P1378: *btwhy't bwl' wdms | šlmy' 'ln 'rb'tyhwn dy 'gylw br mqy 'gylw | šwyr' | dy 'bd lh 'rb' pħzy' lyqrh bdyl dy špr | lhwn b'strtgwn šgy'n wbsryhyn | wšyryn dy slq bhn 'qly dy 'pq mn kysh | nqpn rbrbn wsy' tgy' bkl šbw klh | w'bd plty' šbyhyt wnhwryt byrh | tbt šnt 501 / Προστάγματι βουλῆς καὶ δήμου | αἱ τέσσαρες φυλαὶ Ὀγηλον Μακκαίου τοῦ Ὀγηλου τοῦ Ἀγεγου | τοῦ Σεουира δι' ἀρετὴν πᾶσαν καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ διὰ τὰς συνεχεῖς τὰς | κατὰ τῶν νομάδων στρατηγίας συναράμενον καὶ τοῖς ἐν|πόροις καὶ ταῖς συνοδίαις ἀεὶ τὴν ἀσφάλιαν παρασχόντα ἐν πάσαις | συνοδιάρχαις καὶ πολλὰ καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἐξ ιδίων ἀναλώσαντα καὶ πᾶ|σαν πολειτίαν λαμπρῶς καὶ ἐνδόξως ἐκτε[λέσαντα] τειμῆς χάριν ἔτους ι[φ]'. See also*

Several observations may be made regarding these inscriptions and their content, but we must not interpret them too loosely. They illuminate a situation unique to the last quarter of the second century C.E. They reveal nothing of institutional reforms under the reign of Nero, except that they highlight the appearance and legislative operations of the Palmyrene council.

Despite this evidence, the actual formation of the “four tribes of the city” remains an enigmatic issue. According to Schlumberger, the “four tribes” together formed the civic body of Palmyra, but this assessment is only partially valid.⁹⁹ Indeed, while the four tribes may be regarded as a single social entity comprised of four distinct and independent groups, there is a clear distinction between the “four tribes of the city” and the *dēmos* of Palmyra as a political entity. For example, the inscriptions cited above clearly distinguish between the *boulē*, the *dēmos*, and the four *phylae*. Moreover, there is the issue of the artificiality of the four tribes. Were they formed arbitrarily and solely to meet the official needs of the municipal government, perhaps in relationship to the development of the council in the first century C.E.?¹⁰⁰ This seems unlikely, and, as Teixidor has stressed, inconsistent

Ingholt, “Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre,” 279; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 28-29; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 47-48.

⁹⁹ Schlumberger, “Les Quatre tribus,” 121-33.

¹⁰⁰ For instance, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 25; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 47.

with the evidence.¹⁰¹ Indeed, we cannot separate the religious aspects of the “four tribes of the city, each in their own sanctuary,” from their political, social, or economic roles, at least between 171 and 199 C.E. In order to understand their formation, we may need to ask a different set of questions. Why, for instance, is there no mention of the “four tribes” as a corporate entity before and after these dates? What might explain their appearance only in the late second century C.E., and specifically in contexts that relate to military commands, the protection of caravans, and in relationships with Roman officials? We may gain some insights by examining the evidence in relation to other communal and regional developments.

An examination of the economic and political conditions revealed by these inscriptions provides a preliminary basis for their interpretation and the appearance of the “four tribes.” To begin with, it is significant that the inscriptions of 171 and 198 C.E. record the only known dedications of equestrian statues at Palmyra. The dedication of such equestrian depictions, as opposed to standing, full-length portraits was an unusual practice reserved for the social and political elite.¹⁰² It is

¹⁰¹ See Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 36, who points out that “the existence of four sanctuaries was a fact of national history that cannot be minimized. The sanctuaries were shrines of ancestral gods whose preeminence in the life of the city could not have been a result of an issue settled by a decree of the Palmyrene Assembly.”

¹⁰² See R. R. Smith, “Cultural Choice and Political Identity in Honorific Portrait Statues in the Greek East in the Second Century A.D.,” *JRS* 88 (1998): 64.

also noteworthy that both inscriptions of the 190's highlight disturbances in the Palmyrene countryside and emphasize the important public role of these individuals as *stratēgoi* and as leaders of caravans. In the Palmyrene version of the text from 198 C.E., for instance, Aelius Bora is honored especially for his having established “peace in the territory of the city” (*šlm' bthwmy mdyt'*), and in the following year Ogeilu is honored for his numerous campaigns against the nomads. In other words, these individuals served with distinction as local commanders of Palmyrene forces (see below), who maintained peace and security in the countryside and facilitated the safe passage of caravans. Furthermore, the imperial testimonies and the placement of one of the equestrian statues (that of the unknown individual of P2769) in the *Kaisareion* of Palmyra, the local temple of the imperial cult, highlights the recognition that these individuals received outside of their local context, in actions that benefitted the Roman authorities as well as their community.¹⁰³ Indeed, P2769, which records testimonies given before Avidius

¹⁰³ Only two inscriptions refer explicitly to the existence of the imperial cult at Palmyra. The oldest is P2769 of 171 C.E. quoted above. The second text, which dates to the second half of the second century C.E. is heavily damaged but refers to the temple of the *Sebastoi* ([να]δὸν τῶν Σεβαστῶν); see now Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 149. The inscription was originally published by K. Michalowski, *Palmyre: Fouilles Polonaises, 1959* (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1960), 208-209, no. 2. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 315-16; and Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 100, no. 5. To judge from another damaged inscription, the imperial cult seems to have been established at Palmyra as early as 166 C.E., although there is no direct mention of a temple. This inscription is of interest, because it records the occupation of a certain individual, whose name is beyond restoration, as both a high-priest and symposiarch of the god Bel and a priest of the *Sebastoi* (ιερεὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν [Σεβαστῶν]); it also records the fact that

Cassius, the consular governor, was set up only four years before this same Roman official made an abortive bid for empire, when he proclaimed himself emperor in 175 C.E. after receiving a false report of the death of Marcus Aurelius.¹⁰⁴ Thus from a local perspective, these inscriptions illuminate a period of regional insecurity and increased Roman involvement in the affairs of the city.

This, then, was the historical and social setting within which the “four tribes” became socially relevant. As noted above, the “four tribes” as a social and political entity first appeared in the Antonine period, during the reigns of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius. This coincides with the earliest evidence we have of a Roman garrison in the city, a Greek inscription of 167 C.E. from the temple of Bel that honors the *praefectus* of the *ala Herculiana* of Thracians, Julius Julianus.¹⁰⁵ At about the same time, as I have noted, another *praefectus* Vibius Celer was honored

the same individual had statues erected to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, with whom he had correspondence; see G. W. Bowersock, “A New Antonine Inscription from the Syrian Desert,” *Chiron* 6 (1976): 349-55. According to Bowersock, who restored the text, the individual concerned must have been a priest of the imperial cult, since “an approach to the emperors and a letter from them, probably of a testimonial character and with reference to maintaining a cult, make it exceedingly likely” (ibid., 353).

¹⁰⁴ For discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 115-18. On the career of Avidius Cassius, see M. L. Astarita, *Avidio Cassio* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1983); and R. Syme, “Avidius Cassius: His Rank, Age, and Quality,” in *Roman Papers*, vol. 5 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), 689-701.

¹⁰⁵ *Inventaire* 9.22 (= *ILS* 8869).

and described as both a citizen (*poleitēs*) and a council member (*synedros*).¹⁰⁶ In fact, from this period onwards, numerous inscriptions attest to the Roman military presence in the city and more active involvement of Roman authorities in civic affairs.¹⁰⁷ Of greater interest, though, and perhaps related to the presence of Roman forces, was the introduction of the imperial cult into the city, probably under the emperors Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, there was a decline in the caravan trade, as suggested by the lack of caravan inscriptions between the years 161 and 193 C.E. perhaps resulting from a general rise in regional insecurity. This was concurrent with the Parthian War of Lucius Verus, after which the plague probably ravaged Palmyrene trading interests in communities all along the Euphrates (see pp. 171-72 above). Ultimately, the events of the late second century C.E. would have generated a great deal of stress on the civic institutions of Palmyra, as the city and its inhabitants gradually lost a measure of their independence in the face of increased Roman activity in the region and Rome's involvement in Palmyrene affairs. Indeed, since Hadrian's visit to the city sometime before 131 C.E., elite Palmyrenes began increasingly to flirt with the assumption of Roman identities. Thus the "four tribes" emerged in a setting of both

¹⁰⁶ *Inventaire* 9.23. See p. 279 above.

¹⁰⁷ For the evidence, see Seyrig, "Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine," 152-68; and J. -P. Rey-Coquais, "Syrie romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien," *JRS* 68 (1978): 68-69.

¹⁰⁸ See n. 103 above.

local and regional insecurity and of expanding Roman interests in the city and in the surrounding countryside. It was a period of intense social, economic, and political stress and transition.

Furthermore, by reviewing the existing structures from which these “four tribes” emerged, I will show that they did not appear arbitrarily or without precedent. As indicated in P2769 of 171 C.E. and P1063 of 198 C.E., for example, each of the four tribes of the city had its own sanctuary which housed its respective gods. Shared religious affiliation, then, served to support tribal identities. This was a longstanding reality, in Palmyra and elsewhere. As I discussed in Chapter 3, shared cult was one of the earliest factors that united families and clans who had migrated to the city, when many had also conveyed their deities and cults in the first place. Indeed, Palmyra hosted many tribal groups, only one of which, the *Khōneitōi*, was ever designated in the inscriptions as one of the “four tribes.” Based on this identification, scholars have assumed that the other three tribes are to be equated with those groups also identified as *phylai* in the Greek texts.¹⁰⁹ As I have outlined in Chapter 2, in addition to the φυλή Χομαρηνῶν (= φυλή Χωνειτῶν / *bny kmr*’), these are the φυλή Μιθηνῶν (*bny myt*’), the φυλή Μαθθαβωλιῶν (= φυλή Μανθ[α]βωλειῶν / *bny mtbwl*), the φυλή Μαγερηνῶν (perhaps the *bny m’zyn*), and the φυλή Κλαυδιάδος.¹¹⁰ The φυλή

¹⁰⁹ For instance, see Schlumberger, “Les Quatre tribus,” 132.

¹¹⁰ See pp. 80-81 above.

Κλαυδιάς, however, was apparently an artificial tribe and may be discounted in this assessment.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, the fact remains that each of the other tribes listed above all had a longstanding presence in the city and each seems to have retained its primary familial associations.¹¹² In fact, there is nothing to suggest that they had abandoned bonds based on kinship and blood. Moreover, as the aforementioned inscriptions attest, these major tribes were based in tribal sanctuaries, each of which took decades to construct and embellish, and their respective cults were probably shared by numerous lesser tribal groups.

Thus I would argue that the system of “four tribes” of Palmyra as a social formation developed in a religious context from tribal sanctuaries already in

¹¹¹ See P0471. The φυλή Κλαυδιάς is attested only once in a funerary context recording the foundation of a tower in the northwest necropolis, and it is never associated with a specific sanctuary at Palmyra. In fact, this designation may have been an honorific title given to a local citizen for remarkable achievements in military or commercial endeavors, as recognized by Roman authorities, or perhaps it represents the acquisition of Roman citizenship. See, for instance, P. Piersimoni, “The Palmyrene Prosopography” (Ph.D. diss., University College, London, 1995), 253. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 259-61, regards the Claudiad tribe as foreign to Palmyra, to which it came having adopted the generic tribal from a member of the Augustan dynasty. On the other hand, Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 387, argues that this tribe represents the renaming of an indigenous Palmyrene tribe before the death of Nero in 54 C.E.

¹¹² Bowersock, “Social and Economic History,” 67, states that “the four tribes of Palmyra are best explained as having their roots in religious commitments and the establishment of particular temples in four quarters within the city. In short, the social structure of the cities reflects the preexisting religious organization of Syrian tribes, and hence the establishment of temples and shrines in these cities . . . cannot be viewed as an attempt to reorganize, disrupt, or relocate the indigenous population.”

existence in the first half of the second century C.E. I assume that these sanctuaries are to be identified in two bilingual inscriptions dated to 132 and 144 C.E., respectively, both of which record that statues were set up in honor of a certain Soados, son of Bōliados, son of Soados, in four separate structures. The oldest inscription identifies Soados as pious (*eusebēs*) and a lover of the fatherland (*philopatris*), who (after the Greek text):

. . . in many and (great) opportunities, showed himself sincere and munificent, to the merchants, to the caravans, and to the citizens in Vologesias, who was always unsparing in spirit and substance in matters of importance to the fatherland, and for this was honored with decrees and with positive proposals (?) (δόγμασι καὶ ψ[ηφί]σ[μα]σι) and with public statues and with letters and a proclamation from Publius Marcellus, the most distinguished lord consular governor, because recently he saved the caravan which came down from Vologesias from the great risk/danger surrounding it. The *same caravan* [emphasis added], because of his excellence, greatness of mind, and piety, set up four statues of him, one here in the temple of Zeus, one in the sacred grove, one in the temple of Ares, and the fourth in the temple of Artagatis, through the agency of Agegos, son of Iaribōleos, and Thaimarsos, son of Thaimarsos, the caravan leaders; the year 443; the month Peritios (February 132 C.E.).¹¹³

¹¹³ P0197: . . . ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ [μεγάλοις] | καιροῖς γνησίως κ[αὶ φιλοτείμως] | παραστάντα τοῖς ἐμπό[ροις καὶ ταῖς] | συνοδί[α]ις καὶ τοῖς ἐν Οὐολογασιά[δι] | πολεῖταις καὶ π[ά]ντοτε ἀφειδήσαντα | [ψ]υχῆς καὶ οὐσίας ὑπὲρ τῶν τῆ πατρίδι | διαφ[ε]ρόν[τ]ων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δόγμασι | καὶ ψ[ηφί]σ[μα]σι καὶ ἀνδριάσι δημοσίοις | καὶ ἐ[πιστολ]αῖς καὶ διατάγματι Ποβλικίου | Μαρκ[έλλου τοῦ διασ]ημοτάτου κυρίου | ὑπατικ[οῦ τετειμη]μένον διασώσαντα | δὲ καὶ τὴν [προσφ]άτως ἀπὸ Οὐολογασιά[δος] | παραγενομέν[ην συν]οδίαν ἐκ τοῦ | περιστάντος αὐ[τ]ῆν μεγάλου κινδύνου | ἢ αὐτῆ συνοδία [ἀρετ]ῆς καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνης [καὶ εὐσεβείας ἔνεκ]α αὐτοῦ | ἀνδρ[ιάντας τέσσαρας ἀνέστησ]ε ἐν[α] | μὲ[ν ἐ]νταῦθα ἐν ἱερῷ Διός] ἕνα δὲ | [ἐ]ν ἱερῷ ἄλλει ἕνα δὲ [ἐ]ν ἱε[ρῷ] Ἄρεος | καὶ τὸν τέταρτον ἐν ἱερῷ Ἀταργάτειος | διὰ

According to the Palmyrene version, which is incomplete, the four sanctuaries correspond to the house of Baalshamin (fig. 10), the house of Arsu, the sacred grove, and the house of Ataraathe ('tr'th). Among these, only three are identified in the second inscription of 141 C.E., the sacred grove (presumably of Aglibol and Malakbel), the house of Arsu, and the house of Ataraathe. There is no mention of the sanctuary of Baalshamin, but rather a fourth statue is set up in the house of Allat or Athena (fig. 12).¹¹⁴ In these sanctuaries, according to the Greek text of the inscription from 141 C.E., the caravan of all Palmyrenes (συνοδία πάντων Παλμυρηνῶν) that returned recently from Vologesias had set up four statues:

. . . next to the first four statues set up by the first caravan for Soados, son of Bōliados, son of Soados, son of Thaimisamsos, pious and a lover of the fatherland, through his benevolence and greatness of mind towards the citizens in every way adorned with excellence and with great honors the caravan of all Palmyrenes . . . because he set out in a distinguished manner taking with him a large force and opposed [Ab]dallathos of Eeithe and the (robbers) [brought together by him from [. . .],¹¹⁵ who for a long time were lying in wait to

Ἀγεγού Ἰαριβώλεος καὶ Θαιμαρσοῦ τοῦ Θαιμαρσοῦ συνοδιάρχων · ἔτους [γ]μυ' μηνὸς Περιτίου. See also Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 30; Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 167; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 60-62.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of the evidence pertaining to the temple of Allat, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 99-108; for the temple of Baalshamin, see *ibid.*, 79-88; for the temple of Arsu, see *ibid.*, 116-24; for the sacred grove of Aglibol and Malakbel, see *ibid.*, 124-43; and for the temple of Ataraathe or Atargatis, see *ibid.*, 153-54.

¹¹⁵ The Palmyrene version identifies this group as "Abdallat Ahitaia and the robbers who were assembled" ('bdlt 'hyty' wgyšy' dy knš).

harm the . . .] (and) he preserved them.¹¹⁶

The Palmyrene version corresponds closely to the Greek text, although there is a clearer indication that the caravan which made the dedication had been organized at the civic level, since it is described as the “caravan of the whole of Palmyra” ([šyrt’ dy] *tdmr kllh*). Moreover, these two inscriptions illustrate conditions in the city and countryside that required immediate communal responses. As observed above, there was banditry in the countryside and cooperation among the citizenry was necessary to keep the trade alive. Interestingly, this cooperation spawned from the cultic contexts of at least five urban sanctuaries.

It is important to note that any correlation between the sanctuaries identified in the texts of 132 and 141 C.E. with the less specific references to the “four tribes” of the city and their unidentified sanctuaries in the texts of 171, 193, and 198 C.E. is hypothetical. In fact, the sanctuaries mentioned in the earlier texts are not

¹¹⁶ . . . παρά τοῖς πρώτοις | τέσσαρσι ἀνδριᾶσι τοῖς ἀνεγερθεῖσι | ὑπὸ τῆς πρώτης συνοδίας Σοάδω Βωλιάδους | τοῦ Σοάδου τοῦ Θαιμισάμσου εὐσεβεῖ καὶ φιλοπατρίδι τῷ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ εὐνοϊαν καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνην τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πολεῖτας παντὶ | τρόπῳ κεκοσμημένῳ ἀρεταῖς καὶ μεγίσταις τειμαῖς ἀνέστησεν ἢ ἀπὸ Ὀλογασίας ἀναβᾶσα συνοδία πάντων Παλμυρηγῶν ἐπεὶ | προώρμησεν ἐπισήμως παραλαβῶν μ[ε]|θ’ αὐτοῦ πολλὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἀντέστ[η] | [’Αβ]δαλλάθω Ἐειθῆνω καὶ τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ συναχθεῖσι ἀπὸ π . . . | δ[. . .]ριοῖς τοῖς ἐπὶ χρόνον ἐνεδρεύουσι ἀδικῆσαι τὴν σ[υνοδίαν] | [. . .] προσδιέσωσεν αὐτοὺς διὰ τοῦτο ἀνέγειραν αὐτῷ | [τοὺς ἀνδριάντας] τειμῆς χάριν συνοδιάρχούντων Μαλη Συμωνου | [. . . καὶ Ἐ]ννιβήλου Συμωνου τοῦ Βαζεκῆ ἔτους ενυ’ μη[νὸς] Δαισίον. For the text, see Drijvers, “Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions,” 34-38; and Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 62-63.

described as belonging to any Palmyrene tribe. Without this specification, scholars have inferred their tribal status and associated them with the aforementioned four tribes attested in Greek at Palmyra, namely the φυλή Χομαρηνῶν (= φυλή Χωνειτῶν / *bny kmr'*), φυλή Μιθηνῶν (*bny myt'*), φυλή Μαθθαβωλιῶν (= φυλή Μανθ(α)βωλειῶν / *bny mtbwl*), and the φυλή Μαγερηνῶν or the *bny m'zyn*.¹¹⁷ This inference has been based on the numerous accounts in the epigraphy of tribal groups or members associating themselves with specific cults and sanctuaries. Thus it would seem that the *bny kmr'* were patrons of the sacred grove of Aglibol and Malakbel, the *bny myt'* of the temple of Atargatis, the *bny mtbwl* of the temple of Arsu, and the *bny m'zyn* of both the temple of Baalshamin and the temple of Allat.¹¹⁸ This all remains hypothetical, however likely it might be.

Indeed, a review of the history of cult worship at Palmyra and of the relationship between tribal and civic forms of worship should elucidate the association of specific tribes with particular sanctuaries. As I discussed in Chapter 3, the oasis of Palmyra naturally served as a cult center to which individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds, some more or less indigenous to the region, were attracted. Also, individuals, families, and other groups, whether based on kinship or otherwise, brought with them when they migrated to the city their ancestral gods and traditional modes of worship. Generally, since shared religious affiliation

¹¹⁷ See n. 109 above.

¹¹⁸ For a review of the evidence, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 64-66.

served to support a common identity, we would expect that the foundation of tribal sanctuaries and the maintenance of their respective cults allowed certain primordial bonds and a common identity to persist; and in fact, the association of particular familial and tribal groups with certain sanctuaries, as mentioned, suggests that this was the case. Meanwhile, in the earliest stages of community formation, the temple of Bel was founded as a communal sanctuary to house all the gods and cult idols of the tribes and clans associated with the oasis and its hinterland who were drawn to the city. In this context, the temple and cult of Bel served the needs of the community of Palmyrenes (*gbl tdmry'*), since it was more civic in nature. The preservation of group identity, whether of family, clan, or tribe, however, demanded that traditional modes of worship not be entirely abandoned. The rich and powerful who headed the clans and tribes required mechanisms to ensure the proper maintenance of their respective groups, not entirely dependent on the city and its institutions. Independent tribal sanctuaries, then, would have maintained group identity of the sort that bonded individuals at a primordial level. These would not have replaced or even competed with the cult of the temple of Bel, but rather these would have given variety to the religious life of the city that reflected the diverse religious needs of its population.

Moreover, I would argue that the act of sponsoring independent sanctuaries, whether by an individual or by a particular clan or tribe, was a means of creating and displaying social power and prestige. Thus, these “tribal” sanctuaries serving

communal needs enhanced community life in the city. They helped to establish boundaries that delimited individual and group identity within the community. For example, it was as a “Palmyrene” that one attended banquets and festivals at the temple of Bel, but it was as a “Palmyrene” and something “other” that one attended to the cult of the independent tribal sanctuaries. Yet pagan religion was quite fluid and clearly reflected the society in which it operated. Individuals often patronized numerous sanctuaries and cults concurrently. Thus, the particular deity worshiped in any given context was not an ethnic marker of the individual worshiper, although it suggested the particular ancestry of the individual or group that sponsored the cult initially. Indeed, the religious experience, which was not exclusive, was embedded within the social fabric of the city, particularly in the sense that relations of dependence were generated between those who monopolized the rituals and cult of a specific sanctuary and those who were empowered only to share the experience. Families, clans, tribes, or whoever sponsored the introduction of a particular god and his cult into the city, as a display of their power and prestige, would have sought to retain their pre-eminence in the corresponding associations. The tribal sanctuaries provided a backdrop for this to happen. Indeed, the connection between tribal affiliations and these sanctuaries was undoubtedly long-standing and natural. Understanding this connection provides a religious context for the emergence in the late second century C.E. of the “four tribes” as a distinct social body.

In addition, a more thorough review of the economic context within which

the “four tribes” of the city emerged as a social organism, each tribe in its own sanctuary, further illuminates how and why they arose when they did. I begin with a discussion of the social status of the individuals and groups who sponsored the introduction of tribal cults into the city and, specifically, of the primary source of their wealth. Essentially, Palmyra flourished due to trade, and the elite of the city were, first and foremost, powerful merchants. This is only part of the narrative, however. Clearly, trade supported the growth of community and the urbanization of Palmyra. It also enhanced the position and status of those individuals and groups directly involved, particularly those in positions of authority, who were the first to profit and had the means to engage in public *euergetism*.

What needs further elaboration, however, is the organization of this trade and its relationship, if any, to institutional developments within the city. There is evidence to suggest that in many if not most cases the organization of the caravan trade at Palmyra was a civic enterprise. The inscription of 144 C.E. quoted above refers specifically to the “caravan of all the Palmyrenes” (συνοδία πάντων Παλμυρηῶν), which, according to the Palmyrene text of the same inscription, corresponded with “the caravan of all (or the whole) of Tadmor” ([šyrt’ dy] | tdmr kllh).¹¹⁹ Also, the numerous benefactions to individuals on account of their assistance to the caravans by the Palmyrene council further suggests that these were

¹¹⁹ See n. 116 above.

common civic enterprises.¹²⁰ This need not have been the case exclusively, though, since individuals and small groups may likewise have transported goods in modest amounts, although specific figures are lacking to determine what could be transported and in what quantities to make smaller enterprises profitable. Nonetheless, the majority of the caravans would have been quite large and burdensome, both due to logistical convenience and in order to maximize profits. Such ventures would have required a great deal of support and maintenance, which could explain civic involvement. The question remains, however, what social or institutional body within the city, if any, acted as overseer of the caravan trade.

Current evidence suggests strongly that the caravans, for the most part, were communal endeavors and were managed through the same social and economic framework that supported the tribal sanctuaries of the city, a body of four individuals or groups. By contrast, in the first century C.E., this would have been the task of the Palmyrenes as a whole who assembled in the sacred precinct of the temple of Bel on festive occasions, or in some other communal forum. In the late second century C.E., “four tribes” with their associated families and clans took on the same function, operating from various sanctuaries in the city, but these tribes maintained, nonetheless, a collective association with the civic cult of Bel. P1378 of 199 C.E. is particularly revealing in this regard, because it records the dedication by the “four tribes” of four statues to Ogeilu, son of Maqqai, “because he did good

¹²⁰ Hence, Gawlikowski, “Palmyra and its Caravan Trade,” 140.

to them on many campaigns (*b'str̥tgwn šgy'n*) and enterprises (?) (*wbšryhyn*) and caravans on which he accompanied them (*wšyryn dy slq bhn*)."¹²¹ In fact, every inscription that identifies the “four tribes” highlights the public role of the individuals honored in their support of the caravans and the merchants. The inscriptions of 132 and 144 C.E., for example, which honor Soados, son of Bōliados, for his assistance and zeal, support this hypothesis. Each documents that Soados received four statues set up by a single association of caravan members (*bny šyrt')* in four distinct sanctuaries of the city. In addition, a bilingual inscription of 145 C.E., discovered at the remote site of Umm al-Amad, identifies this same Soados as the only Palmyrene ever to receive four statues “in the *tetradeion* of the city” (ἐν τῷ τετραδείῳ τῆς πόλεως) set up at public expense and records further honors by the council and the people of three additional statues in Palmyrene communities abroad, at Spasinou Charax, at Vologesias, and at the caravaserai at Gennaes.¹²² The four statues in the *tetradeion* of the city, apparently, would have been distinct from the statues set up earlier in the various sanctuaries. Exactly what or where the *tetradeion* of the city was cannot be answered. To my knowledge, the word does not occur elsewhere, and in this context would seem to refer to the

¹²¹ See n. 98 above.

¹²² P1062. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 13-14; Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 47; Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 166-67; and Mouterde and Poidebard, “La Voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît,” 101-15.

“square” of the city. Quite possibly the *tetradeion* may be identified as the agora.¹²³

This would support the communal nature of the caravans. Also, it may be that the *tetradeion* ought to be associated with the “four tribes” in some manner, perhaps representing a civic space within which the tribes met.

Further evidence that the caravan trade, in some instances, was managed by a body of four (either individuals or groups) derives from an enigmatic inscription on the interior wall of Tower 70 in the Valley of the Tombs. The Palmyrene text specifies four accounts (*'rbw' 'mkyl*) and then proceeds to list various investments in terms of capital deposited and the interest or profit gained in one month.

Gawlikowski associates these with rates on mercantile loans to support the caravan trade, but, I propose an alternate hypothesis, that they were a calculation of the division of profits into four categories depending upon the contributions made by four different individuals or groups.¹²⁴ Furthermore, four treasurers are attested at Palmyra (see below). It is possible that these officials may have been representatives of the “four tribes” and may well have managed the accounts that supported the caravans financed by the city.

Finally, among the earliest institutions developed at Palmyra, which was

¹²³ See Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 166-67. Cf. P1383, a fragment from the agora that identifies Soados, son of Bōliados ([Σ]οαδον Β[ωλιαδους], [*š'd]wbr bl[yd]*).

¹²⁴ P2634. See also M. Gawlikowski, “Les Comptes d’un homme d’affaires dans une tour funéraire à Palmyre,” *Semitica* 36 (1986): 87-99. The context of the inscription makes any interpretation speculative.

related to the cultic and economic interests of the community and the emergence of Palmyra as a *polis*, was the treasury (‘*nwšh*). As revealed in P1353 and clearly in their cooperative relationship with the people of Palmyra (*gbl tdmry*), the “men of the treasury” (‘*nwš* ‘*nwšt*’) or treasurers (*argurotomiai*) were important public figures as early as 25 C.E. A dedication of 114 C.E., P0340, which was discovered on three (or four) identical altars at the town of al-Karasi in the *territorium* of Palmyra on the road from Homs, repeats reference to the office of treasurer at Palmyra. The altars were dedicated, according to the Greek text, to Zeus, the Highest and Attentive (Διὶ ὑψίστῳ καὶ ἐπηκόῳ), which the Palmyrene text identifies as the Anonymous God (*bryk šmh l’lm*), by the city (*polis / mdynt*) itself “from silver (contained in) the treasury during their terms as treasurer” (*mn ksp ’nwšt’ b’nwšt*). Interestingly, four Palmyrenes are then named treasurers, Zebaida, son of Taimaamad, Moqimu, son of Yarhibola, Yarhai, son of Nurbel, and Annai, son of Malku.¹²⁵ The fact that four treasurers are mentioned has led some to argue that these represented the “four tribes” of the city based in four specific sanctuaries.¹²⁶ Indeed, for there to have been a treasurer to handle the funds of each

¹²⁵ P0340. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 292-93.

¹²⁶ See, for instance, van Berchem, “Le Plan de Palmyre,” 172-3, who regards the four treasurers as the first magistrates of the Palmyrene people who represented the “four tribes” as early as 25 C.E. See also Sartre, “Palmyre, cité grecque,” 399, n. 36. Cf. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 293, who proposes that these altars from al-Karasi testify to a decision of the community to introduce a new municipal cult into the city, but without convincing justification for his conjecture: “. . . les dédicaces d’el Kerâsi sont les premières de ce genre et témoignent d’une décision religieuse de la

sanctuary would not have been unusual. Similarly, religious clubs and professional associations often had their own treasurers to ensure proper handling of funds in the purchasing of foodstuffs and wine for ritual banquets, among other responsibilities.¹²⁷

Any monetary activity of the tribal sanctuaries, however, would have been secondary to that regulated by the civic treasury housed in the temple of Bel, the existence of which is suggested by a small rectangular *tessera* from the temple which has “the city” (*krk*’) inscribed on the obverse, and, on the reverse, “the treasury” (*’nwšt*’).¹²⁸ More convincing, though, for the existence of civic treasury is a unique *tessera* from the temple of Bel that depicts on its obverse a smith at work, while the reverse reads, “the treasury of Bel, Boliada Maherdat.”¹²⁹ In fact, it would have been customary for such an important civic institution as the treasury, which controlled public revenues, to have been housed in the most important civic

ville d’introduire un culte tout particulier, essentiellement municipal, sans lieux de culte et sans clergé, un phénomène exceptionnel dans l’histoire des religions.” For the same criticism, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 199-200, n. 144.

¹²⁷ See, for instance, P0991. See also Teixidor, “Le Thiase de Bêlastor et de Beelshamên,” 306-14. Also, for example, an altar currently in the Palmyra Museum bears an inscription (P1620) indicating that it was set up at the expense of the treasury, which may have been that of a particular sanctuary. See Starcky, “Autour d’une dédicace palmyrénienne,” 43-85.

¹²⁸ P2015.

¹²⁹ P2042: *’nwš[t]’ | dy bl | bwlyd’ | mhrdt.*

sanctuary, the temple of Bel.¹³⁰ I would argue, then, in light of the public nature of P0340, which suggests that the post of treasurer was a civic one, that the treasury referred to was that housed in the temple of Bel perhaps headed by the *dekaprōtoi*. Also, the presumed association of the four treasurers with the “four tribes” seems valid once we recognize that these were positions connected to pre-existing tribal sanctuaries, from which the “four tribes” as a social and political entity would eventually emerge. Based in their respective sanctuaries, these individuals indeed would have managed the financial affairs of the city, convening when appropriate to honor its leading citizens and supporting its commercial endeavors.

To sum up, until more evidence is brought to light, the relationship between civic and tribal cults within the city, the identification and location of the various sanctuaries of the city, as well as their organization and management, and the institutional or civic character of the “four tribes,” will remain enigmatic. I have attempted only to highlight the peculiarities inherent in the evidence, particularly in relation to the “four tribes” of the city and their respective sanctuaries. More specifically, I have emphasized the fact that all the evidence derives from second century C.E. contexts and should be interpreted in relation to contemporary events. The tendency has been to relate the appearance of the “four tribes” to a civic reorganization associated with Palmyra’s institutional development as a Greek

¹³⁰ For instance, see Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 185; and D. Hillers, “Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions and the Old Testament, Especially Amos 2:8,” *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 8 (1995): 55-62.

polis. I do not necessarily disagree with this view except to note that they seem not to have appeared as a corporate unit until the late second century C.E. and even then there is no evidence whatsoever for any redistricting of the city. I would also argue that this development occurred neither arbitrarily nor without precedent. Instead, the emergence of the “four tribes” operating as a single social organism ought to be examined in its proper second century C.E. context. The “four tribes” developed in reaction to new social and economic realities. Indeed, as the city was pressured from without, due to wars and increased banditry, among other factors, its response from within was to change to meet new challenges. I would argue, in fact, that the development of the “four tribes” as an apparently institutional body was a thoughtful transition based on the existing religious orientation of the community and perhaps the management of civic finances. Also, the association probably formed in response to the needs of the caravan trade. As conditions in the countryside, deteriorated more concerted group action to organize and manage the public caravans arose. Finally, I disagree with Dirven when she states that “representatives of the four ‘tribes’ or [civic] quarters constituted the *boulè*, and together represented the city of Palmyra . . . however, although the four ‘tribes’ and their gods had civic connotations, they were not civic institutions, a role confined to the Palmyrene council and the temple of Bel.”¹³¹ The “four tribes,” in my view, meeting in their respective sanctuaries, in the *tetradeion* or agora, or in the temple

¹³¹ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 74.

of Bel for that matter which housed all Palmyrene gods, comprised collectively an important civic institution that, at least before the mid-second century C.E., was quite active in the economic and religious affairs of the city.

Palmyra's Military and Caravan Guards

The military was also an important civic institution. Palmyra's military projected Palmyrene power and influence beyond the city and contributed to the maintenance of Palmyrene identity and community, whether at home or abroad. It ensured regional security in the Palmyrene countryside, mainly in the desert zone toward the Euphrates where it exercised the greatest force. By monitoring and safeguarding human traffic within its territorial limits, Palmyra's military guaranteed civic prosperity.¹³² The existence of a Palmyrene military raises important questions regarding the relationship between these troops and Roman and Parthian/Persian forces with whom they had direct contact. Why was this apparently independent military capacity tolerated? As a response to this question, I will examine now the evidence for Palmyra's military. I will discuss the function of these forces in the desert zone as well as the relationships that ensued between the Palmyrenes and their imperial neighbors in light of Palmyra's sustained military might.

¹³² On civic militias in the Roman Empire, see Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 326-27; and E. Birley, "Local Militias in the Roman Empire," in *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1972/1974*, edited by A. Alföldi and J. Straub (Bonn: R. Habelt Verlag., 1976), 65-73.

First of all, a distinction may be made between Palmyra's military and what would seem to have been armed guards privately employed, or employed at public expense, on a temporary basis for the immediate protection of caravans.¹³³ The latter would have been commanded by the *synodiarchs* or the *archemporoi*, the patrons, protectors, and leaders of the caravans, who at times are attested as having "saved" or "protected" the caravans from harm.¹³⁴ Several examples may be cited. As I quoted above, for instance, P0197, a bilingual inscription of 132 C.E. from the agora, honors Soados, son of Bōliados, for his having saved the caravan from Vologesias from a great danger or risk that had confronted it.¹³⁵ We have no more specific information from this text to identify the nature of the threat endangering the caravan, though it was apparently endemic and related to banditry. The Greek inscription of 144 C.E. (P0197) quoted above, for example, records that this same Soados received honors from a caravan of all the Palmyrenes, because he himself had assembled a large force and protected the caravan from a certain Abdallat and

¹³³ This distinction was recently suggested by Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 157-66.

¹³⁴ The post of *synodiarch* or that the *archemporos* would appear to have been public duties or perhaps liturgies that clearly generated power, prestige, and influence for the individuals involved. Yet Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 156, goes too far in his estimation that those who performed the public liturgy of *synodiarch* comprised a "distinct" social class, although they were individuals of noticeable power and wealth.

¹³⁵ See n. 113 above.

his band of robbers who were awaiting in ambush to attack.¹³⁶ Unfortunately, we know nothing of the composition of the forces Soados used to safeguard certain caravans or of their recruitment. Perhaps he recruited them at his own expense, or with the assistance of the city, for the immediate task of assuring the safety of the caravans. This would distinguish them from the military forces under permanent arms.

The examples quoted above reveal that a potential danger in the desert, at least in the second century C.E. and later, was well-organized banditry. More sporadic hazards awaited the caravans traversing the desert at the same time from regional pastoralists and nomadic groups, perhaps destitute and with a sure eye to securing quick booty. To these the Palmyrenes responded militarily.¹³⁷ For the most part, such pastoral groups cooperated with the maintenance of a peaceful status quo: indeed, they formed the core of the Palmyrene population. Increased regional insecurity at the close of the second century, however, required more active desert patrols to ensure safe conditions for travel and transport. For example, as I quoted above, P1378 of 199 C.E. records honors granted by the council and the people to a certain Ogeilu, son of Maqqai, for his distinguished service and for his

¹³⁶ See Drijvers, "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions," 34-38; Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 62-63. See also, nn. 115 and 116 above. What is not indicated in this inscription is whether Soados operated in the capacity of a public official or as a private citizen.

¹³⁷ See Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 145-47.

many successful campaigns against nomadic groups.¹³⁸ A year earlier, Aelius Bora, son of Titus Aelius Ogeilu, a *stratēgos* who established peace in the territories of the city, received honors from the council and the people of Palmyra for his patriotism. Apparently, Aelius Bora acted under the supervision of the consular governors Manilius Fuscus and Venidius Rufus.¹³⁹ It is striking that no evidence exists from the first century C.E. suggesting discontent among pastoralists in the countryside that necessitated military responses. Clearly Rome's eastern wars of the second century C.E., or perhaps a decline in the numbers of caravans that traversed the desert in the last quarter of the same century, which would have limited economic opportunities for everyone, had negative effects. Tensions between city and countryside grew in this period, particularly in the desert among those engaged in pastoralism who were probably surviving at basic levels of subsistence. In order to control tensions, the Palmyrenes opted for a sustained military presence in the desert.

The private caravan guards or mercenaries were apparently distinct from the regular military forces that the people of Palmyra supported to safeguard the Palmyrene countryside and the city's commercial interests further afield. Palmyra's military maintained garrisons at various strategic locations, primarily along routes of communication and trade, especially along the Euphrates. From 117 to at least

¹³⁸ P1378. See n. 98 above.

¹³⁹ P1063. See n. 97 above.

162 C.E., for example, Palmyra supported a garrison of soldiers at Dura Europos, which predated the Roman occupation of the city attested by 164 C.E.¹⁴⁰ The Palmyrenes also maintained a garrison to the south on the island of Ana in the Euphrates (fig. 1).¹⁴¹ The earliest reference to this garrison is found in a dedication dated to 132 C.E. by a Nabataean, who identified himself in Palmyrene as “a horseman [in] Hirta in the camp at Ana” (*prš [b]hyrt’ wbmšryt’ dy ‘n’*), of two altars to his native deity and in remembrance of his patron and friend, a certain Zebaida, son of Shemaūn, son of Belaqab.¹⁴² Another inscription, perhaps of 188 C.E., refers to the horsemen of “the detachment of Ana and of Gamla” who erected a statue in Palmyra to a certain Zaba, son of Maqqaia.¹⁴³ Furthermore, an unidentified individual is identified as a *stratēgos* of Ana and Gamla in an inscription of 225 C.E. discovered at Umm es-Selabikh on the route between Palmyra and Hit.¹⁴⁴ Palmyrene forces probably also occupied outposts at Bijan and

¹⁴⁰ For a full discussion of the Palmyrene community at Dura Europos, see pp. 341-63 below.

¹⁴¹ For the history of Ana, see D. L. Kennedy, “Ana on the Euphrates in the Roman Period,” *Iraq* 48 (1986): 103-4; and D. L. Kennedy and A. Northedge, “The History of ‘Ana, Classical Sources,” in *Excavation at ‘Āna*, Iraq Archaeological Reports, vol. 1, edited by A. Northedge, et al. (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988), 6-8.

¹⁴² P0319.

¹⁴³ P0200: *mgy’ dy ‘qym lh pršy’ b’br[] | dy gml’ w’n’*.

¹⁴⁴ P2757. See also Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1933): 178-80. For the route between Palmyra and Hit, see n. 68 above.

Kifrin, two forts in the Middle Euphrates in the vicinity of Ana (fig. 1).¹⁴⁵ The presence of these forces along the Euphrates would suggest their involvement with Palmyra's caravan trade. They certainly represented and supported Palmyrene interests abroad.

Indeed, although this evidence is meager, it indicates that the city of Palmyra maintained adequate forces to garrison various outposts and to safeguard communication and trade along a portion of the Euphrates and perhaps along primary routes through the desert to the east. These forces were visibly active in the second and early third centuries C.E., although we should not discount the existence of military forces in the first century. We know nothing of how these troops were recruited, however, or for how long they served. Furthermore, the fact that such military force existed at all, thus allowing the city of Palmyra to extend its power and authority into the countryside and beyond, raises some interesting questions regarding the range of its operations and how Palmyrene soldiers interacted with others. To what extent, for instance, did the Romans and Parthians permit independent military operations in their zones of effective control? Also, what relations did Palmyrene forces maintain with imperial troops from either side

¹⁴⁵ For example, on Bijan, see M. Gawlikowski, "Bijan in the Euphrates," *Sumer* 42 (1985): 15-26. On Kifrin, see A. Invernizzi, "Kifrin," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 29 (1983): 207-9; idem, "Researches in Kifrin: 'Al-Qadissiya Dam Project,'" *Sumer* 42 (1985): 22-26; idem, "Kifrin and the Euphrates Limes," in *Defence of the Roman and Byzantine Near East*, 357-81; idem, "Kifrin," *Mesopotamia* 21 (1986): 53-84; idem, "Kifrin," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 34 (1987): 156-66.

of the frontier?

From the Roman viewpoint, the answer seems clear. Primarily south and east of the city, the Palmyrenes were allowed to patrol the desert and maintain outposts that supported regional security, ultimately under the authority of the consular governor of Syria. This was a logistic relief to Rome. To the north and west, on the other hand, the Romans seem to have restricted Palmyrene operations to the same extent that they limited Palmyra's territorial boundaries.¹⁴⁶ As I discussed in Chapter 1, Creticus Silanus, the *legatus* of Syria, set Palmyra's territorial limits west of the city as early as 11-17 C.E.¹⁴⁷ By 75 C.E., the Romans constructed a road that connected Palmyra to Sura on the Euphrates, as indicated on a milestone discovered at al-'Arak roughly 27 kilometers northeast of the city, which suggests that a similar Roman road connected Palmyra with Damascus and perhaps extended to the Mediterranean coast as well.¹⁴⁸ More clearly, this road construction marked the incorporation of Palmyra into Rome's provincial system and military zone of operations.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ For the archaeological evidence of Roman activity north and northeast of Palmyra, see M. Konrad, "Research on the Roman and Early Byzantine Frontier in North Syria," *JRA* 12 (1999): 392-410.

¹⁴⁷ See p. 6, n. 8 above.

¹⁴⁸ *L'Année épigraphique* 1933, no. 205. For discussion, see Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate," 59-60; and Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 35.

¹⁴⁹ See Millar, *Roman Near East*, 83-84. See also Seyrig, "L'Incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain," 266-77.

The arrival of an auxiliary *ala* in the mid-second century C.E. confirmed Roman strategic interests in the city.¹⁵⁰ For the remainder of the century, Palmyra retained at least one Roman *ala* as a garrison, which was replaced in the third century C.E. by a partly mounted cohort, the *cohors I Flavia Chalcidenorum*.¹⁵¹ Ultimately, this Roman military presence would have made its local commander a spokesperson of the imperial court and given him some oversight of Palmyrene affairs. It would have been in the interests of Rome, for instance, to safeguard and manage the collection of tolls (*portoria*) on the caravan trade coming through Palmyra. Thus the Roman garrison would surely have backed the activities of Marcus Aemilius Marcianus Asklepiades, a town-councillor of Antioch and a “quarter-collector” (*tetartōnēs*) of caravan revenues, who was honored in 161 C.E. with a statue in the agora of Palmyra,¹⁵² as well as the activities of Lucius Antonius Callistratus, another collector of the “fourth” who, according to a trilingual

¹⁵⁰ *Inventaire* 9.23, for instance, identifies a certain Vibius Celer as “prefect of the *ala* (stationed) here,” who is honored by the council and the people of Palmyra as a citizen and colleague. See p. 279 above. The unit may have been the *ala I Thracum Herculiana*, attested at Palmyra from 167 C.E.; see *Inventaire* 9.22, which honors Julius Julianus, a commander of this *ala*.

¹⁵¹ For the evidence see Seyrig, “Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine” 152-68; and Rey-Coquais, “Syrie romaine,” 68-69. For amendments discounting the existence of a *numerus Vocontiorum*, see M. Speidel, “Numerus or Ala Vocontiorum at Palmyra?” in *Roman Army Studies*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1984), 167-69. See also Millar, *Roman Near East*, 135.

¹⁵² P1373.

inscription of 174 C.E., was honored by his agent, a certain Galenus.¹⁵³ Also, while a Roman garrison was present at Palmyra, we can be certain that the disposition of Palmyrene forces fell under the purview of its commander. On many occasions, Palmyrene *stratēgoi* of the city's military or others who gave protection or leadership to the caravans, the *synodiarchs* or the *archemporoi* for instance, received honor and recognition from the governor of the province. Clearly, then, the actions of these Palmyrene military leaders were viewed as beneficial and vital to Roman interests. Moreover, while the Palmyrene military was an important civic institution, by virtue of the fact that it exercised force beyond the city, it came under the purview of Roman officials and thus was most affected by the Roman presence, especially in the second and third centuries C.E.

What of the operation of Palmyrene forces in Parthian territory? This is a disputed matter. Nominally, in the early stages of Palmyra's civic development in the first century B.C.E., the Parthians seem to have regarded the Palmyrenes as friends and allies, if not the community itself as a constituent of its empire. The Parthians treated Antony's raid on Palmyra in 41 B.C.E., for example, as a clear act of war, and conflict ensued the following year.¹⁵⁴ Rome's gradual expansion

¹⁵³ P1413. See also P2824, another trilingual inscription of the same Lucius Antonius Callistratus published by As'ad and Teixidor, "Quelques inscriptions palmyréniennes inédites," 279, no. 9.

¹⁵⁴ Appian *Bella civilia* 5.9. For discussion, see Debevoise, *Political History of Parthia*, 108.

eastward and increasing influence over Palmyrene affairs, however, may have altered this perception. Under Augustus, a diplomatic settlement was reached between the two empires in 1 C.E. that remained nominally intact until Trajan launched his ambitious (though unsuccessful) war of aggression to conquer the Parthians between 114 and 117 C.E. Episodic breakdowns in diplomacy and conflict between the two states occupied most of the second century. Major wars broke out in 162-65 C.E., when Lucius Verus launched a counter-offensive against the aggression of Vologases IV in Armenia and Roman Syria, during which time the Romans sacked Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital¹⁵⁵ and in 194-217 C.E., when three invasions were launched by the Severan emperors, first by Septimius Severus, who sacked Ctesiphon in 197 C.E., and later by his son Caracalla.¹⁵⁶

In this political context, then, we must explain Palmyrene military actions in areas supposedly under Parthian control, specifically in and around Dura Europos and to the south along the Euphrates, between 117 and 162 C.E. (or until 164 C.E. when the Romans captured Dura and then established their own patrols of the region). After Trajan's withdrawal from this region of the Euphrates, the Parthians regained control of Dura.¹⁵⁷ The political fate of settlements south of Dura,

¹⁵⁵ On the Parthian wars of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, see A. R. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, rev. ed. (1987; reprint, London: Routledge, 2000), 121-26, 128-31, 140; and Millar, *Roman Near East*, 111-15.

¹⁵⁶ See p. 54, n.111 above.

¹⁵⁷ See p. 341 below.

however, specifically that of Ana, remains uncertain. It is probable that the Parthians concurrently took possession of Ana and surrounding settlements as well, but the evidence is inconclusive. If this were the case, then the presence of Palmyrene troops at Dura and to the south would have been sanctioned by Parthian authorities, perhaps in recognition that these forces were to provide nominal security for these settlements and to facilitate caravan trade across the frontier.¹⁵⁸ Would the Parthians, however, have viewed these Palmyrene forces as components of the Roman military apparatus, and thus undoubtedly as a threat to their power and authority in the region?¹⁵⁹ Most scholars presume yes. Thus Gawlikowski argues that after Trajan's withdrawal from the region the Romans retained control over Ana and nearby settlements either by agreement or because the Parthians failed to reoccupy them.¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, we may account for the presence of Palmyrene forces in the area by concluding that Roman authorities granted to them

¹⁵⁸ See, for instance, Rostovtzeff, "Les Inscriptions caravanières de Palmyre," in *Mélanges Gustave Glotz*, vol. 2 (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1932), 805-7; Kennedy, "Ana on the Euphrates," 104.

¹⁵⁹ This problem concerned both F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos (1922-1923)* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1926), xl; and Rostovtzeff, "Inscriptions caravanières de Palmyre," 805-7. Cf. E. Will, "Marchands et chefs de caravane à Palmyre," *Syria* 34 (1957): 267, who suggests that all Palmyrene military activity beyond the limits of Palmyra's territory was conducted solely by private guards employed to protect the caravans and not by any organized civic military. See also Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 158.

¹⁶⁰ Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate," 60. See also Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 165-66.

the mandate to patrol the area. This does little, however, to explain the Parthian ability to gain control of Dura in the same period, or the appearance of Palmyrene archers in the city presumably as early as 150 C.E.¹⁶¹ In response to this dilemma, Gawlikowski, followed by Young, dismisses any appearance of Palmyrene forces in Dura prior to the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus in 164 C.E.¹⁶² This, then, allows all evidence of such forces to be interpreted within the framework of Roman interests and foreign policy; quite simply, Palmyrene forces garrisoned the city at the behest of Rome, only to be incorporated later into regular Roman army units.

Thus the evidence of Palmyra's military and its role with respect to Roman and Parthian foreign policy remains open to debate. The notion that the Palmyrene forces of Dura were present to safeguard the caravan trade, for instance, has been questioned. These forces did, however, serve a practical function by patrolling the desert region to the south and east of Palmyra as far as the Euphrates. The regional security that these forces provided benefitted Rome and Parthia by relieving them from any investment of state resources for comparable tasks. Palmyra benefitted from the protection and deliverance of the caravans, a task its military performed at the behest of their native city and its people and under their own commanders or

¹⁶¹ See p. 344 below. According to P1405, a bilingual Greek and Palmyrene inscription from Palmyra, a certain Marcus Ulpius Abgar served as a prefect of Palmyrene archers in 141 C.E.; we know nothing more specific about these forces, however.

¹⁶² See n. 334 above.

stratēgoi. These apparently complemented the private guards hired more or less as mercenaries for the immediate protection of the caravans by powerful aristocrats within the city, individuals who often personally led the caravans as *synodiarchs* or *archemporoi*. Yet, the presence of these guards must be inferred from the evidence.¹⁶³ As far as Palmyra's military is concerned, these forces represented the extension of Palmyrene power and authority into the desert, which may provide a partial explanation for increased Roman interest in and influence upon the city. Nonetheless, whether authorized or sanctioned by Roman or Parthian authorities, these forces confirmed Palmyrene interests in their zone of operations. They were instruments of power and prestige that confirmed Palmyra's supremacy in the desert and commercial interests beyond.

Conclusion

Throughout the first three centuries C.E., as the Palmyrene community expanded, a series of transformations affected its social and political fabric. At the beginning of this chapter, I raised the one key issue that problematizes Palmyra's civic development. It is our estimation of the "Greekness" of the Palmyrene community, which I examined primarily in relation to Palmyra's institutional development as a *polis*, versus its "Roman" or eastern aspects. In some respects,

¹⁶³ At any rate, what can be certain is that these forces, whether privately employed or organized by the city, contributed to Palmyra's regional security, and, to the extent that the caravans received sufficient protection for their safe return, ultimately contributed to the city's prosperity and growth.

the *adventus* of the emperor Hadrian in the early second century C.E. marked the pinnacle of Palmyra's growth as a Greek community, and it crystallized Roman interest in and influence upon the city. Then, in the Severan age and, in particular, after the *constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 C.E., Palmyra clearly became more Roman as its citizenry began assuming Roman identities and patterns of behavior.

Palmyra's elevation to the status of a Roman colony at this time facilitated this transformation. Concurrent with all of this, an indigenous Palmyrene identity and culture persisted, which was manifested in language, art, and to a certain extent in its political structures.

In this chapter I examined these transformations. By focusing on the evolution of Palmyra's civic institutions, from its magistracies to its military, I established a framework for assessing Palmyrene urbanization and communal development. For the most part, the Palmyrenes were apt to assimilate social and political influences of both western and eastern derivation. They did so with surprising efficiency. In the process, they developed a unique communal identity, which, as I will show in the following chapter, they maintained in foreign settings. Also, as the city and population grew, the civic ideal adjusted accordingly. New political institutions emerged as the city developed, institutionally, into a Greek city and then into a Roman *colonia*, which affected existing social and economic frameworks for personal and group interaction. It is difficult, however, to measure this impact. We can see, for example, the advancement of a civic identity with

numerous episodes of individuals and groups asserting themselves as being “Palmyrenes.” Thus the city itself became an important point of reference for a communal identity. It is difficult at times, however, to know if the assertion of being a “Palmyrene” had a geographic or an ethnic basis, with the distinction being that of a political versus an ethnic identity. Nonetheless, in most cases it would seem to have referred to a civic identity, but whether this displaced traditional modes of constructing identities based on kinship associations cannot be confirmed and seems unlikely. As I have noted, arguments for this type of transformation based on analyses of the evidence of the “four tribes” in their respective sanctuaries, in my view, fall short of making the case. It is best not to divorce the evidence from its context. What the evidence of the “four tribes” and their respective suggests is a social transformation somehow required by the shifting needs of the caravan trade as prompted by altered economic and political conditions in the second century C.E. In fact, I would argue that kinship never ceased to be the core of self-identification. I would, however, suggest that the city emerged in the first century C.E. as an alternate point of reference in the expression of one’s identity, which became particularly relevant as Palmyra grew and contact with foreigners increased, notably Romans in the city. In this context, the civic institutions of Palmyra provided structure to this “Palmyrene” identity and facilitated in its maintenance.

Chapter 6: Palmyrene Identity and Community Abroad

Introduction

The discussion thus far has focused on the city of Palmyra and its hinterland and how personal and group identity were structured and maintained within these limits. A key contribution, however, to the emergence and subsequent maintenance of a self-awareness or self-assertion of being a “Palmyrene” was the progressive expansion of Palmyrene activity abroad, where consistent interaction with foreigners generated distinct boundaries between Palmyrene expatriates and a host of “others” with whom cultural tendencies may or may not have been shared. In these settings Palmyrenes asserted emphatically their social and cultural identities.

In this chapter I will examine the structure and maintenance of Palmyrene identity and community abroad. My analysis is more functional, in terms of Palmyrenes’ activities abroad, rather than geographical, though the latter is pertinent and guides the narrative. The reason for this is that all of the evidence for the Palmyrene presence abroad fits neatly within three basic functional contexts, economic, military, and political. Palmyrenes were acting as merchants, soldiers, retired or otherwise, and as diplomats, or in other positions of political authority. I

would not discount that Palmyrenes ventured abroad for other reasons, however. I only stress that the evidence for their activities in other contexts has mostly vanished. This analysis has geographic relevance primarily in commercial contexts. In merchant communities along the Euphrates, for example, commitments and attachments to Palmyra were the strongest, perhaps due to proximity but clearly because of the central role trade played in Palmyra's prosperity.

I begin this analysis of Palmyrene identity and community abroad with a discussion of the Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos, for whom our evidence is the most abundant. My analysis focuses on both military and civilian groups. For the latter, I discuss the surprising lack of evidence that these were merchants, which presumably they were, and I review the evidence for supposed commercial connections between Palmyra and Dura. As I will show, in whatever manner the Palmyrenes of Dura occupied themselves, they nonetheless constructed a social context that reveals their integration and cooperation with their Durene neighbors, perhaps because of strong commercial relations. In fact, the fates of the Palmyrene and Durene communities were intertwined, and this fact received cultic expression, which geographical proximity certainly facilitated. From Dura I proceed to analyze the activities of Palmyrene merchants abroad in both Roman and Parthian territories. These were clearly involved with Palmyra's caravan trade, and their relations with their home community were close and personal. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a thorough examination of Palmyrenes operating under foreign

employ, as diplomats, local rulers, and soldiers. I analyze the manner in which these individuals preserved their native identities abroad. Generally, throughout this chapter I emphasize three important factors that allow us to see how the Palmyrenes managed to maintain distinct social and cultural identities abroad. These factors were the tendency of Palmyrenes to import their native cults into foreign settings, their persistence use of the Palmyrene dialect as a means of communication, and the profound attachments various individuals maintained with Palmyra's commercial interests.

The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos

Apart from Palmyra, the community of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos is the best documented.¹ Dura-Europos was founded on the Euphrates by Greeks in ca. 300 B.C.E., conquered by Parthians in 113 B.C.E., held briefly by the Romans in 115 C.E. and then continuously from 164 until 256/57 C.E., when Dura fell to the Sassanid Persians (fig. 34). The city was abandoned soon afterwards.² Palmyrene civilians are first attested at Dura in 33 B.C.E., when two individuals, Zabdibol, son

¹ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, is now the standard work on this subject, although she focuses on the nature of religious interaction within the community.

² For a brief sketch of the history of Dura, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 1-17. Ammianus Marcellinus (23.5.8 and 24.1.5), writing in the second half of the fourth century C.E., observed the ruined city and referred to it as a *desertum oppidum* and as *Duram desertam*. On the brief Roman occupation of Dura in 115/16 C.E., see *Dura Preliminary Report 4*, 56-68, no. 167; and *Dura Preliminary Report 6*, 480-82. See also Millar, *Roman Near East*, 102.

of Baayahu, of the *bny gdybwl*, and Malku, son of Ramu, of the *bny kmr*’, founded a sanctuary for their native gods Bel and Yarhibol on a plateau outside the city-walls.³ Palmyrene soldiers joined the community near the mid-second century C.E. The presence of Palmyrene soldiers and civilians in Dura then remained permanent until the city was abandoned in the mid-third century C.E. Their fate afterwards is not known.

What the Palmyrenes were doing at Dura for nearly three centuries is unclear, though they had a distinct cultural presence. Presumably they were there in contexts related to Palmyra’s trade. There is no evidence whatsoever, however, of commercial relations between the two cities. Any assessment, then, of what Palmyrenes were doing at Dura must be based on inference. What is clear is that the Palmyrenes soldiers and civilians in Dura maintained their distinct communal identity throughout the period of their residence. I will examine in this section how they did this and address possible reasons for it. Essentially, the Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos preserved their civic and tribal identities through their language, religious affiliations, and presumed economic activity. They also operated as a community representative of Palmyra in their communications with their Durene neighbors. By showing that the cities had two fates, though intertwined, they fixed a clear boundary that marked themselves as distinct from their neighbors.

³ P1067. See also *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 319-20, pl. 55, 1, no. 916; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 199-202.

The Palmyrene dedication of 33 B.C.E. to the gods Bel and Yarhibol thus establishes a Palmyrene civilian presence at Dura. The dedication itself, of interest as the earliest dated inscription from Dura, is expressly important because it was inscribed in Palmyrene and it reveals the manner in which cult worship was used to support a communal identity. The normal language of the city, at least in written expression, was Greek. The use of Palmyrene, then, as the only other established language of public inscriptions at Dura, suggests that the settlement lay clearly within the zone of direct Palmyrene influence, both before and after the Roman annexation of 164 C.E.⁴ The dedication also represents a concerted effort among Palmyrenes not to assimilate fully into the indigenous community, but rather to maintain a distinct communal identity in a foreign context. Their bringing native Palmyrene cults to Dura emphasizes this point. Bel and Yarhibol were certainly the two most important communal deities worshiped at Palmyra, and their presence at Dura in Palmyrene contexts suggests profound home attachments. Finally, this dedication reflects the preservation of tribal identities beyond the boundaries of Palmyra itself, which suggests that these identities were fundamental to Palmyrene social organization abroad. This one inscription, then, establishes the linguistic and religious contexts for identity maintenance. As I will discuss below, the

⁴ See F. Millar, "Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule," in *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse: The Arsacid Empire - Sources and Documentation. Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27.-30. Juni 1996)*, edited by J. Wiesehöfer (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1998), 476-80, who stresses the fact that no "Semitic" language other than Palmyrene appears in a public context before 164 C.E.

commercial context, which one would presume to be the most apparent, is more elusive.

Palmyrene civilians also frequented two later sanctuaries at Dura, the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin and the temple of the Gaddē, both inside the city walls, both of which supported their community abroad.⁵ For example, both sanctuaries further reflect Palmyrene linguistic and religious continuity with their native community, since each was founded by Palmyrenes for the worship of indigenous deities. The temple of the Gaddē was unique because the cult of the Gad of Tadmor was observed equally alongside that of the Gad of Dura, the significance of which I will discuss below since it showed that the two communities were integrated. In addition, the Palmyrene gods Malakbel and Yarhibol received cult in the temple of the Gaddē.⁶ All of this cult activity suggests that the Palmyrene community of Dura was strong and enduring.

Civilians aside, Palmyrene soldiers were themselves socially involved in the community of Dura where they retained likewise their native tribal and civic identities. None of the relevant evidence, however, dates earlier than the mid-second century C.E., when archers (*qšt'*) of the *bny myt'*, who apparently were present before the Romans annexed Dura in 164 C.E., made a dedication in

⁵ For the excavation of the temple of of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, see *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 284-92; and for the temple of the Gaddē, see *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 218-58.

⁶ See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 248-54.

Palmyrene to the god Yarhibol.⁷ These archers were commanded by a *stratēgos* perhaps appointed at Palmyra. A Palmyrene dedication of 168 C.E., for example, identifies a certain Atpanai as the *stratēgos* (‘*str[ig]*’) “in command of the archers who (are) in Dura” (*dy ‘l qšt’ dy bdwr*).⁸ Likewise, according to a Greek inscription of 170/71 C.E., a Palmyrene named Zēnobios was “*stratēgos* of the archers” (στρατηγὸς τοξοτῶν) based in the city.⁹ Together, these inscriptions suggest that this military detachment of Palmyrene archers was a regular one that was installed sometime in the second century C.E. Also, the inscriptions of 168 and 170/71 C.E. were found in the *mithraeum* at Dura, a location which obviously reflected Roman influence upon these troops after 164 C.E.¹⁰ Nevertheless, one problem associated with the presence of these Palmyrene forces, both before and after the Roman annexation, is that we know nothing regarding their fate. Most likely they were incorporated into the regular Roman auxiliary *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*,

⁷ P1099: *yrḥbwl ‘lh’ | tb’ mšb’ dy | ‘yn’ ‘bd bny | myt’ qšt’*, “Yarhibol, the good god, sacred stone of the spring, set up by the *bny myt’*, the archers.” See also *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 279-82, pl. 35, no. 909, dated to 150 C.E. by the editors; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 233-35 and 253-54, pl. 6. For the evidence of the *bny myt’* at Palmyra, see Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 37-38; and al-As‘ad and Gawlikowski, “Le Péage à Palmyre,” 163-72.

⁸ P1085. See also *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 83-84, no. 845; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 262–63.

⁹ *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 84-85, no. 846; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 264-65.

¹⁰ For discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 260-72.

a milliary unit with *dromedarii*, or camel riders, attached to centuries of infantry. Extensive records of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* have been recovered from Dura that testify to its existence from 208 to 256/57 C.E.¹¹ The incorporation of Palmyrene troops into a regular auxiliary unit of the Roman army, if indeed this happened, meant that their presence served primarily Roman interests, not necessarily those of Palmyra. Interestingly, this transformation coincided closely with that of Palmyra's institutional status into a Roman *colonia*. A second more profound problem that scholars confront is the explanation of why Palmyrene troops were stationed in Dura in the first place. The orthodox view that they were present to safeguard the Palmyrene caravan trade has been called into question, primarily in assessments of known caravan routes and the presumed direction of traffic, manner of transport, and the type of goods conveyed, whether by land or river. As I will argue below, the presence of these forces would seem to have had some commercial significance. For now, it is sufficient to stress that their dedications in Palmyrene, their continued devotion to their god Yarhibol, and their preservation of tribal identities, reflected deep attachments to their native Palmyra, which persisted even after the Romans took control over Dura.

¹¹ For the evidence, see J. F. Gilliam "The Roman Army in Dura," in *Dura Final Report* 5.1, 22-46. More recently, on the history of this unit, see D. L. Kennedy, "The *cohors X Palmyrenorum* at Dura Europos," in *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, edited by E. Dabrowa (Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1994), 89-98.

Beyond inference it is nearly impossible to establish a commercial context for the Palmyrene military and civilian occupation of Dura Europos, which might illuminate why the Palmyrene cultural presence remained strong and enduring. For example, it is unclear whether the Palmyrenes who dedicated the sanctuary to the gods Bel and Yarhibol in 33 B.C. E were merchants or not. This was the earliest of the Palmyrene sanctuaries at Dura and it was set in the same location where the necropolis of the city later developed.¹² The location of this temple outside the city walls is unique and, according to Downey, may reflect a decision of the authorities of Dura not to permit the Palmyrenes to build a temple to their gods within the city proper, an interpretation which, however, cannot be substantiated.¹³ Dirven, on the other hand, suggests that the architectural layout of the temple is key to understanding its placement and function outside the city. Since there is an enclosure attached to the sanctuary which contains a cistern, she interprets these as constituting part of a larger complex that served as a place for the respite of animals and their attendants. According to Dirven,

such resting places were normally situated outside the city and the function of the building therefore readily explains its location. Both merchants and soldiers possessed animals, and consequently we may assume that the temple was built for one or both of these two

¹² For recent discussions of the history of the temple of Bel in the necropolis, see S. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture: Alexander through the Parthians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 96-99; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 199-211.

¹³ Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 98.

groups.¹⁴

This is not a compelling argument, since it seems doubtful that animals were owned exclusively by merchants and soldiers, or that these individuals alone required places of rest outside city walls. More likely, the cistern served the needs of its clientele in the service of the temple cult, in a manner not dissimilar to cisterns in most other pagan sanctuaries whatever their location. Somewhat more compelling, on the other hand, as Dirven stresses, is the fact that the inscription of 33 B.C.E. identifies the dedicants as members of two important tribal groups in Palmyra, the *bny gdybwl* and the *bny kmr'*. Since other members of these Palmyrene tribes were involved in the caravan trade, it is tempting to make the same correlation here.¹⁵ Clearly this cannot be confirmed.

We also know very little of the Palmyrene civilians who observed cult in the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin or in the temple of the Gaddē, whether they were primarily merchants or not. Dirven, however, may be correct to conjecture that the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin was founded by immigrants from Palmyra “attracted by the favorable economic situation in Dura-Europos in the first century C.E.”¹⁶ This observation is based on the location of the temple when it was founded, sometime around 28 C.E., in a vacant area of the city against the

¹⁴ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 32.

¹⁵ For a summary of the evidence, see *ibid.*, 32, n. 130.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

southwest perimeter wall that was presumably earmarked for migrant settlement and the establishment of foreign cults.¹⁷ The choice of deities in fact may reveal something of the productive activities of the Palmyrenes who sponsored their cults. Baalshamin, for instance, was worshiped as a rain and fertility god among both pastoralists and agriculturalists of the Syrian steppe, and it is informative that a bas-relief from the temple of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin depicts the god seated with a sheaves of grain in his right hand.¹⁸ Perhaps, then, the Palmyrene civilians of Dura were engaged in the local economy in contexts associated with agricultural production, but this is hypothetical. Furthermore, it stretches the evidence to presuppose that the foundation of a Palmyrene temple near the bazaar of the city, on a spot later occupied by the temple of the Gaddē, identifies the sponsoring individuals as merchants.¹⁹ Proximity of a sanctuary to a market does not indicate

¹⁷ The date of 28/29 C.E. is from an inscription on the wall above the altar that reads, “Roumes made (this), the year 340 (28/29 C.E.)” (Ῥούμηϛ | ἐπόει | ἔτους μτ’), which is not specific as to when the temple was constructed; see *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 307, no. 914; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 211-12, no. 4. On the foundation of the temple and its subsequent history, see *Dura Preliminary Report 5*, 98-130. A temple to the foreign deity Aphlad, the god of the village of Anath on the Euphrates, was also founded by a migrant community in the same area in 54 C.E.; see *Dura Preliminary Report 5*, 112-13, no. 416.

¹⁸ The god Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin is identified on the relief in a bilingual (Palmyrene and Greek) inscription of 32 C.E. that names the dedicant as a certain Seleukos in Greek or Bar[at]eh in Palmyrene; see P1089. See also Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 212-18; and Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 18-25.

¹⁹ For the suggestion, see *Dura Preliminary Report 7-8*, 220. On the early temple of the Gaddē before the reconstruction in the 150’s C.E., see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 223-28.

the occupations of its respective clients. In addition, although later inscriptions from the sanctuary, after its reconstruction around 150 C.E. and the installation of cult to the Gaddē of Palmyra and Dura, indicate that its embellishment was financed by members of a family who claimed descent from a certain Nasur, presumably of an aristocratic Palmyrene lineage linked perhaps to the family of the renowned Septimius Odenathus, their elite status does not imply that they were merchants.²⁰ Again, however, this cannot be confirmed. What is certain regarding all of this evidence is that the individuals who established these sanctuaries communicated in their native tongue, continued worship of native deities, and sought cooperative relations with their Durene neighbors.

Thus a commercial context for interpreting the Palmyrene civilian presence at Dura in relation to their maintenance of distinct social and cultural identities remains elusive. Presumably most were merchants, an assessment based on our understanding of the importance of trade to the Palmyrene economy and the known presence of Palmyrene merchants in other communities along the Euphrates (see below). There is no epigraphic evidence to support this, however. In fact, to my

²⁰ On the lineage, see P0558, which identifies a certain Nasur as the great-grandfather of Septimius Odenathus. It may be noted that the name *nšwr* is very rare in Palmyrene onomastics; see J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 40 and 100. For discussion of the aristocratic background of the family, see *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 257, n. 31; M. Gawlikowski, "A Propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddē à Palmyre," *Berytus* 18 (1969): 109; idem, "Les Princes des Palmyre," 160; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 232-33, who provides an excellent overview of the evidence.

knowledge, only one scrap of direct evidence suggests the presence of merchants at Dura, which is a Palmyrene inscription on the base of a stele representing a standing figure alongside another figure on horseback. The inscription was found near Tower Tomb 18 at Dura and records a dedication to the gods Asharu and Shaad made by the *bny šqqt*’, or, as Gawlikowski interprets it, the “people of the market,” that is, market vendors.²¹ The restoration and interpretation of this problematic text, however, remain debated.²² Ultimately, any assessment of Palmyrene civilians in Dura as merchants is based solely on inference. According to Dirven, for instance,

the *assumption* [emphasis added] that the Palmyrene community at this time was involved in mercantile activities is supported by the location of their sanctuaries and what is known of the background of the people who contributed to their building.²³

As I have noted, this generalization is not entirely borne out by the evidence. Nevertheless, I would not suggest that Palmyrene merchants were absent from Dura; common sense would dictate otherwise. I do, however, emphasize that we

²¹ P1086. See also *Dura Preliminary Report* 6, 238-40; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 321-25, who reads, “people of the suq,” after Gawlikowski, *Le Temple palmyrénien*, 32-33.

²² For instance, Cantineau, “Tadmorea,” (1938): 164, proposes the reading *bny šqqt*’, which he translates as “inhabitants of the street.” Alternatively, du Mesnil du Buisson, *Inventaire de Doura-Europos*, 12, no. 20, followed by P1086, reads the personal name *bnyšm mt*’. Milik, *Dédicaces*, 342, reads *bny šqmt*’, following *Dura Preliminary Report* 6, 238-40, and interprets those who made the dedication as an association of workers of animal hides.

²³ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 31.

must respect the limits of the evidence and not presume too much. Among the Palmyrene civilian population of Dura, for instance, which apparently comprised a small community to judge from the size of their sanctuaries, all we can say is that some individuals were sufficiently wealthy to patronize and attend to the cult of local sanctuaries that were devoted to native deities and tended, more or less, to include their particular social group. Perhaps this alone was sufficient for the maintenance of their native tribal and civic identities. With respect to their roles as merchants representing Palmyra, we can only examine the evidence for the nature of the commercial activities in which these individuals might have been engaged, which itself is sufficiently vague.

Ironically, despite an abundance of evidence for the Palmyrene community in Dura, much of what they were doing there remains enigmatic. What is clear, however, is that the Palmyrenes maintained deep affiliations with their home community, and, in light of the proximity of the two cities, personal contacts perhaps as well. It is also clear that the evidence from the temple of the Gaddē represents conscious attempts made by Palmyrenes to integrate into the Durene community while preserving their native identities. Perhaps again due to proximity, relationships between the Palmyrene and Durene communities were cooperative and equitable. Indeed, understanding what these relationships were, or may have been, illuminates further the maintenance of Palmyrene identity abroad. Furthermore, despite the lack of evidence to assess precisely what the Palmyrene

civilians and soldiers Dura were doing, they probably did support commercial relations between their city of residence and Palmyra. Based on the assumption that this was true, opinions vary concerning what these relations may have been.²⁴ The central problem is the presumed extent of Dura's involvement in Palmyra's caravan trade. Either there was complete or partial involvement in the caravan trade, or none at all.

Since the discovery of Dura, and during early excavations of the site, scholars consistently interpreted Dura Europos as a "caravan city."²⁵ If this was the case, the Palmyrene civilians must have been merchants engaged in the caravan trade, and the soldiers in the city were charged with the protection of caravans. As I have noted, however, neither situation can be proved. Moreover, although it is only a short distance between Palmyra and Dura, no caravan track has been documented that connected these two settlements.²⁶ It seems in fact that the principal caravan route between Palmyra and the Euphrates lay some 300 kilometers south of Dura,

²⁴ See Dirven, "Trade between Palmyra and Dura-Europos," 39-54.

²⁵ For instance, see Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos*, xxxix - xlix; M. Rostovzeff, *Caravan Cities*, translated by D. T. Rice and T. T. Rice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932; New York: AMS Press, 1971), 91-119 and 153-216. For further references, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 34, n. 133.

²⁶ See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 35. For a presumed ancient route leading southwest of Dura in the direction of the Wadi es-Swab, see P. Leriche, "La Porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos," in *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 245-52. For discussion, see also Dirven, "Trade between Palmyra and Dura-Europos," 42-43.

near the village of Hit.²⁷ This begs the question, then, of what was the function of the Palmyrene garrisons attested in other Euphrates communities south of Dura but north of Hit, noticeably in the area of Ana at the forts of Kifrin and Bijan, not to mention Palmyrene forces in Dura itself (fig. 1).²⁸ Presumably, as Gawlikowski suggests, the navigability of the Euphrates upstream ceased at Hit, which explains the prevalence of caravan traffic from there to Palmyra, although Ana may have been an alternative northern terminus where goods were unloaded.²⁹ This would explain, then, Palmyrene activity in the remote desert region bordering Ana and Hit near Wadi Hauran as supporting the caravan trade.³⁰ Gawlikowski adds the possibility that Dura was not entirely excluded from the caravan trade, by emphasizing the navigability of the Euphrates downstream from there.³¹ Thus Palmyrene traders of long-distance goods may have used Dura-Europos as a point

²⁷ For the role of Palmyrene forces stationed at Dura, see below. The caravan route between Hit and Palmyra was investigated by A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie: Le Limes de Trajan à la conquête arabe; recherches aériennes (1925-1932)* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1934), 105-14. See also Mouterde and Poidebard, "La Voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît," 101-15. The trade connection between Palmyra and Hit is discussed further by Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 23-26; and Gawlikowski, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate," 58-61.

²⁸ See pp. 328-29 above.

²⁹ See Gawlikowski, "Le Commerce de Palmyre," 169; and idem, "Palmyre et l'Euphrate," 53-68.

³⁰ See p. 107, n. 113 above.

³¹ As Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 35-40 recently argued.

of departure only. This hypothesis allows us to regard the Palmyrene civilians of Dura as not entirely divorced from the caravan trade, though their role may have been limited to facilitating exports. Neither hypothesis, however, whether of complete or partial involvement in the caravan trade, can be proved.

Alternatively, as opposed to long-distance trade, the Palmyrenes of Dura may have been engaged in local exchanges between the two cities.³² Yet again, no extant document or inscription speaks exclusively of the local trade between these two communities. If there was local trade, any analysis of it would require assessments of the production of resources available to each and the provisions for import and export. Both cities, for instance, were regional centers of agricultural production, and both communities exchanged goods within and beyond their territories. For Palmyra, this is evident from the tariff inscription;³³ while at Dura, numerous papyri and parchment fragments speak of local production and exchange of a variety of goods, with wine being the chief export.³⁴ In this context it is

³² Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 34-40, provides a recent assessment of the issue of local versus long-distance trade between Dura and Palmyra. The thesis that Dura was not connected to the caravan trade has several proponents; see D. Schlumberger, review of *Caravan Cities: Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, Dura*, by M. Rostovtzeff, *Gnomon* 11 (1935): 87-93; Will, "Marchands et chefs," 262-77; and Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 23-26.

³³ See p. 105, n. 111 above.

³⁴ See, for instance, *Dura Preliminary Report 4*, 86, no. 200, which refers to bread, grain, barley, and wine to be shipped to Sura on the Euphrates up the river. For other graffiti from the "House of the Archives" or the "House of Nebuchelus," see *Dura Preliminary Report 4*, 79-135. For example, one Greek graffito of

interesting that an inscription of 243 C.E., during a rare period of peace in the east, refers specifically to wine not brought into Palmyra “in skins from the west” (*’yty mn ’rb*).³⁵ Thus a likely eastern source for this wine would have been from Dura or from some other community along the Euphrates. Furthermore, as Millar has stressed, the city of Dura was an administrative and political focal point in a chain of villages stretching along the Euphrates.³⁶ It is reasonable to assume that the commercial interests of Dura and its residents were not entirely limited to populations along the river but extended to regions of the steppe as well, as suggested by a handful of Safaitic graffiti attested in the city.³⁷ Furthermore, at Palmyra, it is doubtful local production was sufficient to support the resident population, particularly at the peak of its urban growth in the second century C.E.³⁸ For example, an amendment to the Palmyrene tariff in the second century C.E.

interest identifies a certain Malchus as a partner in the purchase of wine to be shipped to a place called Barnabela, meaning “built by Bel,” see *Dura Preliminary Report* 4, 122-23, no. 245. The area was indeed rich in wine; see Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.4.19. For general remarks on the economic life of Dura as revealed in the parchments and papyri, see *Dura Final Report* 5.1, 8-9. For further discussion, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 38-39; and N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 184-85.

³⁵ See p. 244, n. 184 above.

³⁶ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 445-52.

³⁷ See *Dura Preliminary Report* 2, 172-77.

³⁸ For the population of Palmyra, see p. 175, n. 136 above.

shows that custom dues on goods coming from outside the region of Palmyra were reduced, which suggests that a concerted effort was made by the authorities to stimulate imports.³⁹ Perhaps insufficient agricultural yields to support an increasing population prompted this decision.⁴⁰ The need to procure agricultural products from external sources, whether for subsistence or otherwise, must have been great. Thus from the Palmyrene perspective, Dura would have been viewed as a good source of external supply.

If we assume then that there was commerce between Palmyra and Dura, which was probably the case for goods locally produced, what role did Palmyrene forces based in Dura play in relation to it? The assumption that they were present to safeguard lucrative caravans is a compelling one. If the trade was more mundane, however, such as the exchange of local goods, one might question the need for a sustained military presence. In order to understand why the military was there we need to do two things. First, the evidence must be reviewed in its second century C.E. context, when regional insecurity prompted several administrative adjustments within Palmyra itself to sustain its own commercial endeavors. Thus, whether the concern was with local or long-distance trade, the need to protect the

³⁹ P0259 (Tariff): Greek 89-91; Palmyrene, II.59-60. See J. Février, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1931), 40-41.

⁴⁰ For discussion, see Dirven, "Trade between Palmyra and Dura-Europos," 41-42.

movement of goods through the desert was especially acute at the same time the Palmyrene military appeared at Dura. Second, we need to recognize that the military did more than police caravan routes, for it also managed Palmyra's borders. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the eastern borders of Palmyra seem to have stretched as far as the Euphrates.⁴¹ In light of the fact that Dura Europos is the closest settlement due east of Palmyra on the Euphrates, and nothing but desert lay between them, I would suggest that the *territoria* of the two cities touched upon one another, perhaps even within a short distance of Dura. Thus, the Palmyrene forces at Dura may have been present to monitor and to tax local goods shipped from the city westward, as the tariff mandates. Certainly any goods headed in that direction were bound for Palmyra, or, if not, to minor settlements in Palmyra's hinterland. Also, their presence would have shielded Dura itself from potential raids by bandits in the desert. All of this, nonetheless, though likely, remains hypothetical.

Ultimately, any assessment of the activities of the Palmyrene civilians or soldiers of Dura must remain speculative unless new evidence is brought to light. What is clear, however, is that they were careful to maintain their personal and group identities in a foreign setting, although a commercial context for identity maintenance cannot be confirmed. They also generated distinct social boundaries between themselves and their Durene neighbors, and while doing so they made sure not to spark animosities. Indeed, they sought cooperation and asserted that their

⁴¹ See p. 7 above.

two communities shared similar destinies and the same fortune.

A spirit of cooperative destinies and intertwined fates between Dura and Palmyra is most apparent in the various depictions of the personified fortunes of the two communities set side by side. The earliest example is from the temple of the Gaddē, so-called by archaeologists because of the two cult reliefs discovered in it. One depicts the Gad of Dura (*gd' dy dwr'*), represented as a male deity flanked by eagles; standing to his right is Seleukos Nikator, founder of the Hellenistic city, and to his left is the priest Hairan, son of Malku, who dedicated the relief in 159 C.E. (fig. 35).⁴² The other relief depicts the Gad of Tadmor (*gd' dy tdmwr*) flanked by a lion on her left side (fig. 36). Nike, the personification of victory, stands further to her left posed to crown the seated deity; on her right stands the same priest, Hairan, son of Malku, identified further as the grandson of a certain Nasur.⁴³ Both reliefs, it seems, were shaped by Palmyrene craftsmen probably at workshops in Palmyra and transported to Dura.⁴⁴ There is a recess for a third relief, but nine limestone fragments discovered during excavations do not permit any conclusive

⁴² See *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 258-60, pl. 33; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 245-47 for additional references. See also Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra*, 92-94. Inscriptions on the relief are P1094-96.

⁴³ See *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 260-62, pl. 34; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 247-48 for additional references. Inscriptions on the relief are P1097-98.

⁴⁴ See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 247; and *Dura Final Report* 3.1.2, 253-55.

identification of the deity represented. It is also uncertain which of the three reliefs occupied the central position and thus which god served as the tutelary deity of the sanctuary.⁴⁵

The reliefs from the temple of the Gaddē find their counterparts in the frescoes from the temple of Zeus dated around 239 C.E.⁴⁶ These represent sacrifices by Julius Terentius, the tribune of the Roman auxiliary *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*, his regiment, and the priest Themēs, son of Mokimos, before three unidentified Palmyrene deities.⁴⁷ In the same scene are the *tyche* of Palmyra and the *tyche* of Dura, who appear seated in the section of the painting below the Palmyrene gods to the left and right, respectively, of a large flower. Both

⁴⁵ Dirven *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 249-53, discusses these fragments in detail. Presumably, these fragments depict Malakbel, who may have served as the tutelary deity of the temple, but the evidence is not conclusive. For discussion and references, see Gawlikowski, “A Propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddē à Palmyre,” 107; Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 227; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 158-59.

⁴⁶ For critical comments regarding the identification of the temple of Zeus, formerly called the temple of the Palmyrene Gods or the temple of Bel, see Millar, “Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule,” 482.

⁴⁷ For the discovery and further discussion of the frescoes, see F. Cumont, “Rapport sur une mission à Sâlihîyeh sur l’Euphrate,” *CRAIBL* (1923): 27, pl. 48; J. H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting: First-century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 95-100, pls. 21-22; Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos*, 89-114, pls. 49-51; M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 71-72; A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 42-45, fig. 12; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 302-7, pl. 13.

representations are modeled on the famous *tyche* of Antioch by the Hellenistic sculptor Eutychedes.⁴⁸ Both are seated, depicted frontally, and wearing mural crowns. The *tyche* of Palmyra has her right hand resting on her right knee holding an object that is not discernible. Her left hand rests on the head of a lion. At her feet there is a naked young woman shown swimming, upon whose shoulder the *tyche* rests her right foot. The young woman cups her right breast with her right hand, while her left hand is extends forward. She probably personifies the Efqa spring at Palmyra. In contrast, the *tyche* of Dura has her left hand resting on the head of a naked male figure, presumably an aquatic figure or a personification of the colony.⁴⁹ Her right foot rests on the shoulders of a male figure swimming, most likely a personification of the Euphrates. Importantly, this representation of the two *tychai* is striking in that neither appears subordinate to the other. They are equals, reflecting the cooperative communal relations between the two cities and the beneficent presence of the Palmyrenes themselves in Dura.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ For an overview of the history of the temple and for further references, see Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, 105-10. For the Palmyrene evidence from the temple, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 293-314. On the *tyche* of Antioch, see T. Dohrn, *Die Tyche von Antiochia* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1960), 1-61; and M. Stansbury-O'Donnell "Reflections of Tyche of Antioch in Literary Sources and on Coins," in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, edited by S. B. Matheson (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), 50-63.

⁴⁹ As suggested by Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos*, 97-98.

⁵⁰ For a general discussion of the Classical *tyche*, see S. B. Matheson, "The Goddess Tyche," in *An Obsession with Fortune*, 18-33. On the correlation between

It should be noted, however, that these depictions of the *tychai* of Dura and Palmyra from the temples of Zeus and of the Gaddē were related to the Palmyrene military presence within the city. In the temple of the Gaddē, for instance, a fourth relief was discovered in the same room as the others that depicts on a stele the god Yarhibol in military dress; the accompanying inscription identifies the dedicants as the *bny myt*’, the archers.⁵¹ Also from the temple of the Gaddē, a Latin inscription on a monumental base identifies the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*, which may be earlier than the depiction of Julius Terentius and his regiment from the temple of Zeus.⁵² What this signifies is not clear. It may be, in addition to denoting cooperative destinies and intertwined fates, that the depiction of the tutelary deities of Dura and Palmyra in military contexts legitimized the presence of Palmyrene forces in the city. At the least, it gave the Palmyrenes cause to partake in the religious life of Dura, equally alongside Durenes, without sacrificing their own native identities and attachments to their home community.

All of this evidence presented above thus suggests that the relationships between Palmyra and Dura Europos and between their citizens were close and personal. Proximity between the two settlements, whose boundaries perhaps

“civic identity” and *tyche*, see P. B. F. J. Broucke, “Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World,” in *An Obsession with Fortune*, 34-49.

⁵¹ See n. 7 above.

⁵² *Dura Preliminary Report* 7-8, 277, no. 906.

touched upon one another, may have facilitated this closeness. Also, the evidence suggests that their relationships were cooperative and equitable. Why this was so cannot be answered with any certainty, although mutually beneficial commercial relations and perhaps the military protection Palmyrene forces afforded Dura and its citizens played significant roles. Despite any uncertainty over what the Palmyrenes of Dura were doing there or why, they were uniquely successful at asserting their native tribal and civic identities, through their importation of indigenous cult and continued use of Palmyrene. Also, while they asserted their distinctiveness, they expressed to their Durene neighbors a belief that their two communities were dependent upon one another and shared a common fate. As I will show in Chapter 7, the significance of this outlook was manifested in the mid-third century C.E., after Persian forces destroyed Dura Europos and its Palmyrene community, and the imminent threat of Palmyra's own destruction seemed close at hand.

Palmyrene Merchants Abroad

Palmyrene merchants journeyed throughout the Parthian and Roman empires, as they sought new markets, goods, customers, and contacts. Indeed, from the beginning of the first to the close of the second century C.E., the Palmyrenes had formed an expansive social and commercial network that extended from Britain to India. Their focus, apparently, was on acquiring exotic goods from the East, most notably silks, aromatics, spices, and the like, and distributing them in Roman

territory to the west, where the demand for such goods was especially great.⁵³

Indeed, while this trade contributed to Palmyra's prosperity, enabling the embellishment of its urban landscape, its real success was the ability to maintain the dedication of its merchant population to their mother city in settings abroad.

Wherever Palmyrene merchants ventured, they asserted their native identities and maintained primordial links to their home city. They continued to speak their native language, worship native gods, and communicate with their home community, at times even contributing to the sculptural and architectural embellishment of Palmyra from abroad.

The key to Palmyra's commercial success, which the dedication of its native merchants facilitated, was the development and maintenance of a commercial artery that connected the city itself with the Persian Gulf via the Euphrates river. Dura Europos may have been a commercial nexus, but the evidence is inconclusive. For sure, however, from Hit southwards the Palmyrenes established bases of operation to support its trade. Palmyrene commercial interests expanded on this route from the first to third century C.E. Importantly, the conditions that mandated safe and

⁵³ For general references to the eastern trade, see p. 3, n. 5 above. Appian *Bella civilia* 5.9 informs us that the Palmyrenes marketed Indian and Arabian goods from Persia. On the demand for eastern goods in the Roman Empire, see E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (London: Curzon Press, 1974.), 315-18; Miller, *Spice Trade*, 219-23 and 229-30; J. Thorley, "The Development of Trade between the Roman Empire and the East under Augustus," *Greece & Rome* 16 (1969): 209-23; idem, "The Silk Trade between China and the Roman Empire at its Height, circa AD 90-130," *Greece & Rome* 18 (1971): 71-80; and Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 14.

rewarding trade ventures along the Euphrates also provided a productive climate for interactive and cooperative social relations between Palmyrenes and “others” abroad that facilitated the maintenance of Palmyrene identity. For example, the earliest of the caravan inscriptions describe what appear to be Palmyrene merchant communities in Seleucia, across the Tigris from the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon, and in Babylon a short distance to the south on the Euphrates. The inscriptions date to 19 and 24 C.E., respectively.⁵⁴ Both are of special interest to the issue of identity maintenance in foreign contexts, since each honors separate benefactors to the construction of the temple of Bel at Palmyra, which suggests a deep attachment to the home community. More importantly, though, the inscription of 19 C.E. refers specifically to both “Greek” and “Palmyrene” merchants acting in a cooperative manner, which illustrates a definitive communal boundary that set the Palmyrenes apart from the general population of Seleucia, perhaps in the same manner that Palmyrenes distinguished themselves from the Durene neighbors. Later in the first and second centuries C.E., Palmyrenes merchants established themselves in other communities along the Euphrates down to the Persian Gulf. Within the kingdom of Mesene, located on the lower Euphrates, Palmyrene merchants supporting the

⁵⁴ Ctesiphon, 19 C.E., see P0270. Babylon, 24 C.E., see P1352. In addition to being the two earliest inscriptions to refer specifically to the Palmyrene caravan trade, they are the only references to Palmyrene merchants in these two communities. We would assume, however, that even if the merchants left these cities in the mid-first century C.E. then some commercial contacts would still have been maintained.

caravan trade are attested in Vologesias, Phorath, and Spasinou Charax (fig. 1).⁵⁵

Furthermore, as we have seen, Palmyrene merchants, not content with the acquisition and distribution of goods within the Parthian kingdom, equipped and manned ships that sailed to far off Scythia. We know all of this because of the Palmyrene tendency to express their identity abroad and to retain deep attachments to their native city of Palmyra.

Palmyrene merchants also established bases in Egypt, where they furthered their trade activity with Arabia and India and opened new avenues for the importation of goods into the Roman Empire.⁵⁶ In the second century C.E. Palmyrene merchants founded a community at Coptos, where they participated in the Red Sea trade, as attested by the following Greek inscription honoring a certain Zabdala:

. . . Zabdala, son of Salmanos, (also called?) Aneina, of the Hadrian Palmyrene sailors of the Red Sea, (who) set up, fresh from the foundations, the *propylaea*, the three *stoas*, and the *atria*, all from his own funds, for his friendship and distinction, the Hadrian

⁵⁵ For Vologesias, see A. Maricq, "Vologésias, le emporium de Ctésiphon," *Syria* 36 (1959): 264-76. On the Arabian connections with Spasinou Charax and the kingdom of Characene, see Potts, "Arabia and the Kingdom of Characene," 137-67; and idem, "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 *Early Roman Empire in the East*, 89-107. See also Schuol, *Die Charakene*, 47-90, 380-87. On Mesene, see p. 162, n. 107 above.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the evidence, see J. Schwartz, "Les Palmyréniens et l'Égypte," *Bulletin de la Société Royale d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 40 (1953): 63-81.

Palmyrenes, his companions, (honor) their friend.⁵⁷

According to Reinach, the building associated with this inscription may have been the headquarters of a Palmyrene *collegia*, or a religious club of some sort where Palmyrene merchants gathered with their compatriots, a unit of Palmyrene archers stationed at the site (see below). He based this assessment, in association with the aforementioned inscription, on the discovery at the site of twelve *stelai* that exhibit portraits exemplifying typical Palmyrene “frontality” despite their Egyptian workmanship.⁵⁸ We may know little pertaining to the original purpose or context of the *stelai*, but the communal organization illustrated in the inscription is clear. The Palmyrene merchants acted collectively to honor one of their own who operated as a benefactor and patron to their community, all the while asserting his and their political and social identities as Palmyrenes. Furthermore, it is interesting in this

⁵⁷ J. Bingen, “Une Dédicace de marchands palmyréniens à Coptos,” *Chronique d’Egypte* 59 (1984): 355-58: [.]ΚΤΑΚ · ΤΟΝΑ[. . . .] | οσιον Ζαβδάλα Σαλμά|νου καὶ Ἐνενα Ἄδρια|νῶν Παλμυρηνῶν | ναυκλήρων Ἐρυθραϊκῶν | ἀναστήσαντα ἀπὸ θεμελίου | τὸ προπύλα[ι]ογ καὶ τὰς στοῦας | τρεῖς καὶ τὰ θυρώ[μ]ατα ἐκ και|νῆς τὰ πάντα ἐκ τῶν ιδίων | αὐτοῦ φιλοκαγαθίας χάριν | [Ἄ]δριανοὶ Παλμυρηνοὶ συ|έμποροι τὸν φίλον. See also A. Bernand, *Les Portes du désert: Recueil des inscriptions grecques d’Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), 262-63, pl. 62, no. 103; and Young, *Rome’s Eastern Trade*, 80-81.

⁵⁸ See A. J. Reinach, “Rapport sur les fouilles de Koptos: Deuxième campagne, janvier-février 1911,” *Bulletin de la Société Française des Fouilles Archéologiques* 3 (1912): 64-65. Cf. H. Seyrig, “Le Prétendu fondouq palmyrénien de Coptos,” *Syria* 49 (1972): 121-25, who disputes this assessment and highlights their local context. On “frontality” in Palmyrene art, see Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 126-28.

context that the inscription is not bilingual in Greek and Palmyrene, which would have been a more evident assertion of the cultural identity of these Palmyrene merchants and would have generated a more distinctive social boundary between themselves and their neighbors, predominately Egyptian Greeks. There was also a community of Palmyrene merchants at Dendarah in Egypt, downstream from Coptos. We know of their presence from a fragmentary inscription discovered at the site, which is bilingual in Greek and Palmyrene and is now held in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.⁵⁹ The inscription, perhaps sponsored by fellow merchants (*emporoi*), seems to honor an individual who had adopted the imperial *nomina* of Julius and Aurelius and who either descended from a certain Maqqai or he himself bore that name.⁶⁰ Since most Palmyrene inscriptions that bear the same imperial *nomina* date to the early third century C.E., we may assume that this one does as well.⁶¹

⁵⁹ P0256.

⁶⁰ From Palmyra, there is mention of a certain Julius Aurelius Maqqai, son of Zabdibol, (son of) Maqqai within the Tower of Atenatan; see P0024 and P0025. Also from Palmyra, in the *hypogeum* of Julius Aurelius Malē, there is mention of a Julius Aurelius Maqqai, son of Yarhai; see P0028 (Ingholt, “Five Dated Tombs from Palmyra,” 77, no. 3); and a Julius Aurelius Hairan, son of Maqqai; see P0042 and P0043. P1216 identifies the three brothers Julius Aurelius Nurai, Zabdibol, and Ogeilu, all sons of Maqqai. On the frequency of the Palmyrene name Maqqai (*mqy*), see Stark, *Personal Names*, 35.

⁶¹ For the evidence, see Schlumberger, “Les Gentilices romains,” 72-79. Curiously, Young, *Rome’s Eastern Trade*, 81, maintains that the inscription should be dated between 160 and 212 C.E.

The internal organization of these Palmyrene merchant communities is a difficult subject to address, since our evidence is limited to honorific inscriptions. Perhaps, as discussed in Chapter 4, some were organized into *collegia*.⁶² The possibility that the merchants of Coptos were organized as a voluntary association, for example, has already been addressed, although, as noted, the evidence is not sufficient to make the case definitively. For the most part, these merchant communities would appear to have been egalitarian in the sense that they acted cooperatively on many occasions and jointly made dedications to their leaders or patrons. It was not unusual, for instance, for *collegia* of all sorts to honor their patrons in such a way. Also, some organization seems implied by the distribution or dispersal of wealth held collectively. Unfortunately, what we lack is demographic or statistical data on the size or net worth of these communities. How many Palmyrene merchants resided at Coptos, for example, or in the various *emporia* flanking the Euphrates river? What resources did they have at their disposal? Moreover, to what extent did they act truly with independence, or were they ultimately bound by the economic interests of their native city or of powerful patrons therein? While we are not able to answer these questions with any precision, we can at least appreciate the settlement and activities of these merchants abroad and the prosperous conditions they generated for themselves and their native communities. In foreign settings they preserved their identities and acted uniquely

⁶² See p. 229, 230 above.

as Palmyrenes.

Apart from these Palmyrene merchant communities in Egypt and along the Euphrates in Parthian territory, we lack further data to determine where or to what extent Palmyrene merchants ventured abroad, opening foreign markets and trade to their native community. Their preoccupation, it is clear, pertained to the trade in eastern goods, which explains the predominance of the evidence from the east; while in the west, the Palmyrenes sought primarily markets for the distribution of these goods (as I will discuss, Palmyrene merchants were probably in Rome). There are, however, limitations on the extent to which we can assess Palmyrene merchant activity in the Roman Empire. There is a possibility that Rome's placement of Palmyrene units (*numeri*) abroad facilitated access to new markets. For example, it may not be a coincidence that the only firm evidence of a Palmyrene merchant community outside of Syria comes from Egypt, where a *numerus* of Palmyrene archers happened also to have been stationed (see below). As I will show, the activities of Palmyrenes soldiers elsewhere in the Empire may well have facilitated the expansion of the city's commercial network, together with the settlement and trade ventures of Palmyrene merchants abroad and the tendency of soldiers to settlement upon retirement in regions where they served.

Palmyrenes in Foreign Services

As discussed, Palmyrenes effectively supported and maintained their distinctive cultural identity in settings abroad, where they interacted with "others,"

individually and communally, with whom they may have shared little or no social or cultural affinities. Daily they confronted situations that facilitated the fabrication of social boundaries that objectified their distinctiveness, in itself strengthened by their attachments to their home community. For example, they often persisted in using their native language wherever they traveled, a fact that should not be neglected in this analysis. Yet, Palmyrene activity abroad was not limited solely to its civilian merchant population in economic contexts. Within the Roman and Parthian empires, Palmyrenes were engaged in the affairs of both states in other political and social contexts. As diplomats, ambassadors, or soldiers, Palmyrenes, individually and collectively, further sustained their identities abroad.

The evidence of Palmyrene activity in foreign diplomacy is not substantial. It is, nonetheless, of great significance. In the first quarter of the first century C.E., according to a fragmentary inscription presumably from the temple of Bel within Palmyra, Germanicus, *proconsul* and nephew of Tiberius, commissioned a Palmyrene individual surnamed Alexandros to go as an envoy to the king of Mesene.⁶³ Unfortunately, the purpose of his visit is not mentioned, although we may speculate that it was of both a political and an economic nature, confirming, perhaps, Rome's regional priorities and Palmyra's trade interests. Furthermore, mention of Sampsigeramus, the supreme king of Emesa to the west of Palmyra, in

⁶³ P2754. See also Cantineau, "Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du Temple de Bêl," 139-41, no. 18. See p. 47, n. 90 above.

the same inscription suggests the diplomatic nature of the mission of Alexandros. Similarly, in the second century C.E., a certain Yarhibola, son of Lishamsh, also served the Romans as a foreign envoy. An honorific inscription of 138 C.E. from the agora at Palmyra, for instance, attests the many occasions he gave assistance to the merchants of Spasinou Charax as well as for his having led a diplomatic mission to Susa, the capital of the kingdom of Elymais.⁶⁴ For his public service, Yarhibola also received testimonials from the consular governor of the province of Syria and his colleagues.⁶⁵ What these individuals, Alexandros and Yarhibola, have in common is that each served the interests of Rome as foreign diplomats, and perhaps no less the economic interests of their native Palmyra. To what extent their activities were self-motivated cannot be ascertained from the evidence, however. Teixidor speculates that Alexandros himself was a financier of caravans with

⁶⁴ P1414. See also Seyrig, “Deux inscriptions grecques de Palmyre,” *Syria* 18 (1937): 369-72; idem, “Inscriptions grecques de l’agora de Palmyre,” 255-58; and J. Cantineau, “La Susiane dans une inscription palmyrénienne,” in *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 1 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), 277-79. For more on Susa, see G. Le Rider, *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes: Les Trouvailles monétaires et l’histoire de la ville* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1965), 426-29.

⁶⁵ The inscription identifies [C.] Bruttius Praesens, who, according to Seyrig, “Deux inscriptions grecques de Palmyre,” 369-70, was also governor of the province of Syria. E. Dabrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus*, Antiquitas: Reihe 1, Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte, no. 45 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolph Habelt GmbH, 1998), 215-16, however, summarizing the debate regarding the career of this senator, contends that he was merely a special envoy dispatched to the province by Hadrian. The inscription also identifies [Sex.] Julius M[aior], whose governorship seems to date firmly from 136 to 141 C.E., see idem, 97-103.

preexisting connections and resources in Mesene, which seems probable.⁶⁶

Certainly, this would characterize Yarhibola, who maintained his role as patron to the merchants of Spasinou Charax by assisting them at every opportunity. In light of their connections abroad and with (perhaps) more than adequate resources at their disposal, they were ideal candidates for the appointment of foreign envoys for the Roman government. Also, both individuals were among the elite whose ties to Palmyra were close and personal, and whose commercial interests sustained Palmyrene identity and community abroad.

Palmyrene aristocrats also managed to secure administrative posts within Parthia, which represented the expansion and solidification of their diplomatic power and influence abroad. Primarily, these posts were filled within the kingdom of Mesene. On a column console in the agora, for instance, a well-preserved inscription *in situ* honors a certain Yarhai, son of Nabuzabad, identified as a citizen of Hadriana Palmyra, and attests his appointment as *satrap* of Thilouna (modern Bahrain) by the king of Mesene, Mithridates, from his capital of Spasinous Charax.⁶⁷ In this instance, the emphasis on the citizenship of Yarhai is an important affirmation of his political identity, despite his involvement in the local administration of a foreign state. Also, the fact that the Palmyrene merchants of

⁶⁶ Teixidor, *Un Port romaine du désert*, 11.

⁶⁷ P1374. See also Seyrig, “Inscriptions grecques de l’agora de Palmyre,” 252-53, no. 21bis. For more on Thilouna, see D. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 147-48.

Spasinou Charax set up this inscription suggests that Yarhai used his position of authority within Mesene to their benefit, although no specific benefactions are listed. Similarly, in 140 C.E., according to fragments of an inscription from outside the agora, an unidentified individual (related to a certain Alexandros) seems to be identified as an *archōn* of Phorath, an *emporium* north of Spasinou Charax on the Euphrates (fig. 1).⁶⁸ The inscription itself was set up by the members of the caravan (*synodia*) that had returned from Spasinous Charax to Palmyra via Vologesias, so it is likely that they were assisted en route by this individual as they passed Phorath.⁶⁹ Likewise, another Palmyrene, identified as an *archōn* of Maisan (i.e. Mesene), was honored for having favored his city and its merchants abroad.⁷⁰ Even the renowned Soados, son of Bōliados, who received honors on numerous occasions from the city of Palmyra and its caravans, appears at times to have resided in Vologesias where he held some position of authority (*dynasteia*), embodied in his ability to sponsor the foundation of a temple to the *Augusti* within the city.⁷¹

⁶⁸ P1412. See also Seyrig, “Inscriptions grecques de l’agora de Palmyre,” 252-53, no. 21.

⁶⁹ For a caravan to Palmyra from Phorath via Vologesias, see P0262.

⁷⁰ Schlumberger, “Palmyre et la Mésène,” 256-60.

⁷¹ P1062 (see also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 12-14). The text indicates that Soados “built and dedicated in Vologesias a *naos* of the Sebastoi” (καὶ κτίσαντα | [ἐ]ν Ὀλογα[σι]άδι ναὸν τῶν Σεβαστῶν κ[αὶ] κ[α]θηρώσαν[τα . . .]). Cf. Mouterde and Poidebard, “La Voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît,” 105-15. See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 150-51; and Matthews, “Tax Law of Palmyra,” 166-67. Perhaps, as Young, *Rome’s Eastern Trade*, 144-45,

Unfortunately, we can say very little about the personal interests and loyalties of these Palmyrenes who appear active in the local administration of lower Mesopotamia under the kings of Mesene. They served as foreign administrators, but we are not able to elaborate on the nature of their responsibilities. Also, since all of this evidence seems to be of the mid-second century C.E., between the Parthian Wars of Trajan and Lucius Verus, when the kingdom of Mesene may have been a client state of the Roman Empire, it is difficult to assess the extent that these individuals pursued (more or less overtly) specifically Roman interests.⁷² The foundation of a temple to the *Augusti* within Vologesias no doubt eases this uncertainty. This act was as much a statement of religious loyalty as it was one of social, cultural, and political affiliation.⁷³ We also know that these individuals

suggests, we should view the career abroad of Marcus Ulpius Yarhai, who facilitated mercantile ventures in Spasinous Charax, similarly; there is, however, no evidence to suggest this.

⁷² See F. Pennacchietti, "L'Inscrizione bilingue greco-parthica dell'Eracle di Seleucia," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987): 169-85. On Roman influence in Mesene, see G. W. Bowersock, "La Mésène (Maisân) Antonine," in *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, edited by T. Fahd (Strasbourg: Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, 1989), 159-68; P. Bernard, "Vicissitudes au gré de l'histoire d'une statue en bronze d'Héraclès entre Séleucie du Tigre et la Mésène" *Journal des Savants* (1990): 3-68; and Potter, "Inscriptions on the Bronze Herakles," 277-90. For relations between Mesene and Palmyra, see Schlumberger, "Palmyre et la Mésène," 256-60; and Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 143-48.

⁷³ For an enlightened discussion of the relationship between the imperial cult and political power, see S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (1984; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 239-48.

utilized their power and influence in a number of cases specifically to benefit their compatriots, Palmyrenes either living in or journeying through the region, which facilitated the maintenance of Palmyrene identity and community abroad. This support included their assistance to Palmyrene merchants. Indeed, the honors they received in their native community of Palmyra attests to their patronage abroad. This evidence also attests to their multiple loyalties - to the kings of Mesene, the Romans, themselves in their assertion of their Palmyrene identities, their native city of Palmyra, and to their compatriots, at home and abroad.

The issue of political loyalty is of special relevance in a discussion of Palmyrenes in the service of Rome, specifically as constituents of the Roman army. Indeed, whether as Roman soldiers or as auxiliary troops, Palmyrenes, for the most part, supported Roman interests (at least before the reign of Zenobia, who altered drastically the political climate in the mid-third century C.E.). Also, wherever they served, Palmyrenes were apt to maintain cultural distinctions between themselves and their neighbors. In most cases, it seems, they insisted on retaining the use of their own language and they continued the worship of their own gods, all of which supported their Palmyrene identity abroad. A discussion of the evidence follows.

The recruitment of Palmyrenes into the Roman imperial army began under Trajan, perhaps in connection with his imperial ambitions toward (and subsequent war with) Parthia. Primary evidence includes an inscription on a console fragment from the agora, which records a dedication by the renowned Marcus Ulpius Yarhai

to his friend (τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον), “a citizen of the city of Palmyra” ([πολείτη]ν τῆς Παλμυρη[[ν]ῶν πόλεως) and a Roman military officer, who held the post, among others, of prefect of the *ala I [Ulpia] dromedariorum Palmyrenorum*.⁷⁴ While the unit was raised probably in the decade or so before Trajan’s war with Parthia, the inscription itself would seem to date to the 150’s, at about the same time that Marcus Ulpius Yarhai himself was most active abroad. Furthermore, four military diplomas from the 120’s (two of 120 C.E. and two of 126 C.E.) record Roman citizenship granted to Palmyrene archers who, after their recruitment under Trajan, had completed their service in the Roman province of Dacia.⁷⁵ While these soldiers discharged in 120 C.E. were recruited under Trajan, perhaps for an extraordinary six-year enlistment before his Parthian War, their transfer to Dacia was probably due to Hadrian’s reorganization of Roman assets in the east.⁷⁶ Indeed, Hadrian seems to have increased the enlistment of Palmyrene units and dispersed their units to strategic settings outside of Syria, where, in addition to

⁷⁴ P1422. See p. 253 above. See also Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 46. A military diploma, *CIL* 16.106, attests the presence of an *ala Ulpia dromendaria* in Syria at about the same time.

⁷⁵ These are 1) *CIL* 16.68 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1936, no. 7; 1935, no. 3; 1925, no. 76; and *IDR* 1, no. 6 [Porolissum, 120 C.E.]); 2) *RMD* 1, no. 17 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1959, no. 31; 1958, no. 30; and *IDR* 1.5 [Cășei, 120 C.E.]); 3) *RMD* 1, no. 27 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1967, no. 395; and *IDR* 1.8 [Tibiscum, 126 C.E.]); and 4) *RMD* 1, no. 28 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1977, no. 696; and *IDR* 1.9 [Tibiscum, 126 C.E.]).

⁷⁶ On the unusual enlistment of these Palmyrene soldiers, see J. C. Mann, “The “Palmyrene” Diplomas,” Appendix II in *RMD* 2, 217-19.

Dacia, they are known from Egypt and Africa.⁷⁷

Outside of Syria, the Palmyrenes within the Roman province of Dacia are the best documented epigraphically.⁷⁸ Most of the evidence is from Porolissum and Tibiscum, where units of Palmyrene archers (*numeri Palmyreni sagittarii*) were based. We have already mentioned Roman military *diplomata* discovered in Dacia from the 120's. As noted, Trajan raised the troops discharged in 120 C.E. from within Syria, sometime before 114 C.E., and Hadrian transferred them to Dacia in ca. 118 C.E. This is reflected in their identification as "Palmyrene archers from Syria who are (based) in Dacia Superior" (*Palmyrenis sagittariis ex Syria qui sunt in Dacia Superiore*). The omission of the provincial origin *ex Syria* of the men discharged in 126 C.E. suggests that their recruitment was directly to Dacia without any term of service in Syria.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, we do not know how these forces were accommodated upon their arrival in Dacia; we also know nothing of the size of their units or the legal status of their formations.⁸⁰ It seems that these Palmyrenes initially formed a single unit, not yet regarded as a *numerus*, that was later divided into multiple garrisons based at strategic sites within Dacia, where they came to be

⁷⁷ See H. T. Rowell, "Numerus," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* 17 (1937), 2549-52.

⁷⁸ For discussion, see L. Bianchi, "I Palmyreni in Dacia: Comunità e tradizioni religiose," *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 87-95.

⁷⁹ See Mann, "The "Palmyrene" Diplomas," 219, n. 10.

⁸⁰ See Southern, "The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army," 125.

called *numeri* and where they adopted secondary names based on their geopolitical residence.⁸¹ A few inscriptions, for instance, identify the *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium* at Porolissum.⁸² Others inscriptions attest the unit based at Timiscum, the *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium*, most of which are funerary epithets.⁸³ A detachment of Palmyrene archers from this latter unit was also at Apulum (Alba Julia) in modern Transylvania, where a soldier set up a funerary stele to his distinguished comrade, a certain Mucatra, son of Brasus.⁸⁴ An analogous unit seems to have been based at Optatiana as well, stationed alongside a milliary *ala*.⁸⁵

⁸¹ See H. Callies, “Die Fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats und die sogenannten nationalen Numeri,” *BRGK* 45 (1964): 130-227; and Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 89-90.

⁸² See *L’Année épigraphique* 1944, no. 56: *n[umerus] Pal[myrenorum] Porol[issensium] sag[ittariorum] c[ivium] R[omanorum]*; 1947, no. 170; 1960, no. 219; 1971, no. 389; 1979, no. 501g; 1980, no. 755 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1977, no. 666); *CIL* 3.803; 3.837; and *ILS* 9472.

⁸³ See *IDR* 3.1.134-35, 3.1.136 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1983, 795), 3.1.142 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1983, no. 797; and 1967, no. 393), 3.1.147 (?), 3.1.152 (= *CIL* 3.14216), 3.1.153, 3.1.154 (= *CIL* 3.7999 and P0251; cf. *CIS* 2.3906), 3.1.155, 3.1.160, 3.1.164, 3.1.167 (= P0994), 3.1.170, 3.1.176, 3.1.181 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1999, no. 1295), 3.1.212, and 3.1.256a. See also *L’Année épigraphique* 1967, no. 395; 1971, no. 404d; 1971, no. 405 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1977, no. 694); and 1977, no. 695.

⁸⁴ *L’Année épigraphique* 1914, no. 102: *D(is) M(anibus) | Mucatra | Brasi miles | n(umeri) Palmyren(orum) | Tibiscensium | vixit annis XXXVIII | Mucapor Mucatral | heres contubern(ali) | carissimo posuit*. Cf. *IDR* 5/2.559.

⁸⁵ *CIL* 3.1471 (= *IDR* 3.2.366) and *IDR* 3.2.416. See Bianchi, “I Palmireni in Dacia,” 88; and Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 137. In addition, there is a possible reference to a *numerus Palmyrenorum* from Vistea in Dacia; see *L’Année épigraphique* 1991, no. 1333f: *N(umerus?) P(almyrenorum?)*.

How did these ethnic units maintain their integrity, which would have supported the maintenance of their indigenous identities, and what was their operational mandate? The latter question is the most difficult to answer since generally the status and function of *numeri* in Roman military organization and provincial administration remain contentious subjects.⁸⁶ Judging from their area of deployment in Dacia, we may assume that the Palmyrene *numeri* performed a key role in frontier defense; they may also have assisted with the policing of the province.⁸⁷ With regard to the integrity of their units, the Palmyrene *numeri* seem to have maintained their status as ethnic units into the early third century C.E. A funerary stele from Porolissum, for instance, which a certain Aurelius Maximus set up to his brother Aurelius Justinus, attests the *numerus Palmyreorum Porolissensium*.⁸⁸ The inscription, although not dated, was probably set up after the *constitutio Antoniniana* in 212 C.E., when the adoption of name Aurelius became common. Apparently then, after Palmyra was granted colonial status, these various *numeri* were converted into regular Roman formations.⁸⁹ Furthermore, recruitment

⁸⁶ For a summary of the debate, see Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 81-140.

⁸⁷ The *numeri* consisted of a mix of infantry and cavalry; see *ibid.*, 102-3.

⁸⁸ *CIL* 3.803.

⁸⁹ *CIL* 3.908 provides the only evidence that this indeed happened, which attests the *cohors I Palmyrenorum Porolissensium*. The relevant text of the inscription reads: *CH · I · P(almyrenorum) · P(orulissensium)*.

patterns may also have facilitated unit integrity. As I discussed above, for example, upon their arrival in Dacia, the *Palmyreni sagittarii ex Syria* were probably all Palmyrene natives who received Roman citizenship upon their discharge in 120 C.E. Those discharged in 126 C.E., many of whom were probably also Palmyrenes but directly recruited into Dacia seem also to have included individuals recruited locally, either from among foreigners or descendants of Palmyrene veterans.⁹⁰ As the inscription cited above attests, soldiers at Tibiscum with Thracian names suggests recruitment of non-Palmyrenes;⁹¹ similarly, an inscription from Porolissum attests a soldier in a Palmyrene unit with either a Dacian or a Thracian name.⁹² Most likely these individuals were progeny of Palmyrenes and indigenous natives, and the tendency was probably to continue recruitment from within the expatriate community. The fact these units maintained their integrity as ethnic forces operating as Palmyrenes would seem to suggest this.

Unit integrity is one issue, while the preservation of a distinct social and cultural identity is another. Beyond general remarks regarding the recruitment

⁹⁰ For discussion, see Mann, “The “Palmyrene” Diplomas,” 217-19; and Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 90. Indeed, by the end of the second century C.E., Roman names (many with mixed Palmyrene nomenclature) appear more frequently in the inscriptions. These individuals may have been descendants of retired veterans. See Callies “Die Fremden Truppen in römischen Heer,” 191. In particular, see *L’Année épigraphique* 1971, no. 389, an epithet of a veteran along with members of his immediate family.

⁹¹ See n. 84 above.

⁹² *L’Année épigraphique* 1960, no. 219.

patterns for the Palmyrene *numeri*, we must observe that the core of these units remained Palmyrene. Many of the soldiers retained the use of their native language, but many must also have been knowledgeable of Latin (sufficient enough to adopt loan-words, for instance). On one occasion, a soldier from the unit at Tibiscum transliterated his rank from the Latin *optio* into Palmyrene as *hptyn*.⁹³ Whether this reflects an impetus among the individuals concerned to be more Roman than Palmyrene is not evident, although Latin is by far more frequent in the inscriptions.⁹⁴ For sure, those discharged in 120 and later in 126 C.E. received Roman citizenship; most also adopted the name Aelius. More importantly, though, many of these Palmyrene veterans remained in Dacia as civilians where they embedded themselves in the local society. They did so as Romans, but with the social and cultural presence of Palmyrenes.

As soldiers and civilians, then, the Palmyrenes of Dacia intermingled with the local population in the communities where they were based. Some even integrated within the local aristocracy. Nevertheless, amid all of this social interaction, their importation of native gods and preservation of indigenous cult, no less than the preservation of their language, facilitated the maintenance of a distinct

⁹³ *IDR* 3.1.154 (= *CIL* 3.7999 and P0251). On the importance of literacy in Palmyrene and Latin among soldiers abroad, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 328-29. See also *IDR* 3.1.142 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1967, no. 393; and 1983, no. 797).

⁹⁴ It may be that the tendency to use Latin, rather, reflects a present need to communicate among the ranks and to understand the orders of commanding officers.

Palmyrene cultural identity.⁹⁵ At Sarmizegetusa, the capital of the province and a Roman colony, for example, a certain Publius Aelius Theimes, in his capacity as *duumviralis*, constructed a temple to the gods Malagbel (Malakbel), Bebellahamon (Belhammon), Benefal (?), and Manavat (Manawat); he also added a kitchen undoubtedly for facilitating ritual banquets.⁹⁶ Theimes does not explicitly identify himself as a Palmyrene, but the name itself seems to be the Latin transliteration of the Palmyrene name *tym*’ which, together with the Greek transliteration Thaimēs, appears frequently at Palmyra.⁹⁷ Also, the fact that he constructed a temple to Palmyrene gods, especially Malakbel, suggests strongly a Palmyrene context. Indeed, several inscriptions from Sarmizegetusa and elsewhere in Dacia attest the

⁹⁵ See Bianchi, “I Palmyreni in Dacia,” 87-95.

⁹⁶ *CIL* 3.7954 (= *IDR* 3.2.18; *ILS* 4341; and *L’Année épigraphique* 1960, no. 371; see also *L’Année épigraphique* 1968, no. 445): *Diis Patriis | Malagbel et Bebellaha|mon et Benefal et Mana|vat P(ublius) Ael(ius) Theimes Iiviral(is) | col(oniae) templum fecit solo et | inpendio suo pro se suisq(ue) | omnibus ob pietate ipsorum | circa se iussus ab ipsis fecit | et culinam subiunxit*. See also Kaizer, *Religious Life of Palmyra*, 111-12. Theimes also made a dedication of a marble statue to *Aesc(ulapio) et Hygiae*; see *CIL* 3.7896 (= *IDR* 3.2.152). For the statue, see D. Alicu, C. Pop, and V. Wollmann, *Figured Monuments from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, B. A. R. International Series, no. 55 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1979), 68, no. 7, pl. 3. A funerary altar from Sarmizegetusa (*IDR* 3.2.369 = *CIL* 3.12587) identifies Theimes as having been *Iivir[al(is)] col(oniae) D[ac(icae)] | Sar[miz(egetusae)]* and a retired veteran of the *cohors I Vindelicorum*. Also, on the same altar are listed several of his Palmyrene colleagues, including a certain Publius Aelius Bericio and Publius Aelius Zabdibol.

⁹⁷ See Stark, *Personal Names*, 54-55. On the Latinization of Syrian names, see H. Solin, “Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände,” *ANRW* 2.29.2 (1983): 781-83.

cult of Malakbel, which indicates some communal organization among Palmyrene expatriates.⁹⁸ In addition, at Tibiscum there is evidence of a cult to the Palmyrene god Yarhibol, with emphasis on his solar qualities. A certain Aurelius Laecanius Paulinus, for instance, another veteran of the *cohors I Vindelicorum* (a former *custos armorum*) and a decurion of the colony of Sarmizegetusa, erected an altar to the sun god Ierhaboli (Yarhibol).⁹⁹ While Paulinus himself was probably not from Palmyra, some Palmyrene influence seems implicit in his pious act. There was also a cult of the god Yarhibol at Apulum, attested by two altars dedicated to the deity. One identifies a certain Aurelius Bassinus as a priest (*sacerdos*) and a decurion of the colony of Aequum (in Dalmatia); the dedication reads *deo Soli Hierobolo*.¹⁰⁰ The other altar also identifies a priest, a certain Aelius Nisa, and the divine recipient

⁹⁸ Sarmizegetusa: see *IDR* 3.2.262 (= *CIL* 3.7955), 3.2.263 (?) (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1959, no. 301: MALA<LA>[gbeli]), 3.2.264 (= *CIL* 3.12580), and 3.2.484: . . . CVLT[ores . . . Ma]]LAGB[eli . . . Pro]]CULU[s] . . . See also *IDR* 3.2.265 (= *CIL* 3.7956). Tibiscum: see *IDR* 3.1.142 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1983, no. 797 and 1967, no. 393) and 3.1.143 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1983, no. 798, which suggests joining *IDR* 3.1.148). Cf. *IDR* 3.2.20 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1927, no. 56), that identifies priests at Sarmizegetusa in a Palmyrene context.

⁹⁹ *IDR* 3.1.137. The same individual set up an altar to the Jupiter, the Best and Greatest (*Jovus Optimus Maximus*); see *IDR* 3.1.138.

¹⁰⁰ *CIL* 3.1108 (= *IDR* 3/5.1.103; *ILS* 4344): *Deo Soli | Hierobolo | Aur(elius) Bas|sinus dec(urio) | col(oniae) Aequens(is) | sacerd(os) nu|minum v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*.

as Ierhibol.¹⁰¹ The Palmyrene god Bel also received cult in Dacia. At Tibiscum, for instance, a certain Aelius Zabdibol, a *custos armorum* of the *numerus Palmyrenorum* based in the city, erected an altar to Bel, the supreme god of his native Palmyra.¹⁰² A sanctuary to Bel is also attested at Porolissum, where a certain Gaius Julius Septimius Castinus, a centurion of the *legio V Macedonica* and presumably commander (*cura agens*) of the *numerus* of Palmyrene archers based in the city, paid cult to their native god Bel.¹⁰³ Also at Porolissum, a Palmyrene priest of the *numerus Palmyreorum Porolissensium* is attested on an altar dedicated to Jupiter, perhaps to be identified with Bel.¹⁰⁴ Finally, it is clear from all of these examples that Palmyrenes participated in the pagan life of the communities where they resided, but they did so in a manner that asserted their indigenous character and their group identity as Palmyrenes.

The preservation and maintenance of Palmyrene cult in Dacia can be viewed as a product of the presence of Palmyrene soldiers integrated in the local society,

¹⁰¹ *L'Année épigraphique* 1977, no. 661 (= *IDR* 3/5.1.102): *Deo | [H]ierhibol(i) | Ael(ius) Nisa | sacerd(os) | posuit.*

¹⁰² *IDR* 3.1.134: *Bel[o] deo Palmyr(eno) | Ae[l(ius) Z]abdibol | ar[m]orum cus(tos) | e[x nu]mero | Pal[myrenoru]m | [v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)] m(erito).* See also *L'Année épigraphique* 1971, no. 405 (= *ibid.*, 1977, no. 694).

¹⁰³ *L'Année épigraphique* 1980, no. 755 (= *ibid.*, 1977, no. 666): *deo patrio Belo n(umerus) Pal(myrenorum) sagit(tariorum).* See also I. Piso, "Beiträge zu den Fasten Dakiens im 3. Jahrhundert," *ZPE* 40 (1980): 277-82.

¹⁰⁴ See Bianchi, "I Palmyreni in Dacia," 91, no. 14.

whether serving actively in the various *numeri* of the province or as retired veterans. The prevalence of the gods Malakbel and Yarhibol and the maintenance of their cults, according to Dirven, favor military contexts.¹⁰⁵ Similar patterns appear in north Africa (Numidia), Egypt, and elsewhere abroad where Palmyrene soldiers were based.

For example, the evidence of Palmyrene soldiers in north Africa is less abundant than the Dacian material but equally significant. In the Roman province of Numidia (modern Algeria), Palmyrene forces were stationed primarily at el-Kantara, but the date of their arrival remains contested. A controversial inscription from the site reads:

To the shades of the dead, Agrippa, son of Theme, the Palmyrene, who was [centurion] of the *cohors III Thracum Syriaca*, who then transferred to the *cohors I Chalcidenorum*, by order of the emperor; he was given charge over the Palmyrene archers for 10 years, he served 23 years, he lived for 55 years . . . (made by) . . . his freedman and procurator.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately, the emperor under whose orders Agrippa executed his transfer is not named, so the date must be conjectured; since *imperator* is in the singular, scholars

¹⁰⁵ Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 183.

¹⁰⁶ *ILS* 9173 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1896, no. 35; and 1900, no. 197): *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) | Agrippa Themi | [f]il(ius) Palmyra q(ui) f(uit) | [(centurio)] coh(ortis) III Thra|[c]um Syr(ia) item |[t]ranslatu[s] | [i]n coh(ortem) I Ch(a)lci|denor(um) iusso | [I]mp(eratoris) curam | [e]git Palmyr(enorum) | [s]ag(ittariorum) ann(or)um X | militavit ann(os) | [X]XIII vix(it) an(nos) LV | [---]es lib(ertus) et pro(curator)*. See also Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 46.

have suggested that the reference is to Antoninus Pius, Commodus, or Severus.¹⁰⁷ Also, the Palmyrene archers appear with no unit specification, so we must assume that these troops comprised the *numerus Palmyrenorum* attested in several inscriptions from the site, most of the third century C.E.¹⁰⁸ Yet, the transfer of the *numerus Palmyrenorum* to Numidia, it now seems, predated the Severan period and must be assigned to the middle of the second century, perhaps under Hadrian or Antoninus Pius.¹⁰⁹ It is frequently argued, for instance, that Palmyrene archers were based in Numidia before 150 C.E., when, according to an inscribed stele from Lambaesis, the capital of the province, a certain Moqimu, son of Shemaūn, died. The inscription, however, which is bilingual in Latin and Palmyrene, does not refer to Moqimu as a soldier at all and it mentions no military unit in which he may have served; the Latin text only identifies Moqimu specifically as a Palmyrene.¹¹⁰ He

¹⁰⁷ For the debate regarding the date of the inscription, see Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 90-91.

¹⁰⁸ For discussion of the *numerus Palmyrenorum* in Numidia, see Callies, “Die Fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats,” 200-201; and Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 90-92. One inscription from the reign of Severus Alexander (222-35 C.E.) identifies the unit as the *n(umerus) P(almyrenorum) Sev(erianorum)*; see *CIL* 8.8795 (= *CIL* 8.18020 and *L’Année épigraphique* 1940, no. 148). See also *L’Année épigraphique* 1940, no. 150: *N(umerus) Pal(myrenorum) Seve(rianorum)*.

¹⁰⁹ See Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 90-92, who contends that Palmyrene forces probably arrived in Numidia under Hadrian.

¹¹⁰ P0255.

may have been a civilian only, perhaps a merchant.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, an inscription probably of 169 C.E. definitely attests the *numerus Palmyenorum* at el-Kantara.¹¹² Later, in 177/78 C.E., a legionary centurion dedicated an altar there to the Palmyrene god Malagbel (Malakbel), whose cult in Numidia suggests the presence of Palmyrene soldiers.¹¹³ The *numerus Palmyrenorum* was still at el-Kantara under Septimius Severus.¹¹⁴ They were later split up, however, presumably during the reign of Severus Alexander, and posted elsewhere, with garrisons attested at Messad and El Gahra.¹¹⁵

The situation in north Africa seems comparable to that discussed in Dacia in terms of unit integrity and recruitment patterns, both of which facilitated the preservation of a Palmyrene cultural identity. To some extent, Palmyrene soldiers

¹¹¹ As suggested by Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 91, n. 76.

¹¹² See *L'Année épigraphique* 1980, no. 954 (= *ibid.*, 1941, no. 156). For discussion, see L. Leschi, “Autour de l’amphithéâtre de Lambèse,” *Libyca* 11 (1954): 178-81.

¹¹³ E. Albertini, “Inscriptions d’el Kantara,” *Revue africaine* 72 (1931): 204-6, no. 8 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1980, no. 953; and 1933, no. 42); *Deo Malagbel[o] | pro salute d(ominorum) n(ostrorum) Imp[er]atorum] | A(ulo) Iuli[o] Pi[er]son[e] leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pr(o) p[ro]p[ri]etate] | T(itus) Cl(audius) [.i.]i[us] |(centurio) [[leg(ionis) III] Aug(ustae).*

¹¹⁴ See *L'Année épigraphique* 1926, no. 144.

¹¹⁵ El Gahra: see *CIL* 8.18026 (= *L'Année épigraphique* 1992, no. 1856) under Gordian III. On the Palmyrene presence at Messad, see G. -C. Picard, *Castellum Dimmidi* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1944), 103-5 and 199, with inscriptions nos. 8-10 and 23.

must have played a key role in frontier defense. Their primary task, however, would seem to have been the monitoring of pastoral migrations and policing the routes of communication and trade.¹¹⁶ Also, given the geophysical and environmental similarities of Numidia to their native province of Syria, they probably performed these tasks with marked efficiency and familiarity (a fact perhaps not lost on Roman authorities). The Palmyrene soldiers also seem to have formed a relatively closed community. According to Mann, the *numerus* at el-Kantara probably “formed a hereditary and mainly non-Roman group.”¹¹⁷ This assumes, however, that Palmyrenes from the east were recruited directly into the *numerus* or that its ranks were replenished from among descendants of veterans of the unit who had settled locally. The evidence is inconclusive. It is no less uncertain, if at all, that local Africans were themselves recruited to fill the ranks of the *numerus*.¹¹⁸ Again, however, as in Dacia, recruitment was probably among progeny which would explain the unit’s ability to maintain its Palmyrene character.

Furthermore, and again as in Dacia, the most cohesive aspect of the Palmyrene community in Numidia, in addition to the continued use of their native

¹¹⁶ On the nature and function of Roman forces in Numidia, see E. W. B. Fentress, *Numidia and the Roman Army: Social, Military and Economic Aspects of the Frontier Zone*, B. A. R. International Series, no. 53 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1979), 61-174.

¹¹⁷ J. Mann, “A Note on the Numeri,” *Hermes* 82 (1954): 505.

¹¹⁸ For discussion, see Southern, “The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army,” 91-92.

language, was the maintenance of indigenous cults, specifically those to the gods Malakbel and Yarhibol.¹¹⁹ The cult of Malakbel is first attested in el-Kantara.¹²⁰ From there, presumably, it spread to el-Ghara and Messad with the Palmyrenes soldiers who had been sent to garrison these settlements in the third century C.E.¹²¹ The cult of Yarhibol is further attested in Lambaesis, again in a military context.¹²² Also, an inscription from Ain Zaoui presumably attests the cult of Yarhibol; the divine name mentioned is Iorchobol.¹²³ Finally, an inscription from Tripolitana attests the cult of Yarhibol, identified as a solar deity, in association with the

¹¹⁹ Four bilingual inscriptions in Latin and Palmyrene have come from Numidia; see P0253, P0255, P0990, and Albertini, “Inscriptions d’el Kantara,” 220, no. 29. See also the funerary inscription, P0254, in Palmyrene, only in memory of Raphael, son of Nesha (*rp’l br nš’*), which was discovered in el-Kantara. See also J. -B. Chabot, “Nouvelle inscription palmyrénienne d’Afrique,” *CRAIBL* (1932): 265-69.

¹²⁰ See *CIL* 8.2497 and 8.8795 (= *CIL* 8.18020 and *L’Année épigraphique* 1940, no. 148); see also Albertini, “Inscriptions d’el Kantara,” 204-6, no. 8 (= *L’Année épigraphique* 1980, no. 953; and 1933, no. 42); *L’Année épigraphique* 1933, no. 43 (= Albertini, “Inscriptions d’el Kantara,” 206-7, no. 9); and 1901, no. 114.

¹²¹ Messad: see *L’Année épigraphique* 1940, no. 147; 1940, no. 149; 1940, no. 150; *CIL* 8.8795 (= *CIL* 8.18020 and *L’Année épigraphique* 1940, no. 148); and Picard, *Castellum Dimmidi*, 186-87, no. 9. See also Picard, *Castellum Dimmidi*, 187, no. 10. El-Ghara: see *CIL* 8.18024.

¹²² See *L’Année épigraphique* 1967, no. 572a; and 1920, no. 35. Both inscriptions mention *cultores* of the god. On the cult of Yarhibol in North Africa, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 45-46; and M. Janon, “Cultores dei Ierhobolis iuniores,” *Bulletin d’archéologie algérienne* 2 (1966-1967): 219-30.

¹²³ *CIL* 8.17621. For discussion, see Milik, *Dédicaces*, 46. Alternatively, the deity may read Torchobol.

presence of a vexillation of the *legio III Augusta* and among soldiers of a cohort of Syrian archers, probably *cohors I Syrorum* from Lambaesis.¹²⁴ In each of these cases, the importation of native cult would have preserved their indigenous identities.

The situation is remarkably similar in Egypt, where Palmyrene soldiers are attested at Coptos and Berenike, where they also imported native cults.¹²⁵ The Palmyrene soldiers at Berenike, for example, accompanied (perhaps installed) the cult of Yarhibol. According to a bilingual inscription from the site in Greek and Palmyrene, a statue to the god was made by an otherwise anonymous sculptor named Barikei.¹²⁶ This inscription also seems to identify Yarhibol as the *tyche* of the Palmyrene military unit based at Berenike.¹²⁷ At Coptos, where Palmyrene soldiers are also attested, the god received cult as well. In 216 C.E., for instance, a soldier of the Palmyrene archers based there, a certain M. Aurēlios Bēlakabos, dedicated an altar to the god Yarhibol.¹²⁸ Surprising, though, is the complete lack

¹²⁴ See O. Brogan and J. Reynolds, “Seven New Inscriptions from Tripolitania,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 28 (1960): 51, no. 1, pl. 17a. The *cohors I Syrorum* is attested in *L’Année épigraphique* 1892, no. 13 from Lambaesis.

¹²⁵ See Sidebotham, *Roman Economic Policy*, 95-96.

¹²⁶ See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 182, n. 90.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹²⁸ *IGRR* 1.1169. See also Rowell, “Numerus,” 2549-52.

of evidence of any cult to the god Malakbel in Egypt, concerning which there is no satisfactory explanation. Nonetheless, the evidence available from Egypt exemplifies the role of cult worship in the maintenance of a collective Palmyrene identity and distinctiveness in a foreign setting. This was not necessarily limited to military contexts, however, since, with the presence of Palmyrene merchants, as discussed above, soldiers and civilians interacted.

Elsewhere in the Roman Empire, the evidence of Palmyrene soldiers and civilians is not abundant, but it is of no less significance. Again, the patterns are similar. An inscription in the Museo Capitolino in Rome, for instance, records the dedication of a Palmyrene soldier to the god Malakbel.¹²⁹ In addition, among Palmyrene civilians in Rome, the cult of Malakbel is well attested by two major dedications. One is a relief sculpture produced in Italy that depicts the gods Malakbel and Aglibol side by side; the former deity is depicted in eastern dress clasping the right hand of a cuirassed Aglibol.¹³⁰ The dedication was set up in 236 C.E. by an individual from Hadriana Palmyra, a certain Aurelius Heliodoros Antiochus, identified in the Palmyrene text as Yarhai, son of Haliphai, son of Yarhai, son of Lishamsh Soadu. The other dedication, more famous because of its

¹²⁹ *CIL* 6.31036 (= *ILS* 4338). See also *L'Année épigraphique* 1908, no. 64.

¹³⁰ P0247. For discussion of the iconography of the relief, see Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 231; and Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 60-63. The Greek text of the accompanying inscription identifies the gods Aglibol and Malakbel as “ancestral deities” (Ἀγλιβώλω και Μαλαχβήλω πατρώοις θεοίς).

extensive reliefs and rich iconographic detail, is the marble altar dedicated, according to its accompanying Latin inscription, to Sol Sanctissimus, which Tiberius Claudius Felix, Claudia Helpis, and their son, Tiberius Claudius Alypus sponsored in fulfillment of a vow. Most enigmatic is the fifth line of the Latin text, which has been translated variously as “Calbienses of the third cohort,”¹³¹ “the third courtyard in the apartment house of Galba,”¹³² and “the third cohort of employees at the granaries of Galba (*horrea Galbae*).”¹³³ The accompanying Palmyrene text, however, is more straightforward. It reads:

This altar to Malakbel and to the gods of Palmyra: Tiberius Claudius Felix and the Palmyrenes offered it to their gods.¹³⁴

Unfortunately, we know very little of the historical context of this monument or of its patrons. The Latin text lists only the family of Tiberius Claudius Felix as the dedicants, all of whom were Romans. The Palmyrene text, on the other hand, identifies Tiberius Claudius Felix without family members but alongside an

¹³¹ Suggested by Hillers and Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, 55.

¹³² Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 177.

¹³³ For instance, see Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 231. The enigmatic Latin text, *CIL* 6.710, reads: *Soli sanctissimo sacrum | Ti(berius) Claudius Felix et | Claudia Helpis et | Ti(berius) Claudius Alypus fil(ius) eorum | votum solverunt libens merito | Calbienses de coh(ort) III*. For a recent discussion of the Latin inscription, see G. Houston, “The Altar from Rome with Inscriptions to Sol and Malakbel,” *Syria* 67 (1990): 189-93. The iconography and the inscriptions are also discussed in detail by Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 175-80, with references.

¹³⁴ P0248: *‘lt’ dh lmlkbl wl’lhy tdmr | qrb ṭbrys qlwdys plqs | wtdmry’ l’lhyhn šlm.*

unspecified community of Palmyrenes. It is not clear whether Tiberius Claudius Felix himself was Palmyrene. He was the lead sponsor of the dedication, though, and presumably the patron of a Palmyrene community in Rome, perhaps an association of merchants. As we have seen above in relation to Palmyrene merchants communities in Parthia, this would not have been unusual or unexpected. In addition, this evidence reflects a general pattern of behavior among the community of Palmyrenes in Rome that allowed the preservation of their social and cultural identities, embodied in the importation into their foreign residence of their peculiar language and indigenous cult practices to their native gods.¹³⁵

Three fragmentary inscriptions from Rome further attest the adherence to native cult practices by Palmyrene expatriates. One inscription is bilingual in Greek and Palmyrene and attests the dedication of a sanctuary in Rome to the Palmyrene ancestral gods Bel, Aglibol, and Yarhibol.¹³⁶ The dedication was made by a certain Makkaios, son of Malē, and his compatriot, Soadu, son of Taima (son of) Lishamshai. Interestingly, in 127 C.E., this second dedicant had a statue set up for his father in the temple of Bel at Palmyra, which confirms in this instance the maintenance of primordial attachments abroad.¹³⁷ The remaining inscriptions,

¹³⁵ For discussion, see E. E. Schneider, "Il Santuario di Bel e delle divinità di Palmira: Comunità e tradizioni religiose dei Palmireni a Roma," *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 69-85.

¹³⁶ P0249

¹³⁷ See P0266. See also Milik, *Dédicaces*, 166-68.

which record dedications to the gods Bel and Malakbel in Latin and Greek, were both sponsored by the same individuals, one of whom was a Palmyrene who bore the name Heliodorus.¹³⁸ This evidence further attests the presence of a Palmyrene sanctuary in Rome from the early second to the mid-third century C.E. and the long maintenance of indigenous cult by Palmyrene expatriates abroad.

The last bit of evidence that illuminates the Palmyrene identity maintenance abroad derives from Britain and consists of two funerary stele from South Shields at the mouth of the river Tyne. One stele depicts a Catuvellaunian freedwoman, Regina, set up in her memory by her husband, the Palmyrene Barates, a soldier serving in the Roman unit at the site.¹³⁹ The epitaph is in Latin and Palmyrene; the latter reads, “Regina, daughter of freedom, Barates, alas!”¹⁴⁰ The other stele depicts a certain Maurentianian freedman by the name of Victor reclining on a couch at a

¹³⁸ See *CIL* 6.50 (= Moretti, *Inscriptiones*, no. 117; *ILS* 4334; *IG* 14.969; and *IGR* 1.43) and 6.51 (= Moretti, *Inscriptiones*, no. 118; *IG* 14.970; and *IGR* 1.44). For commentary, see “Schneider, “Il Sanctuario di Bel,” 70-73. For discussion of the relationship between Bel and Malakbel in this specific case, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 173, n. 59.

¹³⁹ For discussion, see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain* (London, 1962), 160, no. 87, pl. 85; and idem, *Art in Britain under the Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 199-200 and 206.

¹⁴⁰ P0246 (*CIS* 2.3901; and R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, vol. 1, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965], no. 1065): *rgyn' bt hry br't' hbl*. The Latin text reads: *D(is) M(anibus) Regina liberta et coniuge | Barat(h)es Palmyrenus natione | Catuallauna an(norum) XXX*. The use of *natio* here is curious. It indicates that Regina was a member of the *natio* of the Catuvellaunians, a British tribe, although the association with Barate's identity as a Palmyrene is possible.

funerary banquet. There is no evidence to suggest that this Victor had any Palmyrene connections. This is suggested only by the craftsmanship of his funerary stele.¹⁴¹ Indeed, according to Colledge, “these two reliefs were carved by one sculptor, trained originally at an important Syrian centre—doubtless Palmyra itself—who had moved westwards and adapted his repertoire somewhat to his new surroundings, but who continued to reveal his origins through his choices of figures, motifs, and techniques.”¹⁴² Barates probably had an affinity for this artisan, since both were affiliated with Syrian traditions. More importantly, though, Barates clearly sought to emphasize his social and cultural identity through this individual, by employing his native Palmyrene script in the epithet and by asserting his Palmyrene identity in the Latin inscription. In the event, for instance, that someone questioned the oddity of the writing, they could examine the Latin text (assuming competence to read, of course) and immediately recognize that the individual responsible was a Palmyrene.

A last category of evidence to which Barates, the Palmyrene in Britain, would seem to belong, again related to the Palmyrene presence in the Roman Empire and the maintenance of identity, is that of Palmyrenes enrolled in or

¹⁴¹ See Collingwood and Wright, *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, vol. 1, no. 1064.

¹⁴² Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 233. For discussion, see S. R. Tufi, “Le Due stele funerarie <<Palmirene>> di Arbeia (South Shields) sul vallo di Adriano,” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 97-100.

commanding Roman army units. The evidence is sparse and sporadic, but of immeasurable value in our estimation of social advancement through military service for Rome. In the agora at Palmyra, for instance, a certain Marcus Acilius Athēnodōros, son of Acilius Mokimos, of the tribe Sergia, who served as tribune of the *legio X Fretensis* and tribune of the *cohors I Ulpia Petraeorum*, received a statue set up by his friend, Marcus Ulpus Malchos.¹⁴³ Both men, clearly, were Palmyrenes and Roman citizens. Also, Marcus Acilius Athēnodōros himself received honors from the council and the people of Palmyra for his piousness and patriotism toward his city.¹⁴⁴ Marcus Ulpus Malchos himself was honored with a statue in the temple of Bel, which his five children, all of whom inherited Roman citizenship, had set up for him according to his wishes; the accompanying inscription states that their father had accomplished with distinction the three equestrian posts (*strateiai*).¹⁴⁵ In Moesia inferior, according to a military diploma of 134 C.E., a certain Marcus Acilius Alexander, identified specifically as a Palmyrene, commanded the *cohors I Claudiaie Sugambrorum*.¹⁴⁶ In addition, a fragmentary inscription from Sarmizegetusa in Dacia attests a Palmyrene as

¹⁴³ *Inventaire* 10.108. See p. page 253 above.

¹⁴⁴ *Inventaire* 10.109.

¹⁴⁵ *Inventaire* 10.24.

¹⁴⁶ *CIL* 16.78 (= *RMD* 1, 286-87, no. 165).

praefectus of the *cohors I Augusta Thracum* (or *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum*).¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, in 141 C.E., an unnamed centurion, in cooperation his brother(s), set up a statue in the agora to honor their Palmyrene father, a certain Marcus Ulpius Abgar, himself a prefect of a corps of Palmyrene archers (ἑπαχον | Παλμυρηνώ[ν το]ξοτῶν).¹⁴⁸ These archers under the command of Abgar may have been raised and supported by Roman authorities, having operated in a manner equivalent to the raising of Palmyrene *numeri* elsewhere in the Empire, but the evidence is inconclusive. Alternately, they may have formed a component of the Palmyra's military. Regardless, Palmyrenes are attested abroad in command of Palmyrene forces under Roman mandate and supporting Roman interests. Also, from far afield, they often maintained primordial attachments to their native home. A certain Titus Aelius, for example, commanded a unit of archers in Dacia during the reign of Antonius Pius, which is known only from the fact that his unit honored him with a statue at Palmyra in the agora.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, for many who became Roman citizens as a result of military service or otherwise, the transition apparently did not detract from the identities as Palmyrenes.

¹⁴⁷ See *IDR* 3.2.348. For discussion, see Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," 229; and Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, 47.

¹⁴⁸ P1405. See also Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," 231, no. 3.

¹⁴⁹ *Inventaire* 10.79; and Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," 231, no. 4. Also, as I have noted (above, n.106), Agrippa, son of Theme, the Palmyrene, commanded a comparable unit in Numidia.

This evidence of Palmyrenes in military service for Rome, whether as basic soldiers or as commanding officers of Palmyrene or Roman forces, reveals interesting patterns with regard to the structure and maintenance of Palmyrene identity and community. The recruitment of Palmyrenes into *numeri*, specialized units with an ethnic basis, and the transfer of these forces abroad, where they interacted with foreign populations, supported the maintenance of a distinct group identity. In such situations, the social and cultural boundaries that distinguished Palmyrenes from “others” were manifested. Communal endeavors to maintain a distinct cultural presence in a foreign setting, for example, evident among Palmyrene soldiers and civilians, was embodied in the continued worship of native gods. Indeed, given the public nature of pagan cult, the spread of Palmyrene religion among expatriates in Egypt, Numidia, Dacia, and Rome would have generated clear distinctions between themselves and their foreign neighbors. In addition, the maintenance of community was supported by the fact that soldiers upon their retirement tended to reside in the areas in which they had served, which provided an element of continuity to their communal organization. Conversely, this provided an element of change as well, since veterans began to integrate into the indigenous societies where they had served; some even incorporated themselves within the provincial elite and adopted roles as local patrons. Furthermore, in some cases, the impetus to sustain a distinct social identity was of individual derivation. The choice to retain Palmyrene as a language of public expression is the most

obvious example. Moreover, the examples are numerous of individuals asserting their social identity as Palmyrenes in public inscriptions, a practice not unusual, for instance, among individuals who had attained Roman citizenship. This practice was particularly prevalent among Palmyrene military officers in Roman units. They served Rome, but they did so as Palmyrenes.

Conclusion

Beyond Palmyra, various mechanisms supported the construction and maintenance of a distinct Palmyrene social and cultural identity. Contact with foreigners, for instance, whether in the city, immediate countryside, or beyond, provided a constructive context in which social boundaries arose. Such boundaries, by default, emphasized distinctive features of the individuals or groups in question, which then served both to structure and maintain their identities. These features, as I have noted, included, among others, native cult associations to indigenous gods and the continued use of Palmyrene as a prominent language in public contexts.

In this chapter, I examined the various activities and situations in which Palmyrenes found themselves abroad. I focused initially on the Palmyrene presence in Dura Europos, where the evidence of their activity is the most extensive. At length I examined the commercial nature of their activity at Dura within the framework of the maintenance of their personal and group identities. Also, in both military and civilian contexts I examined how the Palmyrenes structured their communal relations and supported their distinctiveness in a socially and culturally

mixed environment. A short discussion followed of Palmyrene merchants abroad, which focused on their activities in the Parthian Empire where the evidence is more abundant than in the west. As I have emphasized throughout this study, trade was the basis of Palmyrene civic prosperity. Palmyrene merchants established colonies in areas directly supporting the trade in exotic goods, in communities along the Euphrates and Egypt primarily. I examined the internal organization of these merchant communities briefly and the manner by which they maintained direct social relations with Palmyra. I showed that the bonds to their native community were strong and enduring, and were supported by powerful Palmyrene individuals at home and abroad and by their extension of patronage to these merchant communities. Indeed, shared commercial endeavors that supported Palmyra's caravan trade sustained these merchant enclaves and helped with the preservation of their group identity.

Only to the west does the commercial aspect of Palmyrene activity abroad in foreign employ become obscure, since the evidence is largely confined to military contexts. Palmyrenes were employed as soldiers in special ethnic units (*numeri*) for most of the second century, only to be integrated or transformed into regular Roman units of *alae* and *cohortes* in the third century C.E. As I have discussed, the ethnic basis of these *numeri* gave structure to and facilitated the maintenance of a common group identity, by providing a framework for the continued worship of native gods and the use of a common language. Since these Palmyrene units were based in

locations far removed from their native Syria (in Britain, Numidia, Egypt, and Dacia), the impetus to retain primordial attachments abroad was probably great. Furthermore, in many cases, individuals were granted Roman citizenship upon their retirement from service, and many of these veterans opted to settle in the areas where they had served. Some seem to have moved to Rome. The best evidence is from Dacia, where some individuals proceeded as civilians to integrate fully into local Dacian society and, in unique cases, to rank among the local elite. In positions to wield social and political power, these individuals were opportunely situated to patronize their Palmyrene expatriates, among military and civilian groups. In particular, they were well-equipped to sustain their native cults, which preserved position and status for themselves and supported their distinctiveness (alongside that of their colleagues) in a foreign setting, as ritual and cult delineated definite social boundaries. Yet, the extent that Palmyrene activity in the Roman Empire (as opposed to the Parthian Empire) supported Palmyra's commercial interests is not known, except in Egypt and perhaps Rome where merchants are attested. It can only be assumed that military service abroad extended social and economic relations and provided greater access to different markets. Since most Palmyrenes seem to have maintained communications with their native city, it would have been untypical of them not to have capitalized on their situation in some manner.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Odenathus, Zenobia, and the Crisis of Identity

In 224 C.E. the Persian king Ardashir won a decisive victory over Artabanus V, the last effective Parthian monarch. This marked the foundation of the Sassanian Dynasty and the introduction of a new ideology of rule.¹ Not content with the diplomatic and economic relations upheld by their predecessors, the Sassanian lords sought to reconstitute the old Persian Empire and to reclaim all the lands once controlled by the legendary Darius and his son Xerxes.² It was a noble vision, though arrogant, which Ardashir's son, Shapur, pursued vigorously. His task proved difficult, however. The opposition was not a loose network of Greek *poleis* but the coordinated might of the Romans and their allies, to whom Shapur was an effective and powerful enemy. Shapur campaigned successfully against the Romans in the early 240's, and around 252 or 253 C.E. he actually sacked Antioch.³

¹ For the narrative sources, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 9-33.

² Cassius Dio 80.3. Cf. Herodian 6.2.2.0

³ The campaign in the 240's presumably was a war of defense against the Romans, see Maricq, *RGDS* lines 6-9. For sources on the Persian campaign into

Sometime in the middle of the third century C.E., in reaction to the demise of the Parthians and in the wake of Shapur's military successes, the renowned Septimius Odenathus of Palmyra:

paid [much] court to Shapur as one who had greatly surpassed the Romans. Wanting to lead him on, he sent magnificent gifts and other goods which Persia was not rich in, conveying them by camels. He also sent letters expressing entreaty and saying that he had done nothing against the Persians. Shapur, however, instructed the slaves who received the gifts to throw them into the river and tore up and crushed the letters. "Who is he," he declared, "and how has he dared to write letters to his master? If then he wants to obtain a lighter punishment, let him know that I shall destroy him and his people and his land."⁴

Assuming this exchange occurred, probably before 259/60 C.E. (see below), in what capacity did Odenathus approach Shapur? Did he present himself as a Roman supported by his senatorial rank and concerned with Roman interests, or did he present himself primarily as a leading citizen of Palmyra, a community whose vital economic interests were threatened by the new Persian regime? Indeed, was he attempting to establish diplomatic relations between Palmyra and the Persians comparable to the amicable relations the Palmyrenes enjoyed with the Parthians for

Roman territory in 252 or 253 C.E. and the sack of Antioch, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 49-57. For the date of Shapur's second campaign, see discussion by Millar, *Roman Near East*, 159; and Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 31, n.79.

⁴ Petrus Patricius frag. 10, *FHG* vol. 4, 187. Translation is that of S. N. C. Lieu; see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, 68-69, no. 4.1.3. For discussion, see Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 130. On the problem of the date for this presumed meeting, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 135-37.

centuries? Conversely, from Shapur's perspective, was the threat to destroy Odenathus, his land, and his people directed specifically at Palmyrenes, whose communities in Persian territory Shapur eventually displaced, or was this threat directed more broadly at the Romans? Perhaps Palmyrenes and Romans were largely indistinguishable by this time. Institutionally, Palmyra was a Roman city and its inhabitants were Roman citizens, but what this meant in terms of Palmyrene foreign relations is difficult to assess. Perhaps Shapur was aware, for the most part, of the Palmyrene bias in favor of the Romans, and he measured his response to Odenathus accordingly.

Indeed, the text reveals vividly the framework that structured Palmyra's civic and communal development, at home and abroad, and the drastic changes that followed the rise of the Sassanid Persians. As I have discussed, the caravan trade was central to Palmyrene community formation and urban prosperity. The caravan trade, apparently, also provided the impetus that led to extensive Palmyrene settlement in communities throughout the Parthian Empire, primarily along the Euphrates down to the head of the Persian Gulf. In all of these communities, Palmyra's commercial success depended upon amicable relations between Palmyrenes and their Parthian neighbors. The collapse of Parthia followed by Persian aggression and open hostility toward these communities and their merchants crippled commercial endeavors throughout the region. For the Palmyrenes, their *raison d'être* was in jeopardy. For Palmyra, its prosperity was at

stake. Quite possibly, then, in this context Odenathus may have approached Shapur. He came as a Palmyrene aware of the crippling economic conditions imposed upon his city and its people, and he sought to reestablish a status quo that his community had enjoyed with the Parthians for centuries. Amicable relations with the Persians, however, were not at all in prospect. Odenathus was rebuffed, perhaps, because Shapur was keenly aware of Palmyra's Roman character and western tendencies. Neutrality was not an option. For Odenathus and his fellow Palmyrenes, then, the critical moment for reassessment and reaction had arrived if their city was to weather the Persian storm.

The evidence from the caravan inscriptions supports this assessment. After the rise of the Persians in 224 C.E. only three caravans are known to have returned from the east, one in 247 C.E. during the reign of Philip the Arab, who had negotiated a peace treaty with the Persians three years earlier, a cessation of hostilities that would end in 252 or 253 C.E.;⁵ a second in 257/58 C.E., at the same that Odenathus and his son received numerous honors from craftsmen within Palmyra, perhaps associated with the Palmyrene embassy to Shapur after he destroyed Dura Europos in 256 C.E., and shortly before Shapur's most decisive campaign into Roman territory which ended with the capture of the Roman emperor

⁵ See P0279.

Valerian in 259/60 C.E.;⁶ and a third in 266/67 C.E. in the wake of Odenathus' own victories against the Persians which led him down the Euphrates as far as Ctesiphon.⁷ Clearly, Palmyra's commercial interests in the third century C.E. were adversely affected by Persian aggression and directly related to the state of political affairs between Rome and Persia.

The titles Odenathus assumed during this period also mirrored the deteriorating state of affairs for the Palmyrene community and the city's need to redefine itself in an environment of change and persistent conflict. In 252 C.E., for example, Odenathus was identified as the leader or chief of Tadmor (*rš dy tdmwr*), or *exarchos* in Greek.⁸ Admittedly, we do not know what these titles meant, although it would seem that Odenathus had assumed a prominent political and military role in the community, especially in light of his activities in subsequent years.⁹ Interestingly, he shared these titles with his son, Septimius Harian.¹⁰ Yet

⁶ See P0282. For sources on Shapur's third campaign and the capture of Valerian, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 58-67. For discussion, see Millar, *Roman Near East*, 159-73; and Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 129-40.

⁷ See P0288. For sources on Odenathus' campaigns against the Persians, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 71-77. For discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 215-17.

⁸ See p.292, n. 82 above. It is not clear when Odenathus was given the title *exarchos*, although it was probably in the 240's. For a general discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 86-102.

⁹ See Millar, *Roman Near East*, 157-58, who also suggests that the titles may have been used to designate a Roman priesthood. On the military connotation of

under what conditions did this happen? What would have prompted the city itself to recognize one of its citizens, no less than this man's son, as chief among others? The implication, I suggest, is that the city did so in the face of regional political and economic crises.¹¹ Odenathus and his son thus became the spokesmen of Palmyra, perhaps because of their social prominence as Roman senators. Thus it would have been as a leading citizen of Palmyra that Odenathus, ever watchful of Palmyrene interests, approached Shapur. Again, the impetus for such a visit may have been Shapur's destruction of Palmyrene communities all along the Euphrates. Ana, for example, was destroyed in 252/53 and Dura in 256 C.E.¹² The latter no doubt confirmed Shapur's animosity toward the Palmyrenes, whose community in Dura certainly would have suffered during the Persian siege. By 257/58 C.E. Odenathus also assumed the Roman title of *hypatikos*, the equivalent of *consularis*, which suggests that he had become governor of the province, but it remains uncertain

the term *exarchos*, see H. J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis*, American Studies in Papyrology, vol. 13 (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 43; and on that of the Palmyrene term *rš*, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 93, n. 122.

¹⁰ See P0290, an inscription of 251 C.E. set up in honor of Septimius Hairan by a Roman soldier in the legion at Bostra. Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 102, suggests that the assumption of these titles by father and son is evidence for the establishment of dynastic rule (*Herrscherdynastie*) at Palmyra.

¹¹ On the critical state of affairs at Palmyra, see now Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 76-85. See also Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre," 261.

¹² See Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 80-81.

whether he was mainly a Palmyrene or Roman official.¹³ At this stage, with many Palmyrene communities abroad destroyed, perhaps Odenathus and his compatriots had realized that their only means of surviving the Persian onslaughts and restoring commercial contacts abroad was to identify fully with the Romans. At any rate his titles expressed the position of Odenathus in purely Roman terms.

When Shapur resumed campaigning in 259/60 C.E., and after his capture of the Roman emperor Valerian in Mesopotamia, the Palmyrenes, led by Odenathus, reacted. With an army of Palmyrene soldiers, Syrian peasants, and whatever Roman forces would join his ranks, Odenathus drove back the Persians.¹⁴ Despite his successful campaigning, Odenathus failed to retrieve the emperor but nonetheless humbled Shapur's arrogance. There followed a second campaign in 262 C.E. when Odenathus managed to recover most of Mesopotamia for the Romans; and in 266 or 267 C.E., Odenathus advanced deep into Persian territory

¹³ For instance, the title may indicate that he had been appointed suffect consul by the emperor and served as governor of the province, or perhaps the title was more ornamental and reflected a formal position of power within Palmyra itself. For discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 104, n. 167.

¹⁴ We know very little of the disposition of Odenathus' forces at the time. Festus *Breviarium* 23, Jerome *Chronicon* 221 (Helm), and Orosius *Historia* 7.22.12 all describe Odenathus as having collected a band of peasants (*agrestium manu*), predominately Syrian according to Festus. Zosimus 1.39.1 adds that Odenathus also included within his ranks the remnants of the Roman legions in the East. Presumably, his army also included any Palmyrene forces the city supported. For discussion, see Will, *Les Palmyréniens*, 181-82.

and attempted directly to seize Ctesiphon.¹⁵ This push down the Euphrates probably facilitated the Palmyrene caravan of 266 C.E. Finally, in recognition of these exploits to advance frontier security, Odenathus was apparently honored with further titles that acknowledged his preeminence in the Near East, such as “restorer of the entire Orient” (*restitutor totius Orientis*) and “King of kings” (*mlk mlk’*), the latter a title traditionally assumed by the Persian rulers.¹⁶ Such titles will have emphasized Palmyra’s position between Roma and Persia. The only decisive evidence for the title “King of kings,” however, dates to 271 C.E., when his wife Zenobia was on her own campaign to legitimate her imperial ambitions.¹⁷ Any further plans Odenathus may have had of extending Palmyrene or Roman influence into Persia, or of securing a more favorable position for himself or Palmyra within the Roman Empire, were cut short by his murder, alongside that of his son, Septimius Hairan, in 267/68 C.E.¹⁸ Odenathus had brought Palmyra through some

¹⁵ For the various accounts, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 71-77. The campaign of 266 or 267 C.E. is implied by Zosimus 1.39.1-2, who states that Odenathus twice besieged Ctesiphon after 262 C.E. and once shortly before his death. The same is implied by Syncellus *Chronographica* 1.712.

¹⁶ See p. 56, n. 121 above. *Restitutor totius Orientis* is taken from P0292 as the translation of *mtqnn’ dy mdnh’ kllh*; for discussion, see Cantineau, “Un *Restitutor orientis*,” 222 (1933): 217-33. As “King of kings,” see P0292 and P0317.

¹⁷ See P0293.

¹⁸ If more was known concerning the circumstances surrounding his death, better insight might be gained with respect to Zenobia’s subsequent actions or reactions, and to what extent his assassination affected relations between Palmyra

troublesome times.

I have suggested that Odenathus, before he ever took an aggressive stance against Shapur, approached the Persian king primarily as a Palmyrene mindful of Palmyra and Palmyrene trade interests in Persia. Yet Odenathus was a Roman senator with regional influence. Also, Palmyra itself at the time was a Roman *colonia*, although despite this status the city was unique among others. While under the aegis of Rome, Palmyra nonetheless retained some independence because of its isolation in the desert. A more comprehensive response, then, to the initial question of whether Odenathus presumably had approached Shapur as a Palmyrene or a Roman would be that he did so in all likelihood as both, only that the welfare of his native community seems to have held pride of place.

The events that followed the death of Odenathus are complex. At some time before 269/70 C.E., his wife and son, Zenobia and Vaballathus, assumed from both eastern and western perspectives positions of exceptional power. An undated inscription, for example, on a milestone in Palmyrene territory west of the city on

and Rome. Sources on this matter are confusing and contradictory, based largely on rumor and hearsay. One version of the assassination implicates the emperor Gallienus, who apparently grew concerned over Odenathus' increasing power, while Zenobia's subsequent actions simply translated as revenge for the death of her husband (see Petrus Patricius frag. 7, *FHG* vol. 4, 195; cf. John of Antioch frag. 152.2, *FHG* vol. 4, 599). Various other versions relate the assassination to internal family disputes: Zenobia herself is implicated in one account (see SHA *Tyranni Triginta* 15.5-6 and 17.1-3; SHA *Gallienus* 13.1; Zonaras 12.24; Syncellus *Chronographica* 1.716-17; and Zosimus 1.39.2). For the sources, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 80-82. For discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 218-30.

the road to Damascus or Emesa, identifies Zenobia as “queen” (*basilissa*) and Vaballathus as both “King of kings” (*mlk mlk*) and “*corrector* of the entire East” (*’pnrtt’ dy mdnh’ kllh*).¹⁹ In this instance I would argue that the assumption of royal titles made sense only with respect to the extension of Palmyrene power and influence into Persian territory, where Odenathus had earlier established Palmyrene dominance. It was, perhaps, an assertion of Palmyrene interests in the East. Soon, however, Zenobia and her son turned westward, but what motivated their decision to do so remains contested. The various accounts are late, fragmentary, and even contradictory at times, so it is generally difficult to discern fact from fiction.²⁰

It is, nonetheless, evident that Palmyrene forces took immediate steps to seize Egypt in 269/70 C.E., and they secured control over Arabia in the process.²¹ Potentially, there were two motivating factors behind the Palmyrene invasion of

¹⁹ P0317. The inscription probably dates before Palmyra’s eventual expansion westward, as Millar, *Roman Near East*, 171-72, suggests. The Palmyrene term *’pnrtt’* is a transcription of the Greek *epanorthōtēs*, the equivalent of the Latin *corrector*. For discussion, see C. Clermont-Ganneau, “Odeinat et Vaballat, rois de Palmyre, et leur titre romain de *corrector*,” *Revue biblique* 29 (1920): 382-419. See also F. Millar, “Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian: The Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria,” *JRS* 61 (1971): 9-10.

²⁰ For the evidence, see Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 83-89.

²¹ On the extension of Palmyrene power in Arabia, see Malalas 12, p. 299, who claims that Zenobia invaded to avenge the death of her husband and slew the *dux* of the province. For further discussion, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 278-88. For the chronology, see Millar, “Paul of Samosata,” 9.

Egypt. Commercial interests may have prompted the invasion.²² As noted, there was a significant decline in the long-distance trade via the Euphrates as a result of the Persian Wars.²³ Meanwhile, commercial goods continued to arrive at Red Sea ports, and, as noted in Chapter 6, Palmyrene merchants in the region were certainly aware of and supported this trade. Thus the desire to assume direct control over this commerce and to open new markets may have prompted the invasion.²⁴

On the other hand, the seizure of Egypt may have been clearly an attempt to assert dynastic rule in the Near East. Egypt was after all central to the food supply of the Roman state and power and dominance awaited anyone who controlled it.²⁵ Initially, the Palmyrenes may have sought to maintain their dominant position in the region, which Odenathus certainly had achieved, as opposed to expanding it.²⁶ But their dominance expanded nonetheless. Presumably after the Egyptian campaign, the Palmyrenes took control over northern Syria, which included the great city of

²² See J. Schwartz, "L'Empire romain et le commerce oriental," *Annales* 15 (1960): 18-44.

²³ For discussion, see Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 180-82.

²⁴ Perhaps in this same context the Palmyrenes attacked Bostra in Syria. See *IGLS* 13.1.9107, which records the destruction of the temple of Jupiter Hammon by the "Palmyrene enemies" (*a Pa[l]myrenis hostibu[s]*).

²⁵ On the supplying of foodstuffs in the Roman Empire, see Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 83-103.

²⁶ See Potter, *Prophecy and History*, 394.

Antioch.²⁷ Palmyrene supremacy eventually spread to Galatia, and thus the Palmyrenes held all of Asia Minor east of Ankara.²⁸ This move into Galatia, it is claimed, challenges the notion that the Palmyrenes were motivated by commercial interests.²⁹ This is not necessarily true, if we presume that the Palmyrenes were also commercially driven by a desire to gain access to foreign markets. In addition, the move into Galatia may have reflected Palmyrene interest in the Black Sea trade. Nevertheless, while the Palmyrenes may have intended to expand their domination further westward, fate intervened in the person of an angered and perhaps anxious Roman emperor, Aurelian, who had assumed power soon after the death of Claudius II in 270 C.E. and thus after the Palmyrenes gained control over Egypt.³⁰

The expansion of Palmyrene power and dominance under Zenobia and Vaballathus raises the issue of whether it represented a local ethnic movement against Rome, a bid for independence and hegemony over Syria and the Near East, or was it an abortive claim to the Empire by notable Romans hailing from a Roman city?³¹ In other words, did Zenobia and her son, and behind them the forces of

²⁷ As argued by Millar, "Paul of Samosata," 9.

²⁸ Zosimus 1.50.1.

²⁹ For instance, see Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire*, 161; and Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, 180.

³⁰ See Malalas 12, p. 299.

³¹ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 173 and 334-35, suggests that Zenobia's actions in fact reflected an abortive claim to the Empire.

Palmyra, act primarily as Palmyrenes or as Romans? Since narrative sources are late and unreliable for establishing a context illuminating personal motives, scholars have turned to the epigraphy and the numismatic evidence for answers. Basically, the attempt has been made to determine when and in what manner the Palmyrenes propagandized and legitimized their rule, as revealed, for instance, by the titles their leaders assumed and asserted locally on coins and through inscriptions.³² Presumably before 270 C.E., for example, Zenobia regarded herself as “queen” (*basilissa*), and Vaballathus styled himself “King of kings” (*mlk mlk’*) and “corrector of the entire East” (*ʿpnrtt’ dy mdnh’ klh*), titles which he purportedly inherited from his father.³³ The implication of this is that Zenobia and her son were the supreme rulers of Palmyra acting in their city’s interests. Also, the dual designation of “King of kings” and *corrector*, I would suggest, legitimized the extension of Palmyrene domination to the east and west, respectively.

In 270 C.E. Vaballathus began assuming the Roman titles of *vir clarissimus* (the most illustrious ruler), *consul*, *dux Romanorum*, *stratēgos* of the Romans, and *imperator*, while he apparently dropped the title of *corrector* and began designating himself as “king,” or *rex* in Latin rather than as “King of kings.” Clearly by this time, Vaballathus sought recognition and legitimacy from Roman authorities, in

³² For what follows, see the discussion by see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 242-59.

³³ See n. 19 above.

particular from the emperor Aurelian, since the title *imperator* was an overt claim to imperial rank. Coins struck in Antioch, papyri from Egypt, and milestone inscriptions from Arabia and Syria tell the story. For example, milestone inscriptions from along Trajan's new highway (*via nova*) from between Bostra and Philadelphia (modern Amman) record Vaballathus as L. Julius Aurelius Septimius Baballathus Athenodorus *v(ir) c(larissimus) rex co(n)s(ul) imperator dux Romanorum*.³⁴ Papyri from Egypt, those which are dated by the regnal years of both Aurelian and Vaballathus, present a more obvious attempt on the part of the latter to gain legitimacy. These style Aurelian in a dominant position as, "Imperator Caesar Lucius Domitius Aurelianus Pius Felix Augustus," whereas Vaballathus is identified without the title of Augustus as, "Julius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus Athenodoros, illustrious king, consul, *imperator*, *stratēgos* of the Romans."³⁵ Similarly, coins struck in Antioch in this period bear portraits of both Aurelian and Vaballathus; the former is identified as Augustus on the reverse

³⁴ For the evidence, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 248, n. 16. Similarly from Judaea, milestones found north of Scythopolis record, "*Vaballatho | Athenodoro | VC Regi Cons | Imp Duc Roma|norum*;" see Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 223, n. 22; and Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 248-49, n. 17. See also T. Bauzou, "Deux milliaires inédits de Vaballath en Jordanie du Nord," in *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, 1-8.

³⁵ See, for example, P. Oxy. 2908 2:20-26: (ἔτους) α´ Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος | Λουκίου Δομιττίου Αὐρηλιανοῦ Εὐσεβοῦς | Εὐτυχοῦς Σεβαστοῦ καὶ Ἰουλίου | Αὐρηλίου Σεπτιμίου Οὐαβαλάθου | Ἀθηνοδώρου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου βασιλέως | ὑπάτου αὐτοκράτορος στρατηγῶ Ῥωμαίων(v) | Τῦβι. Cf. P. Oxy. 1264. For discussion with references, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 249-50, ns. 18-20.

of the coins, whereas on the obverse Vaballathus is depicted with the lesser titles of king (*rex*), *imperator*, and *dux Romanorum*.³⁶ In all such examples, it is clear that Vaballathus had yet to deviate from the hope of imperial recognition, with which Palmyrene power and dominance in the region would have been secured.

Only near the end of 271 and in 272 C.E. did Vaballthus break from this pattern of acknowledging his subordinate position to Aurelian and assume direct imperial authority by styling himself as Augustus. A milestone from along the Trajan's *via nova* publicizes the usurpation:

To the Emperor Caesar L. Julius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus
Athenodoros Persicus Maximus Arabicus Maximus Adiabenicus
Maximus Pius Felix Invictus Augustus.³⁷

Also, at Antioch coins were struck that excluded Aurelian altogether and designated Vaballathus as Augustus along with his mother Zenobia as Augusta.³⁸ It would seem that Zenobia and Vaballathus assumed imperial authority because prior attempts to legitimize and to gain official recognition of their dominance in the

³⁶ The standard formulation was, according to *RIC* 5.1, 308, nr. 381: IMP C AVRELIANVS AVG | VABALATHVS VCRIMDR = Imp(erator) C(aesar) Aurelianus Aug(ustus) | Vabalathus V(ir) C(larissimus) R(ex) Im(perator) D(ux) R(omanorum). For other references, see Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, 251-53, ns. 27-28 and 30.

³⁷ *ILS* 8924: Im[p]. Caesari L. Iulio | Aurelio Septimio | Vaballatho | Athenodoro Per[sico] Maximo Ara[bico] Maximo Adia[benico] Maximo Pio | Felici Inuicto Au[g].

³⁸ See H. Seyrig, "Vhabalathus Augustus," in *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*, edited by M. -L. Bernhard (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966), 659-62; and Millar, *Roman Near East*, 172.

region were reproached by the emperor. Indeed, it may be that Aurelian had already set out for the East, which then forced the transition. Unfortunately, the evidence is insufficient to understand what the strategic aims of Zenobia and her son were. In fact, as Isaac emphasizes, it was probably naive in the first place to think that Palmyrene domination over Egypt was anything but an “irrevocable step making reconciliation with the emperor impossible.”³⁹ At any rate, what appeared as clear usurpation to Aurelian met with stiff resistance. The emperor Aurelian came to the East later in 272 C.E., when he defeated Palmyrene forces at Antioch and Emesa and besieged Palmyra itself. Palmyra eventually fell after the Romans captured Zenobia, who had attempted an escape to the Persians. The fate of Vaballathus is not known, but it is doubtful that Aurelian allowed the youth to be spared.⁴⁰

With the evidence of the Palmyrene “revolt” in mind, we may now address the question of whether Palmyrene operations deep within Roman territory represented a separatist movement to establish Palmyrene dominance over Syria or all of the Near East, or whether it was an abortive bid of Palmyra’s rulers as

³⁹ Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 223.

⁴⁰ Zosimus 1.59.1 reports that a son of Zenobia accompanied Aurelian, but he does not specify whether it was Vaballathus or not. Purportedly, Zenobia had other children through her union with Odenathus. SHA *Gallienus* 13.2 names two sons, Herennianus and Timolaus, while SHA *Aurelian* 38.1 identifies Vaballathus, Herennianus, and Timolaus. For further discussion of the evidence and the issues involved, see Seyrig, “Les Fils du roi Odainat,” 159-72. Cf. Potter, *Prophecy and History*, 386-88.

Romans to seize the Empire. According to Millar, the facts themselves suggest that the latter was the case. I agree, but point out that the claim to imperial power came only after spectacular military success. Surely in 271/272 C.E., by declaring themselves Augusti, Vaballathus and Zenobia sought imperial power in Roman terms. What was meant earlier, however, when they clung to the titles of king and queen, which would have had no real relevance in the Roman state among Roman citizens? Unfortunately, the answers are as vague as any personal motives that we may hope to assign to Zenobia and her son, although their assumption of these titles should not be removed entirely from their Palmyrene contexts. Hence, the initial impetus to move westward, especially into Egypt, may have been prompted by the desire to expand Palmyrene commerce, which would indicate that Palmyra's prosperity was a main concern. If Zenobia and her son embraced a separatist revolt, they acted not just as Palmyrenes, or primarily as Romans, but as both.

Finally, the epilogue to the Palmyrene "revolt" illuminates the strength of the Palmyrene community. After deposing Zenobia, Aurelian initially spared the city.⁴¹ After the capture of Zenobia, however, and upon his return to Europe, within the year perhaps, Aurelian had received word of a second Palmyrene uprising. Led by a local citizen, Septimius Apsaios, a group primarily of Palmyrenes, who sought perhaps to restore Palmyra to a position of regional importance, began tempting a certain Marcellinus, whom Aurelian posted as prefect of Mesopotamia and Rector

⁴¹ Zonaras 12.27; and Zosimus 1.54-56.

of the East, to usurp imperial power.⁴² Cautious and hesitant, Marcellinus delayed responding to the Palmyrenes, which aggravated their impatience. When they insisted upon an answer, Marcellinus would provide only ambiguous ones, all the while concealing the fact that he had informed Aurelian of their plans. With their patience exhausted, the Palmyrenes reacted by elevating one of their own to the rank of Augustus, a certain Antiochus.⁴³ Aurelian, meanwhile, was quick to return to the city and put down the revolt, presumably even dismissing Antiochus afterwards as someone of little importance. The fate of Septimius Apsaios is not known, but his faithfulness to Palmyra was memorialized by the following inscription set up along the Great Colonnade:

The City to Septimius Apsaios, citizen and protector.⁴⁴

In a final assessment I would not discount the possibility that Septimius Apsaios, not to mention his colleagues, acted partly out of his own self-interest, but neither would I dismiss the notion that he also acted out of communal-interest, as a Palmyrene faced with the civic crisis of displacement from the broader social and commercial networks that had made the city what it was. For his good citizenship

⁴² Zosimus 1.59-61.

⁴³ According to SHA *Aurelian* 30.4-5, the Palmyrenes promoted a certain Achilleus, presumably a kinsman of Zenobia. The anonymous source goes on to describe how the Palmyrenes murdered a certain Sandario, commander of the Roman garrison there, along with six hundred of his archers.

⁴⁴*Inventaire* 3.18: Σεπτ. "Αψαιον τὸν πολεΐτην | καὶ προστάτην ἢ πόλις.

and his self-identification with Palmyra, he was appropriately honored. At this point, however, this meant very little. The community of the Palmyrenes had breached faith with both Rome and Persia as a neutral entity between the Empires. Soon Palmyra would fade into obscurity.

Retrospect and Broader Implications

Thus, in the dramatic careers of Odenathus and Zenobia, a conflict of identities helped bring a dramatic end to the spectacular achievement of Palmyra. My aim in this study has been to identify the factors that led various tribal groups to establish a city in the first century B.C.E. and then to illuminate the subsequent processes of urban development and community transformation. I framed this entire study within an analysis of the structure and maintenance of personal and group identity, in the city, in the countryside, and further afield, as well as within a discussion of the development of the state as a hybrid of the Greek *polis*, thus a community of citizens in face-to-face contact. I sought to elaborate upon how the Palmyrenes managed to form a community that typified Mediterranean social and political structures while retaining indigenous elements that made them culturally distinct.

I examined in Chapter 2 how the Palmyrenes constructed personal and group identity upon clans and tribes of primordial origin, by analyzing tribalism both at Palmyra and in its territory. Initially, I contested the popular conceptions of sedentarization and nomadization as unidirectional processes, and I stressed that

subsistence strategies based on agriculture or pastoralism tended to overlap, even within the same tribal groups, and that relations between their members tended to be mutualistic rather than antagonistic. Tribalism at Palmyra, in fact, reflected commonalities between individuals and groups generated in an environment sufficiently harsh to require greater effort and cooperation in order to acquire the basic necessities of life. The harsh environment also promoted greater competition over what few resources were available, which might have turned to conflict and thereby required more concerted measures to maintain security and peace. Furthermore, I emphasized that Palmyra remained distinctly a tribal society throughout its history, and that membership in a particular tribe conferred identity upon those individuals involved. This in turn provided a cultural infrastructure around which their community grew.

Chapters 3-5 formed the heart of this study. I examined in Chapter 3 the mechanisms of community formation. I emphasized the role of the city as both a religious and an economic center. Indeed, individuals and groups were naturally and customarily drawn to Palmyra as a cult center in the Syrian desert, perhaps through most of the settlement history of the oasis. The cultic atmosphere provided social cohesion. Then, beginning in the first century C.E., more people settled in Palmyra because of the economic opportunities that the city afforded, especially participation in the caravan trade. This was a lucrative enterprise that enriched those involved in it and largely financed the architectural and sculptural

embellishment of the city.

I examined in Chapter 4 Palmyrene social relations that followed community formation. I explored personal and group identity through a comprehensive review of the daily face-to-face interactions among individuals and groups, and I attempted to put Palmyrene social relations in broader Mediterranean contexts. I emphasized the importance of kinship as the basic framework for identity construction, and I examined related issues such as family structure, marriage patterns, and the roles of women, freedmen, freedwomen, and slaves in Palmyrene society. I then reviewed non-kinship groups such as religious clubs and occupational groups in the city's social organization. I concluded Chapter 4 with an assessment of friendship and patronage at Palmyra and the manner in which these power relationships structured personal and group interaction. These reflected an ethic of reciprocity in Palmyrene society, which resulted from communal expansion and increased relationships between Palmyrenes and foreigners, primarily Romans. In fact, the introduction of a formal Roman system of patronage in the third century C.E., not to discount informal patronage systems in preceding centuries, marked a clear shift in Palmyra's social development. This placed upon the Palmyrene community a unique cultural stamp, the imprint of which highlighted Palmyra's incorporation in the Roman world.

I discussed in Chapter 5 the development of Palmyra's civic institutions that regulated social, economic, political, and cultural relations within the city and its

hinterland. I began with the development of Palmyra as a hybrid form of the Greek *polis* and of the formation of a distinct “Palmyrene” identity and citizenship. I then discussed Palmyra’s institutional development first into a classic Greek *polis* and then into a Roman *colonia*. Throughout, I stressed Rome’s increasing power over and influence upon the city. I also reviewed the evidence for the “four tribes” of Palmyra as a distinct social organism, but I rejected the common view that the “four tribes” were an artificial creation that occurred under Roman influence. Instead I identified their appearance as a natural communal reaction to an economic and political crisis in the second century C.E. that required greater group collaboration among pre-existing tribal entities. I concluded Chapter 5 with a discussion of Palmyra’s military as a distinct civic institution that embodied the power of the Palmyrene state.

Chapter 6 moved beyond Palmyra and its hinterland to examine how Palmyrene identity and community were structured and maintained abroad. I focused initially on the Palmyrene community of Dura Europos, for whom we have the greatest evidence, and I demonstrated how Dura and Palmyra intertwined their fates through affiliation of their respective tutelary deities. I then discussed the Palmyrene merchant communities abroad, especially those in the Parthian Empire, which promoted the caravan trade and Palmyra’s urban development. I concluded with a discussion of Palmyrenes in foreign services, notably those who served in *numeri*, or ethnic military units, throughout the Roman Empire. I emphasized in

Chapter 6 that the Palmyrenes were quite successful at sustaining their identities and cultural distinctiveness in foreign contexts. They did so by maintaining social and economic connections to their native community. They also imported their Palmyrene gods into their foreign residences in order to sustain themselves as a unified people while settled abroad.

To sum up, in this study I have shown that through almost three centuries the Palmyrenes, whether at home or abroad, never lost their cultural integrity and distinctiveness. In fact, Palmyra represents a rare example of a tribal society that made the transition from a nomadic, or semi-nomadic, to a more settled way of life, while retaining strong pastoral connections. Whatever the circumstances were that brought about this transition, it is significant that it occurred so soon after the Romans established their presence in the Near East. Trade was certainly a factor. Also, as an urban community, the Palmyrenes were in a better position to engage in more meaningful and profitable relations with the Romans, who were predisposed to focus their attention and resources on people in cities as opposed to “barbarians” living on the fringes of civilization. Yet while the Romans provided a context for the urbanization of Palmyra in Mediterranean style, the Palmyrenes themselves initiated and promoted a new and distinct communal identity. Cultural influence from the east also had an impact on Palmyra’s communal development. Indeed, the same tribes that coalesced at Palmyra also established communities in a number of important cities in Parthia, and the cultural influences derived from these contacts

were numerous. In this manner, between Rome and Parthia, the Palmyrenes formulated and maintained a distinct cultural identity. Their success may be attributed to their semi-autonomy in the frontier between the two empires, which set all the conditions necessary to generate a cultural distinctiveness as Palmyrenes that was, as I will discuss further below, “Greek,” “Roman,” “Parthian,” and native all at once.

Finally, this study has contributed broadly to scholarship in Palmyrene, Near Eastern, and frontier studies. In the field of Palmyrene studies, by examining the epigraphic evidence in its monumental contexts, I have presented a composite image of communal development at Palmyra that highlights indigenous responses to social, economic, and political change. I have also provided a more comprehensive context for identity construction and maintenance, by demonstrating the persistence of identities based on blood and kinship and their compatibility with those based on locality of residence. Ultimately, I have provided a social, political, and historical context for the interpretation of material associated with the Palmyrene community.

In the broader field of Near Eastern studies, I have illuminated the ubiquitous process of sedentarization and outlined the development of a Semitic city on the fringes of the Roman Near East. In the process of building a community, Palmyrene social and political structures reflected native features, as well as Greek, Roman, and Parthian ones. These structures, in fact, governed the

shape and maintenance of Palmyrene identity, which reflected all external stimuli.

Fergus Millar asserts that “a social and economic history of the Near East in the Roman period cannot be written.”⁴⁵ This is true partly because we lack sufficient case studies to permit broader assessments of social and economic developments in the Near East. Oddly enough, Palmyra is unique among communities in the Near East for many reasons but in particular because of the wealth of historical and archaeological evidence the city provides. It is indeed possible to write a social and economic history of Palmyra, as I hope to have demonstrated. Furthermore, when set in broader regional contexts, the Palmyrene evidence can illuminate general historical processes that reflect Near Eastern society and economy.

This study also contributes to frontier studies and the issue of cultural negotiation in regional settings. I have emphasized throughout this work, which is essentially an historical ethnography of Palmyra as a frontier community, the social and cultural distinctiveness the Palmyrenes achieved during the growth of their community. This happened while confronting Rome’s expanding power and influence. Indeed, the growth of Palmyra as a city, which began probably in the first century B.C.E., was facilitated by Roman authorities such as Creticus Silanus, who fixed Palmyra’s territorial boundaries, and Germanicus early in the reign of Tiberius. Then road construction in the last quarter of the first century C.E. brought

⁴⁵ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 225.

Palmyra into Rome's provincial network and gave Roman forces ease of access to the oasis. The imperial visit of Hadrian, the living embodiment of Roman power and authority, early in the second century C.E. confirmed Roman interests in the city, both as a source of revenue and as an indirect means of policing the desert to assure regional security. By the close of the second century C.E., a Roman garrison was installed in the city, perhaps under Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, along with the imperial cult, which set Palmyra firmly within Rome's administrative network. Finally, in the third century C.E. Palmyra was confirmed to be a Roman city, having been granted the institutional status of a *colonia*, and its free citizens, certainly after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 C.E., legally became Romans.

In a broader context, according to Isaac, "the Roman Empire grew by conquering and absorbing neighboring peoples, one after the other. The subjects in the provinces lost their identity as peoples and became, if they were lucky, Roman citizens."⁴⁶ As I have noted, however, the Palmyrenes clearly did not lose their identity as a people. Rather they managed to preserve this identity while simultaneously becoming Roman. This was possible because Palmyra was a community isolated in the desert and on the periphery of the Empire. Because of its setting, as Pliny had noted in the first century C.E., Palmyra enjoyed a *privata sors*, a separate fate, between empires. Palmyra was the archetypical frontier community.

The study of Roman frontiers traditionally has centered on the Roman army,

⁴⁶ Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 2.

as the instrument of *imperium* or power, and its deployment. The tendency has been to regard frontiers as explicitly military, where a frontier is defined chiefly by the presence of imperial forces and their fortifications.⁴⁷ In terms of function, the frontier served both as a safeguard against external enemies (whether perceived or real) and, not least of all, as a staging area for the expansion of the Roman *imperium*. One challenge to scholars has been to determine the scope of either of these functions, whether the components of any frontier system represented defensive tactics, offensive tactics, or both. Studies which emphasize the nature and function of military architecture within a frontier zone represent one important response to the challenge.⁴⁸

While no study of the Roman frontier can dismiss the significance of the army, which, after all, represented the Roman Empire in the provinces and was essential to the imperial administration, neither should any study ignore the indigenous elements that comprised Roman frontiers and their distinctive features. Frontier regions varied significantly one from another, and this variation depended on a number of factors. Differences in climate and topography contributed, on the

⁴⁷ See, for instance, W. S. Hanson, "The Nature and Function of Roman Frontiers," in *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe*, edited by J. Barrett, et al., B. A. R. International Series, no. 471 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1989), 55-63. For discussion, see H. Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 1-9.

⁴⁸ For the East, see S. Gregory, *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier* (Amsterdam: A. Hakkert, 1995).

one hand, and the customs, traditions, language, and religion of native populations, only to name a few aspects, did so as well. Awareness of this diversity gives room for the development of more integrative models for the study of frontier regions.

Whittaker's *The Frontiers of the Roman Empire* represents an important contribution in this direction.⁴⁹ Whittaker is interested in the Roman ideology of frontiers, which he shows to be the result of a cosmology that combined a Roman perception of space, defined in terms of harmony, order, regularity and accessibility, with an assertion of power and control over areas not under direct imperial control. Whittaker argues that the Romans adhered to the ideology of *propagatio imperii* and *imperium sine fine*, which suggests that they perceived of an empire without limits, and he illustrates how *externae gentes*, peoples beyond imperial control, were themselves treated as though they were in fact subjects of the Empire.⁵⁰ His thesis represents a growing trend not to view frontiers as simple demarcations between Romans and barbarians but as zones of social, economic, or cultural interactivity or diffusion.⁵¹ While Whittaker admits that there were limits

⁴⁹ C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 10-30.

⁵¹ This is also the essence of the argument by B. Isaac, "An Open Frontier," in *Frontières d'empire: Nature et signification des frontières romaines (Actes de la Table ronde internationale de Nemours, 21-22-23 mai 1992)*, edited by P. Brun, S. E. van der Leeuw, and C. R. Whittaker, *Mémoires du Musée de Préhistoire d'Ile-de-France*, no 5 (Nemours: Editions de l'Association pour la Promotion de la Recherche archéologique en Ile-de-France, 1993), 105-14.

to imperial expansion, his emphasis is less on the boundaries of direct Roman control than on the zones within which the Romans exercised their influence.⁵²

The manner in which Rome exercised its control over or influence upon Palmyra is difficult to assess, but the effects seem obvious. Palmyra developed as a community increasingly attuned to Mediterranean values and customs. Palmyrenes were clearly more Roman in the third century C.E. than they had been in the first or second. Indeed, as the community developed over time, patterns of Roman behavior emerged among its citizenry, especially among the ruling elite. This reflected the dual processes of homogenization and cultural convergence, as the Palmyrenes gradually became less differentiated from Romans. To a certain extent, this was Romanization. There were, however, anomalies that made Palmyra unique. Its language, art, military capacity, and foreign relations, as I have discussed, all contributed to the preservation of a unique Palmyrene identity. How are we to explain this? What did it mean for the Palmyrenes to “become Roman,” and was it necessarily the case that to “become Roman” meant that one lost all sense of being something other?

Romanization is still a problematic topic.⁵³ Essentially, it was a process—

⁵² See also Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 2-9.

⁵³ The literature on the topic is vast and no doubt will continue to increase so long as the issues of acculturation and assimilation maintain contemporary relevance. For a survey of the issues with references to earlier works, see M. Millett, “Romanization: Historical Issues and Archaeological Interpretations,” in *The Early Roman Empire in the West*, edited by T. Blagg and M. Millett (Oxford:

traditionally expressed in such terms as assimilation and acculturation that took place at the periphery—by which indigenous peoples were incorporated into the Roman Empire. In other words, they “became Romans.” The Roman army was one link between center and periphery, and just as its role on the Roman frontier is debated, so too is its role as a catalyst for cultural change. Most scholars assume that the Roman army was central to the homogenization of the Empire.⁵⁴ They emphasize the high visibility and integration of the army in the provinces, the daily contacts between soldiers and civilians, and the role of the army in mediating between the imperial government and civilian populations. The army facilitated the spread of Latin to the provinces and contributed to the development of the provincial infrastructure. As the builder of bridges, roads, and other public works, the army facilitated the social and economic integration of the provinces. The army also incorporated provincials of diverse cultural backgrounds into its ranks, imposing upon them a single institutional framework that clearly defined their status and duties, and having them serve wherever the ruling power selected. In this sense, the bulk of the Roman army consisted of provincials who, by virtue of their service, were themselves assimilated and acculturated in Roman fashion.

Interestingly, the Palmyrene evidence complicates this assessment, since

Oxbow Books, 1990), 35-41; and Webster, “Creolizing the Provinces,” 209-17.

⁵⁴ See Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 194; and R. MacMullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 1-19. See also Millar, *Roman Near East*, 526-27.

some Palmyrenes served in the Roman army and became Roman while others, as I discussed in Chapter 6, took care to preserve their native identities. This leads to a central debate regarding Romanization, which is the extent to which the Romans actively assimilated and acculturated provincial populations as opposed to the provincials Romanizing themselves by deliberately adopting the cultural habits of their conquerors.⁵⁵ I will suggest here, however, as I have in Chapter 2, that our tendency to regard any process as unidirectional detracts from a full understanding of the dynamics involved. Cultural identities were, in fact, fluid and negotiable, and the processes of acculturation and assimilation were active concurrently among Romans and provincials alike.

For example, in his study of Roman Gaul, Greg Woolf similarly opted to change the assumptions made in the debates concerning Romanization.⁵⁶ Rather than presenting the situation as that of one culture assimilating or adopting the habits of another, the Romans and the Gauls collaborated in the development of a totally new provincial culture. Also, according to Woolf, it appeared that this collaboration took place primarily between Roman authorities and a newly formed Gallo-Roman aristocracy. Both recognized that Roman culture was in itself a negotiable concept. What each of them sought from the interactive experience was the cultural competence necessary to take part in the process of deciding what

⁵⁵ See Woolf, "Beyond Romans and Natives," 347.

⁵⁶ Ibid. See also idem, *Becoming Roman*, 238-49.

Roman culture, as a shared, provincial culture, would be.

In a similar manner the Palmyrenes, through the ruling elite who were the arbiters of power, negotiated a unique cultural identity, by becoming Roman while remaining Palmyrene. There was, however, one noticeable difference. The Palmyrenes, being in the frontier between Empires, incorporated cultural influences that derived from the east as well as from the west. To be a Palmyrene, then, was to be “native,” “Parthian,” “Greek,” and “Roman” all at once. Indeed, a Palmyrene cultural identity seems to have been embedded in a network of complementing or competing identities as defined by different affiliations and agendas among individuals or groups in both indigenous and non-indigenous contexts. This supports Millar’s emphasis on the complexity and malleability of communal identities in the Near East.⁵⁷ Millar also notes that two profound effects on the regional culture of the Near East were the step by step advance into the region of the Roman army, as an important agent of cultural change, and the suppression of local, independent identities. He maintains that “the effect of Roman rule was to produce a steadily more uniform world of Graeco-Roman cities.”⁵⁸ There was indeed a predominance of Graeco-Roman urban culture spread throughout the Roman Near East, which Palmyra’s urban development exemplified. Yet the

⁵⁷ See Millar, *Roman Near East*, 225-35; and idem, “Ethnic Identity in the Roman Near East, 325 - 450: Language, Religion, and Culture,” *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998) 159-176.

⁵⁸ Millar, *Roman Near East*, 521.

suppression of an independent Palmyrene identity did not occur so long as it complemented Roman power structures. Only when it became politically competitive did it succumb.

Again in Pliny's description of Palmyra as enjoying a separate fate between two Empires, we must appreciate how integral the city and its citizens were to the prosperity and security of both. Surrounded by a vast sea sand, Palmyrenes had mastered the desert. They controlled its routes, its water reserves, and managed the activities of its tribal contingents. Also, by policing the desert the Palmyrenes relieved Rome and Parthia of the same burden and secured for themselves a dominant position in the lucrative caravan trade. Revenues from this trade, at the behest of merchant notables, principally financed the embellishment of the oasis into a spectacular example of a Hellenistic/Roman city. Meanwhile, the Palmyrenes negotiated a new cultural identity that reflected their new civic lifestyles, but they retained nonetheless their eastern tendencies and a sense of presence within their desert environment. They maintained their tribal orientations and desert traditions. In the period of this book, the Palmyrenes became, and remained, Palmyrenes.

Figures

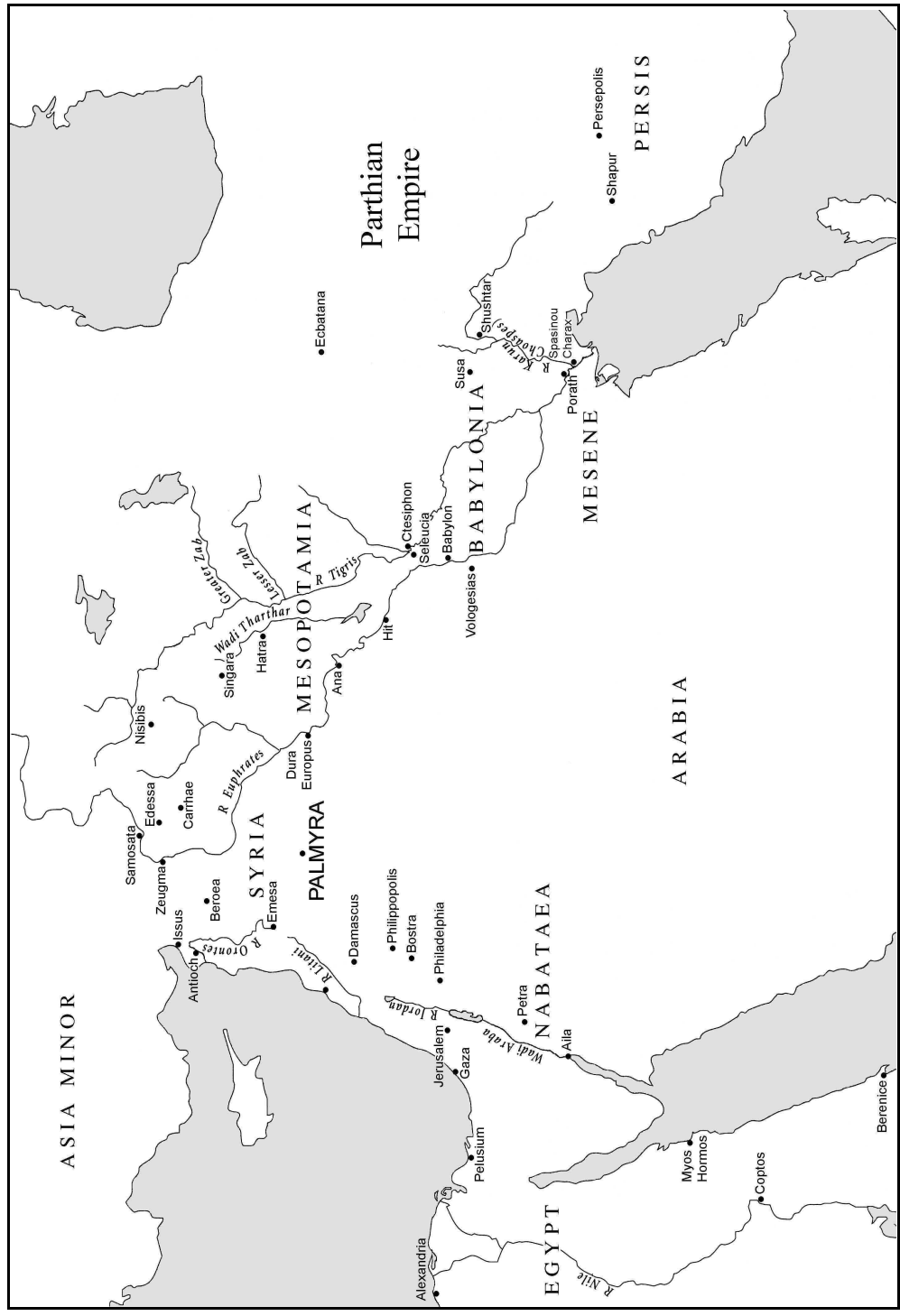


Figure 1: General Map of the Near East

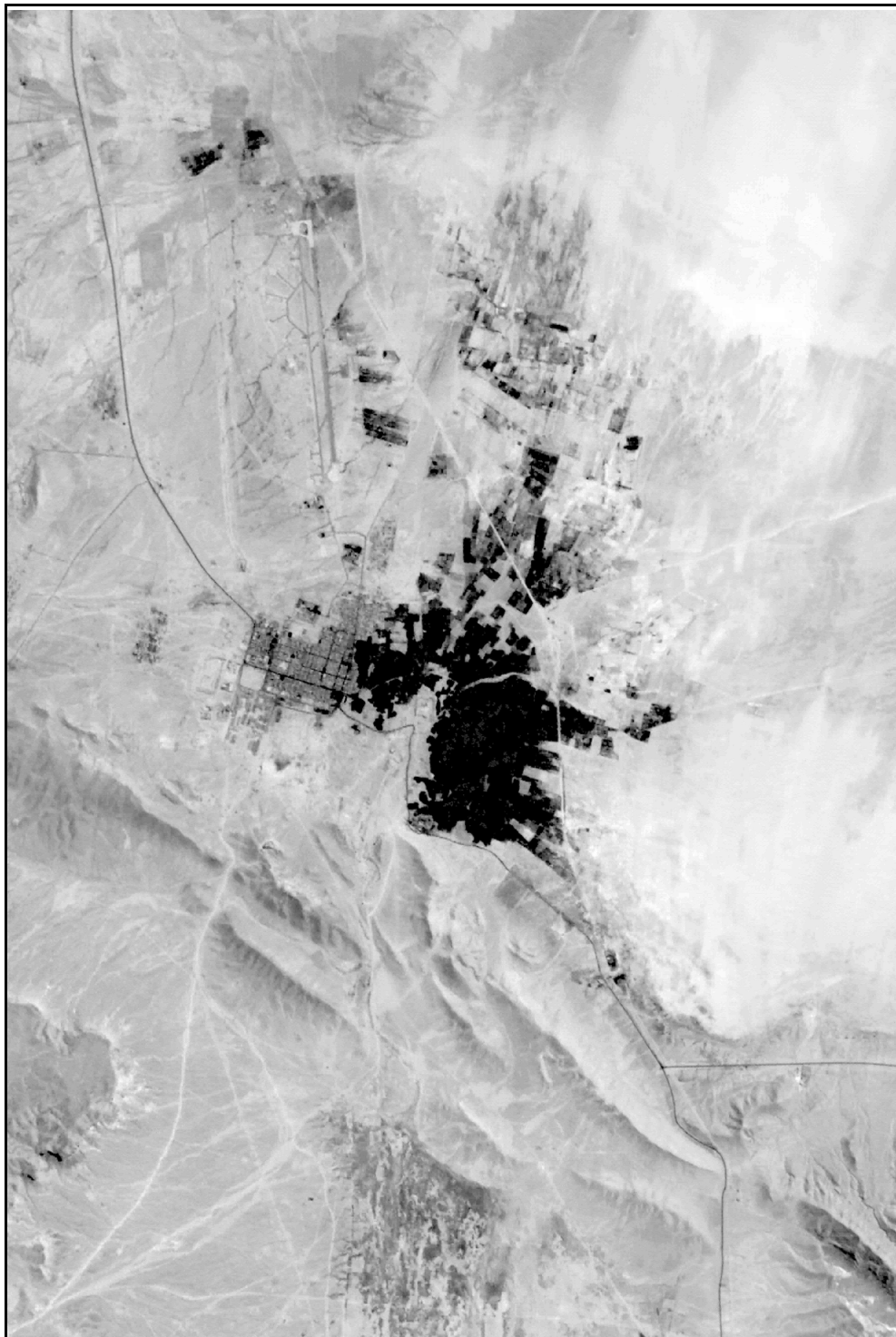


Figure 2: Satellite Image of Palmyra—north at top (ICJ CNES/SPOT Image 1992-1994)

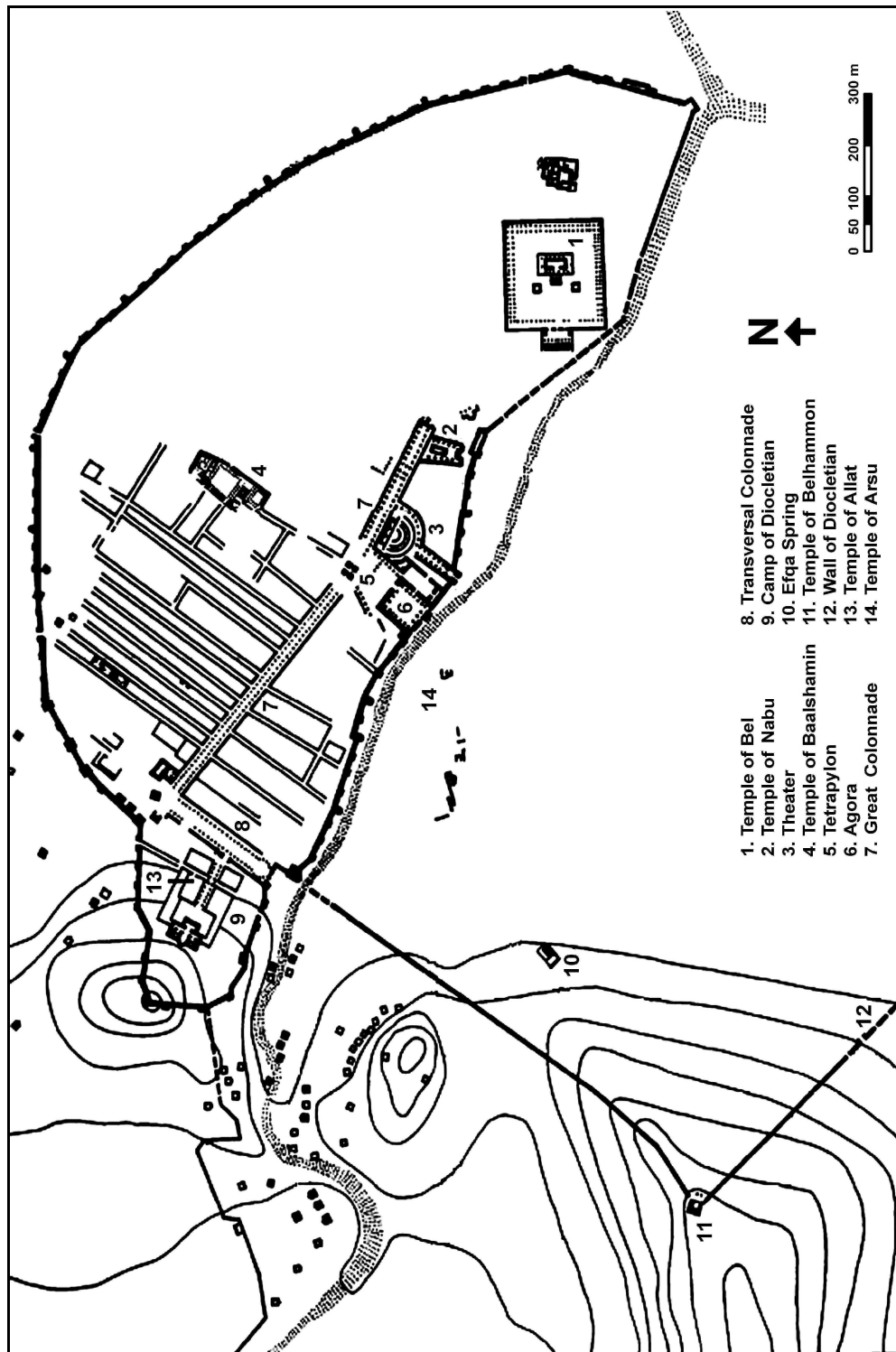


Figure 3: City Plan of Palmyra (courtesy of Waleed al-As'ad)



Figure 4: Ancient city of Palmyra looking southeast. Note the oasis in the immediate background and the sabkha in the distance.

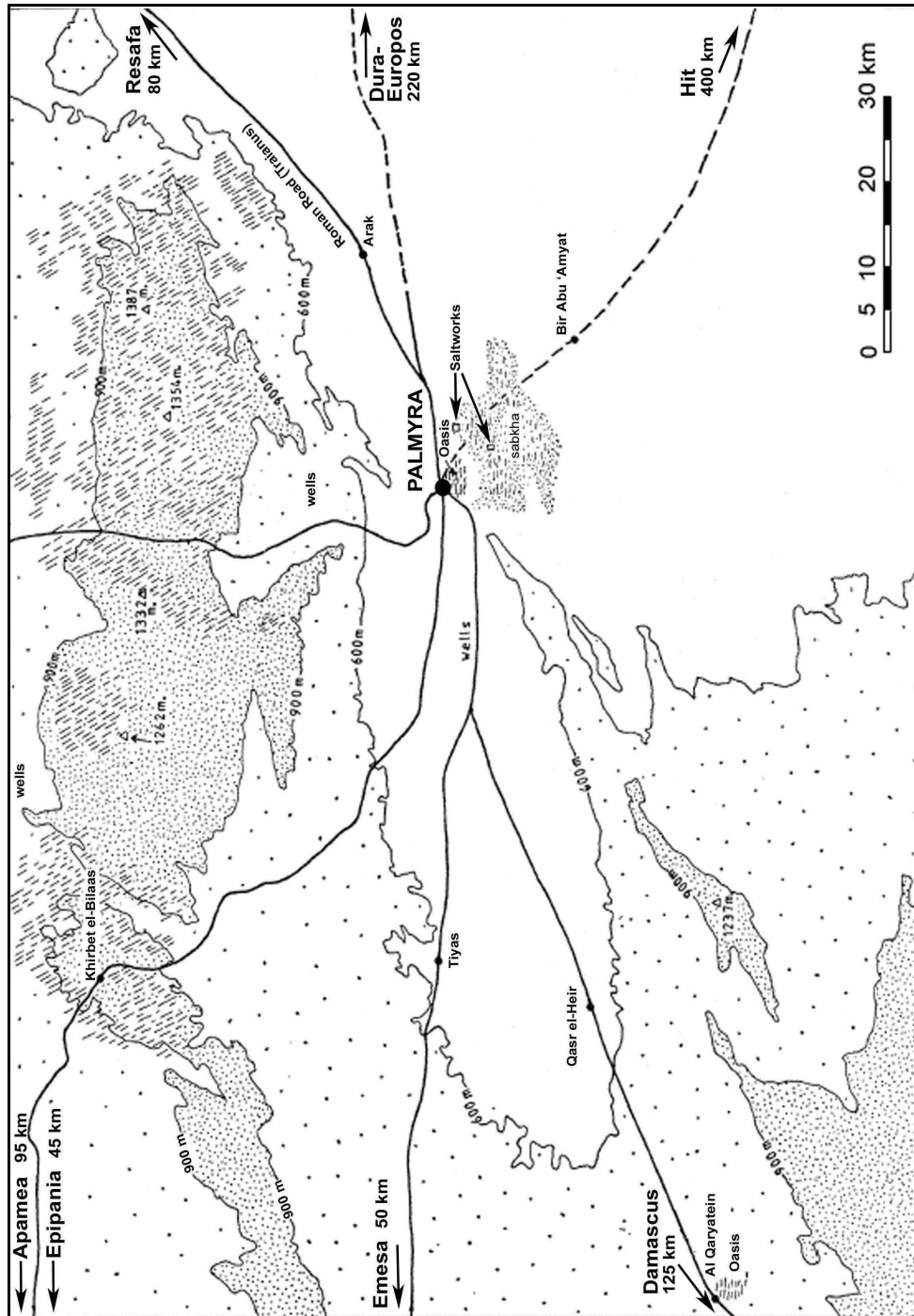


Figure 5: Territory of Palmyra (after Matthews, "Tax Law of Palmyra," 163, map 2)



Figure 6: Statue of unidentified Palmyrene male (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)



Figure 7: Great Colonnade looking north. Note the presence of consoles on the columns, on which statues of the Palmyrene elite were set. Honorific inscriptions identifying these individuals were generally inscribed on the face of the console or on the column below it.



Figure 8: Temple of Bel looking west. Note the date palms of the oasis in the foreground.



Figure 9: Sanctuary of Bel in the temple precinct looking east



Figure 10: Sanctuary of Baalshamin looking north. Note the presence of consoles on the columns supporting the roof of the sanctuary, on which statues of the temple's benefactors were displayed.



Figure 11: Aerial view of the restored theater and of the agora looking west (photograph by Waleed al-As'ad)

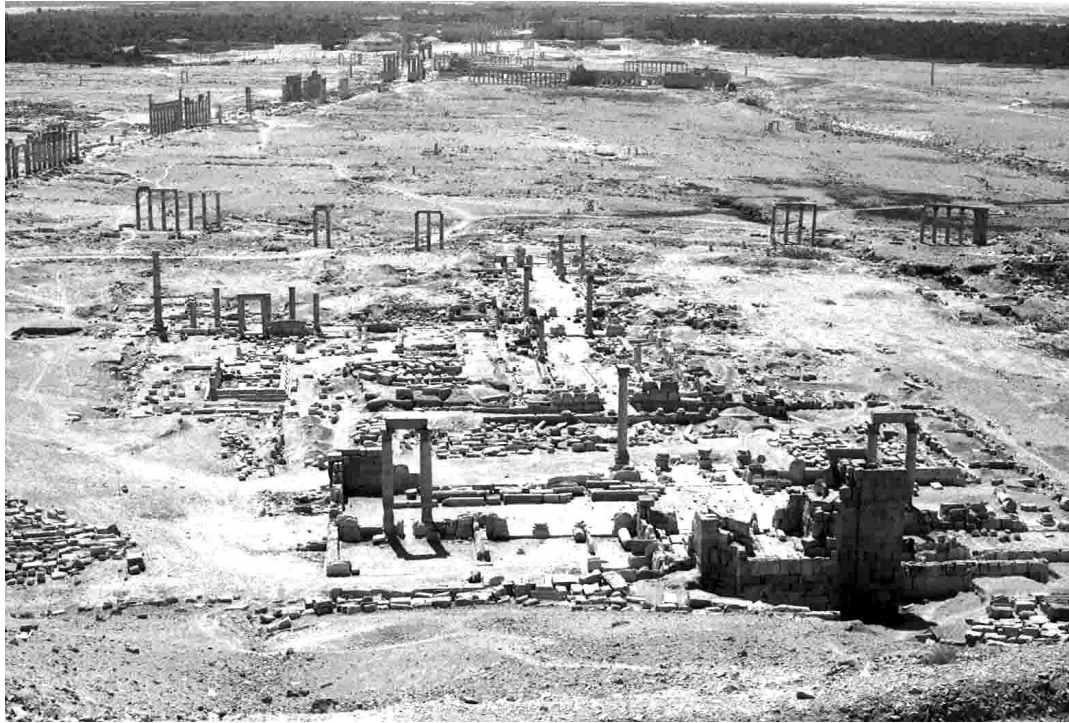


Figure 12: Temple of Allat looking south. Note the Great Colonnade leading to the temple of Bel in the background.



Figure 13: Monumental Arch looking northwest. The arch masks a sharp bend in the colonnade.



Figure 14: Tetrapylon looking north. The monument marks an intersection of two colonnaded streets. Its columns, one of which is original, are of pink granite shipped from Egypt.



Figure 15: Valley of the Tombs looking west. The visible tower tombs are among the oldest monuments at Palmyra. Also present though not visible in the photograph are the numerous *hypogea* which replaced the tower tombs as the preferred method of burial in the second century C.E.



Figure 16: Tower tombs looking southwest



Figure 17: Monumental sarcophagi from the *hypogeum* of the three brothers depicting a typical *triclinium* arrangement that mimics a Roman dining setting.



Figure 18: Loculi in the *hypogeum* of Artaban



Figure 19: Palmyrene merchants (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). Note their distinctive native dress.



Figure 20: Palmyrene camel relief (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)



Figure 21: Camels at Palmyra today



Figure 22: Palmyrene ship with long oars, perhaps for navigating up the Euphrates (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum).

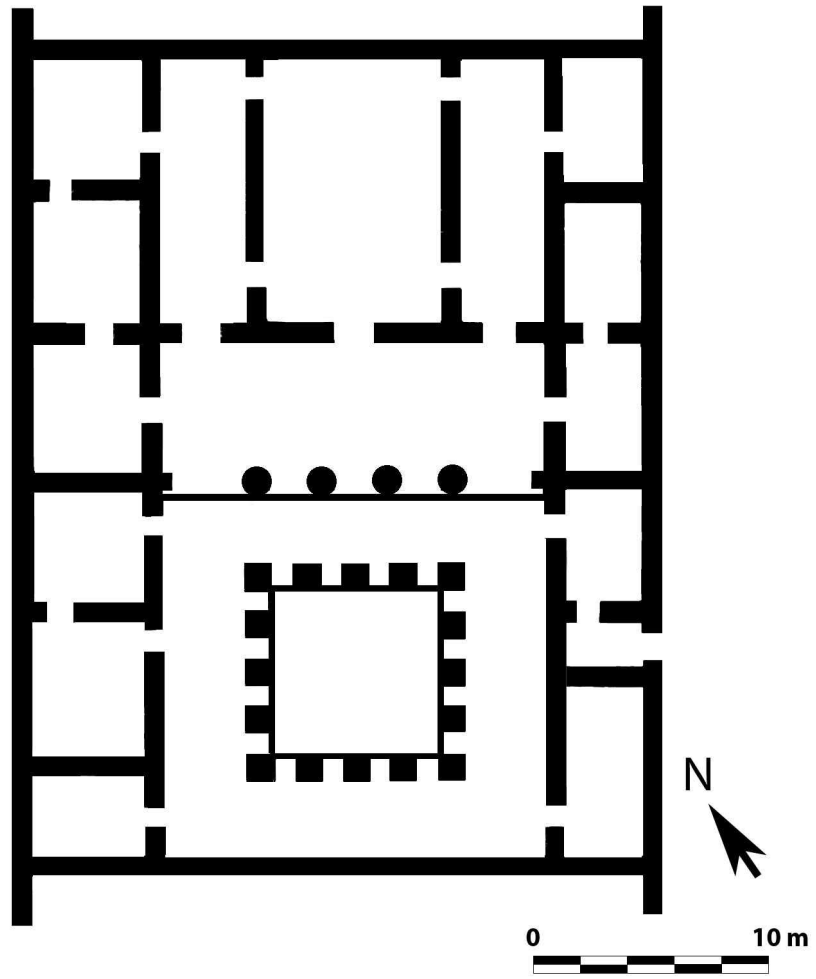


Figure 23: House 35 at Palmyra (after Gabriel, “Recherches archéologiques à Palmyra,” pl. 15)

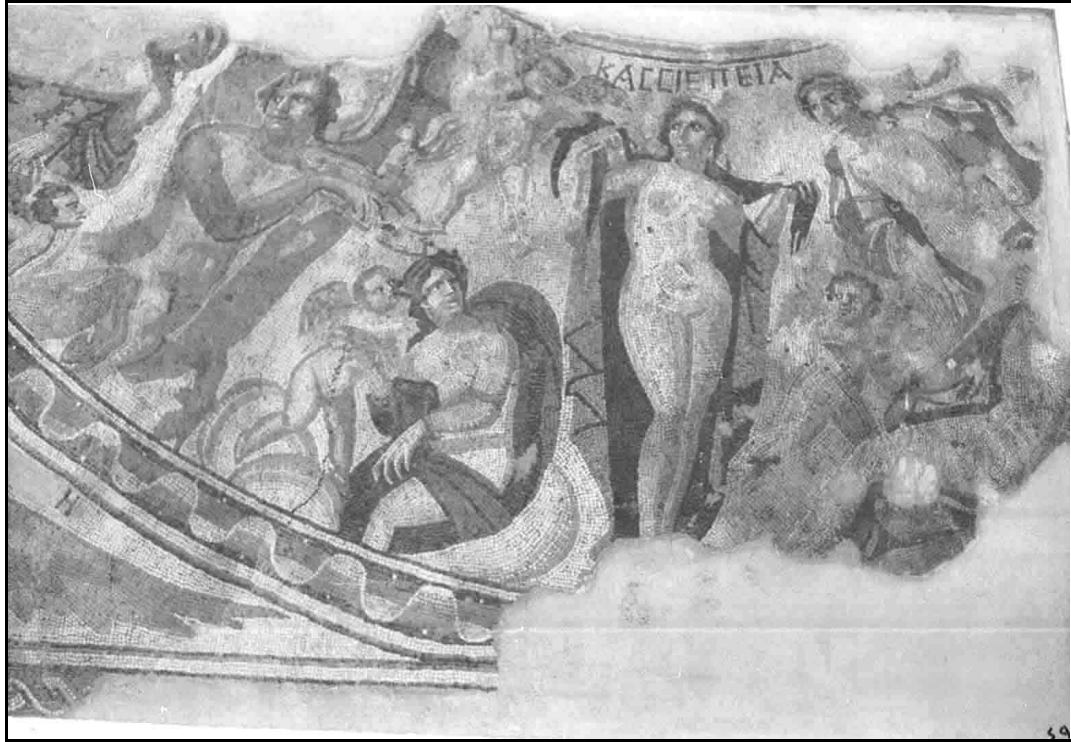


Figure 24: Mosaic from the house of Cassiopeia highlighting Greek cultural inclinations among the Palmyrene elite (courtesy of the National Museum, Damascus, Syria)

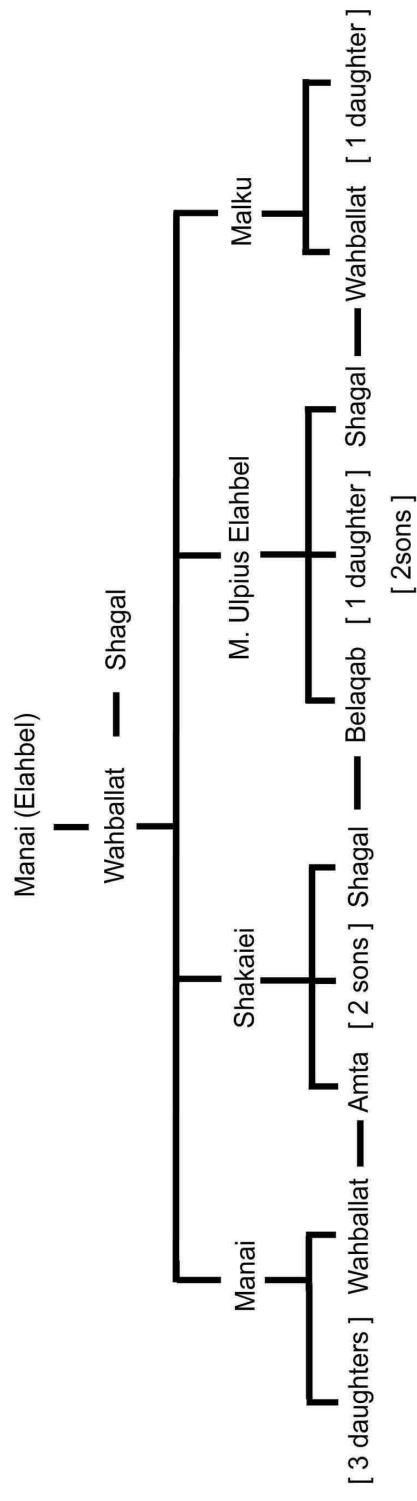


Figure 25: Genealogical chart showing the descendants of Manai Elahbel. Note the endogamous parallel cousin marriages.



Figure 26: Palmyrene funerary sarcophagus from the *hypogeum* of Bolha in the southwest necropolis depicting as the central figure a certain Nabushuri, son of Ogeilu, whose father is depicted on his right (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). The woman sitting at the feet of Nabushuri is Aqme, daughter of a certain Baratai, presumably his wife and clearly in a subordinate position. The children, who are set in smaller relief in the background, are not identified.



Figure 27: Relief of reclining Palmyrene couple, a certain Malē (right) and Bolaya (left), from the southeast necropolis (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)



Figure 28: Relief of reclining Palmyrene woman with servant (courtesy of the National Museum, Damascus, Syria)



Figure 29: Right side of relief of a processional scene from the temple of Bel. Note the train of women swathed in veils.



Figure 30: Left side of relief of processional scene from the temple of Bel. Note the veiled women in the upper-left scene.



Figure 31: Relief of a Palmyrene sacrificial scene from the temple of Allat depicting veiled women in procession, perhaps priestesses (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)



Figure 32: Archaic relief from the agora that depicts two veiled women in a sacrificial scene (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum). The woman on the far right holds a two-handled cup, and before her another woman holds what appears to be a incense burner.



Figure 33: Relief of an unidentified Palmyrene woman with a *stylus* (courtesy of the Palmyra Museum)



Figure 34: View of Euphrates from Dura Europos looking south. Note the agricultural fields along the bank of the river.



Figure 35: Relief of 159 C.E. depicting the Gad of Dura Europos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection)

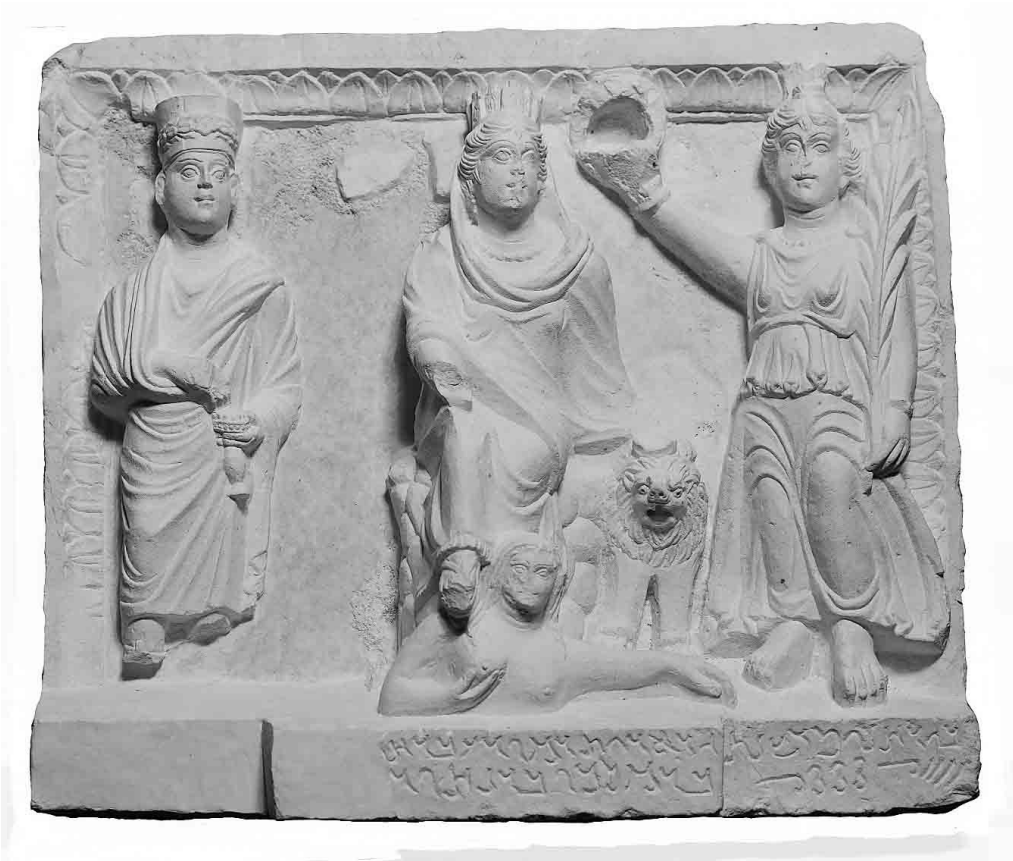
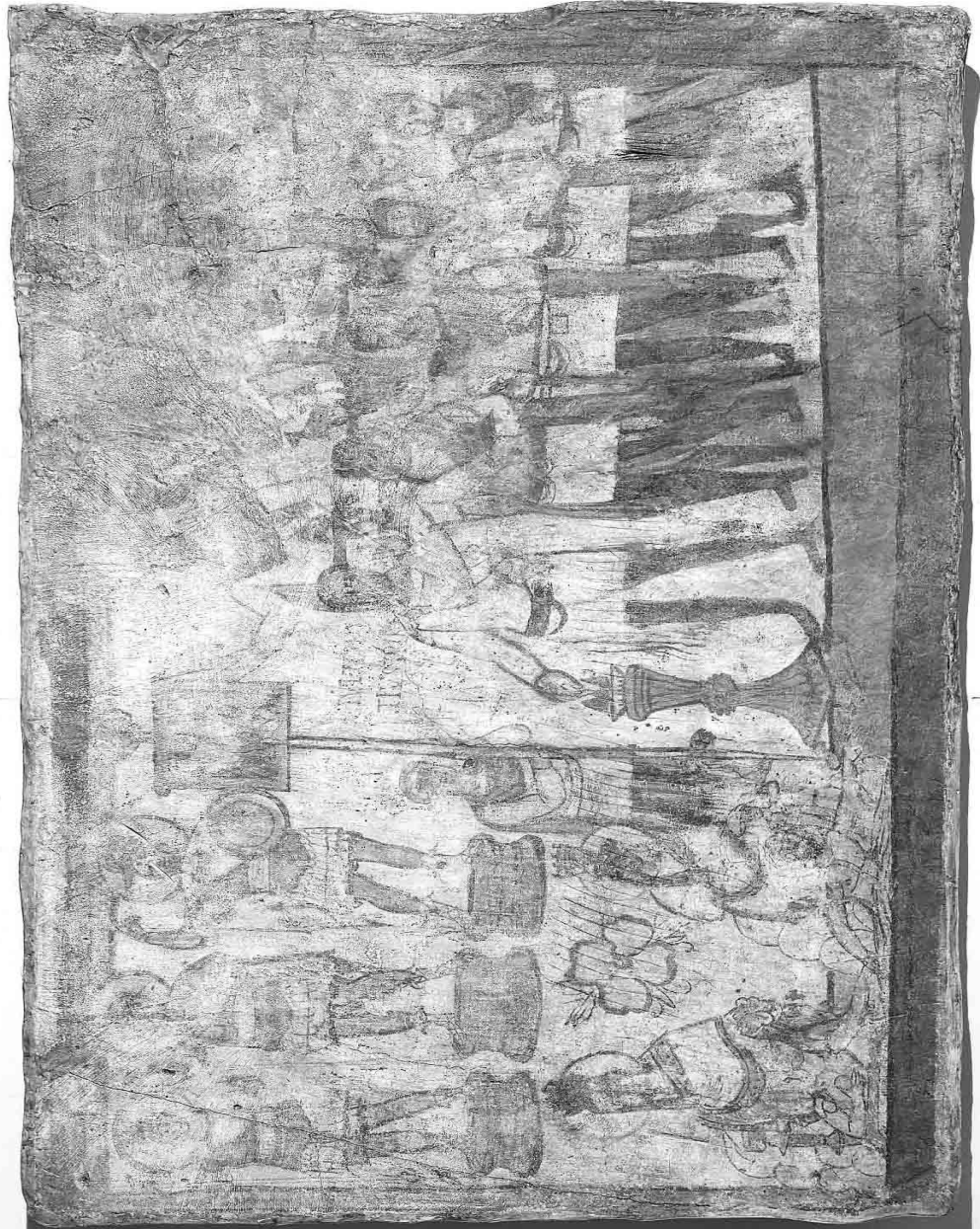


Figure 36: Relief of 159 C.E. depicting the Gad of Palmyra (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection)

Figure 37: Fresco depicting in the lower left scene the *tychai* of Palmyra and Dura Europos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection). The *tychai* in addition to three other Palmyrene deities receive a sacrifice from the tribune Julius Terentius alongside members of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* and the priest Themēs, son of Mokimos (courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection)



Appendix I: Index of Palmyrene Aramaic Texts

<i>PAT</i> #	
0005	225
0024	76, 368
0025	368
0028	368
0042	368
0043	368
0044	75, 89, 220, 228
0045	75, 89, 228
0048	75, 89, 228
0049	89, 219, 228
0050	75, 89, 219, 220, 228
0064	75
0065	208
0071	188
0072	221
0075	221

0094	227
0096	74
0101	74
0110	90
0115	253
0121	199
0122	199
0123	199
0124	199
0125	199
0126	199
0158	46
0164	85
0167	46, 205, 207
0168	76, 84, 85, 196, 205
0169	85
0170	85
0177	85, 234
0178	75, 234
0179	85, 186
0180	85

0187	283
0193	85
0194	85
0197	83, 85, 88, 142, 143, 163, 165, 226, 277, 310, 325
0200	328
0208	93, 95
0209	93, 95
0218	76
0246	395
0247	269, 392
0248	393
0249	394
0251	379, 382
0253	390
0254	390
0255	387, 390
0256	368
0257	271
0259	47, 48, 51, 105, 106, 149-151, 155, 156, 212, 213, 216, 224, 280- 283, 357
0260	53, 127, 129, 257, 277

0261	88, 126, 197
0262	85, 88, 163, 166, 226, 374
0263	82, 127
0265	88, 136, 243
0266	394
0267	277
0268	126, 277
0269	117, 126, 130, 265, 275
0270	45, 80, 125, 162, 257, 268, 365
0271	80, 125
0274	85
0276	257, 277
0277	257, 277
0278	55, 88, 138, 257, 277, 285, 288
0279	85, 163, 226, 406
0280	277, 287
0281	277
0282	88, 168, 226, 277, 407
0283	254, 278
0284	277, 290
0285	254, 289, 290

0286	254, 290
0287	55, 254, 290
0288	55, 88, 168, 226, 245, 277, 285, 289, 290, 407
0289	254, 290
0290	255, 292, 408
0291	224, 232, 255, 293
0292	88, 95, 207, 255, 410
0293	88, 95, 207, 255, 410
0294	85, 88, 163
0295	163
0296	82, 191
0297	82, 84, 191
0298	82, 191, 257, 277
0299	82, 191
0300	206
0305	50, 52, 85, 86, 269, 277, 281
0306	75, 164, 226, 253
0307	164, 253
0309	85, 163
0312	267
0314	142

0315	140, 206
0316	236, 244
0317	410, 412
0318	184, 254
0319	254, 328
0320	225
0322	133
0324	75, 84, 187, 191
0326	85, 144, 234
0329	85
0334	188, 208
0335	90, 186
0340	320, 322
0344	186
0356	208
0373	208
0379	184
0381	254
0382	184
0393	184
0394	184

0398	188
0400	184
0402	186
0410	133
0411	133
0415	224
0453	290
0457	58
0463	91, 184
0464	184, 217
0467	92
0469	80
0470	76
0471	75, 80, 81, 309
0486	198
0491	94
0494	198
0495	198
0496	198
0497	198
0498	197

0500	198
0501	92, 198
0505	198
0507	198
0510	76
0511	76
0543	75, 80
0544	90
0558	292, 350
0562	75, 188
0570	76
0574	254
0591	48
0612	75
0614	226
0615	226
0616	226
0617	225
0618	225
0619	226
0620	226

0621	226
0634	92
0644	74
0645	92
0646	91
0794	76
0795	76
0796	76
0862	94
0874	228
0922	90
0923	90
0947	76
0990	390
0991	237, 238, 241, 321
0992	187
0994	379
1001	208
1002	186
1019	92
1043	92

1062	85, 86, 167, 226, 318, 374
1063	80, 83, 137, 141, 277, 286, 301, 308, 327
1067	84, 135, 342
1068	76
1073	76
1074	76
1085	286, 345
1086	351
1089	349
1094	359
1095	359
1096	359
1097	359
1098	359
1099	84, 133, 138, 345
1113	225
1128	235
1130	85
1131	241
1134	77, 80
1142	221

1167	92
1216	76, 368
1218	227
1226.02	82
1247	219
1347	46, 84, 127
1349	227
1352	45, 80, 84, 119, 125, 162, 226, 275, 365
1353	80, 117, 125, 129, 275, 320
1355	126
1356	80, 126
1357	88, 236, 243
1358	88, 129, 217, 244, 295
1359	257, 277
1360	88, 168, 266, 277
1366	163, 226
1368	277
1369	55
1370	277, 282
1373	88, 163, 226, 278, 331
1374	51, 163, 226, 269, 373

1375	49, 257, 277, 282
1376	49, 162, 226
1378	54, 83, 168, 226, 277, 287, 302, 317, 326, 327
1382	277
1383	319
1384	257, 277, 279
1387	277, 280
1389	257, 277, 279
1392	277
1395	164, 256
1396	164, 253
1397	85, 163, 164
1398	138, 285, 286
1399	163, 253
1403	164, 226, 253
1404	257
1405	335, 398
1406	284
1407	257, 277
1408	277, 281
1409	163, 226, 253

1410	225
1411	163, 253
1412	85, 163, 374
1413	332
1414	167, 226, 257, 277, 372
1415	138, 257, 277, 285, 288
1417	206
1419	85, 88, 163, 166
1421	167, 226, 257, 277
1422	164, 253, 266, 268, 377
1423	257, 269, 277
1424	256
1425	82
1429	84
1435	186
1436	186
1442	94, 186
1445	184
1446	184
1447	186
1448	184

1452	184
1455	186
1458	224
1461	128
1504	84, 141
1505	142
1506	75, 90
1509	75, 84, 140
1511	129
1517	76
1521	131, 276
1523	128
1524	128
1525	75
1539	84
1553	143
1557	137
1558	228
1561	49, 84, 85
1571	240
1584	92, 162, 226

1619	186
1620	321
1622	134
1624	219, 220
1633	94
1677	217
1714	236
1719	225
1746	86
1760	90
1784	185
1786	75
1787	185
1830	199
1871	90
1894	222
1896	222
1898	186
1900	184, 186
1901	91
1902	186

1904	186
1906	186
1907	186
1909	186
1911	184
1914	186
1917	137
1918	88, 137, 186
1919	88, 134, 137
1920	184
1928	186
1929	91, 96, 186
1941	85, 225
1942	84, 140
1944	84, 141, 142
2015	321
2033	88, 234, 243
2036	88, 235
2037	88, 235
2038	88, 235
2039	88, 235

2040	88, 235
2041	88, 235
2042	224, 321
2144	84
2147	84
2184	89
2227	91, 95
2279	85, 234
2284	235
2285	235
2286	235
2287	235
2359	91
2634	319
2636	117, 275
2637	199
2664	197
2665	197
2666	197
2667	197
2668	197

2669	197
2670	197
2671	197
2672	197
2673	197
2723	128
2725	221
2730	7, 154
2732	107, 286
2733	107
2734	107
2735	107
2736	107
2737	107
2738	107
2739	107
2740	107
2741	107
2742	107
2743	88, 239, 244
2749	129, 130

2750	129
2753	244, 292
2754	47, 371
2756	281
2757	288, 328
2759	283, 284
2760	283
2762	126
2763	164
2766	84, 128, 129, 239
2767	131
2768	129, 136
2769	83, 277, 300, 305, 308
2774	128, 129, 131, 133, 276, 283
2775	128, 131, 276
2778	268
2780	129, 186
2781	186
2798	186
2801	80, 82, 196
2807	234

2810	6, 107, 286
2812	244, 295
2822	75
2824	332

Appendix II: Short Concordance of Text References (*Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum, and PAT sigla*)

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0246		2.3901
0247		2.3902
0248		2.3903
0249		2.3904
0251		2.3906
0253		2.3908
0254		2.3908bis
0255		2.3909
0256		2.3910
0257		2.3911
0259		2.3913
0260	9.25	2.3914
0261	9.13	2.3915
0262	9.14a	2.3916
0263	9.15	2.3917
0265	9.19	2.3919
0266	9.32	2.3920
0267	9.31	2.3921

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0268	9.9	2.3922
0269	9.8	2.3923
0270	9.6a	2.3924
0271	9.6b	2.3925
0274		2.3928
0276	2.2	2.3930
0277	2.3	2.3931
0278	3.22	2.3932
0279	3.21	2.3933
0280	3.14	2.3934
0281	3.15	2.3935
0282	3.13	2.3936
0283	3.12	2.3937
0284	3.11	2.3938
0285	3.10	2.3939
0286	3.9	2.3940
0287	3.8	2.3941
0288	3.7	2.3942
0289	3.6	2.3943
0290	3.16	2.3944
0291	3.17	2.3945
0292	3.19	2.3946
0293	3.20	2.3947
0294	3.28	2.3948

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0295	3.29	2.3949
0296	5.1	2.3950
0297	5.2	2.3951
0298	5.3	2.3952
0299	5.4	2.3953
0300	5.5	2.3954
0305	1.2	2.3959
0306	10.87-88	2.3960
0307	10.89	2.3961
0309	10.47	2.3963
0312	2.1	2.3966
0314		2.3968
0315	11.84	2.3969
0316		2.3970
0317		2.3971
0318		2.3972
0319		2.3973
0320		2.3974
0322		2.3976
0324		2.3978
0326		2.3980
0329		2.3983
0334	6.3	2.3988
0335	6.9	2.3989

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0340		2.3994
0344	6.5	2.3998
0356	11.23	2.4010
0373		2.4027
0379		2.4033
0381	11.15	2.4035
0382		2.4036
0393		2.4047
0394		2.4048
0398		2.4052
0400		2.4054
0402		2.4056
0410		2.4064
0411		2.4065
0415		2.4069
0453		2.4105ter
0463	4.18a	2.4115
0464	4.18b	2.4115bis
0467		2.4118
0469	8.75	2.4120
0470	4.5	2.4121
0471	V2.6a	2.4122
0486	4.27a	2.4134
0491	4.271	2.4139

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0494	4.27e	2.4142
0495	4.27f	2.4143
0496	4.27g	2.4144
0497	4.27m	2.4145
0498	4.27n	2.4146
0500	4.27p	2.4148
0501	4.27q	2.4149
0505	4.27u	2.4153
0507	4.27w	2.4155
0510		2.4158
0511		2.4159
0543	4.2	2.4187
0544		2.4188
0558	8.55	2.4202
0562	4.1a	2.4206
0570		2.4214
0574		2.4218
0591	8.57	2.4235
0612		2.4256
0614		2.4258
0615		2.4259
0616		2.4260
0617		2.4261
0618		2.4261bis

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
0619		2.4262
0620		2.4263
0621		2.4264
0634		2.4277
0644		2.4287
0645		2.4288
0646		2.4289
0794		2.4434
0795		2.4435
0796		2.4436
0862		2.4501
0874		2.4513
0922		2.4561
0923		2.4562
0947		2.4586
1130	1.5	
1131	3.2	
1134	4.7a	
1142	4.13	
1167	8.7	
1216	8.58	
1218	8.60	
1226.02	8.71	
1247	8.94	
	500	

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
1347	9.1	
1349	9.4a-b	
1352	9.11	
1353	9.12	
1355	9.16	
1356	9.20	
1357	9.26	
1358	9.28	
1359	9.29	
1360	9.30	
1366	10.7	
1368	10.11	
1370	10.13	
1373	10.29	
1374	10.38	
1375	10.39	
1376	10.40	
1378	10.44	
1382	10.54	
1383	10.56	
1384	10.57	
1387	10.63	
1389	10.69	
1392	10.74	
	501	

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
1395	10.77	
1396	10.78	
1397	10.81	
1398	10.85	
1399	10.90	
1403	10.96	
1404	10.98	
1405	10.99	
1406	10.102	
1407	10.105	
1408	10.106	
1409	10.107	
1410	10.110	
1411	10.111	
1412	10.112	
1413	10.113	
1414	10.114	
1415	10.115	
1417	10.119	
1419	10.124	
1421	10.127	
1422	10.128	
1423	10.129	
1424	10.130	

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
1425	10.131	
1429	10.145	
1435	11.6	
1436	11.7	
1442	11.13	
1445	11.16	
1446	11.17	
1447	11.19	
1448	11.20	
1452	11.25	
1455	11.28	
1458	11.32	
1461	11.35	
1504	11.79	
1505	11.80	
1506	11.81	
1509	11.85	
1511	11.87	
1517	11.93	
1521	11.97	
1523	11.99	
1524	11.100	
1525	12.1	
1539	12.22	

<i>PAT</i>	<i>Inventaire</i>	<i>CIS</i>
1553	12.39	
1557	12.44	
1558	12.45	
1561	12.48	

Bibliography

- L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres. *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud*. 2 vols. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939.
- Aggoula, B. "Remarques sur l'inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, Fasc XI et XII." *Semitica* 29 (1979): 109-18.
- . "Les Mots *blw* et *blwy*' dans une inscription palmyrénienne." *Syria* 71 (1994): 415-17.
- Ajmar, G., ed. *Syncretism and the Commerce of Symbols*. Göteborg, Sweden: IASSA, 1995.
- Albertini, E. "Inscriptions d'el Kantara." *Revue africaine* 72 (1931): 193-261.
- Alcock, S., ed. *The Early Roman Empire in the East*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Alföldi, A., and J. Straub, eds. *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1972/1974*. Bonn: R. Habelt Verlag, 1976.
- Alicu, D., C. Pop, and V. Wollmann. *Figured Monuments from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. B. A. R. International Series, no. 55. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1979.
- Amy, R., and H. Seyrig. "Recherches dans la nécropole de Palmyre." *Syria* 17 (1936): 229-66.
- Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 1991.
- al-As'ad, K., and M. Gawlikowski. "New Honorific Inscriptions in the Great

- Colonnade of Palmyra.” *AAAS* 36 (1986): 164-71.
- . “Le Péage à Palmyre en 11 CE.” *Semitica* 41-42 (1991): 163-72.
- al-As‘ad, K., and J. Teixidor. “Quelques inscriptions palmyréniennes inédites.” *Syria* 62 (1985): 271-80.
- . “Un Culte arabe préislamique à Palmyre d’après une inscription inédite.” *CRAIBL* (1985): 286-93.
- Astarita, M. L. *Avidio Cassio*. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1983.
- Ball, W. *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire*. London: Routledge, P2000.
- Balty, J. “Composantes classiques et orientales dans les mosaïques de Palmyre.” In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 407-16. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Balty, J. Ch. “Palmyre entre orient et occident: Acculturation et résistances.” In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 437-41. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Banning, E. “Peasants, Pastoralists and the *Pax Romana*: Mutualism in the Southern Highlands of Jordan.” *BASOR* 261 (1986): 25-47.
- . “*De bello paceque*: A Reply to Parker.” *BASOR* 265 (1987): 52-55.
- Banuazizi, A., and M. Weiner, eds. *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986.
- Baranski, M. “The Great Colonnade at Palmyra Reconsidered.” *Aram* 7 (1995): 37-42.
- Barth, F. “Father’s Brother’s Daughter Marriage in Kurdistan.” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 10 (1954): 164-71.
- . , ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969.
- . “Introduction.” In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, edited by F. Barth, 9-38. Boston:

- Little, Brown and Co., 1969.
- Bates, D. "The Role of the State in Peasant-Nomad Mutualism." *Anthropological Quarterly* 44 (1971): 109-31.
- Bauer, P. V. C., and M. I. Rostovtzeff, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Second Season of Work, October 1928 - April 1929*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931.
- Bauer, P. V. C., M. I. Rostovtzeff, and A. R. Bellinger, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season of Work, October 1930 - March 1931*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933.
- Bauzou, T. "Deux milliaires inédits de Vaballath en Jordanie du Nord." In *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*, edited by P. Freeman and D. L. Kennedy, 1-8. B. A. R International Series, no. 297. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986.
- . "Épigraphie et toponymie: Le Cas de la Palmyrène du Sud-Ouest." *Syria* 70 (1993): 27-50.
- van Berchem, D. "Le Premier rempart de Palmyre." *CRAIBL* (1970): 231-37.
- . "Le Plan de Palmyre." In *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg [18-20 octobre 1973] à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)*, 165-73. Strasbourg: AECR, 1976.
- Bernand, A. *Les Portes du désert: Recueil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna*. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984.
- Bernard, P. "Vicissitudes au gré de l'histoire d'une statue en bronze d'Héraclès entre Séleucie du Tigre et la Mésène." *Journal des Savants* (1990): 3-68.
- Bernhard, M. -L., ed. *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*. Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966.
- Bertinelli, M. G. A. *Roma e l'Oriente: Strategia, economia, società e cultura nelle relazioni politiche fra Roma, la Giudea e l'Iran*. 2nd ed. Rome: <<L'Erma>> a di Bretschneider, 1979.

- Bettini, M. *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul*. Translated by J. van Sickle. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Bianchi, L. "I Palmyreni in Dacia: Comunità e tradizioni religiose." *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 87-95.
- Bingen, J. "Une Dédicace de marchands palmyréniens à Coptos." *Chronique d'Egypte* 59 (1984): 355-58.
- Birley, A. R. *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor*. Rev. ed. 1988. Reprint. London: Routledge, 1999.
- . *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*. Rev. ed. 1987. Reprint. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Birley, E. "Local Militias in the Roman Empire." In *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1972/1974*, edited by A. Alföldi and J. Straub, 65-73. Bonn: R. Habelt Verlag, 1976.
- Bivar, A. D. H. "Mithra and Mesopotamia." In *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*, edited by J. R. Hinnells, 275-89. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975.
- Black-Michaud, J. *Sheep and Land: The Economics of Power in a Tribal Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Blagg, T., and M. Millett, eds. *The Early Roman Empire in the West*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Boatwright, M. *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Bounni, A. "Le Sanctuaire de Nabû à Palmyre." In *Petra and the Caravan Cities*, edited by F. Zayadine, 157-67. Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1990.
- Bounni, A., and M. Saliby. "Six nouveaux emplacements fouillés à Palmyre (1963-1964)." *AAS* 15 (1965): 121-38.
- Bounni, A., and J. Teixidor, eds. *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*. Vol. 12. Damascus: Publications de la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des

Musées de la République Arabe Syrienne, 1975.

- Bowersock, G. W. "Syria under Vespasian." *JRS* 63 (1973): 133-38.
- . "A New Antonine Inscription from the Syrian Desert." *Chiron* 6 (1976): 349-55.
- . "Roman Senators from the Near East: Syria, Judaea, Arabia, Mesopotamia." *Tituli* 5 (1982): 651-68.
- . *Roman Arabia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- . "Social and Economic History of Syria under the Roman Empire." In *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie, vol. 2: La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, edited by J. -M. Dentzer and W. Orthmann, 63-80. *Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, no. 1. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1989.
- . "La Mésène (Maisân) Antonine." In *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, edited by T. Fahd, 159-68. Strasbourg: Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, 1989.
- . *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Breasted, J. H. *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting: First-century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924.
- Briant, P. *État et pasteurs au Moyen-Orient ancien*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Brogan, O., and J. Reynolds. "Seven New Inscriptions from Tripolitania." *Papers of the British School at Rome* 28 (1960): 51-54.
- Broucke, P. B. F. J. "Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World." In *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, edited by S. B. Matheson, 34-49. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994.
- Browning, I. *Palmyra*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1979.

- Brun, P., S. E. van der Leeuw, and C. R. Whittaker, eds. *Frontières d'empire: Nature et signification des frontières romaines (Actes de la Table ronde internationale de Nemours, 21-22-23 mai 1992)*. Mémoires du Musée de Préhistoire d'Ile-de-France, no 5. Nemours: Editions de l'Association pour la Promotion de la Recherche archéologique en Ile-de-France, 1993.
- Burton, P. "Amicitia in Roman Social and International Relations, (350 - 146 B.C.)." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2000.
- Calhoun, C., ed. *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Callies, H. "Die fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats und die sogenannten nationalen Numeri." *BRGK* 45 (1964): 130-227.
- Campbell, J., and A. Rew, eds. *Identity and Affect: Experiences of Identity in a Globalizing World*. London: Pluto Press, 1999.
- Cantineau, J., ed. *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*. 9 vols. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1930-6.
- . *Inscriptions palmyréniennes*. Châlon-sur-Saône: E. Bertrand, 1930.
- . "Textes palmyréniens provenant de la fouille du temple de Bêl." *Syria* 12 (1931): 116-41.
- . "Tadmorea." *Syria* 14 (1933): 169-202.
- . "Un Restitutor orientis dans les inscriptions de Palmyra." *Journal asiatique* 222 (1933): 217-33.
- . *Le Dialecte arabe de Palmyre*. 2 vols. Beirut: Institut Français de Damas, 1934.
- . *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique*. Publications de l'Institut d'Études Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger, vol. 4. Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1935.
- . "Tadmorea." *Syria* 17 (1936): 267-82 and 346-55.
- . "Tadmorea." *Syria* 19 (1938): 72-82 and 153-71.

- . “La Susiane dans une inscription palmyrénienne.” In *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 1, 277-79. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939.
- Casimir, M. J., and A. Rao, eds. *Mobility and Territoriality: Social and Spatial Boundaries among Foragers, Fishers, Pastoralists, and Peripatetic*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992.
- Caskel, W. “The Bedouization of Arabia.” In *Studies in Islamic Cultural History*, edited by G. von Grunebaum, 36-46. Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, no. 76. Menshasha, WI: George Banta, 1954.
- Castells, M. *The Power of Identity. The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, vol. 2. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
- Chabot, J. -B. “Glanures palmyréniennes.” *Journal asiatique* 12 (1918): 277-317.
- . “Un Corrector totius orientis dans les inscriptions de Palmyre.” *CRAIBL* (1930): 312-18.
- . “Nouvelle inscription palmyrénienne d’Afrique.” *CRAIBL* (1932): 265-69.
- Charlesworth, M. *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire*. Rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Chéhab, M. “Tyr à l’époque romaine.” *MUSJ* 38 (1962): 11-40.
- Clermont-Ganneau, C. “Odeinat et Vaballat, rois de Palmyre, et leur titre romain de corrector.” *Revue biblique* 29 (1920): 382-419.
- Cohen, A. *Arab Border-Villages in Israel: A Study of Continuity and Change in Social Organization*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965.
- Cohen, A. P. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Tavistock, 1985.
- Cohen, S. J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, and Uncertainties*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Collart, P. “Le Rôle de Palmyre à l’époque hellénistique et romaine d’après les découvertes récentes.” *Atti del settimo Congresso internazionale di archeologia classica* 1 (1961): 427-35.
- . “Le Sanctuaire de Baalshemên.” *Archeologia* 16 (1967): 52-56.

- Collart, P., and J. Vicari. *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 1-2: Topographie et architecture*. Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana, no. 10. Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1969.
- Colledge, M. *The Parthians*. New York: Praeger, 1967.
- . *The Art of Palmyra*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.
- . "Parthian Cultural Elements at Roman Palmyra." *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987): 19-28.
- . "Roman Influence in the Art of Palmyra." In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 363-70. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Collingwood, R. G., and R. P. Wright. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Cotton, H. M., W. E. H. Cockle, and F. Millar. "The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey." *JRS* 85 (1995): 214-35.
- van Creveld, Martin. *The Rise and Decline of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Crouch, D. P. "A Note on the Population and Area of Palmyra." *MUSJ* 47 (1972): 241-50.
- . "The Water System of Palmyra." *Studia Palmyrenskie* 6-7 (1975): 151-86.
- Cumont, F. "Rapport sur une mission à Sâlihîyeh sur l'Euphrate." *CRAIBL* (1923): 12-41.
- . *Fouilles de Doura-Europos (1922-1923)*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1926.
- Cussini, E. "Transfer of Property at Palmyra." *Aram* 7 (1995): 233-50.
- Dabrowa, E., ed. *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*. Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1994.
- . *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus*.

- Antiquitas: Reihe 1. Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte, no. 45. Bonn: Dr. Rudolph Habelt GmbH, 1998.
- Dalley, S. "Bel at Palmyra and Elsewhere in the Parthian Period." *Aram* 7 (1995): 137-51.
- Davidson, J. *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Debevoise, N. C. *A Political History of Parthia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.
- Degeorge, G. *Palmyre: Métropole du désert*. Paris: Libr. Séguier: Archimbaud, 1987.
- Dentzer, J. -M., ed. *Hauran I: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*. 2 vols. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 124. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1985.
- . "Développement et culture de la Syrie du sud dans la période préprovinciale." In *Hauran I: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, edited by J.-M. Dentzer, 387-420. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1985.
- Dentzer, J. -M., and W. Orthmann, eds. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie: La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*. 2 vols. Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie, no. 1. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1989.
- Dessau, H. "Der Steuertarif von Palmyra." *Hermes* 19 (1884): 486-533.
- Dijkstra, K. *Life and Loyalty: A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995.
- Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées de la République Arabe Syrienne. *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Dirven, L. "The Nature of the Trade between Palmyra and Dura-Europos." *Aram* 8 (1996): 39-54.

- . *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.
- Dodgeon, M. H., and S. N. C. Lieu. *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 226 - 363): A Documentary History*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Dohrn, T. *Die Tyche von Antiochia*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1960.
- Donner, F. M. *The Early Islamic Conquests*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Dostal, W. "The Evolution of Bedouin Life." *Studi semitici* 2 (1959): 11-34.
- Downey, S. *The Stone and Plaster Sculpture*. The Excavations at Dura Europos, Final Report. Vol. 3.1. fasc. 2. Los Angeles : Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 1977.
- . *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture: Alexander through the Parthians*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Drijvers, H. J. W. *The Religion of Palmyra*. Iconography of Religions, vol. 15. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.
- . "Hatra, Palmyra und Edessa. Die Städte der syrisch-mesopotamischen Wüste in politischer, kulturgeschichtlicher und religionengeschichtlicher Beleuchtung." *ANRW* 2.8 (1977): 799-906.
- . "De Matre inter leones sedente: Iconography and Character of the Arab Goddess Allât." In *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren: Recueil d'études offert par les auteurs de la série Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain à Maarten J. Vermaseren à l'occasion de son soixantième anniversaire le 7 avril 1978*, edited by M. J. Vermaseren, M. B. de Boer, and T. A. Edridge, 331-51. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978.
- . "Greek and Aramaic in Palmyrene Inscriptions." In *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches*, edited by M. Geller, J. Greenfield, and M. Weitzman, 31-42. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Supplement no. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . "Inscriptions from Allât's Sanctuary." *Aram* 7 (1995): 109-19.
- Duff, A. M. *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University

- Press, 1928. Reprint. Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1958.
- Dunant, C. "Nouvelles tessères de Palmyre." *Syria* 36 (1959): 102-10.
- . *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 3: Les Inscriptions*. Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966. Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1971.
- Duncan-Jones, R. P. "The Impact of the Antonine Plague." *JRA* 9 (1996): 108-36.
- Dussaud, R. "La Palmyrène et l'exploration de M. Alois Musil." *Syria* 10 (1929): 52-62.
- . *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1955.
- Edwards, J. *Language, Society, and Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- d'Entrèves, A. *The Notion of the State: An Introduction to Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Evans, R. *In Defense of History*. London: Granta Books, 1997.
- Fahd, T., ed. *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*. Strasbourg: Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, 1989.
- Fellman, R. *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 5: Die Grabanlage*. Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966. Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1970.
- Fellman, R., and C. Dunant. *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamîn à Palmyre, vol. 6: Kleinfunde objets divers*. Mission archéologique suisse en Syrie, 1954-1966. Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1975.
- Fentress, E. W. B. *Numidia and the Roman Army: Social, Military and Economic Aspects of the Frontier Zone*. B. A. R. International Series, no. 53. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1979.
- Ferguson, J. "China and Rome." *ANRW* 2.9.2 (1978): 581-603.
- Février, J. *La Religion des Palmyréniens*. Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin.,

1931.

———. *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre*. Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1931.

Filarska, B. *Études sur le décor architectural à Palmyre*. Études palmyréniennes, no. 3, edited by K. Mikalowski and T. Dzierzykraj-Rogalski. Warsaw: PWN: Editions scientifiques de Pologne, 1967.

Finkelstein, I, and A. Perevolotsky. "Processes of Sedentarization and Nomadization in the History of Sinai and the Negev." *BASOR* 279 (1990): 67-88.

Finlayson, C. "Veil, Turban and Headpiece: Funerary Portraits and Female Status at Palmyra." Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1998.

Finley, M. I., ed. *Slavery in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1956.

———. *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*. New York: Viking Press, 1980.

Fox, R. L. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: HarperCollins, 1986.

Fraser, P. M. *Cities of Alexander the Great*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Freeman, P., and D. L. Kennedy, eds. *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*. B. A. R. International Series, no. 297. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986.

French, D., and C. Lightfoot., eds. *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*. 2 vols. B. A. R. International Series, no. 55. Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, 1989.

Frézouls, E. "A Propos de l'architecture domestique à Palmyre." *Ktēma* 1 (1976): 29-52.

———. "Questions d'urbanisme palmyrénien." In *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg [18-20 octobre 1973] à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)*, 191-207. Strasbourg: AECR, 1976.

———., ed. *Sociétés urbaines, sociétés rurales dans l'Asie Mineure et la Syrie*

hellénistiques et romaines (Actes du colloque organisé à Strasbourg, novembre 1985). Strasbourg: AECR, 1987.

Fried, M. H. *The Notion of Tribe*. Menlo Park: Cummings Publishing Co., 1975.

Frye, R. *History of Ancient Iran*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984.

Gabriel, A. "Recherches archéologiques à Palmyra." *Syria* 7 (1926): 71-92.

Gagé, J. *La Montée des Sassanides et l'heure de Palmyre*. Paris: A. Michel, 1964.

Galaty, J. G., and D. L. Johnson, eds. *Settling the Desert*. New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1981.

Garnsey, P. *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

———. *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Garnsey, P., and R. Saller. *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Garnsey, P., and G. Woolf. "Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World." In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by A. Wallace-Hadrill, 153-70. Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1989.

Gauthier, P. *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs (IVe-Ier siècle avant J.-C.)*. Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, supplément 12. Athens: Ecole Française d'Athènes, 1985.

Gawlikowski, M. "A Propos des reliefs du temple des Gaddê à Palmyre." *Berytus* 18 (1969): 105-9.

———. "Classement, chronologie et évolution de la Tour funéraire à Palmyre." *Etudes et Travaux* 3 (1969): 168-91.

———. *Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*. Travaux du Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, no. 9. Warsaw: PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1970.

- . “Nouvelles inscriptions du camp de Dioclétien.” *Syria* 47 (1970): 313-25.
- . “Palmyrena.” *Berytus* 19 (1970): 65-94.
- . “Inscriptions de Palmyre.” *Syria* 48 (1971): 407-26.
- . *Le Temple palmyrénien: Étude d'épigraphie et de topographie historique*. Warsaw: PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1973.
- . *Recueil d'inscriptions palmyréniennes provenant de fouilles syriennes et polonaises récentes à Palmyre*. Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 16. Paris: Klincksieck, 1974.
- . “Les Défenses de Palmyre.” *Syria* 51 (1974): 231-42.
- . “Le Tadmoréen.” *Syria* 51 (1974): 91-103.
- . “Trois inscriptions funéraires des camps de Dioclétien.” *Studia Palmyrenskie* 6-7 (1975): 127-33.
- . “Le Temple d'Allat à Palmyre.” *Revue archéologique* (1977): 253-74.
- . “Palmyre et l'Euphrate.” *Syria* 60 (1983): 53-68.
- . “Le Sanctuaire d'Allat à Palmyre. Aperçu préliminaire.” *AAS* 33 (1983): 179-98.
- . “Les Princes de Palmyre.” *Syria* 62 (1985): 251-61.
- . “Bijan in the Euphrates.” *Sumer* 42 (1985): 15-26.
- . “Les Comptes d'un homme d'affaires dans une tour funéraire à Palmyre.” *Semitica* 36 (1986): 87-99.
- . “The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates.” *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987), 77-80.
- . “Le Commerce de Palmyre sur terre et sur eau.” In *L'Arabie et ses mers bordières: Séminaire de recherche 1985-1986*, edited by J. -F. Salles, 163-72. Lyon: GS-Maison de l'Orient, 1988.
- . “Les Dieux de Palmyre.” *ANRW* 2.18.4 (1990): 2605-58.

- . “Le Premier temple d’Allat.” In *Resurrecting the Past: A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni*, edited by P. Matthiae, M. Loon, and H. Weiss, 101-08. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990.
- . “Les Arabes de Syrie dans l’antiquité.” In *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*, edited by K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors, 83-92. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1995.
- . “Palmyra and its Caravan Trade.” In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 139-45. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- . “Syrian Desert Under the Romans.” In *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock, 55-71. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Geller, M., J. Greenfield, and M. Weitzman, eds. *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches*. Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement no. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Giddens, A. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.
- Gilliam, J. F. “The Roman Army in Dura.” In *The Parchments and Papyri*, edited by C. Welles, R. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam. The Excavations at Dura Europos, Final Report. Vol. 5.1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Graf, D. F. “Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace.” In *L’Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987*, edited by T. Fahd, 341-400. Strasbourg: Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1989.
- Graham, J. W. “The Origins and Interrelations of the Greek House and the Roman House.” *Phoenix* 20 (1966): 3-31.
- Gregory, S. *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier*. Amsterdam: A. Hakkert, 1995.
- von Grunebaum, G., ed. *Studies in Islamic Cultural History*. Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, no. 76. Menshasha, WI: George

- Banta, 1954.
- Gysens, J. C. "Graffiti safaitici a Pompei." *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 107-17.
- Hall, J. M. *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Hansen, M. H., ed. *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community: Symposium August, 29-31 1996*. Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, vol. 4. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1997.
- ., ed. *The Polis and City-State: An Ancient Concept and its Modern Equivallent (Symposium, January 9, 1998)*. Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, vol. 5. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1998.
- Hartmann, U. *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*. Oriens et occidents, no. 4. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2001.
- al-Hassani, D., and J. Starcky. "Autels palmyréniens découverts près de la source Efa (suite)." *AAS* 7 (1957): 95-122.
- Hawley, R., and B. Levick, eds. *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Healey, J. F. *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*. Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement no. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- . "Palmyra and the Arabian Gulf Trade." *Aram* 8 (1996): 33-37.
- . *The Religion of the Nabataeans: A Conspectus*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 136. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001.
- Herzig, H. E., and A. Schmidt-Colinet. "Two recently discovered Latin inscriptions from Palmyra." *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 5 (1991): 65-69.
- Higuchi, T. *Tombs A and C Southeast Necropolis Palmyra Syria: Surveyed in 1990-92*. Publication of Research Center for Silk Roadology, vol. 1. Nara Japan: Research Center for Silk Roadology, 1994.
- Hillers, D. R. "Notes on Palmyrene Aramaic Texts." *Aram* 7 (1995): 73-88.

- . “Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions and the Old Testament, especially Amos 2:8.” *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 8 (1995): 55-62.
- Hillers, D. R., and E. Cussini. *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Hinnells, J. R., ed. *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975.
- Hirth, F. *China and the Roman Orient*. Leipzig: G. Hirth, 1885. Reprint. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966.
- Hodgson, N. “The East as Part of the Wider Roman Imperial Frontier Policy.” In *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, edited by D. French and C. Lightfoot, vol. 1, 177-89. B. A. R. International Series, no. 55. Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, 1989.
- Horden, P., and N. Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- Houston, G. “The Altar from Rome with Inscriptions to Sol and Malakbel.” *Syria* 62 (1991): 189-93.
- Hvidberg-Hansen, F. *The Palmyrene Inscriptions: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*. Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1998.
- Hvidberg-Hansen, F., and G. Ploug. *Palmyra Samlingen: Katalog, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*. Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1993.
- Ingholt, H. “Les Thiasés à Palmyre d’après une inscription inédite.” *CRAIBL* (1925): 355-61.
- . “Un Nouveau thiasé palmyrénien.” *Syria* 7 (1926): 128-41.
- . *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur*. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels, 1928.
- . “Deux inscriptions bilingues de Palmyre.” *Syria* 13 (1932): 278-92.
- . “Five Dated Tombs from Palmyra.” *Berytus* 2 (1935): 57-120.
- . “Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, I.” *Berytus* 3 (1936): 83-126.

- . “Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra, II.” *Berytus* 5 (1938): 93-140.
- . *Palmyrene and Gandharan Sculpture: An Exhibition Illustrating the Cultural Interrelations between the Parthian Empire and its Neighbors West and East, Palmyra and Gandhara, October 14 through November 14, 1954*. Yale University: Art Gallery, 1954.
- . “Some Sculptures from the Tomb of Malkû at Palmyra.” In *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*, edited by M. -L. Bernhard, 457-76. Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966.
- . “Palmyrene Inscription from the Tomb of Malku.” *MUSJ* 38 (1962): 99-119.
- . “Varia Tadmorea.” In *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg [18-20 octobre 1973] à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)*, 101-37. Strasbourg: AECR, 1976.
- Ingholt, H., H. Seyrig, and J. Starcky. *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 58. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1955.
- Ingholt, H., J. Starcky, and G. Ryckmans. “Recueil épigraphique.” In D. Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*, 139-77. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 49. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1951.
- Invernizzi, A. “Kifrin.” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 29 (1983): 207-9.
- . “Researches in Kifrin: ‘Al-Qadissiya Dam Project.’” *Sumer* 42 (1985): 22-26.
- . “Kifrin.” *Mesopotamia* 21 (1986): 53-84.
- . “Kifrin and the Euphrates Limes.” In *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*, edited by P. Freeman and D. L. Kennedy, 367-81. B. A. R. International Series, no. 297. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986.
- . “Kifrin.” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 34 (1987): 156-66.
- Isaac, B. *The Limits of Empire*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

———. “An Open Frontier.” In *Frontières d’empire: Nature et signification des frontières romaines (Actes de la Table ronde internationale de Nemours, 21-22-23 mai 1992)*, edited by P. Brun, S. E. van der Leeuw, and C. R. Whittaker, 105-14. Mémoires du Musée de Préhistoire d’Ile-de-France, no 5. Nemours: Editions de l’Association pour la Promotion de la Recherche archéologique en Ile-de-France, 1993.

Istituto per l’Oriente. *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*. Rome: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1956.

Jamme, A. *Safaitic Notes*. Washington: [s.n.], 1970.

Janon, M. “Cultores dei Ierhobolis iuniores.” *Bulletin d’archéologie algérienne 2* (1966-1967): 219-30.

Johnson, T., and C. Dandeker. “Patronage: Relation and System.” In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by A. Wallace-Hadrill, 219-38. Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1989.

Jones, A. H. M. *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.

———. *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940.

———. “Slavery in the Ancient World.” In *Slavery in Classical Antiquity*, edited by M. I. Finley, 1-15. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1956.

Kaizer, T. *The Religious Life of Palmyra: A Study of the Social Patterns of Worship in the Roman Period*. Oriens et occidentes, no. 4. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2002.

Kapera, Z. J., ed. *Intertestamental Essays in Honour of Józef Tadeusz Milik*. Kraków: Enigma Press, 1992.

Kennedy, D. L. “Ana on the Euphrates in the Roman Period.” *Iraq* 48 (1986): 103-4.

———. “The *cohors X Palmyrenorum* at Dura Europos.” In *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, edited by E. Dabrowa, 89-98. Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1994.

- Kennedy, D. L., and A. Northedge. "The History of 'Ana, Classical Sources." In *Excavation at 'Ana*, edited by A. Northedge, et al. Iraq Archaeological Reports, vol. 1. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988.
- Khazanov, A. *Nomads and the Outside World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Khoury, P. S., and J. Kostiner. "Introduction: Tribes and the Complexities of State Formation in the Middle East." In *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, edited by P. S. Khoury and J. Kostiner, 1-22. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Khoury, P. S., and J. Kostiner, eds. *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Kloppenborg, J. S., and S. G. Wilson, eds. *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Konrad, M. "Research on the Roman and Early Byzantine Frontier in North Syria." *JRA* 12 (1999): 392-410.
- Konstan, D. *Friendship in the Classical World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Krader, L. *Formation of the State*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Lancaster, W., and F. Lancaster. "Thoughts on the Bedouization of Arabia." *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 18 (1988): 51-62.
- . "Tribal Formation in the Arabian Peninsula." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1992): 145-72.
- Laurence, R., and J. Berry, eds. *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Lavan, L., ed. *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*. JRA Supplementary Series, no. 42. Portsmouth, R.I.: JRA, 2001.
- Leman, J. *The Dynamics of Emerging Ethnicities: Immigrant and Indigenous Ethnogenesis in Confrontation*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1998.

- van Lerberghe, K., and A. Schoors, eds. *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1995.
- Leriche, P. "La Porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos." In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 245-52. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Le Rider, G. *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes: Les Trouvailles monétaires et l'histoire de la ville*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1965.
- Leschi, L. "Autour de l'amphithéâtre de Lambèse." *Libyca* 11 (1954): 171-86.
- Lindsay, H. "Eating with the Dead: The Roman Funerary Banquet." In *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, edited by I. Nielsen and H. Nielsen, 67-80. Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, no. 1. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998.
- Lipiński, E. "Maqluta', qinita' et a plug qduš à Palmyre." In *Intertestamental Essays in Honour of Józef Tadeusz Milik*, edited by Z. J. Kapera, 305-11. Kraków: Enigma Press, 1992.
- Littmann, E. *Semitic Inscriptions. Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900*, pt. 4. New York: The Century Co., 1904.
- . "Safa-Inschriften." In *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 2, 661-71. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 30. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939.
- . *Thamud und Safa: Studien zur altnordarabischen Inschriftenkunde*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, vol. 25, no. 1. Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag F. A. Brockhaus, 1940.
- . *Safaitic Inscriptions. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909*, division 4, section C. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1943.
- Luttwak, E. N. *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- MacAdam, H. I. "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria: Three Views of Ancient Arabia and its Peoples." In *L'Arabie préislamique et son*

environnement historique et culturel: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987, edited by T. Fahd, 289-320. Strasbourg: Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1989.

MacDonald, M. C. A. "Nomads and the Ḥawrān in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence." *Syria* 70 (1993): 303-413.

Mach, Z. *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

MacMullen, R. *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

———. *Paganism in the Roman Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

———. *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Malkin, I. "Introduction." In *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, edited by I. Malkin, 1-28. Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001.

———., ed. *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*. Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001.

Mann, J. C. "A Note on the Numeri." *Hermes* 82 (1954): 501-6.

———. "The "Palmyrene" Diplomas." Appendix II in *Roman Military Diplomas 1978 to 1984*, edited by M. M. Roxan, 217-19. London: Institute of Archaeology, 1985.

Maricq, A. "Res Gestae Divi Saporis." *Syria* 35 (1958): 295-360.

———. "Vologésias, le emporium de Ctésiphon." *Syria* 36 (1959): 264-76.

Martin, E. *Cargoes of the East: The Ports, Trade, and Culture of the Arabian Seas and Western Indian Ocean*. London: Elm Tree Books, 1978.

Marx, E. "The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East." *American Anthropologist* 79 (1977): 343-63.

- Mason, H. J. *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis*. American Studies in Papyrology, vol. 13. Toronto: Hakkert, 1974.
- Matheson, S. B., ed. *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994.
- . “The Goddess Tyche.” In *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, edited by S. B. Matheson, 18-33. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994.
- Matthews, J. F. “The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a City of the Roman East.” *JRS* 74 (1984): 157-80.
- Matthiae, P., M. Loon, and H. Weiss, eds. *Resurrecting the Past: A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bounni*. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990.
- Mattingly, H., et al., eds. *The Roman Imperial Coinage*. London: Spink, 1923-81.
- Maxfield, V. A., and M. J. Dobson, eds. *Roman Frontier Studies 1989*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991.
- McGinn, T. A. J. *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- McNeill, W. *Plagues and Peoples*. 1976. Reprint. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.
- du Mesnil du Buisson, R. *Les Tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre, Planches*. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1944.
- . *Les Tessères et les monnaies de Palmyre, Texte*. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1962.
- . “Première campagne de fouilles à Palmyre.” *CRAIBL* (1966): 158-90.
- Michalowski, K. *Palmyre: Fouilles Polonaises, 1959*. Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1960.
- Milik, J. T. *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à l'époque romaine*. Recherches d'épigraphie proche-orientale, vol. 1. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1972.

- . “La Tribu des Bani ‘Amrat en Jordanie de l’époque grecque et romaine.” *ADAJ* 24 (1980): 41-54.
- Millar, F. “Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian: The Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria.” *JRS* 61 (1971): 1-17.
- . “Empire, Community, and Culture in the Roman Near East: Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabs,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 38 (1987): 143-64.
- . “The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: A Study of Cultural Relations.” In *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History: Proceedings of a Colloquium at Tvärminne, 2-3 October 1987*, edited by H. Solin and M. Kajava, 7-58. Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1990.
- . *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.-A.D. 337*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- . “Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule.” In *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse: The Arsacid Empire - Sources and Documentation. Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27-30 Juni 1996)*, edited by J. Wiesehöfer, 473-92. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1998.
- . “Ethnic Identity in the Roman Near East, 325 - 450: Language, Religion, and Culture.” *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998) 159-76.
- Miller, J. I. *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Millett, M. “Romanization: Historical Issues and Archaeological Interpretations.” In *The Early Roman Empire in the West*, edited by T. Blagg and M. Millett, 35-41. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Mommsen, T. *Römische Geschichte*. 6 vols. Berlin: Weidmann Buchhandlung, 1874.
- Morehart, M. “Early Sculpture at Palmyra.” *Berytus* 12 (1956): 53-83.
- Moretti, C. L. *Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae*. Studi pubblicati dall’Istituto italiano per la storia antica, fasc. 17. Rome: 1967.
- Morris, I. *Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

- . “The Early Polis as City and State.” In *City and Country in the Ancient World*, edited by J. Rich and A. Wallace-Hadrill, 25-57. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Mouterde, R. P. R., and A. Poidebard. “La Voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hît, au IIe siècle ap. J.-C.” *Syria* 12 (1931): 101-15.
- Musil, A. *Palmyrena: A Topographical Itinerary*. American Geographical Society Oriental Explorations and Studies, no. 4, edited by J. K. Wright. New York: American Geographical Society, 1928.
- Nelson, C. ed. *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*. Research Series, no. 21. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1973.
- Nicols, J. “Pliny and the Patronage of Communities.” *Hermes* 108 (1980): 365-85.
- Nielsen, I., and H. Nielsen, eds. *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*. Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, no. 1. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998.
- van Nijf, O. M. *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East*. Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, vol. 17. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1997.
- Northedge, A., et. al., eds. *Excavation at ‘Āna*. Iraq Archaeological Reports, vol. 1. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988.
- Oliver, G. J., ed. *The Epigraphy of Death: Studies in the History and Society of Greece and Rome*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.
- Oxtoby, W. G. *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*. American Oriental Series, no. 50. New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1968.
- Parker, S. T. *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986.
- . “Peasants, Pastoralists, and *Pax Romana*: A Different View.” *BASOR* 265 (1987): 35-51.
- . “The Nature of Rome’s Arabian Frontier.” In *Roman Frontier Studies 1989*, edited by V. A. Maxfield and M. J. Dobson, 498-504. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991.

- Pasternak, B. *Introduction to Kinship and Social Organization*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- Pennacchietti, F. A. "L'Inscrizione bilingue greco-parthica dell'Eracle di Seleucia." *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987): 169-85.
- Perkins, A. *The Art of Dura-Europos*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Pfister, R. *Nouveaux textiles de Palmyre découverts par le Service des antiquités du Haut-commissariat de la République française dans la nécropole de Palmyre (tour d'Élahbel)*. Paris: Les Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1937.
- Picard, G. -C. *Castellum Dimmidi*. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1944.
- Piersimoni, P. "The Palmyrene Prosopography." Ph.D. diss., University College, London, 1995.
- Pietrzykowski, M. *Adyta świątyń palmyreńskich: Studium funkcji i formy*, edited by M. Gawlikowski. Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, Instytut Archeologii, 1997.
- Piganiol, A. "Observations sur le tarif de Palmyre." *Revue historique* 195 (1945): 10-24.
- Piso, I. "Beiträge zu den Fasten Dakiens im 3. Jahrhundert." *ZPE* 40 (1980): 273-82.
- Poidebard, A. *La Trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie: Le Limes de Trajan à la conquête arabe; recherches aériennes (1925-1932)*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1934.
- Pollard, N. *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- Pomeroy, S. B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. 1975. Reprint. New York: Schocken Books, 1995.
- . "Women's Identity and the Family in the Classical *Polis*." In *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*, edited by R. Hawley and B. Levick, 111-21. London: Routledge, 1995.

- Potter, D. S. *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Book of the Sibylline Oracle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- . “The Inscriptions on the Bronze Herakles from Mesene: Vologeses IV’s War with Rome and the Date of Tacitus’ *Annales*.” *ZPE* 88 (1991): 277-90.
- Potts, D. T. “Arabia and the Kingdom of Characene.” In *Araby the Blest*, edited by D. T. Potts, 137-67. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1988.
- ., ed. *Araby the Blest*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1988.
- . *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*. 2 Vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- . “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 *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock, 89-107. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Les Presses Universitaires de France. *Mélanges Gustave Glotz*. 2 vols. Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1932.
- Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. 1984. Reprint. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Raschke, M. “New Studies in Roman Trade with the East.” *ANRW* 2.9.2 (1978): 604-1378.
- Reinarch, A. J. “Rapport sur les fouilles de Koptos: Deuxième campagne, janvier-février 1911.” *Bulletin de la Société Française des Fouilles Archéologiques* 3 (1912): 47-82.
- Rey-Coquais, J. -P. “Syrie romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien.” *JRS* 68 (1978): 44-73.
- Rich, J., and A. Wallace-Hadrill, eds. *City and Country in the Ancient World*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Richmond, I. A. “Palmyra under the Aegis of Rome.” *JRS* 53 (1963): 43-54.
- Rodinson, M. “Une Inscription trilingue de Palmyre.” *Syria* 27 (1950): 137-42.

- Roosens, E. *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*. Frontiers of Anthropology, vol. 5. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989.
- Rosenfeld, H. "An Analysis of Marriage Statistics for a Moslem and Christian Arab Village." *International Archives of Ethnography* 48 (1957): 32-62.
- Ross, S. *Roman Edessa: Politics and Culture on the Eastern Fringes of the Roman Empire, 114-242 C.E.* London: Routledge, 2001.
- Rostovtzeff, M. I. "Seleucid Babylonia." *YCS* 3 (1932): 1-114.
- . "Les Inscriptions caravanières de Palmyre." In *Mélanges Gustave Glotz*, vol. 2, 793-811. Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1932.
- ., ed. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season of Work, October 1931 - March 1932*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934.
- . "Une Nouvelle inscription caravanière de Palmyre." *Berytus* 2 (1935): 143-48.
- . *Dura-Europos and its Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- . *Caravan Cities*. Translated by D. T. Rice and T. T. Rice. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932. Reprint. New York: AMS Press, 1971.
- Rostovtzeff, M. I., et al., eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Sixth Season of Work, October 1932 - March 1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.
- Rostovtzeff, M. I., F. Brown, and C. Welles, eds. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons of Work, 1933-1934 and 1934-1935*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.
- Rowell, H. T. "Numerus." In Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* 17(1936), 1327-41 and 2537-54.
- Roxan, M. M. *Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977*. London: Institute of Archaeology, 1978.

- . *Roman Military Diplomas 1978 to 1984*. London: Institute of Archaeology, 1985.
- Ruprechtsberger, E. M. *Palmyra: Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der syrischen Oasenstadt: Einführende Beiträge und Katalog zur Ausstellung*. Linzer archäologische Forschungen, vol. 16. Linz: Gutenberg, 1987.
- Sabeh, J. “Sculptures palmyréniennes inédites du Musée de Damas.” *AAS* 3 (1953): 3-26.
- Sadurska, A. “Nouvelles recherches dans la nécropole ouest de Palmyre.” In *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg (18-20 octobre 1973) à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)*, 11-32. Strasbourg: AECS, 1976.
- . *Le Tombeau de famille de ‘Alainê*. Palmyre, no. 7, edited by K. Michalowski. Warsaw: PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1977.
- . “L’Art et la société: Recherches iconologiques sur la sculpture funéraire de Palmyre.” In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 285-88. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Sadurska, A., and A. Bounni. *Les Sculptures funéraires de Palmyre*. Supplementi alla RdA, no. 13. Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1994.
- Safar, F. “Inscriptions from Wadi Hauran.” *Sumer* 20 (1964): 9-27.
- Sahlins, M. *Tribesmen*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Saliby, N. “L’Hypogée de Sassan fils de Malê à Palmyre. Mit einem bibliographischen Anhang von Klaus Parlasca.” *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 6 (1992): 267-92.
- Saller, R. *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- . “Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction.” In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by A. Wallace-Hadrill, 49-62. Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1989.

- Salles, J. -F., ed. *L'Arabie et ses mers bordières: Séminaire de recherche 1985-1986*. Lyon: GS-Maison de l'Orient, 1988.
- Salzman, P. C., ed. *When Nomads Settle: Processes of Sedentarization as Adaptation and Response*. New York: Praeger, 1980.
- Sampson, E. *Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.
- Sartre, M. "Tribus et clans dans le Hawran antique." *Syria* 59 (1982): 77-91.
- . *L'Orient romain: Provinces et sociétés provinciales en Méditerranée orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères (31 avant J.-C. - 235 après J.-C.)*. Paris: Seuil, 1991.
- . "Transhumance, économie et société de montagne en Syrie du sud." In *La Montagne dans l'antiquité (Actes du Colloque de la SOPHAU, Pau [Mai 1990])*, 39-54. Cahiers de l'Université de Pau, no. 23. Pau: Publications de l'Université de Pau, 1992.
- . "Palmyre, cité grecque." In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 385-405. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.
- Savino, E. *Città di frontiera nell'impero romano: Forme della romanizzazione da Augusto ai Severi*. Pragmateiai no. 1. Bari: Edipuglia, 1999.
- Scheffler, H. W. *Filiation and Affiliation*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.
- Schlumberger, D. "Études sur Palmyre, I. Le Développement urbain de Palmyre." *Berytus* 2 (1935): 149-62.
- . Review of *Caravan Cities: Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, Dura*, by M. I. Rostovtzeff. *Gnomon* 11 (1935): 82-96.
- . "Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène." *Syria* 20 (1939): 43-73.
- . "Les Fouilles de Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi (1936-1938): Rapport préliminaire." *Syria* 20 (1939): 195-238 and 324-73.
- . "Les Gentilices romains des Palmyréniens." *Bulletin d'études orientales* 9 (1942): 53-82.

- . “L’Inscription d’Herodien: Remarques sur l’histoire des princes de Palmyre.” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 9 (1942): 35-50.
- . *La Palmyrène du nord-ouest*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 49. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1951.
- . “Palmyre et la Mésène.” *Syria* 38 (1961): 256-60.
- . “Les Quatre tribus de Palmyre.” *Syria* 48 (1971): 121-33.
- . “Vorod l’agoranome.” *Syria* 49 (1972): 339-41.
- Schmidt-Colinet, A. “L’Architecture funéraire de Palmyre,” in *Archeologie et histoire de la Syrie, vol. 2: La Syrie de l’époque achéménide à l’avènement de l’Islam*, edited by J. -M. Dentzer and W. Orthmann, 447-56. Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie, no. 1. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1989.
- . *Das Tempelgrab Nr. 36 in Palmyra: Studien zur palmyrenischen Grabarchitektur und ihrer Ausstattung*. 2 vols. Damaszenener Forschungen no. 4. Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1992.
- . “The Tomb Architecture at Palmyra and its Decoration.” In *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock, 157-77. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Schmidt-Colinet, A., and K. al-As‘ad. “Zur Urbanistik des hellenistischen Palmyra. Ein Vorbericht.” *Damaszenener Mitteilungen* 12 (2000): 61-93.
- . “Archaeological News from Hellenistic Palmyra.” *Parthica* 4 (2002): 157-66.
- Schneider, E. E. “Il Santuario di Bel e delle divinità di Palmira: Comunità e tradizioni religiose dei Palmireni a Roma.” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 69-85.
- Schottruff, W. *Palmyrenische Grabreliefs*. Frankfurt am Main: Liebieghaus, 1979.
- Schuol, M. *Die Charakene: Ein mesopotamisches Königreich in hellenistisch-parthischer Zeit*. Oriens et occidents, no. 1. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2000.

- Schwartz, J. "Les Palmyréniens et l'Égypte." *Bulletin de la Société Royale d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 40 (1953): 63-81.
- . "L'Empire romain et le commerce oriental." *Annales* 15 (1960): 18-44.
- Segal, J. B. "A Syriac Seal Inscription." *Iraq* 49 (1967): 6-15.
- . "Arabs at Hatra and the Vicinity: Marginalia on New Aramaic Texts." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31, no. 1 (1986): 57-80.
- Service, E. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975.
- Seyrig, H. "L'Incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain." *Syria* 13 (1932): 266-77.
- . "Nouveaux monuments palmyréniens des cultes de Bêl et de Baalshamîn." *Syria* 14 (1933): 253-82.
- . "Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine de Palmyre." *Syria* 14 (1933): 152-68.
- . "Bas-reliefs monumentaux du temple de Bêl à Palmyre." *Syria* 15 (1934): 155-86.
- . "Armes et costumes iraniens de Palmyre." *Syria* 18 (1937): 4-31.
- . "Deux inscriptions grecques de Palmyre." *Syria* 18 (1937): 369-78.
- . "Rapport sommaire sur les fouilles de l'agora de Palmyre." *CRAIBL* (1940): 237-49.
- . "Sculptures palmyréniennes archaïques." *Syria* 22 (1941): 31-44.
- . "Le Statut de Palmyre." *Syria* 22 (1941): 155-75.
- . "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre." *Syria* 22 (1941): 225-70.
- . "Palmyra and the East." *JRS* 40 (1950): 1-7.
- . "Bêl de Palmyre." *Syria* 48 (1971): 85-114.

- . “Les Fils du roi Odainat.” *AAS* 13 (1963): 159-72.
- . “Vhabalathus Augustus.” In *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*, edited by M. -L. Bernhard, 659-62. Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966.
- . “Le Prétendu fondouq palmyrénien de Coptos.” *Syria* 49 (1972): 121-25.
- Seyrig, H., R. Amy, and E. Will. *Le Temple de Bêl à Palmyre*. 2 vols. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 83. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1975.
- Shahid, I. *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs*. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984.
- Shaw, B., and R. Saller. “Close-Kin Marriage in Roman Society?” *Man*, New Series 19.3 (1984): 432-44.
- Shaw, R., and C. Stewart. “Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism.” In *Syncretism / Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, edited by C. Stewart and R. Shaw, 1-26. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Shifman, I. S. *Pal'mirskii poshlinnyi tarif*. Moscow: Izd-vo “Nauka,” 1980.
- Shipley, G. *The Greek World after Alexander, 323 - 30 B.C.* London: Routledge, 2000.
- Sidebotham, S. E. *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa, 30 B.C. - A.D. 217*. Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava, Supplement no. 91. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986.
- Smith, A., ed. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology, vol.60. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992.
- Smith, R. R. “Cultural Choice and Political Identity in Honorific Portrait Statues in the Greek East in the Second Century A.D.” *JRS* 88 (1998): 56-93.
- Smith, W. R. *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*. New ed. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903.
- Solin, H. “Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände.” *ANRW* 2.29.2 (1983): 590-1248.

- Solin, H., and M. Kajava, eds. *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History: Proceedings of a Colloquium at Tvärminne, 2-3 October 1987*. Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1990.
- Sourdel, D. *Les Cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 53. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1952.
- Southern, P. "The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army." *Britannia* 20 (1989): 81-140.
- Speidel, M. "Numerus or Ala Vocontiorum at Palmyra?" In *Roman Army Studies*, vol.1, 167-69. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1984.
- Stansbury-O' Donnell, M. "Reflections of Tyche of Antioch in Literary Sources and on Coins." In *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, edited by S. B. Matheson, 50-63. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994.
- Starcky, J., ed. *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*. Vol. 10. Damascus: Publications de la Direction Générale des Antiquités de Syrie, 1949.
- . "Autour d'une dédicace palmyrénienne à Sadrafa et à Du'anat." *Syria* 26 (1949): 43-85.
- . "Inscriptions archaïques de Palmyre." In *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, 509-28. Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1956.
- . "Une Inscription palmyrénienne trouvée près de l'Euphrate." *Syria* 40 (1963): 47-55.
- Starcky, J., and M. Gawlikowski. *Palmyre*. Édition revue et augmentée des nouvelles découvertes. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1985.
- Stark, J. K. *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Stauffer, A. "Textiles from Palmyra: Local Production and the Import and Imitation of Chinese Silk Weavings." In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 425-30. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.

- Stern, H. *Les Mosaïques des maisons d'Achille et de Cassiopée à Palmyre*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 101. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1977.
- Stewart, C. "Relocating Syncretism in Social Science Discourse." In *Syncretism and the Commerce of Symbols*, edited by G. Ajmar, 13-37. Göteborg, Sweden: IASSA, 1995.
- Stewart, C., and R. Shaw, eds. *Syncretism / Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Stone, L. *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000.
- Stoneman, R. *Palmyra and Its Empire*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- Sullivan, R. D. "The Dynasty of Emesa." *ANRW* 2.8 (1977): 198-219.
- Swain, S. "Greek into Palmyrene: Odaenathus as 'Corrector Totius Orientis'?" *ZPE* 99 (1993): 157-64.
- Syme, R. "Avidius Cassius: His Rank, Age, and Quality." In *Roman Papers*, vol. 5, 689-701. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Taha, A. "Men's Costume in Palmyra." *AAS* 32 (1982): 117-32.
- Tajfel, H., "Introduction." In *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, edited by H. Tajfel. European Studies in Social Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- ., ed. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. European Studies in Social Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Tapper, R. "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East." In *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, edited by P. S. Khoury and J. Kostiner, 48-73. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Tarrier, D. "Banquets rituels en Palmyrène et en Nabatène." *Aram* 7 (1995): 165-82.

- Tate, G. "The Syrian Countryside During the Roman Era." In *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock, 55-71. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997.
- Teixidor, J. "Three Inscriptions in the Iraq Museum." *Sumer* 18 (1962): 63-65.
- . "Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes du musée de Bagdad." *Syria* 40 (1963): 33-46.
- ., ed. *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*. Vol. 11. Beirut: Institut Français d'Archeologie de Beyrouth, 1965.
- . *The Pagan God: Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- . *The Pantheon of Palmyra*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979.
- . "Cultes tribaux et religion civique à Palmyre." *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* 197 (1980): 277-87.
- . "L'Inscription palmyrénienne Inv. XII, 45." *Semitica* 30 (1980): 61-62.
- . "Le Thiase de Bêlastor et de Beelshamên d'après une inscription récemment découverte à Palmyre." *CRAIBL* (1981): 306-14.
- . "Le Tarif de Palmyre: I. Un Commentaire de la version palmyrénienne." *Aula orientalis* 1 (1983): 235-52.
- . *Un Port romaine du désert: Palmyre et son commerce d'Auguste à Caracalla*. *Semitica*, no. 34. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1984.
- . "Nomadisme et sédentarisation en Palmyrène." In *Sociétés urbaines, sociétés rurales dans l'Asie Mineure et la Syrie hellénistiques et romaines (Actes du colloque organisé à Strasbourg, novembre 1985)*, edited by E. Frézouls, 49-55. Strasbourg: AECR, 1987.
- Thorley, J. "The Development of Trade between the Roman Empire and the East under Augustus." *Greece & Rome* 16 (1969): 209-23.
- . "The Silk Trade between China and the Roman Empire at its Height, circa AD 90-130." *Greece & Rome* 18 (1971): 71-80.

- Toynbee, J. M. C. *Art in Roman Britain*. London: Phaidon Press for the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1962.
- . *Art in Britain under the Romans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- . *Death and Burial in the Roman World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Tufi, S. R. “Le Due stele funerarie <<Palmirene>> di Arbeia (South Shields) sul vallo di Adriano.” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 5, no. 1 (1987): 97-100.
- L’Université de Pau. *La Montagne dans l’antiquité (Actes du Colloque de la SOPHAU, Pau [Mai 1990])*. Cahiers de l’Université de Pau, no. 23. Pau: Publications de l’Université de Pau, 1992.
- L’ Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg. *Palmyre: Bilan et perspectives (Colloque de Strasbourg [18-20 octobre 1973] à la mémoire de Daniel Schlumberger et de Henri Seyrig)*, 165-73. Strasbourg: AECR, 1976.
- de Vaux, R. “Sur le voile des femmes dans l’Orient ancien.” *Revue biblique* 44 (1935): 407-23.
- Vermaseren, M. J., M. B. de Boer, and T. A. Edridge, eds. *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren: Recueil d’études offert par les auteurs de la série Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain à Maarten J. Vermaseren à l’occasion de son soixantième anniversaire le 7 avril 1978*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978.
- Veyne, P. *Le Pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d’un pluralisme politique*. Paris: Seuil, 1976.
- Walbank, F. W. *The Hellenistic World*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Wallace-Hadrill, A., ed. “Patronage in Roman Society: from Republic to Empire.” In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by A. Wallace-Hadrill, 63-87. Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1989.
- ., ed. *Patronage in Ancient Society*. Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1989.

- Warmington, E. H., *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*. London: Curzon Press, 1974.
- Webster, J. "Necessary Comparisons: A Post-Colonial Approach to Religious Syncretism in the Roman Provinces." *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 324-38.
- . "Creolizing the Provinces." *AJA* 105 (2001): 209-25.
- Welles, C., R. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam, eds. *The Parchments and Papyri. The Excavations at Dura Europos, Final Report. Vol. 5.1*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Whittaker, C. R. "Introduction." In *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity*. Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society, Supplement no. 14. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1988.
- Wiesehöfer, J., ed. *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse: The Arsacid Empire - Sources and Documentation. Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27-30 Juni 1996)*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1998.
- Will, E. "La Toure funéraire de Palmyre." *Syria* 26 (1949): 87-116.
- . "Marchands et chefs de caravane à Palmyre." *Syria* 34 (1957): 262-77.
- . "Le Développement urbain de Palmyra: Témoignages épigraphiques anciens et nouveaux." *Syria* 60 (1983): 69-81.
- . "Pline l'ancien et Palmyre: Un Problème d'histoire ou d'histoire littéraire?" *Syria* 62 (1985): 263-69.
- . *Les Palmyréniens: La Venise des sables (Ier siècle avant - IIIème siècle après J.-C.)*. Paris: A. Colin, 1992.
- . "A Propos de quelques Inscriptions Palmyréniennes: Le Cas de Septimus Vorôd." *Syria* 73 (1996): 109-15.
- . "Palmyre et les routes de la soie." In *International Colloquium on Palmyra and the Silk Road*, 125-28. AAAS, no. 42. Damascus: Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, 1996.

- . “Les Salles de banquet de Palmyre et d’autres lieux.” *Topoi* 7 (1997): 873-87.
- Wilson, S. G. “Voluntary Associations: An Overview.” In *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, edited by J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson, 1-15. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Windschuttle, K. *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering our Past*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996.
- Winnett, F. V., and G. L. Harding. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978.
- Woolf, G. “Beyond Romans and Natives.” *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 339-50.
- . “The Roman Urbanization of the East.” In *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, edited by S. Alcock, 1-14. Oxford: Oxbow, 1997.
- . *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Yon, J.-B. “Euergetism and Urbanism in Palmyra.” In *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, edited by L. Lavan, 173-81. JRA Supplementary Series, no. 42. Portsmouth, R.I.: JRA, 2001.
- Young, G. *Rome’s Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy, 31 B.C. - A.D. 305*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Zahrnt, M. “Zum Fiskalgesetz von Palmyra und zur Geschichte der Stadt in hadrianischer Zeit.” *ZPE* 62 (1986): 279-93.
- Zayadine, F., ed. *Petra and the Caravan Cities*. Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1990.
- Zuchowska, M. “Quelques remarques sur la Grande Colonnade à Palmyre.” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 52 (2000): 187-93.