

# The RAG

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### *Lepcis Magna, Gaddafi's Guns, and NATO's Bombs* —NATO Wouldn't have, Would It?

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On August 21, 1969, a deranged Australian, Dennis Rohan, a Christian endeavouring to fulfil biblical prophesy, used kerosene to set fire to a priceless *minbar* (more or less the Muslim equivalent of a pulpit) in the Al Aqsa Mosque on Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Al Aqsa ranks in importance in the Muslim world with the nearby Dome of the Rock and the *Kaaba* in Mecca.

It is an interesting question as to how much of our cultural heritage is dispensable, and under what circumstances it can become dispensable. For example, what circumstances would make dispensable to the West the destruction of the Pantheon, or of what remains of the Colosseum? What about the Louvre and its collection?

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Rohan's Plan was to burn down Al Aqsa, but the fire was contained by Israeli firemen, although not before great damage was done to the mosque. Rohan's arson at Al Aqsa very nearly started a renewed Arab war against Israel, because Al Aqsa was then, and still is, under the protective custody of Israel (Israel having taken Temple Mount in the 1967 war) and the incident was held widely and wrongly in the Arab world to have been an Israeli plot to destroy Al Aqsa.

There are reports that Colonel Gaddafi stored weaponry at Lepcis Magna which is a world heritage site in Libya. Lepcis Magna is of course only one of numerous sites of major importance in Roman archaeology all over the Middle East and whilst it is politically correct for nations to express mutual respect for cultural heritage, different cultures can hardly be expected to feel the same, or necessarily any, degree of sentimental attachment to the cultural symbols and historical legacies of others as they do in respect of their own (see the article by David Kennedy in this issue regarding relevant risks in Syria). In some cases there is no respect at all. The Taliban considered the Buddhas of Bamyán to be a focus for idolatry, and it was for its representation of paganism that a vast amount of Greco-Roman antiquities was vandalized or destroyed in early Christian Europe. Gaddafi did not give the impression that he would have wept more for the loss of Lepcis Magna than for the loss of his weapons.

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The symbolic significance of cultural heritage sites was forcefully brought into focus in 2001 when the Taliban used artillery to very publicly destroy the two most prominent of the giant carved Buddhas in Bamyán province in Afghanistan.

There is a vast catalogue of cases in history of the nefarious use and abuse of cultural heritage sites that have fallen under alien hands by means of territorial conquest. Very often it is not destruction that is involved but conversion. For example, the Parthenon was converted into a Christian Church when Athens fell under Byzantine control, and then into a mosque when the Ottoman Turks took over Athens. But it was war that dealt the Parthenon its *coup de grâce*. When in September 1687 the Ottoman Turks on the Acropolis in Athens were under siege by the Venetians of a Holy Christian League, the Parthenon was used by the Turks as a cache for their munitions. Perhaps the Turks thought that the Venetians would not touch the Parthenon. If the Turks did think this they were wrong. It was ordered that the building be shelled, and the result was a massive explosion which left the Parthenon in ruins. For all that Athens remained under Turkish control for another 140 years or so.

So what should NATO have done if Gaddafi had stored weapons in the ruins of Lepcis Magna? Should its response to the situation have been different to what its response would have been if the site were not of cultural importance to the West, or should it have been governed purely by the tactical demands of its military operations in Libya? Ostensibly, NATO's bombing of Libya was to enable Libyans to enjoy the benefits of Western political values—would the achievement of that objective have made Lepcis Magna dispensable? Perhaps it would have, but where the achievement of the objective cannot be guaranteed, would we have Lepcis Magna, like the Parthenon, lost in vain?



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## ‘As of Nîmes’

*John McDonald*

**John McDonald is a RAG member who has been interested in history and archaeology since childhood. He is a numismatist (member of the Numismatic Association of Australia, Perth Numismatic Society and WA Roman Coin Study Group) specialising in the coinage of Imperial Rome. He has also been a geologist in the resource industry for 45 years.**

The Provence region in the south of France is renowned for its food and wine, its lovely medieval hilltop villages and of course for its many impressive and well preserved Roman remains. But one thing that it is not known for is crocodiles. Why then should the coat of arms of the city of Nîmes consist of a crocodile chained to a palm tree?



Nîmes is located on the edge of the great agricultural plain of the lower Rhône River, on the western fringe of Provence. The famous Pont du Gard was part of its water supply system in Roman times.

A crocodile and palm emblem (example below) can be seen all over the city, from elegant representations on the balcony of the Mairie (city hall) to more prosaic examples on the cast iron manhole covers scattered along the old winding streets of the town centre. According to one plausible theory the origins of this emblem may go back more than 2,000 years to an historic event in September 31 BC when the fleet of Octavian, nephew of Julius Caesar and future emperor, defeated that of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in the naval battle at Actium. This victory, and Antony's subsequent suicide in Egypt in 30 BC, left Octavian in undisputed control of Rome and all its territories. But his official reign as Rome's first emperor is usually considered not to have begun until January 27

BC when among many other honours offered to him by the Senate he accepted the title of 'Augustus', which he adopted as his personal name and by which he was known for the rest of his long life.

Shortly after Augustus became emperor, Nîmes began to produce a bronze coin (pictured page opposite) about 27 mm in diameter (about the size of our 20 cent piece, but considerably heavier) which commemorated his victory at Actium. It continued to be minted for perhaps several decades, certainly until some years after 2 BC.

The obverse design consisted of 2 busts back to back. On the left was Marcus Agrippa, often shown wearing a rostral or naval crown. He was Augustus' right hand man and he had commanded the victorious fleet at Actium. On the right was Augustus himself, bare-headed on early issues but wearing a crown of laurels on later ones.

Throughout the whole life of this coinage the obverse legend was IMP DIVI F (*Imperator Divi Filius*) referring to the fact that Augustus was the adopted son of the deified Julius Caesar. Later issues also carrying the letters P P (for *Pater Patriae*, 'father of his country', a title not given to Augustus until 2 BC).

The reverse image was always a collared crocodile facing right, attached by a chain to a palm tree. The palm was surmounted by a laurel wreath or crown with trailing ribbons. The legend was always COL NEM (an abbreviation of *Colonia Nemausus*, the Roman name for Nîmes) in the field above the crocodile. The present day emblem of the city is little changed from this ancient design.

By the time of the Battle of Actium, Mark Antony was based in Egypt. He was personally and politically united with the Egyptian queen Cleopatra who was present at the Battle, and they both fled





back to Egypt after their defeat. Consequently the victory at Actium would have been viewed as the defeat of Egypt, not just the defeat of Mark Antony himself, a point Augustus stressed regularly not least in the erection and dedication of Egyptian obelisks in Rome.

The crocodile was frequently used to represent Egypt and a chained crocodile surmounted by a laurel crown (as worn by the Roman Emperor) quite clearly symbolised the submission of Egypt to Roman control.



An interesting question is why the emblem of the chained crocodile should have been associated with the distant, inland town of Nîmes in the province of Gallia Narbonensis. Nîmes was an established town before the arrival of the Romans and the original Gallic inhabitants had been minting coins since the 2nd century BC. But under Imperial Rome, like many other towns in sunny and fertile southern Gaul, it became an important Latin colony where legionaries who had served their time were resettled and granted land. It probably grew to a population of somewhere between 20,000 and 60,000 under Augustus and its status as a Latin colony gave it the right to continue to issue coins.

We know that some veterans of Legio VI Ferrata, who had served under Julius Caesar in Egypt in 48-47 BC, were settled at Arles only 28 kms away to the southeast, so it is no great stretch to assume that others were probably living in and around Nîmes by 27 BC. This could explain why the city seems to have felt a particular connection with the subjugation of Egypt and a desire to commemorate it.

Many Egyptian influences have been identified on Roman monuments and inscriptions recovered in Nîmes, also suggesting a strong link with the Nile region.

Even if this wasn't the motivation, flattering the new Emperor in Rome certainly didn't do Nîmes any harm. Under Augustus it underwent major development and was endowed with protective walls and impressive public buildings, some of which still stand.

Among them is the temple dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar (grandsons of Augustus) that was erected in about 16 BC and is now one of the most intact and best preserved of Roman buildings. It is known as the 'Maison Carrée' or 'square house'.

The Tour Magne on the hill above the city served as a watchtower over the Via Domitia that linked Italy with Gaul and Spain. It was also an integral part of the defensive wall system built around Nîmes by Augustus. Some gateways through these walls also survive, most notably the Porta Augusta.





The atmospheric ruins of the so-called "Temple of Diana" (picture below) probably date from the Antonine period in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. It is not clear what the real purpose of this building was, but it was probably not a temple. It has been suggested that it might have been an Imperial cult centre or perhaps a library.



Development continued under subsequent Emperors, and the city would undoubtedly have received generous Imperial patronage under Antoninus Pius because his father's family came from Nîmes.

Once thought to date from the time of Augustus, the large and well-preserved amphitheatre (pictured below) is now considered to have been constructed around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Originally it would have been able to seat nearly 24,000 spectators. It lies in the heart of the city and is still in regular use today, with a capacity of about 16,000.

As these and other impressive remains demonstrate, Nîmes became an important city in Roman times and the numismatic evidence shows that the crocodile and palm emblem has been intimately associated with it for over 2 millennia. This must make it one of the oldest city emblems in Europe—does anyone know of an older one?



An inscription (pictured above) held in the Museum at Nîmes reads:  
 (Dedicated) To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus and Nemausus. Gaius Julius Tiberinus, son of Tib(erinus?), of the Tribe Fabia, First Centurion, from Berytus. Fulfilled his vow.



**A Note From Professor John Melville-Jones**  
 There are two theories concerning the choice of the crocodile type. One is that is that a large contingent of Julius Caesar's veterans was settled at Nemausus after his victory at the Battle of the Nile (47 B.C.). The other is that it refers to Egypt because Octavian had defeated Mark Antony and the Egyptian queen Cleopatra at the battle of Actium, and some soldiers had been settled at Nemausus after that. The latter seems more probable, given the message of the obverse type of the coin, which presents Octavian and Agrippa as victors.

## Roman Archaeology and War

*David Kennedy*

Kevin O’Toole’s Front Page in this issue was sparked by one disturbing news item this month; my own article by a second – the fighting at Hama in Syria. The BBC web site on 2 August included film taken on a mobile phone of tanks in the central square and framed by the columns of a Roman monument (somewhat grainy picture below).



Of course, similar pictures could have been made for a dozen other places in the recent Syrian uprising: Damascus, Aleppo (Roman Halab), Homs (Emesa) and now Lattakia (Laodicea). Hama resonated with me not just because there were pictures of Roman archaeology in the image but for more personal reasons. Under the same name – though officially called Epiphaneia in the Graeco-Roman period, Hama was a significant city of the Roman province of Syria. Over 30 years ago, one of the first reviews I wrote was of the Danish excavations on part of the Roman remains.

A few years earlier still, my doctoral thesis had involved the detailed study of Syria’s contribution to the Roman army. Hama was famous for its archers and a regiment of cavalry and three of infantry are attested. Best known and most likely to resonate for readers of RAG, is the *Cohors I Hamiorum Sagittariorum* – The First Hamian Archers. In the 2nd century AD it was in garrison at Carvoran on Hadrian’s Wall where inscriptions record dedications to Dea Syria (the Goddess Syria) and Dea Hamia (the Goddess Hamia) and Jupiter Heliopolitanus (the Jupiter worshipped at Baalbek in Lebanon). A few years later it is found on the Antonine Wall garrisoning the fort at the Bar Hill in the suburbs of Glasgow. There a tombstone records the death of “Salames the son of Salames, aged 15” (photograph opposite). (My viewing of that stone in 1979 was made more memorable as it was done in the company of the appropriately named Moroccan archaeologist Pierre Salama who knew another regiment of Hamians had been stationed in his home country). I have digressed here to remind readers that even a ‘faraway place’ like Hama in modern Syria was integrated into the Roman Empire and the archaeology of its city and rural hinterland as well as of its expatriate people, is of importance.

There is nothing new about the destruction of Roman archaeology in modern warfare even if we go no further back than the last century. (And we may be anxious in Libya not just for Lepcis Magna – about 100 km east of Tripoli and with the frontline at Misrata being steadily pushed towards it), but for Sabratha (just west of Zawiya which is in the news again today), Benghazi (Berenice), and Tripoli itself. Fortunately Ptolemais and Cyrene are far to the east of Benghazi).

There are too many examples of destruction in what we can think of as ‘our times’. A core battlefield of the First World War was in the Somme Valley where aerial reconnaissance by Roger Agache in the 1960s and 70s still recorded over 1000 Roman villas. We can only guess at how much more had been lost in the vast churning of the landscape during the great battles there.

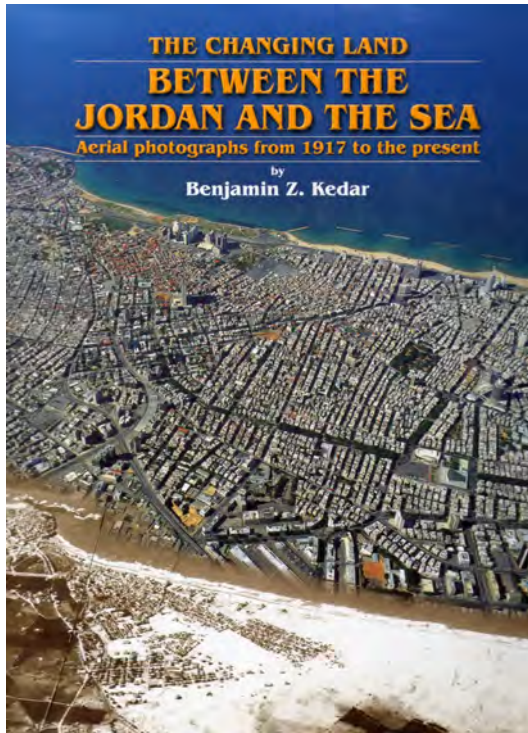
Another loss from that war was of a different kind. During the campaign in Palestine both British and Australian and German air forces took tens of thousands of aerial photographs. The Germans in particular often deliberately included archaeological sites but even those photographs of a more general nature were superb records of landscapes which have been utterly transformed.



Fortunately thousands of such photographs have survived and there is a marvellous book pairing the 1917 photograph with a



current aerial image by Kedar (below). Sadly, however, at least one great cache of these German photographs which was housed in Berlin seems to have been destroyed during the Second World War.



Also destroyed during the Second World War were the immense pleasure barges of the Emperor Gaius (aka 'Caligula') (AD 37-41). These were discovered in the 15<sup>th</sup> century sunk in Lake Nemi 30 km south of Rome but it was not till the late 1920s that a Roman conduit from the lake was re-opened and draining was carried out. The two ships revealed were huge by Roman standards – we thought! One was 73 m long by 24 m wide (see below) and it demonstrated that written references to huge ships carrying grain to Rome were probably not exaggerated.



The remains found on the wrecks included aspects of Roman technology such as bilge pumps that were revelations in themselves. The museum constructed over the wrecks to preserve them had a short life although it is unclear whether the fire that destroyed them in 1944 was caused by German or American action. A tragic loss only mitigated by the survival of the detailed plans and of some of the artifacts being housed elsewhere at the time.

The city of Rome itself was declared an 'Open City' and spared the destruction that might have been so devastating. Other Italian cities were less fortunate including Turin whose factories made it a frequent target.

The number of examples is unfortunately large from the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone and often includes material already salvaged and moved for safe-keeping into museums. Not all stories about destruction and damage had unhappy endings. Anyone who has visited the Australian War Memorial museum in Canberra will have seen the large Roman mosaic (see below) brought back in pieces by Australian soldiers who found it at Gaza in Palestine.



All too often, mosaics once exposed, have been left to gradually deteriorate. A few more Australian soldiers evidently got far out into the Syrian desert where they 'found' an funerary bust at the desert city of Palmyra (pictured below).





## Jarash: Tales From the Hinterland

*Fiona Baker*

*The Jarash Hinterland Survey was started with a first season in 2005 involving a modest team jointly directed by Fiona Baker of Firat Archaeological Services at Helensburgh in Scotland and me. Fiona had worked in the Middle East for many years including on the nearby Pella Hinterland Survey in the 1990s. Although the first season was a success, little further funding was available. Happily our own RAG Committee Member Don Boyer stepped in. Almost all of the funding for the 2008 season was provided by Don and the recent 2010 season was entirely funded by him. In a very real sense, since 2005, this UWA project has also become a RAG one. In addition to Don and Ann Boyer, the team has regularly included Anne Poepjes, Andrew Card (and his wife Helen in 2010) and Stafford Smith on loan from the Aerial Archaeology in Jordan project.*

*Several brief reports on the survey have been published and RAG Members have heard and read about various aspects at Saturday sessions and in the RAG magazine. As you are reading this Ina Kehrberg of University of Sydney is in Jordan working through the mountains of artefacts collected and preparing a report. Once we have this, all the pieces of the jigsaw we can expect will be available, not least the basic dating evidence from pottery collected. At that point we can embark on the process of synthesis – using the counts of data – X sarcophagi, Y quarries, Z water channels ... to offer up a picture of what lay outside the walls of Roman Gerasa. As Members will be aware from oft-repeated remarks on the subject in lectures, cities did not end at the walls, but archaeological exploration often has. At Gerasa, faced with the rapid expansion of the modern town, the JHS – thanks in large part to Don Boyer, has salvaged records of sites which seem soon fated to disappear, and taken a step towards developing a wider understanding of the immediate hinterland of Classical cities.*

*The following at times whimsical reflections offer an insight into the delights and dangers of fieldwork in the Middle East and the character of the evidence salvaged. Fiona Baker is a graduate of Durham University and has run an archaeological consulting and contracting practice, Firat Archaeological Services, based in the west of Scotland since 1992. She has worked on several projects in the Middle East and Egypt over the last twenty years including directing the Pella Hinterland Tomb Survey. Andrew Card who adapted the following text for RAG has an honours degree in Classics and Ancient History and currently works part-time processing data from the JHS. (DLK)*

The third and final field season of the Jarash Hinterland Survey (JHS) took place in October 2010, apparently the hottest October for a century. Our plan of working in the cooler weather failed miserably but by working after Ramadan we could at least quench our thirst in public and get a decent night's sleep. I read recently that traditional Ramadan drummers were few and far between; we can assure you they have all moved to western Jarash. The team settled into our home from home at Jarash Archaeological Camp and reacquainted ourselves with its idiosyncrasies of which plugs worked and how to obtain hot water. Gabriel's cats and kittens moved in soon afterwards to be spoiled with milk and titbits. Trina found extracting herself from her all-enveloping mattress in the morning a bit of a struggle and decided to put a board under it to improve matters. Her 'ouch' as she extracted a suitable bit of wood from the pile she put down to a small splinter. However, an hour or two later when she said she really wasn't feeling too well, her rapidly swelling ankle and red pin prick mark was a bit of a giveaway for a scorpion sting. Rescue driver Andrew sagely warned her that the answer, whatever the ailment, would be a jab or two in the backside as we headed off to see the doctor. He was right, but two injections in the backside later and Trina was feeling a lot better and the swelling was going down before our eyes. The daughter of homoeopathic doctors, she drew the line at a course of antibiotics as well - she had never had so much conventional medicine in her life as she did in the space of five minutes.

First drama of the season over, we set about our work in earnest setting off at the crack of dawn each day laden with our survey kit essentials, assorted headgear and potions, enough water to sink a battleship and of course the essential snake scaring, scorpion poking, wild dog defending, measuring and walking aids a.k.a ranging rods. Over three seasons the team has covered urban and rural terrain, forest and fields, descended precipitous slopes into wadis, struggled up hills, hacked through vegetation, sighed at yet another quarry (only 220 or so of those) and squeezed, wriggled and crawled into numerous tombs. Survey routes were planned with military precision around the



Andrew Card successfully gaining access to a tomb across a field of festering rubbish

school day to avoid being ‘shabab-ed’. Of course we also drunk lots of cups of tea kindly provided in all of the above locations by kind locals, ate honeycombs wax and all straight from the hive, and often came home laden with citrus fruit, pomegranates and figs. As ever, local knowledge was invaluable. A tomb that had about 20 sarcophagi in iton Abu Suwan had been used a bomb shelter in 1973 and had subsequently been filled in leaving no visible trace; the route of a built Classical water course along the Wadi Deir now scattered and bulldozed was shown to us by a man who played in it as a child and an intense artefact scatter had been delivered by trucks from elsewhere in the preceding few months.

At the end of the walking day the team enjoyed a sit down with a cold drink and some salty snacks in our shady courtyard. Paul had learned he really shouldn’t have a sneaky sit down while out surveying after sitting on a plastic garden chair he found discarded in an urban area only for it to collapse in a pure pantomime slapstick crescendo. As we enjoyed our brief rest before photograph and GPS downloading, cataloguing, map updating and data entry occupied our re-hydrated brains the teams would recount the day’s discoveries and the treasures we had found would be admired by all – a cute Jarash zoomorphic lamp fragment, coin, painted pottery sherd, ground stone axe fragment or incredible flint artefact.



David Kennedy finding conditions in the interior of a tomb can be equally unpleasant



The fake Assyrian deity found in an artefact scatter in a ploughed field.

On occasion a special find would be show-and tell at second breakfast at Jarash Rest House, our favourite meal of the day. In 2008 I thought I had the best find of all, a small bronze Assyrian deity figurine found in a ploughed field in the Wadi Jarash. We were all thrilled but when I showed it to our inspector Abd al Majeed within a minute he laughed and declared it was a modern fake. But, but, but...it was in a field in an artefact scatter...how? Why? However, the more we looked at the fresh mould marks, the file marks, the patination, it became clear he was right and our Assyrian god was not. The response of the esteemed specialist to the photo we sent was they ‘wouldn’t touch it with a bargepole’. Then there was the polished, ovoid haematite stone we decided was a modern magnet toy, the kind of thing given out at geological conferences as an executive desk toy only to spot that weights from Ugarit in the Damascus museum are remarkably similar...



Modesty at all times - Andrew modelling emergency trouser repairs and depriving Fiona of her headscarf.

Apart from area covered, types and numbers of sites etc., the survey had a number of other tally lists on the go. Our JHS Fitness Boot Camp list counted belt not chesttightened and kilos lost, while everyone managed at least 5kg., Don won by a country mile shedding an incredible 11kg, though he was helped somewhat by a bout of food poisoning – no pain no gain!





Don Boyer working by torchlight in one of the subterranean tombs

The wildlife spotting competition was a close run thing, tortoises and foxes happily ahead of snakes, scorpions and hornet catching giant spiders. David and Don saw a flock of pelicans in the desert flying out to Azraq thought whether wildlife spots outside the JHS area and on an AAJ mission were permitted was a moot point. However, four of us trumped the pelicans in an almost unbelievable but absolutely *bona fide* sighting of a leopard in a wadi in the north of the survey area. We watched with growing amazement this large chocolate brown big cat picking its way slowly and nonchalantly down a wadi, estimating its size, conformation and proportions and all agreeing that this was absolutely not a domestic cat. Cameras stored in the boot of the car at the time means we have no photographic evidence, but our sketches of the cat's shape and estimation of its size has led to the conclusion that it can only have been one thing, a black panther—supposedly extinct in this part of Jordan. But there is nothing else it could have been except perhaps a leopard.



Welcome to our world of tomb exploration.



Maggie Struckmeier assessing the best means of access to a tomb.

So, the lessons learned from the hinterland are never trust a discarded chair; always time your survey around the school day; listen to what the locals tell you; don't believe every artefact you find is the real deal, but also believe your eyes when you see something you shouldn't be!

An overview of the survey results for the 2010 season is forthcoming in Annual of the Department of Antiquities, Vol 55, 2011.



## *New Roman Discoveries in Jordan 2010*

David Kennedy

The 2010 Season of fieldwork in Jordan involved two parallel projects. The Jarash Hinterland Survey is reported above and this essay is only about the findings from the Aerial Archaeology project.



### **Masuh Milestone**

The first discovery was only in part ‘found’ from the air. About 20 km south-southwest of Amman – Roman Philadelphia, is the extensive ruined Roman village of Masuh. It is unusual – most of the visible remains of Roman villages on this plain around Amman have long been built over by modern villages and towns just in the last 50 years. Masuh is relatively intact so we visited not least to investigate reports by previous visitors of a Latin inscription. In fact the inscription turned out to be a Roman milestone which had evidently been re-used as a column in a building (photo opposite). Enough of the text is still visible and clear to be able to detect the names and titles of the Emperor Septimius Severus (AD 193-211). Severus is well-known as the founder of the Severan dynasty and, as a link to other stories in this issue, we might note that he was a native of Lepcis Magna in Libya and died in Britain (at York) after campaigning north of Hadrian’s Wall.

Milestones are quite common in Jordan but, as it happens, they are rare on the highway south from Philadelphia through Esbus to Madaba. Masuh lies c. 3 km east of Esbus so – unless there is a lateral road we know nothing about, the best interpretation of this find is that the stone was moved from the highway near Esbus for re-use at Masuh. That in turn tells us that the re-use must be later than Severus and probably at a time when the stone either was no longer important or had been superseded by a later milestone.

### **Roman Temporary/Marching Camp**

Although the temporary camps the Roman army constructed even just for an overnight halt are common in north-western Europe, especially Britain (almost 700 examples), they are rare anywhere in the eastern provinces.

The best-known in the East are in fact the siege camps around Masada in Israel and Machaerus in Jordan. Simple marching camps are almost unknown. A possible example was spotted on old aerial photographs of 1953 some 15 years ago. It was doubted, however, as it lay on a barren and highly arid flint-covered desert surface on the Wadi Abu Safat about 20 km east of Jordan’s Desert Highway. A recent flight has revealed the clinching detail – a *titulus/titulum*. A Roman camp, and only a Roman camp, included short banks in front of the entrances to the camp. A faint but clear example (arrowed yellow) is revealed in the photo opposite. The camp is c. 200 x 130 m, 2.6 ha. It appears to be showing a route across the desert to the Al-Jafr Oasis where some Latin graffiti have been recorded

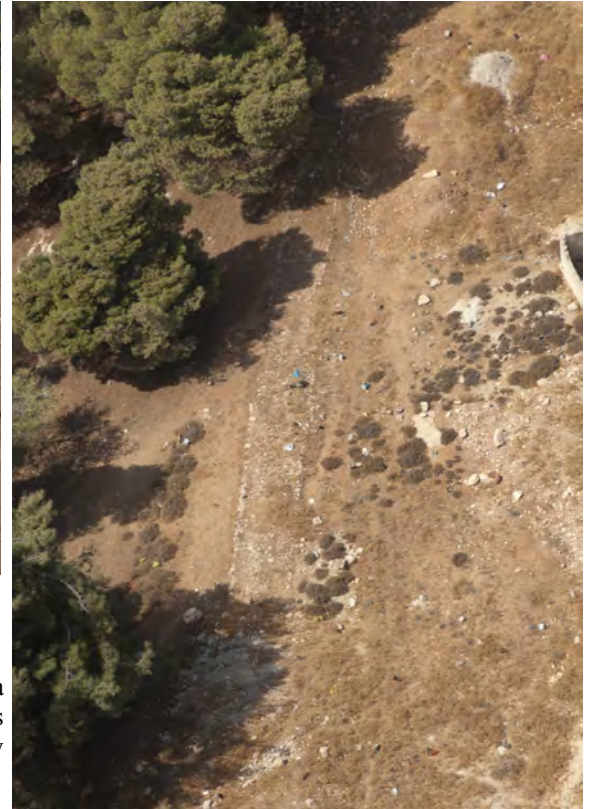




## Roman Roads around Philadelphia

The rapid urban sprawl of Amman has destroyed several stretches of Roman road that radiated out from the ancient city to Bostra, Jarash and Madaba as well as local roads. It was a surprise, therefore, to discover from the air two stretches of road that had not previously been reported.

The first (photo directly below) is about 8 km (5 Roman miles) southwest of central Philadelphia. As the photograph shows, there is the trace – virtually invisible at ground level, of both a stretch of road and what may be a roadside farm or a road-station.



A further 3 Roman miles further southwest we spotted the remains of a Roman road on the crest of a hill (photo opposite). Less impressive traces were seen in the vicinity a few years ago but this good stretch is an entirely new discovery.

### *Greek Archaeological Tour—October/November 2012*

#### Kevin O'Toole

Expressions of interest are invited from RAG readers who are attracted to the idea of participating in an archaeological tour of mainland Greece to be held over 14 days in late 2012.

The tour would commence at Vravrona (Brauron) near Athens international airport and, visiting the sites of ancient Brauron and ancient Eleusis on the way, proceed for a first overnight stop at Loutraki as a base for visits principally to the Heraion at Perachora, Corinth and Nemea. The next stop would be Nafplio as a base for a tour of numerous sites in the Argolid. We would then proceed to Sparta where we would visit the site of ancient Sparta, and other sites including the Menelaion. In that area we would not want to pass by Mistra at the lower levels of the Taygetos mountains which we would cross on our way to our next stop, Kalamata. Kalamata would be a base for visits to a number of sites including Pylos and Messene. We would then proceed to Olympia, and in that area take in also the Temple of Apollo at Bassai. From there we would go across the Corinthian gulf via its spectacular new bridge at Patra to stay at Mesolonghi as a base from which to proceed for visits to Aktion, Nikopolis and the Necromanteion in Western Epirus. After that we would proceed to beautiful Ioanina as a base for a visit to Dodona. From Ioanina we would cross the Pindos mountains and the Thessalian Plain to stay near Halkida visiting Thermopylai on the way. We would then proceed to Delphi after visiting Amphiareion, Ramnous and Marathon. Our final stay would be at Athens for three nights for visits to numerous sites there.

It is intended that the tour be highly educational with notes and maps and short evening presentations in preparation for the following day. The tour cost is yet to be determined but it would include transport, accommodation and site entry fees. It would not include travel to and from Athens.

As preparation for the proposed tour (and for general interest) I shall be giving a University Extension 2012 Summer School course entitled "Linear B and Mycenaean Civilization" in which I shall be discussing in detail many of the sites proposed for the Tour and setting the context of later Greek history and Greco-Roman myth. My email address is [kevin.otoole@uwa.edu.au](mailto:kevin.otoole@uwa.edu.au)

# Roman Archaeology at UWA

## Membership of The RAG

### Roman Portus Lecture

One of our Members – Terry Seubert, invited DLK to give an informal talk on the Roman port-city at the mouth of the Tiber. The original port of Ostia was gradually left high and dry as the Tiber silted and the numerous ships required to supply Rome could not be managed. The answer was to create an artificial harbour, the successful version in time coming to be a town in its own right clustered around the great harbour and simply taking its name – Portus. The talk was held on Sunday 11th September at the WA Museum.

### Winter Saturday Season 2011

The final Saturday session on 17<sup>th</sup> September brought to a close a season of well-attended lectures on Villas and Luxury Houses in the Roman Empire. Inevitably even 6 lectures can do no more than introduce an audience to a vast subject. There is a large literature on specific sites as well as villas as a class. If anyone wants guidance on 'Further Reading' do write and ask.

### Summer Saturday Season 2012

Precise dates and lecture titles are yet to be finalized. As in previous years the intention is to have one session in each of January, February and March. The theme this time will be the decline and fall of the Roman empire.

### Roman Archaeology Lectures

Dr Robyn Veal:

Colleagues in Archaeology at UWA have given prominence in their week-day seminars recently to Roman Archaeology. On 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011, Dr Robyn Veal of the Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney gave an interesting talk: "*Fuelling ancient Mediterranean cities: a framework for research, and a case study from Pompeii*".

It is easy to forget in a world in which coal, oil and gas provide our primary fuel needs, just how dependent the ancient world was on wood and on its 'farming'. Despite Meiggs, R. (1982) *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Oxford (OUP), a huge and excellent book, there is important work still to

be done, not least in charting the trade in wood between areas of surplus and those with needs.

Sean Winter :

On 8 September 2011 16:00, Sean Winter – a UWA student, gave a talk on Excavations at Thmuis, a Greco-Roman City in the Nile Delta, Egypt. "First established in the 5th century BC, Thmuis developed into an important administrative centre, first for the Ptolemaic and then later for the Roman rulers of Egypt. In 2007 a team from the University of Hawaii commenced archaeological investigation of the site and annual field seasons have followed since then."

We will monitor this seminar series more closely and let Members know of topics of interest. They are usually at 4 pm on Thursdays.

### Fieldwork in Jordan 2011

The Fifteenth Year/ Eighteenth Season of the Aerial Archaeology in Jordan project will run from 23 September till 5 November 2011. The team this year will be the largest to date though not all will be present at the same time.

Participants familiar to RAG Members include Don Boyer, Karen Henderson, Rebecca Banks and Mat Dalton from Perth; Bob Bewley and Francesca Radcliffe from the UK; and Nadja Qaisi from the British Institute of Archaeology in Amman.

Although sites of every period are recorded, a particular focus this season is the region east of Petra – known as Arabia Petraea, thickly settled in the Roman period and with scores of ruined villages and farmsteads.

### Google

In April, Google contacted the Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East to arrange to visit Perth for three days to conduct interviews and do filming of our use of Google Earth as an innovative tool in archaeology. That is expected to result in a short promotional film show-casing the 'creative use' of Google products. The PR department of Google Earth itself is now working on a parallel showcase for their own purposes.

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## The RAG

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