

# THE TAX LAW OF PALMYRA: EVIDENCE FOR ECONOMIC HISTORY IN A CITY OF THE ROMAN EAST \*

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Plates I-II

‘Why are the eyes of the Palmyrenes bleared?’ He said to him, ‘My son, you have asked a great question. Because they live in sandy places.’ Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a (with acknowledgements to Ben Isaac).

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the year A.D. 137 the council of the city of Palmyra in Syria agreed to revise and publish the tariff and regulations according to which dues were levied on goods brought into and exported from the city and services provided within it. This was done in order to avert in future the disputes that had arisen between the tax collectors and the merchants, tradesmen and others from whom the taxes were due, and to make the situation absolutely clear the council ordered to be inscribed and displayed in a public place both the new regulations and the old ones which they superseded. The result is one of the most important single items of evidence for the economic life of any part of the Roman empire, and, especially in the taxable services mentioned in the regulations, a vivid glimpse also of the social life of a great middle-eastern city. In ordering the publication both of the old and the new regulations, the council also caused to be preserved crucial evidence for the development of the administrative position of Palmyra in the Roman empire, the old regulations being an accumulation of pronouncements and agreements affecting the city over a period of many years. And lastly, being inscribed both in Greek and in the dialect of Aramaic used in Palmyra and its region, the inscription is an important document in the relations between Classical and local cultures in an eastern province of the empire.

The tax law was splendidly published in 1926, in both Greek and Palmyrene versions, with photographs, facsimile drawings, Latin translation of the Palmyrene text and commentary, by J.-B. Chabot, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (CIS)* II. iii, no. 3913, cf. *Tabulae* IVa, b. A less complete but still serviceable edition had been published in 1906 by R. Cagnat, in *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes (IGR)* III, no. 1056, here too with Latin translation, also by Chabot, of the Palmyrene version, printed opposite the Greek text. Greek and Palmyrene texts, with an English translation of the Palmyrene and useful commentary, were provided by G. A. Cooke, *A Textbook of North Semitic Inscriptions* (1903), no. 147 (pp. 313-40), a book now difficult of access and based on superseded editions of the texts: the French translation of the Palmyrene text by J. Teixidor in the new journal *Aula Orientalis* I. 2 (Barcelona, 1983), 235-52, is therefore particularly welcome. The standard publication of the Greek text alone in W. Dittenberger's *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae (OGIS)* II (1905), no. 629, is unsatisfactory from many points of view. It makes insufficient use of the Palmyrene text for establishing points of detail in the Greek text where this is incomplete, contains misunderstandings and in its omissions and unclear presentation makes no sense of the structure of the text; this is particularly so in the matter of the relations between the old and new laws, both inscribed on the stone. The same is obviously true of selective translations based on Dittenberger's

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for use as Pl. I (it is Pl. 85 of K. Michałowski's *Palmyra* (1968), Engl. tr. 1970). I am grateful to Maria Dzielska of Jagiellonian University, Cracow, for conveying my request for permission to use the photograph, and to Michał Gawlikowski and the editors of *Syria* for permission to use Pl. II. And I am particularly indebted to Sebastian Brock for his help especially (but not only) on matters concerning the Palmyrene version of the tax law and the other Palmyrene material referred to.

text, useful though these can be in giving an idea of the contents of the law.<sup>1</sup> By far the fullest and most helpful English version, making use of Palmyrene as well as Greek texts, is by F. M. Heichelheim, in Tenney Frank's *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, but even in this the structure and presentation of the law are not clearly apparent, and there is only the briefest explanatory comment.<sup>2</sup> The publication of the inscription in Abbott and Johnson's *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (1926), no. 89 (pp. 409 f.) actually includes only the decree of the council ordering the revision of the law, and gives an incorrect description of its scope and purpose, while the excerpts in the teaching collection of documents from the reigns of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian made by E. M. Smallwood (no. 458), though fuller and based on the Greek text of *CIS*, are still too incomplete to show the structure and arrangement of the original inscription. Further, much historical comment on the inscription<sup>3</sup> either precedes or fails to take account of specialist discussion which has transformed our understanding of the text and its interpretation, notably the essential fact, emphasized by H. Seyrig and noted by J.-P. Rey-Coquais in his recent review of archaeological work on the province of Syria and by H. J. W. Drijvers in his summary of research on Palmyra, that the law is connected not with the caravan trade that gave Palmyra its spectacular prosperity but with the local economy of the city and its territory.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this article is not to offer a new publication or detailed consideration of the tax law, nor to pursue in any detail the question of the economy and society of Palmyra,<sup>5</sup> but to make available a translation of the Greek text of the law that both preserves its overall structure and presentation, and exploits the essential contribution of the Palmyrene version. In addition, since the question arises of the relationship between the local economy of Palmyra and the caravan trade with the east from which the city derived its prosperity in the Roman period, I have taken the opportunity to describe in more general terms the city and certain aspects of the caravan trade—again through the presentation of items of evidence in translations which, I hope, will give them a wider currency than they at present possess.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ruins of Palmyra 'otherwise Tedmor, in the Desert' after the title of Robert Wood's magnificent and influential publication of 1753, make it still, despite the pillaging it has suffered since his day, one of the most evocative of Classical cities.<sup>6</sup> The view (Pl. I) from the rising ground at the western end of the city is dominated in the foreground by the temple of Allat, and, in the middle distance, by the huge temple of Bel, built in the first century on an ancient site and reflecting in its architectural design the indigenous Semitic

<sup>1</sup> e.g. N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization: a Sourcebook II. The Empire* (2nd ed., 1966), pp. 329–32; A. H. M. Jones, *A History of Rome through the Fifth Century* II (1970), no. 106 (pp. 238–40).

Short titles are used in the text and footnotes as follows: *Ant. Syr.* III. 38 for H. Seyrig, 'Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre, 4: Rapports de Palmyre avec la Mésène, la Susiane et les Indes', *Antiquités Syriennes* III. 38 (1946), 196–207 (= *Syria* 22 (1941), 252–63), inscriptions cited by number; *Inventaire* for J. Cantineau, *Inventaire des Inscriptions de Palmyre* I–IX (1930–33): fasc. X (1949) is by J. Starcky.

<sup>2</sup> *Economic Survey* IV (1938), pp. 250–4, correctly put under the heading 'municipal accounts': as too by Lewis and Reinhold, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, p. 410; 'Palmyra, in the midst of a desert, had no other revenue except that which she derived from her position as a way-station on the trade-route to the Orient' (my italics: contrast below, pp. 162 f.): A. H. M. Jones, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 238; 'with these revenues Palmyra was a very wealthy city, as its magnificent ruins amply

demonstrate', and similarly in his *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (1937), p. 267 (unchanged in the second edition of 1971, pp. 265–6).

<sup>4</sup> Seyrig, 'Le Statut de Palmyre', *Syria* 22 (1941), 155–74 (= *Ant. Syr.* III. 36 (1946), 142–61) is fundamental: see esp. at 161 (148). Also Seyrig, *JRS* 40 (1950), at 4; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Syrie romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien', *JRS* 68 (1978), at 55, n. 151; H. J. W. Drijvers, 'Hatra, Palmyra, und Edessa', in H. Temporini, W. Haase (edd.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 7 (1977), 837–63, at 842.

<sup>5</sup> See in addition to the wealth of specialized material cited in the following notes, M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities* (1932), chaps. IV–V; J. Starcky, *Palmyre* (1952) and in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément VI (1960), cols. 1066–1103; I. A. Richmond, 'Palmyra under the Aegis of Rome', *JRS* 53 (1963), 43–54; K. Michalowski, *Palmyra* (1970); and Iain Browning's useful general account, *Palmyra* (1979).

<sup>6</sup> Wood's publication, recording a visit of 1751, has been reproduced in reduced format (Gregg International: Farnborough, Hants, 1971).

traditions of the Palmyrene community. Wood described how, visiting Palmyra in 1751 with his considerable entourage, he was given hospitality for fifteen days by the far from opulent Arab occupants of the great walled precinct of the temple (*The Ruins of Palmyra*, 37); it was only in the present century that the site was 'freed from the hundreds of poor Arab huts built over and around it' to allow for its proper exploration (Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, 127). Their inhabitants were re-settled in the present-day village, built on ancient foundations in the north-east sector of the city.

Leading to the precinct and temple of Bel in a series of three differently aligned sections is the great colonnade, an architectural feature characteristic of Roman Oriental town planning (it is found also at Jerash and at Severan Lepcis Magna in Tripolitania, where eastern influence is confidently asserted).<sup>7</sup> To the left is the temple of Baalshamin, to the right the agora and by this, scarcely discernible in the photograph, the theatre. Beyond the urban area is the oasis, the site of the modern settlement and, in the background, the desert across which the caravans made their way to the Euphrates and thence to the trading cities of the Persian Gulf.

The ruins, spectacular as they are, in more senses than one represent merely the 'skeleton' of the city. Wood was struck by the appearance of the place, consisting, it seemed, merely of 'Corinthian pillars, mixed with so little wall or solid building' (*The Ruins of Palmyra*, 35). This is partly to be accounted for by the disintegration of brick-built walls while the stone has survived; connected with this is our relative lack of knowledge of the domestic and, still more, the humbler commercial architecture and religious life of the city. In this deficiency, Palmyra contrasts most sharply with its eastern neighbour on the Euphrates, Doura-Europos, one of the most productive of all ancient sites in revealing the ordinary lives of its inhabitants.

From another point of view also, the archaeological plan of Palmyra is a skeleton, suggesting the main facets of its economic life and social structure but leaving much to the other evidence, and to the imagination. The salient features are obvious enough; the monumental streets already mentioned, the temples of the gods, the agora, its triple entrances opening to the south-west, facing the considerable and obviously important, but largely unexplored area of the city lying over the wadi-bed (Pl. II, cf. Map 1).<sup>8</sup> In the irregular alignment of the main streets, seen especially in the orientations of the great colonnade, has been seen the influence of the separate quarters of a city dominated, it is suggested, by the ancestral tribal organization of Semitic (and Arab) Tadmor; possibly even, at an earlier stage of development, the progressive habitation of the site by sedentarized groups of desert people before the onset of urbanization.<sup>9</sup> The street plan has the look of something influenced by pre-existing considerations, and does not conform to Hellenistic or Roman principles of town-planning.

The earlier history of Palmyra, though little known in specific detail, reaches back far into the pre-Classical period. Mentioned in Assyrian documents of the early second millennium B.C.,<sup>10</sup> the city is described in the Old Testament as a foundation of king Solomon, who is said (*II Chronicles* 8. 4) to have 'built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath [the city and kingdom of Hama, later Epiphania]'. This attribution is expanded by Josephus (*Ant. Iud.* 8. 6. 1) in terms that make explicit the essential conditions of settlement at the site. Having said how Solomon went 'as far as the desert above Syria, and possessed himself of it, and built there a very great city', Josephus goes on:

Now, the reason why this city lay so remote from the parts of Syria that are inhabited is this, that below them there is no water to be had, and that it is in that place only that there are

<sup>7</sup> J. B. Ward-Perkins, 'Severan art and architecture at Lepcis Magna', *JRS* 38 (1948), at 70-1, citing also Antioch, Apamea, Damascus, Jerusalem; see also his *Roman Imperial Architecture*<sup>2</sup> (1981), at 358-60, and, on Apamea, J. Ch. Balty, *Guide d'Apamée* (1981), 46 ff.

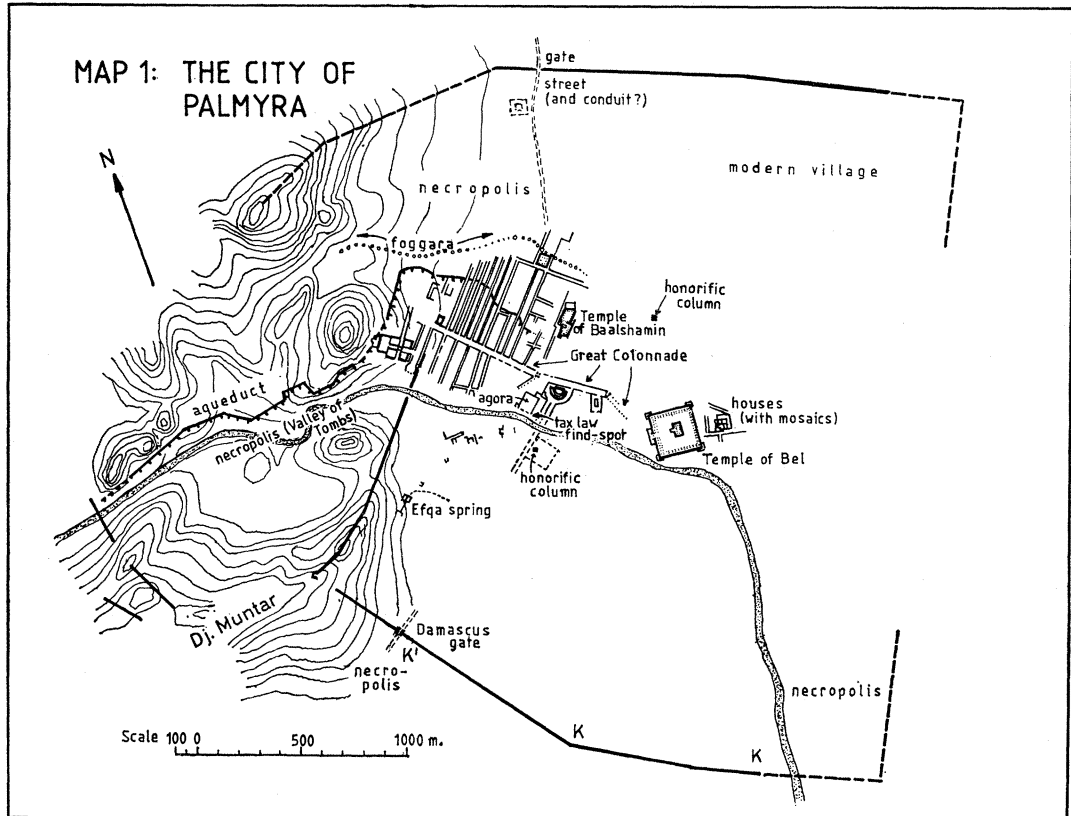
<sup>8</sup> D. van Berchem, 'Le plan de Palmyre', *Palmyre: Bilan et Perspectives: Colloque Strasbourg 1973* (1976), at 168-70 emphasizes the importance of this area, which was enclosed by the early walls.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. E. Frézouls, 'Questions d'urbanisme palmyrénien', *Palmyre: Bilan et Perspectives*, 191-207; Seyrig, 'L'arabisme de Palmyre', *Syria* 47 (1970), 87-92. See further below, p. 169.

<sup>10</sup> Seyrig, *JRS* 40 (1950), 1; Starcky, *Palmyre*, 26-30, and in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Suppl. vi, at cols. 1078 f. Confirmation from archaeological research at the site of the temple of Bel: R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *CRAI* 1966, 181-7.

springs and pits of water. When he had therefore built this city, and encompassed it with very strong walls, he gave it the name of Tadmor, and that is the name it is still called at this day among the Syrians, but the Grecian name is Palmyra (tr. Whiston).

The city, explained Josephus, lay 'two days' journey from upper Syria, and one day's journey [this is incorrect] from Euphrates, and six long days' journey from Babylon the Great'.



The plan includes the early ramparts (cf. p. 161 and Plate II) as shown by Gawlikowski, *Syria* 51 (1974), 233, but not the later defences. Both the plan and Plate II make clear the importance in the configuration (and no doubt the economic life) of Palmyra, of the largely unexplored area south of the wadi-bed and of the agora. Some details are added from Dora Crouch, *Berytus* 22 (1973), esp. Fig. 2.

Despite the opinion of the Arab occupants of Palmyra encountered by Wood, who could point out to their visitors 'his seraglio, his harem, the tomb of a favourite concubine with several other particulars'—all of which 'mighty things', they said, 'Solomon the son of David did by the assistance of spirits' (*The Ruins of Palmyra*, 3)—the attribution of the building of Tadmor to king Solomon owes more to legend than to authentic history. Josephus was wrong in accepting it, as he was in attributing the choice of name to Solomon ('Tadmar' is already the form given in the Assyrian records) and in implying that the city supposedly built by Solomon could compare in any way in size or grandeur with the Palmyra of his own day.<sup>11</sup> Yet the Biblical references suggest that at least at the time of the writing of *II Chronicles*, perhaps in the fourth century B.C., Tadmor was a relatively prominent

<sup>11</sup> The etymology of the name and the confusion of Tadmor of *Chronicles* with Tamar (in the Judean wilderness) of the corresponding passage of *I Kings* (9. 18) are discussed in great detail by Starcky, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Suppl. vi, cols. 1066–76 (summarized at 1075 f.). It has been suggested that the names Tadmor and Palmyra are identical, linked

through the consonantal shifts (P)t → P and d → l (cf. Starcky, 1087). If so, neither word (and in any case this is true of 'Tadmor') has anything to do with palm-trees. For Roman coins of Tiberian date countermarked with Palmyrene 'T' and 'Π' (for Tadmor and Palmyra), see below, n. 22.

settlement, sufficiently so to be assigned in origin to king Solomon. It is worth remarking also that the inscriptions of Palmyra employ the Seleucid system of dating, but whether this means that the city was 'controlled' by the Seleucids in the Hellenistic period remains, as Wood observed (pp. 3 f.), unclear; it may have adopted the system in use among its neighbours for simple convenience in its relations with them. Any early city, built largely no doubt of brick rather than stone, and possibly resembling a conglomeration of settlements at different points around the oasis rather than a single centre, has left little trace, though the most imposing monument of Roman Palmyra, the temple of Bel, rises on a ruin mound that shows the antiquity of this part of the site. The temple also, as was noted above, seems to have imposed its presence, though not its orientation, on a street plan that does not naturally conform to it.

In other respects Josephus' description picks out the important features clearly enough. His reference to the 'very strong walls' of Palmyra is however problematical. When the place was attacked by Mark Antony's cavalry in 41 B.C. in order to seize its already fabulous mercantile wealth, the Palmyrenes took it away on horseback to safety beyond the Euphrates, whose banks they prepared to defend with the archery at which they were exceedingly proficient (Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 5. 9). It has been inferred from their choice of flight rather than the defence of their city against a mere cavalry attack that it cannot then have been fortified, for a cavalry force would have been ill-equipped to press a siege;<sup>12</sup> but it is possible that this is too strict an inference. The early walls of which considerable stretches can be traced were some years ago given a firm *terminus ante quem* of A.D. 89, for a dated shrine was then built into their south-west corner; but more recent study of their design and technique shows that these walls owe nothing to Roman influence but were probably constructed by the Palmyrenes themselves.<sup>13</sup> There seems no good reason to suppose that this had not already been done by the time of Mark Antony's attack. The wall, extending southwards over the river-bed into the area of the oasis and forming in some sectors a series of separate curtain screens reinforcing natural features rather than a continuous rampart, may well have been designed to inhibit local threats to the settlement from Bedouin *razzias* rather than the measured onslaughts of an imperial power;<sup>14</sup> the Palmyrenes may in 41 B.C. have been simply playing for safety in taking to flight across a terrain and to a refuge they knew intimately, trusting if necessary to their archery, rather than risk exposing their wealth to the unknown hazards of an attack on their city by a strange enemy. That the attack was, according to Appian (5. 10), taken by the Parthians as a provocation, justifying their declaration of hostilities to Rome, at least confirms the extent to which Palmyra was at that time linked with the sphere of influence of the eastern power.

The elder Pliny wrote of Palmyra as having a quasi-independent status between the two great empires of Rome and Parthia, always the first preoccupation of either in times of war (*Hist. Nat.* 5. 88). This remark is surely anachronistic for Pliny's own time. It is clear that by then, while its remote location and mercantile activities gave it in some respects an unusual degree of independence, Palmyra had been drawn into the Roman sphere of influence. The tax law of 137 cites pronouncements by Germanicus Caesar (A.D. 18) and subsequent governors of Syria including Domitius Corbulo (60-63) and Licinius Mucianus (67-69), either issued for the specific use of Palmyra or at least applied to it by analogy with other cities in Syria (below, pp. 179 f.). In A.D. 75 a road established by the *legatus pro praetore* Ulpius Traianus linked Palmyra by way of Resafa with Sura on the Euphrates, thereby involving the city more closely with Roman defensive arrangements on the eastern

<sup>12</sup> Richmond, *JRS* 53 (1963), 48.

<sup>13</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson, *CRAI* 1966, 170-1, cf. D. van Berchem, *CRAI* 1970, 231-7 (Tiberius); G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* 63 (1973), 137 (Vespasian). But see now M. Gawlikowski, *Le Temple Palmyrénien (Palmyre VI, 1973)*, 16, and 'Les défenses de Palmyre', *Syria* 51 (1974), 231-42; Rey-Coquais, *JRS* 68 (1978), 51. Independently of Gawlikowski, Dora P. Crouch, 'The Ramparts of Palmyra', *Studia Palmyrénskie VI-VII* (1975), 6-44, describes (at 31 f.) the construction of the southern wall (KK<sup>1</sup> on Map 1) as 'a typical Hellenistic walling

method'.

<sup>14</sup> Gawlikowski, *Syria* 51 (1974), at 235, cf. 240. Commenting on Crouch (op. cit. at 46), Gawlikowski again remarks that 'the limited defensive qualities of the ramparts, built in mud-brick and only 2.40 m. wide, without advancing towers, suited a limited objective of keeping the desert nomads off the town and its gardens... It could not possibly be effective against a regular army prepared for siege'. It seems unnecessary to postulate, with Gawlikowski and Crouch, a date after 41 B.C. for their construction.

frontier of the empire.<sup>15</sup> This involvement was further increased when the Roman *limes* was extended south into Arabia, annexed in 106.<sup>16</sup> By the time of the revision of the tax law in 137, Palmyra, visited by Hadrian possibly in 130, had become a *civitas libera*, its citizens calling themselves—no doubt only in their more self-conscious moments—‘Hadrianopolitae’ and the city adding the title ‘Hadriana’ to its nomenclature (cf. below, p. 175); and it became a colony under Septimius Severus or Caracalla.

The limits of Palmyrene territory in the Roman period marched to the west with those of Emesa and perhaps, further north, of Apamea. Their position is fixed at two points by inscriptions, respectively 60 kilometres to the south-west and 75 kilometres to the north-west of the city.<sup>17</sup> The latter, in fact three inscriptions on a single column, come from the reigns of Trajan and Pius, one of the inscriptions referring back to an ordinance by a *legatus pro praetore* of A.D. 11–17; ‘*fines regionis Palmyrenae constitutos a Cretico Silano leg. Aug. pr. pr.*’ (*AE* 1939, 179). Whether the adjoining territory at this point was that of Emesa or Apamea depends on the interpretation of the second of the three inscriptions; it is not clear whether it referred to ‘a]rva civitat[is/Hemes]enorum’ or ‘Apam]enorum’ (*AE* 1939, 178). The second restoration seems marginally preferable on grounds of the number of letter spaces available for the supplement (which would seem to exclude the most immediately obvious reading, ‘civitat[is/Palmyr]enorum’). This set of inscriptions, at Kheurbet el-Bilaas on the road from Palmyra to Hama (Epiphania) and Apamea, stands at the north-western edge of the Djebel Chaar and Djebel Bilaas, a range of hills in which are many water-points and areas of vegetation, clearly marked on modern maps. In this region were in the 1930’s surveyed several villages with temples and cisterns, sometimes garrisoned by dromedarists or soldiers assigned from the garrison of Palmyra, their period of prosperity coinciding with that of Palmyra itself (Map 2). Clearly satellites of the great city, they are among those ‘villages in the territory’ of Palmyra mentioned in the tax law (below, p. 179). In these regions agriculture was conducted, with scope also for the raising of horses which, in the third century, may have furnished the Palmyrene heavy cavalry.<sup>18</sup>

The boundary marker to the south-west with Emesa, at Qaşr el-Ḥeir on the road to Damascus (*AE* 1939, 180), stands near a conduit system and artificial lake served by a massive dam 15 km. distant. Constructed in the Classical period, as is shown by the building methods and sculptured fragments found at the site, both reminiscent of Palmyrene style, the complex was further developed by the Ummayyads as a luxurious desert khan with ornamental gardens.<sup>19</sup> At least in the economic potential of the site, only fully realized in the later period, Qaşr el-Ḥeir, like the villages to the north-west, may remind us that according to the elder Pliny, Palmyra was not simply an island in a sandy desert but surrounded also by fertile lands; ‘... urbs nobilis situ, divitiis soli et aquis amoenis, vasto undique ambitu harenis includit agros ...’ (*Hist. Nat.* 5. 88). It will be recalled that one of the boundary inscriptions to the north-west just mentioned refers to the ‘fields’ (*arva*) of Apamea, Emesa or (just possibly) Palmyra. In a different sector of the territory we should note the situation revealed by a fascinating Palmyrene inscription from the Qa’ara depression, in the desert 200 km. south-east of the city. It commemorates and blesses the ‘reapers’ who had been ‘here at the boundaries’ with Abgar son of Ḥairan, giving the names and the fathers’ (and in all cases but one, the grandfathers’) names of five other men and the tribe of a sixth, who is described (without patronymic) as a ‘herald’. Whatever the detail of its interpretation, the inscription is clear evidence of cultivation, no doubt of a cereal crop benefiting from favourable conditions in a wadi-bed that had conserved some residue of winter rainfall. It is not impossible to imagine teams of such ‘reapers’

<sup>15</sup> *AE* 1933, 205; cf. Bowersock, ‘Syria under Vespasian’, *JRS* 63 (1973), at 133. Note also the appearance at Palmyra of the tribe Claudias (*CIS* II, 4122).

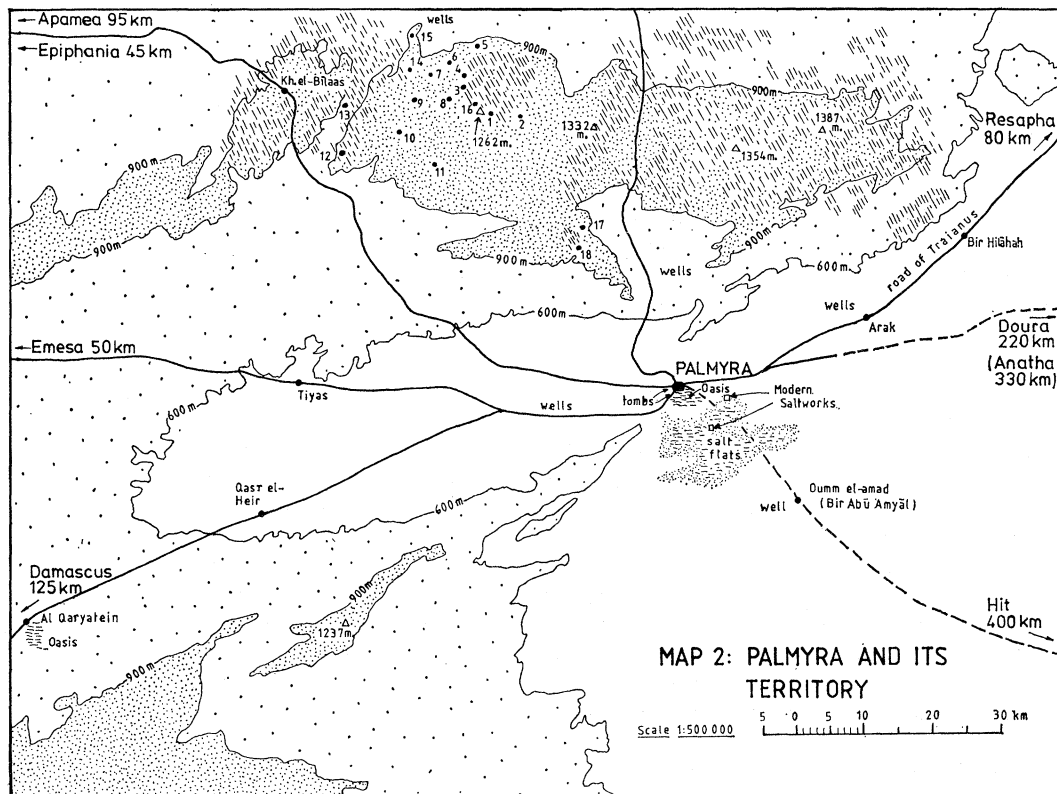
<sup>16</sup> Bowersock, ‘A Report on Arabia Provincia’, *JRS* 61 (1971), at 230 f., and now his *Roman Arabia* (1983), esp. chaps. VI and VII. Bowersock is especially good (at 129–37) on the later relations between Zenobia’s Palmyra and the Arabs.

<sup>17</sup> D. Schlumberger, ‘Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène’, *Syria* 20 (1939), 43–73. Place-names

here and in Map 2 are given in their French transliterations, as used by Schlumberger and others, and often on modern large-scale maps.

<sup>18</sup> Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest* (1951): conclusions at 129–34.

<sup>19</sup> Schlumberger, ‘Bornes frontières ...’ at 64 (*AE* 1939, 180) and ‘Les fouilles de Qaşr el-Ḥeir el-Gharbi (1936–8): rapport préliminaire’, *Syria* 20 (1939), 195–238 and 324–73. Summary of history of the site at 360–6.



Contours and physical features are derived from Series 1404 Sheet 426-B Hims (Homs), printed by Ordnance Survey for the Director of Military Survey, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom (HMSO, 1977), scale 1:500 000. Numbered sites (1-18) are those described by Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest*, and shown on his detailed but very confusing map at p. 2; they have been transferred from this map with some difficulty and their location as shown here is given as approximate. Diagonal hatching indicates areas of vegetation as marked on the modern map cited above. It should be noted that the numbered sites (named below) are only those subjected to excavation; Schlumberger's map shows several other apparently similar sites not excavated, and it is very likely that there are more Palmyrene settlements of this period to be found. The limits of Palmyrene territory to the west (pp. 162 f.) were at Kheurbet el-Bilaas and Qasr el-Heir. For the inscription from Oumm el 'amad see pp. 166 f.

Numbered sites as listed by Schlumberger :

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Kheurbet Semrine      | 10. Kheurbet es Souâné    |
| 2. Kheurbet Leqteir      | 11. Kheurbet Madaba       |
| 3. El Mkemlé             | 12. Kheurbet Ramadane     |
| 4. Ras ech Chaar         | 13. Kheurbet es Sané      |
| 5. Kheurbet Farouâne     | 14. Kheurbet Abou Douhour |
| 6. Hassan Madhour        | 15. Marzouga              |
| 7. Labda                 | 16. Rasm ech Chaar        |
| 8. Kheurbet Chteib       | 17. Ouéchel               |
| 9. Kheurbet Ouadi Souâné | 18. Taboun el Masek       |

touring the entire desert region with armed protection, to gather whatever seed happened on any particular occasion to have produced a harvest.<sup>20</sup>

To the east of Palmyra are no neighbouring cities, no territorial boundaries. In this sector the whole concept of territory and its definition and control should be formulated rather differently. It consisted in command of water-points and their associated settlements in an area in which no permanent control or occupation was envisaged. 'Through the surveillance that he exercises over the water-source,' wrote Daniel Schlumberger in 1939 of the sheikh who then commanded the site of Qasr el-Heir, 'the lesser nomads and herdsmen fall under his control',<sup>21</sup> and this was in ancient times still more applicable to

<sup>20</sup> J. Teixidor, 'Deux inscriptions palmyréniennes du Musée de Bagdad', *Syria* 40 (1963), 33-46. Compare the desert pastoralism near the Euphrates

mentioned below, n. 62. Cf. also n. 42.

<sup>21</sup> *Syria* 20 (1939), 361, n. 2; and cf. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, at 129 ff.

the region east of Palmyra. The important larger issue here was the securing of the routes to the Euphrates against raiding Bedouin, not by direct or intensive military control but by knowledge of the land and its peoples, diplomacy, intelligence, high mobility and the capacity to take action. As to the actual manner in which this was achieved, some evidence is presented below and discussion better reserved to that point.

The outburst of urban munificence at Palmyra coincides almost exactly with the beginnings of active (rather than merely avaricious) Roman interest in the city. Dedicatory inscriptions show that the great temple of Bel was being constructed in A.D. 17 and 19 (it was dedicated in 32), converging closely in time with a presumed visit to Palmyra of Germanicus Caesar on behalf of Tiberius in 18, possibly also with the boundary definition by Creticus Silanus at Kheurbet el-Bilaas, if that were towards the end of his tenure of office.<sup>22</sup> Tacitus records, by implication, Germanicus' journey from Artaxata and Cyrrhus to the dinner with the king of the Nabataeans at which the hostile Cn. Piso, offered a smaller crown than those offered to Germanicus and Agrippina, cast it aside with the remark that the occasion seemed more suitable for a Parthian king's son than for a Roman *princeps*—offensive, no doubt, and out of keeping with time and place, but not lacking point when one recalls the recent crowning by Germanicus, before assembled multitudes at Artaxata, of a son of Polemo of Pontus as king of Armenia (*Ann.* 2. 56. 3 ; 57. 5).<sup>23</sup> On the assumption that the Nabataean king gave his dinner-party at one of his chief cities, Bostra for instance or Petra, Germanicus' journey from Cyrrhus may well have taken him by way of Palmyra, a natural inference confirmed by two items of epigraphical evidence from the city. The first, a statue base in honour of Tiberius, Drusus and Germanicus (*AE* 1933, 204), names as its dedicator Minucius Rufus, *legatus* of the Legion X Fretensis stationed, as Tacitus had just happened to remark, at Cyrrhus (*Ann.* 2. 57. 2).

The second inscription, in Palmyrene only, records in fragmentary fashion the services of Alexandros, sent by Germanicus on some sort of diplomatic mission involving the region of Maishan, and relations also with Samsigeramus, the ancestral dynast of Palmyra's western neighbour, Emesa.

J. Cantineau, *Syria* 12 (1931), no. 18 (pp. 139-41) :

.....] who is also called Alexandros  
 .... Pal]myrene, because he performed (?)  
 ....] before (?), and Germanicus sent him  
 ...] of Maishân, and to Orabzes  
 [fragmentary line]  
 ...] Šamsigeram, Supreme King.

The district of Maishan is mentioned in the Syriac 'Hymn of the Soul' in the apocryphal *Acts of St. Thomas*, with brief but effective characterization :

I quitted the East and went down  
 Led by two couriers,  
 For the way was dangerous and difficult  
 And I was very young to travel it.  
 I passed over the borders of Maišân,  
 The meeting-place of the merchants of the East,  
 And reached the land of Babel,  
 And entered in to the walls of Sarbug . . .  
 (vv. 16-19, tr. R. McL. Wilson).

It is the region known to the Greeks and Romans as Mesene, the area at the head of the Persian Gulf, where trade carried down the Euphrates can, through mercantile cities built there, communicate by sea with northern India.

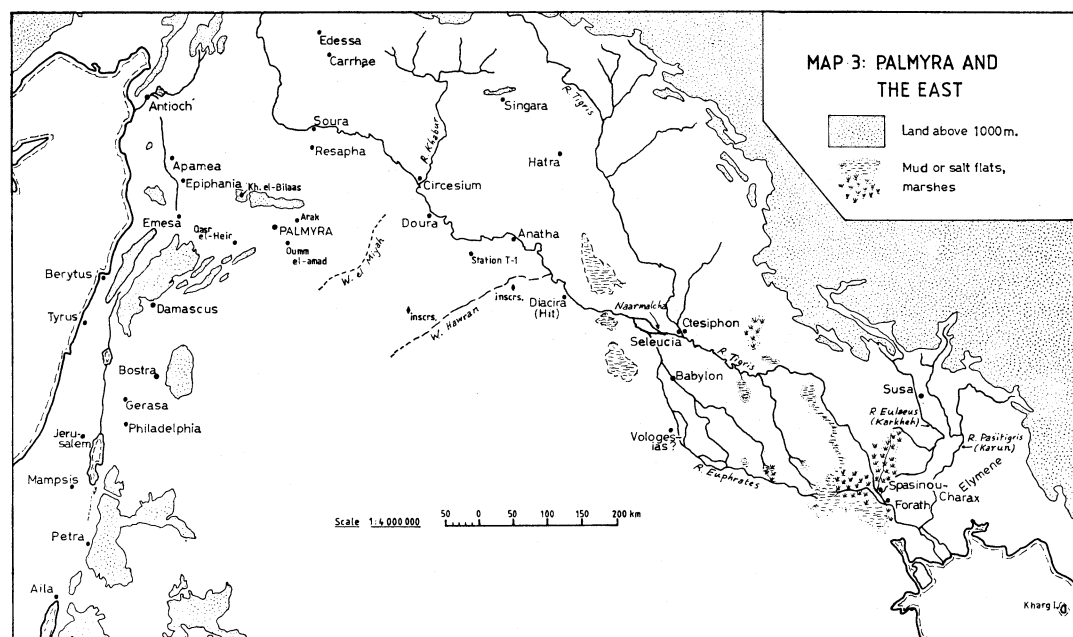
<sup>22</sup> *CIS* II, 3924-5 (*Inventaire* IX, 6a, b), cf. *Inventaire* IX, 11 (A.D. 24); IX, 1 (dedication on 6 Nisan = April 32). In the proceedings of the International Numismatic Convention on Greek Imperials (Jerusalem, 1983), C. J. Howgego calls attention to S.C. series bronze coins of Tiberius countermarked with both Palmyrene 'T' and 'Π' (for Tadmor and

Palmyra) : to be assigned to 'the context of increased Roman influence in the area following the expedition of Germanicus'.

<sup>23</sup> Strabo's description of Nabataean royal drinking-parties may shed more light on the occasion : 'no one drinks more than eleven cupfuls (of wine), each time using a different golden cup' (16. 4. 26)!



The connections of Palmyra with this region (Map 3) are documented by many inscriptions in which are acknowledged the services to caravans of Palmyrene merchant princes and caravan leaders.<sup>24</sup> The vocabulary and idiom of the dedications are fairly regular. The merchants, or ἔμποροι, residing in certain places thank the caravan leader (συνοδιάρχης) for his role in financing and providing protection for the caravan (συνοδία), sometimes but not necessarily travelling with it. So, for instance, in a dedication of A.D. 142 in the temple of Bel, 'Nesa son of Ala son of Nesa son of Rephaelos son of Abissas, caravan leader', is thanked by the 'merchants who travelled up with him from Forath and Vologesias' (*CIS* II, 3916);<sup>25</sup> and M. Ulpius Iarhai is thanked in A.D. 155 by the 'caravan from Spasinou Charax' which he had assisted through its leader Zabdeathes son of Zabdelas (*CIS* II, 3928; cf. *SEG* VII, 142). Forath and Spasinou Charax (Aramaic Karka di Maishan) were cities of the lower Tigris-Euphrates basin, the first standing on the banks of the river Tigris (Shatt al 'Arab). The merchants of Petra, according to Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* 6. 145),



The locations of Spasinou Charax and Forath, and the lower courses of the rivers Euphrates and Eulaeus (Karkheh) in their vicinity, are those suggested by Hansman, *Iranica Antiqua* 7 (1967), 21–58. The coastline shown here is modern, though it has in fact receded considerably since the Classical period.

went there across the desert, then the twelve miles 'on a favourable tide'—that is, upstream—to Spasinou Charax, built on an artificial platform at the confluence of the river Eulaeus and the Tigris. If the Eulaeus is rightly identified as the river Karkheh, entering the Tigris by an old bed traceable on air photographs, then the sites of Spasinou Charax and Forath lie well to the north of Khorramshahr and Basra, where they are conventionally placed, at sites east of the Tigris opposite the town of Al Qurnah.<sup>26</sup> Founded by Alexander the Great and later renamed Antiochia after king Antiochus V, Spasinou Charax was now the chief city of the little kingdom of Characene.<sup>27</sup> Vologesias was a new Parthian city named after king Vologeses I (c. A.D. 52–80). Identified by Maricq with Vologesocerta, founded by Vologeses, according to Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* 6. 122) to undermine the prosperity of Hellenistic

<sup>24</sup> Rostovtzeff, 'Les inscriptions caravanières de Palmyre', *Mélanges Glotz* II (1932), 793–811.

<sup>25</sup> *Inventaire* X, 124 shows the same man descending with a caravan from Palmyra to Vologesias, and *CIS* II, 3933 records another journey in that direction. See esp. Seyrig, *Ant. Syr.* III. 38, 196–207.

<sup>26</sup> John Hansman, 'Charax and the Karkheh', *Iranica Antiqua* 7 (1967), 21–58—with identification

of the sites.

<sup>27</sup> S. A. Nodelman, 'A preliminary history of Characene', *Berytus* 13 (1960), 83–121, with illustration of the coinage. 'Spasinou' commemorates the name of its second-century B.C. eparch and king Hyspaosines (c. 160–after 121); Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 6. 139, with Nodelman, 91.

Seleucia, it has more recently been distinguished from that city and placed in its traditional location by the Euphrates near Babylon (Ptolemy 5. 19).<sup>28</sup> Seleucia is once mentioned among the cities (*Inventaire* IX, 6a of A.D. 19), so too Babylon (*Inventaire* IX, 11 of A.D. 24), and Choumana, a city in Babylonia south of Vologesias (*CIS* II, 3960)—this last in one of the many inscriptions in honour of M. Ulpius Iarhai. He received no less than ten dedications between 155 and 159, five of these from traders from Spasinou Charax. His elder brother was honoured by a caravan from the same city and his son Abgar led one there in 159.<sup>29</sup>

From these mercantile cities further connections were made by boat with what the inscriptions describe as 'Scythia', in fact north India around the mouth of the Indus river. The dedications, such as those which mention journeys made by merchants (ἔμποροι) 'from Scythia in the boat of Bo[. . .]' (*SEG* VII, 156) and, in an inscription also naming M. Ulpius Iarhai, 'in the boat of Honaino son of Haddoudan',<sup>30</sup> were erected by the merchants to their protectors and patrons at Palmyra. The relative scarcity of such dedications in that city perhaps reflects the rarity of merchants who were themselves involved in the conduct of the entire journey, both the sea voyage from India and the overland caravan to Palmyra. That some *were* so involved is implied by a funerary relief at Palmyra showing a Palmyrene with his ship, and by the discovery of a Palmyrene tomb monument on the island of Kharg in the Persian Gulf.<sup>31</sup>

The merchants, established in communities, or trading companies, in Parthian cities—such as the 'merchants at Charax' or 'all the merchants who are in the city of Babylon' mentioned by two inscriptions in which these bodies thank their patrons at Palmyra (*Inventaire* X, 19, 80; IX, 11)—sometimes extended their activities into an openly political dimension. In one dedication, of A.D. 131, the ἔμποροι of Spasinou Charax honour Iarhai son of Nebouzabados, described as 'satrap' of Thilouana, modern Bahrain, then ruled by a king of Spasinou Charax named Meeredates;<sup>32</sup> in another, the Palmyrene Iariboles of the family or tribe of Aabei had in some way helped the ἔμποροι of Spasinou Charax and had also taken part in an embassy to king Orodes. This is Vorod of Elymene or Elymais, formerly a Parthian province, now an independent principality which had extended its hold over Susiana, and even controlled the city of Susa itself.<sup>33</sup> Another Palmyrene living in the Parthian empire built at Vologesias a shrine with an image of Bel, providing the site and furnishing the temple with its roof, together with donations at Palmyra itself (*CIS* II, 3917). The most amazing example of such munificence is however that of Soados son of Boliades, who built and dedicated *at Vologesias* a temple of the Augusti; eloquent testimony to Parthian appreciation of the importance of their commercial links with the west.

The mode of operation of the caravans and the functions of their leaders are given in rather more circumstantial detail in the inscriptions of this Soados son of Boliades, which merit translation in full. The first was discovered at a location called Oumm el 'amad, in the desert south-east of Palmyra.

R. Mouterde, *Syria* 12 (1931), 105–15 (*SEG* VII, 135):

In the year [. . .]. The council and people (honour) Soados son of Boliades, son of Soados son of Thaimisamsos, for his piety and love of his city, and for the nobility and munificence that he has on many important occasions shown to the merchants and the caravans and the citizens at Vologesias. For these services he received testimonial letters from the divine Hadrian and from the most divine Emperor Antoninus his son, similarly in a proclamation of Publicius Marcellus

<sup>28</sup> A. Maricq, 'Vologésias, l'emporium de Ctésiphon', *Syria* 36 (1959), 264–76: against, Marie-Louise Chaumont, 'Études d'histoire parthe, III: Les villes fondées par les Vologèses: (a) Vologésocerta et Vologésias', *Syria* 51 (1974), 77–81.

<sup>29</sup> *Ant. Syr.* III, 38, at 204.

<sup>30</sup> *Ant. Syr.* III, 38, no. 23 (*Inventaire* X, 96), cf. *JRS* 40 (1950), 6.

<sup>31</sup> R. Ghirshman, 'L'île de Kharg dans le Golfe Persique', *CRAI* 1958, 261–8, at 265 ff., and (with more illustration) *Revue Archéologique* 1959, 70–7, at 75 ff. The ship relief is most accessible in Malcolm Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (1976), p. 76 and Pl. 103.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* no. 21 *bis* (*Inventaire* X, 38). On King Meeredates (i.e. Mithradates), known also from coin issues of 143/4, see Nodelman, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 112–14. For Thilouana as Tilmun or Tilwun (Gr. Tylos), modern Bahrain, see Ernst Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire: Studies in Geography and Ethnography of the Ancient Near East* (ed. G. Walser, 1968), 62 f.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* no. 22 (*Inventaire* X, 114); see esp. G. Le Rider, *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes: les trouvailles monétaires et l'histoire de la ville (Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran* 38, 1965), 426–9. The kings of Elymene controlled Susa from c. A.D. 45 and struck coins there from c. 75.

and letters from him and successive consular governors. He has been honoured by decrees and statues by the council and people, by the caravans on various occasions, and by individual citizens: and now, he alone of all citizens of all time is on account of his continuous and cumulative good services honoured by his city at public expense by four statues mounted on pillars in the tetradion of the city, and by decision of the council and people another three, at Spasinou Charax and at Vologesias and at the caravanserai of Gennaes. In addition, he founded and dedicated at Vologesias a temple of the Augusti [. . .] and in gratitude for his loyalty and generosity in his management of [every] position of authority (δυναστεία) [. . .]

The details will by now be largely self-explanatory, and are at certain points further enlarged by the second inscription of Soados translated below. The *tetradion*, in which stood the four statues of Soados, probably erected one each by the four main tribes of Palmyra, is generally taken to be the agora of the city.<sup>34</sup> Since the inscription records honours 'now' given to Soados, it is reasonable to assume that the dedication itself represents one of the other three statues voted by the council and people—the rather particular emphasis on this point in the wording of the inscription no doubt reflecting the fact that the statues were not at Palmyra itself, but, in two cases at least, in cities of the Parthians. It was presumably there too that the δυναστεία mentioned on the inscription was held, but not at all clear in what it consisted, whether a local satrapy or the headship of some sort of Palmyrene 'foreign legation' in Parthia. The site of Gennaes is, by elimination of the Parthian cities, precisely Oumm el 'amad. A water-point in the desert, it lies 22 kilometres south-east of Palmyra, evidently the first staging-post out of the city on the direct route to Hit on the Euphrates.<sup>35</sup>

The second (and earlier) inscription was found in excavations at the temple of Baalshamin at Palmyra and published with commentary by Christiane Dunant in 1956. As in the case of the first inscription, the Palmyrene text is much less well preserved than the Greek, the first few lines of the latter being, except for the omission of Soados' great-grandfather's name, identical to lines 3–7 of the first text.

*Museum Helveticum* 13 (1956), 216–25; *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre, III: Les Inscriptions*, no. 45 (pp. 56–9):

(In honour of) Soados son of Boliades son of Soados, for his piety and love of his city, and for the nobility and munificence that he has on many important occasions shown to the merchants and the caravans and the citizens at Vologesias. He was ever unsparing of his person and property in matters of importance to his city and for this was honoured by decrees of council and people and by public statues and letters and by a proclamation of Publicius Marcellus the most distinguished consular governor. In that he saved the recently arrived caravan from Vologesias from the great danger that surrounded it, the same caravan, in gratitude for his virtue, generosity and piety set up four statues of him, one here in the temple of Zeus (Baalshamin), one in the sacred grove, one in the shrine of Ares and the fourth in the shrine of Atargatis, through the agency of Agegos son of Iariboles and Thaimarsos son of Thaimarsos, caravan leaders. In the year 443, the month Peritios (= February 132).

This inscription obviously represents one of the 'decrees and statues' awarded to Soados by caravans, as mentioned by the inscription from Oumm el 'amad. The letter of Publicius Marcellus is referred to, but not the letters of 'successive consular governors' mentioned in the later inscription, nor those from the emperors Hadrian and Pius, all to be dated after A.D. 132.<sup>36</sup> The four statues at various locations at Palmyra are distinct from the four in the *tetradion* voted on the later occasion by the council and people at public expense. It is likely on the basis of other examples (see below) that they reflect the role of the four dominant tribes of Palmyra and, if so, possible also that the 'sacred places' in question—

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the fragment from the agora noted by Seyrig, *Ant. Syr.* III, 38, 169: . . . Σ]οαδον Β[ωλιαδος . . ., with the Palmyrene [. . . S'WD]W BR BL[YD' . . .]; *Inventaire* x, 56. A private dedication to Soados, by his 'friend' Iarhai son of Ogeilu, was published by Gawlikowski, *Berytus* 19 (1970), 65–7 (temple of Bel, south portico).

<sup>35</sup> See the description of the site by A. Poidebard,

'La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hit au II<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.', *Syria* 12 (1931), 101–5 and Pl. XXV (followed by the publication by R. Mouterde of the inscription translated above).

<sup>36</sup> C. Quintius Certus Publicius Marcellus held office in 130/1 to 134/5; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *JRS* 68 (1978), 64–5.

the temple of Baalshamin, the sacred grove, the temples of Ares (Palmyrene 'Aršu, the protector of caravans) and Atargatis—were similarly connected with the four tribes, and with the quarters of the city in which they were situated.<sup>37</sup>

The other aspects of Sodos' services, as mentioned on the inscription from the temple of Baalshamin, are further illustrated by a dedication in honour of Ogelos son of Makkaios.

H. Ingholt, *Syria* 13 (1932), 289-92 (*SEG* VII, 139); *Inventaire* x, 44 :

By decree of the council and people. The four tribes (honour) Ogelos son of Makkaios<sup>38</sup> son of Ogelos son of Agegos son of Seviras for his complete virtue and courage, for the continuous expeditions he has raised against the nomads, always providing safety for the merchants and caravans on every occasion on which he was their leader; and for his generous expenditure to these ends from his own resources, and his distinguished and worthy performance of all his civic duties: for the sake of his honour. In the year 510 (A.D. 199).

The 'many expeditions against the nomads' conducted by Ogelos are naturally taken, as by Ingholt (291-2), to be the same as his services to the caravans, which he has protected against marauding Bedouin. Another inscription published by Ingholt (*ibid.* 278-89), in honour of Aelius Boras son of T. Aelius Ogeilas, commemorates in the Greek version how he was 'many times general' in the interests of peace, showing constant personal courage and eagerness (*SEG* VII, 138; *AE* 1933, 206). For this he was honoured by his city, receiving an 'equestrian statue and four statues from the four tribes from their own resources in their own sacred places'. The Palmyrene version of the dedication is at one point more detailed, in its statement that Boras 'established peace in the boundaries [that is, the territories] of the city'; like Ogelos, that is to say, he secured the safe passage of caravans by suppressing nomad raids in the eastern reaches of Palmyrene territory.<sup>39</sup> In another respect the Greek text is more explicit than the Palmyrene, for it mentions that Boras gained confirmation for his expeditions from two successive governors of the province (the newly divided Syria Phoenice).<sup>40</sup> One can see why he took this precaution, if these expeditions in some way went beyond the normal scope of such desert operations. It might be necessary to reassure the Roman authorities that nothing was being undertaken contrary to their interests, especially at a time when the Romans themselves, under Septimius Severus, were extending their interests in the region by the annexation of the province of Mesopotamia.

To this general context belongs some at first sight disconcerting evidence, an inscription from the agora of Palmyra commemorating (in Palmyrene only) the dedication in A.D. 132 of two altars by 'Obaidu, son of 'Anamu son of Sha-'adallat, a Nabataean, who was a cavalryman at Hirta and in the camp at 'Ana' (*CIS* II, 3973). 'Ana or Anatha, where this Nabataean soldier served the Palmyrenes, was an island city in the Euphrates river five stages below Doura; Ammianus Marcellinus records its capture by a detachment of the army of Julian in 363, in a description that indicates the essential features of its geography (24. 1. 6 f.). Another inscription, found by the vestiges of a way-station about 115 km. east of Palmyra on the road to Hit, records someone who was *strategos* of 'Ana and Gamla, and his lieutenant; Gamla is taken to be modern Gmeyla, a post in the immediate locality of 'Ana.<sup>41</sup> Yet another dedication found more recently near an oil pumping station (T-1) west-south-west of 'Ana, commemorates 'Abgar son of Shalman son of Zabdibol, who

<sup>37</sup> *Museum Helveticum* 13 (1956), at 220-5. On the nature of the tribes, D. Schlumberger, 'Les quatre tribus de Palmyre', *Syria* 48 (1971), 121-33; D. van Berchem, *Palmyre: Bilan et Perspectives* (above, n. 8), at 170-3—the latter associating the four 'main' tribes with a reorganization of the city under Roman government. On the sanctuaries, Gawlikowski, *op. cit.* (n. 13), 48-52.

<sup>38</sup> M. Gawlikowski, *Syria* 48 (1971), 412-21, publishes and discusses an inscription of Septimius Haddudan, senator, son of Septimius 'Ogeilū Maqqai, who helped the troops of Aurelian after his capture of Palmyra and was high priest of the temple of Bel: obviously a direct descendant (grandson?)

of the Ogeilos of the text translated above.

<sup>39</sup> Ingholt, at 282, discusses the Palmyrene version and its interpretation; cf. J. Starcky, *Syria* 40 (1963), at 51-2.

<sup>40</sup> viz. Manilius Fuscus (attested in 194) and Venidius Rufus (attested in 198); J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *op. cit.* (n. 36), 66.

<sup>41</sup> J. Cantineau, 'L'inscription de 'Umm eṣ-Ṣalābiḥ', *Syria* 14 (1933), 178-80. See also Chr. Dunant, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin* III, no. 51 (p. 65) for a dedication at Palmyra by 'the cavalrymen of the detachment of Gamla and of 'Ana' (after A.D. 188).

came to the limits of the territory under the command (*strategia*) of Iarḥai'.<sup>42</sup> The father of this Abgar may be the Shalman son of Zabdibol recorded in the so-called 'hypogeum of the two brothers' (*CIS* II, 4171); in which case Abgar was the brother of Ḥaddudan, assigned a share in the hypogeum in A.D. 160.

It is not altogether clear what were the terms of Iarḥai's function as *strategos*, but it does not strain possibility to connect him with M. Ulpius Iarḥai who, as we saw earlier (p. 166), protected numerous caravans from Spasinou Charax and other places to Palmyra. It begins to look as if the *strategia* referred to in these inscriptions was an office conferred by the Palmyrenes in order to secure the route to Hit on the Euphrates. It is even possible that the tract Palmyra-'Ana-Hit should be conceived of as some sort of territorial command,<sup>43</sup> though one would not wish to assign to it precise or definite borders. It has long been recognized that the Palmyrenes maintained a military presence at Doura when that city was still under Parthian control.<sup>44</sup> The toleration of Palmyrene forces in these regions is a tribute both to Parthian and to Roman realism in viewing a tract of land, the direct control of which offered no advantage to either side, and reflects the special circumstances attending the maintenance of order in a terrain where peace needed to be preserved, not against a well-defined foreign power but against the rapid and elusive Bedouin, with their capacity to disrupt the trade routes and communications between eastern and western imperial powers.

In the 260's and 270's, as is well known, Palmyra was under its dynasts Odaenathus, Zenobia and Waballath the centre of an independent 'empire' that curbed the Sasanian Persians when the forces of the Roman empire were incapacitated by preoccupations elsewhere, and extended its own authority to Syria, Egypt and, at times, parts of eastern Asia Minor. The suppression of the Palmyrene 'usurpers' by Aurelian and his capture of the city put an end to its prosperity as a great commercial centre; though it is likely that there was also a more general decline in trade with the east in the now unsettled political conditions.<sup>45</sup> Palmyra was garrisoned by Diocletian and became a central point in the late Roman defensive system, but never again achieved even the shadow of its earlier greatness.

The question, what happened to its people when the city declined, has been answered by Ernest Will in a manner that has direct relevance to the social history of the city as I have outlined it.<sup>46</sup> Drawn originally from the desert as the families and followers of Bedouin chieftains who for a brief period became urban potentates, they never really left the desert behind them. They brought into Palmyra their religions,<sup>47</sup> their tribal structure (and feuds) and, as we can see from their magnificently eloquent sculptured monuments, the loose, flowing dress of desert riders. In the end they responded to the decline of their city much as their ancestors had to Mark Antony's attack in 41 B.C., by taking again, this time permanently, to the desert. It was to their role as Bedouin sheikhs, importing to Palmyra their connections and alliances with the desert peoples, that they had owed their success in 'policing' the desert. They were—men such as Soados, M. Ulpius Iarḥai and Ogelos son of Makkaios—not exactly themselves 'merchant princes', rich though they became on the caravan trade, but the protectors and patrons of merchants; men of the desert enjoying a phase of magnificent, but relatively short-lived, urban grandeur.

<sup>42</sup> J. Starcky, 'Une inscription Palmyrénienne trouvée près de l'Euphrate', *Syria* 40 (1963), 47-55. H. Ingholt, 'Varia Tadmorea', *Palmyre: Bilan et Perspectives* (above, n. 8), at 127, n. 144, translates the phrase 'to the limits of the territory' as 'with the head of the archers'; but Sebastian Brock has advised me that the Palmyrene variant required to give this meaning is very unlikely. The same observation would apply to the inscription of the 'reapers' mentioned above (pp. 162 f. and n. 20).

<sup>43</sup> Starcky, *op. cit.* at 53-5, cf. Ingholt, *op. cit.* 126 f.; '[the *strategoī*] were not archons, who sometimes went out for caravan duty, but an integral part of the Palmyrene militia, presumably its military leaders'. In the inscriptions of pastoralists near the Wadi Hauran mentioned below (n. 62) the title *strategos* may however be tribal ('sheikh'), as in

*OGIS* 616: ἐθνάρχου, στρατηγού νομάδων. See for this and other refs., Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 131 with n. 35.

<sup>44</sup> F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos* (1926), Introduction, XL; L-LI.

<sup>45</sup> Doura-Europos never recovered from its sack by the Sasanians in the mid-250's, and the Arab city of Hatra was long deserted by 363, cf. *Amm. Marc.* 25. 8. 5, 'vetus oppidum in media solitudine positum, olimque desertum'.

<sup>46</sup> E. Will, 'Marchands et chefs de caravanes à Palmyre', *Syria* 34 (1957), 262-77.

<sup>47</sup> On which see esp. Seyrig, *Syria* 47 (1970), 87-92; J. Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra (Études Préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 79, 1979), 78 ff.

It is fair to ask whether Palmyra was in any respect a 'typical' city of the Roman empire, particularly if we consider the dominant role of commerce in its economy when, as is now generally assumed, the basis of most urban development in the ancient world was agriculture.<sup>48</sup> There can of course be no doubt that it was in fact commerce that brought to Palmyra its immense wealth, transmitted to the population by normal habits of munificence in the Roman empire, such as we see in a dedication to Julius Aurelius Zabdilas son of Malchos, *strategos* of the city at the time of the visit of the Emperor Alexander Severus; he held also the office of *agoranomos*, or market controller, and 'spent much money' on his city (*CIS* II, 3932). Another such dedication is to Males son of Iarhai, who was *grammateus* for the second time during the visit of Hadrian and made distributions of oil to the citizens and to the visitors (*CIS* II, 3959). Citizens and visitors alike could view the statues of such notables in temple precincts and on high platforms attached to the pillars of the great colonnade, and read the inscriptions declaring how they had provided funds for building, protected caravans, acted as the patrons of merchants and, to quote an often used phrase, 'in every way whatever, pleased them' (*CIS* II, 3917, 3948, 3966, etc.).

Such inscriptions express, in the form appropriate to Palmyra, a tradition of 'big spending' by members of the local aristocracy that ensured the wider distribution of their wealth among the population and made possible the elaborate material resources and ostentatious social life characteristic of a Graeco-Roman city. Civic munificence, at Palmyra as elsewhere, furnished and maintained public amenities, created employment in construction, manufacture and the provision of transport, and generated the service and leisure occupations represented, as we shall see, in certain sections of the tax law (p. 177). The only 'untypical' facet of this behaviour is the source of the wealth of these local leaders in the pursuit or support of mercantile enterprise rather than, as in most cities, agriculture.

This touches a widely debated issue in ancient economic and social history, concerning the relative importance, functions and prestige of agriculture and commerce in Greek and Roman societies. It has been said, in summary of the now generally accepted view emphasizing the importance of agriculture, that even in such cities as Carthage, Aquileia and Alexandria which did function to some extent as trading centres, the local leaders were 'more likely to derive their wealth from the ownership of land than from active participation in manufacture or even commerce'.<sup>49</sup> At Arles and Lyon, where the evidence is sufficient to show something of the conduct and organization of commerce, the local aristocracies had little to do with trade or industry, but left these occupations, in the words of A. H. M. Jones, to 'foreigners, freedmen and the lower orders'.<sup>50</sup> The same picture would no doubt be revealed, if the evidence were as full, at Lepcis Magna, Corinth, London and other cities where commerce played an important role in the overall economy of the city; only at Ostia, with its small territory and great harbour built to service Rome, did the trading interest make much headway among the political and social élite.<sup>51</sup> It is further assumed that when wealth was acquired through trading or in some other 'non-aristocratic' profession, it would normally be invested in land, both as the only secure form of long-term investment and as the passport to higher social status and respect in the community.<sup>52</sup> If this is so, Palmyra was indeed untypical, for nothing is more evident than the pride of its local leaders in their mercantile connections, and nothing less obviously enticing, or less relevant to the prestige of these lords of the desert, than the prospects of landownership.

But even in the case of Palmyra the question cannot be dismissed so simply. The inter-relationship of trade and agriculture may take different forms in different contexts. A predominantly commercial city like Palmyra has to meet the needs of a disproportionately

<sup>48</sup> As strongly emphasized in much recent work, for example A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: a Social, Economic and Administrative Survey* (1964), 769 ff., and M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (1973), 56-60, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Keith Hopkins (summarizing the views of Jones and Finley), in Peter Garnsey, Keith Hopkins, C. R. Whittaker (edd.), *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (1983), xii.

<sup>50</sup> 'The economic life of the towns of the Roman

Empire' in his *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History* (ed. P. A. Brunt, 1974), 53.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* 55.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, as cited above, n. 48, and Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, chap. II, e.g. at 41 f. See also, on the question of status, the remarks of John d'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (1981), chap. I.

large non-productive population for basic sustenance, by whatever combination of local resources and importation is available—an especially obvious and exacting requirement when it is situated in a desert. The population of Palmyra at its height has recently been estimated at 150–200,000.<sup>53</sup> The methods of calculation are admittedly speculative, but the results are convergent and by no means implausible, and their implications bear careful consideration.

It is suggested of Petra and other Nabataean cities such as Mampsis that they were obliged, precisely by the growth of their commercial success in controlling the southerly caravan route from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, to develop an agricultural base adequate to sustain their growing populations.<sup>54</sup> They did this with a now widely recognized skill in exploiting the desert by the use of barrages to regulate the run-off and penetration of water, cleverly contoured terraces and enclosures for its distribution, cisterns for storage, and much resource in the techniques of actual cultivation.<sup>55</sup> The growth of Palmyra is a no less impressive tribute to its people's sophistication in the supply, conservation and distribution of water, reaching far beyond the satisfaction of the basic needs of the community to the maintenance of the baths, pools and fountains prominent in the topography of the city, and no doubt to the gardens of its greater houses.<sup>56</sup> The city took its water not only from local sources such as the spring Efqa (155 litres per second of tepid, sulphurous water from an underground source channelled into a monumental grotto), but by conduit from Al Qaryatein and still more distant sources. The Palmyrenes made extensive use of the subterranean aqueducts known in modern times as *foggaras* or *qanats*. These consist of gently sloping excavated galleries, often many kilometres in length, with frequent vertical shafts to the surface, where they are crowned by spoil heaps produced by the tunnelling and pierced by air holes to give the appearance of lines of little volcanoes; the resulting highly distinctive pattern is clearly visible in air photographs of Palmyra and other areas of Roman desert settlement.<sup>57</sup> There was a time, it is reported, when the city of Teheran was largely supplied by *qanats*, some of them more than 20 kilometres long, and they certainly had an important role in supplying Palmyra with sweet water from the north and west—liberating the vaporous product of Efqa, one would hope, to serve the hygiene of the city, and the irrigation of the gardens of the oasis.<sup>58</sup>

As with other desert and sub-desert Mediterranean areas, we also have to reckon with some ecological change since ancient times, caused not by climatic variation but by the presence or absence (or the wise or foolish application) of human effort. One of the most conspicuous natural features in the configuration of Palmyra, the Djebel Muntar, was once known as the 'Mount of Terebinths' from the conifers that grew there, an ecological change surely more widely characteristic of the region as a whole, and one which will help explain an at first sight surprising reference in the tax law to the duty on pine-cones carried for marketing (p. 179).<sup>59</sup> We have also seen the evidence from the hills to the north and

<sup>53</sup> Dora P. Crouch, 'A note on the population and area of Palmyra', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 47 (1972), 241–50.

<sup>54</sup> Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert: the exploration of the Negev* (1959), 195 ff. At 211 the continuation of these cities' trading activities is made dependent on their further development of agriculture, while Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 21, writes of overland commerce as 'the basis of their [sc. the Nabataeans'] prosperity and their sedentarization'. Avraham Negev on the other hand (op. cit. in following note, at 639) sees agricultural developments as a compensation for declining trade. I would doubt this, and in any case it is not applicable to Palmyra.

<sup>55</sup> A. Negev, 'The Nabataeans and the Provincia Arabia', in H. Temporini, W. Haase (edd.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 8 (1977), at 631–3 (Mampsis), 633–5 (Nessana, Sobata, Elusa).

<sup>56</sup> Dora P. Crouch, 'The water system of Palmyra', *Studia Palmyrénskie* VI–VII (1975), 151–86. Relatively little is known of the houses of Palmyra, though see H. Stern, *Les mosaïques de la maison d'Achille et de Cassiopée à Palmyre* (*Inst. fr. Arch. de Beyrouth* CI, 1977)—behind the temple of Bel, third century.

<sup>57</sup> Crouch, 'Water system', at 160 ff. (listing the various sources) and in her 'Use of aerial photography at Palmyra: a photo essay', *Berytus* 22 (1973), 71–106, fig. 2. On *foggaras* and their construction, N. B. Fisher, *The Middle East: a Physical, Social and Regional Geography* (7th ed., 1978), 36 f. For their use in sub-Saharan Numidia, J. Baradez, *Fossatum Africae: recherches aériennes sur l'organisation des confins Sahariens à l'époque romaine* (1949), Pl. 169 and p. 192 (near Badès). They are also found in Tripolitania.

<sup>58</sup> Fisher, op. cit., 37 notes the case of Teheran. It was observed by Crouch, 'Water system', 155, that the water of Efqa becomes less unpalatable if allowed to stand for a while in porous jars, to allow some evaporation of the sulphurous fumes. Efqa now irrigates the southern part of the oasis.

<sup>59</sup> Crouch, 'A note on the population', etc. (above, n. 53), 247; M. B. Rowton, 'The woodlands of ancient Western Asia', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 26 (1967), 261–77, esp. at 273. King Ashurbanipal of Assyria marched from the Euphrates to the region of Damascus through 'dense forest and high trees' (Rowton, 274).

north-west of Palmyra for the existence of villages whose prosperity, contemporaneous with that of the great city, was similarly based on the conservation and careful exploitation of water (p. 162). The result was a modest rural economy in agriculture and stock-raising which surely contributed to the subsistence of Palmyra itself.

There is finally, in this matter of the role of commercial and agricultural activities in the economic life of Palmyra, the indispensable evidence of the tax law. This is correctly defined, like the much less substantial Zarai tariff from north Africa (*CIL* VIII, 4508), as a *lex portus*. A *portus* is in this context not a 'harbour' in the narrow sense of the word, but any point where a transit tax, or *portorium*, was exacted, and both the Greek word λιμήν and its Palmyrene transliteration are so used in the document (below, n. 9). Despite the mercantile prosperity of Palmyra derived from the caravan trade with the east, it is essential to recognize that the tax law is not concerned with this—except that it reflects and at many points illustrates the general prosperity brought to Palmyra by foreign trade—but relates to the functioning of the local economy of Palmyra and its territory: how otherwise, indeed, could it have been agreed and published by the council of the city without reference to the Roman authorities, at a time when Palmyra was administratively a normal city of the Roman empire? The opening lines of the 'Hymn of the Soul' in the *Acts of Thomas* well match those cited earlier for their description of Maishan, 'the meeting place of the merchants of the east':

From the East, our homeland,  
My parents provisioned and sent me;  
And from the wealth of our treasury  
They had already bound up for me a load . . .  
Gold from Beth 'Ellaie,  
And silver from great Gazak,  
And chalcedonies of India  
And opals of the realm of Kushan  
(vv. 3 f.; 6 f.; tr. R. McL. Wilson)

—but the contents of the tax law have little in common with the silk, spices, precious stones and other luxuries that are the legendary merchandise of caravans from the east. In fact, they are something of an anti-climax, reminiscent rather of Masefield's 'Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack' than his 'Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir' with its 'cargo of ivory . . . sandal-wood, cedar-wood and sweet white wine'.<sup>60</sup> Olive oil and animal fat contained in goatskins, salt fish (a commodity, like the 'Italian wool' of P. 94–5, presumably brought in from the west),<sup>61</sup> wheat, wine and fodder, imported by camel or donkey (32–91), the pine-cones already mentioned (191), camels coming in unloaded at one denarius each (92–3), tax-free camelskins (P. 122–3)—none of this is the stuff of the eastern luxury trade. Nor in this context could much be made of the payment of dues below one denarius in the κέρμα, or local currency, of the city (184–5). Aromatic oil or unguent suggests a higher level of luxury, especially when imported in alabaster vessels rather than goatskins (23–31), but nothing beyond the range of more comfortable members of Palmyrene society (cf. below, n. 14). It was for rich Palmyrenes, no doubt, that were imported the bronze statues mentioned at P. 128–30, commissioned by them from makers in other cities and brought in to accompany the honorific inscriptions found at Palmyra in such quantities; but this was only the normal practice of upper-class members of Graeco-Roman cities. In one entry, that concerning slaves, the export of the commodity is clearly regarded as contingent: 'If the purchaser exports the slave, he shall pay 12 denarii per man' (7–8; P. 69). It is assumed that otherwise imported slaves will be put to use in the city itself. This is to say nothing of the sale and taxation of salt (116–20; P. 64, 69–73, 130–6), the use of the water sources in the city (88; P. 1, 58, 63), the import on the

<sup>60</sup> The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (tr. and comm. by W. H. Schoff, 1912), §36, gives among imports from India to the Persian Gulf copper, sandalwood, teak-wood, blackwood (*sisam*), ebony; and in §39 as exports from Barbaricum in India *costus*, *bdellium*, *lycium* (varieties of spices and drugs), nard, turquoise,

lapis lazuli, 'Seric' (dyed) skins, cotton, silk yarn, indigo.

<sup>61</sup> Here and in what follows, plain numbers refer to the Greek text of the Palmyra tariff, numbers with P. to the Palmyrene text.



hoof of animals for slaughter (181-6) or sheep brought in for shearing (P. 147)—all self-evidently referring to the local economy of Palmyra.

This impression of the normal economic and social life of a middle-eastern city is borne out by certain other facets of the tax law. The diverse services offered by prostitutes and leather-workers, by workshops and bazaars (73-83, 203; P. 47-55; 125-7) need occasion no surprise, though it is unusual to find that the word for 'bazaars', that unequivocally Levantine institution, is in the Palmyrene a loan-word from Greek (81; P. 53). Interesting, too, as a point of detail is the implied contrast between sellers of clothing who 'move about the city' (86-7; P. 57, cf. 139) and others who pursue their trade in fixed establishments. No doubt we have here wandering salesmen selling their products in the streets, or with portable stalls which they could move around from place to place.

The law distinguishes between loads of produce carried to and from the villages in the territory of Palmyra, where no charge is exacted, and loads brought in from outside its boundaries (187-9; P. 109-13). We have noted (pp. 162; 171-2) the presence in the hills to the north-west of the city of numerous Palmyrene villages—a discovery that in itself refutes the notion that the economy of Palmyra must have consisted *entirely* of its role in the caravan trade between east and west, and that the tax law must of necessity be concerned with this. As should now be clear, it is not. We also saw some of the evidence for the role of leading Palmyrenes in securing the caravan routes across the desert against the threat of danger presented by Bedouin tribesmen. The economic counterpart of this situation may at one point be reflected in the tax law. It alludes (233-7; P. 149) to the question of grazing rights, distinguishing between Palmyrenes who graze animals in the territory, for which no charge is made, and those who bring animals into the territory from outside to graze. On these payment is due, the tax collector being empowered 'if he so wishes' (and, one is tempted to add, if he can catch them) to have such animals branded. It seems at least possible that we have here an allusion to the seasonal grazing of their flocks and herds by transhumant desert peoples, reminding us yet again, at the last, that Palmyra, despite its urban magnificence of the Roman period, was still an oasis settlement surrounded by the economy and customs of the desert.<sup>62</sup>

### III. THE TAX LAW

The translation is of the Greek text in *CIS*, with reference to the notes of this and to the notes and texts of the *OGIS* and *IGR* publications, as well as to H. Dessau, 'Der Steuertarif von Palmyra', *Hermes* 19 (1884), 486-533; J. G. Février, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* (1931), chap. IV; D. Schlumberger, 'Réflexions sur la loi fiscale de Palmyre', *Syria* 18 (1937), 271-97; and especially to H. Seyrig, 'Le Statut de Palmyre' (above, n. 4)—the last of these being in my view decisive on the structure of the inscription. Sebastian Brock of the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, has advised on many points of interpretation of the Palmyrene version, and I have consulted also the translation of the Palmyrene text by Javier Teixidor mentioned above (p. 157). Where the Greek text is incomplete but its format and general content are clear, details have been supplied without comment from the Palmyrene version, where this provides them; in these cases, the format of the Greek text is kept. In some passages where the Greek is lost but the Palmyrene survives, the latter is translated, with line references to Chabot's edition of the Palmyrene text. Where both Greek and Palmyrene versions are too fragmentary to translate, a summary is given of what the content appears to have been; these and all other editorial comments are enclosed by square brackets, which are also used in the translated text to indicate points where a supplement which the sense seems to require is directly supported by neither Greek nor Palmyrene version. The text is divided for

<sup>62</sup> As vividly illustrated by the group of Aramaic and Safaitic inscriptions of A.D. 98 (year 409), recording how one Zebida led a party, of mixed Palmyrene and Arabic nomenclature, to 'pitch their tents', 'pasture their animals' and build enclosures in the wadi Rijelat Umm-Kubar near its confluence with the wadi Ḥauran, about 50 km. south-west of

Haditha on the Euphrates. The inscriptions (found *in situ*) also mention a (tribal rather than Palmyrene?) *strategos* and (by supplement) the 'gods of T[admor]': Fuad Sufar, 'Inscriptions from Wadi Ḥauran', *Sumer* 20 (1964), 9-25, reported with some amendments by J. Teixidor, 'Bulletin d'Épigraphie Sémitique', in *Syria* 44 (1967), 187 f.

convenience into sections 1(a-b) (decree and new law) and 2(a-c) (old law); for justification of this division, see below, n. 6.

Angled marks in the text  $\lrcorner$  are to indicate the beginning and end of panels of the Greek inscription, as identified in the margin. All plain line numbers (at left) are to the Greek text; references to the Palmyrene text are denoted by P.

The inscription is arranged on the stone as follows (it will be noted that the Palmyrene text, being of course written from right to left, gives the text a particularly elegant symmetry):

Imperial and consular dating (Greek)									
I Decree of Council:  Greek  Palmyrene	Palmyrene text			Greek text			Greek text		
	IIc	IIb	IIa	IIIa	IIIb	IIIc	IVa	IVb	
	100-	51-		1-47	48-	94-	141-	198-	
148	99	2-50		93	140	197	237		

#### TRANSLATION

#### *At head of text :*

In the reign of the Emperor Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, son of the deified Traianus Parthicus, grandson of the deified Nerva, in the twenty-first year of his tribunician power, twice hailed imperator, three times consul, *pater patriae*, in the consulships of L. Aelius Caesar for the second time and Publius Coelius Balbinus.

#### 1. *The new law*

##### 1(a). *Decree of Council*

$\lrcorner$ In the year 448, on the 18th of the month Xandikos.<sup>1</sup> Decree of the Council.

In the presidency of Bonnes, son of Bonnes, son of Hairanos, the secretary of the council and people being Alexandros, son of Alexandros, son of Philopator, in the magistracies of Malichos, son of Olaies,<sup>2</sup> and Zebeidas, son of Nesa, at a statutory meeting of the council,<sup>3</sup> it was decreed as follows :

Since in former times most of the dues were not set down in the tax law but were exacted by convention, it being written into the contract<sup>4</sup> that the tax collector should make his exactions in accordance with the law and with custom, and it frequently happened that disputes arose on this matter between the merchants and the tax collectors, it is resolved that the magistrates in office and the dekaprotoi<sup>5</sup> should determine the dues not

Panel  
I

<sup>1</sup> Palmyrene Nisan, April. Year 448 (= A.D. 137) is calculated by the Seleucid era.

<sup>2</sup> The Palmyrene adds here 'grandson of Mokimos'. For the Palmyrene names mentioned, see J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (1971), at 75, 95, 105 f., 96, 86, 100.

<sup>3</sup> βουλῆς νομίμου ἐγομένης, i.e. a regular meeting laid down by law; contrast the extraordinary meeting of *SEG* IV, 512; βουλῆς ἐγομ[νης κατ(?)] ἄλλο μέρος, in the sense of 'outside the normal routine'.

<sup>4</sup> The contract was put out by the council for tender by individuals to act as tax collectors. For a reference made by a *legatus pro praetore* of Syria to

one such contract, see lines 152 ff. (P. 75-8).

<sup>5</sup> The dekaprotoi were a board of municipal officials, found very widely in eastern cities, concerned with the exaction of local (and perhaps later also some central) taxation and the supervision of certain financial transactions of a city. See A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City*, 139, and for a full presentation of the evidence and discussion, E. G. Turner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 22 (1936), 7-19. Teixidor's translation of the Palmyrene text is at this point at variance with the unproblematic Greek version, and I am unconvinced by his suggestion of a Latin original.

set down in the law and write them into the next contract, and assign to each class of goods the tax laid down by custom; and that when they have been confirmed by the contractor they should be written down together with the first law<sup>6</sup> on the stone column opposite the temple called Rabaseire;<sup>7</sup> and that the magistrates who are in office at any time and the dekaprotoi and syndics<sup>8</sup> should take care to see that the contractor does not exact any excess charge.

[The Palmyrene version of the decree follows, and then, in both Greek and Palmyrene:]

For one wagon-load of any merchandise, the tax has been assessed at the rate of four camel-loads.]

1(b). *The new tariff*

[The new tariff is now inscribed, headed in the Palmyrene version by a title, set out in large letters across the head of all three columns of the Palmyrene text:]

TAX LAW OF THE EXCHANGE<sup>9</sup> OF HADRIANA TADMOR<sup>10</sup> AND OF THE WATER SOURCES OF AELIUS CAESAR.

[Lines 1–53 of the Greek inscription (Panel IIIa and the first six lines of IIIb) are not well preserved, but the formulae are regular and details, including the figures in lines 1–43, can be supplied from the Palmyrene version.]

- |   |  |         |               |
|---|--|---------|---------------|
| 1 | From those importing slaves into Palmyra or the borders of Palmyra, he will exact for each person, | 22 den. | Panel<br>IIIa |
| 4 | From one selling slaves in the city [not?] for export, <sup>11</sup> for each person,              | 12 den. |               |

<sup>6</sup> The 'new law', 1(b) in the translation, is set out in lines 1–93 of the Greek inscription (P. 1–62). The 'first law' then follows, in three main sections: 2(a) the old tariff, as agreed before the governor Mari(a)nus, abbreviated and in an extremely fragmentary state of survival (94–120; P. 63–73); 2(b) an edict on the acceptance of sureties by the contractor and a definition of his legal powers (121–49; there is no Palmyrene equivalent of this section); 2(c) a long edict, of the *legatus pro praetore* C. Licinius Mucianus (A.D. 66–9), which itself includes references to the old law, and to previous pronouncements of Roman officials (150–237; P. 74–151). There is naturally repetition between the new and old laws, but also some differences of phraseology. The word for 'tax-collector' is regularly δημοσιώνης in the new law and in section 2(a) and 2(b) of the old law, but τελώνης in 2(c), the proclamation of the *legatus pro praetore* (cf. 160, 185, 231), except at the very end (236). Different Palmyrene words are used for 'prostitutes' (ἑταίραι) in new and old laws respectively (P. 45; 126, cf. below, n. 39). It will be clear that I am opposed to the interpretation of A. Piganiol, 'Observations sur le tarif de Palmyre', *Rev. Hist.* 195 (1945), 10–24, followed by S. de Laet, *Portorium: Étude sur l'organisation douanière chez les romains, surtout à l'époque du Haut-Empire* (1949), at 357 f., according to which the tariff is inscribed in strict chronological order, Mucianus' proclamation (2(c)) being its latest section. This raises many problems, not least why the 'new law', against the intention of this passage of the decree, was in this case never inscribed at all.

<sup>7</sup> The Palmyrene text has simply 'Temple of Rabaseire'. Rabaseire (Rab asirē) was a god of the underworld, cf. Chabot ad loc. (*CIS* II. iii, p. 58), and his temple was situated near the south-eastern corner of the agora (*CRAI* 1966, 176–7).

<sup>8</sup> The function of the syndics (σύνδικοι) was to act as legal representatives of the city in relation to its private citizens and to the imperial government, cf. *Digest* III. iv. 1. 1, comparing the legal rights of

*collegia* to those of cities; 'proprium est ad exemplum rei publicae habere res communes, arcam communem et actorem [legal agent] sive syndicum, per quem tamquam in re publica, quod communiter agi fierique oporteat, agitur fit'. The Egyptian evidence, though later, is relevant, making it clear, for example, that the office was a civic liturgy, and suggesting that there might be two syndics, as in *P. Oxy.* 2673; cf. A. K. Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt* (1971), 46–52.

<sup>9</sup> The word translated here by 'exchange' is in the Palmyrene text a transcription (LMN<sup>7</sup>) of the Greek λιμήν, 'harbour', well attested as a loan-word in early Syriac in the broader sense of 'mart, emporium'; cf. S. Brock, *Abh. Akad. Gött. Wiss.* 96 (1975), 83 f. This broader sense seems also to be implied by *Digest* L. xvi. 59, "'portus" appellatus est conclusus locus, quo importantur merces et inde exportantur...'. The precise sense relevant here derives from *portus* as used to denote a place where a *portorium* was exacted; so the Zarai tariff of A.D. 202 is a *lex portus* (*CIL* VIII, 4508), and there was a place 35 miles SW of Sitifis in Mauretania known as 'Ad Portum' (*Tab. Peut.* II, 3/4 Miller). The Greek equivalent, λιμήν, is given by the bilingual inscription, *ILS* 7193. See also M. Rostovtzeff, *Yale Classical Studies* 3 (1932), 79–81.

<sup>10</sup> For the pretended etymology of Tadmor, assimilated with Semitic *tamar*, 'date-palm', see above, p. 160 and n. 11. The city acquired the name Hadriana and its citizens were called Hadriano-politae (Steph. Byz., p. 498), after Hadrian's visit there in ?130. For this, and the implications for the status of Palmyra, now a *civitas libera*, cf. Seyrig, 'Le Statut de Palmyre', 164 f. and 171 f. (*Ant. Syr.* III. 36, 151 f., 158 f.).

<sup>11</sup> The interpretation here depends on the Palmyrene version, itself incomplete. However, '[not]' seems required by the logic and is a possible supplement for the space in the Palmyrene text, line 4. Teixidor, at 246, has 'slave, sold in the city or exported'.

6	From one selling veteran slaves, <sup>12</sup>	10 den.	
	And if the purchaser exports the slaves, he will exact <sup>13</sup> for each person,	12 den.	
9	The said tax collector will exact for each camel-load of dried produce imported,	[3] den.	
	For each camel-load exported,	3 den.	
14	For each donkey-load imported,	[?2] den.	
	Exported,	[?2] den.	
16	For purple-dyed fleece, for each skin imported, he will exact	8 asses	
	Exported,	8 asses	
19	For a camel-load of unguent imported in alabaster vessels, <sup>14</sup> he will exact	25 den. <sup>15</sup>	
	And for each camel-load exported,	13 den.	
23	For a camel-load of unguent imported in goat-skins, he will exact	13 den.	
	Exported,	[?7] den.	
26	For a donkey-load of unguent imported in alabaster vessels, he will exact	13 den.	
	Exported,	7 den.	
29	For a donkey-load of unguent imported in goat-skins, he will exact	7 den.	
	Exported, he will exact	4 den.	
32	For a load of olive oil imported by camel in four goatskins, he will exact	13 den.	
	Exported,	1[3] den.	
36	For a load of olive oil imported by camel in two goatskins, he will exact	[?7] den.	
	Exported,	[?7] den.	
40	For a load of olive oil imported by donkey, he will exact	7 den.	
	Exported,	[7] den.	
43	For a load of animal fat imported by camel in four goatskins, he will exact	13 den.	
	Exported,	13 den.	
46	For a load of animal fat imported by camel in two goatskins, he will exact	7 den.]	
	Exported,	7 den.	
49	For a load of animal fat imported by donkey, he will exact	?7 den.	Panel IIIb
	Exported,	7 den.	
52	For a load of salt fish imported by camel, he will exact	10 den. <sup>16</sup>	
	Exported, he will exact	[. . . . .]	

<sup>12</sup> On 'veteran slaves', cf. *Digest* xxxix. iv. 16. 3, 'sunt autem veterana, quae anno continuo in urbe servierint: novicia autem mancipia intelleguntur, quae annum nondum servierint'.

<sup>13</sup> The usual Palmyrene formulation is 'he (the purchaser) will give'. Dittenberger regularly prints the supplement πρόξει, 'he will exact' for categories of goods exported (cf. lines 11, 15, 18, 22, 25, etc.) but according to the facsimile the word did not usually stand in the inscription, except at 31, and perhaps 53.

<sup>14</sup> Unguent or perfume, what the Authorized Version of the New Testament calls 'ointment' (Greek μύρον, Palmyrene 'aromatic oil') was, as Pliny states in his discussion of the subject (*Hist. Nat.* 13. 19), best kept in alabaster vessels. At *Mark* 14. 3 a woman anoints Jesus' head with 'an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious' (ἀλάβαστρον μύρον νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς), which the disciples claim could have been sold for 300 denarii to give to the poor (cf. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*

13. 15 for the price level). Jesus' reply that the woman had come to anoint him for burial (μυρίσαι μου τὸ σῶμα εἰς τὸ ἐνταφιασμὸν) reveals one of its uses. *Luke* 7. 46 shows the distinction between 'unguent' and ordinary 'oil'; Jesus says to Simon the Pharisee 'my head with oil (ἐλαίῳ) thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment' (μύρῳ). Again it was contained in alabaster (v. 37).

<sup>15</sup> In the figures that follow, as in 9-15 above, it appears that one denarius is allowed for the beast of burden, whether camel or donkey (cf. lines 92 and 194-5 for unloaded camels). After this deduction in each case, it will follow that camel-loads are charged twice as much as donkey-loads, and imports twice as much as exports, e.g. in lines 19-31 the net figures are 24:12, 12:6 and 6:3 respectively. See Février, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* (1931), 40 f.

<sup>16</sup> The content of this entry is entirely supplied from the Palmyrene version (P. 34-5).

[Lines 54–74 of the Greek version are illegible or very incomplete. From the Palmyrene version (lines 36–47), which is also damaged, can be recovered references to [horse]s (?) and mules (P. 39), sheep or lambs, ‘for each head imported or exported, one assarion’ (P. 42), and to a monthly tax of 2 asses on the sale of unguent (P. 46–7). The Greek fragments at lines 72–4 mention a monthly tax on the sale of olive oil.]

75	The said tax collector will exact from prostitutes who receive one denarius or more, from each woman, <sup>17</sup>	1 den.
78	From those who receive eight asses [he will exact]	8 asses
79	From those who receive six asses, from each woman,	6 asses
80	The said tax collector will exact from workshops, [. . . . .] general stores, <sup>18</sup> leather[-workers’ shops] <sup>19</sup> . . . . .] according to custom, from each workshop per month,	1 den.
84	From those importing or selling skins, for each skin,	2 asses
86	Similarly, sellers of clothing who pursue their trade moving about the city <sup>20</sup> shall pay to the tax collector the appropriate tax. <sup>21</sup>	
88	For the use of the two water sources, <sup>22</sup> each year	800 den.
89	The said tax collector will exact for each load of wheat, wine, fodder and similar produce, for each camel-load, for each trip,	1 den.
92	For a camel brought in unloaded, he will exact 1 den., according to the exaction laid down by Cilix, freedman of Caesar.]	

[This is the end of the new regulations which, according to the decree of the Council, were to be inscribed together with the existing law. The reference at line 93 to the ‘freedman of Caesar’ marks the end of Panel IIIb of the Greek version; the beginning of IIIc (lines 94–115) is lost.

## 2. The old law

There appears at the point of the Palmyrene text corresponding to line 94 of the Greek text the following heading, which resembles the heading of the new law in the Palmyrene version placed at the beginning of this translation. It is a transcription of the heading of the old law; note particularly that Tadmor/Palmyra does not carry the additional name Hadriana:]

Panel IIIc
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### 2(a). The old tariff

P. 63 Tax law of Tadmor and the water sources and of the salt which is in the city and its borders,

<sup>17</sup> Presumably per month, on the basis of line 83, a similar tax on trade.

<sup>18</sup> ‘General stores’, ‘bazaars’, in Greek παντοπωλείων, is represented in Palmyrene (P. 53) by a direct loan-word, PTPLY. The lacuna in the text leaves it unclear whether these establishments are to be identified with or distinguished from the ‘workshops’ (ἐργαστηρίων) of line 80.

<sup>19</sup> The precise relationship of σκυτικῶν (to do with leather, more precisely with shoemaking) with παντοπωλείων is also unclear. Liddell & Scott, s.v. σκυτικός, take the words together as meaning ‘shoe-shops’, but this seems unduly to restrict the meaning of παντοπωλείων (cf. P. Oxy. 520. 1).

<sup>20</sup> Greek μετáβολοι, Palmyrene ‘who come and go’; the precise meaning is difficult, but a contrast seems to be made between traders who operate from stores and workshops and those who have no fixed place of trading; cf. P. 139 an apparently similar

passage in the old law.

<sup>21</sup> In Greek τὸ ἰκανόν, ‘sufficient’; in Palmyrene, ‘the tax remains unfixed’ (P. 57).

<sup>22</sup> The Palmyrene adds here (P. 58) ‘which are in the city’. One would of course expect water to be expensive at Palmyra, but the high level of this figure has often been commented on. Dessau, *Hermes* 19 (1884), 522 supposed it was the sum payable by caravan leaders for access to the water for their animals (cf. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 12. 65), and these may well have been among the users; to whom one might add the owners of private baths and commercial premises rather than individuals, for it seems impossible that each individual citizen of Palmyra, or even each head of household, can have paid 800 denarii p.a. Teixidor, at 250 f., thinks persuasively of irrigation rights; though his translation of P. 58, ‘à l’administration des deux sources d’eau . . .’, is not consistent with the Greek version.

P. 65 according to the agreement made in the presence of Marinus the governor.<sup>23</sup>

[This is followed in the Palmyrene text by incomplete references to the import and export of camel-loads, the nature of which cannot be determined, at 4 den. (P. 66), to the import and export of [purple-dyed?] fleece at 4 den. (P. 67; cf. Greek text, line 101), and to other commodities 'as is written above' (P. 68)—that is, in the new law, which of course appears first on the stone. Both Greek (116–20) and Palmyrene (P. 69–73) texts then refer to the taxing of salt found at Palmyra or in its territory at one as per modius of sixteen sextarii, with a penal rate of two sestertii per modius for anyone failing to make a declaration (P. 69–73), and the Greek text continues with a section for which there is no Palmyrene equivalent. This presumably reflects an incompatibility between Graeco-Roman and Palmyrene legal conventions in the area in question:]

2(b). *Edict on sureties*

- 121 From whomsoever the tax collector [. . . . .] receives sureties [. . . . .] let them surrender [. . . . .] let the tax collector receive a satisfactory amount; as to this, let the sum deposited with the tax collector be double.<sup>24</sup>
- 127 Concerning any complaint made of anyone by the tax collector or any complaint made of him by someone else, let the arbitration of this matter rest with the appointed official at Palmyra.<sup>25</sup>
- 131 Let it be within the powers of the tax collector to take sureties for undischarged debts through his own agency or through [his assistants]; and if these sureties are not redeemed in [. . .] days, let the tax collector be empowered to sell
- 136 [. . . . ? in a] public [p]lace?, without fraud or malice.<sup>26</sup> [If any surety?] is sold [for more?] than was required to be paid, let the tax collector be empowered to act as [is permitted by?] the law.

[The next lines of the Greek text (139–80) are extremely fragmentary, and for their first part (139–49) still without a Palmyrene equivalent. This section of the Greek text begins at 139 with a reference to 'The tax contractor of the exchange<sup>27</sup> [of Palmyra and the] water sources of Caesar', permitting 'no one else to act, to give or to receive [. . . .] by any name (i.e. title of authority)', and establishing penalties for unauthorized action (139–45).

Panel  
IVa

<sup>23</sup> On the form of the name, Marinus or Marianus, and the transcription HYG MW N, see below, n. 28. It is unclear whether the contract was determined by the governor or simply laid before him for approval. The latter is more likely, but in either case the intervention of the Roman authorities in the affairs of the city is undeniable, cf. Seyrig, *op. cit.* (p. 175 above, n. 10), 159 (146). There is a problem, in that no known *legatus* of Syria bore the name Marinus (J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *JRS* 68 (1978), 625 gives the list). Marinus may be seen as the acting deputy of an absent governor, such as P. Aelius Lamia (c. 23–32) whom Tiberius never permitted to go to his province (Tacitus, *Ann.* 6. 27 and Seneca, *Ep.* 12. 8 on the legionary legate Pacuvius 'qui Syriam usu suam fecit'); and governors not uncommonly died in office, cf. R. Syme, 'Governors dying in Syria', *ZPE* 41 (1981), 125–44, esp. (on Marinus) 131: 'a legionary legate functioning in default of a consular', with possible opportunities under Tiberius and in 49–51. At *Historia* 31 (1982), 482, Syme wonders about P. Valerius Marinus, designated consul by Galba (for 69) but deferred by Vitellius; cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> M 285. If this were the man and he were to be found in the east (his earlier career is

not known), opportunities to act for the governor existed in 63 and 67.

<sup>24</sup> Presumably double the amount at dispute.

<sup>25</sup> παρά τῷ ἐν Παλμύροις τεταγμένῳ—presumably a Roman, not a Palmyrene official; Seyrig, *op. cit.* p. 175 above, n. 10), 159 (146) suggests that he was a military officer. An inscription also published by Seyrig, *Ant. Syr.* III. 38, no. 13 reveals the presence at Palmyra in the second century of a *legatus Augusti et curator* (πρεσβευτής Σεβαστοῦ καὶ λογιστής), but it is unlikely that such an official already existed in the mid-first century, which must be the approximate date of this edict (cf. n. 28 below).

<sup>26</sup> 'In a public place', i.e. by auction, or possibly, 'for the benefit of the public treasury'. 'Without fraud or malice', χωρίς δόλου πο[νηροῦ], is the Latin legal expression *sine dolo malo*, defined at *Digest* IV. III. 1. 2, 'dolum malum esse omnem calliditatem fallaciam machinationem ad circumveniendum fallendum decipiendum alterum adhibitam'.

<sup>27</sup> Λιμένος (139), again in the broader sense discussed on p. 175 above, n. 9. Dittenberger's puzzlement at this point (*OGIS* 629, n. 91) is unnecessary. The 'water' ([πηγῶν ὑδάτων Καίσαρος]) has nothing to do with any supposed 'harbour'.

2(c). *Pronouncement of imperial legate*

The Palmyrene text now resumes, joining the extremely fragmentary Greek version (at 150, cf. P. 74) with a pronouncement of a *legatus pro praetore* (sc. of Syria) named Gaius [ . . . . Mu]ci(a)nus,<sup>28</sup> which began, as reconstructed mainly from the Palmyrene version, P. 75-8:]

152 [On] the assessment of taxes between the Palmyrenes and [. . . . .] taxes, I have determined that [. . .] the tax should be [according to the schedule?] [. . .] which Alkimos contracted<sup>29</sup> [. . . . .]

[Lines 150-237 (the end) of the Greek version (P. 74-151) constitute a final section of the 'old law', in which the edict of Mucianus refers back to other earlier pronouncements (see lines 182, 196-7). Throughout this section Mucianus speaks in the first person, as at line 188 of the Greek text, 76, 125, 131 of the Palmyrene. The pronouncement, as preserved in the Palmyrene text (80-101) went on to cover the import of slaves into Palmyra and its borders and their export (P. 80-2; 22 denarii per slave, as at the beginning of the new law, cf. 1 ff.), the import, export and sale of other categories of slave (P. 83-8), the taxation of Italian wool (94-7; cf. the Greek text, 167), and of unguent carried in goatskins. This last was to be done 'according to the law', apparently because an 'error in writing' had been committed by the tax collector (P. 98-101). The rate was now fixed at 13 denarii (cf. Greek version, 177-80).

The following section is well preserved, both in Greek and Palmyrene versions. The document still represents the pronouncement of the *legatus pro praetore* of Syria.]

- 181 The tax on animals for slaughter should be reckoned in denarii, as Germanicus Caesar also made clear in his letter to Statilius, to the effect that taxes should be reckoned in Italian asses.<sup>30</sup> Any tax of less than a denarius the tax collector will exact according to custom in small coin.<sup>31</sup> In the case of animals rejected on account of natural death the tax is not due.
- 187 As for provisions, I decree that a tax of one denarius should be exacted according to the law<sup>32</sup> for each load imported from outside the borders of Palmyra or exported there; but those who convey provisions to the villages or from them<sup>33</sup> should be exempt, according
- 191 to the concession made to them. As to pine cones<sup>34</sup> and similar produce carried for marketing, it is determined that the tax should be reckoned as for dried produce, as is also the practice in the other cities.
- 194 As for camels, if they are brought in from outside the borders either 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.<sup>35</sup>]

<sup>28</sup> Seyrig, op. cit. (p. 175 above, n. 10), 165-7 (152-4), convincingly sees in the Palmyrene GYS [. . . . .]QYNS HYGMWN' a reference to Gaius [Licinius Mu]cianus, *legatus* of Syria in 67-9; . . . . QYNS can serve as a transliteration of either '-cinus' or '-cianus'. HYGMWN' is a transliteration of Greek ἡγεμών, 'governor'. Line 151 of the Greek text has ἀντιστρατήγος, for *legatus pro praetore*.

<sup>29</sup> Alkimos is presumably an earlier tax contractor whose contract had been approved by the then *legatus* of Syria.

<sup>30</sup> The reading ἰταλικόν, 'Italian', for Dittenberger's πάντα, 'all' or 'every', is secured by the Palmyrene version. Germanicus Caesar was in the east with special powers in A.D. 18-19 (see above, p. 164). Statilius was perhaps a Roman procurator in Syria (as *PIR* S 588), or possibly the Roman official of lines 129-30.

<sup>31</sup> Greek κέρμα (cf. *OGIS* 484. 18), the small bronze coin of the Palmyrene district. Another expression for small local coin was λεπτός χαλκός or simply λεπτόν, the 'widow's mite' of *Luke* 21. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Sc. the existing law in the time of the *legatus pro praetore* whose pronouncement this is.

<sup>33</sup> i.e. to and from villages in the territory of Palmyra; see above, p. 162.

<sup>34</sup> Pine kernels were widely used in cooking; see the index to *Apicius: the Roman Cookery Book*, by Barbara Flower and Elisabeth Rosenbaum (1958), 229.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. above, lines 92 f. G. Domitius Corbulo was *legatus pro praetore* in Syria under Nero, c. 60-3 (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> D 142). Barbarus, like Statilius in line 182, was possibly procurator in Syria (as *PIR*<sup>2</sup> B 48), or the Roman official stationed in Palmyra (p. 165 above, n. 25).

[The next 35 lines (198–232) of the Greek inscription are illegible or extremely fragmentary. The Palmyrene version corresponding to the first part of this section can be translated as follows :]

Panel  
IVb

- P. 122 As for camel skins,<sup>36</sup> they have been deleted from the tariff, because no tax is exacted.<sup>37</sup> As for grasses and [. . . .],<sup>38</sup> it is decided that they are liable for tax, because they can be sold for profit.
- P. 125 As for the tax on slave girls,<sup>39</sup> I have decided as the law declares :  
The tax collector will exact from slave girls who take one denarius or more, a tax of one denarius for each woman ; and if she receives less, he will exact whatever sum she receives.<sup>40</sup>
- P. 128 As for bronze images, that is, statues,<sup>41</sup> it is decreed that the tax be exacted as for bronze, one image to be taxed one half its value by weight, and two images the value by weight of one.<sup>42</sup>
- P. 130 As for salt, it seems right to me that it should be sold in the public place where the people assemble,<sup>43</sup> and any Palmyrene who buys it for his own use will pay one Italian as for each modius, as is written in the law. The tax on salt which is found at Palmyra must be exacted in asses, as in [that law],<sup>44</sup> and the salt put on sale to the Palmyrenes, according to custom.

[The rest of the Palmyrene text is fragmentary, but references can be detected to the tax on purple (P. 137) and to skins (P. 142–3). A tax is levied on flocks of sheep brought into Palmyrene territory, but not on those brought into the city in order to be sheared there (P. 145–7). The Greek text concludes :]

- 233 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.]

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<sup>36</sup> H. Ingholt, 'Varia Tadmorea', *Palmyre : Bilan et Perspectives*, 105 f., suggests the translation 'as to the leaders of the camels, they have already paid their dues [sc. to the imperial customs] ; they [sc. the local collectors] should not levy a tax'. This would be consistent with, and indeed make explicit, the distinction between the municipal tariff and the Roman imperial customs tax levied on the caravans, but there are technical objections, pointed out to me by Sebastian Brock, to Ingholt's rendering of Palmyrene GLDY' as 'leaders'. Teixidor, at 242, agrees on camel skins.

<sup>37</sup> Lit. 'they have deleted/renounced them because they do not exact tax'. Teixidor's tr., 'ils ont desavoué qu'on n'exige plus la taxe' gives the opposite sense, but the Greek version does not support his division of the text here.

<sup>38</sup> 'Grasses' may mean 'fodder', or possibly 'vegetables'. Chabot restored the following phrase to yield 'fallen leaves' (convertible into fodder) but the text is extremely uncertain and better left without restoration.

<sup>39</sup> The Palmyrene equivalent of the Greek ἑταίρων, 'prostitutes' (line 203 ; cf. also lines 75 ff. in the 'new law', where the Palmyrene has a closer equivalent to ἑταίραι).

<sup>40</sup> The taxes are to be exacted at the specified rates

per month, as in the new law ; cf. above, lines 75 ff., and n. 17.

<sup>41</sup> 'Statues', a Greek loan-word in the Palmyrene, is apparently to be taken in apposition with 'bronze images'. The statues were no doubt commissioned from makers elsewhere for public display in their city by Palmyrene notables : Seyrig, *JRS* 40 (1950), 4.

<sup>42</sup> This seems a necessary expansion of the Palmyrene, which reads literally, 'let an image pay half the weight, and two images the weight'.

<sup>43</sup> i.e. in the agora or forum—so as to exert some control over the sale and make it possible to collect the tax. The area south and south-west of Palmyra is a large sebkha, or salt-flat, and it is in this region that the salt was collected (cf. Map 2).

<sup>44</sup> The text here is extremely uncertain. An alternative reading gives a Palmyrene transcription of the Greek word ἡγεμονία, which might be used for 'province' (as is ἡγεμών for governor ; cf. above, n. 28). Palmyrene practice would then be established 'as in [the province]' ; cf. the reference to practice in 'the other cities' in the Greek version, line 193. But there is no reason to suppose that Palmyra was not itself part of the province, and Teixidor, at 245, supports the interpretation given here, citing new photographic evidence for the word 'law', NM[WS'], on the inscription.





PALMYRA FROM THE WEST.



PALMYRA FROM THE SOUTH-WEST, CAWLIKOWSKI, *Syria 51* (1974), PLATE X. *Photo W. Jerke*. IN THE FOREGROUND IS THE EARLY RAMPART (SEE P. 161 AND MAP 2). NOTE THE TRACES OF BUILDINGS TO THE SOUTH OF THE WADI-BED.