

The RAG

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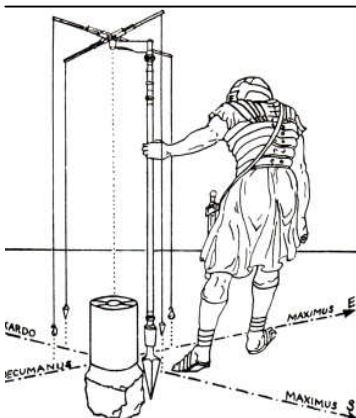
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Jarash Hinterland Survey Survives

David Kennedy



Professor David Kennedy - aerial archaeologist

The generous support of one of our Members has made it possible to continue an important ground survey around the Roman city of Jarash in Jordan.

Jarash (Roman *Gerasa*—see map opposite) in northwest Jordan is one of the great archaeological sites of the Roman period. A city of c. 80 ha, a city wall still traceable for most of its 3.5 km, a main colonnaded street 800 m long, two of the largest temples of the ancient world and a dozen lesser ones, 15 churches with fine mosaic pavements, three theatres, three public baths, a hippodrome, triumphal arch, two monumental gates ... all of it set in a delightful bowl in the Highlands of Ajlun, barely an hour's drive north of Amman.

The western half of Jarash is today an archaeological park, protected by law and safeguarded by fences and patrols of the Tourist Police. The eastern half is largely underneath the heaped up houses of the modern town.

Ancient towns were more than just the areas within the walls. Outside each lay the necropolis, the City of the Dead, with huge cemeteries of burials of every kind from massive monumental tombs to the grave pits in which the poor were interred. Usually these were strung out along the approach roads and are known most famously for the examples along the Via

Appia in Rome and outside the Herculaneum Gate at Pompeii.

It was here, too, that some “industry” would be found, often banished from the town because of dirt or noise or smell. The kilns of the ubiquitous pottery workshops, the probable metal-working and possible glass workshops were all unwelcome neighbours. Then there was tanning which involved the extensive use of urine ...

In this circuit one might also find small farms, shrines, small churches, and buildings of all kinds scattered amongst the kitchen gardens



and fruit groves that supplied the city.

Beyond this nimbus of the extra-mural city would lie the estates of the wealthier citizens, exploiting the most valuable land within easy distance of the city in which their public life was lived.

Beyond again, at the junction of roads and routes and at the mid-points along the roads to

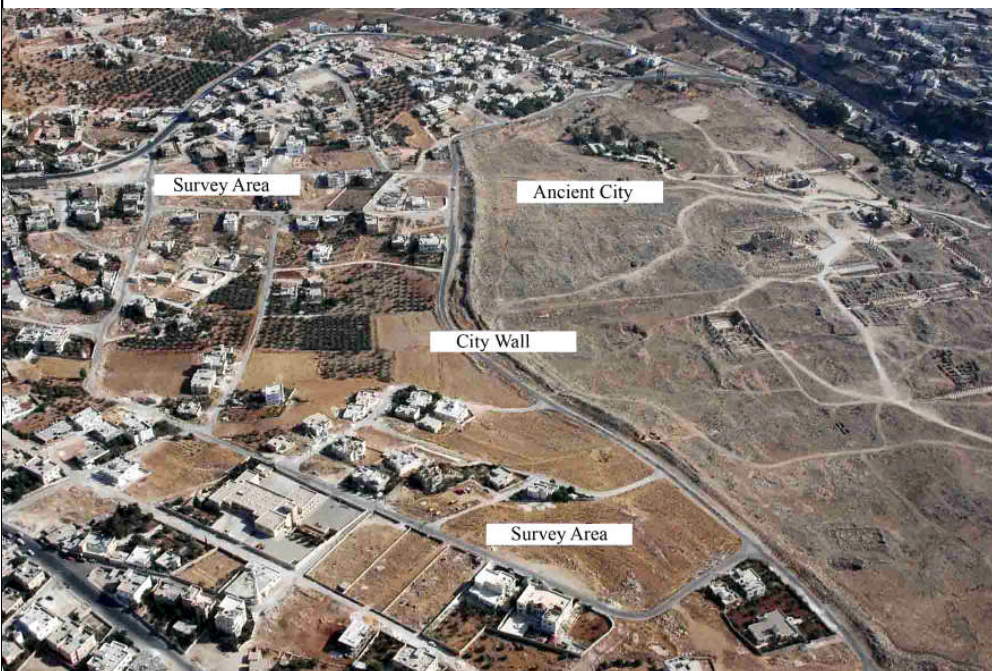
neighbouring cities were the villages and their regular markets to underpin the economic framework of the city and its territory. At Jarash, the direct protection provided for the intra-mural city is not extended to the area immediately beyond the walls.

Specific structures may be protected but in general the area is simply watched and a great deal of trust is placed in the willingness of developers to report finds ... a procedure often directly contrary to their interests.

A generation ago there were few buildings outside the city walls at Jarash, and fewest of all on the west side. Now there are hundreds. On the east much of the damage is already done but on the west the process of development is still in progress. It is here, too, that there were some well-known monumental tombs with the prospect others were likely to be hidden.



Aerial view of Jarash from the north. The main colonnaded street, the two urban theatres and two immense temples stand out. The entire eastern half of the ancient city is under the modern town on the left.



Aerial view looking north. Already much of the extra-mural ancient settlement has been built over on the left.

In 2005 I carried out a short season of survey at Jarash (JHS 2005) with Fiona Baker of Firat Archaeological Services (of Helensburgh in Scotland). The survey area is a square 3 x 3 km plus a further 1 km square on the north side.

At the heart is the archaeological park and the modern town which are not part of the survey area and some further substantial areas are now almost entirely built over and beyond our reach. Most obvious is Tall Jarash, the Bronze and Iron Age predecessor of Graeco-Roman Jarash, just beyond the northeast walls - the entire hill is smothered by Jarash Hospital.

In two weeks the team recorded 217+ "sites". These included several monumental tombs, 84 rock-cut graves, 31 areas of quarrying, and an area of apparent pottery production. We recorded 26 sarcophagi (stone coffins), several inscriptions, tesserae from mosaics ... All told, we covered an area of 80 ha much of which was already under roads, houses or inaccessible gardens. Sadly further funding was not immediately available to continue the next year and work our way round the remainder of our survey area. In 2006 a brief visit revealed dozens of new houses in various stages, a bulldozer cut into the Tomb of the Councillor (ostensibly on protected land) and evidence everywhere of the intensification of development.

The funding sources of 2005 were no longer available in 2006 and the Australian Research Council turned down an application for 2007. It seemed we had failed – another two or three years of development and destruction had taken place and there was no prospect of salvaging any more data in this immediate extra-mural area much less in the next band beyond. At the end of 2007 I had sufficient funds to provide teaching cover here in UWA and get myself to Jordan but no funds to do anything in Jordan much less bring my team out.

Enter Don Boyer. Don, a keen “Romanist”, took three weeks off his busy schedule to join my Tour of Roman Britain in 2003, he and Anne Boyer joined me in Jordan for a few days over Easter 2007 (see RAG 3.1) and he returned to spend a week with me in Jordan in August 2007. As readers will know, Don is already funding one of the annual Roman Archaeology Travel Scholarships to enable some of our students to participate in a fieldwork project in the Roman world. Now he has gone further still and made a significant donation to the Roman Archaeology Fieldwork fund which will cover ALL of the major costs.

At a stroke JHS 2008 has been made viable. As always there will still be uncovered financial needs not least for post-survey work and perhaps any necessary follow-up of discoveries. But the Roman Archaeology Fieldwork fund now exists and contributions are tax-deductible.



The most spectacular of the monumental tombs: the Tomb of Germanus which was probably in the form of a small temple.

I need hardly say I am delighted and relieved. This is a superb opportunity to salvage remains that are disappearing fast and take the study of a major Roman city beyond what goes on inside the walls. So three hearty cheers for Don Boyer’s remarkable generosity. It is very gratifying, too, to be able to look back and see the extent to which the Roman Archaeology Group has already had an impact. Many thanks to all of you for your marvellous support of all kinds ... and we still have room for more Members.

There is now a JHS website under construction: <http://www.classics.uwa.edu.au/about/research/jarash>

We are now booking flights, accommodation and equipment and submitting applications for permits and security clearance. In early September Fiona Baker and I will meet up in Amman with the same team plus a couple of extras – eight in total - to spend about three weeks in the field then a further week in post-survey work in Amman. Half the team will come from Scotland; the other half from Perth (including Don, of course). A wholesome combination ...



A mound of sarcophagi just beyond the northwest corner evidently gathered from tombs encountered during, and destroyed by, recent house-building.



The team at breakfast in the Jarash Rest House in 2005. Fiona Baker in back centre, Paul Sharman, Maggie Struckmeier and David Connolly.

Postscript: I shall be in Jordan for some six weeks, 30 Aug till 13 Oct, and part of my time will be taken up on my 11th year of Aerial Archaeology in Jordan. More on this in a future issue.

The Decapolis

The Decapolis from the Greek, *deka*, ten, and *polis*, city, is a name given to a collection of ten semi autonomous cities, Damascus, Canatha, Hippus, Dion, Raphanea, Gadara, Scythopolis, Pella, Gerasa and Philadelphia in the eastern margins of the Roman empire in what is today mainly Jordan. (See map on front page). The common characteristic of the ten cities was not that they belonged to any sort of political alliance but that they were centres of Graeco-semitic culture under general Roman rule. (Ed.)

See : Kennedy, D. L. (2007) *Gerasa and the Decapolis: A "Virtual Island" in Northwest Jordan*, London (Duckworth)

ROMAN CENTURIATION

Francesca Radcliffe



Francesca Radcliffe is a freelance aerial Archaeologist living in Dorset. She has a keen interest in the aerial archaeology of her native Italy and recently arranged the publication of John Bradford's pioneering essays on Apulia.

It is well known that the Romans developed this elaborate system of land division, turning newly conquered territories into extensive check-boards or landscapes of scottish tartan! The centuriation was a system of land registry devised by the Roman state in order to assign land, and it also provided a system of control by the state on the private property of its citizens.

John Bradford who studied the Roman centuriation in many countries and in different settings, initially from vertical aerial photographs during WW2, and later visiting most of the sites on the ground, called this land division "a planned landscape . . . carried out with an absolute self-assurance and great technical competence, . . . and one of deceptive simplicity". He also tells us that "centuriation was never intended to provide the general setting for farming in Roman lands", and "the creation of such systems... was a formal Act of State, fortified by sanctions from religion and custom". So although this land partition was used sometimes when settling a farming population or when planning a new town or to reward military men, it was also a very convenient administrative tool: in Africa, under Diocletian, and perhaps in other part of the Mediterranean world, it was used in assessing tax collection.

The Romans laid out the principles and theory of this land division in many books and manuals and Bradford tells us that "one could fill a volume" with the long list of technicalities and experts' terminology found in the 'field-manuals of the 'gromatic writers'. These books are illustrated with many explanatory drawings and diagrams but the texts are also

extremely complicated.

Of the instruments used by the Roman surveyors for laying out the lines in the fields, the basic one was the cross-staff or *groma* (Fig 1 below). One was found in Pompeii in 1912 and a representation of other instruments used by the surveyors was found on a funerary inscription at Ivrea in North Italy. By sighting across pairs of strings, the surveyor could lay out lines at right angles and at 45°.

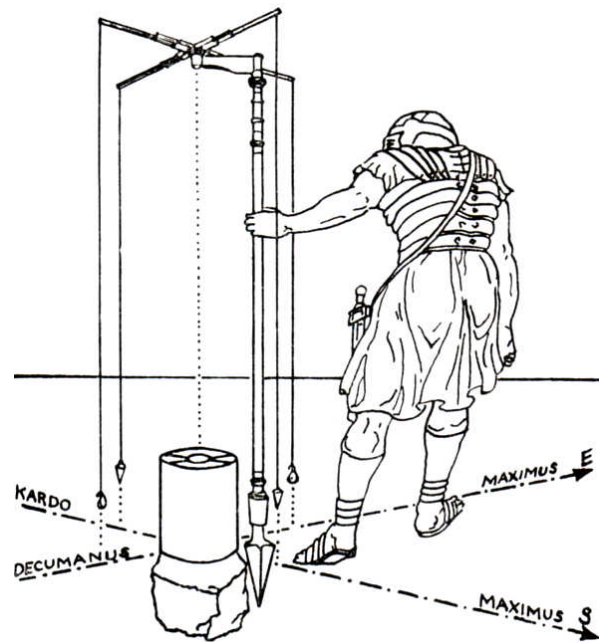
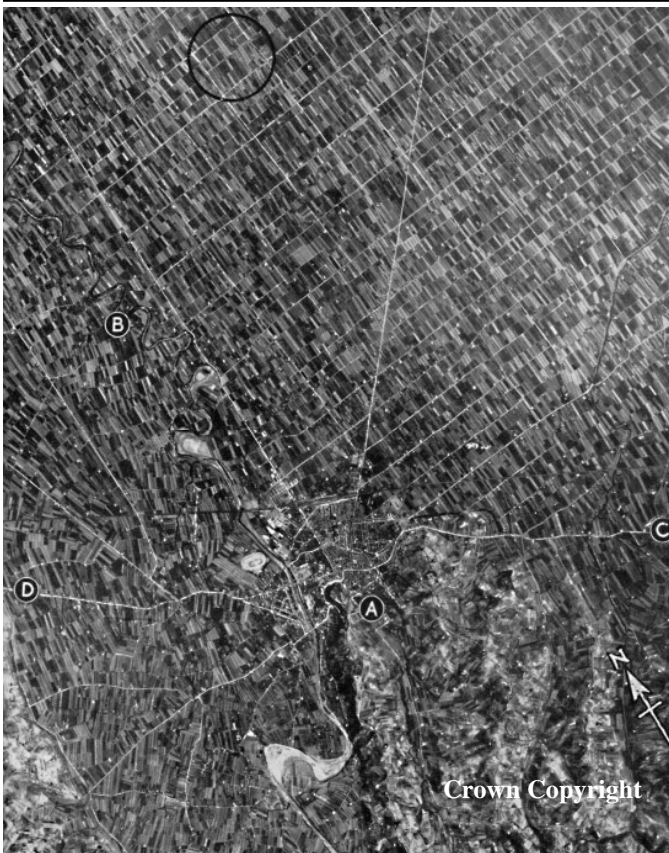


Fig 1 The Roman surveyors' *groma* (cross-staff) used for laying-out lines at right-angles in the field (after Frigerio, *Antichi Strumenti tecnici*). Adapted from *Ancient Landscapes* Liceo Scientifico Righi Cesena, Classe II Bs. <http://www.kjws.com/centuriazione/conservazione.html>

The basic principles of the '*ager centuriatus*', the more widespread scheme, are simple: the surveyor shouted '*agrimensore*', after selecting the centre of the town (*umbilicus*). The *umbilicus* was the point where the two primary roads intersected at right angles dividing the area in four (Fig 1). The first of these two roads, aligned East-West, was the *Decumanus Maximus*, the second, aligned North-South, was the *Cardo Maximus*. Their width was a recommended 11.84m and 5.92m respectively (40 and 20 Roman feet). It was usual to mark the two main roads' intersections with a *cippo cromatico*, a huge cylindrical stone similar to a mile stone. And then the surveyors went on into the fields and surrounding countryside tracing the intersecting lines at a regular distance of 710.40m, forming the squares (the *centuria quadrata*), an area of 200 *jugera* each. Thus, a network of roads and squares was laid out and formed parallel to the *decumanus* and the *cardo*. In the process the landscape



John Bradford's Plate 38. (A) Cesena, (B) the Savio River, (C—D) Via Aemilia. The area is about 110 square kilometres. The unit was a square (see sample circled) of 20x20 actus 709mx709m. The fields uniformly have their length on the north-south axis.

was transformed into a huge check-board. Every *centuria* was subdivided in 10 strips 71m wide, called *heredia*. Each *heredium* in turn was divided in two *iugera*, an area which two oxen could plough in a day.

The amazing thing is that in many countries, sectors of this land division have survived for two millennia and although they can be best seen and studied from aerial photographs, they

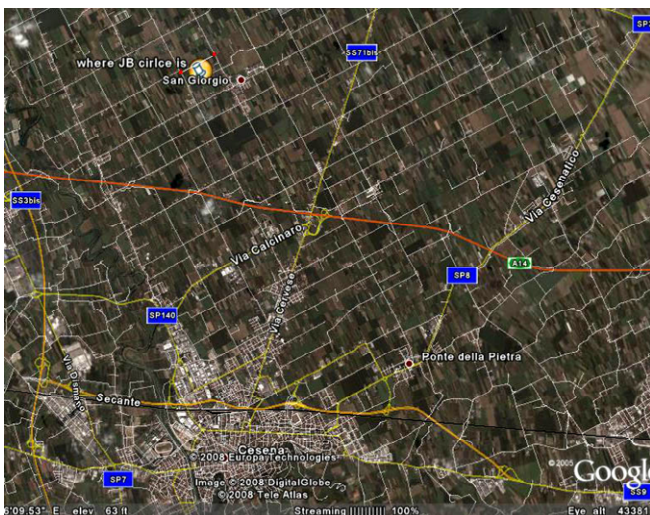


Fig 2. Plain NE of Cesena, image from Google Earth with Fig 38 from Ancient Landscapes, the RAF 1940s vertical photograph. The network of modern roads is highlighted.

have long been recognised on the ground. In some areas the centuriation has survived because successive generations of roads have been squarely superimposed over the Roman network, as in the plains of NE Italy. I think Bradford's Plate 38 (see above) of the centuriation NE of Cesena is a very good example.

In Fig 2 (above) the same area 70 years later is seen from Google Earth. And in Fig 3 (below) the area is seen mapped.

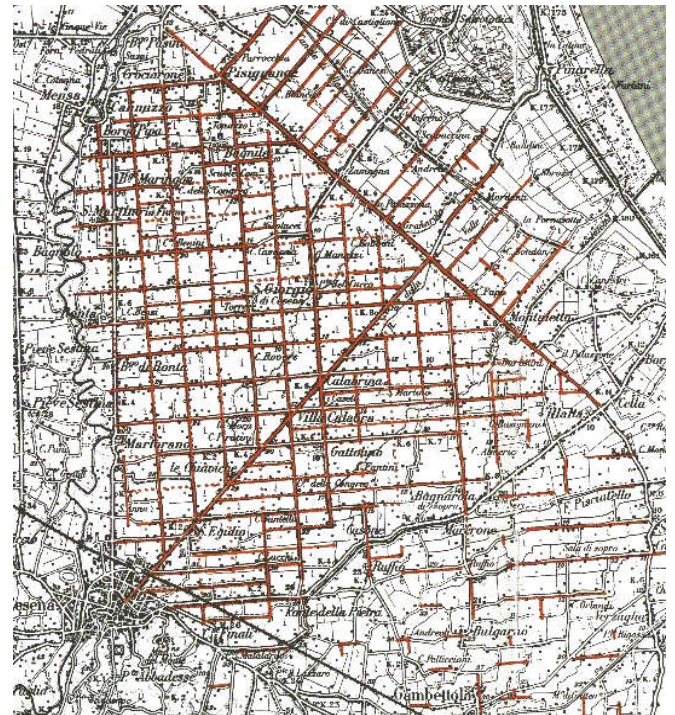


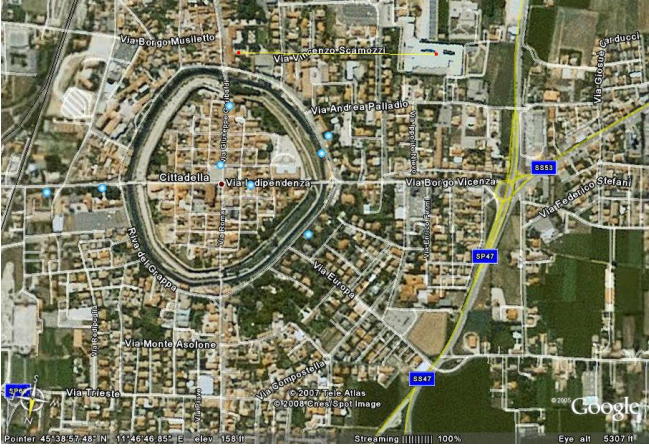
Fig 3. Mapped Centuriation NE of Cesena from the work of Liceo Scientifico Righi Cesena, Classe II Bs.

In the UK the Romans did introduce the centuriation system and it has been found in counties from Hampshire to Norfolk. In Hampshire, near Alton from the Hog's Back to Winchester, a Roman centuriation system was found similar to the ones in Southern Europe and North Africa, consisting in many field boundaries parallel and at right angles to the Roman Road.

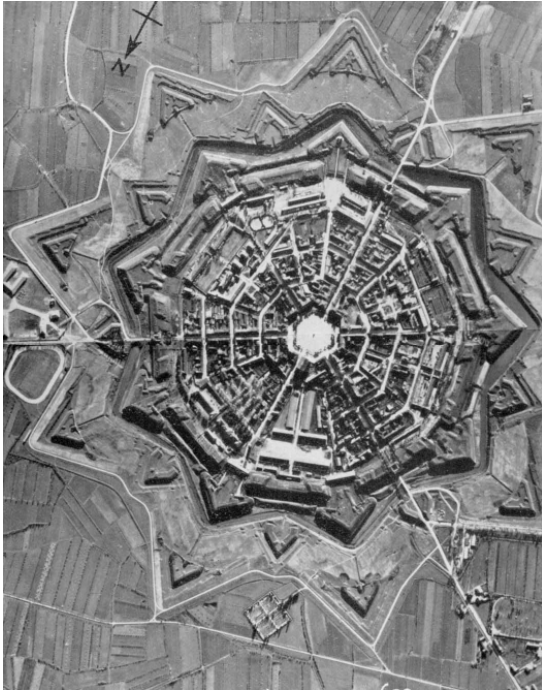
Fig 4 (below) - Cittadella (Fig 65 in John Bradford's 'Ancient Landscapes') is an example of town centuriation.



Fig 5 (below) is Cittadella from Google Earth. The new development outside the city enclosed by the earthwork may also have been influenced by the underlying centuriation which surrounded the original town.



Figs 6 (*Ancient Landscapes*) below gives another example of City centuriation. The city is Palmanova.



References:

J. Bradford *Ancient Landscapes, Studies in Field Archaeology*, London G. Bells and Sons Ltd, 1957: 145.

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La Centuriazione Romana di Padova Nord by Luciano Bon & Timoteo Munari, in an Article in the journal *Alta Padovana*, 3 December 2004
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The Long Arm of Rome David Kennedy

It is well-known that the Romans had a much more elastic view of their empire than did more recent empires. Their provinces collectively were what we would regard as their “empire” but they included not just the provinces they administered (with officials, tax collectors, garrisons etc) but also large areas beyond in which their influence was significant. At their most inclusive they thought of their rule as extending over the entire world – *totius orbis terrarum*!

But even within the more limited interpretation, we are constantly reminded that their direct reach often went further than the sharp boundaries of provinces we draw on maps. In the East, there are some startling examples – some are long-known about; others are recent discoveries.

The Roman province of Cappadocia sat astride the Euphrates river in eastern Turkey. But it extended northwards round the eastern end of the Black Sea. During the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, its most famous governor, Flavius Arrianus (‘Arrian’)– historian of Alexander the Great – records his journey (*Periplus*) inspecting his garrisons in their forts along the coast of what is today the Republic of Georgia.

But what about the other side of the Caucasus on the Caspian Sea? We know that as far back as the mid-first century BC Roman forces had campaigned into the territory of the King of Albania, which lies roughly where the modern Republic of Azerbaijan and the neighbouring Russian federated Republic of Dagestan lie. But that was a brief episode. Or was it? A century later the Emperor Nero had grand plans for a campaign in the Caucasus and the area was turbulent under the next dynasty when a marauding tribe called the Alani passed through it. There is in fact some solid evidence for some kind of Roman military activity in Albania, a generation later still. At Gobustan 50 km southwest of Baku, the mountains come down to a sandy beach and on one of the final, not very tall outcrops, there is an inscription in Latin:

**IMP DOMITIANO
CAESARE AVG
GERMANIC
L. IVLIVS
MAXIMUS >
LEG XII FVL**

It reads: *To the Emperor Domitian Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Lucius Julius Maximus, Centurion of the Legion XII Fulminata* (dedicated this).

Although it has been described as a graffito, it looks much more robust than a simple scratching. The letters are deep and well-formed suggesting care and time. The date is provided by Domitian’s victory title “Germanicus” which he received in AD 83 and was used till his assassination in 96. We don’t know anything more about L. Julius Maximus or what he was doing on the shore of the Caspian.

The next example comes from far away to the south at the oasis of Jawf (see map below) in north-central Saudi Arabia. It lay on a trading route down the intervening Wadi Sirhan then across to the Gulf. The Nabataeans had been there and we have a Nabataean inscription referring to a military officer, a Camp Prefect. Much more startling was the discovery of an altar there inscribed in Latin:

**PRO SALVTE
DOMM NN AVGG
I O M HAM-
MONI ET SAN-
CTO SVLMO
FL DIONYSI-
VS > LEG III CYR V S**

It reads: *For the Safety of Our Lords the Two Emperors. To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Ammon and the Holy Sulmus. Flavius Dionysius, Centurion of the Legion III Cyrenaica fulfilled his vow.*

The HQ of the legion was at Bostra (just south of Canatha, see map front page) in southern Syria, 460 km sld to the northwest and almost 400 km sld from the intervening Roman outpost at the Azraq Oasis in northern Jordan. The occasion when there were two emperors is thought to be either the late 2nd century or, more likely, the early 3rd.

The third example is from the Yemen.

**[P]CORNE[LIVS...]
EQVES
ΠΟΥΒΑΙΣ ΚΟΡΝ[ΗΑΙΟΣ]**

(The inscriber left an omicron out of the Greek for 'Publius').

It reads: *Publius Cornelius, cavalryman . . .*

Baraqish is an ancient city of the Minaean civilization on the fertile Jawf plateau c. 100 km sld northeast of Sana'a (see map opposite) and almost 1800 km sld south of the previous Jawf. It is part of a bilingual Greek and Latin tombstone and most easily explained as a relic of the Roman military campaign of c. 26 BC which briefly established some garrisons but soon returned empty-handed. It implied nothing about boundaries even if it was an impressive demonstration of Roman ambitions almost 2000 km from their nearest province.

Rather different has been the very recent discovery* of a Latin inscription on one of the Farasan Islands of Saudi Arabia (see map opposite). These lie in the far south of the Red Sea just before it begins to narrow into the tight straits known as the Bab el-Mandib. It is dedicated to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138-160) but has an internal date of precisely AD 143/4. Of course, inscriptions go astray and one might have supposed this was something originating far to the north. The most southerly stretch of the Roman province of Arabia included the northern Hedjaz as far as Hegra. But this is no "wandering" inscription carried south by some mediaeval caravan leader. The dedication is damaged towards the end but is clear enough on two points. First, that it was set up by a detachment of the *Legion II Traiana* (whose headquarters were at Nicopolis in the

suburbs of Alexandria in Egypt), its auxiliaries (i.e. some soldiers from the regiments of provincial troops in Egypt) and "castrenses". Second is the explicit statement that they are under the command of the "Prefect of the Portus of Ferresan". In other words, in the middle of the 2nd century AD, the Roman garrison in the province of Egypt maintained a mixed force of legionaries and auxiliaries on key islands controlling the mouth of the Red Sea. The nearest point on the Roman province of Egypt was about 1000 km to the north at Berenike.

Although there is no explicit reference to warships, the best guess is that the garrison was there to police a notoriously pirate-infested region. It would make sense to have further detachments on some of the other island groups – those opposite Faresan on the coast of Ethiopia and those actually in the mouth of the Bab el-Mandib itself.

It is interesting to find that during the reign of an emperor who gave his name to the period – the Golden Age of the Antonines – Roman forces were installed in the southern Red Sea at one end and in Central Scotland on the Antonine Wall c. AD 142, c. 6000 km away.

*Source: F. Villeneuve, 'Une inscription latine sur l'archipel Farasan, Arabie Séoudite, sud de la Mer Rouge', *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 2004: 419-429



Farasan Islands

Sana'a

northern Jawf

The Literate Nomads of the Roman World

Andrew Card



Andrew Card: Andrew is a former Ph. D student at UWA.

Written evidence for Roman history includes literary works (histories, biographies, poetry, etc) and everyday documents on papyrus and skin (letters, receipts, memos etc). It also includes inscriptions – texts inscribed on hard material such as stone, glass, wood, clay etc. Already known are some half million inscriptions in Latin and in Greek from the Roman period. But native peoples in the East in particular were also literate and some continued to write in their own languages, sometimes generating enormous numbers of texts. Most such peoples were the “civilized” urbanised populations – but one case is different.

One of the many interesting and little known sources of information for the peoples who lived on the south-eastern frontier of the Roman Empire in the provinces of Syria, Arabia and Palestine – which equates roughly to modern Jordan, southern Syria and northern Saudi Arabia – is the collection of almost 30,000 inscriptions produced by the indigenous population of the region.

Inscribed in stone, frequently on those which form part of funeral cairns or on rock faces, they are written in northern Arabian dialects but in a southern Arabian script, probably reflecting the ancient origins of the authors’ tribes which followed the common migration path taken by many tribes from the southern areas of the Arabian peninsula up towards the Fertile Crescent and contact with the major civilizations of the region.

There are two main languages or dialects represented: about 20,000 + inscriptions are Safaitic and these are mainly found in the Harra, or Black Basalt Desert of northeast Jordan and southern Syria, another 8,000 + are Thamudic and these have mainly been found in the Hisma – the desert region of southern Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia. Two of the current major scholars studying these inscriptions disagree over the extent to which the inscriptions represent the efforts of nomads operating largely outside the sphere of the Roman Empire (MacDonald) or rather peoples inside the Empire but containing large no-

madic elements (Graf). However, recent finds have been located in villages and settled areas throughout the region showing that the picture is more complex than first thought and tend to suggest that Graf’s approach may be more accurate.

The inscriptions are mainly of a laconic nature: the vast majority are simply of the nature *x son of y*, although more generations may be recorded, and some inscriptions record that the writers have found inscriptions written by their fathers or grandfathers. The tribe of which the inscription writer is a member is also often recorded. Others record details of the writers’ activities and are often connected with a nomadic lifestyle. The movement of herd animals, mainly camels, but also sheep and goats, is often mentioned. The onset, or not, of rains, the loneliness of desert life and the hope of booty from raiding are all common themes. Conflict between various tribes is also occasionally mentioned and the two major sedentary powers in the region, first the Nabataeans and then the Romans, also make brief appearances.

Along with the inscriptions often go drawings – animals are a common motif: camels appear as very important, along with horses, and desert fauna is well represented. A few scenes of armed combat appear, with warriors variously armed with bow and arrow, spear /sword and shield, or lance armed on horseback, or more rarely camels.



Thamudic Inscriptions and Drawings in Wadi Rum

A very few inscriptions contain dating evidence. Often the reference is lost to us – the year *x* died or a noteworthy local event, such as a flood, or the appearance of a large number of hyenas. However, occasionally there is a reference to known events. Some contain dating formula involving the Herodian dynasts, thus placing them in the 1st century BC or 1st century AD, others suggest an early imperial context, such as LP 653 “the year the troops of Germanicus were at Nq’t’. Others can reasonably be placed in the 3rd century. A number of texts refer to a struggle between the Persians and the Romans at Bostra: C4448 is dated to “the year the Persians fought the Romans at Bostra”, SIJ 78 refers to “the year the Persians came to Bostra” whilst both WH 1698 and WH 1725b talk of “the year the Romans delivered the city”. The context of this is most likely the

Palmyran attack in AD270, when Bostra, the “capital” of the province of Arabia, was occupied by Palmyran forces, and their expulsion shortly later by Aurelian.

Overall, these allow us to date the inscriptions to between the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD. These dates are not set in stone – just because no political events are recorded from outside these times does not guarantee that the inscription writing ceased, however both Graf and MacDonald conclude that it did terminate abruptly. The reason for this is not clear, however we know that new tribes were migrating from the Arabian Peninsula and appearing on the borders of the Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, and this resulted in a period of conflict before a political resolution was reached. It is possible this may have affected the population of literate nomads but it may simply be that with continued contact with the Roman Empire these nomads became increasingly sedentarized and the impetus to record their activities in their native script simply faded away.

The authors were clearly aware of events going on in the wider region and had some contact with the Romans, although only 30 of the inscriptions explicitly mention Rome. Apart from those mentioned above a few talk of tribes in conflict with Rome, and a handful mention individuals fleeing from Roman authority. However, neither of the major scholars who have worked recently on these texts judges that there is enough evidence in them to indicate there was a major military threat for the Romans from the tribes of these authors. The occasional raid, and more rarely a tribal conflict, may have occurred and would be consistent with our understanding of the interaction of nomadic groups with sedentary powers. This is consistent with our literary sources from the Roman side, which often complain of nomadic raiding in a generalized way, but do not mention any large-scale conflicts between Romans and nomadic groups in this region until the end of the 4th century AD.

So these inscriptions are interesting for a number of reasons. It is rare to find records of literate nomads from this period, indeed nomadic societies are often characterized by their difficulty to locate in the archaeological and written records. This growing corpus of inscriptions should allow us to gain a greater understanding of the local life of people living on the margins of the Roman Empire through their contents and distribution. They also provide some limited insight on the political situation in the region, both the relationship between tribal groups and the tribes and Rome. A work which draws together a synopsis of these inscriptions would be of great value.



Funerary cairn in Wadi Rum

BOOK REVIEW

Kevin O'Toole

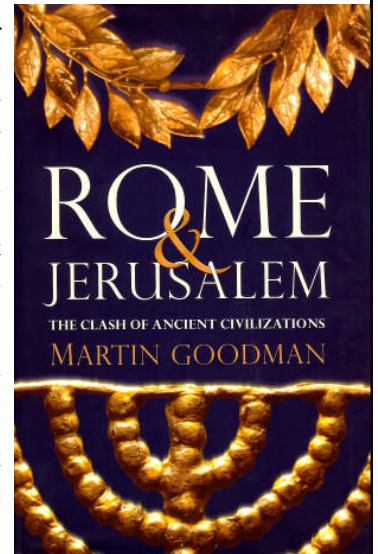
The notion of a clash of civilizations was first mooted by the orientalist historian Bernard Lewis. Lewis used the idea in connection with relations between the West and Islam. The notion is today better known for its use by Samuel Huntington as the title to a now famous paper by him published in 1993, and to a best selling book published in 1996. Huntington sought to explain the post cold war world in terms of inter-civilizational conflict proposing that the world was best understood as a collection of civilizations: the West, Sinic, Islamic, Orthodox, and Hindu being the major members. In Huntington's thesis religion is a single defining characteristic of civilizations and he predicted that world affairs would turn on the way that the major civilizations would resolve the tensions between them. His thesis generated and continues to generate considerable, sometimes bitter, debate and, especially since 9/11, the notion 'clash of civilizations' in its Huntington formulation has become a powerful leitmotiv in international political dialogue.

In his *Rome and Jerusalem* Martin Goodman, professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford University, has adapted the 'clash' idea to the study of the ultimately disastrous history of relations between Rome and the Jews. Goodman does not mention Huntington so it is not entirely clear that in using the sub-title 'The Clash of Ancient Civilizations' Goodman means to refer in any way to the modern debate about Huntington's thesis. However, this does not detract from the book and Goodman comes up with a thesis of his own that is surprising and very relevant to an understanding of the historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Reduced to its essentials Goodman's thesis is that the Diaspora following the Jewish Wars of 66-73, 115-117 and 132-135 was due to Roman military misjudgement and political instability in Rome, leading to the unlikely appointment of Vespasian as Emperor. Judea became a convenient focus for the Flavian dynasty, founded by Vespasian, to consolidate its power, setting the scene for subsequent conflict and leading to an early version of the 'final solution' under Hadrian. Thus, for Goodman, it was not the difference or clash of cultural values as between Rome and Jerusalem that led to the all but complete destruction of Judaism in Palestine but a chance conjunction of events which was unpropitious from the Jewish point of view.

In short, Goodman offers a possibility, a possibility having obvious significance, that but for chance misfortune during Roman rule there may well have been a robust Jewish polity in and about ancient Judea surviving unbroken into the modern era.

Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, Penguin, 2007, 639 pages, \$59.95



THE *INSULAE* OF ROMAN OSTIA

Sandra Ottley



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Rome has many remarkable ruins -great public buildings, temples, fora and baths – all of which offer us a marvellous insight into public and civic life in ancient Rome. Yet no matter how magnificent these ruins are, they do not provide us with an understanding of the private life of the middle and lower classes. Few private dwellings remain in Rome, and consequently the evidence which survives is insufficient to give us any clear indication of the manner in which the vast majority of Romans were housed. Fortunately, there is Ostia, the port of ancient Rome. During the first and second centuries AD, when so much of Rome was being reconstructed, the same processes were operating in Ostia. As a result, the domestic architecture found in Ostia is in all likelihood very similar to that of the capital. Therefore, from studying the evidence at Ostia we can better understand the living conditions in Rome.



Rome and Ostia

The ancient Roman city of Ostia, as the Latin name implies, was situated at the mouth of the Tiber River, approximately 30 km to the west of Rome. Today Ostia still lies next to the Tiber but silting has resulted in the shoreline moving west and Ostia Antica is now some 5 km from the coast. According to legend Ancus Marcius, fourth king of Rome who ruled in the late 7th century BC founded Ostia. The oldest surviving remains however, date from the 4th cent. BC. Ostia was originally a fortified city (*castrum*), but later it expanded to be a larger commercial centre (*urbs*). The settlement's first industry was salt extraction but it rapidly developed into Rome's port and during the Punic Wars (264 – 146 BC) became an important naval base. One of Ostia's main functions was the organisation of the grain supply (*annona*) to Rome. By the 1st century AD, Ostia had outgrown its inadequate and rapidly silting harbour and a new artificial port, *Portus* was built by Claudius (AD 41 – 54), to the north-west, and completed by Trajan (AD 98 – 117). Population migrated and Ostia went into decline. Nevertheless, Ostia remained an important centre until the time of Constantine (AD 306 - 337) but by then it had become largely a residential town rather than a commercial port. In the following centuries malaria and a loss of trade contributed to its further decline. By the Middle Ages it was a village, by 1756 the population of the city, which had once stood at approximately 30,000, had dropped to 156 inhabitants and in 1878, Augustus Hare reported that the city had one human inhabitant.

The extensive abandoned remains of the city of Ostia are some of the most interesting and evocative sights near Rome. One of the most important results of the excavations and research there has been the increased understanding of the nature of housing for the middle and lower class Romans. Although, it should be noted that while the housing discovered at Ostia can be considered similar to that which would have been in use at Rome, it is not necessarily typical of housing throughout the Empire. The middle and lower class housing (*insulae*) uncovered at Ostia is in sharp contrast to the typical Pompeian residence (*domus*), while the typical Pompeian *domus*, with its *atrium* and peristyle, are relatively rare at Ostia.

Most Ostian residences were high-density apartment houses. They contained numerous flats or sets of rooms designated by numbers on the stairs, which led up to them. The internal plans of these structures vary considerably from building to building. For example, the simplest flats had just one room, while a larger apartment may possess two or more façades and have an internal courtyard.

However, regardless of these internal differences, it is possible to classify the *insulae* into three basic categories.

In the first category, ground floor apartments look toward the street through rows of regularly spaced windows.

The second group comprises of shops fronted by an arcade,

which occupy the ground floor, while the apartments are found on the upper stories.



Model of *insulae*

The third type is similar to the second group, in that it has shops on the ground floor, but in this case, the arcade is lacking.

Throughout these three categories, there was some uniformity. The *insulae* usually had four storeys (ground floor apartments excluded), and reached a height of 15 m, which was the maximum permitted by Roman law. Almost every wall was constructed in brick-faced concrete, which was characteristic of the construction of the 2nd century A.D. Entranceways frequently had pilasters (similar to an engaged column, only rectangular rather than rounded) and as they had no structural significance they were designed purely for decoration. Although frequently of different types, Ostian doors and windows tended to have a standard shape and mica or selenite was used instead of glass in the windows. Many of the *insulae* had balconies of various designs. The inclusion or omission of arcades usually depended on the nature of the street and the character of the building. In a number of the grander apartments, mosaics and wall paintings have also been unearthed.



Remains of the top floors of an *insula* near the Capitolium and the Aracoeli in Rome.

In addition, the *insulae* at Ostia, seem to have lacked certain conveniences. Few had toilets and even fewer had kitchens. Even in some of the best apartments in Ostia, toilets and kitchens do not seem to have existed except shared under stairwells.

It is only in size, uniformity of plan and decoration that are the grander flats of Ostia are distinguished from their humbler neighbours. This suggests that the vast majority of Ostian flats were not homes in the modern sense of the word, as they were not capable of taking care of all the physical needs of their inhabitants and were not overall designed to entertain guests. Ostian apartments then served merely for household life and for the storage of family property.

Therefore, as Packer, in his extensive survey on the *insulae* of Ostia has noted, the real life of the community was lived outside individual dwellings. Shops bordered most streets and the apparent lack of cooking facilities in most Ostian homes suggests that many shops supplied the inhabitants of the surrounding buildings with partially or completely prepared food and drink. One such shop can be found in the Caseggiato del Thermopolium. The pavement is a rough black and white mosaic.



Caseggiato del Thermopolium

The walls display alternating red and yellow panels, and food and drinks were dispensed from a marble-faced counter, which retains much of its veneer. Dishes were kept in the marble cupboard behind the counter. Behind the shop, there is a small garden with benches lining the garden walls where customers could sit, or customers could choose to sit on the seats placed outside the shop's street doors. Besides the shops, leisure time could be passed in one of the 14 public baths in Ostia. No one in Ostia was more than a five-minute walk from a bath complex. There were also fora, colonnades and loggias for social gatherings.

The abundance of public meeting places and the fact that most of the actual flats were small and cramped, suggests that the entire city was intended to function as one large unit. In our modern world, each house or unit supplies most if not all of the needs of the inhabitants, while in ancient Ostia almost all the requirements of the vast majority of its citizens were taken care of outside the home. Interesting for its own sake, Ostia becomes even more significant because of its close relationship to Rome. While not entirely a replica of the capital, Ostia can offer us an insight into the lives of middle and lower class Romans.

Further reading: <http://www.ostia-antica.org/>

Roman Archaeology at UWA Membership of RAG

Casey McAllister

Another of our recent graduates is preparing to head overseas to join fieldwork projects. She writes:

"As a student of archaeology I have always been interested in Ancient Rome, having been inspired by my high school Ancient History teacher. At the end of 2006 I completed my honours dissertation on the topic "Public Health in Military Sites in Roman Britain: The Impact of Latrines, Sewers and Drains". For the past 12 months I have been working in the UWA library service, saving to spend 6 months in Europe participating in archaeological digs this year.

So far I have been accepted for an excavation of some Roman buildings and a bath house at Blacklands near Faversham in Kent with the Kent Archaeological Field School. I have also been accepted to an excavation of the Roman city of Sanisera in Menorca which is part of the Spanish Balearic Islands. This is with the Ecomuseo de Cap de Cavalleria. I have just now also been accepted to join an excavation of the Villa Vignacce in Parco degli Acquadotti in Rome with the American Institute for Roman Culture. In between digs I will be travelling to Scotland, France, Turkey, Greece and Egypt where, apart from some general sightseeing, I hope to see some other interesting ancient sites, like Hadrian's Wall, the Pont du Gard, Ephesus and the Pyramids."

David Kennedy

The second semester of 2007 was a period of Study Leave for David Kennedy and provided a welcome opportunity for him to pursue research more single-mindedly. That involved several weeks overseas in Britain and France then two weeks in southwest Turkey. The last of these was especially valuable as it gave him a chance to visit three Graeco-Roman cities he had never seen on any of a dozen other visits to Turkey. *"Aphrodisias and Hierapolis are both superb in their different ways; Kaunos is a much smaller place but still boasts several visible public buildings including a theatre, all spread around one side of the largely silted up harbour. A highlight, however, was the opportunity to fly*

over Kaunos at a low level in a microlight aircraft and take aerial photographs." A short article with several photographs will appear shortly in the British magazine *Current World Archaeology*.

Most of David Kennedy's time has been devoted to research on the c. 20,000 aerial photographs of Jordan in his Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East. Two articles – jointly authored with his colleague Bob Bewley in the UK, will be published later this year in the journals *Antiquity* and *Levant*. A fourth article publishing an important newly discovered Latin inscription from the legionary fortress of Udruh east of Petra has been co-authored with its Jordanian discoverer, Hani Falahat.

David Kennedy and Bob Bewley have also provided aerial photos this past year to several archaeological colleagues who are well-aware of the dramatic and informative quality of the aerial view.

As always, however, a great deal of David Kennedy's time has been devoted to making grant applications to support fieldwork in 2008.

Last Summer Saturday Session for 07/08

Saturday 15 March 2008: Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius in History

Richard Harding, RAG Member

The Column of Marcus Aurelius

Dr Bill Leadbetter, Edith Cowan University

Where: Alexander Lecture Theatre at University of WA

When: 1.30 pm

Cost: Free

Refreshments at the mid-session break: \$5 pp (Members) and \$7 pp (Non-Members).

Please RSVP for yourself and friends to Mike Manley by telephone (0147932031) **or email:** mike1155@inet.net.au

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 \$35.00 Family membership 1 (2 adults; 1 copy of RAG magazine)
 \$50.00 Family membership 2 (4 family members; 1 copy of RAG magazine)
 \$50.00 School membership (2 copies of RAG magazine)
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 Complete and post the form with this edition of the RAG or contact The Treasurer at the address below.

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The RAG

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