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Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

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GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE AND THE GALILEE OF JESUS

Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus, the first book-length investigation of this topic, challenges the conventional scholarly view that first-century Galilee was thoroughly Hellenized. Examining architecture, inscriptions, coins, and art from Alexander the Great's conquest until the early fourth century CE, Chancey argues that the extent of Greco-Roman culture in the time of Jesus has often been greatly exaggerated. Antipas's reign in the early first century was indeed a time of transition, but the more dramatic shifts in Galilee's cultural climate happened in the second century, after the arrival of a large Roman garrison. Much of Galilee's Hellenization should thus be understood within the context of its Romanization. Any attempt to understand the Galilean setting of Jesus must recognize the significance of the region's historical development as well as how Galilee fits into the larger context of the Roman East.

MARK CHANCEY is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University, Dallas. He is author of *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (2002, SNTS Monograph No. 118).

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For Tracy Anne

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Preface

The need for a new synthesis and analysis of the evidence for Greco-Roman culture in Galilee during the time of Jesus became apparent to me while working on my study on Galilee's population, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*. In particular, I was struck at the importance of context, both geographical and chronological, for understanding the region as a whole as well as the significance of individual artifacts and buildings. When reading about particular archaeological finds, I wanted to know if they were typical or atypical within Galilee, the larger area of Palestine, and elsewhere in the Roman East, as well as within their own time periods. I also wanted to contextualize investigations of Galilee within the larger scholarly conversation about Romanization. In this work, I have tried to collect and present the archaeological data from Galilee in a concise, accessible form, while also directing the reader to parallel finds from other regions and to standard reference works on specific categories of material culture. Fuller bibliographies for individual sites can often be found in my previous book, *Myth*. I have written primarily for scholars who are interested in understanding the setting of Jesus, but I also hope this book will prove useful to scholars specializing in Early Judaism, Syro-Palestinian archaeology, and the Roman Near East.

When discussing specific sites, I have sometimes used the Greek name and sometimes the Hebrew, depending on which is better known. My transliteration of Hebrew names usually follows the general-purpose style outlined in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 28–29. Thus, *kheth* is typically represented by *h* or *kh* and *alef* and *ayin* by a ';

underdots are omitted. I have provided map coordinates for sites not included on the map, when possible. As for my use of Josephus, translations are typically from the Loeb edition.

I am greatly indebted to the people who read portions of the manuscript and offered suggestions for improvement: Tracy Anne Allred, Jeremy Bakker, Joshua Ezra Burns, Jaime Clark-Soles, Richard W. Cogley, Johan Elverskog, Steven Fine, Sean Freyne, Adam Marshak, Dale B. Martin, Byron R. McCane, Eric M. Meyers, and Adam Porter. I also owe special thanks to Mordechai Aviam, who helped me gather data on Galilee's inscriptions; Eric M. Meyers, Steven Fine, and David Hendin, for providing me with access to forthcoming works; and C. Thomas McCollough, James F. Strange, and Morten Hørning Jensen, all of whom provided me with copies of or information from conference papers. I continue to profit from the wise counsel of Eric M. Meyers and E. P. Sanders, my mentors at Duke University, and Richard W. Cogley, my department chair at Southern Methodist University. Eric M. Meyers first introduced me to the joys of archaeological fieldwork. The Dorot Foundation and the Endowment for Biblical Research helped fund my participation in the Sepphoris Regional Project in the 1990s, and the SMU University Research Council provided grants for research in the libraries of Duke University and for travel to Italy to study Roman architecture. A Research Fellowship from SMU allowed me to take a sabbatical semester in the fall of 2003 to devote to writing. This book would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of Billie Stovall of the Fondren Library Interlibrary Loan Office. Katharina Brett, my editor, has been an extremely helpful source of guidance and advice, and I am grateful to John Court for the opportunity to contribute again to the SNTS series. I am extremely thankful for the careful attention my work received from copy-editor Tony Rainer. The members of my family continue to provide me with welcome support. My students are a perpetual source of inspiration.

I began work on this project a few weeks before my wedding, and it has been an all-too constant companion with me and my wife, Tracy Anne Allred, in the early years of our marriage. Tracy Anne has been an unfailing source of encouragement, good humor, and healthy perspective throughout the stages of this book's preparation. I dedicate this work to her.

Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	David Noel Freedman et al., eds., <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJC</i>	Ya'akov Meshorer, <i>Ancient Jewish Coinage</i> , 2 vols. (Dix Hills, N. Y.: Amphora Books, 1982)
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1970–present)
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>Beth She'arim</i>	<i>Beth She'arim</i> Benjamin Mazar, vol. 1, <i>The Catacombs 1–4</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973) Moshe Schwabe and Baruch Lifshitz, vol. 2, <i>The Greek Inscriptions</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974) Nahman Avigad, vol. 3, <i>The Excavations 1953–1958</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976)
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

- CHJ* *The Cambridge History of Judaism*
W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, eds.,
vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1984)
W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, eds.,
vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1989)
William Horbury, W. D. Davies, and John
Sturdy, eds., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1999).
Steven T. Katz, ed., vol. 4 (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, in press)
- City-Coins* Ya'akov Meshorer, *City-Coins of Eretz-Israel
and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*
(Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1985)
- CRBS* *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
- ESI* *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*
- GLI* Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G.
Holum, eds., *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions
of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston, Mass.: The
American Schools of Oriental Research,
2000).
- Gush Halav* Eric M. Meyers, Carol L. Meyers, with James
F. Strange, *Excavations at the Ancient
Synagogue of Gush Halav* (Winona Lake,
Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990)
- HA* *Hadashot Arkheologiyot*
- HSCP* *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
- HTR* *Harvard Theological Review*
- HUCA* *Hebrew Union College Annual*
- IEJ* *Israel Exploration Quarterly*
- INJ* *Israel Numismatic Journal*
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JJS* *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JPOS* *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
- JSJ* *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian,
Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
- JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*

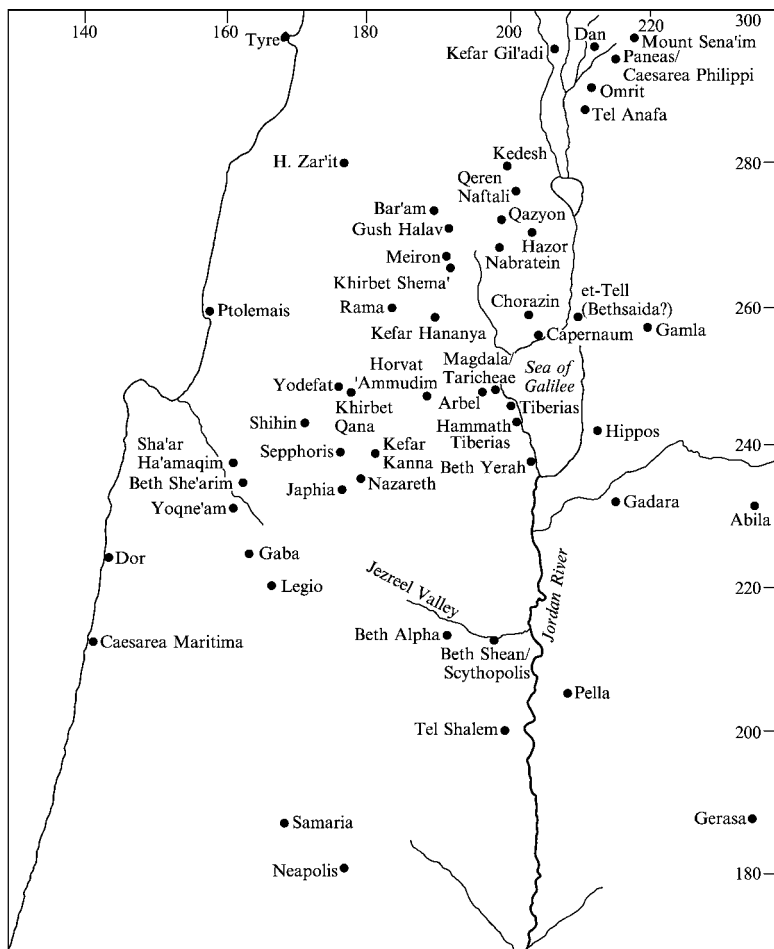
- Khirbet Shema'* Eric M. Meyers, A. Thomas Kraabel, and James F. Strange, *Ancient Synagogue Excavations at Khirbet Shema', Upper Galilee, Israel, 1970–1972* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976)
- LA *Liber Annuus*
- Meiron Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, and Carol L. Meyers, *Excavations at Ancient Meiron, Upper Galilee, Israel 1971–1972, 1974–1975, 1977* (Cambridge, Mass.: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1981)
- Millar, RNE Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–337 CE* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993)
- MPI Ruth Ovadiah, and Asher Ovadiah, *Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Rome: Lerva di Bretschneider, 1987)
- Nagy, Sepphoris Rebecca Martin Nagy, Carol L. Meyers, Eric M. Meyers, and Zeev Weiss, eds., *Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996)
- NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology*
- NEAEHL Ephraim Stern et al., eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society and Carta, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993)
- NTS *New Testament Studies*
- OEANE Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols. (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- PEQ *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
- QDAP *Quarterly of the Department of the Antiquities in Palestine*
- RB *Revue biblique*

<i>RPC</i>	<i>Roman Provincial Coinage</i> Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Pere Paul Ripollès, eds., vol. 1 (London: British Museum Press, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1992) Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, Ian Carradice, eds., vol. 2 (London: British Museum Press, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1999)
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Treasury</i>	Ya'akov Meshorer, <i>A Treasury of Jewish Coins</i> (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press; Nyack, N.Y.: Amphora Books, 2001)
<i>WA</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
Josephus:	
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>

Rabbinic works:

The abbreviations for rabbinic references are taken from Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

Galilee and northern Palestine



Introduction

By the time of Jesus, all Judaism was Hellenistic Judaism. Martin Hengel's dictum, articulated in his massive book *Judaism and Hellenism* and elaborated upon in follow-up projects, has been enormously influential.¹ His review of evidence from the Persian through the early rabbinic periods demonstrated that Hellenistic influence was felt in many spheres of Jewish life in Palestine: linguistic, literary, educational, architectural, religious, philosophical, artistic, political, economic, and military. Collectively a tour de force, his works exposed the problematic nature of sharp differentiations between Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora and Judaism in Palestine. Hengel argued that any use of the phrase "Hellenistic Judaism" that excludes Palestinian Judaism is inappropriate, and any effort to portray Palestinian Judaism as more "orthodox" than Diaspora Judaism on the basis of its supposedly lesser Hellenization is doomed to failure. Hengel has had his critics,² but his main point

¹ *Judaism and Hellenism*, trans. John Bowden, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), especially vol. 1, 104; *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989); "Judaism and Hellenism Revisited," in John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 6–37.

² Samuel Sandmel, "Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity: The Question of the Comfortable Theory," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 137–148; Samuel Sandmel, review of Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1973), *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 11:4 (1974): 701–702; Louis H. Feldman, "How Much Hellenism in Jewish Palestine?" *HUCA* (1986): 83–111; Louis H. Feldman, "Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* in Retrospect," *JBL* 96 (1977):

is rightly accepted as conventional wisdom in most sectors of New Testament scholarship: Palestinian Judaism must be understood as a part of, not apart from, Hellenistic Judaism.

Judaism in Galilee was no exception. It, too, felt the impact of Greek culture, and no one can any longer imagine Jesus living, as it were, on an isolated and untouched island of Semitic culture in a sea of Hellenism.³ Like the rest of Palestine, it came under the influence of yet another empire's culture when it fell into the orbit of Rome, a point that Hengel and others also correctly made. Many scholars regarded archaeological finds in the 1980s and 1990s as further confirmation of Hengel's arguments. Images of the region had varied in earlier scholarship, with some portraying it as thoroughly Hellenized and others as backwater and uncultured.⁴ The weight of majority view has now shifted towards the view that Galilee fully exhibited key aspects of Greco-Roman culture. Hengel had argued that Greek was widely used in Palestine; excavations in Galilee found numerous Greek inscriptions. Hengel had drawn attention to the presence of Greco-Roman architectural forms; archaeologists uncovered new examples of such buildings in Galilee. Hengel had noted the importance of Greco-Roman artistic influence; projects in Galilee discovered mosaics, frescoes, figurines, and other artifacts reflecting that influence.

Excavations at Sepphoris, located less than four miles from Nazareth, took pride of place in discussions of the region, at least within New Testament scholarship. A theater had been uncovered there in 1931, and more recently, bathhouses, a basilical building,

371–382; cf. also Tessa Rajak, "Judaism and Hellenism Revisited," in *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1–11 and Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), vol. 1, 148–153.

³ The metaphor's phrasing is from Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 311; cf. Wayne A. Meeks, "Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity," in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, Ken.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 17–27, esp. 24–25.

⁴ The most famous depiction of Galilee as rural and bucolic is found in Geza Vermes's *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). For a review of scholarship on Galilee, see Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16–22; Halvor Moxnes, "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus – Part I," *BTB* 31 (2001): 26–37 and "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus – Part II," *BTB* 31 (2001): 64–77.

and an aqueduct have been excavated. At least some of the city's streets were shown to be organized in a grid pattern, a characteristic feature of both Greek and Roman cities. The city's spectacular mosaics contained Dionysiac imagery, including a depiction of a procession in honor of Dionysos as well as a symposium with Heracles. Another mosaic showed flora and fauna of the Nile, and yet another portrayed Orpheus. These mosaics bore Greek inscriptions, as did the city's coins, a market weight, and other objects.⁵

Though Sepphoris received the lion's share of attention, numerous other sites were also excavated and older digs attracted renewed interest.⁶ The necropolis at Beth She'arim had been investigated in 1936–1940 and 1953–1958, but the full report had not been translated from Hebrew into English until the 1970s. With nearly three hundred inscriptions, the catacomb complex was increasingly cited as an exemplar of the region's Hellenistic milieu. So was Tiberias, though the presence of the modern city by the same name made it difficult to excavate. On the basis of several categories of evidence – architecture, coins, various forms of art, inscriptions, Greek and Latin loanwords and names in Jewish sources, the presence of imports from elsewhere in the Mediterranean – Lower Galilee, especially, was increasingly seen as no less Hellenized and urbanized than anywhere else in the Roman world.⁷

⁵ Eric M. Meyers, Ehud Netzer, and Carol L. Meyers, "Sepphoris: Ornament of all Galilee," *BA* 49 (1989): 4–19; James F. Strange, "Sepphoris," *ABD*, vol. 5, 1090–1093; Eric M. Meyers, "Roman Sepphoris in Light of New Archaeological Evidence and Recent Research," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (New York and Jerusalem: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 321–338. For more recent reviews, see Mark Chancey and Eric M. Meyers, "How Jewish was Sepphoris in Jesus' Time?" *BAR* 26:4 (2000): 18–33, 61; Mark A. Chancey, "The Cultural Milieu of Ancient Sepphoris," *NTS* 47:2 (2001): 127–145; Chancey, *Myth*, 69–83.

⁶ J. Andrew Overman provides a thorough overview in "Recent Advances in the Archaeology of the Galilee in the Roman Period," *CRBS* 1 (1993): 35–57.

⁷ The following works, many by scholars who later revised their positions, have often been cited to support the view of a thoroughly Hellenized Galilee: Eric M. Meyers, "The Cultural Setting of Galilee: The Case of Regionalism and Early Judaism," in *ANRW* 2.19.1, 686–702; Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 31–47; J. Andrew Overman, "Who Were the First Urban Christians? Urbanization in Galilee in the First Century," in J. David Lull, ed., *SBLSP 1988* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 160–168; Douglas R. Edwards, "First-Century

In light of these findings, few New Testament scholars would seriously dispute that Galilean culture indeed reflected Greek and Roman influences. Yet, if consensus exists on that basic point, confusion abounds about how extensive those influences were at different times and about the specific ways in which they were manifested. As impressive and influential as Hengel's work has been, some of his specific claims were oversimplified. Furthermore, much subsequent scholarship has gone well beyond Hengel in its characterizations of Greco-Roman culture in the world of Jesus. A review of statements often made about Jesus, his earliest followers, and their Galilean setting highlights issues that merit further examination.⁸

Scholars have frequently suggested, on the basis of numismatic and other inscriptions, that Greek was frequently spoken in the region, though it did not displace Aramaic as the dominant tongue.⁹ The use of Greek was not limited to the cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias; it might be heard in other Galilean communities as well, such as Capernaum, Magdala/Taricheae,¹⁰ and Chorazin.¹¹ Overall, it was proposed, the language was as common in Galilee as it was in Egypt and Asia Minor.¹² The fact that at least two of Jesus' disciples,

Urban/Rural Relations in Lower Galilee: Exploring the Archaeological and Literary Evidence," in Lull, *SBLSP 1988*, 169–182; Douglas R. Edwards, "The Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos of the Lower Galilee in the First Century: Implications of the Nascent Jesus Movement," in Levine, *Galilee*, 39–52; Howard Clark Kee, "Early Christianity in the Galilee: Reassessing the Evidence from the Gospels," in Levine, *Galilee*, 3–22; James F. Strange, "Some Implications of Archaeology for New Testament Studies," in James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver, eds., *What has Archaeology to do with Faith?* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 23–59.

⁸ Many of the claims below have antecedents in earlier scholarship, but they have drawn new life from Hengel's influence and recent excavations. They are illustrative of certain types of arguments made about Galilee and are not intended to represent the full spectrum of scholarship.

⁹ Robert W. Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 33–34, 78–79; Howard Clark Kee, *Jesus in History: An Approach to the Study in the Gospels*, 3rd ed., (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 248; Kee, "Early Christianity"; Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus & the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 26–27.

¹⁰ On the two names, see Chancey, *Myth*, 98–100.

¹¹ John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 92–93.

¹² Heinz O. Guenther, "Greek: The Home of Primitive Christianity," *TJT* 5 (1989): 247–279, esp. 250–251.

Andrew and Philip, had Greek names showed that the language had gained usage even among the lower socio-economic classes.¹³ It was thus quite likely that Jesus himself spoke at least a little Greek, raising the possibility that the gospels preserved some of his sayings verbatim. It was also now more easily imaginable that one or more of the gospels, perhaps Matthew or Mark, had been written in the region.¹⁴ An even earlier document, Q, believed by many to have been composed in Greek, might also have originated there.¹⁵

The proximity of Sepphoris to Nazareth made it likely that Jesus was exposed to the full range of Greco-Roman culture. He would have needed Greek to communicate with the city's diverse population, one that included a large number of gentiles. Antipas's construction projects could have created employment opportunities for a *tekton* like him, and the city, like others in the area, included many buildings characteristic of Greco-Roman urbanization – temples, bathhouses, a theater, and other monumental architecture. Jesus might have sat in the theater, watching classical plays. He might also have heard popular philosophers preaching on the city's corners.¹⁶

¹³ Hengel, 'Hellenization', 16.

¹⁴ Anthony J. Saldarini, "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict in the Galilee," in Levine, *Galilee*, 23–38; Aaron M. Gale, "Tradition in Transition, or Antioch versus Sepphoris: Rethinking the Matthean Community's Location," in *SBLSP 2003* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2003), 141–156.

¹⁵ James M. Robinson, "History of Q Research," in James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), xix–lxxi; John S. Kloppenborg, "The Sayings Gospel Q: Recent Opinion on the People Behind the Document," *CRBS* 1 (1993): 9–34; John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 214–261; Jonathan L. Reed, "The Social Map of Q," in John S. Kloppenborg, ed., *Conflict and Invention: Literary, Rhetorical, and Social Studies on the Sayings Gospel Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995), 17–36; Jonathan L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-Examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 170–196; Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 102–103; William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 52–59; Leif E. Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts: Jesus' First Followers According to Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994).

¹⁶ Compare, for example, the various points made by Kee, "Early Christianity"; Funk, *Honest*, 33, 79; Overman, "Who were the First Urban Christians?" and by Richard A. Batey in three works: "Is Not This the Carpenter?" *NTS* 30 (1984): 249–258; "Jesus and the Theatre," *NTS* 30 (1984): 563–574; and *Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991).

Sepphoris was not alone in its mixed population. Tiberias, too, was home to a considerable number of gentiles, and the region as a whole could be characterized as “semipagan.”¹⁷ Jesus need not leave Galilee to encounter non-Jews; he would have had frequent interaction with them throughout his life. Some of these pagans were indigenous Galileans, while others were Phoenicians, Arabs, or descendents of Greek settlers.¹⁸ The region’s roads were major trade routes that bustled with merchant convoys and other travelers.

Galilee, like the rest of Palestine, was occupied by the Roman army, perhaps even settled by Roman colonists, according to some scholars.¹⁹ Two gospels preserve a memory of Jesus’ encounter with a Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10). Roads built and paved by the Roman army and marked by Roman milestones crossed the region.²⁰ Sepphoris itself was a Roman administrative and military center.²¹ After finishing their lengthy terms of service, some Roman soldiers chose to stay in Antipas’s Galilee, retiring there.²² The region’s Romanization was thus no less thoroughgoing than its Hellenization.

In light of Galilee’s cosmopolitan and diverse cultural atmosphere, a wholesale re-imagining of Christian origins was in order. Both Jesus and his earliest followers – according to influential reconstructions of the earliest stratum of Q, a rootless, itinerant group of Galileans²³ – could be best understood as Cynic-like philosophers.²⁴ The

¹⁷ Funk, *Honest*, 33, 79; cf. Strange, “Some Implications.”

¹⁸ The influence of this view, which pre-dates recent archaeological work, is reflected in many Bible dictionary articles (Chancey, *Myth*, 1 n. 2).

¹⁹ James F. Strange, “First-Century Galilee from Archaeology and from the Texts,” in Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., ed., *SBLSP 1994* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 81–90; Marianne Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 82–85, 88, 92–96, 178–179. On the characterization of Galilee as a colony or of the Roman “occupation” as “colonial,” see Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 7, 27, 82, 88–89, 133, and Borg, *Meeting Jesus*, 52.

²⁰ Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 112; cf. Funk, *Honest*, 12, 99–100.

²¹ Kee, “Early Christianity”; Batey, *Jesus*, 14, 81, 140.

²² Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 141.

²³ Burton L. Mack, “Q and a Cynic-Like Jesus,” in William E. Arnal and Michel Desjardins, eds., *Whose Historical Jesus?* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 25–36 and *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Gospel Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*; Arnal, *Jesus*.

²⁴ John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 74–88, 338–341; *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*

argument has sometimes been framed as one of influence: Jesus had heard the teachings of Cynic philosophers at Sepphoris or while he traveled through the region. Though explicit evidence of Cynics in Galilee was lacking, to imagine a Cynic-free Galilee would be to imagine a Hellenism-free Galilee – and thus, by implication, an impossibility. If all Hellenism was Hellenistic Judaism, and Galilee’s architecture, art, and inscriptions confirmed the region’s full participation in the larger culture of the Greco-Roman world, then envisioning Jesus as a Jewish Cynic was not a problem. One scholar even suggested that protestations that Cynics were unlikely to be found in Galilee were, in fact, covert apologetic attempts to defend early Christianity’s uniqueness.²⁵ At other times, the proponents of the Cynic thesis have utilized an argument of analogy: regardless of whether or not Jesus and the Q community actually encountered any Cynics, they were much like them and a comparison with them was especially illuminating. This argument, too, has frequently been accompanied by appeals to the high level of Hellenization purportedly attested in the archaeological record.

Such positions have not been universal, of course, and their conflation above for brevity’s sake should not be interpreted as suggesting that a scholar who holds one also holds the others. Some of these statements, as will be seen in the course of this study, are quite reasonable, but most are built on shaky foundations. They sometimes seem to reflect one or more of several assumptions: that Greek and Roman cultures were homogenous across the Mediterranean region; that more evidence of those cultures has been found in

(San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 114–122; “Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Jesus Movement,” in Arnal and Desjardins, *Whose Historical Jesus?* 7–24. In *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 333–335, Crossan backs away from some of his earlier arguments, and the comparison with Cynics is missing entirely from his recent work with Jonathan L. Reed, which exhibits a more nuanced portrayal of Galilee (*Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001]). F. Gerald Downing has collected parallels between Jesus’ teachings and those of the Cynics in numerous works, including *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992); *Christ and the Cynics* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988); *Jesus and the Threat of Freedom* (London: SCM, 1987). Note also Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 53–77; and Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 33.

²⁵ Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*, 13, 145 n. 58.

early first-century CE Galilee than is actually the case; that finds in Jerusalem, the coastal cities, and the Decapolis were representative of Galilee; or that evidence from the second or later centuries accurately reflects the situation in the early first century. The last assumption is especially common. At times, depictions of the Galilee of Jesus have relied so heavily on late data that it is almost as if Jesus were being contextualized within the third century, rather than the first.²⁶

If we are to understand the particularity of the Galilean context of Jesus and his followers, we must acknowledge the significance of chronological development, regional variations, and class distinctions in the ways Hellenistic, Roman, and local cultures interacted. With these factors in mind, this study investigates the emergence of certain aspects of Greco-Roman in Galilee and the significance of that cultural interaction for the Historical Jesus and early Judaism. The chief challenges to such a project are deciding what phenomena to include within the terms “Hellenistic” and “Roman” and determining how to envision the interaction of those cultures with local ones.

Writing specifically of “Hellenism,” Hengel pointed out that the word is so broad and all encompassing that it is not always useful: “it says too much, and precisely because of that it says too little.”²⁷ As several scholars have noted, “Hellenistic” can be used to indicate a wide variety of things:

- the speaking of Greek (from minimal ability to full fluency)
- familiarity with Greek philosophy and literature
- distinctively Greek architectural forms (i.e., stadiums, theaters, gymnasia)
- use of imported Greek tableware and cookware, or, at least, local imitations
- civic organization like a polis, with a Greek constitution, *boule*, and officials.

²⁶ Mark A. Chancey, “Galilee and Greco-Roman Culture in the Time of Jesus: The Neglected Significance of Chronology,” *SBLSP 2003* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2003), 173–188.

²⁷ Hengel, ‘*Hellenization*’, 54.

The word “Roman” lends itself just as easily to ambiguity. Studies that use terms like these must be explicit in identifying which specific aspects of culture they are investigating, careful not to imply that other phenomena should be excluded from the meanings of the terms, and mindful of the danger of lapsing into essentialism. A brief survey of related studies shows how other scholars have handled such issues.

G. W. Bowersock has argued that many studies of Hellenistic culture start with a problematic model: an understanding of “Hellenization” as “the deliberate or inevitable imposition of Greek ways over local ones.” In his view, the concept of “Hellenization” is “a useless barometer for assessing Greek culture” because it implies the replacement of one culture by another, a process that rarely actually occurred. Local cultures did not disappear under the weight of Greek culture but instead found new ways to express themselves by adopting aspects of that culture. If “Hellenization” is a misleading word, the concept of “Hellenism” is nevertheless quite helpful. “Hellenism . . . represented language, thought, mythology, and images that constituted an extraordinarily flexible medium of both cultural and religious expression.” Thus, “it provided a new and more eloquent way of giving voice” to various peoples.²⁸

Lee I. Levine provides another possibility, describing “Hellenism” as the “cultural milieu (largely Greek) of the Hellenistic, Roman, and – to a somewhat more limited extent – Byzantine periods,” and “Hellenization” as “the process of adoption and adaptation of this culture on a local level.”²⁹ Other cultures also spread beyond their points of origin in the “Hellenistic world,” that is, the territories conquered by Alexander and his successors, and distinctions should be made “as to the degree of receptivity in each area [aspect of culture], as well as from region to region and from class to class.”³⁰ At particular places, particular groups might adapt specific aspects of Greek culture to their own needs, while other groups might reject

²⁸ G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), quotations from xi and 7; cf. Eric M. Meyers, “The Challenge of Hellenism for Early Judaism and Christianity,” *BA* 55 (1992): 84–91.

²⁹ Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 16–17.

³⁰ Levine, *Judaism*, 22.

those aspects. Furthermore, Levine emphasizes the importance of chronology, noting that evidence of Hellenism increases with the passing of each century.

The most thorough recent examination of the interaction of Hellenism and Judaism is that of John M. G. Barclay.³¹ Focusing on the Diaspora, Barclay defines Hellenism as a fusion of cultures after Alexander, characterizing it as “common urban culture in the eastern Mediterranean, founded on the Greek language . . . typically expressed in certain political and educational institutions and largely maintained by the social élite.”³² Noting several different spheres of culture (political, social, linguistic, educational, ideological, religious, and material culture), he argues that Jews might engage Hellenism in one area of life while ignoring it in others, and that there were differences in the degree of engagement. To deal with these phenomena, he utilizes the sociological concepts of assimilation, acculturation, and accommodation. He defines assimilation as the extent of social integration and interaction between Jews and non-Jews and acculturation as the level of familiarity with various aspects of Greek culture. Accommodation is conceptualized as the use to which acculturation is put, whether to embrace Greek culture fully, or to resist it by reinterpreting and expressing Jewish distinctiveness in new ways.³³ Barclay applies this model to describe the interplay between Judaism and Hellenism in various regions, with considerable attention to class differences. He might be critiqued on some points; he does not always differentiate clearly between Hellenistic and Roman cultural elements, and his discussion does not always pay sufficient attention to chronological developments.³⁴ His overall project, however, is a significant contribution, precisely because his guiding model is inherently flexible enough to handle diverse responses.

James F. Strange has addressed the issue of how Romanization affected material culture in Jewish Palestine. He suggests that we

³¹ John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

³² Barclay, *Jews*, 88.

³³ Barclay, *Jews*, 82–124, especially 90–98.

³⁴ Leonard V. Rutgers, “Recent Trends in the Study of Ancient Diaspora Judaism,” in *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, 2nd edn. (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 15–44.

envision certain features of material culture – the Jerusalem temple, synagogues, particular styles of tombs, and symbols like the menorah – as a Hellenistic Jewish foundation, upon which the Romans imposed an “urban overlay,” one that was itself also influenced by Hellenism. That overlay included “baths, hippodromes, theaters, amphitheaters or circuses, odeons, *nymphaea*, figured wall paintings, statues, triumphal monuments, temples,” and other features. The overlay and foundation interacted to produce a new cultural atmosphere that was distinct from either one alone.³⁵

Two recent important studies on the Romanization of the Near East, one by Fergus Millar, the other by Warwick Ball, approach their topic from fundamentally different perspectives.³⁶ For Millar, Roman culture largely obliterated local cultures, replacing them with Roman buildings, Roman coins, Roman art, and Roman inscriptions. Palestinian Judaism was a rare exception to this process, in that Jews managed to maintain a culturally distinctive ethnos, despite being subsumed into the Roman Empire. But Ball offers a strong critique of Millar’s work. For him, Roman culture was little more than a veneer laid over local indigenous cultures, cultures that continued to survive and to express themselves in the new media of Roman culture. Ball argues, for example, that scholars have over-emphasized the uniformity of so-called “Roman” monumental architecture in the Near East, while neglecting aspects of that architecture that were distinctive to each sub-region or that in some cases originated in the Near East, not in Rome.

These discussions of the interaction between Hellenism, Roman culture, and Judaism have conceptual points of contact with ongoing conversations about the nature of Romanization in other parts of the Empire.³⁷ The major starting point of those studies is

³⁵ Strange, “Some Implications,” esp. 31–34.

³⁶ Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–337 CE* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993); Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

³⁷ For reviews of the scholarship, see Jane Webster, “Roman Imperialism and the ‘Post Imperial Age,’” in Jane Webster and Nicholas J. Cooper, eds., *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1996), 1–17; Jane Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” *AJA* 105 (2001): 209–225; Richard Hingley, “The ‘Legacy’ of Rome:

the work of F. Haverfield, who analyzed the influence of the Romans on the Celts in Great Britain.³⁸ Haverfield concluded that the Romans deliberately spread their culture – language, pottery, architecture, art, civic organization – and that locals enthusiastically adopted it. This new culture did not wholly subsume the old; instead, Celtic and Roman cultures mixed, though the latter was dominant. Haverfield took seriously the differences between regions, and he recognized that the Greek East never fully adopted Roman ways. But in the west, the spread of Roman culture was nothing less than the spread of civilization. The Romans, he suggested, should thus be credited for bringing progress to the natives.³⁹

Scholarly dissatisfaction with this Romano-centric perspective was inevitable. The backlash was especially notable in post-World War II scholarship focusing on geographical areas that had been colonial possessions of the modern European empires, such as North Africa. Many of these scholars argued that though the Roman impact on indigenous populations might be highly visible in the material culture, it was only a veneer superimposed on local culture, a model similar to those of Ball and Strange. In many cases, indigenous ways continued with only minimal change under the Romans; in others, subject peoples actively rejected Roman domination. Thus, for example, Marcel Bénabou's review of the historical development of Roman rule in North Africa and its impact on religion, language, personal names, and

The Rise, Decline, and Fall of the Theory of Romanization," in Webster and Cooper, *Roman Imperialism*, 35–48; Roel Brandt and Jan Slofstra, eds., *Roman and Native in the Low Countries: Spheres of Interaction* (Oxford: BAR, 1983), especially J. Slofstra's study, "An Anthropological Approach to the Study of Romanization," 71–104; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–23; D. J. Mattingly, ed., *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997).

³⁸ F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Great Britain* (4th ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923; 1st edn. in 1906).

³⁹ That this perspective was strikingly similar to how the British perceived their own administration of empire has not gone unnoticed among social historians of scholarship. Much of the early discussion about Romanization was deeply influenced by the modern contexts of European colonialism.

city organization emphasized the ways Africans resisted Roman culture.⁴⁰

Martin Millett has advanced a different model. Focusing on Britain, he argues for a high level of acculturation to Roman ways. In his view, the Romans encouraged acculturation and locals willingly accepted it. Provincial elites Romanized to maintain their positions of status and power, and many of the lower classes copied them. Millett terms this process “progressive emulation.” His study devotes considerable attention to the Roman military presence, their organization of territory into administrative districts (*civitates*), their reliance on local tribal leaders, the emergence of Roman civic planning and architecture, and economic changes.⁴¹

Jane Webster, who has also worked primarily with Celtic materials, strongly criticizes Millett’s model as merely an updating of Haverfield’s. She points out that many provincial elites and even more of the masses refused to embrace Roman culture. For her, the notion of “progressive emulation” does not do justice to differences within and between regions and within and between social classes. Furthermore, she emphasizes, failure to adopt Roman ways should not necessarily be viewed as merely a reflection of a slow rate of acculturation; it might also be interpreted as a form of local resistance against the Romans. “Romanization,” in her opinion, is a wholly inadequate term, precisely because it glosses over such variations. She proposes “Creolization,” understood as resistant adaptation, as a substitute that more appropriately conveys the mixing and fusion of local and Roman elements.⁴² Webster’s sentiments have

⁴⁰ Marcel Bénabou, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation* (Paris: François Maspero, 1976); cf. David J. Mattingly, “From One Colonialism to Another: Imperialism and the Maghreb,” in Webster and Cooper, *Roman Imperialism*, 49–69.

⁴¹ Martin Millett, *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and “Romanization: Historical Issues and Archaeological Interpretation,” in Thomas Blagg and Martin Millett, eds., *The Early Roman Empire in the West* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1990), 35–41. Ramsay MacMullen’s survey emphasizes the roles of legions and colonists in Romanizing the provinces, but he also notes the enthusiasm of the local elites, an argument with obvious points of contact with Millett’s thesis (MacMullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000]).

⁴² Webster, “Roman Imperialism”; “Creolizing”; “Necessary Comparisons: A Post-Colonial Approach to Religious Syncretism in the Roman Provinces,” *WA* 28:3 (1997): 324–338; “Art

been echoed in other studies that apply the insights of postcolonial methods⁴³ and that emphasize the particularity of specific regions.⁴⁴

The interactions of Greek, Roman, and local cultures in the ancient world were too complex for any one of these models to be considered universally valid. There were simply too many variations. Roman culture, for example, was sometimes merely a veneer upon local culture; at other times the two cultures mingled to produce something quite different from what either one had been alone. The masses sometimes emulated both the indigenous elites and the Romans themselves; on other occasions they rejected what they saw as the pretensions of the upper classes. Roman ways were sometimes embraced and sometimes resisted by a broad spectrum of society. As will be seen, the nature of our information about Galilee makes it difficult to insert the available data smoothly and consistently into any of these models. Instead of choosing one of them and then trying to force our evidence into its parameters – an effort doomed to look artificial – it might prove more profitable to be intentional in drawing from all of them, keeping their different insights and questions in mind as we survey Galilee’s ancient cultural landscape. Their most important implications, summarized, are the following:

- Any consideration of either Hellenization or Romanization must specify which aspects of culture are being examined (i.e., architecture, language, numismatics, education, philosophy, economics, technology, etc.).

as Resistance and Negotiation,” in Sarah Scott and Jane Webster, eds., *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24–52.

⁴³ Hingley, “Legacy”; Peter van Dommelen, “Colonial Constructs: Colonialism and Archaeology in the Mediterranean,” *WA* 28:3 (1997): 305–323; Brad Bartel, “Colonialism and Cultural Responses: Problems Related to Roman Provincial Analysis,” *WA* 12 (1980): 11–26; Mattingly, *Dialogues*; Scott and Webster, *Roman Imperialism*; Webster and Cooper, *Roman Imperialism*.

⁴⁴ Brandt and Slofstra, *Roman and Native*; Karen Meadows, Chris Lemke and Jo Heron, eds., *TRAC 96: Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997); Susan E. Alcock, ed., *The Early Roman Empire in the East* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997); D. Mattingly, “Being Roman: expressing identity in a provincial setting,” *JRA* 17 (2004): 5–25; Mattingly, “From One Colonialism”; Blagg and Millett, *Early Roman Empire*.

- Hellenization or Romanization in one aspect of culture should not be automatically interpreted as evidence for Hellenization or Romanization in another aspect of culture.
- Neither Hellenization nor Romanization should be understood to indicate total replacement of local, indigenous cultures.
- Neither Hellenistic nor Roman culture was wholly uniform across the affected geographical areas; there were considerable differences between regions.⁴⁵
- Within a specific region, different social classes and other groups might have widely varying attitudes toward and degrees of acceptance of Hellenization and Romanization.
- Attention to chronological development is necessary for an understanding of how these processes played out in a given locale.
- We should specify, when possible, which parties sponsored the adoption of particular aspects of Hellenistic and Roman culture – e.g., outside rulers and administrators, occupying military forces, client kings, provincial and civic elites, the masses, or, at least, subgroups within the masses. These parties themselves should not necessarily be assumed to be homogenous.
- Social elites might sometimes choose to emulate Greek or Roman ways, and commoners might sometimes choose to emulate elites, but we should not assume that such emulation was the universal norm.
- Failure to adopt certain aspects of Hellenistic or Roman culture might sometimes be regarded as resistance to those dominant cultures, as might efforts to develop and express distinctive local and ethnic identities.
- Locals might sometimes appropriate the cultural symbols and vocabularies of larger Hellenistic and/or Roman culture to express their own identities; they might even employ those symbols and vocabulary to express resistance to those cultures.

Remembering these insights will help us to skirt a surprisingly common pitfall, the “all or nothing” mindset that the possibilities are

⁴⁵ Eric M. Meyers has long championed this approach by drawing attention to the differences and similarities between Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee (“Cultural Setting”; “Galilean Regionalism as a Factor in Historical Reconstruction,” *BASOR* 221 [1976]: 93–101; “Galilean Regionalism: A Reappraisal,” in W. S. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* [Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press for Brown University, 1978], vol. 5, 115–131).

limited to full Hellenization and/or Romanization, on the one hand, or full isolation, on the other. Casting a comparative eye at other regions, mostly those near Galilee but occasionally more distant ones, will sharpen our perception of the ways in which Galilee was similar and dissimilar to other parts of the Mediterranean world. Differentiating archaeological evidence by time period will help us to avoid anachronistic conclusions about the early first century CE.

I will argue here for a more tempered view of the influence of Hellenistic and Roman culture in Galilee in the early first century CE than is often found. In doing so, I build on a foundation already laid by scholars like E. P. Sanders,⁴⁶ Eric M. Meyers,⁴⁷ Sean Freyne,⁴⁸ and Martin Goodman.⁴⁹ My argument should not be interpreted in any way as a claim that Galilee was *sui generis*. To the contrary, it is an argument that takes seriously both the evidence we have from Galilee itself as well as what we know of Hellenization and Romanization elsewhere. Though I focus primarily on published archaeological data, I also make considerable use of the gospels, the writings of Josephus, and rabbinic sources. The project's chronological scope ranges from the late Persian period (late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE) to the early fourth century CE, with particular emphasis on how the material culture of Galilee in the second and third centuries CE differed from that of the first.⁵⁰

Studies like those described above remind us of the importance of establishing basic working definitions at the outset of our

⁴⁶ E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1993), 33–48; “Jesus in Historical Context,” *Theology Today* 50 (1993): 429–448; “Jesus’ Galilee,” in Ismo Dunderberg, Kari Syreeni, and Christopher Tuckett, eds., *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 3–41.

⁴⁷ Eric M. Meyers, “Jesus and his Galilean Context,” in Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCollough, eds., *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 57–66.

⁴⁸ Sean Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: 323 BCE to 135 CE* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980; reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); and *Galilee and Gospel* (Boston and Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002).

⁴⁹ Martin Goodman in “Galilean Judaism and Judaean Judaism,” in *CHJ*, vol. 3, 596–617 and *State and Society in Roman Galilee, AD 132–212* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983).

⁵⁰ I do not attempt here to provide a full overview of the fourth century CE or of the transition from the Roman to the Byzantine periods.

investigation. I will sometimes use the words “Hellenistic” and “Roman,” along with “Persian” and “Byzantine,” to indicate chronological parameters.⁵¹ In this regard, I follow the standard practice of Syro-Palestinian archaeology:

Persian Period	539–332 BCE
Early Hellenistic Period	332–198 BCE
Late Hellenistic Period	198–63 BCE
Early Roman Period	63 BCE–135 CE
Middle Roman Period	135–250 CE
Late Roman Period	250–360 CE
Byzantine Period	360–640 CE

Note that this schema is something of a hybrid based on both political events⁵² and on changes in material culture (particularly pottery) that occurred for a variety of reasons.⁵³ The terminology can be somewhat confusing, since a reference to the “Hellenistic period” need not imply the literal presence of Greeks and a reference to the “Roman period” does not necessarily indicate the presence of Romans.

Defining the chronological sense of the terms, however, is the easiest of our tasks; creating workable definitions for the larger cultural phenomena proves more difficult. Words like “Hellenism,” “Hellenization,” and “Romanization” all have their ideological baggage,⁵⁴ but each serves as a “convenient shorthand”⁵⁵ nonetheless. In

⁵¹ See Walter E. Rast, *Through the Ages in Palestinian Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992).

⁵² For example, the conquest of Alexander c. 332 BCE, the arrival of Pompey c. 63 BCE, the Bar Kochbah War c. 135 CE, the Arab conquest c. 640 BCE.

⁵³ That is, destruction from war or earthquakes.

⁵⁴ On the social history of scholarship on Hellenism and Judaism, see the essays in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul*, especially Meeks, “Judaism, Hellenism”; Dale B. Martin, “Paul and the Judaism/Hellenism Dichotomy: Toward a Social History of the Question,” 29–61; Philip S. Alexander, “Hellenism and Hellenization as Problematic Historiographical Categories,” 63–80; Collins and Sterling, *Hellenism*; Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 12, 22; Lester L. Grabbe, “Hellenistic Judaism,” in Jacob Neusner, ed., *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, part 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 53–83; and Levine, *Judaism*, 6–33.

⁵⁵ The phrase is from Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 7.

the most obvious sense, “Hellenism” refers to the presence of Greek culture. There is no comparable single word to denote the presence of Roman culture (“Romanism” would be the equivalent, but it finds no users). “Hellenization,” in my usage, denotes the processes, in all their variety, of interaction between Greek and local cultures, and “Romanization,” likewise, the processes, in all their variety, of interaction between Roman and local cultures. As already noted, neither implies the erasure of local culture. The term “Greco-Roman” is useful to indicate the blending of these two cultures. Already the imperfections of such terminology are apparent. “Hellenistic” can apply to cultural phenomena still occurring centuries after what archaeologists call the “Hellenistic period.” Furthermore, in the eastern half of the Mediterranean region, the Romans encouraged Hellenistic culture, already present to varying degrees, as a unifying force. Thus, “Romanization” there often included “Hellenization” in ways that “Romanization” in Western Europe did not. Another drawback to all of these terms, admittedly, is that they emphasize the cultures of the dominant political powers rather than those of indigenous peoples.

The addition of “paganism” to the terminological mix complicates matters further, since “pagan” has often been used as a substitute for “Greek” or “Roman.” In my usage, “pagan” denotes only the worship of a god or gods other than the one worshipped by Jews and Christians. Those deities might be from the Greek or Roman pantheon, but they might also be local or imported from beyond the Greco-Roman world.⁵⁶

Nor can we pretend that the meaning of the term “Judaism” is uncontested. My usage reflects the influence of E. P. Sanders’s argument that most forms of Judaism in the ancient world can be conceptualized together as “common Judaism,” indicating a shared emphasis on covenantal monotheism, continuity with the history of Israel, Sabbath observance and other distinctive (though not always unique) customs like circumcision and dietary restrictions.⁵⁷ While this notion of Judaism emphasizes common practices and

⁵⁶ Compare Chancey, *Myth*, 7–8.

⁵⁷ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief: 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992) and *Historical Figure*, 33–48.

beliefs, it should not be interpreted as suggesting there was no diversity within it.

One dimension of Galilee's cultural milieu is becoming increasingly clear: despite occasional claims to the contrary, Galilee's population in the first century was predominantly Jewish, with gentiles only a small minority. Scholars like Eric M. Meyers, E. P. Sanders, and Sean Freyne have long advocated this position,⁵⁸ and recent studies by Peter Richardson and Mordechai Aviam, Jonathan L. Reed, and myself confirm it.⁵⁹ Archaeological data suggests that a population shift occurred in Galilee after the Hasmonean conquest (late second or early first century BCE), with many older settlements abandoned and new settlements established. The gospels and Josephus describe the region's inhabitants as mostly Jewish, and the amount of archaeological evidence for Jews – stone vessels, ritual baths, and ossuaries – far outweighs the surprisingly little evidence for pagan cultic practices. These generalizations hold true for both smaller communities as well as larger ones like Sepphoris and Tiberias. Any consideration of the interaction of Greco-Roman and local Galilean cultures in the early first century must acknowledge the region's Jewish character and not exaggerate the number or influence of pagans.

Josephus defines Galilee as the region between Mount Carmel and the territory of Ptolemais on the west, Samaria and the territory of Scythopolis to the south, Gaulanitis and the territory of Hippos and Gadara to the east, and the territory of Tyre, which extended as far inland as Kedesh, to the north.⁶⁰ These borders also roughly correspond to the limits of Herod Antipas's territory. This study

⁵⁸ Meyers, "Jesus"; Sanders, "Jesus," "Jesus' Galilee," *Historical Figure*, and *Judaism*; Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander and Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels*.

⁵⁹ Mordechai Aviam and Peter Richardson, "Josephus' Galilee in Archaeological Perspective," in Steve Mason, ed., *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 9, 177–209; Reed, *Archaeology*, 23–61; Chancey, *Myth*. See also Rafael Frankel, Nimrod Getzov, Mordechai Aviam, and Avi Degani, *Settlement Dynamics and Regional Diversity in Ancient Upper Galilee: Archaeological Survey of Upper Galilee* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2001) and my "Archaeology, Ethnicity, and First-Century CE Galilee: The Limits of Evidence," forthcoming in Margaret Daly-Denton, Brian McGing, Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley, and Zuleika Rodgers, eds., [title not yet known].

⁶⁰ *War* 3.35–44; see also Chancey, *Myth*, 9–10 n. 26 and Mordechai Aviam, "Borders between Jews and Gentiles in the Galilee," in *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Galilee* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 9–21.

relies primarily on Josephus's description for an obvious reason: he provides an informed first-century perspective, and my goal is to illuminate first-century Galilee. Any decision about how to define Galilee's borders has ramifications for how data is organized – what is regarded as within Galilee, and what is portrayed as outside it.⁶¹ Though my choice to rely on Josephus's description affects the presentation of my data, it does not affect the substance of my argument. Regardless of exactly where one draws the lines of Galilee's boundaries, the overall pattern of evidence is the same, with differences (of varying degrees of significance) between the material culture of most of Galilee and that of cities and areas on its perimeter.

I have argued elsewhere that Galilee's role as a crossing ground for long-distance travelers and traders has been greatly overstated. The region was certainly integrated into the economic network of the larger Roman world, as finds of imported goods make clear, and its roads did connect it with both surrounding regions and more important trade routes. There appears to be little reason to suggest, however, that its highways were especially full of merchants and other travelers from afar. Most people traversing Palestine would have bypassed Galilee, though some would have passed nearby. An investigation of its cultural milieu must not exaggerate the influence of outsiders, though it should acknowledge that some Galileans, particularly in the border regions, would have had contacts with the peoples of neighboring territories.⁶²

With those points in mind, this study investigates the expression of Greek and Roman cultures in Galilee in public and monumental architecture, inscriptions, coins, and various forms of art. These specific categories of evidence receive the bulk of my attention not because they are the only or the inevitable ways in which Greco-Roman influence might be expressed (that is definitely not the case) but because they are the types of findings most often cited in discussions of Galilee in New Testament scholarship. By

⁶¹ Thus, for the purposes of this project, I treat the coastal plain, most of the Jezreel Valley, and Paneas as beyond Galilee's borders (contrary to some modern usages of the term "Galilee").

⁶² Chancey, *Myth*, 155–165.

focusing on them, I am trying to address some of the questions most frequently posed about Galilee and to correct some of the more frequently repeated misperceptions. Along the way, I consider other aspects of Galilee's cultural climate, such as the construction of Roman roads and cities' adoptions of names that honored the emperor.

Though this project charts the varied rates of appearance in Galilee and elsewhere of certain artifacts associated with Greco-Roman culture, there are numerous other pertinent issues equally worthy of scholarly exploration. Rabbinic texts provide ample material for examining relations with Roman administrators and the extent of the rabbis' familiarity (if not always that of the commoners) with Hellenistic and Roman legal thought, philosophy, and educational practices.⁶³ The archaeological record allows opportunities for pursuit of a myriad of other topics, such as changes in technology; shifts in settlement patterns; typologies of domestic architecture;⁶⁴ use and distribution of imported wares; imitation of imported goods by local manufacturers; continuity, change, and the development of particularly Galilean forms in various categories of material culture;⁶⁵ and the use of luxury goods such as jewelry and gems. The need remains for a full treatment of the economic impact of Romanization on Galilee.⁶⁶ Many developments within

⁶³ Goodman, *State and Society*; Peter Schäfer, ed., *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2002); Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Lee I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1989); Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B. C. E.–IV Century C. E.* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950).

⁶⁴ Peter Richardson's study ("Towards a Typology of Levantine/Palestinian Houses," *JSNT* 27 [2004]: 47–68) is an important contribution in this regard.

⁶⁵ Two articles provide examples of how productive examining such categories can be: Andrea M. Berlin, "Romanization and anti-Romanization in pre-Revolt Galilee," in Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman, eds., *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 57–73 and Jonathan L. Reed, "Stone Vessels and Gospel Texts: Purity and Socio-Economics in John 2," in Jürgen Zangenberg and Stefan Alkier, eds., *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf den Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2003), 381–401, esp. 393.

⁶⁶ Such a study would require a thorough review of recent scholarship on ancient urban–rural relations (rather than an over-reliance on one or two models), a search for patterns in the region's numismatic evidence, a site-by-site sifting for examples of trade, a

Judaism can be interpreted (to varying degrees) as reactions to growing Hellenistic and Roman influence: the increasing emphasis on ritual purity, as demonstrated by the rising use of stone vessels and ritual baths; sectarianism; revitalization and revivalist movements; and, of course, the events leading up to the two Jewish revolts. There is thus no shortage of questions about Greco-Roman culture in Galilee or about Galilean Judaism in general, but there is a practical limit to what any one project can do.⁶⁷ I make no attempt to address these issues in detail, though I touch upon some of them.

As with all studies that focus on archaeological materials, the conclusions drawn here are provisional, always subject to revision in light of future finds and publications. Nonetheless, we have sufficient data to talk with some confidence about the ways in which Galileans adopted, adapted, and rejected certain aspects of Greek and Roman culture, and thus about how the Galilee of Jesus fits into the larger context of the Greco-Roman world. My discussion proceeds along the following lines: Chapter **One** is devoted to the encounter with Greek culture in the late Persian and the Hellenistic periods in Palestine as a whole and Galilee in particular. In Chapter **Two**, I describe the history of the Roman military presence in Galilee, highlighting the lack of long-term garrisons there until the second century CE. Chapter **Three** examines the period from the Romans' arrival in the mid-first century BCE to the Jewish revolt in 70 CE, devoting special attention to the role of the Herodian client kings in spreading Greco-Roman culture. The transformation of Galilean cities in the second and third centuries is discussed in Chapter **Four**. Chapter **Five** investigates what we can determine about the languages spoken in Galilee, especially the extent of the use of Greek. Chapter **Six** considers the information

serious grappling with the problems posed by extracting information about social conditions from parables, and an investigation of the economic obligations of client kings to Rome.

⁶⁷ D. Kennedy raises similar questions about the larger Roman Near East ("Greek, Roman, and Native Cultures in the Roman Near East," in J. H. Humphrey, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Near East* [Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999], vol. 2, 76–106).

provided by Galilee's numismatic record about the region's Hellenization and Romanization. Chapter [Seven](#) provides an overview of several categories of art found in Galilee, including mosaics, frescoes, statues, and figurines, a body of evidence which demonstrates that Galileans were noticeably more comfortable with Greco-Roman media and motifs in the second and later centuries CE than in the first. My conclusion summarizes the implications of the study's findings.

CHAPTER I

Galilee's early encounter with Hellenism

By the time of Jesus, it is often observed, Galilee's encounter with Hellenism was centuries old. Greek culture had made its way to Palestine even in the Persian period, and it had been spread further by Alexander the Great and his successors, the Ptolemies and Seleucids. In some respects, the Maccabees and Hasmoneans embraced it.¹ The fact that all of the foregoing statements are true does not change another fact: our actual *evidence* for Hellenistic culture in Galilee in the last few centuries before the Common Era is strikingly limited. The poor preservation of Hellenistic-era strata is partly to blame for that circumstance, but not solely. The evidence that has survived suggests that while Hellenistic culture was present in Galilee, it was not as widespread as might be thought. Overall, in fact, its inroads were quite modest. In this chapter, I will provide a chronological overview of Galilee's early encounter with Hellenism, as well as that of the rest of Palestine.²

BEFORE ALEXANDER

Palestine's contacts with Greek culture did indeed predate the arrival of Alexander. Some cities had imported Greek goods as early

¹ For convenience, I reserve the term "Maccabees" for Judas and his brothers and "Hasmoneans" for the dynasty that began with Simon's son, John Hyrcanus I.

² Rami Arav's masterful overview of Hellenistic Palestine includes sites on Galilee's fringes (Beth Yerah, Scythopolis, Tel Anafa, and Tel Dan) but notes very little evidence from the region itself (*Hellenistic Palestine: Settlement Patterns and City Planning, 337–31 BCE* [Oxford: BAR, 1989], 97–105); cf. Andrea M. Berlin, "Between Large Forces: Palestine in the Hellenistic Period," *BA* 60:1 (1997): 2–57, esp. 12 on the third century; Mordechai Aviam, "Galilee: The Hellenistic to Byzantine Periods," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 453–458,

as the eleventh century BCE, and by the sixth century, Aegean pottery and Athenian black- and red-glazed wares had made their way there. Persian rule of Palestine did not prevent the growth of Greek cultural influence.³ The importing of Greek pottery continued and coins minted by distant Greek cities circulated.⁴ Persian and local civic coins often imitated Greek designs, depicting, for example, the owl, long associated with Athens, and the griffin.⁵ The port city of Dor became one of the first cities in Palestine to lay streets at right angles, and further north, Tel Abu-Hawam and Shiqmona did likewise.⁶ This type of city plan, called a Hippodamian grid even though it predates the famous architect Hippodamus (fifth century BCE), is a telltale sign of Hellenistic influence.⁷

Overall, Persian Galilee has provided less evidence for Hellenistic culture than some other parts of Palestine. Galilee had been sparsely populated since the Assyrians deported the Israelite tribes in the late eighth century.⁸ In the Persian period, however, new settlements began appearing. Phoenician pottery in the western region suggests

esp. 453–454; Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 108–110; Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, and Dennis E. Groh, “The Meiron Excavation Project: Archeological Survey in Galilee and Golan, 1976,” *BASOR* 230 (1978): 1–24.

³ Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, vol. 2: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); Ephraim Stern, “Between Persia and Greece: Trade, Administration and Warfare in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods (539–63 BCE),” in Thomas E. Levy, ed., *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 432–445; Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 BC* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982); Eric M. Meyers, “Second Temple Studies in the Light of Recent Archaeology: Part I: The Persian and Hellenistic Periods,” *CRBS* 2 (1994): 25–42; Hengel, *Hellenism and Judaism*, vol. 1, 32–35; Hengel, *Jews*, 4.

⁴ Stern, *Material Culture*, 141, 232, 283–286.

⁵ Stern, *Archaeology*, 556–570; *Treasury*, 1–19; Uriel Rappaport, “Numismatics,” in *CHJ*, vol. 1, 25–59.

⁶ Ephraim Stern, “Stratigraphical Summary of Architectural Remains,” in Stern, *Excavations at Dor, Final Report*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Hebrew University and Israel Exploration Society, 1995), vol. 1, 29–48; Stern, *Material Culture*, 230.

⁷ Ball (*Rome*, 248–256) strongly emphasizes the pre-Greek origins of urban grids.

⁸ Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 104–107; Zvi Gal, *Lower Galilee during the Iron Age* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992); Chancey, *Myth*, 31–34. Only a few Galileans would have been descendants of the Israelites, *contra* Richard A. Horsley in *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1995) and *Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996).

that settlers there were arriving from the coast.⁹ In the northeast, around Mt. Meron, quite different pottery, called “Galilean Coarse Ware,” suggests that people of an unidentifiable ethnicity dwelt there.¹⁰ Most Galilean communities were quite small.¹¹ Large buildings appear to have been rare; a pagan temple at Mizpeh Yamim, a columned administrative building at Kedesh, and a citadel at Hazor were the exceptions in this regard, not the norm.¹² Imported Greek goods were rarer than in the coastal cities.¹³ Coins, mostly of Tyre and Sidon, circulated in Galilee, though in smaller quantities than adjacent areas.¹⁴

GALILEE UNDER THE GREEKS

Alexander the Great and his Macedonian army swept down the coast of Palestine in 332 BCE while en route to Egypt. They passed through Palestine again the following year as they moved north and then east into Mesopotamia. On his first trip through the region, Alexander besieged Tyre and Gaza and, according to legend, he visited Jerusalem.¹⁵ On his second journey through the region, his

⁹ Stern, *Archaeology*, 373–379; note also Phoenician-style masonry at Yoqne’am (Amnon Ben-Tor, Yuval Portugali, and Miriam Anissar, “The Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavations at Tel Yoqne’am, 1979 and 1981,” *IEJ* 33 [1983]: 30–53).

¹⁰ Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 106–108, 110.

¹¹ On sites in and near Galilee with Persian-era remains, see Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 107; Stern, *Material Culture*, 1–14; Stern, *Archaeology*, 373–379; Zvi Gal, “Galilee: Chalcolithic to Persian Periods,” in *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 450–453; and the following in Nagy et al., *Sephoris*: Michael Dayagi-Mendels, “Rhyton,” 163 and “Persian-Period Incense Burners,” 164–165; Matthew W. Stolper, “Vase Fragment,” 166–167; and Rafael Frankel, “The Mizpeh Yamim Hoard,” 168–170.

¹² Rafael Frankel and Raphael Ventura, “The Misphe Yamim Bronzes,” *BASOR* 311 (1998): 39–55 (Mizpeh Yamim is at map coordinates 193/260); Sharon C. Herbert and Andrea M. Berlin, “A New Administrative Center for Persian and Hellenistic Galilee: Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan/University of Minnesota Excavations at Kedesh,” *BASOR* 329 (2003): 13–59, esp. 46–48; Stern, *Material Culture*, 1–4; Yigael Yadin, “Hazor: Excavation Results: First Four Seasons (1955–1958),” *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 595–603. A structure at Ayelet ha-Shahar (map coordinates 195/246) has sometimes been dated to the Persian period, but see Amnon Ben-Tor’s reservations in “Hazor: Fifth Season of Excavations (1968–1969),” *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 604–605.

¹³ Greek imports have, however, been discovered at Hazor and Ayelet ha-Shahar (Stern, *Archaeology*, 216).

¹⁴ Stern, *Archaeology*, 561 and *Material Culture*, 217–228; see discussion in Chapter Six.

¹⁵ *Antiquities* 11.336 provides one version of the legend; on the visit’s historicity, see Grabbe, *Judaism*, vol. 1, 181–183.

army suppressed a revolt in Samaria.¹⁶ Aside from these battles, though, his immediate impact on the region is difficult to gauge. Traditions and inscriptions from the Roman and Byzantine periods associate him and his officers with the foundation of numerous cities,¹⁷ such as Samaria,¹⁸ Gerasa,¹⁹ Dium, Pella,²⁰ and Capitolias.²¹ Whether the history of any of these cities actually goes back to Alexander is almost impossible to determine; however, some of Samaria's fortifications date to c. 300 BCE, showing, at the least, that the site was occupied shortly after his conquest.²² It was fashionable for cities to assert such links to famous figures of history and myth,²³ and their claims of connections with Alexander should probably be interpreted primarily as affirmations of their "Greekness."²⁴

¹⁶ Grabbe, *Judaism*, vol. 1, 205–208.

¹⁷ Hengel, *Jews*, 9; A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 238–239; cf. also Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973–1987), vol. 2, 146–149.

¹⁸ Curtius Rufus, a Roman biographer (first or second century CE), reports that Alexander settled Macedonians at the city of Samaria (4.8), but Eusebius (c. 260–c. 340 CE) names Alexander's general Perdiccas, rather than Alexander himself, as the founder of a Greek city there (*Chronicle* 123). Josephus claims that Alexander granted the Samaritans permission to erect a temple on nearby Mt. Gerizim (*Ant.* 11.321–324).

¹⁹ According to a scribal gloss on the commentary on Nicomachus by Jamblichus, Alexander founded Gerasa by stationing a group of elders (*gerontes*) there. Most scholars have rejected this report as merely a strained etymology for the city's name (Carl H. Kraeling, "The History of Gerasa," in Carl H. Kraeling, ed., *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis* [New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938], 27–72, esp. 28). Because a third-century CE statue-base inscription there mentions Perdiccas, some scholars have suggested that he was regarded as the city's founder (C. B. Welles, "The Inscriptions," in Kraeling, *Gerasa*, 355–496, specifically, 423 no. 137; Kraeling, "History," 28–29; Jones, *Cities*, 238–239). Note also the third-century CE coin that calls Alexander "founder" (*City-Coins*, 94 no. 256).

²⁰ The sixth-century text of Stephanus of Byzantium identifies Dium as a foundation of Alexander, and a gloss on that text makes the same claim about Pella (Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 145–148).

²¹ *City-Coins*, 86 no. 232; Augustus Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1978), 102 no. 15.

²² Berlin, "Between," 10; J. W. Crowfoot, Kathleen M. Kenyon, and E. Sukenik, *The Buildings at Samaria* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942), 24–27.

²³ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 57. In his discussion of cities in Asia Minor, Getzel M. Cohen treats such claims from the Roman and later periods skeptically (*The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995], 420–423).

²⁴ Compare Zaphra Newby's observation that in the second and third centuries CE, cities throughout the east associated themselves with Greek culture by claiming historical links

Alexander's death in 323 BCE brought with it the splintering of his empire among his dominant officers.²⁵ Palestine went first to the Seleucids, but for only two decades, too brief a time to leave an identifiable imprint in the archaeological record. The Ptolemies seized it c. 301 BCE, and while most of it would remain in their hands throughout the following century, some territory occasionally changed hands with the Seleucids.²⁶ After their victory at the Battle of Paneas (c. 200 BCE), the Seleucids regained control over all of Palestine.²⁷

Numerous cities took Greek names in this era. Under the Ptolemies, the port city Acco became Ptolemais, and Beth Shean, at the eastern end of the Jezreel valley, became Scythopolis. In the Transjordan, Pella was renamed Berenice and Rabbat-Ammon, Philadelphia. Philoteria, probably named for the sister of Ptolemy II, may have been an entirely new foundation.²⁸ The foundation and refoundation of cities continued under the Seleucids.²⁹ In the Huleh, north of Galilee, Seleucia was built.³⁰ Roman-period coins and inscriptions show that Abila took the name Seleucia³¹ and that

to Athens, Sparta, and other important Greek cities ("Art and Identity in Asia Minor," in Scott and Webster, eds., *Roman Imperialism*, 192–213, esp. 193–194). Julian M. C. Bowsher suggests that such claims indicate only that a city had a Greek-style constitution ("Civic Organisation within the Decapolis," *ARAM* 4:1 & 2 [1992]: 265–281, esp. 267–268).

²⁵ For historical overviews, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 6–12; Hengel, *Jews*, 1–48; Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 27–35; Berlin, "Between."

²⁶ During the Fourth Syrian War (219–217 BCE), for example, Antiochus III briefly held Tyre, Ptolemais, Philoteria, Scythopolis, Atabyrion (Mt. Tabor), Gadara, Abila, Pella, and other places (Polybius, *Histories*, 5.65.2, 5.70.3–12, 5.71.1–3; Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 30–31; Hengel, *Jews*, 7).

²⁷ On the third-century BCE conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, see H. Heinen, "The Syrian-Egyptian Wars and the New Kingdoms of Asia Minor," in F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, R. M. Ogilvie, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vol. 7, pt. 1, 412–445.

²⁸ On the renaming of these cities, see Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 102; Jones, *Cities*, 242; Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 104–114. Little is known of Philoteria, though ruins at Beth Yerah might be its remnants (Ruth Hestrin, "Beth Yerah," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 255–259).

²⁹ Jones, *Cities*, 252–253.

³⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.393, *War* 1.105, 4.2; cf. *Life* 37. For discussion of possible locations of Seleucia, see Aviam and Richardson, "Josephus' Galilee," 193 and Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 113–114. Tcherikover argued that a city named Antioch was also built in the Huleh (*Hellenistic Civilization*, 101–102; cf. *Ant.* 13.394, 17.23; *War* 1.105).

³¹ Spijkerman, *Coins*, 48–57.

Hippos³² and Gerasa³³ adopted the name of the Seleucids' capital city, Antioch.³⁴ The sixth-century historian Stephen of Byzantium notes that Gadara was known as both Antioch and Seleucia.³⁵ Ptolemais kept its name, which honored the Seleucids' rivals, but its coins from the mid-second century and later proclaimed its citizens "Antiocheans who are in Ptolemais."³⁶ It could have been under the Seleucids that Scythopolis became Nysa, a name that honored not only the nurse of the god Dionysos, but perhaps also a member of the Seleucid household.³⁷ Many Galileans would have been familiar with these new names, especially those of nearby cities like Ptolemais, Hippos, and Scythopolis. But how much can we deduce about life in those cities on the basis of Greek names? Taking a new name does not indicate that colonists arrived, that commoners began speaking Greek, or that construction of Hellenistic architecture soon followed. Nor does it tell us to what extent or how quickly a city adopted a Greek form of civic government. We find ourselves largely in the dark on such matters.

It is difficult to discuss Ptolemaic and Seleucid governance of Galilee in anything but the most general of terms.³⁸ Papyri from Egypt suggest that the Ptolemies typically divided their territory into nomes, and their nomes into toparchies. Villages were, in turn, administratively assigned to the toparchies. Sometimes the Ptolemies sent their own officials to govern; sometimes, they relied upon indigenous leadership, particularly at the local level.³⁹ The Zenon papyri, a collection of letters, contracts, and other business documents from a Ptolemaic official's journey through Palestine and southern Syria in 259 BCE, suggest that they established a

³² Spijkerman, *Coins*, 170–179.

³³ Welles, "Inscriptions," nos. 30, 56–57, 251.

³⁴ Cohen discusses the popularity of the names Antioch and Seleucia in the Seleucid Empire (*Hellenistic Settlements*, 428–431).

³⁵ Jones, *Cities*, 252.

³⁶ *City-Coins*, 12.

³⁷ Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 34. A city in western Asia Minor was also named Nysa; see Cohen, *Hellenistic Settlements*, 256–257 on the name's origin.

³⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 18–28; Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 27–35; Roger S. Bagnall, "Palestine, Administration of (Ptolemaic)," *ABD*, vol. 5, 90–92; Thomas Fischer, "Palestine, Administration of (Seleucid)," trans. Frederick H. Cryer, *ABD*, vol. 5, 92–96; Herbert and Berlin, "New Administrative Center," 48–54.

³⁹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 18–32; Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 124–127.

similar system in Palestine.⁴⁰ Seleucid provinces appear to have been divided into hyparchies, to which towns and villages were assigned. Like the Ptolemies, the Seleucids relied on a combination of their own and local personnel to administer their holdings. Several Hellenistic-era fortresses in western Lower Galilee attest to some military presence in the region,⁴¹ but nothing in the literary or the archaeological record suggests that large numbers of Ptolemaic and Seleucid administrators, soldiers, or colonists arrived there.⁴² With no major cities at the time, Galilee probably received fewer officials than other regions.

We are fortunate to have a few inscriptions from northern Palestine that shed a little light on officials in the Seleucid period. One is a Greek inscription found near Ptolemais recording a dedication offered by a Seleucid governor to Zeus Soter c. 130 BCE.⁴³ Another Greek inscription is found on a limestone stele near Scythopolis. Dating to c. 202–195 BCE, it records several orders and memoranda from Antiochus III, his son Antiochus IV, and the region's *strategos* and chief priest, Ptolemaios.⁴⁴ Two other inscriptions from Scythopolis provide rare early proof of Greek-style officials. One lists the priests of an Olympian deity, probably Zeus (the inscription is fragmentary), showing that Greek deities – or, at least, Hellenized forms of local deities – were worshiped.⁴⁵ The second, a lead weight

⁴⁰ Xavier Durand, *Des Grecs en Palestine au IIIe Siècle avant Jésus-Christ: Le Dossier Syrien des Archives de Zénon de Caunos (261–252)* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1997); William Linn Westermann, Clinton Walker Keyes, and Herbert Liebesny, *Zenon Papyri: Business Papers of the Third Century BC Dealing with Palestine and Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); P. W. Pestman et al., *A Guide to the Zenon Archive*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 60–73. Several of these papyri mention Beth Anath, a site possibly in Upper Galilee (Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 22; Durand, *Des Grecs*, 67–68; Berlin, “Between,” 14; Pestman et al., *Guide*, vol. 2, 481 on Βαιτόνατα).

⁴¹ Mordechai Aviam, “Hellenistic Fortifications in the ‘Hinterland’ of ‘Akko-Ptolemais’,” in *Jews*, 22–30.

⁴² Chancey, *Myth*, 35–36.

⁴³ Y. H. Landau, “A Greek Inscription from Acre,” *IEJ* 11 (1961): 118–126; cf. J. Schwartz, “Note complémentaire (à propos d’une inscription grecque de St. Jean d’Acre),” *IEJ* 12 (1962): 135–136.

⁴⁴ Y. H. Landau, “A Greek Inscription Found Near Hefzibah,” *IEJ* 16 (1966): 54–70; *SEG* 29.1613, 39.1636, 40.1509, 41.1574.

⁴⁵ *SEG* 8.33; Alan Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-Shan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), 45.

from 117/116 BCE, demonstrates that the market overseer was known by the Greek title, *agoranomos*.⁴⁶ Inscriptions from Galilee itself are lacking, however, with the possible exception of an ostrakon from Sepphoris. Excavators interpreted the first five of its seven letters אפמלסלש as the transliteration of the Greek *epimeletes*, a common title with a wide range of meanings.⁴⁷

Greek influence in Palestine under these two kingdoms is reflected in numerous aspects of the material culture. Hellenistic-style fortifications, with buttresses and towers, were built at several cities, including Beth Yerah (probably under the Ptolemies),⁴⁸ and Sepphoris (probably under the Seleucids).⁴⁹ Peristyle buildings (i.e., buildings with column-lined courtyards) have been found at Gezer, Maresha, Samaria, Beth Zur, and, nearer to Galilee, Tel Anafa.⁵⁰ A few more cities, such as Maresha⁵¹ and perhaps the one at Beth Yerah, adopted some degree of orthogonal planning.⁵² The famous three orders of Greek columns, Ionic, Doric, Corinthian, began to

⁴⁶ *SEG* 27.1451. That the title was also already in use elsewhere in Palestine is shown by a market weight from Maresha dated 107–106 BCE (*SEG* 27.1439) and weights at Scythopolis (no author, *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud* [Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1972], 110 no. 224 and Alla Kushnir–Stein, “New Hellenistic Lead Weights from Palestine and Phoenicia,” *IEJ* 52 [2002]: 225–230).

⁴⁷ Eric M. Meyers, “Sepphoris on the Eve of the Great Revolt (67–68 CE): Archaeology and Josephus,” in Eric M. Meyers, ed., *Galilee through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 109–122, esp. 112–113; Joseph Naveh, “Jar Fragment with Inscription in Hebrew,” in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 170; Joseph Naveh, “Epigraphic Miscellanea,” *IEJ* 52 (2002): 240–253, esp. 242–243. In Josephus, *epimeletes* often refers to the administrator of a large piece of territory; Herod the Great is described as the *epimeletes* of the Jews (*Ant.* 14.127) and of all Syria (*Ant.* 14.280) (E. Meyers, “Sepphoris on the Eve,” 113). In later inscriptions, it refers to civic and religious positions (John D. Grainger, “‘Village Government’ in Roman Syria and Arabia,” *Levant* 27 [1995]: 179–195, esp. 183ff). See more Roman-period examples in Chapter Five.

⁴⁸ Hestrin, “Beth Yerah”; for other cities, see Marie-Christine Halpern-Zylberstein, “The Archeology of Hellenistic Palestine,” in *CHJ*, vol. 2, 1–34, esp. 3–13; Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 156.

⁴⁹ Meyers, “Sepphoris on the Eve,” 110–111.

⁵⁰ Halpern-Zylberstein, “Archeology,” 3–17; Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 167; Robert W. Funk, “Beth-Zur,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 259–261; Sharon C. Herbert, “Occupational History and Stratigraphy,” in Herbert, ed., *Tel Anafa, I: Final Report on Ten Years of Excavation at a Hellenistic and Roman Settlement in Northern Israel*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: Mich.: Kelsey Museum, 1994), vol. 1, 26–182, esp. 31ff.

⁵¹ Amos Kloner, “Maresha,” *OANE*, vol. 3, 412–413; Berlin, “Between,” 6–8.

⁵² Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 98.

make their appearance.⁵³ Greek imports increased, and local potters imitated Greek styles, making fishplates and glazed pots.⁵⁴ Stamped amphora handles discovered throughout Palestine reflect a taste for imported wines.⁵⁵ The Hellenistic custom of burials in *loculi* (niches cut inside tombs so that the bodies lay perpendicular to the walls) was introduced.⁵⁶ People would have been exposed more and more to the Greek language through its presence on coins and occasionally other government inscriptions (although, as we will later see, whether they could actually read these inscriptions is debatable).⁵⁷ Bathing facilities were built at a few sites, such as Kedesh,⁵⁸ Tel Anafa,⁵⁹ and Beth Zur (south of Jerusalem).⁶⁰

As important as these developments are, it is essential to keep them in perspective.⁶¹ While a few cities began constructing orthogonal streets, most of our evidence for that type of civic planning in Palestine dates to the Roman, not the Hellenistic, era. Many of the buildings associated with Hellenistic cities elsewhere are absent from Palestine. Theaters, common in Greece since the classical period and in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands since Alexander, are nowhere to be found,⁶² and the hippodrome is entirely missing.⁶³ We have no evidence for a gymnasium, the central cultural and educational institution of Greek culture, until c. 175 BCE, when one was famously

⁵³ Moshe L. Fischer, *Marble Studies: Roman Palestine and the Marble Trade* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1998), 37.

⁵⁴ Halpern-Zylberstein, "Archeology."

⁵⁵ See Berlin, "Between," 5, 13 and the references in Chapter Five.

⁵⁶ Byron R. McCane, *Roll Back the Stone: Death and Burial in the World of Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 34.

⁵⁷ Compare Chapter Five.

⁵⁸ A reference to a bathhouse in a letter of Zenon shows that one had been built by 259 BCE (Westermann, Keyes, and Liebesny, *Zenon Papyri*, 8 no. 61). Recent excavations have discovered a later bathing facility (probably mid-second century BCE) associated with an administrative center (Herbert and Berlin, "New Administrative Center," 35–38).

⁵⁹ A late second-century structure had bathing facilities with a primitive heating system that anticipated Roman technology (Herbert, "Occupational History," 62–72).

⁶⁰ The bath dates to the second century BCE (Robert W. Funk, "Beth-Zur," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 259–261).

⁶¹ On this point, note in particular Arav's analysis in *Hellenistic Palestine*, 147–153.

⁶² Margaret Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton: Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Arthur Segal, "Theaters," *OEANE*, vol. 5, 199–203.

⁶³ The nearest known hippodrome was hundreds of miles to the north at Syrian Seleucia (Polybius, 5.49.1).

built in Jerusalem.⁶⁴ Greek-style baths were far more common in other regions.⁶⁵

Almost all of the evidence mentioned above comes from outside Galilee. Though coins and imported wares demonstrate that Ptolemaic and Seleucid Galilee was economically connected to the larger Levant, the region was not a hotbed of Hellenism. There was no massive influx of Greek settlers, apparently few Greek inscriptions, and little Hellenistic architecture. Hellenistic culture was the culture of cities, not villages, and Galilee as yet had no major cities.

THE HASMONEANS, HELLENISM, AND GALILEE

Judea, of course, had a major city: Jerusalem. Jews there gave Hellenism a mixed reception, one that ultimately culminated in the Maccabean Revolt. To reduce this revolt to a rebellion against Hellenism is to misrepresent and oversimplify its causes,⁶⁶ which included internal tensions within the Jewish community and reactions against the particular excesses of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV. To dismiss entirely the role of Hellenism in fomenting the revolt, however, would be to ignore our chief evidence for understanding it, the books of First and Second Maccabees.

Both works are polemical, written to depict in the worst possible light both the Seleucids and the Jews most receptive to Hellenism. Their strong and obvious biases leave them open to charges of exaggeration, distortion, and even outright fabrication. Yet they

⁶⁴ 2 Macc. 4:7–10. For evidence for gymnasia further north in Syria, see Fergus Millar, “The Problem of Hellenistic Syria,” in Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, eds., *Hellenism in the East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 110–133, esp. 117; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 70.

⁶⁵ Inge Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, 2 vols. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993), vol. 1, 6–9.

⁶⁶ Discussions of the causes of the revolt are numerous. Classic ones include Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization* and Elias J. Bickerman, *God of the Maccabees: Studies on the Origin and Meaning of the Maccabean Revolt*, trans. Horst R. Moehring (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979). More recent treatments include Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1–40; Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus*, vol. 1, 246–259, 276–293; Jonathan A. Goldstein, “The Hasmonean Revolt and the Hasmonean Dynasty,” in *CHJ*, vol. 2, 292–351; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Maccabean Revolt: Anatomy of a Biblical Revolution* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1988); Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 146–163.

seem reliable on a very basic point: some Jews in Jerusalem were more open to Hellenism than others. First Maccabees notes that Jewish “renegades” built a gymnasium in the city so that they could observe the “ordinances of Gentiles.” Once the gymnasium was constructed, some of its visitors “removed the marks of circumcision,” an apparent reference to an operation that made their lack of foreskins less noticeable when they exercised in the nude.⁶⁷ According to Second Maccabees, the high priest Jason attempted to “shift his compatriots to the Greek way of life.”⁶⁸ The gymnasium was built adjacent to the temple and Jason organized an *ephebate*, a group of youths, probably the sons of the city’s elites, to be educated at it.⁶⁹ He also attempted to enroll the city’s inhabitants as “Antiochenes.” The exact meaning of the word is unclear, but it suggests that he wanted the city to assume the name Antioch, as had other Seleucid cities. In an image that now seems almost comical, the author claims that priests neglected the sacrifices in the temple, so anxious were they to hurry over to the gymnasium’s *palaestra* to watch wrestling. Whether this claim is accurate is beside the point; it effectively juxtaposes abandonment of the central rite of Judaism, temple sacrifice, with fascination with the activity symbolic of Hellenistic culture, gymnasium exercise. The book describes such abhorrent behavior as the height of “Hellenism” (4:13), providing us with the first known usage of the word.

Up to this point, though the city was not isolated from Hellenism, it was apparently not fully immersed in it, either. Despite having been under Greek rule for over 150 years, it had had no gymnasium and no *ephebate*. Archaeological finds suggest that it was not laid out on a Hippodamian grid or dotted with Hellenistic architecture and monuments. It has thus far yielded few Greek inscriptions from this period.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ 1 Macc. 1:1–15. On skepticism regarding this claim, see Gruen, *Heritage*, 29–30 and Grabbe, *Judaism*, vol. 1, 278–279.

⁶⁸ 2 Macc. 4:10.

⁶⁹ 2 Macc. 4:7–17. According to 4:12, the gymnasium was “under the citadel,” presumably the one overlooking the temple.

⁷⁰ Berlin notes only two inscriptions in Jerusalem from the time of Antiochus IV (“Between,” 17).

The situation deteriorated rapidly under the next high priest, Menelaus. According to First Maccabees, Antiochus IV plundered both the temple and the city. He then, or so the book asserts, outlawed key practices of Judaism – animal sacrifice, circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and possessing Torah scrolls. Furthermore, he ordered the construction of pagan shrines and the sacrifice of unclean animals.⁷¹ Second Maccabees claims that Antiochus used the Jewish temple to worship the Olympian Zeus and forced Jews to participate in a festival of Dionysos.⁷² The accuracy of these charges has been challenged, and the sequence of events is difficult to reconstruct.⁷³ What is undisputed is that the Maccabees harnessed popular outrage against the Seleucids and led their fellow Jews in revolt. The ultimate results of that rebellion are well-known: the capture and rededication of the temple c. 164 BCE; the beginning of a decades-long struggle against the Seleucids; the expansion of Jewish-controlled territory; and the establishment of a new dynasty of Jewish rulers, the Hasmoneans.

The Maccabees made only occasional forays into Galilee, which did not become a predominantly Jewish territory for decades.⁷⁴ Their earliest expedition there took place in the revolt's opening stages, when Simon led a mission to rescue Jews there from gentiles from Galilee and the coastal cities of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Sidon.⁷⁵ First Maccabees notes only that Simon battled the gentiles, driving them back as far as the "gate of Ptolemais" before gathering the region's Jews and bringing them down to the relative safety of Judea. The account, if accurate,⁷⁶ suggests that Jews were at the time a small minority in Galilee, in need of protection and capable of evacuation. A second campaign occurred there c. 144 BCE when Jonathan led his forces against the Seleucid king Demetrius II,

⁷¹ 1 Macc. 1:41–61.

⁷² 2 Macc. 6:2, 7. It is possible that these deities were Hellenized versions of Syrian gods (Grabbe, *Judaism*, vol. 1, 258–259).

⁷³ See Harrington, *Maccabean Revolt*, 92–97, and the other sources cited above.

⁷⁴ For an overview of Maccabean and Hasmonean activities in Galilee, see Mordechai Aviam, "The Hasmonaean Dynasty's Activities in the Galilee," in *Jews*, 41–50.

⁷⁵ 1 Macc. 5:9–23.

⁷⁶ 1 Macc. 5:21–22. On the historicity of this expedition, see Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabeus: The Jewish Struggle against the Seleucids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 554 and Chancey, *Myth*, 39–40.

camping by the Sea of Galilee before meeting him at the plain of Hazor and driving his forces back to Kedesh.⁷⁷ The large building with a bath at Kedesh, probably a government archive of some sort, went out of use at approximately this time, suggesting that Seleucid troops abandoned Kedesh shortly after the battle.⁷⁸ Jonathan made another incursion to Galilee c. 143.⁷⁹ He first marched towards Beth Shean, where the forces of Trypho, a contender for the Seleucid throne, were encamped. He then fell for Trypho's trickery, accepting an invitation to be his guest at Ptolemais. Trypho seized him and attacked the troops he had left behind in Galilee. Within a few months, Jonathan was dead, executed in Gilead.⁸⁰

The conquests of John Hyrcanus (135–104 BCE), Jonathan's nephew, extended Hasmonean territory northwards to Samaria⁸¹ and, with the seizure of Scythopolis, to the borders of Galilee.⁸² Most scholars assume that it was his successor, Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE), who annexed Galilee itself. Josephus writes that Aristobulus "made war on the Ituraeans and acquired a good part of their territory for Judaea and compelled the inhabitants, if they wished to remain in their country, to be circumcised and to live in accordance with the laws of Jews." He also cites a quotation of Timagenes in Strabo that states that Aristobulus "brought over to them a portion of the Ituraean nation, whom he joined to them by the bond of circumcision."⁸³ The whole passage is problematic, because it does not explicitly identify the geographical extent of Aristobulus's campaigns. If his conquests reached as far north as the primary Iturean territory, around Mt. Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, then we

⁷⁷ 1 Macc. 11:63–74; cf. *Ant.* 13.158–162. On the possibility that 1 Macc. 9:1–2 alludes to an earlier battle in Galilee, see Chancey, *Myth*, 40.

⁷⁸ The interpretation of the building as an archive is supported by the presence of over 2000 stamped sealings, many with Greek mythological motifs (Herbert and Berlin, "New Administrative Center"; Donald T. Ariel and Joseph Naveh, "Selected Inscribed Sealings from Kedesh in the Upper Galilee," *BASOR* 329 [2003]: 61–80).

⁷⁹ 1 Macc. 12:39–53; cf. *Ant.* 13.187–193.

⁸⁰ 1 Macc. 13:23.

⁸¹ *Ant.* 13.254–256, 275–281; *War* 1.64–66; Berlin, "Between," 31; Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 91; Itzhak Magen, "Gerizim, Mount," in *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 484–493.

⁸² *Ant.* 13.280, *War* 1.66.

⁸³ *Ant.* 13.318–319; Chancey, *Myth*, 41–45; Sean Freyne, "Galileans, Itureans, and Phoenicians: A Study of Regional Contrasts in the Hellenistic Age," in Collins and Sterling, *Hellenism*, 184–215.

would expect to find destruction levels there, but thus far, none has been found. If the Itureans to whom Josephus refers were settlers who had drifted south into Galilee, as some scholars have suggested, then we would expect to find Iturean pottery there, but Iturean wares are largely absent in Galilee. The brevity of Aristobulus's reign and the fact that he minted no coins that we could use to date archaeological finds make it more difficult to understand what happened under him. It is possible, as Andrea M. Berlin has suggested, that Josephus and Timagenes are simply mistaken about Aristobulus's conquest of the Itureans. If so, then it was Aristobulus's brother Jannaeus who took Galilee.⁸⁴

Like his predecessors, Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) enacted a policy of territorial conquest.⁸⁵ He struck first at Ptolemais, the port city closest to Lower Galilee.⁸⁶ His siege there was unsuccessful, but subsequent campaigns led to the seizure of a lengthy list of cities,⁸⁷ including Raphia, Anthedon, Straton's Tower, all on the coast;⁸⁸ Seleucia and Gamla in the Golan;⁸⁹ and Gerasa, Gadara, and Pella in the Decapolis region.⁹⁰

Whether Jannaeus began the Judaization of Galilee or finished what his brother Aristobulus had started, Galilee was solidly Hasmonean territory by the end of his reign. His coins are scattered throughout the region, though many could have found their way there later. A new military presence is reflected in the construction or reuse of several fortifications.⁹¹ Older sites were abandoned and

⁸⁴ Berlin, "Between," 38.

⁸⁵ Josephus claims that Alexander Jannaeus grew up in Galilee, sent there by his father Hyrcanus (*Ant.* 13.322).

⁸⁶ *Ant.* 13.324–355; *War* 1.86. See my discussion of the battles that ensued in Galilee (especially those involving Asochis/Shihin and Sepphoris) in *Myth*, 71, 83, 85.

⁸⁷ *Ant.* 13.395–397.

⁸⁸ *Ant.* 13.324–325.

⁸⁹ *Ant.* 13.393–394.

⁹⁰ *Ant.* 13.356–358, 394, 397; *War* 1.86–87, 104.

⁹¹ Defenses at Yodefat were renovated, fortifications at Sha'ar Ha'amaqim, and Sepphoris were newly occupied, and those at Khirbet el-Tufaniyeh (map coordinates 174/261) were probably built (Israel Shatzman, *The Armies of the Hasmonaeans and Herod: From Hellenistic to Roman Frameworks* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 83–87; David Adan-Bayewitz and Mordechai Aviam, "Iotapata, Josephus, and the Siege of 67: Preliminary Report on the 1992–1994 Seasons," *JRA* 10 [1997]: 131–165; Arthur Segal and Yehuda Naor, "Sha'ar Ha'amaqim," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1339–1340; Chancey, *Myth*, 70–71; E. Meyers, "Sepphoris on the Eve").

new sites sprang up.⁹² The findings of a survey of Upper Galilee undertaken from 1986–1990 are especially revealing.⁹³ In the north-east, Galilean Coarse Ware, used since the Persian period, began to disappear. In western Galilee, the boundary of the usage of Phoenician pottery began receding towards the coast.⁹⁴ Pagan cultic objects were shattered at Mizpeh Yamim and Beersheba (map coordinates 189/259).⁹⁵ These developments collectively suggest that population shifts occurred after the Hasmonean conquest, with pagans leaving the region as Jews moved in from the south. Archaeological data from the following decades and the information provided by Josephus and the canonical gospels suggest that after the Hasmonean conquest, Galilee was predominantly Jewish.⁹⁶

Erich S. Gruen has recently emphasized how thoroughly the Maccabees and Hasmoneans embraced many aspects of Hellenistic culture. They “engaged regularly in diplomatic dealings with Greek kings, adopted Greek names, donned garb and paraded emblems redolent with Hellenic significance, erected monuments, displayed stelai and minted coinage inspired by Greek models, hired mercenaries, and even took on royal titulature.”⁹⁷ Gruen is quite correct on these points, as his thorough discussion shows. First Maccabees and Josephus’s *Antiquities* are full of references to diplomatic missions to and correspondence with foreign kings, contacts that often resulted in alliances.⁹⁸ John Hyrcanus gave Greek names to his sons

⁹² New sites also appeared in Judea and in Samaria (Berlin, “Between,” 28–29).

⁹³ Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 108–110.

⁹⁴ Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 108–114, 131–134.

⁹⁵ Frankel and Ventura, “Mispe Yamim Bronzes”; Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 110. The destruction of cultic sites and expulsion and conversion of gentiles is consistent with earlier Maccabean and Hasmonean actions (1 Macc. 5:44, 68; 10:83, 13:47–48; *War* 1.66; *Ant.* 13.154–281, cf. 13.397).

⁹⁶ See the sources cited in my Introduction.

⁹⁷ Gruen, *Heritage*, 2; cf. 1–40. See also Tessa Rajak, “The Hasmoneans and the Uses of Hellenism,” in Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White, eds., *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (JSOT Supplement Series 100, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 261–280; Levine, *Hellenism and Judaism*, 37–46; Lee Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period (538 BCE–70 CE)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society and Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2002), 91–148; and Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 32–42.

⁹⁸ 1 Macc. 8:17–32, 12:1–23, 13:34–40; 2 Macc. 11:16–38. On the authenticity of the letters mentioned in 1 Maccabees, see Grabbe, *Judaism*, vol. 1, 260–261 and Tessa Rajak, “Hasmonean Kingship and the Invention of Tradition,” in Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pedersen,

(Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander), starting a trend that continued until the end of the dynasty, though many Hasmoneans also had Hebrew names.⁹⁹ Simon wore royal purple and donned a crown, both gifts of the Seleucid King Alexander Balas.¹⁰⁰ The tomb he built at Mode'in for his brothers and parents reflects strong Hellenistic influence, with pyramids, columns, trophies of armor suits, and carvings of ships.¹⁰¹ He also allowed the people of Jerusalem to erect a stele in Jerusalem with an honorific inscription.¹⁰² Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannaeus, in typical Hellenistic fashion, employed mercenaries, the latter recruiting Greeks from Asia Minor.¹⁰³ Hasmonean coins were free of human portraits, but their symbols were drawn from the standard repertoire of Hellenistic coinage. Those of Alexander Jannaeus and Mattathias Antigonus had Greek inscriptions, in addition to their Semitic ones.¹⁰⁴ The tactics of the Hasmonean armies reflected their familiarity with the military innovations of the Hellenistic period.¹⁰⁵ Hellenistic titles were common: Jonathan was named the "King's Kinsman" and "First Friend" by the Seleucids,¹⁰⁶ and John Hyrcanus received the title "Friend and Ally."¹⁰⁷ Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus both took the title "king,"¹⁰⁸ and Aristobulus proclaimed himself "Philhellene," or "Friend of the Greeks."¹⁰⁹ Following the practice of their Ptolemaic and Seleucid predecessors, the Hasmonean

Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle, eds., *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 99–115.

⁹⁹ Gruen, *Heritage*, 31–33; Schürer, *History*, 217; Goldstein, "Hasmonean Revolt," 330.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Macc. 10:20, 10:62.

¹⁰¹ 1 Macc. 13:27–29. For discussion, see Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Other tombs in and near Jerusalem from the late second century BCE to 70 CE also reflect Hellenistic influence, with their monumental scale, pyramid-shaped roof, and columns (Andrea M. Berlin, "Power and its Afterlife: Tombs in Hellenistic Palestine," *NEA* 65:2 [2002]: 138–148).

¹⁰² 1 Macc. 13:25–30, 14:25–27.

¹⁰³ *Ant.* 13.249, *War* 1.65; *Ant.* 13.374–378, *War* 1.89–93; cf. Shatzman, *Armies*, 31–32.

¹⁰⁴ See discussion in Chapter Six.

¹⁰⁵ For example, the use of artillery and siege machinery (Shatzman, *Armies*, 24–25).

¹⁰⁶ 1 Macc. 10:89, 11:26–27.

¹⁰⁷ *Ant.* 13.247–249.

¹⁰⁸ *Ant.* 13.301, *War* 1.70; *Treasury*, 38–39.

¹⁰⁹ *Ant.* 13.318; cf. Rajak, "Hasmonean Kingship," 107. For other Mediterranean kings who took this title, see Aryeh Kasher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990), 135n. 52.

rulers designated a considerable amount of land as “King’s Land.”¹¹⁰ Hyrcanus and the kings who followed him devoted considerable resources to building palatial residences at Jericho, with multiple buildings, frescoed interiors, decorative gardens, columns, swimming pools, *mikvot*, aqueducts, and a bathhouse.¹¹¹

That the Hasmoneans took on the trappings of the typical Hellenistic monarch is clear enough, but that their efforts led to a thoroughgoing Hellenization of Jewish society is not. Rami Arav has generalized that “even the most Hellenized sites in Palestine seem to have fallen behind the Hellenistic achievements” of other parts of the Mediterranean.¹¹² The gymnasium built by Jason in Jerusalem faded from history, never to be mentioned again in literary sources and never to be found.¹¹³ With its demise, the *ephebate* presumably likewise crumbled. In Hasmonean territory, the number of imported goods dropped dramatically.¹¹⁴ None of the Hasmoneans rebuilt Jerusalem on a Hippodamian grid or sponsored the construction of architectural symbols of Hellenism, such as a stadium or a theater. Hellenistic influence is much more visible in the Hasmoneans’ private spaces, with their frescoes, colonnaded courtyards, Greek-style bathing facilities, than in the public eye. Though their subjects might have been aware of the extravagance of such palaces, they would hardly have been familiar with the details of their interiors. The primary place where the public would have glimpsed the Hasmoneans’ affection for Hellenism was on their coins, and even there the Hasmonean statement was ambiguous.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Berlin, “Between,” 33.

¹¹¹ Ehud Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Institute of Archaeology, 2001), vol. 1, 1–7; Ehud Netzer, “Jericho: Hellenistic to Early Arab Periods,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 681–691; Berlin, “Between,” 34–35, 42; Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 163–165.

¹¹² Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 166.

¹¹³ Duane W. Roller however, notes the possibility that the *xystos* (an exercise ground of some sort) adjacent to the temple at the time of the Revolt against Rome (*War* 2.344, 5.144) was related to the gymnasium (*The Building Program of Herod the Great* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 178).

¹¹⁴ Berlin, “Between,” 28–29, 42–43. Since by the time of Jannaeus the Hasmoneans held a number of ports (Joppa, Gaza, Straton’s Tower), this change in trade patterns cannot be attributed to poor relations with the coastal cities.

¹¹⁵ See discussion in Chapter Six.

Galilee displayed the same insularity as the rest of the Hasmonean territory. Tyrian and Sidonian coins attest to its continuing participation in a trade network including those cities, but there was little Phoenician semi-fine ware like that found in adjacent areas.¹¹⁶ By the first century CE, the imported round, molded lamps and red-slipped Eastern Sigillata A pottery that had been used in earlier years had disappeared.¹¹⁷ There was no dramatic increase in Hasmonean Galilee in the number of inscriptions (aside from coins) or Hellenistic-style urban planning. The overall impression is that while the Hasmonean conquest brought the Judaization of Galilee, it did not bring its rapid Hellenization.

A comparative look at the Phoenician settlement at Tel Anafa, northeast of Galilee in the Huleh, shows that such austerity was not inevitable.¹¹⁸ Its inhabitants imported goods from all over the eastern Mediterranean and had a special fondness for Aegean wines. Their luxury goods included fine pottery, an unusually large number of molded glass bowls, even a small cache of gems. Figurines of Pan and perhaps Demeter show that they were familiar with the characters of Greek mythology.¹¹⁹ The graffiti they carved onto their red-ware were in Greek,¹²⁰ and they cooked in Greek-style casserole dishes.¹²¹ The most extravagant of their buildings, the one with the bathing facility, employed Phoenician- and Greek-style construction techniques.¹²² Its courtyard was lined with Ionic and Corinthian columns, and its walls were painted and stuccoed. The settlement was abandoned c. 75 BCE, after the region came under Hasmonean influence.

¹¹⁶ Andrea Berlin, "From Monarchy to Markets: The Phoenicians in Hellenistic Palestine," *BASOR* 306 (1997): 75–88.

¹¹⁷ Berlin, "Romanization and Anti-Romanization."

¹¹⁸ Berlin has drawn attention to the usefulness of this comparison ("Between"). On Tel Anafa, see Herbert, *Tel Anafa, I*; Sharon Herbert, ed., *Tel Anafa II, i: The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Kelsey Museum; Columbia, Mo.: Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri, 1997); Kathleen Warner Slane, "The Fine Wares," in Herbert, *Tel Anafa II, i*, 247–418; Andrea Berlin, "The Plain Wares," in Herbert, *Tel Anafa, II, i*, ix–246; and sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 125–129.

¹¹⁹ Sharon C. Herbert, "Tel Anafa, 1980," *Muse* 14 (1980): 24–30; Saul S. Weinberg, "Tel Anafa: The Hellenistic Town," *IEJ* 21 (1971): 86–109.

¹²⁰ Slane, "Fine Wares," 342–346.

¹²¹ Berlin, "Plain Wares," 95.

¹²² Sharon C. Herbert, "Introduction," in Herbert, *Tel Anafa, I, i*, 1–25, esp. 14–19.

Jannaeus's wife Alexandra Salome held the Hasmonean kingdom together for only a few years after his death. After she died in 67 BCE, it descended into civil war and chaos as her sons Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II battled each other for the throne. Each probably looked back on the successes of the dynasty, the solidification of its power, and the expansion of its territory and assumed that similar glory awaited the victor of their struggle. Neither could have been fully aware of how drastically things were about to change.

CONCLUSION

We know far less of Hellenistic Galilee than we would like, and perhaps future excavations will fill in some of the gaps of our knowledge. On the eve of Rome's rise to power in the area, however, Hellenism's impact does not appear to have been very deep. Though some cities around Galilee publicly expressed their openness to Hellenistic culture by adopting Greek names, in most cases we can only speculate about the other ways they adopted and adapted Hellenism. It is tempting to attribute the lack of evidence from this period to the destruction of materials during the construction activity of later centuries, and we know that such destruction often occurred. That explanation alone, however, is probably insufficient. Writing of Syria in the Hellenistic period, Fergus Millar has argued that the absence of evidence is probably not solely due to accidents of survival and discovery, but rather to the slow pace of Hellenization there prior to the arrival of the Romans.¹²³ As will be seen, the same is true of Galilee.

¹²³ Millar, "Problem," 130. The amplexity of Mesopotamia's Hellenistic-period material culture provides a stark contrast (Malcolm Colledge, "Greek and non-Greek Interaction in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East," in Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, *Hellenism*, 134–162).

The Roman army in Palestine

The arrival in Palestine of the Roman general Pompey in 63 BCE marks the beginning of a new chapter in the region's history.¹ The following decades and centuries would bring drastic changes: the end of the Hasmonean dynasty; proxy rule of Palestine by the Romans through the Herodian client kings; the piecemeal annexation of the area and, with it, the implementation of direct Roman rule through prefects and procurators; the establishment of a Roman military presence; the destruction of the Jewish temple; and the slow emergence of rabbinic Judaism. The Romans brought with them the mixture of Roman culture and Hellenistic culture characteristic of their eastern empire. To a large degree, then, Romanization included Hellenization.

Understanding the chronological development of Rome's administrative and military presence in the region is crucial for understanding the spread of Greco-Roman culture there.² In this chapter, I provide an overview of Rome's military activity in Palestine, paying special attention to variations between regions and over time. I will argue that because Galilee did not receive a long-term garrison until c. 120 CE, contact with Roman soldiers in Galilee would have been

¹ On Rome's expansion east, see Ball, *Rome* and Millar, *RNE*.

² On the Roman army in Palestine, see Millar, *RNE*, 27–111; Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 427–435; Lawrence Keppie, "Legions in the East from Augustus to Trajan," in Philip Freeman & David Kennedy, eds., *The Defence of the Roman & Byzantine East* (Oxford: BAR, 1986), vol. 2, 411–429; Menahem Mor, "The Roman Army in Eretz-Israel in the Years AD 70–132," in Freeman and Kennedy, *Defence*, vol. 2, 575–602; Zeev Safrai, "The Roman Army in the Galilee," in Levine, *Galilee*, 103–114; Baruch Lifshitz, "Légions romaines en Palestine," in Jacqueline Bibauw, ed., *Hommages à Marcel Renard* (Brussels: Latomus, 1969), 458–469.

uncommon in Jesus' lifetime, the story of his famous exchange with a centurion at Capernaum notwithstanding. As future chapters will demonstrate, a strong correlation exists between the arrival of Roman soldiers and the emergence of certain forms of Greco-Roman culture. Likewise, the relatively low profile of certain aspects of Greco-Roman culture in first-century Galilee is probably related, at least in part, to the absence of Roman soldiers.

THE BEGINNING OF ROMAN RULE

The Roman Senate had directed Pompey to rid the Republic of the threat of pirates, but he was not content with such a limited goal. He set out instead to expand Rome's territory, to create a relatively stable eastern frontier that would discourage the Parthians from venturing into Rome's sphere of interests, and, perhaps, to increase his own glory. Before his expedition was complete, he had conquered lands stretching from Pontus and Armenia in northern Asia Minor down the eastern Mediterranean coast all the way into Egypt.³

When Pompey marched into Palestine from Syria, he found the region in turmoil due to a dispute between the Hasmonean rivals Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. Each sent him gifts and embassies, hoping to turn him against the other,⁴ but Hyrcanus was the more deferential of the two, and it was he who won Pompey's favor. Pompey named him high priest, imprisoned Aristobulus,⁵ and besieged Aristobulus's followers in Jerusalem, an engagement that culminated, Josephus says, with the slaughter of priests in the temple.⁶ Though Hyrcanus, as high priest, was nominal leader of the Jewish people, the days of the Hasmonean kingdom were over. Rome now ruled Palestine, which was placed under the care of the governor of the newly acquired Syria.

³ On Pompey's eastern expeditions, see Robin Seagar, *Pompey the Great: A Political Biography* (2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 53–62; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East, 168 BC to AD 1* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 186–234.

⁴ *Ant.* 14.34–47; *War* 1.131–132.

⁵ *Ant.* 14.73; *War* 1.153.

⁶ *Ant.* 14.58–73; *War* 1.138–151.

Little is known of the actions of the earliest Roman governors of Syria, but the fourth, Aulus Gabinius (57–55 BCE), made significant administrative changes in Palestine, dividing Jewish territory into five regional councils based at Jerusalem, Gadara, Amathus, Jericho, and Sepphoris.⁷ The fact that Sepphoris was chosen suggests that it was already the most important city in Galilee; it does not, however, suggest that it hosted Roman troops and administrators. Josephus explicitly describes this arrangement as government by aristocrats – presumably local elites who ruled on Rome’s behalf. The Romans themselves probably played little – if any – direct role in the councils, and there is no reason to suppose that a council required a strong Roman presence.⁸ Within a few years, Gabinius reorganized the administration of Palestine again, placing power in the hands of Antipater, an Idumean who had supported Roman expansion and provided Gabinius with troops. The five councils were apparently disbanded; Josephus never mentions them again.⁹

On at least two occasions during this period, the Roman army conducted campaigns in or near Galilee. The first was under Gabinius, when the Romans defeated a pro-Hasmonean army at Mount Tabor.¹⁰ Soon thereafter (53 BCE), the Parthians invaded in support of Aristobulus, and much of the combat occurred in Galilee. The Romans punished Jews who opposed them, enslaving some 30,000 people at Taricheae (Magdala), according to Josephus.¹¹

Antipater maintained his position despite shifts in the political winds at Rome. Julius Caesar appointed him *epitropos* of Judea, and he, in turn, delegated authority to his two sons c. 47 BCE, appointing Phasaël to govern Judea and Herod to govern Galilee.¹² Both Antipater and Phasaël would be killed within a very few years,

⁷ *Ant.* 14.91, *War* 1.170; Adam Porter, “Amathus: Gabinius’ Capital in Peraea?” *JJS* 50 (1999): 223–229; Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 244–245, 268 n. 5; E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 32–33.

⁸ Compare Sanders, “Jesus’ Galilee,” 7.

⁹ *War* 1.178; cf. Smallwood, *Jews*, 32–33. Sherwin-White provides a dissenting view, arguing that the councils lasted until the first revolt (*Roman Foreign Policy*, 275).

¹⁰ *War* 1.177, *Ant.* 14.102.

¹¹ *Ant.* 14.120, *War* 1.180.

¹² *Ant.* 14.158; *War* 1.199–200, 203; Chancey, *Myth*, 49 n. 100.

Antipater by a political rival and Phasael by the Parthians. Herod's political career, however, was just beginning. While governing Galilee, he made a name for himself as an effective leader, collecting tribute from Galilean communities, defeating renegades who had raided border settlements, and routing Tyrian forces who had seized three Galilean fortresses in support of the Hasmonean Antigonus.¹³ Herod later served as governor of Syria¹⁴ and then as tetrarch of Judea, holding the latter position jointly with his brother Phasael.¹⁵ In 40 BCE, however, a Parthian invasion brought the death of Phasael and the defeat of Herod's army. The Parthians appointed Antigonus king, and Herod fled, hoping to find sanctuary among the Nabateans. When they rejected him, he turned west to seek the aid of his patron in Rome, Antony.¹⁶ His appeals were successful. The Senate, under Antony's influence, pronounced him king of Judea, not least because of his enmity toward Rome's rivals, the Parthians.¹⁷ He sailed back to Palestine in 39 BCE, arriving at Ptolemais, bringing with him an army of Roman soldiers, and his forces grew as both gentiles and Jews (including many Galileans) joined them.¹⁸ By 37 BCE, he had defeated the Hasmonean forces, seized Jerusalem, and claimed his throne. His territory encompassed most of the old Hasmonean kingdom, including Galilee and lands further northeast.¹⁹

When Herod died c. 4 BCE, Augustus divided his kingdom between his three sons. Galilee, along with Perea, went to Antipas.²⁰ Archelaus received Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; Philip was granted Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and other areas in the general vicinity of the present-day Golan Heights. The emperor allowed none of Herod's sons to take their father's title, *basileus*. Instead, Antipas and Philip each became tetrarch, literally, "ruler of a fourth," and Archelaus received the more prestigious title of

¹³ *War* 1.204–205, 221, 238–239; *Ant.* 14.297–298.

¹⁴ It is not clear what Herod's title was. *Ant.* 14.280 calls him *strategos* of Coile Syria; in *War* 1.225, he is *epimeletes* of "all Syria."

¹⁵ *War* 1.244; *Ant.* 14.326.

¹⁶ *War* 1.248–281, *Ant.* 14.330–380.

¹⁷ *Ant.* 14.282–285; cf. Roller, *Building Program*, II n. 3.

¹⁸ *Ant.* 14.394, *War* 1.290. Not all Galileans joined Herod; Josephus describes Herod's attacks on "bandits" at Arbel in *Ant.* 14.415–430 and *War* 1.305–313.

¹⁹ Sanders ("Jesus' Galilee") provides a helpful overview of who held various cities in the transitions from Hasmonean to Herodian to Roman rule.

²⁰ *Ant.* 17.318–320, *War* 2.93–100.

ethnarch, “ruler of a people.”²¹ From this point until the end of the first century CE, the political fortunes of the subregions of Palestine varied as territories shifted back and forth between client kings and Roman governors. Archelaus remained ethnarch in Judea for only ten years, after which the emperor removed him. In 6 CE, his territory became the province of Judea, administered by a Roman governor.²² It would remain provincial territory for the rest of the Roman period, with the brief exception of three years when it was granted to Agrippa I (41–44 CE).²³ After Philip’s death in 33/34 CE, his territory passed briefly to the province of Syria before reverting back to the hands of client kings Agrippa I (37–44 CE), to the Romans again, then to Agrippa II (53–90s CE).²⁴

Galilee and Perea were ruled by Antipas for decades, until his brother-in-law Agrippa I convinced Gaius Caligula that Antipas was conspiring against him. Josephus implies that the charges were false, but c. 39 CE, Caligula banished Antipas to western Europe, giving his territory to Agrippa I.²⁵ After Agrippa’s death in 44 CE,²⁶ Galilee was attached to the province of Judea, bringing it under direct Roman control for the first time in a century. In 61 CE, Claudius gave Agrippa II some of the lakeside cities of Galilee, including Tiberias and Taricheae, but they reverted back to the province of Judea at his death.

THE ROMAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN PRE-70 CE PALESTINE

From early in Herod the Great’s reign until the first Jewish revolt, the Roman military presence in Palestine was small. Antony’s troops had helped Herod seize the throne²⁷ and a legion remained in Jerusalem until 30 BCE,²⁸ but after that, Roman troops were not

²¹ *Ant.* 17.20–21.

²² *Ant.* 17.355, *War* 2.117.

²³ *Ant.* 19.274–275, *War* 2.215–216.

²⁴ Agrippa II died between 92/93 and 100 CE; see Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 480–483; Millar, *RNE*, 91–92; Nikos Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 396–399.

²⁵ In *Ant.* 18.245–252, Antipas is exiled to Lyon; in *War* 2.183, to Spain.

²⁶ *Ant.* 19.343–352; Acts 12:19–23; see discussion in Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 452–453.

²⁷ *War* 1.288–294, 301–302, 317, 345–354; *Ant.* 14.394–395, 398, 434.

²⁸ *Ant.* 15.71–73.

regularly stationed in his territory. If his forces proved insufficient to deal with situations, he requested help from the governor in Syria, where four legions were typically stationed, mostly in the northern areas.²⁹ Thus, there were apparently no Roman soldiers in Trachonitis when Zenodorus allowed banditry c. 22 BCE,³⁰ none in Palestine when war broke out between Herod and the Nabateans in 12 BCE,³¹ and none there when widespread chaos erupted at the death of Herod in 4 BCE.³² In each of these cases, Roman legions marched down the coastal road from Syria, a pattern that would be repeated in first-century CE crises.³³

At Herod's death, his army was probably split between his sons, and when Archelaus was deposed, his forces seem to have been converted to auxiliary units and passed to the Roman procurators. The backbone of the Roman forces in pre-70 CE Judea were based mostly at Caesarea, where the Roman prefect set up his headquarters, and Jerusalem, where they were housed primarily in the Antonia fortress overlooking the Temple platform.³⁴ The troops assigned to the Antonia fortress must have been small in number, since the procurator Florus had to bring in forces from elsewhere as problems escalated in the city.³⁵ At the outbreak of the Jewish revolt, a few other garrisons were scattered across the region – Machaerus, Cypros, Ashkelon, Masada, and various places in Samaria.³⁶

²⁹ Though four legions was the normal garrison, the number may have occasionally dropped to three or even two, particularly in the 50s when units rotated in and out of the province due to the war with the Parthians in Cappadocia. The Syrian garrison constituted about a sixth of Rome's total army (25 legions c. 14 CE, perhaps 28–29 by 70 CE). See H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 92, 119, 128–129, 134–139, relying heavily on Tacitus, *Annals*; Lawrence Keppie, "The Army and the Navy," in Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), vol. 10, 371–396, esp. 386–388; E. Dabrowa, "The Frontier in Syria in the First Century AD," in Philip Freeman and David Kennedy, eds., *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East* (Oxford: BAR, 1986), vol. 1, 93–108.

³⁰ *War* 1.398–400, *Ant.* 15.343–348.

³¹ *Ant.* 16.271–299.

³² *War* 2.16–19, 66–79; *Ant.* 17.250, 286.

³³ See especially Millar, *RNE*, 27–69.

³⁴ Some may have been stationed in the old Herodian palace (*War* 2.430, 440).

³⁵ *War* 2.430 for the Antonia fortress; *War* 2.296, 305, 318, 325–332, 430 on the use of troops stationed elsewhere.

³⁶ *War* 2.318, 408, 484–486; 3.9–28, 309; references collected in Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 365.

Most of the rank and file “Roman” soldiers in Palestine were not from Rome or the Italian peninsula. Josephus suggests that they were locally raised, recruited from the pagan cities of Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste.³⁷ They were not in detachments from legions, whose members were all Roman citizens. Instead, they were in auxiliary units, whose members were usually not granted citizenship until after they were mustered out.³⁸ The combined provincial garrison was not especially large. At the death of Agrippa in 44 CE, it consisted of one *ala* and five *cohorts*, or approximately three thousand men.³⁹

Though these were the main Roman units in Palestine, others may have occasionally passed through or been stationed there, as suggested by the book of Acts. Acts 10 refers to Peter’s conversion of a centurion named Cornelius of the Italian Cohort at Caesarea Maritima c. 40 CE. We know of at least two units with similar names, the *Cohors I* and the *Cohors II Italica Civium Romanorum*. Both were auxiliary units attested to have been in Syria in the second half of the first century.⁴⁰ As their names imply, they were an unusual type of auxiliary unit, “citizen cohorts” whose members were already Roman citizens.⁴¹ Their names imply that they originated on the Italian peninsula, but they would have acquired new recruits from the areas where they were stationed.⁴²

³⁷ *Ant.* 19.356–366, 20.122, 20.176; *War* 2.236. Recruitment of auxiliaries from the provinces was typical throughout the empire.

³⁸ On the first-century Roman forces in Judea, see D. B. Saddington, *The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Caesar to Vespasian (49 BC–AD 79)* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1982), 98–104. In contrast to legions, which were basically heavy infantry, auxiliary cohorts were light infantry, often specialty troops like archers and slingers. In addition, some auxiliary units were cavalry (*alae*), and others included both infantry and cavalry.

³⁹ *Ant.* 19.365; cf. *War* 3.66. Presumably, the garrison had shifted over to Agrippa I for his brief rule. After his death, it reverted back to the control of the Roman governor. Josephus refers to one *ala* and four cohorts during the reign of Cumanus (48–52 CE) (*Ant.* 20.122). See Saddington, *Development*, 50.

⁴⁰ Paul A. Holder, *Studies in the Auxilia of the Roman Army from Augustus to Trajan* (BAR International Series 70, Oxford: BAR, 1980), 66.

⁴¹ D. B. Saddington, “The Development of the Roman Military and Administrative Personnel in the New Testament,” *ANRW* 2.26.3, 2409–2435, esp. 2415–2416; Michael P. Speidel, “The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators: The Italian and the Augustan Cohort in the Acts of the Apostles,” *Ancient Society* 13–14 (1982–1983): 233–240, esp. 233–237.

⁴² Speidel (“Roman Army in Judaea”) and Saddington (“Development”) note that a grave-stone discovered in Austria attests to the presence of an eastern recruit in such a unit.

Julius, Paul's centurion escort from Caesarea to Rome, was a member of the "Augustan Cohort" (*speira Sebaste*) (Acts 27:1).⁴³ It was almost certainly an auxiliary unit, as well. It is possible that its name was drawn from the city of Sebaste, an indication that the unit had been created there.⁴⁴ More likely, however, the name of the unit was the Greek equivalent of the Latin *cohors Augusta*. There were at least ten infantry cohorts with that name attested in the East, especially Syria, in the first century.⁴⁵ Regardless of the cohort's name or place of origin, it is not clear from Acts that the entire unit was stationed in Caesarea. The story claims only that Julius was present and available to escort the prisoner Paul.⁴⁶

If the number of Roman soldiers in first-century Palestine was fairly small, the number of Roman colonists was even smaller – zero, in fact, in the lifetime of Jesus. Elsewhere in the Roman Empire (Spain, Gaul, North Africa, the Balkan coast, Greece, the southern part of Asia Minor), dozens of colonies and *municipia* had been founded by Julius Caesar and Augustus,⁴⁷ all serving as islands of Roman culture and agents of Romanization. The Levant, however, was not an area of focus of colonization efforts. The only colony in the Roman East at the time was at Berytus, planted by Augustus in 15 or 14 BCE.⁴⁸ No colonists would arrive in Palestine until two decades after Jesus' death.

JESUS AND THE CENTURION

In light of what we know about Roman troop deployments, there is little reason to believe that Roman soldiers were regularly stationed

⁴³ References to an infantry cohort and a cavalry unit in Acts 21–23 are presumably to the other aforementioned auxiliary forces.

⁴⁴ Saddington, *Development*, 50.

⁴⁵ Holder, *Studies*, 14–15, 23 n. 1–5; Saddington, *Development*, 172. Several *alae* also carried the name *Augusta*. An inscription in the Hauran suggests that one of the infantry cohorts was assigned to Agrippa II in the 80s CE; see discussion below.

⁴⁶ Speidel, "Roman Army in Judaea"; Saddington, "Development," 2417–2418; cf. M. H. Gracey, "The Armies of the Judaean Client Kings," in Freeman and Kennedy, *Defence*, vol. 1, 311–323, esp. 320 and the review of the history of one *cohors Augusta* in Michael P. Speidel, "The Roman Army in Arabia," in *ANRW* 2.8, 687–730, esp. 710–711.

⁴⁷ MacMullen, *Romanization*, 8–9, 32–33, 52–53, 94–95.

⁴⁸ Fergus Millar, "The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: A Study of Cultural Relations," in Heikki Solin and Mika Kajava, eds., *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman*

in first-century Galilee. The only case for a Roman presence hangs by the most slender of threads, the story of Jesus and the centurion at Capernaum (Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10).⁴⁹ In both versions of that story, presumably drawn from Q, Jesus enters the village and is approached by a gentile centurion whose servant is ill. Jesus offers to go to the centurion's house, but the officer protests that he is not worthy for Jesus to come under his roof. Instead, he expresses confidence that Jesus' word would be sufficient to heal his servant. When Jesus hears this, he marvels that he has not found such faith in Israel. He then heals the servant from a distance; the two apparently never meet. Each gospel adds its own redactional elements, but both share key emphases: the power and authority of Jesus, Israel's lack of a faithful response to Jesus, and Jesus' rewarding the faith of a gentile. The story is the only specific encounter between Jesus and a gentile in Galilee recorded in the New Testament.⁵⁰

If the story has a historical basis, then soldiers stationed at Capernaum were led by a gentile officer. But does the pericope indicate that they were a Roman detachment? Probably not. Neither Matthew nor Luke identifies the centurion as a Roman; they portray him only as a gentile. The presence of a gentile soldier should come as no surprise, because we know that the Herodian kings employed them. Most famously, Herod the Great had foreign bodyguards (Gauls, Thracians, and Germans), as well as troops from Trachonitis and from a pagan city he founded, Sebaste.⁵¹ After his death, Antipas may have acquired some of his gentile forces. In addition, Antipas's

History (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1990), 7–58; Millar, *RNE*, 36, 279; Isaac, *Limits*, 318–321. On the possible colonial status of Heliopolis near Berytus, see the studies by Millar.

⁴⁹ On Jesus and the centurion, see Chancey, *Myth* 101–102, 175–176 and Reed, *Archaeology*, 161–162. Scholars who have argued that the centurion is a Roman officer include Strange, "First-Century Galilee," 89–90; Kee, "Early Christianity," 18; Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 183; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 284–285; Thomas G. Long, *Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 89; Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. and Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Mistaken Identities but Model Faith: Rereading the Centurion, the Chap, and the Christ in Matthew 8:5–13," *JBL* 123 (2004): 267–294.

⁵⁰ Jesus' other recorded encounters with gentiles occur outside Galilee (e.g., the Syro-Phoenician/Canaanite woman in the coastal region to the northwest [Mark 7:24–30/; Matt. 15:21–28], Pilate in Jerusalem).

⁵¹ *War* 1.672, 2.58; *Ant.* 16.198–199, 266, 271; Gracey, "Armies," 312–313.

realm included not only Jewish Galilee but also Perea, which probably had a more mixed population⁵² and could have provided him with pagan soldiers. It is also possible that Antipas occasionally recruited retired Roman officers, whether from the auxiliaries in Judea or the legions in Syria.

Furthermore, the term used in the gospels to identify the officer does not necessarily imply that he was the commander of a Roman detachment. English translations typically render the word “centurion,” a Latin derivative with obvious Roman connotations. The Greek word in both versions of this pericope, however, is ἑκατόνταρχος. While it is sometimes used for Roman officers,⁵³ it also appears in reference to non-Romans. Most of Josephus’s usages refer to Roman centurions, but others occur in his recounting of biblical stories, and in one case ἑκατοντάρχης is used for officers of the Jewish rebels.⁵⁴ In addition, the term appears frequently in the Septuagint, obviously in non-Roman contexts.⁵⁵

Even if one were to argue that the term ἑκατόνταρχος reflected Roman-style military organization, that would still not show that the unit at Capernaum was Roman. Herod the Great had organized his troops along Roman lines, and it is highly likely that the Roman-educated Antipas did likewise.⁵⁶ The ἑκατόνταρχος at Capernaum could thus easily be one of Antipas’s own officers.⁵⁷ This probability is strengthened all the more if the story in John 4:46–54, where Jesus

⁵² Adam Lowry Porter stresses, however, that the Jewish population of Perea was sizable (“Transjordanian Jews in the Greco-Roman Period: A Literary-Historical Examination of Jewish Habitation East of the Jordan River from its Biblical Roots through the Bar-Kochba Revolt” [Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1999]).

⁵³ The Roman soldier at the foot of Jesus’ cross is called a ἑκατόνταρχος in Matt. 27:54, a ἑκατοντάρχης in Luke 23:47, and a κεντυριων (a Latin loanword) in Mark 15:39.

⁵⁴ *Ant.* 6.40; 7.233, 368; 9.143, 148, 151, 156, and 188; for Jewish officers, *War* 2.578. See Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, ed., *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), vol. 2, 47–48.

⁵⁵ Ex. 18:21, 25; Num. 31:14, 48, 52, 54; Deut. 1:15; 1 Chron. 29:6, and elsewhere.

⁵⁶ Shatzman, *Armies*, 198–216; Keppie, “Army,” 374; Gracey, “Armies,” 314. In at least one case, Herod the Great employed a Roman officer (*War* 1.535). In *War* 2.52, 74, two of his officers have Latin names, though whether they are Romans or locals with Roman names is unclear.

⁵⁷ It is impossible to determine with certainty what type of officer the authors of Matthew and Luke had in mind when writing this story, or how their intended audiences understood the term ἑκατόνταρχος.

heals the son of a “royal official” (βασιλικός) from Capernaum, is based on a similar tradition.

There is no other evidence to which proponents of a Roman presence in Galilee in Jesus’ lifetime might appeal, neither inscriptions nor passages in other ancient texts. Though some scholars have described Sepphoris as a Roman administrative and military center in this period,⁵⁸ Josephus provides no hint of such a role.⁵⁹ There were apparently no Roman troops at Sepphoris in 4 BCE when rebels raided the armory after Herod’s death, and apparently none elsewhere in Galilee, since Varus had to bring down soldiers from Syria to quell the rebellions.⁶⁰ Nor, apparently, were Roman soldiers in Antipas’s territory in the mid-30s CE when hostilities broke out between him and the Nabateans; the nearest forces, once again, were in Syria.⁶¹

Indeed, the stationing of Roman soldiers in the territory of a loyal client king like Antipas would have been somewhat unusual. Antipas and the emperor were on good terms.⁶² The client king had been educated in Rome and probably had met Tiberius then. Josephus describes the two as friends.⁶³ When Agrippa I traveled to Rome to complain about Antipas, the emperor stood by Antipas.⁶⁴ Antipas was a key player in Roman diplomacy, participating in negotiations between the Parthians and the Romans.⁶⁵ When war broke out between Antipas and the Nabateans, Tiberius blamed Aretas, sending the general Vitellius to capture or kill him.⁶⁶ Antipas’s status as a trusted figure in the emperor’s court did not change until after Tiberius’s death, when Agrippa convinced Caligula that Antipas was plotting against him.⁶⁷

⁵⁸ See examples cited in my “Introduction.”

⁵⁹ The piece of armor found at Sepphoris (part of a cuirass) tells us only that at some point a Roman had passed through the area, a fact none would dispute. On the armor, see James F. Strange, Dennis E. Groh, Thomas R. W. Longstaff and C. Thomas McCollough, “The University of South Florida Excavations at Sepphoris, Israel: Report of the Excavations: May 11 – July 14, 1998,” at www.colby.edu/rel/archaeology/Sep98.html.

⁶⁰ *War* 2.56; *Ant.* 17.271, 288–289.

⁶¹ *Ant.* 18.113–115.

⁶² Morten Høring Jensen discusses this material in “Josephus and Antipas: A Case Study on Josephus’ Narratives on Herod Antipas,” in Zuleika Rodgers, ed., *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005).

⁶³ *Ant.* 18.36–38.

⁶⁴ *War* 2.178.

⁶⁵ *Ant.* 18.101–105.

⁶⁶ *Ant.* 18.115.

⁶⁷ *Ant.* 18.247–252.

Client kingdoms were typically a source of manpower for the Romans, not additional territory for them to garrison.⁶⁸ Though Roman troops were occasionally assigned to such kingdoms if they faced internal or external threats, that situation was the exception, not the norm.⁶⁹ Thus it is not especially surprising to find an inscription from the mid-80s CE in the Hauran, part of the territory of Agrippa II, mentioning Lucius Obulnius, centurion of the cohort Augusta.⁷⁰ The area had not been entirely loyal to Agrippa in the Jewish Revolt, and the Romans may have sent troops to buttress him.⁷¹

For the troops at Capernaum to have been Roman, we would have to imagine a similar need for them – and there is none. We know of no serious threats to Antipas during Jesus' lifetime. His conflict with the Nabateans came in the mid-30s,⁷² after Jesus' crucifixion, and those troubles apparently began and escalated without the Romans' awareness – a development difficult to explain if there were Romans at Capernaum. We might also ask why, assuming the Romans did place troops in Antipas's territory, they would choose Capernaum. The fishing village was located in the area where Galilee abutted Philip's territory, and the two client kings were not on bad terms. Perea, which bordered the Nabateans, would have been a more natural choice to receive troops if the Romans decided they were needed to safeguard Antipas from their other ally, Aretas. It has sometimes been suggested that Romans were needed at Capernaum to collect tolls on goods passing between Antipas's and Philip's territories, but such tolls would presumably have gone to the tetrarchs themselves, not to Rome.⁷³ Even if, however, one were to grant the unlikely prospect that Roman customs were

⁶⁸ Compare Jacobson, "Three Roman Client Kings," 26–27.

⁶⁹ David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 94; Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century AD to the Third* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 20–40; Ball, *Rome*, 30.

⁷⁰ Speidel, "Roman Army in Judaea;" Gracey, "Armies," 320.

⁷¹ Alternatively, the unit could have been from Agrippa's army, its name chosen to honor the emperor, but the possibility that it was Roman seems more likely since we know of Roman auxiliary units with similar names in the area.

⁷² *Ant.* 18.109–115.

⁷³ Despite the frequency of scholarly references to Roman taxation of Galilee, we know little of it while Antipas reigned; direct Roman taxation apparently did not occur until after its

collected at this border, it would still strain credulity to suggest that Roman soldiers were required for the task. Why would the Romans need their own military personnel to collect taxes at the border of two client kings who were brothers, on generally amiable terms, and both unquestionably loyal to Rome? To do so would have been unnecessary and insulting.

In short, the gospels themselves do not present the centurion at Capernaum as the commander of Roman forces, and it is far more likely that he was a Herodian officer. In the absence of other evidence, this story is insufficient to demonstrate a Roman military presence in Galilee. Jesus' Galilee was not occupied by the Romans, and it is extremely unlikely that he encountered Romans soldiers there with any frequency.⁷⁴

What, then, is one to make of one of the most famous of Jesus' sayings, his injunction that if one is commanded to go for one mile, he should go for two (Matt. 5:41)?⁷⁵ The passage has sometimes been interpreted as a reference to *angaria*, the Roman law that allowed soldiers to requisition transport.⁷⁶ The auxiliary forces in Judea may have used the right, and it is possible that Jesus and other Galileans heard of the practice from their southern neighbors or that they encountered it themselves when traveling to Judea. It is also possible that the saying simply did not originate with Jesus.

The lack of Roman troops in Galilee and the small number elsewhere in Palestine also has implications for how we interpret the story of the Gerasene/Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20/Matt. 8:28–34/Luke 8:26–39). In the pericope the demons cry out that they are so numerous that their name is “Legion.” Jesus then exorcises them by sending them into a herd of swine, which casts itself into

incorporation into the province of Judea in 44 CE (Millar, *RNE*, 46–49; Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 373–374).

⁷⁴ *Contra* Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 141, there is no evidence that Roman soldiers retired to Galilee during the early first century.

⁷⁵ Jesus' advice to “go the extra mile” has sometimes been cited as a reference to Roman roads with Latin milestones (e.g., Robert W. Funk, *A Credible Jesus: Fragments of a Vision* [Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2002], 99–100), but no such roads existed in Palestine in his lifetime.

⁷⁶ On *angaria*, see Isaac, *Limits*, 291–297.

the Sea of Galilee. John Dominic Crossan has shown how fruitful it is to interpret the name “Legion” as a symbolic reference to detested Roman forces. In this perspective, the story reflects the hostility of indigenous people toward their colonial occupiers, and Jesus’ power over the demons symbolically represents the power of God’s kingdom over that of Rome.⁷⁷ Any argument that this story originated in an occupied context, however, must reckon with the fact that the Roman presence in pre-70 CE Palestine was minimal.⁷⁸

DIRECT ROMAN RULE AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLT

After the death of Agrippa I in 44 CE, the Romans assumed direct control of Galilee. They may have introduced administrative personnel into the region, but they probably relied mostly on local elites to manage their affairs. The single most famous inscription from Galilee may date to this time: a decree from Caesar prohibiting tomb robbery upon punishment of death.⁷⁹ The inscription is unusual in several respects. Unlike typical imperial edicts, it is in Greek, though it appears to have been translated from Latin. Though epigraphic and literary evidence demonstrates that laws against tomb spoliation were common, this is the only known inscription recording an imperial decree on the matter. Furthermore, its prescribed punishment, the death penalty, is harsher than

⁷⁷ Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 313–318.

⁷⁸ David E. Aune suggests that the reference to pigs reflects awareness of the boar symbol on the emblem of the Legio X Fretensis, which was stationed in Syria before 70 CE and in Judea afterwards (“Jesus and the Romans in Galilee: Jews and Gentiles in the Decapolis,” in Adela Yarbro Collins, ed., *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture: Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 230–251).

⁷⁹ *SEG* 8.13, 13.596, 16.828, 20.452. The best recent review of the issues raised by this inscription is Adalberto Giovannini and Marguerite Hirot, “L’inscription de Nazareth: Nouvelle Interprétation,” *ZPE* 124 (1999): 107–132; see also Craig Evans, *Jesus and the Ossuaries* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003), 35–37; Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 83–84; J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 117–121; Bruce Metzger, “The Nazareth Inscription Once Again,” in E. E. Ellis and E. Grässer, eds., *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 221–238; F. de Zulueta, “Violation of Sepulture in Palestine at the Beginning of the Christian Era,” *JRS* 22 (1932): 184–197; and Frank E. Brown, “Violation of Sepulture in Palestine,” *American Journal of Philology* 52 (1931): 1–29.

other such laws.⁸⁰ It is difficult to establish when it was erected; dates based on epigraphical grounds range from the mid-first century BCE to the second century CE. A new examination of its letters' morphology would be enormously helpful in this regard, particularly in light of the abundance of comparative material now available from Caesarea Maritima.

Most enigmatic of all are its origins. Franz Cumont found it in the Paris National Library, where it had long sat unnoticed, and published it in 1930.⁸¹ It had been sent there from a private collection, and a brief notation in the inventory of that collection read only "Dalle de marbre envoyée de Nazareth en 1878." Because the inscription came from Nazareth, Cumont speculated that it must have been related to Jesus. He tentatively proposed that when the emperor heard reports of a Galilean troublemaker whose tomb was empty, he had issued this edict to squelch further robberies and rumors – a theory later popularized by F. F. Bruce.⁸² Yet, as has often pointed out, the inscription's sparse accompanying documentation said only that it had been sent from Nazareth, not that it had been found there. Since Nazareth was heavily involved in the European antiquities trade, it would have been a natural place for the inscription's finder to take it. Theoretically, it could have come from anywhere; other proposed places of origin include Samaria⁸³ and Asia Minor.⁸⁴ It is more likely, however, that the inscription originated in or near Galilee than that it was discovered elsewhere and transported a long distance.

If the inscription is indeed from Galilee, we can probably rule out some of the earlier proposed dates and identify 44 CE, the beginning of direct Roman administration there, as a likely *terminus post quem*. The edict is best understood on its own simple terms: it is a law against grave robbery. With so many unanswered questions about it, any attempt to interpret it as a response to the story of

⁸⁰ Giovannini and Hirot, "L'inscription."

⁸¹ Franz Cumont, "Un rescrit imperial sur la violation de sepulture," *Revue Historique* 163 (1930): 241–266.

⁸² F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 300–303. Erhard Grzybek and Marta Sordi revived this theory in "L'édit de Nazareth et la politique de Néron à l'égard des chrétiens," *ZPE* 120 (1998): 279–291.

⁸³ Zulueta, "Violation."

⁸⁴ Giovannini and Hirot, "L'inscription."

Jesus' empty tomb is far-fetched. Wherever and whenever it was posted, however, it advertised Rome's domination to all who saw it.

In the early or mid-50s, Palestine received its first Roman colony, a veteran settlement founded at the strategic site of Ptolemais. Aside from being an important port, Ptolemais connected the coastal route taken by soldiers marching south from Syria with the entrance to the Jezreel valley, a major east–west passage. The colony thus provided the Romans with a secure military base at an important junction as well as a reserve military force upon which to call, if necessary. Though there is some debate over which legions provided the settlers, they likely included the X Fretensis, VI Ferrata, and the XII Fulminata, all from the Syrian garrison.⁸⁵ The colonists took pride in their identity as Roman citizens. Two city coins depicted Nero ceremonially establishing the colony's boundaries by plowing with an ox; four legionary standards are visible in the scene's background.⁸⁶ Those coins, like others issued by Ptolemais for the next two centuries, had Latin inscriptions, in contrast to all of the city's preceding coinage, which had used Greek.⁸⁷ The colony also utilized Latin for other inscriptions. One shows that its territory was divided into *pagi*, the standard Roman administrative unit.⁸⁸ Another, a dedication to Nero, attests to the colony's usage of the Latin term *vici* for its villages Nea Come and Gedru. The number of colonists is difficult to estimate, but it could not have been very high – perhaps dozens, perhaps the low hundreds. Soon after the colony's foundation, the road connecting Ptolemais to Antioch was paved in the Roman fashion, as shown by a milestone dating to 56 CE.⁸⁹ This was not only the first Roman road in Palestine; it was also the earliest anywhere in the Near East.

⁸⁵ Shimon Applebaum, "The Roman Colony of Ptolemais-ʿAke and its Territory," in *Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times: Historical and Archaeological Essays* (London: E. J. Brill, 1989), 70–96, esp. 85; *RPC*, vol. 1, 658; Millar, *RNE*, 65; Isaac, *Limits*, 322–323.

⁸⁶ *City-Coins*, 12; *RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4749–4750. Such coins suggest that Nero established the colony, though Pliny places its foundation in Claudius's reign (*Natural History* 5.17.75).

⁸⁷ *City-Coins*, 13–15; Henri Seyrig, "Le monnayage de Ptolémaïs en Phénicie," *Revue Numismatique* (1962): 25–50.

⁸⁸ Michael Avi-Yonah, "Newly Discovered Latin and Greek Inscriptions," *QDAP* 12 (1946): 84–102, specifically 85–86, nos. 2–3; Applebaum, "Roman Colony," 70–75.

⁸⁹ R. G. Goodchild, "The Coast Road of Phoenicia and its Roman Milestones," *Berytus* 9 (1949): 91–127, esp. 112–113, 120 nos. 234A and 235; Isaac, *Limits*, 110.

Growing Jewish–Roman tensions erupted into widespread violence in 66 CE,⁹⁰ with initial hostilities occurring at Jerusalem and Caesarea. The procurator Florus's few thousand auxiliary troops proved inadequate to deal with the turmoil, forcing the Romans once again to utilize their troops in Syria to deal with problems in Judea. The war would bring a massive incursion by Roman soldiers into Galilee and the rest of Palestine, and with it, a permanent change in the ways in which Rome's eastern garrisons were deployed.

To quell the rebellion, Cestius Gallus, legate of Syria, gathered his forces at Antioch. His army included the XII Fulminata Legion, two thousand soldiers from each of the other legions in Syria (the VI Ferrata, X Fretensis, and perhaps the V Macedonica), ten auxiliary units, and several thousand soldiers supplied by regional client kings (Agrippa II, Antiochus of Commagene, Sohaemus of Emesa). As his forces marched southwards along the coastal route to Ptolemais, local gentiles joined them and swelled their numbers even further.⁹¹ The main target of Cestius Gallus was Jerusalem, but he did venture into Galilee, pillaging the border town of Chabulon and other nearby villages.⁹² Later, soldiers from the XII legion entered Galilee again, where Sepphoris gladly received them. After defeating rebel forces at Asamon, a Galilean mountain, the soldiers rejoined the main army at Caesarea.⁹³ Ultimately, Cestius Gallus suffered several thousand casualties at Jerusalem and retreated to Syria.⁹⁴ After describing Gallus's defeat, Josephus refers to an officer in charge of forces in the Jezreel valley, but otherwise he provides no information about any Roman soldiers stationed in Galilee in the early stages of the war.⁹⁵

After the Gallus debacle, Nero appointed Vespasian, a veteran of campaigns in Germany and Britain, to take charge of Roman efforts against the Jews.⁹⁶ Vespasian, like his predecessor, gathered forces at Antioch before marching to Ptolemais. His army included the V

⁹⁰ The activities of Roman troops in the revolt are summarized in Saddington, *Development*, 48, 101–103; Smallwood, *Jews*, 293–330. On the revolt in Galilee, see Horsley, *Galilee*, 76–88 and Chancey, *Myth*, 55–58.

⁹¹ *War* 2.499–502; Saddington, *Development*, 101–102; Smallwood, *Jews*, 296.

⁹² *War* 2.504–506.

⁹³ *War* 2.510–512; on Sepphoris's garrison, see *Life* 394.

⁹⁴ *War* 2.513–555.

⁹⁵ *Life* 115.

⁹⁶ *War* 3.1–5.

Macedonica and X Fretensis legions, twenty three additional cohorts, and several thousand troops from the client kings, including new troops sent by the Nabateans. When his son Titus arrived with the XV Apollonaris from Egypt, his forces numbered approximately 60,000 men.⁹⁷

Vespasian was met at Ptolemais by a delegation from Sepphoris who requested that he assign a garrison to their city, as Cestius Gallus had. He responded by sending a thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry to the city.⁹⁸ Vespasian's main force attacked Gabara,⁹⁹ Japhia,¹⁰⁰ and Jotapata/Yodfat¹⁰¹ before retiring for the winter. For that season, Vespasian initially quartered the V and X legions at Caesarea Maritima, though at least parts of these legions accompanied him later in the winter to Caesarea Philippi. The XV wintered at Scythopolis.¹⁰² At winter's end, Vespasian reassembled his forces to march on the city of Tiberias, which he spared after the rebels abandoned it. He next seized Taricheae, executing some 1,200 Jews at the stadium and enslaving thousands more for Nero and Agrippa, according to Josephus.¹⁰³ The Roman army then defeated Jewish forces at Gamla,¹⁰⁴ Mt. Tabor,¹⁰⁵ and Gischala¹⁰⁶ before moving south to Jerusalem. At least some troops from the X Fretensis stayed behind to build a paved Roman road through the Jezreel, connecting Scythopolis to Ptolemais; a milestone dates it to 69/70 CE.¹⁰⁷

At Jerusalem, the Romans were augmented further by the return of the XII Fulminata, the arrival of 2,000 men from the legions garrisoning Egypt, III Cyrenaica and XXII Deiotariana, more troops from client kings, and additional Syrian auxiliaries.¹⁰⁸ The Jewish rebels, divided amongst themselves, stood little chance against such an impressive assembly of forces, now led by Titus. Their inevitable defeat was accompanied by the even greater catastrophe of the destruction of the temple. Judaism would henceforth cease to be a sacrificial religion.

⁹⁷ War 3.29, 64–69.

⁹⁹ War 3.132–134.

¹⁰¹ War 3.141–288, 316–408.

¹⁰³ War 3.445–505, 522–542.

¹⁰⁵ War 4.54–61.

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin Isaac and Israel Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea I: The Legio–Scythopolis Road* (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 66 no. 1.

¹⁰⁸ War 5.40–47; Tacitus, *Histories* 5.1–2.

⁹⁸ War 3.30–34, 59; cf. *Life* 411.

¹⁰⁰ War 3.289–306.

¹⁰² War 3.412–413, 443–444.

¹⁰⁴ War 4.1–83.

¹⁰⁶ War 4.84–120.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROMAN GARRISON

Previous outbreaks in Judea had led to only temporary increases in the Roman military presence. On this occasion, however, the Romans recognized that greater forces would be necessary to maintain stability and assigned the province to a governor of praetorian rank.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the previous governors, who, as equestrians, typically controlled only auxiliary troops, the new governor received charge of a legion. The Legio X Fretensis, formerly part of the Syrian garrison, was selected to be Judea's legion,¹¹⁰ an ironic choice, since its emblem was decorated with a boar, an unclean animal for Jews.¹¹¹ The legion and its auxiliary units made their main headquarters in devastated Jerusalem, and archaeological evidence of its activity has been found both there and at other Judean (that is, southern) sites.¹¹² The X Fretensis remained in Judea until the late third or early fourth century, when it moved to Aila, a port city on the Red Sea.¹¹³ In addition, Vespasian settled eight hundred Roman veterans at Emmaus, only a few miles from Jerusalem¹¹⁴ and elevated Caesarea to the status of a colony, as shown by inscriptions there recording its new name, Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesarea.¹¹⁵

The other legions that had participated in the war were re-assigned, two to Egypt and one to a station in northern Syria along the Euphrates.¹¹⁶ The Syrian legion was soon supplemented by others, so that the bulk of Rome's eastern army continued to be grouped in that province.¹¹⁷ The auxiliary troops raised in Caesarea and Sebaste that had been the primary Roman military presence in pre-war Judea were reassigned away from Palestine.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Smallwood, *Jews*, 331–334.

¹¹⁰ *War* 7.1, 5, 17.

¹¹¹ *War* 7.17; Smallwood, *Jews*, 333.

¹¹² Isaac, *Limits*, 105–106, 427–430; Edward Dabrowa, "Legio X Fretensis," in Yann Le Bohec, ed., *Les Légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire* (Lyon: Diffusion de Boccard, 2000), 317–325; Hillel Geva, "Jerusalem: The Roman Period," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 758–767.

¹¹³ Smallwood, *Jews*, 534.

¹¹⁴ *War* 7.217.

¹¹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 5.13.69; *GLI*, 6 and inscriptions nos. 3, 12, 24, 44, 122.

¹¹⁶ *War* 7.5.

¹¹⁷ L. J. F. Keppie, "The Legionary Garrison of Judaea under Hadrian," *Latomus* 32 (1973): 859–864; Keppie, "Legions"; Mor, "Roman Army"; Safrai, "Roman Army"; Isaac, *Limits*, 427–435.

¹¹⁸ *Ant.* 19.366.

Roman forces in Judea were buttressed further in the second century by Hadrian, who established the Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina in Jerusalem. The colony was comprised primarily of veterans of the X Fretensis, though it is possible that some settlers came from other eastern legions.¹¹⁹ Its formation, presumably interpreted by Jews as reducing the likelihood that their temple would be rebuilt, helped precipitate the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE).¹²⁰

East of the Jordan, the extent of the Roman presence in the immediate aftermath of the first Jewish revolt is unclear. We have only hints. At Gerasa, one inscription from 75/76 CE honors M. Ulpius Trajan, the future emperor's father,¹²¹ and another from 90/91 records the dedication of a theater by a Roman.¹²² At Madytus in Asia Minor, an inscription refers to a Roman officer stationed in the "Decapolis of Syria" during Domitian's reign.¹²³

By the early second century, Rome had absorbed the two remaining client kingdoms in the area, those of Agrippa II and of the Nabateans. After Agrippa's death, his territory was incorporated into the provinces of Syria and Judea. In 106, the Romans annexed the Nabatean territory, apparently without bloodshed. They reorganized it as the province of Arabia¹²⁴ and attached the old Decapolis cities of Gerasa and Philadelphia to it. The Nabatean royalist forces were converted into auxiliary troops,¹²⁵ and a Roman

¹¹⁹ Benjamin Isaac, "Roman Colonies in Judaea: The Foundation of Aelia Capitolina," in *The Near East under Roman Rule* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 87–108, esp. 100–103; Isaac, *Limits*, 323–325.

¹²⁰ At one time it was unclear whether the colony's foundation had preceded the revolt, as reported by Cassius Dio (69.12), or had followed it. The discovery of Aelia Capitolina's coins mixed with rebel coins in caves used by Jewish forces demonstrates that Cassius Dio was correct (Leo Mildenberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War* [Aarau: Verlag Sauerländer, 1984], 100). See, however, Yoram Tsafrir's reservations in "Numismatics and the Foundation of Aelia Capitolina: A Critical Review," in Peter Schäfer, ed., *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 31–36.

¹²¹ Pierre-Louis Gatier, "Gouverneurs et procurateurs à Gerasa," *Syria* 73 (1996): 47–56.

¹²² *SEG* 27.1010.

¹²³ Benjamin Isaac, "The Decapolis in Syria: A Neglected Inscription," in *Near East*, 313–321.

¹²⁴ Cassius Dio 68.14.5; Millar, *RNE*, 92–95; G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 81–82; and David Kennedy, *The Roman Army in Jordan* (London: Council for British Research in the Levant, 2000), 34–38.

¹²⁵ Millar, *RNE*, 92–93, 96–97; cf. G. W. Bowersock, "The Annexation and Initial Garrison of Arabia," *ZPE* 5 (1970): 37–47.

legion was sent to garrison the region. The VI Ferrata appears to have been briefly stationed there,¹²⁶ but it was soon replaced by the III Cyrenaica and its auxiliaries. Their principal base was at Bosra, though detachments were found elsewhere,¹²⁷ as abundant archaeological evidence shows.¹²⁸ In the late third and early fourth century, the III Cyrenaica was reinforced by a second legion, the IV Martia.¹²⁹

Galilee, in contrast to Syria, the Transjordan, and geographical Judea, does not appear to have been occupied by Roman soldiers in the first decades after the temple's destruction. Perhaps the Romans felt that the combined might of the veteran colony at Ptolemais, the sympathetic city of Gaba (a military colony founded by Herod the Great),¹³⁰ and the nearby troops of Agrippa II (presumably converted to auxiliaries after his death) were sufficient to handle any minor troubles that erupted, and the X Fretensis could march north for major disturbances. By the early second century, however, circumstances had changed. In 115–117 CE, Jews revolted again, this time not in Palestine but in parts of the Diaspora.¹³¹ The Romans decided to assign a second legion to the province of Judea, and this one was based in the Jezreel Valley and southern Galilee. The combined might of two legions and their auxiliaries were sufficient to handle most situations in Palestine, although the Bar Kokhba revolt required additional units.¹³²

Exactly when the second legion arrived in Galilee is unknown, but it may have been as early as 117 CE. In that year, Hadrian named

¹²⁶ Inscriptions at Gerasa and Bosra attest to the presence of units of the VI Ferrata (Speidel, "Roman Army in Arabia," 698; Welles, "Inscriptions," 435 no. 171).

¹²⁷ Speidel, "Roman Army in Arabia;" Isaac, *Limits*, 118; Kennedy, *Roman Army*, 43–45.

¹²⁸ Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 105–109; Speidel, "Roman Army in Arabia;" Isaac, *Limits*, 122–128.

¹²⁹ Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 143–144; Speidel, "Roman Army in Arabia." The Legio I Parthica Philippiana may have been briefly been there in the mid-third century CE.

¹³⁰ *War* 3.36; *Ant.* 15.294; Chancey, *Myth*, 152–153.

¹³¹ Smallwood, *Jews*, 389–427. Arguments that Galileans participated in this revolt are unpersuasive (*contra*, for example, Menahem Mor, "The Geographical Scope of the Bar Kokhba Revolt," in Schäfer, *Bar Kokhba War*, 107–131, esp. 127).

¹³² Other forces involved in the Bar Kokhba war include a large number of auxiliary units, the Legio III Gallica, and detachments from at least five other legions. On the possible participation of the Legio XXII Deiotariana, see Smallwood, *Jews*, 428–466; L. J. F. Keppie, "The History and Disappearance of the Legion XXII Deiotariana," in *Legions and Veterans: Roman Army Papers 1971–2000* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 225–232.

Quietus “consular legate” of Judea, a title that was normally reserved for governors who commanded more than one legion.¹³³ The earliest archaeological evidence is from only a few years later: a milestone recording the construction of the Sepphoris–Ptolemais road by the Legio II Traiana in 120 CE.¹³⁴ Another milestone, on the road connecting Sepphoris to Legio, dates to the same year. It, like most milestones in the area, does not identify the legion that erected it, but its wording is very close to that from the Ptolemais road, suggesting that it, too, was made by the II Traiana.¹³⁵

The II Traiana had been redeployed to the Euphrates by 123 and was in Egypt c. 127.¹³⁶ It was replaced in Palestine by the Legio VI Ferrata and its auxiliaries, which were transferred from Arabia.¹³⁷ Exactly when the Legio VI Ferrata arrived is unclear, but it was probably responsible for roadwork in Galilee recorded on milestones dated to 129/130.¹³⁸ All that can be said with certainty is that it was in Palestine prior to the Bar Kokhba war in 132–135. Aside from occasional brief missions outside the province,¹³⁹ its units were based in Galilee and the Jezreel for a century or more. A coin of Damascus from the middle of the third century displays the legion’s emblem, suggesting that at least part of it had been reassigned to Syria by that time.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Smallwood, *Jews*, 421–422; David L. Kennedy, “*Legio VI Ferrata*: The Annexation and Early Garrison of Arabia,” *HSCP* 84 (1980): 283–309, esp. 307; Benjamin Isaac and Israel Roll, “Judaea in the Early Years of Hadrian’s Reign,” in Isaac, *Near East*, 182–197.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Isaac and Israel Roll, “*Legio II Traiana* in Judaea,” in Isaac, *Near East*, 198–205. Note the challenge by J. R. Rea, “The *Legio II Traiana* in Judaea?” *ZPE* 38 (1980): 220–221 and Isaac and Roll’s response in “*Legio II Traiana* in Judaea—A Reply,” in Isaac, *Near East*, 208–210.

¹³⁵ On the 120 CE date, see Isaac and Roll, “Judaea,” 184. Baruch Lifshitz had dated the milestone from the Sepphoris–Legio road to 130 CE (“Sur la date du transfert de la *legio VI Ferrata* en Palestine,” *Latomus* 19 [1960]: 109–111).

¹³⁶ Isaac and Roll, “Judaea,” 188. Smallwood notes the possibility that a detachment returned for the Bar Kokhba war (*Jews*, 447).

¹³⁷ Kennedy, “*Legio VI Ferrata*.”

¹³⁸ It is also possible that other units briefly passing through the region provided the labor; cf. Isaac and Roll, “Judaea,” 189–190.

¹³⁹ Smallwood, *Jews*, 481.

¹⁴⁰ Isaac, *Limits*, 139, 433 and Smallwood, *Jews*, 528–529. Hannah M. Cotton suggests, however, that the legion may have remained in northern Palestine beyond the mid-third century (“*Legio VI Ferrata*,” in Bohec, *Les Légions*, 351–357).

For the Bar Kokhba war, the two legions in Judea were joined by a multitude of other Roman forces, including the III Gallica, the III Cyrenaica, probably the XXII Deiotariana, and detachments from at least five other legions, and numerous auxiliary units. This conflict seems to have been confined to Judea, and there is no evidence of Galilean participation in it.¹⁴¹ After the war, the Romans reduced their garrison in Judea back down to two legions.

Rome's legions inscribed their presence on the land itself in the form of new paved roads, constructed to facilitate troop movements.¹⁴² The earlier roads in Palestine, the Ptolemais–Antioch and Ptolemais–Scythopolis routes, were now integrated into a much larger network. In addition to the roads of 120 CE connecting Sepphoris with Ptolemais and Legio, roads were also built connecting Ptolemais with the Legio–Caesarea route at Gaba, as well as with Tiberias and Bethsaida–Julias.¹⁴³ Further north, a road joined Paneas with Tyre. Scythopolis was an important junction, with roads shooting out in several directions. One connected it to Gerasa,¹⁴⁴ which itself became an important stop on the newly constructed north–south Via Nova Traiana joining the Gulf of Aqaba to Bosra.¹⁴⁵ The road system in geographical Judea was even more intricate than that in Galilee.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Smallwood, *Jews*, 428–466; on the Roman units involved, see 446–449 and Keppie, “History and Disappearance.” Werner Eck and Gideon Foerster argue unpersuasively that a monumental inscription (which they associate with a long-gone arch) at Tel Shalem probably recorded a Roman military victory there (“Ein Triumphbogen im Tal von Beth Shean bei Tel Shalem,” *JRA* 12 [1999]: 294–313). One does not have to postulate a battle to explain the presence of the inscription (Mor, “Geographical Scope” and Glen W. Bowersock, “The Tel Shalem Arch and P. Nahal Hever/Seiyal 8,” in Schäfer, *Bar Kokhba War*, 171–180). Yuval Shahar’s overview of cave hideouts in Galilee (“The Underground Hideouts in Galilee and their Historical Meaning,” in Schäfer, *Bar Kokhba War*, 217–240) does not argue for their use in the Bar Kokhba revolt.

¹⁴² Isaac, *Limits*, 107–113; Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea I*; Mosche Fischer, Benjamin Isaac, and Israel Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea II: The Jaffa–Jerusalem Roads* (Oxford: BAR, 1996); Benjamin Isaac, “Milestones in Judaea: From Vespasian to Constantine,” in Isaac, *Near East*, 48–68; Yoram Tsafrir, Leah Di Segni, and Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani: Iudaea, Palaestina: Eretz Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994); Chancey, *Myth*, 157–158.

¹⁴³ Fischer, Isaac, and Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea II*, 4; Mordechai Aviam, “Two Roman Roads in the Galilee,” in *Jews*, 133–138.

¹⁴⁴ Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea I*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ Ball, *Rome*, 67. ¹⁴⁶ See sources already noted.

These roads transformed the landscape so that travelers could not help but recognize that even the pavement beneath their feet represented Roman military power and prowess. Each milestone bore a Latin inscription with the name and titles of the reigning emperor. Many had a second inscription in Greek indicating how far it was to the nearest city. Most people who used the roads, particularly non-soldiers, would not have been able to read either the Latin or the Greek, but they would have understood the message of Roman imperial domination nonetheless. The milestones not only marked distances, they served to make sure that everyone knew just whose territory – Rome's – was being crossed. That the milestone inscriptions were made for such propagandistic purposes is strongly suggested by the fact that while they were frequently put up in densely populated areas, they were rarely erected in more sparsely settled areas.¹⁴⁷

The VI Ferrata made its main headquarters at Legio,¹⁴⁸ built at the village of Kefar 'Otnay in the Jezreel Valley. Excavations of its ruins in the early twentieth century showed that the main part of the camp consisted of a small enclosure within a larger enclosure, with the whole complex large enough to house approximately a thousand men.¹⁴⁹ It had an amphitheater, probably built by soldiers for entertainment and training,¹⁵⁰ and an aqueduct system.¹⁵¹ A discovery 2.5 kilometers away at Khirbet el Khazna reflects the soldiers' cultic practices: a white marble altar decorated with carvings of a legionary eagle, a Victory goddess standing on a globe, and two Latin inscriptions, one almost entirely gone but the other proclaiming a dedication to Serapis on behalf of the emperor by

¹⁴⁷ Isaac, *Limits*, 111–112; Millar, *RNE*, 108–109.

¹⁴⁸ Isaac, *Limits*, 432–433.

¹⁴⁹ G. Schumacher, *Tell El Mutesellim* (Leipzig, 1908), vol. 1, 188–190. Safrai provides the estimate of the camp's size ("Roman Army," 105).

¹⁵⁰ The poorly preserved structure is sometimes described as a theater, but the oval shape suggests it was an amphitheater (Schumacher, *Tell El Mutesellim*, vol. 1, 174, figure 259; Arthur Segal, *Theatres in Roman Palestine and Provincia Arabia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 52–53).

¹⁵¹ Tsvika Tsuk, "An Aqueduct to Legio," in David Amit, Joseph Patrich, and Yizhar Hirschfeld, eds., *The Aqueducts of Israel* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2002), 409–411 and "The Aqueduct to Legio and the Location of the Camp of the VIth Roman Legion," *TA* 15–16 (1988–1989): 92–97.

a centurion.¹⁵² Another Latin inscription, found closer to the main encampment, also comes from an altar.¹⁵³

If Legio held only a thousand men, then several thousand others must have been assigned elsewhere in northern Palestine. Archaeological finds and rabbinic traditions shed some light on their deployment.¹⁵⁴ Soldiers of the VI Ferrata worked on the aqueduct at Caesarea Maritima under Hadrian,¹⁵⁵ and a fort at Beth Yerah was probably built by the unit.¹⁵⁶ A (second-century?) inscription records the presence of an auxiliary *ala* at Scythopolis.¹⁵⁷ Eleven kilometers southeast of Scythopolis, at Tel Shalem, a Roman fort stood for a few decades in the second century. Finds there include a Roman bath, two inscriptions (one Greek, the other the Latin inscription mentioned earlier), and forty-two fragments of a bronze statue of Emperor Hadrian.¹⁵⁸ A Latin inscription at Tiberias records the burial of a centurion from the VI Ferrata Legion;¹⁵⁹ a Greek one marks the interment of a centurion of the X Fretensis.¹⁶⁰ Another Greek inscription, this one on a sarcophagus found near Tiberias's city gate, identifies the interred as an army decurion, though it does not specify his unit.¹⁶¹ Other Latin burial inscriptions of Roman soldiers have been found at Gabara,¹⁶² Kefar Kanna and Acco.¹⁶³ Units also occasionally ventured further south; inscriptions

¹⁵² Avi-Yonah, "Newly Discovered," 89–91 no. 6.

¹⁵³ Werner Eck and Yotam Tepper, "A Dedication to Silvanus near the Camp of the Legio VI Ferrata near Lajjun," *SCI* 20 (2001): 85–88; cf. Yotam Tepper, "Survey of the Legio Region," *HA* 115 (2003): 29–31.

¹⁵⁴ On the archaeological evidence, see Isaac, *Limits*, 427–435; Safrai, "Roman Army."

¹⁵⁵ *GLL*, 74 no. 29, 77 no. 54.

¹⁵⁶ B. Maisler, M. Stekelis, and M. Avi-Yonah, "The Excavations at Beth Yerah (Khirbet el-Kerak) 1944–1946," *IEJ* 2 (1952): 165–173, 218–229, esp. 222–223.

¹⁵⁷ Rosa Last and Alla Stein, "Ala Antiana in Scythopolis: A New Inscription from Beth-Shean," *ZPE* 81 (1990): 224–228.

¹⁵⁸ Isaac, *Limits*, 432; N. Tzori, "An Inscription of the Legio VI Ferrata from the Northern Jordan Valley," *IEJ* 21 (1971): 53–54; Eck and Foerster, "Ein Triumphbogen"; Bowersock, "Tel Shalem"; Gideon Foerster, "A Cuirassed Bronze Statue of Hadrian," *Atiqot* 17 (1985): 139–157.

¹⁵⁹ Avi-Yonah, "Newly Discovered," 91 no. 7.

¹⁶⁰ R. Cagnat and G. LaFaye, eds., *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes* (Paris: Academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1906), vol. 3, no. 1204.

¹⁶¹ Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 151.

¹⁶² Avi-Yonah, "Newly Discovered," 88 no. 4.

¹⁶³ Mordechai Aviam, personal communication.

of the VI Ferrata have been found at Sebaste and as far away as Beth Govrin.¹⁶⁴ In contrast, the Romans do not appear to have ventured very far north into Upper Galilee; evidence of their presence there is minimal.¹⁶⁵

Rabbinic sources refer often to encounters between Galilean Jews and Roman soldiers.¹⁶⁶ A few passages record the presence of a Roman camp overlooking Tiberias;¹⁶⁷ several others preserve memories of an incident in which soldiers from Sepphoris extinguished a fire at Shihin on the Sabbath.¹⁶⁸ A later tradition refers to a unit at Sepphoris in the fourth century.¹⁶⁹ It was said that no festival occurred at Sepphoris without the presence of a Roman patrol or at Tiberias without the presence of the governor or another official.¹⁷⁰

The arrival of these soldiers greatly accelerated the Romanization of Galilee – an ironic fact, since very few of the soldiers themselves were from Rome or the Italian peninsula. By the early second century, legions throughout the empire were staffed mostly by non-Italians.¹⁷¹ The VI Ferrata had been stationed in the eastern Mediterranean for decades, and its troops would have hailed from Asia Minor, Syria, and Arabia, though some may have been children

¹⁶⁴ Isaac, *Limits*, 431, 432.

¹⁶⁵ Roof tiles with the stamp of the Legio VI Ferrata were found at Horvat Hazon (map coordinates 187/257) and Kefar Hananya (D. Bahat, “A Roof Tile of the Legio VI Ferrata and Pottery Vessels from Horvat Hazon,” *IEJ* 24 [1974]: 160–169; David Adan-Bayewitz, “Kefar Hananya 1986,” *IEJ* 37 [1987]: 178–179). They do not necessarily reflect a Roman military presence at those sites, since the army could have sold tiles (cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963], 28–31).

¹⁶⁶ Aharon Oppenheimer, “Roman Rule and the Cities of the Galilee in Talmudic Literature,” in Levine, *Galilee*, 115–139; Isaac, *Limits*, 115–118; Goodman, *State*, 141–146.

¹⁶⁷ *Y. Eruvin* 5, 22b; Safrai, “Roman Army,” 105; Isaac, *Limits*, 435.

¹⁶⁸ *T. Shabbat* 13(14): 9; *m. Shabbat* 16:6; *b. Shabbat* 121a; *y. Shabbat* 16, 15d. Stuart S. Miller argues that the incident could have occurred any time between 70 CE and the mid-second century (*Studies in the History and Traditions of Sepphoris* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984], 31–40). In light of what we know of Roman deployments, I would opt for the later end of that range, dating the fire no earlier than c. 120 CE (*contra* Safrai, “Roman Army,” 105).

¹⁶⁹ *Y. Pesahim* 4, 31b; Miller, *Studies*, 40–45.

¹⁷⁰ *B. Shabbat* 145b; Oppenheimer, “Roman Rule,” 122.

¹⁷¹ The number of legionnaires recruited in Italy declined steadily after Augustus. By the time of Trajan, the proportion may have been as low as 21 percent, and after that it dropped further (Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* [Totowa, N. J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1984], 180–181).

of earlier legionnaires recruited in Italy.¹⁷² Regardless of his place of origin, though, every legionnaire was a Roman citizen, socialized in the ways and values of the Roman army and thus a bearer of Roman culture. Most soldiers in auxiliary cohorts and *alae* were not yet citizens, but they looked forward to citizenship as a reward at the end of their service. They, too, helped introduce Roman culture to Galilee on a new scale.

CONCLUSION

In the time of Jesus, there were no Roman army units, no colonists, and probably few, if any, Roman administrators in Galilee. Jesus did not frequently interact with Roman soldiers there, nor did Galilee suffer the political and economic consequences of actual occupation.¹⁷³ The overall Roman presence in Palestine was relatively small: an indeterminable number of administrators and a few thousand auxiliary soldiers, stationed primarily at Caesarea Maritima and Jerusalem.

The lack of a significant Roman presence in Galilee calls into question whether the term “colonial” is appropriate for understanding the political, social, and economic situation there before the early second century CE. We might likewise consider how helpful the language of “colony” and “colonial” is for describing pre-70 CE Judea, since most “Romans” in the region were recruited not from Rome, but from Palestine and, as auxiliaries, were not Roman citizens. At the very least, scholars who apply such terms to first-century Palestine should be explicit about what they mean (and do not mean) when using them.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² J. F. Gilliam, “Romanization of the Greek East: The Role of the Army,” in Gilliam, *Roman Army Papers* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1986), 281–287.

¹⁷³ E. P. Sanders has effectively argued this point in “Jesus in Historical Context” and “Jesus’ Galilee”; cf. Millar, *RNE*, 27–111; Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 362–367; Lifshitz, “Légions romaines.”

¹⁷⁴ For understandings of “colony,” “colonial,” and related terms, see Claire L. Lyons and John K. Papadopoulos, eds., *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002). For a broader overview of the scholarly discourse on colonialism, post-colonialism, and imperialism, see Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 15–69.

By the early second century, circumstances were quite different. The entire area was now under direct Roman rule, the former client kingdoms split amongst the provinces of Syria, Arabia, and Judea, the latter renamed Syria Palaestina after the Bar Kokhba war. Roman legions were now found not only in Syria but also in Jerusalem and its environs, Galilee, and the Transjordan. Other changes were soon to follow.

CHAPTER 3

The introduction of Greco-Roman architecture

At the dawn of the Roman era, Hellenism had made only limited inroads into Galilean culture. Over the next few centuries, however, Hellenistic and Roman architecture became more common in Galilee and elsewhere in Palestine. In this chapter, I will focus on the construction activity in the early decades of Rome's rule, from 63 BCE to the first revolt in 66–70 CE, devoting special attention to the roles of the early Roman governors and the Herodian client kings, especially Herod the Great and Herod Antipas.

THE FIRST ROMANS

Whether Pompey and the early governor Gabinius initiated a wave of Roman construction in Palestine is unclear.¹ Pompey was well-known for sponsoring building projects elsewhere, such as a theater at Rome and the repair of the *bouleuterion* at Antioch. He had also founded and refounded numerous cities, especially in Asia Minor, though it is uncertain how much construction accompanied those foundations.² In Palestine, however, he refounded (*anaktizo*) only one city, Gadara, an action that likely did involve building, since Josephus specifically says that the city had been destroyed by Jewish forces.³ Pompey also stripped other cities conquered by the Hasmoneans away from Jewish control. Josephus writes in *War* that Pompey “liberated from their rule all the towns . . . which they had not already razed to the ground, namely Hippos, Scythopolis,

¹ Isaac, *Limits*, 336–340.

² Roller, *Building Program*, 80–82; cf. William G. Fletcher, “The Pontic Cities of Pompey the Great,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 79 (1939): 17–29.

³ *War* 1.155.

Pella, Samaria, Jamnia, Marisa, Azotus, and Arethusa . . . Gaza, Joppa, Dora, and . . . Straton's Tower. All these towns he restored to their legitimate inhabitants and annexed to the province of Syria."⁴ In *Antiquities*, Josephus adds Dium to this list.⁵ The implication of these two passages is that, Gadara aside, any destruction at these cities had been minimal. Thus, the need for new building would also have been minimal.

The evidence for building activity by Gabinius is equally murky.⁶ Josephus presents two lists of cities that received Gabinius's attention, lists that are similar, though not identical, to those of the cities that Pompey "liberated." In both, he writes that Gabinius went about the region "refounding" cities, again using the verb *anaktizo*. Though the verb can denote rebuilding, it is also subject to other interpretation. In the Roman period, as in the Hellenistic period, the refoundation of cities often as not involved only renaming and perhaps reorganization, not necessarily construction. Josephus says that a number of towns were resettled on Gabinius's orders.⁷ Some of these cities, however, are the very ones that Josephus writes had already been restored to their inhabitants by Pompey, and one, Gamla, remained a Jewish village until its destruction in the first revolt. Noting these difficulties, Benjamin Isaac suggests that Josephus actually knew very little about the histories of these towns.⁸

Many cities honored Pompey and Gabinius for releasing them from Jewish rule, recording their gratitude on their coinage.⁹ Gadara immediately adopted a new era, dating the city's foundation

⁴ *War* 1.156.

⁵ *Ant.* 14.75–76. Josephus's wording is made all the more curious by his earlier report that Pella had been razed by Jannaeus (*Ant.* 13.397). Archaeological evidence supports this report (Robert Houston Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis* [Wooster, Ohio: The College of Wooster, 1973], vol. 1, 34–35; Robert H. Smith and Anthony W. McNicoll, "The 1982 and 1983 Seasons at Pella of the Decapolis," *BASOR Supplement* 24 [1985]: 21–50, esp. 29; cf. Ilan Shachar, "The Historical and Numismatic Significance of Alexander Jannaeus's Later Coinage as found in Archaeological Excavations," *PEQ* 136 [2004]: 5–33).

⁶ *War* 1.165–166 and *Ant.* 14.88; on Gabinius, see Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 271–279.

⁷ That is, Scythopolis, Samaria, Anthedon, Apollonia, Jamnia, Raphia, Marisa, Adorus, Gamla, Azotus, and others.

⁸ Isaac, *Limits*, 339.

⁹ See my review of this material in "City Coins and Roman Power in Palestine: From Pompey to the Great Revolt," in Douglas R. Edwards, ed., *Religion and Society in Roman Palestine* (New York and London: Routledge Press, 2004), 103–112.

to Roman liberation; its coins from 64/63 BCE read “Year One of Rome.”¹⁰ Nysa-Scythopolis and Marisa soon adopted similar dating systems. In addition, the coins of Nysa-Scythopolis from the mid-first century BCE bear Gabinus’s bust and show that the city renamed itself “Gabinia,”¹¹ and Marisa’s coins from the same period bore the letters “GA,” probably an abbreviation for a similar name.¹² Second- and third-century coinage of numerous other cities shows that at some point they, too, adopted the Pompeian era.¹³ Cities that put such features on their coins were making strong statements that they (or, at least, their elites) identified themselves as Roman subjects and that their history began anew with their annexation by Rome.

Numismatic evidence and Josephus’s remarks leave our questions about the extent of the construction activities of Pompey and Gabinus unanswered. Archaeological evidence provides little additional support for the idea that they began the architectural Romanization of the region. Though finds at Samaria, Azotus, and Scythopolis have been cited as possibly Gabinian,¹⁴ very little can be traced with certainty to either him or Pompey – no buildings, no monuments, no Roman civic planning.¹⁵

HEROD THE GREAT: CLIENT OF THE ROMANS, PATRON OF GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE

A standard handbook on Roman architecture begins its discussion of the Eastern Mediterranean with Herod the Great.¹⁶ This choice is certainly appropriate, since it was he, more so than Pompey or

¹⁰ Spijkerman, *Coins*, 128–129, nos. 1–2.

¹¹ Rachel Barkay, “Coins of Roman Governors issued by Nysa-Scythopolis in the Late Republican Period,” *INJ* 13 (1994–1999): 54–62.

¹² Shraga Qedar, “The Coins of Marisa: A New Mint,” *INJ* 12 (1993): 27–33. In addition, Antioch’s coins bore Gabinus’s monogram (*RPC*, vol. 1, no. 4124), and second- and third-century coins of Canatha attest the name “Gabinia” (Barkay, “Coins” and “A New Coin Type of Dionysos from Canatha,” *INJ* 11 [1990–1991]: 72–76).

¹³ For example, Hippos, Philadelphia, Pella, Abila, Dium, Gerasa, Canatha, Gaba, Gaza, Dora, Apamea and Byblos (*RPC*, vol. 1, 672, 660–661, 676–677, 632, 647; Spijkerman, *Coins*, 316–317). Ptolemais adopted a similar system, dating its era to Julius Caesar’s visit in 48/47 BCE (*RPC*, vol. 1, 658).

¹⁴ Crowfoot, Kenyon, and Sukenik, *Buildings*, vol. 1, 31–32; Roller, *Building Program*, 81.

¹⁵ Isaac, *Limits*, 339–340.

¹⁶ J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1981), 307–362.

Gabinus, who bore responsibility for bringing Roman culture to the region. His enthusiastic sponsorship of both Roman and Hellenistic architecture provided the example that his sons would follow.¹⁷ A detailed description of his projects illustrates the extent of his impact and allows us to put into perspective the more meager activity that followed in Early Roman Galilee. It also provides an opportunity to discuss characteristic types of Hellenistic and Roman urban buildings.

Herod's visit to Rome in 40 BCE to seek Antony's support lasted only a week, but, as Duane W. Roller has commented, that week proved to be extraordinarily influential.¹⁸ Roller's fascinating study shows the impact that this exposure to Roman culture had on Herod and, through him, on the whole Levant. When Herod arrived, Rome was a city at the initial stages of architectural renewal. Sulla, Pompey, and Julius Caesar had each sponsored the construction of new buildings, and the Rome of the monuments so well-known now was emerging. The previous decades had seen the rebuilding of the Capitoline Temple and the erection or renovation of numerous other basilicas, forums, and temples. Pompey's portico and theater (the latter, apparently the first permanent one in Rome) had been warmly received, and the foundations of another theater had already been laid. All of these new buildings, combined with the older assortment of temples and monuments, could not help but be impressive to a refugee who had been cast out from his own territory. Herod might have been powerless, but he knew where power lay, and discerning what the future held for his homeland could not have been difficult. Here at Rome, he perhaps saw a glimpse of the coming landscape of the Near East. By his next two visits, the first occurring between 19 and 16 BCE and the other in 12 BCE, Augustus's transformation of the city from one of bricks to

¹⁷ On the Herodian dynasty, see Schürer, *History*, vol. 1, 287–483 and Nikos Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998). On Herod's building projects, see Roller, *Building Program*; Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996); Peter Richardson, *Building Jewish in the Roman East* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 225–240, 253–308.

¹⁸ *War* 1.248–281, *Ant.* 14.330–380; Roller, *Building Program*, 16, 33–42.

one of marble would have been well underway – as were Herod’s own building projects.¹⁹

After Herod returned to Palestine, he devoted much of the next three decades to sponsoring buildings that heightened the visibility of Hellenistic and Roman architecture and advertised his own wealth and generosity. He did not confine his attention to his own territory. Josephus’s lengthy lists of Herod’s donations show that they stretched from Judea up the Levantine coast, across Asia Minor, and into Greece.²⁰ Ascalon received baths, fountains, and peristyles; Tripoli, Damascus, and Ptolemais, gymnasia; Berytus and Tyre, stoas, temples, and agoras; Sidon and Damascus, theaters; Antioch, marble pavement and a lengthy colonnade; Rhodes, a rebuilt temple; Nikopolis, a number of public buildings. Inscriptions from Athens record both his gifts and his use of the titles *philoromaïos*, “friend of the Romans,” and *philocaesar*, “friend of Caesar.”²¹ He gave a sizable gift to the endowment of the Olympics, contributed to the taxation payments of towns in Asia Minor, and provided money to Cos for its *gymnasiarch*. Numerous other communities received land and corn. An inscription at Si’a, near Canatha, suggests that he donated to the temple of Baal Shamin.²² Some of his gifts, such as the gymnasia, stoas, and agoras, had Hellenistic roots, while others, like the theaters and bathhouses, were Roman in style. While Herod may not deserve *all* of the credit for introducing such monumental architecture to the region, it seems obvious that he deserves *most* of it.²³

Herod’s accomplishments within his kingdom were no less impressive. Soon after Octavian emerged the victor of the Roman power struggles, Herod began work on a city honoring the new emperor. He built it at the site of the ancient city of Samaria and named it Sebaste, the Greek equivalent of Octavian’s recently

¹⁹ *Ant.* 16.6, 90–130; *War* 1.427, 452–455; Roller, *Building Program*, 66–75. Suetonius records Augustus’s boast about turning Rome into a city of marble (*Augustus*, 28).

²⁰ *War* 1.422–425; *Ant.* 16.146–148; cf. Chancey, *Myth*, 50 n. 109; Richardson, *Herod*, 174–177; and Roller, *Building Program*, xii.

²¹ For inscriptions in Palestine identifying Herod as *philocaesar*, see Richardson, *Herod*, 203–208 nos. 2, 6, 8).

²² Richardson, *Herod*, 184, 206–207.

²³ Josephus does not identify who built a hippodrome he claims was in early first-century BCE Damascus (*Ant.* 13.389).

acquired title *Augustus*. Though several other cities eventually had similar names (Sebaste, Sebasteia, Sebastopolis), Herod's was the first. Many findings at Sebaste probably date back to the Herodian period: a temple (probably the one dedicated to Augustus and Roma that Josephus mentions), stadium, palace, streets aligned on a grid, and a colonnaded rectangular terrace that appears to have been a Roman-style forum, a highly unusual urban feature within Palestine. A basilica at the western end of the forum might also date to Herod, though some have dated it to the second century CE.²⁴

Herod started work on another city honoring the emperor c. 22 BCE, calling it Caesarea.²⁵ Suetonius claims that each of Rome's client kings founded a city by that name, but Herod again appears to have been among the first.²⁶ He decided to make his new city a port, choosing the town of Straton's Tower as his site, even though the natural harbor there was hardly adequate for major shipping. Herod, however, was a man of no small ambition, and he set about to construct an artificial harbor on a scale that had never been done before. His engineers, probably aided by counterparts from Italy, devised two breakwater walls that together created a usable harbor.²⁷ They utilized the most advanced Roman technology, hydraulic concrete that would set underwater, imported in vast quantities from the Bay of Naples area.²⁸ The end-result of Herod's efforts was comparable in size to Athens's famous harbor, the Piraeus.²⁹ It was one of the earliest examples – perhaps *the* earliest – of a harbor

²⁴ *Ant.* 15.293, 296–298; *War* 1.403; Roller, *Building Program*, 209–212; James D. Purvis, “Samaria (City),” *ABD*, vol. 5, 915–921; Crowfoot, Kenyon, and Sukenik, *Buildings*, 41–50, 55–57, 62–67, 123–128; Clarence Stanley Fisher, “Architectural Remains,” in George Andrew Reisner, Clarence Stanley Fisher, and David Gordon Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria: 1908–1910* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), vol. 1, 91–223, esp. 211–219.

²⁵ Roller, *Building Program*, 89 n. 14.

²⁶ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 60; cf. David M. Jacobson, “Three Roman Client Kings: Herod of Judaea, Archelaus of Cappadocia and Juba of Mauretania,” *PEQ* 133 (2001): 22–38, esp. 28–29.

²⁷ Avner Raban, “Caesarea: Maritime Caesarea,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 286–291; John Peter Oleson et al., *The Harbours of Caesarea Maritima*, 2 vols. (Oxford: BAR 1989, 1994); Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum, eds., *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

²⁸ Roller, *Building Program*, 138; cf. *Ant.* 15.332.

²⁹ *Ant.* 15.332; cf. *War* 1.410.

built according to the methods described by the Roman architect Vitruvius.³⁰ Herod named his new port facilities Sebastos.³¹

Such an impressive harbor demanded an equally impressive city.³² The buildings of Caesarea Maritima were, in Josephus's words, "constructed in a style worthy of the name which the city bore."³³ The city was organized on a grid, its streets intersecting at right angles and forming rectangular blocks to an extent very uncommon for its day. Its buildings included a theater, amphitheater, agoras, and, on a hill at the city's center, a temple to the emperor and Roma.³⁴ The temple's location ensured that it, along with the glistening white buildings that lined the shore, would be seen by visitors approaching by sea.³⁵ Herod placed a palace on a seaside cliff to maximize both its view and its visibility.³⁶ Fresh water was brought to the city by aqueduct, and seawater was utilized in an advanced underground sewage system. At the city's completion in 10 BCE, Herod instituted a series of quinquennial games that included the musical and athletic competitions and horse races typical of Greek festivals as well as animal shows and gladiatorial combat, forms of entertainment associated with the Romans.³⁷ These gladiatorial contests were the first ever held in the region. Ultimately, Caesarea was a state-of-the-art monument to the emperor, Rome, and Roman culture in general. It was also, of course, a monument to Herod himself.

³⁰ Raban, "Caesarea."

³¹ *Ant.* 17.87; the name appears on coins of Agrippa I (*Treasury*, 232 no. 122) and on city coins issued c. 68 CE (*RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4862–4864).

³² Kenneth G. Holum, "Caesarea," *OEANE*, vol. 1, 399–404; Kenneth G. Holum, Avner Raban, et al., *NEAEHL*, "Caesarea," vol. 1, 270–291; Roller, *Building Program*, 133–144; Richardson, *City*, 104–129; Chancey, *Myth*, 144–148.

³³ *War* 1.415.

³⁴ Lisa C. Kahn, "King Herod's Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima," in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 130–145; Kenneth G. Holum and Avner Raban, "Caesarea: The Joint Expedition's Excavations, Excavations in the 1980s and 1990s, and Summary," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 282–285; Richardson, *City*, 112–114.

³⁵ *Ant.* 15.339; Richardson, *City*, 112–113.

³⁶ Richardson, *City*, 109, 115–117; Barbara Burrell, "Palace to Praetorium: The Romanization of Caesarea," in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 228–250 and Kathryn Louise Gleason, "Rule and Spectacle: The Promontory Palace," in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 208–227. Yosef Porat, however, argues that the palace dates to the early procurators, not Herod ("Caesarea – 1994–1999," *HA* 112 [2000]: 34–40).

³⁷ *War* 1.415, *Ant.* 16.136–149.

Herod honored his friends and patrons elsewhere in his kingdom, too. Buildings at Jerusalem and Jericho were named after the emperor and his supporter, Agrippa,³⁸ as was the city Anthedon, which became Agrippias.³⁹ Herod called a palace-fortress overlooking the Jerusalem temple Antonia, after his former patron.⁴⁰ He commemorated his own family members by naming the city of Antipatris for his father and Phasaelis for his brother.⁴¹

Jerusalem received considerable attention.⁴² There, Herod constructed a lavish palace, an “amphitheater” nearby “out in the plain,” and a theater.⁴³ The latter building, adorned with war trophies and inscriptions honoring Caesar, was used for wild animal fights and combat between criminals and animals, practices controversial to many Jerusalemites.⁴⁴ As he had at Caesarea, Herod instituted a set of quinquennial games. The city was also home to the best known of Herod’s building projects, the Jewish temple. He expanded the entire precinct to twice its earlier size, making it the largest temple complex in the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ He surrounded the temple building itself with porticoes of marble columns;⁴⁶ the southernmost, with its four rows of 162 columns, outsized other basilical structures in the Roman world.⁴⁷ The renovations Herod began continued long his death, not reaching completion until 64 CE – just a few years before the building’s destruction.

Other construction projects, especially fortresses and palaces, dotted Herod’s kingdom.⁴⁸ He rebuilt several Hasmonean fortresses – Alexandreion, Hyrcania, Cypros, and Masada – and constructed

³⁸ *War* 1.402, 407.

³⁹ *War* 1.87, 118.

⁴⁰ *Ant.* 15.292.

⁴¹ *War* 1. 417–418, *Ant.* 16.142–145.

⁴² Levine, *Jerusalem*, 187–217.

⁴³ *Ant.* 15.268. On Josephus’s possible misuse of the term “amphitheater,” see discussion below.

⁴⁴ *Ant.* 15.267–279.

⁴⁵ Roller, *Building Program*, 176–178; Richardson, *City*, 138–146; *War* 1.401, 5.184–237; *Ant.* 15.380–425.

⁴⁶ *Ant.* 15.395, *War* 5.190–192; Roller, *Building Program*, 177.

⁴⁷ *Ant.* 15.411; Richardson, *City*, 141.

⁴⁸ For overviews, see Roller, *Building Program*, 125–238; Richardson, *Herod*, 197–202; Ehud Netzer, *The Palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, Israel Exploration Society, 2001); Ehud Netzer, “Architecture in Palaestina Prior to and During the Days of Herod the Great,” in Edmund Buchner et al., eds., *Akten des XIII internationalen Kongresses für klassische Archäologie: Berlin 1988* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von

new ones at Machaerus and the immodestly named Herodium.⁴⁹ The round shape of the latter palace, which was intended to serve as his tomb, may have been inspired by reports of Augustus's mausoleum in Rome.⁵⁰ He also made the Hasmonean palace at Jericho his own, perhaps adding the amphitheater and a hippodrome there,⁵¹ and he built a temple to the emperor at Paneas (later called Caesarea Philippi).⁵²

The Roman-ness that so many of these buildings exhibited was strikingly new for the area. Theaters provide a prime example. None had appeared in Palestine in the Hellenistic era, despite their popularity elsewhere, but Herod built them at Caesarea, Jerusalem,⁵³ and Jericho.⁵⁴ He eschewed the features of the older Hellenistic-style theater, with its circular performance area at the bottom and seats wrapping around more than half of that circle. Instead, he constructed his theaters according to the Roman design, which was itself fairly recent. Each was shaped like a half-circle, with a decorative wall (*scaena frons*) stretched horizontally across the diameter. The performance area (*orchestra*) was thus itself approximately a half circle and smaller than the equivalent areas in Greek theaters. The upper seats (*summa cavea*) were supported by Roman barrel vaults, and halls (*vomitoria*) underneath the *summa cavea* led to the lower seats (*ima cavea*).⁵⁵ The construction

Zabern, 1990), 37–50; Mark Chancey and Adam Porter, “The Archaeology of Roman Palestine,” *NEA* 64 (2001): 164–203, esp. 167–174.

⁴⁹ See Chancey and Porter, “Archaeology,” 174 for other possible Herodian forts.

⁵⁰ *War* 1.419–421; *Ant.* 15.323–325, 17.196–199; Roller, *Building Program*, 72–73.

⁵¹ Amphitheater: *War* 1.666; *Ant.* 17.161, 194; hippodrome: *War* 1.659, *Ant.* 17.175.

⁵² *War* 1.404–406; *Ant.* 15.363–364. Scholars debate the temple's location: candidates include a building in front of the Pan grotto (Andrea M. Berlin, “Baniyas is Still the Best Candidate,” *BAR* 29:5 [2003]: 22–24), another one hundred yards west (Ehud Netzer, “A Third Candidate: Another Building at Baniyas,” *BAR* 29:5 [2003]: 25), and a tetrastyle structure excavated at Omrit (J. Andrew Overman, Jack Olive, and Michael Nelson, “Discovering Herod's Shrine to Augustus: Mystery Temple Found at Omrit,” *BAR* 29:2 [2003]: 40–49, 67–68). John Francis Wilson reviews the possibilities in *Caesarea Philippi: Baniyas, The Lost City of Pan* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 14–16.

⁵³ *Ant.* 15.268.

⁵⁴ *Ant.* 17.161.

⁵⁵ On theater design, see Alexandra Retzliff, “Near Eastern Theatres in Late Antiquity,” *Phoenix* 57 (2003): 115–138 and Bieber, *History*, 189.

of Herod's theaters was soon followed by that of several in the Nabatean kingdom.⁵⁶

Amphitheaters and the combat sports for which they were designed were likewise Roman innovations. Some scholars have suggested that Josephus may have used the term "amphitheater" to refer to Hellenistic-style hippodromes, facilities built primarily for horse races, rather than to amphitheaters *per se*.⁵⁷ At Caesarea, they point to an elongated oblong structure found in the southern part of the city as a possible candidate for Herod's "amphitheater."⁵⁸ Similarly, some have argued that when Josephus mentioned an amphitheater at Jericho, he had in mind a long racecourse discovered there.⁵⁹ It is possible, however, that Josephus knew the difference between an amphitheater and a hippodrome and that the amphitheaters he mentions simply have not been discovered. If this is the case, and Herod's amphitheaters were, technically speaking, amphitheaters and not hippodromes, then Caesarea's may have been the first permanent one outside of Italy.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Segal, *Theatres*, 5–7.

⁵⁷ As used by archaeologists, the term "amphitheater" designates a circular or slightly oval entertainment building, as opposed to the semi-circular theater or the longer stadium or hippodrome. On amphitheaters as a Roman institution, see Ze'ev Weiss, "Adopting a Novelty: The Jews and the Roman Games in Palestine," in J. H. Humphrey, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Near East* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), vol. 2, 23–50, esp. 39–40; Allison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 53–76; Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 41–46.

⁵⁸ On the possible ambiguity or misuse of the term "amphitheater" in antiquity, see Roller, *Building Program*, 140–141; Richardson, *Herod*, 186–187; Y. Porath, "Herod's 'amphitheatre' at Caesarea: a multipurpose entertainment building," in J. H. Humphrey, *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1995), 15–27, esp. 24–26 and Weiss, "Adopting," 34, 39. On the location of Caesarea's amphitheater, see Roller, *Building Program*, 140–141 and Porath, "Herod's 'amphitheatre.'"

⁵⁹ Rachel Hachlili, "Herodian Jericho," *OEANE*, vol. 3, 16–18; Netzer, *Palaces*, 64–67. Netzer has suggested that a building attached to the structure was used for receptions or as a gymnasium. Since there is no other evidence for gymnasia in Herod's territory, the latter option seems unlikely.

⁶⁰ A late source (the sixth-century CE writer Malalas in *Chronicle*, 216–217, 338, discussed by Roller, *Building Program*, 82) claims that Julius Caesar sponsored the construction of a theater, amphitheater, and baths at Antioch after his visit in 47 BCE. Isaac, however, strongly questions the reliability of Malalas, given how late he wrote (*Limits*, 335; cf. Roller, *Building Program*, 141).

Herod's palaces included Roman baths⁶¹ – the first in Palestine and among the first anywhere in the eastern Mediterranean.⁶² In contrast to earlier baths in the region, these used a hypocaust system to heat water for the *caldarium* (hot-room).⁶³ They sometimes included other rooms typical of the Roman bathhouse: the *apodyterium* (dressing room), *tepidarium* (warm room), and a *frigidarium* (cold room), the latter occasionally with a Jewish innovation, stairs that apparently allowed them to serve as ritual baths.

Herod also made extensive use of other Roman construction techniques. The warehouses at Caesarea, possibly built by him, utilized barrel vaults.⁶⁴ He often supplemented his typical style of masonry, courses of limestone ashlar dressed with bossing,⁶⁵ with techniques he would have encountered at Rome, *opus incertum* and *opus reticulatum*.⁶⁶ *Opus incertum* had been widely used in Italy for some time; *opus reticulatum*, only recently invented (late second century BCE), was used extensively by Augustus's builders.⁶⁷ Neither technique ever achieved much popularity in the eastern

⁶¹ Baths have been found at Herodium, Jericho, Cypros, Machaerus, and Masada. In addition, excavators argue that a bathhouse found at Ramat Hanadiv, northeast of Caesarea, is Herodian (Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Architecture and Stratigraphy," 235–327 and Yizhar Hirschfeld, "General Discussion: Ramat Hanadiv in Context," 679–735, both in Yizhar Hirschfeld et al., eds., *Ramat Hanadiv Excavations* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000]).

⁶² Ronny Reich, "The Hot Bath-House (*balneum*), the Miqweh, and the Jewish Community in the Second Temple Period," *JJS* 39 (1988): 102–107; Ehud Netzer, "Herodian bath-houses," in J. De Laine and D. E. Mohnston, eds., *Roman Baths and Bathing* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 45–55; Nielsen, *Thermae*, vol. 1, 93–99, 103–104.

⁶³ In the Roman hypocaust, heat from the furnace circulated between short pillars under the bath's floor (Fikret Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* [New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1992], 356–362; Jean-Pierre Adam, *Roman Building: Materials and Techniques*, trans. Anthony Mathews [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994], 264–270).

⁶⁴ Holum and Raban, "Caesarea: The Joint Expedition's Excavations."

⁶⁵ With Herodian bossing, the outside face of each block was indented around its edges.

⁶⁶ Roller, *Building Program*, 99; Richardson, *Herod*, 183; for an example, see Netzer, *Palaces*, 48–63.

⁶⁷ With *opus incertum*, the facing of walls consisted of differently-shaped stones arranged in no discernible pattern. With *opus reticulatum*, the square faces of stones were arranged like diamonds, creating the visual impression of diagonal rows (Mario Torelli, "Innovations in Roman Construction Techniques between the First Century BC and the First Century AD," in Mario Torelli, *Studies in the Romanization of Italy*, ed. and trans. Helena Fracchia and Maurizio Gualtieri [Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995], 212–245).

Mediterranean, and *opus reticulatum*, in particular, was uncommon outside of central Italy and Campania.⁶⁸ Their lack of diffusion makes Herod's employment of them all the more notable. The floors of some rooms in his mansions also reflected Roman tastes, with stone tiles of different colors (*opus sectile*).⁶⁹

Herod was also fond of Roman-style decoration. The interior walls of his palaces were decorated with frescoes reminiscent of those found on the Italian peninsula. Stucco moldings covered walls, ceilings, and columns. Herod's mosaics, like contemporary ones in Italy, were made mostly of white tesserae, sometimes utilizing black or (less often) other colors to depict stripes, rosettes, or geometrical patterns. Unlike Italian art, however, Herod's decorations avoided representations of animals, people, and mythological figures.

Given Herod's penchant for construction, one might have expected him to lavish some of his gifts upon Galilee, where he had received his political start and support against Antigonus. This, however, does not seem to have been the case. Only once in Josephus do we find a reference to a Herodian building in Galilee, a royal palace (*basileion*) at Sepphoris raided by Judas the Galilean after Herod's death.⁷⁰ That structure has not yet been found, but given what we know of Herod's other palaces, it, too, probably incorporated Hellenistic and Roman construction techniques and stylistic features. Aside from this building and a military colony he established southwest of Galilee at Gaba,⁷¹ however, Herod seems to have left the region almost wholly untouched. Its encounter with Roman architecture would not begin until the reign of his son, Antipas.

FROM ANTIPAS UNTIL THE WAR

When Antipas received Galilee, the region had only one major city, Sepphoris, which had suffered greatly after Judas the Galilean's

⁶⁸ Adam, *Roman Building*, 127–128; Torelli, "Innovations." Jacobson points out that *opus reticulatum* also appears in other client kingdoms ("Three Roman Client Kings," 28).

⁶⁹ *MPI*, 53 nos. 70, 69 nos. 94–95, 76–77 nos. 110–113, 109–110 nos. 181–183; on patterns see 150–151; Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 66–72.

⁷⁰ *Ant.* 17.271–272.

⁷¹ *War* 3.36; *Ant.* 15.294.

assault.⁷² Varus, Roman legate to Syria, had marched south to quell the Jewish uprisings, and Josephus claims that his troops had burned Sepphoris to the ground.⁷³ Antipas determined that he would resurrect the city as the “ornament of Galilee.”⁷⁴ Though excavations have found no sign of widespread destruction, they have found considerable evidence of first-century construction.

Antipas had learned from watching his father how to flatter the emperor. He called his new Sepphoris Autocratoris,⁷⁵ a name with no known civic parallels. Some scholars have suggested that it indicated that the city had some degree of civic independence or “self-rule,” but this seems unlikely. Cities with such independence (or pretensions of it) were called not “autocratoris” but “autonomous.” *Autocrator*, however, was the Greek equivalent of the Latin *Imperator*, a title that Augustus received numerous times. Antipas thus appears to have named Sepphoris after an imperial title, just as his father had done with Caesarea and Sebaste. After Augustus died, Antipas built a wholly new city to honor Augustus’s successor, Tiberias. At some point, he renamed the city of Betharamphtha in Perea as Julias, after Tiberius’s mother and Augustus’s wife.⁷⁶

Antipas’s work at Sepphoris and Tiberias apparently introduced Greco-Roman urban culture to Galilee for the first time, but to what extent? Sepphoris, in particular, has sometimes been represented in New Testament scholarship as the prototypical Roman city, but the actual evidence allows for only more modest interpretations. The first century was definitely a time of growth for the city, which spread from the acropolis eastwards onto a plateau. Its population, with perhaps 8,000–12,000 inhabitants, was large for the immediate region though not large by the standards of the

⁷² *War* 2.56, *Ant.* 17.271–272.

⁷³ *War* 2.68, *Ant.* 17.289.

⁷⁴ *Ant.* 18.27; Chancey, *Myth*, 69–83; Chancey, “Cultural Milieu;” Chancey and Meyers, “How Jewish?;” Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, “Sepphoris,” *OEANE*, vol. 4, 527–536; Nagy, *Sepphoris*; E. Meyers, Netzer, and C. Meyers, *Sepphoris*; and Reed, *Archaeology*, 100–138.

⁷⁵ *Ant.* 18.27.

⁷⁶ *Ant.* 18.27; *War* 2.59, 168. Roller (*Building Program*, 183–184) suggests it was known as Livias until Augustus’s death, when Livia Drusilla joined the Julian clan. It was definitely known as Livias in later centuries (Eusebius, *Onomasticon* 48.13–15); cf. footnote C at *Ant.* 18.27 in the Loeb edition.

empire as a whole.⁷⁷ Its streets were paved and at least two were built on a grid, though it did not yet have the main north–south *cardo* characteristic of Roman cities.⁷⁸ Numerous *insulae* have been excavated, and on the acropolis, a rectangular building with eight pools was found.⁷⁹ One of the city’s aqueducts and the foundation of the basilical building on the eastern plateau date to the first century CE.⁸⁰

Sepphoris’s theater is particularly well-known among New Testament scholars. The archaeologists who discovered it on the northeastern side of the acropolis in 1931 thought that either Antipas or his father, Herod the Great, had built it.⁸¹ In the 1980s, Richard A. Batey made the plausible suggestion that Antipas’s exposure to theaters in Rome had prompted him to construct one of his own in his capital city. Batey raised the intriguing possibility that Jesus had attended Sepphoris’s theater and watched performances of classical tragedies and comedies.⁸² The image is evocative: Jesus, seated amongst the masses in the upper rows of the theater, looking down at the performers of a play of Sophocles or Euripides, soaking up the world of classical culture and mythology, the Beth Netofah valley as his backdrop. Perhaps it was there, Batey speculated, that Jesus had first learned the Greek word *hypocrite*, originally a theatrical term meaning “actor.”⁸³ Perhaps his criticism of hypocrites who “disfigure/hide/disguise” (ἀφανίζουσιν) their faces (Matt. 6:16–18) alluded to the use of masks and paint by actors and mimes.

⁷⁷ Reed, *Archaeology*, 80; Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus*, 81.

⁷⁸ C. Thomas McCollough and Douglas R. Edwards, “Transformations of Space: The Roman Road at Sepphoris,” in Edwards and McCollough, *Archaeology*, 135–142.

⁷⁹ James F. Strange, “Six Campaigns at Sepphoris: The University of South Florida Excavations, 1983–1989,” in Levine, *Galilee*, 339–356.

⁸⁰ James F. Strange, “The Eastern Basilical Building,” in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 117–121 and the numerous reports by James F. Strange, Dennis Groh Thomas R. W. Longstaff and C. Thomas McCollough at <http://www.colby.edu/rel/archaeolo/Israel.htm>; Tsvika Tsuk, “The Aqueducts to Sepphoris,” in Amit, Patrich, and Hirschfeld, *Aqueducts*, 279–294.

⁸¹ S. Yeivin, “Historical and Archaeological Notes,” in Leroy Waterman, *Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan Excavations at Sepphoris, Palestine, in 1931* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), 17–34, esp. 29–30.

⁸² Batey, “Jesus and the Theatre”; *Jesus and the Forgotten City*; “Sepphoris: An Urban Portrait of Jesus,” *BAR* 18:3 (1992): 50–63.

⁸³ Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 23, 24, 27, 29, 51; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42; 12:56; 13:15; Batey, “Jesus and the Theatre,” 572 n. 1.

Not all archaeologists, however, have believed the theater existed in the early first century. Soon after the original excavation, W. F. Albright argued that a second- or third-century CE date was more in line with the majority of Palestine's theaters.⁸⁴ More recently, scholars have differed on the dating of pottery sherds found underneath the theater's stage and walls. James Strange and C. Thomas McCollough argue that the fragments are from the early first century.⁸⁵ Eric and Carol Meyers, Ehud Netzer, and Ze'ev Weiss date them to the late first century or later.⁸⁶ Publication of the fragments in question will enable other archaeologists to review the evidence and hopefully settle the debate.

Batey also portrayed the city as a Roman administrative headquarters and suggested that it, like Sebaste, Paneas, and Caesarea, would have had a temple to Roma and Augustus.⁸⁷ Yet, Josephus depicts the city as primarily Jewish, and he refers to no Romans there in the first century until the time of the revolt. No temple has been discovered, and there is little evidence of pagan cultic activity until the second century.

The presence in Galilee of a city like Sepphoris may explain why we find several references in the gospels to urban features: courts and prisons,⁸⁸ agoras,⁸⁹ wide streets (*plateias*) and narrow streets (*rumas*),⁹⁰ and gates, perhaps those in a city wall.⁹¹ Sepphoris's acropolis was visible from the ridges that overlooked ancient Nazareth, and the two were in easy walking distance of each other. Batey has suggested that Antipas's construction projects could have provided employment for Jesus, whom Mark 6:3 identifies as a *tekton*, a word usually translated "carpenter" but with a range of meaning that

⁸⁴ W. F. Albright, review of Leroy Waterman, *Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan Excavations at Sepphoris, Palestine, in 1931*, in *Classical Weekly* 31 (1938): 148.

⁸⁵ Strange, "Six Campaigns," 342–343; C. Thomas McCollough, "The Roman Theater at Sepphoris: Monumental Statement of Polis at Play," unpublished paper presented at the ASOR/AAR/SBL Southeastern Regional Meeting, Knoxville, Tenn., March 1998.

⁸⁶ C. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, "Sepphoris," *OANE*, vol. 4, 533; Ze'ev Weiss and Ehud Netzer, "Hellenistic and Roman Sepphoris: The Archaeological Evidence," in Nagy et al., *Sepphoris*, 29–37, esp. 32 and "Architectural Development of Sepphoris during the Roman and Byzantine Periods," in Edwards and McCollough, *Archaeology*, 117–130, esp. 122.

⁸⁷ Batey, *Jesus*, 56.

⁸⁸ Matt. 5:25/Luke 12:57–59.

⁸⁹ Matt. 11:16–17/Luke 7:32.

⁹⁰ Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:13; Luke 14:21.

⁹¹ Matt. 7:13–14, Luke 13:23–24.

includes woodworker and stoneworker.⁹² Whether Jesus ever worked there is, of course, impossible to determine (as Batey himself recognized). Despite Nazareth's proximity to the city, none of the gospels ever mentions it. Perhaps Jesus avoided it because he feared Antipas, particularly after the death of John the Baptist. Perhaps he was suspicious of Antipas's embrace of Roman culture, relatively limited though it was. Perhaps the city had poor relations with neighboring villages. Or, perhaps Jesus visited there regularly and we simply have no record of it. Whatever the case, it leaves us in the curious position of not knowing Jesus' stance towards the emergence of the first Greco-Roman city in Galilee.⁹³

Sometime around 20 CE, Antipas founded a second city. With his inland territory, he did not have the option to build on the coast as his father had. He had, however, inherited a sizable lake, the Sea of Galilee, and it was on its western shore that he created Tiberias.⁹⁴ Like Autocratoris, less than twenty miles away, it was apparently the only city to bear its name; no other cities called Tiberias are known from the ancient world. The site chosen was located "in the best region of Galilee," as Josephus put it, overlooking the lake and not far from the hot springs at the village of Hammath. Unfortunately, it was atop an old graveyard, and many people refused to live there. Antipas had to forcibly settle the city, bringing in inhabitants from near and far. Josephus says that "no small contingent" of its population was Galilean, thus implying at the same time that a fair number of the new residents were not. Perhaps Antipas drew some of them from Perea, his other territory.

Tiberias was comparable in size to Sepphoris, with 6,000–12,000 inhabitants.⁹⁵ Less of it has been excavated than of Sepphoris,

⁹² Batey, "Is Not This the Carpenter," reviving a suggestion of Shirley Jackson Case, "Jesus and Sepphoris," *JBL* 45 (1926): 14–22.

⁹³ Willibald Bösen, *Galiläa als Lebensraum und Wirkungsfeld Jesu* (Basel and Vienna: Herder Freiburg, 1985), 69–75; Reed, *Archaeology*, 100–108.

⁹⁴ *Ant.* 18.36–38, *War* 2.168. The date of 20 CE is based on Antipas's coins that refer to the city and are dated to the 24th year of his reign, which began in 4 BCE (Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *OEANE*, vol. 5, 203–206 and James F. Strange, "Tiberias," *ABD*, vol. 6, 547). Michael Avi-Yonah argues for 18 CE, in "The Foundation of Tiberias," *IEJ* 1 (1950–1951): 160–169.

⁹⁵ Reed, *Archaeology*, 82. For overviews of Tiberias, see Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *OEANE*, vol. 5, 203–206; Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1464–1470; Gideon Foerster, "Tiberias,"

because it lies under the modern lakeside resort town of the same name. Josephus refers to a stadium at Tiberias, and archaeologists have recently discovered one,⁹⁶ but it is neither fully excavated nor published. He also mentions a palace with extravagant decorations that was built by the “tetrarch,” which must mean Antipas.⁹⁷ The building was destroyed in the revolt because its artistic depictions of animals offended Jewish sensibilities, and it has never been found. Additional archaeological remains include a gate complex standing outside the ancient city, with a round tower bordering each side. The structure may have been a free-standing arch, serving more to signify Tiberias’s status as a city than to defend it. It has usually been dated to Antipas’s foundation of the city,⁹⁸ but this interpretation has been called into question. As Monika Bernett has pointed out, Josephus records that Vespasian tore down part of the southern wall to enable the entrance of his soldiers; the excavated gate, however, was quite broad – approximately 4.5 meters – more than wide enough for the passage of even heavy equipment. Furthermore, it does not even appear to have been connected to a city wall until the Late Byzantine period. Noting similarities to gates at Gerasa and Scythopolis, Bernett suggests that the excavated gate was built in the second century, not the first.⁹⁹

Josephus was active in Tiberias during the revolt, and he mentions it frequently in *Life* and *War*. Furthermore, Tiberias was the home of Justus, who wrote a history of the revolt that was harshly critical of Josephus. Josephus devotes much of his autobiography to a refutation of Justus’s charges, and the result is that we have a

NEAEHL, vol. 4, 1173–1176; Gideon Foerster, “Tiberias: Excavations in the South of the City,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1470–1473; Strange, “Tiberias,” 547–549; and Tessa Rajak, “Justus of Tiberias,” *Classical Quarterly* 23 (1973): 345–368; Yizhar Hirschfeld, “Excavations at Tiberias Reveal Remains of Church and Possibly Theater,” *BA* 54 (1991): 170–171.

⁹⁶ *Life* 331, *War* 2.618; no author, “Roman Stadium Found in Tiberias,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 17, 2002.

⁹⁷ *Life* 65, 68. Josephus cannot have had Agrippa I or II in mind, since both were kings, not tetrarchs.

⁹⁸ For example, Yizhar Hirschfeld, *A Guide to Antiquity Sites in Tiberias* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1992), 25–26; Hirschfeld, “Tiberias,” *OEANE*.

⁹⁹ Monika Bernett, “Der Kaiserkult als teil der Politischen Geschichte Iudeas unter den Herodianern und Roemern (30 v. – 66n. Chr.)” (Habilitationsschrift, Munich 2002), 202. I am greatly indebted to Monika Bernett and Rami Arav for their help in understanding this gate.

glimpse into the city's life that would have eluded us otherwise.¹⁰⁰ From Tiberias's earliest years, at least one office, the market overseer, was known as the *agoranomos*, a traditional Greek title already used in other cities in Palestine and across the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁰¹ Among the first at Tiberias to hold that office, appointed by Antipas himself, was Agrippa I, the future ruler of Palestine.¹⁰² Two lead market weights, one from Antipas's reign (c. 31 CE) and the other from that of Agrippa II, further confirm the use of the title *agoranomos*.¹⁰³ Josephus also provides us with considerable detail about Tiberias's government. At the time of the revolt, it resembled that of an eastern Hellenistic (not western Roman) city, with ten *protoi*,¹⁰⁴ a *boule* of six hundred men,¹⁰⁵ and public assemblies to address serious issues. These assemblies met sometimes in the *pro-seuche*¹⁰⁶ and sometimes in the stadium, the latter large enough to hold thousands.¹⁰⁷

The evidence we have for Tiberias exemplifies the methodological issues facing anyone trying to understand the Galilean context of Jesus. Almost all of our information comes from after Jesus' lifetime, though sometimes only by a few decades. Only the palace can be associated with certainty with Antipas. Though the other buildings could have been built by him, it is just as possible that they were constructed later.

Structures elsewhere in Galilee are equally difficult to date and identify. Underneath the fourth-century synagogue at Hammath Tiberias, famous for its mosaic of the twelve astrological signs,

¹⁰⁰ Rajak, "Justus."

¹⁰¹ In addition to the Hellenistic-era examples mentioned in Chapter One, note a first-century CE weight from Tyre (Douglas R. Edwards and H. J. Katzenstein, "Tyre [Place]," *ABD*, vol. 6, 686–692); and two weights at Paneas, probably second-century CE and the other probably later (*SEG* 45.1941–1942). Richardson describes two from the period of Herod the Great (*Herod*, 204). For overviews of *agoranomoi* in Palestine, see Frederic Manns, *Some Weights of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods*, trans. Godfrey Kloetzli (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), 41–48 and Sperber, *City*, 32–47.

¹⁰² *Ant.* 18.149.

¹⁰³ Shraga Qedar, "Two Lead Weights of Herod Antipas and Agrippa II and the Early History of Tiberias," *INJ* 9 (1986–1987): 29–35. The second weight mentioned above does not name a city, but probably comes from Tiberias, as does, perhaps, another weight discussed by Alla Kushnir-Stein, "Two Inscribed Lead Weights of Agrippa II," *ZPE* 141 (2002): 295–300; cf. *SEG* 42.1473, 43.1076.

¹⁰⁴ *Life* 69, 296; cf. *War* 2.639.

¹⁰⁵ *War* 2.639, 641; *Life* 64, 169, 279, 284.

¹⁰⁶ *Life* 277–280.

¹⁰⁷ *Life* 92, 331; *War* 2.618, 3.539–542.

archaeologists found the remnants of a rectangular columned building from the first or second century. Noting the building's design, columns, and nearby water reservoirs and conduits, they suggested that the building was a gymnasium or palaestra. Because of the later synagogue, however, the structure was only partially excavated, and the full extent of its walls is not clear. The primary excavator acknowledged that it was difficult to determine the building's purpose, noting that it was also possible that it was an earlier synagogue.¹⁰⁸ A rectangular building at Magdala/Taricheae decorated with Doric columns was initially identified as a "mini-synagogue," but its purpose, too, remains unclear, and it has also been interpreted as a springhouse.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of how these buildings were used, their basic shape and use of columns reflect Greco-Roman influence.

At Beth She'arim, as at Sepphoris, remains from a first-century CE basilical building have been found underneath a later structure.¹¹⁰ Basilicas, rectangular buildings with interior rows of columns that formed long aisles, were a distinctly Roman architectural form. They were used for a wide range of purposes, from civil administration, legal proceedings, and merchant transactions. Unfortunately, not enough evidence has survived from the earliest phase of either the Beth She'arim or Sepphoris building to determine their functions.¹¹¹

We know from Josephus that the stadium at Tiberias was not the only example of sports architecture in Galilee; he also refers to a revolt-era hippodrome at Taricheae. This hippodrome, like

¹⁰⁸ Moshe Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias: Early Synagogues and the Hellenistic and Roman Remains* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983), 15–19.

¹⁰⁹ Virgilio C. Corbo, "Scavi archeologici Magdala, 1971–1973," *LA* 24 (1974): 19–37; Mordechai Aviam, "Magdala," *OEANE*, vol. 3, 399–400. E. Netzer interprets it as a springhouse in "The Synagogues from the Second Temple Period according to Archaeological Finds and in Light of the Literary Sources," in G. Claudio Bottini, Leah Di Segni and L. Daniel Chrupcala, eds., *One Land – Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislaw Loffreda* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2003), 277–285; cf. Jürgen Zangenberg, "Magdala – Reich an Fisch und reich durch Fisch," in Gabriele Faßbeck, Sandra Fortner, Andrea Rottloff, and Jürgen Zangenberg, eds., *Leben am See Gennesaret* (Mainz am Rhein: Phillip von Zabern, 2003), 93–98, esp. 96, 98.

¹¹⁰ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 17.

¹¹¹ Sperber, *City*, 73–76. Note also the presence of a basilical structure at Gamla that may pre-date those of Galilee (Danny Syon and Zvi Yavor, "Gamla 1997–2000," *HA* 114 [2002]: 2–4).

Tiberias's stadium, was sometimes used for public assemblies.¹¹² Presumably, the same types of athletic competitions occurred in these buildings as took place in others in the Roman world: horse-races in the hippodromes and footraces and similar games in the stadium. There is no evidence at all of gladiator shows in these structures or anywhere else in first-century Galilee, just as there is no evidence for an amphitheater, the building where the bloody contests usually took place. It seems more than a stretch to argue, as one scholar has, that Jesus' disciple Simon grew up watching combat sports in the stadium at Tiberias, and, even less likely that this childhood interest lies behind his supposedly mercurial disposition and his nickname, Peter.¹¹³

No pagan shrine has yet been discovered from first-century Galilee,¹¹⁴ but some have argued that Bethsaida, located within walking distance in the tetrarch Philip's territory, was home to a temple of the imperial cult.¹¹⁵ The city is mentioned several times in the gospels, as the site where Jesus healed a blind man,¹¹⁶ where he multiplied the loaves;¹¹⁷ as the object of his rebuke;¹¹⁸ and as the home of Philip, Andrew, and John.¹¹⁹ If an imperial temple stood there, then Jesus' first followers would definitely have had some exposure to this key aspect of Roman culture.¹²⁰

The exact location of Bethsaida is a matter of considerable dispute, but recent attention has centered on the site of et-Tell.¹²¹ The excavation team there has proposed that a rectangular,

¹¹² *War* 2.599, *Life* 132–133.

¹¹³ H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976), 106.

¹¹⁴ Note, however the Early Roman remains of a temple at Jebel Bilat in southern Lebanon (Aviam, "Borders," esp. 14).

¹¹⁵ Though John (1:43–44; 12:21) and Ptolemy (*Geography* 5.71) regarded Bethsaida as part of Galilee, Josephus apparently did not (*War* 2.168, 2.252, *Ant.* 20.159; cf. *Ant.* 18.28, *Life* 399). The city passed to the province of Syria after Philip's death, and in 54 CE, it was given to Agrippa II (*War* 2.252, *Ant.* 20.159).

¹¹⁶ Mark 8:22–26.

¹¹⁷ Luke 9:10–17.

¹¹⁸ Matt. 11:21–24/Luke 10:13–16.

¹¹⁹ John 1:44, 12:21. In contrast, Mark 1:29 reports that James and John came from Capernaum.

¹²⁰ Whether Jesus was familiar with the building depends in part on the date of his death.

¹²¹ Rami Arav, Richard A. Freund, and John F. Shroder, Jr., "Bethsaida Rediscovered," *BAR* 26:1 (2000): 44–56; Rami Arav, "Bethsaida," *OEANE*, vol. 1, 302–305; John F. Shroder, Jr.

columned, basalt building was an imperial shrine built by Philip.¹²² Its different sections, they argue, correspond to the main parts of a typical Roman temple, with a porch, an approaching hall (*pronaos*), a main room (*naos*), and a room at the rear (*opisthodomous*).

Yet, in several respects, the building bears little resemblance to other temples in the Roman East. Those temples, particularly those that were the main ones in their cities, were often situated within a larger precinct, atop a large platform, or inside an enclosure wall, with a sizable ramp or flight of stairs leading up to their porch.¹²³ This structure, however, had none of those characteristics; in fact, it does not even appear to have had a paved floor.¹²⁴ Nor, actually, is its floor plan typical.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the fieldstones and slabs making up its walls¹²⁶ are quite different from the elegant courses of dressed ashlar in the imperial temples built by Philip's father, Herod.

Proponents of the identification of the building as a temple point for support to a small gray figurine found nearby that depicts a woman with curly, veiled hair – characteristics, they argue, that identify the woman as Augustus's wife, Julia.¹²⁷ The presence of

and Moshe Inbar, "Geological and Geographic Background to the Bethsaida Excavations," in Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund, eds., *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee* (Kirksville, Mo.: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1995), vol. 1, 65–98; James F. Strange, "Beth-saida," *ABD*, vol. 1, 692–693; and Chancey, *Myth*, 107 n. 243. My understanding of the issues regarding et-Tell was greatly enriched by conversations with R. Steven Notley.

¹²² Rami Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations: Preliminary Report, 1994–1996," 3–113, esp. 19–24, in Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund, eds., *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee* (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 1999), vol. 2; Rami Arav, "An Incense Shovel from Bethsaida," *BAR* 23:1 (1997): 32; Arav, Freund, and Shroder, "Bethsaida Rediscovered"; Fred Strickert, *Bethsaida: Home of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1989), 103–105.

¹²³ Ball, *Rome*, 317–356.

¹²⁴ Arav carefully notes some of these objections in "Bethsaida Excavations," 23–24.

¹²⁵ Compare the floor plans in Ball, *Rome*, 317–356. Though the building appears to be different from most imperial temples, its basic rectangular shape is similar to ones at Messina and Ancyra (Heidi Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti: Eine Studie zu den Tempeln des ersten römischen Kaisers* [Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1985], plates 30 and 40).

¹²⁶ Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations," 19; cf. Map no. 2 on the CD-ROM accompanying Arav, *Bethsaida*, vol. 2.

¹²⁷ Rami Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations: Preliminary Report, 1987–1993," in *Bethsaida*, vol. 1, 3–64, esp. 21; Strickert, *Bethsaida*, 106. Aside from the hairstyle, this figurine appears

a figurine of Julia would be significant, since Philip renamed Bethsaida Julias. Though Josephus says he named the city after Augustus's daughter Julia,¹²⁸ the excavators note that she had been disgraced in 2 BCE and suggest that Philip named it after the emperor's wife instead – thus the potential relevance of the figurine. The latter Julia died in 29 CE, and Philip honored her on his coins the following year. The city could have been renamed in her memory.¹²⁹ Yet whether the figurine is, in fact, Augustus's wife Julia is uncertain. Though she was often depicted with such hair and a veil, neither feature was unique to her.¹³⁰ The figurine could just as easily have been of someone else – or of no one in particular.

A bronze incense shovel, found nearby in a first-century CE refuse pit, has also been cited as strong evidence of emperor worship.¹³¹ The responsibility for the association of such shovels with emperor worship lies partly with the great Yigael Yadin, who found similar shovels in Bar Kokhba period caves near the Dead Sea. Yadin claimed that other shovels had been found in “centers of pagan worship and in stations of the Roman Legions and Auxilia,” but his own inventory of parallels does not support this

similar to a Hellenistic-period one at Yoqne'am (Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom, “Stamped Jar Handles and Terracotta Fragments,” in A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar, Y. Portugal, et al., *Yoqne'am I: The Late Periods* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1996], 60–65, esp. 65).

¹²⁸ *Ant.* 18.28, *War* 2.168.

¹²⁹ John T. Greene, “The Honorific Naming of Bethsaida-Julias,” in Arav and Freund, *Bethsaida*, vol. 2, 333–346; Mark D. Smith, “A Tale of Two Julias: Julia, Julias, and Josephus,” in Arav and Freund, *Bethsaida*, vol. 2, 333–346; Strickert, *Bethsaida*, 91–107; Fred Strickert, “The Coins of Philip,” in Arav and Freund, eds., *Bethsaida*, vol. 1, 165–189, esp. 181–184; *Treasury*, 229 no. 106.

¹³⁰ On Livia's hairstyles, see Elizabeth Bartman, *Portraits of Livia: Imaging the Imperial Woman in Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5, 32–39; on the veil, see 41, 44. The depiction of the figurine in Arav, “Bethsaida Preliminary Report, 1987–1993,” 21 suggests that the curly hair was divided into segments, a characteristic shared by only a minority of Livia depictions (e.g., Bartman's discussion of the “Diva Augusta” type in *Portraits*, 144–145.) The combination of the veil and the segmented, curly hair appears even rarer; for a possible parallel, see Rolf Winkes, *Livia: Octavia Julia* (Louvain-La-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain; Providence: Brown University, 1995), 132 no. 56.

¹³¹ Strickert, *Bethsaida*, 105; Arav, “Bethsaida Excavations,” vol. 2, 22; Arav, “Bethsaida Preliminary Report, 1994–1996,” 22; Arav, “Incense Shovel”; Arav, Freund, Shroder, “Bethsaida Rediscovered,” 56; and especially Richard A. Freund, “The Incense Shovel of Bethsaida and Synagogue Iconography in Late Antiquity,” in *Bethsaida*, vol. 2, 413–460.

contention.¹³² The reality is that of the several dozen known bronze shovels, few have been recovered in controlled archaeological contexts.¹³³ Their exact provenances and functions are largely unknown. Not a single one is recorded as having been unearthed at a temple of the emperor cult. Only one is known with certainty to have been discovered in a cultic context, a votive deposit underneath a Hellenistic-period temple at Beersheba in Judea.¹³⁴ The name “Serapis” on the handle of another also implies a cultic function.¹³⁵

Incense was, of course, offered to the emperor and to other deities,¹³⁶ but this fact alone does not prove that incense shovels invariably should be associated with cultic acts. They may have had other functions: at least three are known to have been found in tombs – one of them Jewish – apparently placed there as funerary gifts.¹³⁷ Another bore the inscription “Good luck to the purchaser” – hardly evidence for temple use, though it does not preclude use in a household ritual.¹³⁸ It is entirely possible that such shovels were sometimes used merely for fumigation.¹³⁹ Furthermore, Jewish use of incense shovels is attested by rabbinic sources and suggested by Late Roman and Byzantine period synagogue mosaics.¹⁴⁰ A

¹³² Yigael Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1963), 58.

¹³³ Leonard Victor Rutgers, “Incense Shovels at Sepphoris,” in Meyers, ed., *Galilee, 177–198*, esp. 197–198 and Yadin, *Finds*, 54–58. For the shovels most similar to that at et-Tell, see Yadin, *Finds*, 51 no. 5, 55 c and 57 d, f; Rebecca Martin Nagy, “Incense Shovel,” in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 179; and one described in David Gordon Mitten, “Two New Bronze Objects in the McDaniel Collection: An Etruscan Strainer and a Roman Incense Shovel,” *HSCP* 69 (1965): 163–167.

¹³⁴ Yohanan Aharoni, “Excavations at Tel Beer-sheba,” *TA* 2 (1975): 146–168, esp. 164 and pl. 36:1.

¹³⁵ K. Herbert, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions in the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1972), 14–16 no. 5, plate 5.

¹³⁶ S. R. F. Price, *Ritual and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 208, 228.

¹³⁷ Rutgers, “Incense Shovels,” 197–198; on the Jewish tomb, see A. Mazar, “A Burial Cave on French Hill,” *Atiqot* 8 (1982): 41–45 (Hebrew; English summary on 5).

¹³⁸ J. H. Iliffe, “Greek and Latin Inscriptions in the Museum,” *QDAP* 2 (1933): 120–126, esp. 123 no. 5, plate 46a.

¹³⁹ Nagy, “Incense Shovel.”

¹⁴⁰ Though most of the rabbinic references are to temple practices, Freund has shown that Jews also burned incense in other contexts (“Incense Shovel”; cf. Rutgers, “Incense Shovels”).

considerable number of incense shovels, albeit ceramic rather than bronze, have been discovered in Jewish domestic contexts at Sephoris.¹⁴¹ What all of this suggests is that the bronze incense shovel at et-Tell, like the figurine, provides less support for the identification of the building as a temple than might be thought, and even less support for a more specific identification as an imperial shrine. Because the shovel was found in a refuse pit, we can know little about its owner or purpose.

Likewise, the fact that a city was named in honor of the emperor or a member of his family does not guarantee that it had an imperial temple, as the apparent lack of such cults at first-century Sepphoris-Autocratoris and Tiberias shows. Any number of future finds could strengthen the arguments of the excavators of et-Tell, such as an altar, a statue, bones of sacrificed animals, dedicatory or other inscriptions, or indisputably cultic implements (recovered within the temple itself, rather than nearby). On the basis of the currently available evidence, however, it appears highly unlikely that this building was a temple dedicated to the emperor.

BEYOND GALILEE

Though Hellenistic and Roman cultures continued to impact architecture and urban organization elsewhere in Palestine, all too often first-century finds are too scarce to allow us to draw detailed conclusions. The overall impression is that between the death of Herod the Great and the first Jewish Revolt, local adaptation of Greco-Roman architectural conventions was sporadic and geographically spotty. The region's major Romanization in this regard was yet to come.

We do know that in Philip's territory, Paneas was renamed Caesarea Philippi and continued to grow.¹⁴² At Gamla, a synagogue built in the first century BCE – one of the earliest synagogues in existence – continued to function until its destruction in the revolt.¹⁴³ Its rectangular shape, like the designs of later synagogues,

¹⁴¹ Rutgers, "Incense Shovels."

¹⁴² *Ant.* 18.28.

¹⁴³ Steven Fine, "Gamla," *OEANE*, vol. 2, 382; Shemaryahu Gutman, "Gamala," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 459–463.

clearly reflected Greco-Roman influence.¹⁴⁴ Tel Anafa, in the Huleh, was re-occupied, and its new settlers showed a fondness for Italian-style pans and fine wares from Italy, Asia Minor, and Cyprus.¹⁴⁵

Our knowledge of the coastal cities is limited, with the notable exception of Caesarea. Herod's prize city became the administrative capital of the new province of Judea and maintained its position as the most Roman city in Palestine. The king's seaside palace was converted to the governor's praetorium,¹⁴⁶ additional warehouses were built, and an amphitheater may have been constructed in the northeastern part of the city.¹⁴⁷ A Latin inscription demonstrates that Pontius Pilate (26–36 CE) built a shrine to emperor Tiberius.¹⁴⁸

We are also largely in the dark regarding the extent of Hellenistic and Roman culture in the Decapolis cities. Josephus characterizes Gadara and Hippos (as well as Gaza) as Greek cities, but too few first-century remains have survived to allow us to determine exactly what that label meant.¹⁴⁹ Only Gerasa is known to have adopted orthogonal planning, which it did in the middle of the century. In this regard, it went beyond the Hippodamian grid of the stereotypical Hellenistic city by making one street its main thoroughfare – the *cardo maximus* of the Roman city. It also went beyond the typical Roman city of the time by lining that *cardo* with colonnades, anticipating a custom that would become even more common in the following century.¹⁵⁰ The city also built a new temple of Zeus Olympios, as demonstrated by an inscription recording gifts to it by a priest of Tiberius Caesar and the city's gymnasiarchs.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ See discussion of this point in Chapter Four.

¹⁴⁵ Berlin, "Plain Wares," 104–106.

¹⁴⁶ Burrell, "Palace."

¹⁴⁷ Richardson, *City*, 108–110.

¹⁴⁸ *GLI*, 67–70.

¹⁴⁹ *Ant.* 17.320, *War* 2.97; Gideon Foerster and Yoram Tsafrir note that an inscription on a second- or third-century altar at Scythopolis refers to it as a Greek city ("Nysa-Scythopolis – A New Inscription and the Titles of the City on its Coins," *INJ* 9 [1986–1987]: 53–58).

¹⁵⁰ Arthur Segal, *From Function to Monument* (Oxford: Oxbow Press, 1997), 5; Ball, *Rome*, 261–272. On the difference between Hellenistic and Roman city planning, see Ball, *Rome*, 248–256.

¹⁵¹ Welles, "Inscriptions," nos. 2–4, *SEG* 35.1568–1569; cf. Welles, "Inscriptions," nos. 5–6.

As for Jerusalem, Josephus mentions that it had a hippodrome at the time of the Revolt, though he does not identify who built it.¹⁵² He also makes several references to a *xystus*, an exercise trail of some sort, which he specifies as being physically connected to the temple; perhaps it stood at the location of the old Seleucid-era gymnasium.¹⁵³ The city used Greek titles for its officials. Josephus quotes a letter from Emperor Claudius to the “the officials, *boule*, and *demos* of Jerusalem”¹⁵⁴ and elsewhere refers to *dekaprotoi* and a *bouleuterion*, or meeting hall for the *boule*.¹⁵⁵ Some of the city’s elites indulged themselves in the luxury of a hot bath; excavations have found four houses with private bathing facilities that included hypocaust systems and *mikvot*.¹⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

Ironically, Pompey, Gabinius, and the early Roman governors apparently did less to introduce Hellenistic and Roman architecture to Palestine than did an Idumean Jew, Herod the Great. Herod’s city Caesarea Maritima, in particular, combined features of both Greek and Roman cities in a fashion that was unprecedented at its time of construction. His enthusiastic sponsorship of Greco-Roman conventions also included Sebaste, Jerusalem, his many palaces, and cities throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Surprisingly, however, it does not appear to have extended into Galilee. When considering the first fifty years of the Roman era, it is important to keep in mind differences within Palestine between cities and between regions. Sepphoris was not Caesarea.

Antipas inherited the territory his father had neglected, and he poured his own efforts into it. Under his reign, Hellenistic and Roman influence became far more visible in Galilee’s architecture than it had ever been before. When he rebuilt Sepphoris, at least

¹⁵² *War* 2.44 and *Ant.* 17.255.

¹⁵³ *War* 2.344, 4.580–581, 5.144, 6.191, 6.324–325, 6.377; Roller, *Building Program*, 178; Harris, *Greek Athletics*, 39–40.

¹⁵⁴ *Ant.* 20.11.

¹⁵⁵ *Ant.* 20.11, 194; *War* 2.405, 5.532, 6.354; cf. Mark 15.43, Cassius Dio 66.6.2. Levine collects the references in *Jerusalem*, 266.

¹⁵⁶ Reich, “Hot Bath-House,” 103–104.

some of its streets were laid on a grid, an indication of the urban planning that characterized both Greek and Roman cities. Presumably the planning was more extensive than the two streets intersecting at a right angle that archaeologists have discovered, but just how extensive is not yet clear. The basilica on the eastern plateau, though little of it remains from the first century, was a distinctively Roman building. Antipas probably reused his father's palace at Sepphoris, and he built another at his wholly new foundation, Tiberias. Probably both palaces reflected the mingling of Hellenistic and Roman characteristics that his father's had. Tiberias used Greek titles for positions within its civic government – *agoranomoi*, a *boule*, and *dekaprotai*; Sepphoris probably did likewise. At some point, Tiberias acquired Hellenistic sports architecture, a stadium. These cities were a physical expression of Antipas's desire to express himself as a man of considerable stature who was fully in touch with the cultural currents of the Roman world. The names he bestowed upon them made his own loyalties and subservient status clear.

Greco-Roman architectural influence was not limited to the two main cities. A hippodrome stood at Magdala/Taricheae by the mid-60s, buildings there and in Hammath Tiberias used columns, and a basilical building was erected at Beth She'arim. Upper Galilee, with no major cities, did not yet reflect the new influx of Greco-Roman culture that was felt in Lower Galilee. In this regard, Eric M. Meyers' observations about the differences between the cultural climates of the two areas still stand.¹⁵⁷

It is difficult to talk about how different sectors of Galilean society reacted to the newly arrived Greco-Roman architectural culture. Much of that culture was imposed from the top down, by Antipas. But when were the other buildings described above built, in his reign or afterwards? Who paid for them? If we had a larger corpus of inscriptions, perhaps we would be able to identify patrons from among the two Agrippas, or the cities' elites, or (after 44 CE) Roman administrators. But we have no such resource. Not a single first-century building inscription survives to tell us the name of a donor.

¹⁵⁷ See the sources cited in my Introduction.

As for the masses, how did they respond? Did they view these buildings as “progress” or merely as the visible expression of who had power and wealth and, by implication, who did not? Because the structures apparently had no precedents in the region, many people probably associated them with the new Roman domination, regardless of whether the styles of specific buildings were more properly characterized as Hellenistic or Roman, and whether they had been built by a Herodian client king or someone else. The images of animals in Antipas’s palace at Tiberias were offensive enough to some that it was burned down in the angry, early days of the revolt – but apparently not offensive enough to have attracted a mob in the previous six decades. Exactly what types of competitions were held in Tiberias’s stadium and Magdala’s hippodrome, who competed in them, how often they took place, and who came as spectators – all these matters are wholly unknown. Presumably, any games were also viewed by some as a foreign innovation, but did that foreignness provoke hostility or curiosity? Many commoners apparently had no problem using the facilities for public meetings, if the need arose.

The Roman amphitheater made no appearance in Galilee in the first century, nor was it present elsewhere in Palestine aside from Caesarea and Jerusalem. Gladiatorial spectacles, a favorite entertainment of the Romans, would have been limited to those two cities; we have no evidence that any took place in Galilee. When Agrippa I decided to build an amphitheater, he built it not in his own territory but far to the north at the Roman colony of Berytus.¹⁵⁸

Other buildings characteristic of Greco-Roman cities appear to have been uncommon, if present at all. The theater at Sepphoris was probably not constructed until after the Revolt, and Tiberias had not yet acquired one. No first-century temples have been found, unless future finds confirm arguments that one stood at nearby Bethsaida. Public bathhouses (as opposed to private baths, such as those in Jerusalem homes and Herodian palaces) made no inroads in Galilee or anywhere in Palestine.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ *Ant.* 19.335–337.

¹⁵⁹ If the bathhouse at Ramat Hanadiv is post-Herodian, it is possible that it was a public facility, though more likely it was a private facility.

Thus when considering the “Greco-Roman” milieu of pre-70 CE Galilee, it is essential not to load the term with content imported from elsewhere. Both Sepphoris and Tiberias, for example, exhibited Greco-Roman urban architectural culture to a degree unprecedented for Galilee, but neither compared to Caesarea Maritima or Gerasa, much less to some of the other cities in the Roman world, like Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia, Ephesus, or Aphrodisias. Antipas’s rebuilding of Sepphoris did not suddenly transform central Lower Galilee into a beacon of Roman culture. Though Antipas had introduced urban architecture to the region on an unprecedented scale, the interaction of Greco-Roman culture and local Galilean culture had only just begun.

CHAPTER 4

The transformation of the landscape in the second and third centuries CE

After the arrival of large, long-term Roman garrisons, Palestine's landscape was transformed as Greco-Roman urban and monumental architecture became common features in many cities. In this chapter, I will discuss some of the changes that characterized civic life in the second and third centuries. I begin with the adoption of new civic names and titles. Next, I provide an inventory of where Roman urban architecture appeared. Last, I consider the issue of who was responsible for the construction of these buildings. Throughout the chapter, I consider developments throughout Palestine in order to keep those in Galilee in perspective.

CIVIC TITLES AND NAMES

One effect of the heightened Roman presence in Palestine was the establishment of new colonies. Caesarea Maritima was elevated to colonial status by Vespasian shortly after the first revolt, taking the official name *Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesarea*.¹ The Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina had been founded at Jerusalem by 132 CE.² Military veterans settled at both cities. Inscriptions show that Caesarea adopted Roman-style civic institutions, with *duumviri*, *decurions*, and *pontifices*,³ and Aelia Capitolina probably did likewise. Both cities placed Latin inscriptions on their coins. In the late second century and throughout the first half of the third, numerous cities were awarded the status of colony⁴ and a few

¹ See discussion in Chapter Two.

² Cassius Dio 69.12.

³ *GLI*, 6 and inscriptions nos. 3, 8, 10, 11, 15.

⁴ Tyre (193 CE), Sebaste (197 CE), Petra (218 CE), Sidon (218 CE), Bosra (231 CE), Neapolis (244 CE), and Philippopolis (244 CE) (Arie Kindler, "The Status of Cities in The

received the still more vaunted title of “metropolis.”⁵ By then, however, the designation “colony” appears to have been purely honorific; the Romans had ceased to establish genuine colonies occupied by military veterans. According to a late rabbinic tradition, Judah ha-Nasi appealed to the emperor to have Tiberias granted the rank of colony, but the story may be legendary.⁶ Archaeological evidence of colonial status is lacking.⁷

Other cities also adopted names that honored the Romans.⁸ Joppa apparently added the name “Flavia,” after the imperial dynasty,⁹ and a new city, Flavia Neapolis, was founded at the bottom of Mt. Gerizim c. 81 CE by Vespasian.¹⁰ Emmaus became Nicopolis c. 161 CE and then later Marcia Aurelia Antoninopolis Nicopolis.¹¹ Antipatris assumed a similar name.¹² In the third century, the names of numerous cities were changed to honor the Severan emperors, including Eleutheropolis and Diospolis (Lod).¹³ At some point, Aelia Capitolina added a name honoring Commodus.¹⁴ Second- and third-century CE coins from other cities show that they re-named themselves after individuals who had figured prominently in their histories. Gaba and Pella both took the name “Philippeia,” probably after the proconsul of Syria c. 61/60 BCE, Marcus

Syro-Palestinian Area as Reflected by Their Coins,” *INJ* 6–7 [1982–1983]: 79–87) and perhaps Scythopolis (early fourth century) (*SEG* 43.1073/ 20.1964).

⁵ In Palestine, Caesarea Maritima (222 CE) received the title. Cities in adjacent areas that received the status include Tyre (93/94 CE), Petra (118 CE), Sidon (218 CE), and Bosra (244 CE) (Kindler, “Status”).

⁶ *B. Avodah Zarah* 10a; Millar, “Roman *Coloniae*,” 10. Shimon Applebaum notes a *ketubah* from 347 CE that may refer to Tiberias as a colony (“Syria-Palaestina as a Province of the Severan Empire,” in *Judaea*, 143–154, esp. 150–151 n. 51.).

⁷ Meshorer argued that an early third-century coin of Tiberias had a faint and incomplete Latin inscription reading CO . . . TIBE, which he interpreted as a reference to colonial status (*City-Coins*, 35, 113 no. 86). Joshua Ezra Burns, however, recently inspected the coin in question and found no support for Meshorer’s reading (personal communication).

⁸ Millar, *RNE*, 354; Kindler, “Status,” 84–85; A. H. M. Jones, “The Urbanization of Palestine,” *JRS* 21 (1931) 78–85, esp. 82.

⁹ *City-Coins*, 24.

¹⁰ Isaac, “Roman Colonies,” 95–96, *City-Coins*, 48–49.

¹¹ *City-Coins*, 56.

¹² Marcia Aurelia Antoniana Antipatris (*City-Coins*, 115 no. 150–152).

¹³ Eleutheropolis became Lucia Septimia Severa Eleutheropolis (*City-Coins*, 64), and Diospolis (Lod) became Lucia Septimia Severa (*City-Coins*, 55).

¹⁴ Ya’akov Meshorer, *The Coinage of Aelia Capitolina* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1989), 62–63; cf. Smallwood, *Jews*, 492.

Philippus, and Canatha called itself “Gabinia.” Gadara picked a more influential figure to commemorate, naming itself Pompeia.¹⁵

Galilee’s cities participated in this trend. Beginning in 101 CE, the coins of Tiberias show that it proclaimed itself *Claudiopolis*.¹⁶ It is possible that Tiberias had taken this name during Claudius’s reign (41–54 CE), though if that were the case, one would have expected the name to have appeared on the city coins issued in 53 CE or on the coin Agrippa II minted with the city’s name.¹⁷ Perhaps the name change is associated with Tiberias’s assignment to the Roman province of Judea after Agrippa’s death. The city may have recognized its admission into the province by commemorating its earlier history under direct Roman governance (44–61 CE), naming itself after the first emperor who had ruled it directly.

During the revolt, Sepphoris had renamed itself *Neronias* (following the example of Caesarea Philippi, which had also adopted the name) and *Eirenopolis* (“City of Peace”),¹⁸ but it appears to have quickly dropped both names after the war.¹⁹ By the mid-second century, it was known as *Diocaesarea*, a name identifying “Caesar” as “Zeus.” The new name does not seem to have been popular among Jews; the rabbis continued to refer to the city by its Hebrew name, *Zippori*.²⁰

¹⁵ Barkay “New Coin Types” and “Coins.” The cities may have adopted these names earlier, but if so, it is unclear why they did not put the names on their coins until the second and third centuries.

¹⁶ A. Kindler, *The Coins of Tiberias* (Tiberias: Hamei Tiberia, 1961), 55–57 nos. 3–6; *City-Coins*, 112–113 nos. 77–80. I interpret the inscriptions as *Tiberias Claudiopolis*, rather than as *Tiberias Claudia* (Meshorer’s reconstruction) because one of the coins under Trajan reads *TIBEPIEQN KAAVDIO* (*City-Coins*, 112 no. 79). A coin from 186 CE has a fuller name, “*Tiberias Claudiopolis* which is in Syria Palaestina” (*TIB KAA CYP ΠΑΛ*) (*City-Coins*, 113 no. 85).

¹⁷ *Treasury*, 106–107, 177–178, 261. Cf. Gaba’s renaming itself after Claudius in the first century (*City-Coins*, 113 no. 96).

¹⁸ On Sepphoris, see discussion in Chapter Six. On Caesarea Philippi, see *Treasury*, 233 no. 132.

¹⁹ Presumably Sepphoris discarded its wartime name “*Neronia*” shortly after Nero’s death and the Roman Senate’s proclamation of a *damnatio memoriae*.

²⁰ The name appears on second- and third-century coins; see discussion in Chapter Six. On literary references to the city, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 227. Like many other city names adopted in the Roman and Byzantine periods, *Diocaesarea* would fade from use after the Arab conquest in the eighth century, replaced by a Semitic name, in this case, *Saffuriyya*.

Exactly when Sepphoris assumed the name Diocaesarea is difficult to determine. It is absent from city coins struck during Trajan's reign (98–117 CE) but appears on coins minted under Antoninus Pius (138–161 CE).²¹ It is also found in a Greek inscription on the milestone from 120 CE on the Sepphoris–Legio road.²² Whether the Greek inscription, which provides the distance to Sepphoris, is original or was added later is difficult to determine.²³

The name Diocaesarea may have been chosen to honor Hadrian, who was identified with Zeus/Jupiter.²⁴ Many cities throughout the Empire, grateful for the emperor's visits or benefactions, renamed themselves after him.²⁵ If, however, Sepphoris chose "Diocaesarea" to flatter Hadrian, it was a unique selection; no other cities adopted that name.²⁶ Instead, cities that honored Hadrian typically called themselves Hadrianopolis, or added Hadriane to their old name (as Petra did, becoming Hadriane Petra).²⁷ Some scholars have suggested that Sepphoris adopted the name to honor Hadrian on his tour of Syria, Palestine, and Arabia in 130 CE,²⁸ but there is no evidence that he passed through Galilee.²⁹ Other explanations include A. H. M. Jones's proposal that the name reflected a decline in Jewish power at the city and perhaps a transfer of government

²¹ Ya'akov Meshorer in "Sepphoris and Rome," in O. Mørkholm and N. M. Waggoner, eds., *Greek Numismatics and Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Margaret Thompson* (Belgium: Cultura Press, 1979), 159–171; "Coins of Sepphoris"; *City-Coins*, 36–37.

²² Isaac and Roll, "Judaea."

²³ Though it is often assumed that Greek distance inscriptions on milestones are contemporary with the primary Latin inscriptions, no one (to my knowledge) has demonstrated this. The fact that the scripts of Greek inscriptions are often much cruder than those of the Latin inscriptions suggests they may be secondary; see Isaac and Roll, "Judaea," 184 n. 14.

²⁴ Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 138–139.

²⁵ On Hadrian's benefactions, see Boatwright's excellent study, *Hadrian*.

²⁶ The name Diocaesarea predates Hadrian; a city in Cilicia and one in Cappadocia adopted it in the first century CE (T. S. McKay, "Diocaesarea," in Richard Stillwell et al., eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976], 275–276; cf. Jones, *Cities*, 74, 180, 210–213).

²⁷ Stephen Mitchell, "Imperial Building in the Eastern Roman Provinces," *HSCP* 91 (1987): 333–365, esp. 357–358; Boatwright, *Hadrian*, 104–105; Spijkerman, *Coins*, 218–222.

²⁸ For example, George Frances Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine (Galilee, Samaria and Judaea)* (London: British Museum, 1914), xi.

²⁹ Anthony R. Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (London and New York: Routledge 1997), 215–268.

from a Jewish *boule* to a gentile one³⁰ and Meshorer's suggestion that it reflected Hadrian's punishment of Sepphoris in the wake of the Bar Kokhba war – even though there is no evidence the city participated in that revolt.³¹ Most likely, the name simply reflects the new political realities in Galilee after the arrival of Roman troops. The local *boule* probably adopted it as a gesture of loyalty to the occupying forces, possibly during Hadrian's reign but perhaps not until that of Antoninus Pius. One does not have to assume a transition from Jews to gentiles in the *boule*; one only has to assume savvy on the part of its members.

Because of a dearth of civic inscriptions, details about the governments of Sepphoris and Tiberias elude us.³² Tiberias had been organized along Hellenistic (rather than Roman) lines, with its *agoranomos*, *protoi*, and *boule*, since at least the Revolt and probably for its entire history.³³ Presumably, Sepphoris had a similar administration (as my references above to its *boule* suggest), though a mid-second-century market weight referring to the *agoranomos* is our sole explicit archaeological evidence.³⁴ With Galilee's cities, we are in a quite different position than with Caesarea, with its inscriptions and Roman-style civic officials,³⁵ and Gerasa, where inscriptions mention the *epimeletes*,³⁶ *agoranomos*,³⁷ *grammateus*, *dekaprotos*, *archontes*, and other officials.³⁸

³⁰ Jones, *Cities*, 279–280; Birley, *Hadrian*, 232.

³¹ Meshorer, "Sepphoris and Rome," 159–171; "Coins of Sepphoris;" *City-Coins*, 36–37.

³² On civic organization (especially the difference between Hellenistic and Roman), see Joyce Reynolds, "Cities," in David Braund, ed., *The Administration of the Roman Empire: 241 BC–AD 193* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1988), 15–51; Hartmut Galsterer, "Local and Provincial Institutions and Government," in Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), vol. II, 344–360. On civic organization in the Levant, see Grainger, "Village Government" and Julian M. C. Bowsher, "Civic Organisation within the Decapolis," *ARAM* 4:1 & 2 (1992): 265–281.

³³ See discussion in Chapter Three.

³⁴ See Ya'akov Meshorer, "Market Weight," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 201; cf. his earlier "The Lead Weight: Preliminary Report," *BA* 49 (1986): 16–17.

³⁵ See discussion above.

³⁶ On *epimeletes* inscriptions at Gerasa, see Kraeling, "History," 60; *SEG* 39.1646, 1650; cf. those at Scythopolis, see *SEG* 37.1531/ 40.1509.

³⁷ Welles, "Inscriptions," 399–400 no. 53; *SEG* 46.2064.

³⁸ See discussion in Kraeling, "History," 44.

THE SPREAD OF GRECO-ROMAN URBAN ARCHITECTURE

From the late first century on, both of Galilee's cities saw extensive construction. Most of it was done with local materials, limestone and basalt, despite Palestine's greater integration into the marble trade network in the second and third centuries.³⁹ Other cities in Palestine, especially Caesarea Maritima and, to a lesser extent, Scythopolis, made greater use of the imported stone, and in them marble Corinthian columns and decorated cornices, friezes, and architraves became quite common.⁴⁰

At Sepphoris, a new paved street was built along the northern edge of the acropolis running east toward the summit early in the late first or early second century, as was, perhaps, the theater.⁴¹ A columned, monumental public building on the eastern side of the acropolis may also date to this period.⁴² The city continued expanding onto the adjacent plateau, where a north-south *cardo* and an east-west *decumanus*, the hallmark streets of the Roman city, were constructed. The two streets, paved with limestone slabs, intersected at the basilical building, which itself underwent renovation in the second century. Both were lined with columns, a civic feature more characteristic of the Roman East than of the West, and shops.⁴³ Other streets and buildings, particularly on the plateau, were also built according to a grid pattern.⁴⁴ A second aqueduct system (parts of which are featured prominently at the modern site) was constructed, along with a sizeable reservoir tank and a pool (for swimming?).⁴⁵ Two Roman-style bathhouses (one late first- or

³⁹ Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 40–41, 263–265. Marble was not wholly absent from Galilee; some has been found at Sepphoris, though how much is not yet clear (Ze'ev Weiss, "Zippori 1999," *HA* 112 [2000]: 21–23; Ze'ev Weiss, "Zippori 2001," *HA* 114 [2002]: 23–24).

⁴⁰ In general, marble was used more often in Palestine than in the inland areas of Syria and Arabia but less often than in north Africa, western Europe, and the site of many of the quarries, Asia Minor (Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 47–131).

⁴¹ Hoglund and Meyers, "Residential Quarter"; Weiss and Netzer, "Architectural Development"; and Weiss and Netzer, "Hellenistic and Roman Sepphoris."

⁴² Ze'ev Weiss, "Zippori 2000," *HA* 113 (2001): 25–27.

⁴³ Ball, *Rome*, 261–272.

⁴⁴ McCollough and Edwards ("Transformations") describe the second-century paving of an earlier road on the plateau. A coin found under the pavement dates to 119/120 CE, suggesting this road was paved at the approximate time of the construction of the Sepphoris-Legio highway.

⁴⁵ Tsuk, "Aqueducts."

second-century, the other third- or fourth-century) benefited from the increased water supply. The latter was the larger of the two, with three *caldaria* and two *frigidaria*. Rabbinic sources refer to an upper and a lower agora.⁴⁶

As of yet, no pagan temple has been found at Sepphoris. The foundation of a large public building (23 by 12 meters) could be from a temple, but it could also have supported a synagogue or some other structure.⁴⁷ Beginning with the reign of Antoninus Pius, Sepphoris's coins depicted temples,⁴⁸ but whether these symbols should be interpreted as representations of actual buildings is unclear. At other cities, excavations have often confirmed the presence of buildings depicted on coins – often, but not always. Sepphoris had a crucial characteristic that differentiated it from most other second- and third-century coin minting cities: a predominantly monotheistic population. Temple motifs were standard numismatic designs, and their presence at Sepphoris may merely reflect the desire of the *boule* to produce coins similar to those of other cities, or a propagandistic depiction of Roman culture.⁴⁹

The domestic architecture of Sepphoris's elites also reflected growing Greco-Roman influence. Several peristyle houses, which are uncommon in Palestine, were built.⁵⁰ One, on the acropolis near the theater, dates to the early third century. A lavish, two-story residence, it is known for the Dionysos mosaic on its triclinium

⁴⁶ *B. Erubin* 54b, *b. Yoma* 11a. On rabbinic references to Sepphoris, see Samuel Klein, *Beiträge zur Geographie und Geschichte Galiläas* (Leipzig: Verlag von Rudolf Haupt, 1906), 26–45.

⁴⁷ Weiss and Netzer, “Architectural Development” and “Hellenistic and Roman Sepphoris,” 34.

⁴⁸ See discussion in Chapter Six.

⁴⁹ Compare Strange, “Some Implications,” 38; Goodman, *State and Society*, 41, 46; Nicole Belayche, *Iudaea-Palaestina: The Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Centuries)* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 38–44.

⁵⁰ Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press and Israel Exploration Society, 1995), 85–94; Eric M. Meyers, “Aspects of Everyday Life in Roman Palestine with Special Reference to Private Domiciles and Ritual Baths,” in John R. Bartlett, ed., *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 193–220; Eric M. Meyers, “Jewish Art and Architecture in Ancient Palestine (70–235 CE),” in *CHJ*, vol. 4 (forthcoming); Katharina Galor, “Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan,” *NEA* 66:1–2 (2003): 44–57, esp. 51; Jodi Magness, “Peristyle House,” *OANE*, vol. 4, 273.

floor.⁵¹ On the eastern plateau, a peristyle house from the late third or early fourth century had mosaic panels depicting the god Orpheus and scenes from everyday life.⁵² Another contained a decorative fountain.⁵³

Tiberias underwent similar development.⁵⁴ As noted earlier, the southern gate complex often attributed to Antipas may actually date to the second century; it closely resembles arches erected elsewhere in the region during Hadrian's reign.⁵⁵ A *cardo* with a portico originated at a piazza inside the gate and ran north alongside the lake. Otherwise, topography limited the area where orthogonal planning could be applied, since there was only a thin strip of land between Mount Berenice and the shore. A large basilical building with columns and an eastern apse, built near the lake, may have been used for municipal functions. A second basilical building was built in the third century,⁵⁶ as was a rectangular public building with a *mikveh*. Other new structures include a semicircular *exedra* (date unknown), a theater (second–third century), a bathhouse with mosaics depicting animals and fish (fourth century), and an aqueduct (built between the third and fifth centuries).⁵⁷ The city's coins, like those of Sepphoris, depict temples. In this case, literary evidence corroborates the presence of a temple – or, at least, the partial construction of one. Epiphanius (c. 315–403 CE) refers to an uncompleted temple to Hadrian that the city's residents were trying to convert to a bathhouse.⁵⁸ As of yet, however, no remains of any temple have been found.

Roman-style construction was not limited to Sepphoris and Tiberias. At Beth She'arim, a two-story building, probably for civic

⁵¹ R. Talgam and Z. Weiss, *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris: Excavated by E. M. Meyers, E. Netzer, and C. L. Meyer* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2004), 17–33.

⁵² Ze'ev Weiss, "Zippori (Sepphoris) – 1998," *HA* 110 (1999): 20–23.

⁵³ Weiss, "Zippori 2001."

⁵⁴ Unless otherwise noted, features described in this paragraph come from Hirschfeld, *Guide*, 15–33; Hirschfeld, "Tiberias"; and Hirschfeld and Foerster, "Tiberias."

⁵⁵ See discussion in Chapter Three.

⁵⁶ Eli Ashkenazi, "Researchers say Tiberias Basilica may have housed Sanhedrin," *Haaretz*, March 22, 2004 (www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/spages/407113.html).

⁵⁷ Zalmon S. Winogradov, "The Aqueduct of Tiberias," in Amit, Patrich and Hirschfeld, *Aqueducts*, 295–304.

⁵⁸ Epiphanius, *Adv. Haereses* 30.12.1; discussed in Belayche, *Iudaea–Palaestina*, 93.

use, was erected in the late second century.⁵⁹ Capernaum saw the appearance of sizable rectangular buildings and, in the second or third century, a Roman bathhouse. Its four rooms were arranged in a simple linear design, with a clearly identifiable *caldarium*, *frigidarium*, and *tepidarium*; the fourth room could have served as swimming pool or an *apodyterium*.⁶⁰ In the third or fourth century, a bathhouse appeared at Rama, in the southernmost region of Upper Galilee. Several times larger than the Capernaum bathhouse, this one contained a large courtyard, swimming pool, and several side pools, in addition to the other standard rooms.⁶¹

At Kedesh, a Tyrian village on the northern fringe of geographical Galilee, a massive pagan temple was built in the early second century.⁶² The 17.6 by 20 meter building stood approximately 12 meters high and was located within a large (55 by 80 meter) *temenos*. Its decoration – some of it original, some added later – included Corinthian and Ionic columns and elaborately decorated lintels. Greek inscriptions show that it was in use by 117/118 CE and was dedicated to the “Holy God of Heaven.”⁶³ Mordechai Aviam notes the remains of other temples across the northern limits of Galilee, apparently beyond the area settled by Jews, at H. Zar’it, Jebel Bilat, and Kh. ed Duweir, and two pagan inscriptions at Qeren Naftali may also come from a temple.⁶⁴

The most significant architectural development in Galilee in these centuries is the proliferation of synagogue buildings.⁶⁵ The earliest of these, at Nabratein, provides a helpful example of the varieties of

⁵⁹ *Beth She’arim*, vol. 1, 13–19.

⁶⁰ John C. H. Laughlin, “Capernaum: From Jesus’ Time and After,” *BAR* 19:5 (1993): 54–61.

⁶¹ Vassilios Tzaferis, “A Roman Bath at Rama,” *Atiqot* 14 (1980): 66–75.

⁶² On Kedesh as a Tyrian village, see *War* 4.404.

⁶³ Asher Ovadia, Moshe Fischer, Israel Roll, “Kedesh (In Upper Galilee): The Roman Temple,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 3, 857–859; Moshe Fischer, Asher Ovadia, and Israel Roll, “The Epigraphic Finds from the Roman Temple at Kedesh in the Upper Galilee,” *TA* 13 (1986): 60–66; Moshe Fischer, Asher Ovadia, and Israel Roll, “The Roman Temple at Kedesh, Upper Galilee: A Preliminary Study,” *TA* 11 (1984): 146–172; Mordechai Aviam, “Some Notes on the Roman Temple at Kedesh,” in *Jews*, 139–146; and other sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 150–151.

⁶⁴ Aviam, “Borders,” 14–16. Jebel Bilat and Kh. ed Duweir are both in southern Lebanon.

⁶⁵ For a review of scholarship on earlier synagogues at Masada, Herodium, and Gamla, see Donald T. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 4–22 and the sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 66. Netzer mentions other early possibilities in “Synagogues.”

synagogue design.⁶⁶ Originally built in the mid-second century, it was constructed in a “broadhouse” design, with the northern and southern walls longer than the other two (11.2 meters by 9.35 meters).⁶⁷ Two platforms on the southern wall suggest that the worshipers faced south, towards Jerusalem. One entrance was also located on the southern wall, another in the building’s northeastern corner. It is not clear whether or not columns stood in the interior at this point.

In the second half of the third century, the synagogue was expanded and reoriented so that it ran lengthwise from north to south (11.2 meters by 13.85 meters). The southern wall (now one of the shorter ones) remained the focal point of worship and the main point of entry into the building. A portico of four columns stood outside that entrance, and two rows of three columns each ran lengthwise down the building’s interior. With its columns and rectangular design, the renovated synagogue resembled Roman basilical buildings, and so synagogues of this style are typically called “basilical synagogues.”⁶⁸ Destroyed by an earthquake in 306 CE, it was rebuilt again and continued to function until the mid-fourth century.

In the third century, additional synagogues appeared in both Upper and Lower Galilee. Most were basilical in design (Meiron,⁶⁹ Gush Halav,⁷⁰ Hammath Tiberias,⁷¹ and Beth She’arim⁷²), though one was a broadhouse (Khirbet Shema⁷³). Still more basilical synagogues

⁶⁶ Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, and Carol L. Meyers, “Preliminary Report on the 1980 Excavations at en-Nabratein, Israel,” *BASOR* 244 (1981): 1–25 and “Second Preliminary Report on the 1981 Excavations at en-Nabratein, Israel,” *BASOR* 246 (1982): 35–54.

⁶⁷ On synagogue typology, see Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 99–102; Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 296–302; Eric M. Meyers, “Ancient Synagogues: An Archaeological Introduction,” in Steven Fine, ed. *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World* (New York and Oxford: Yeshiva University Museum and Oxford University Press, 1996), 3–20, esp. 14–16; Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 142–152.

⁶⁸ Basilical synagogues are also sometimes called “Galilean synagogues,” though the design is not limited to Galilee.

⁶⁹ *Meiron*.

⁷⁰ *Gush Halav*.

⁷¹ This synagogue was renovated in the fourth century (Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias*, 26, 67; cf. Dothan, “Hammath Tiberias,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 573–557).

⁷² *Beth She’arim*, vol. 1, 18–19.

⁷³ *Khirbet Shema’*.

appeared in the fourth and fifth centuries⁷⁴ (Arbel,⁷⁵ Chorazin,⁷⁶ Capernaum,⁷⁷ Bar'am,⁷⁸ Horvat 'Ammudim,⁷⁹ Meroth,⁸⁰ and Japhia⁸¹). Like the renovated synagogue at Nabratein, most of these were arranged lengthwise from north to south. The entrance was located on one of the shorter walls (typically the southern one), often in the form of a façade with three portals. At some, columns decorated the façade. Inside, columns were arranged either in two parallel lines or in the shape of a "U." Stone benches for seating often lined two or three of the interior walls, and some synagogues had a second story.⁸²

A monumental structure at Qazyon, famous for a Greek lintel inscription recording the honoring of the emperor Septimius Severus by a group of Jews,⁸³ has often been regarded as a synagogue. The building, however, had not only porticoes but also two pools – a feature that would have been unusual at synagogues. The building's design is similar to a temple, but the Jewish inscription is strong

⁷⁴ The identification of a fourth–fifth-century building at Beth Yerah as a synagogue (Hestrin, "Beth Yerah") has been disputed (Ronny Reich, "The Beth Yerah 'Synagogue' Reconsidered," *Atiqot* 22 [1993]: 137–144).

⁷⁵ Zvi Ilan and Avraham Isdarechet, "Arbel," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 87–89.

⁷⁶ Ze'ev Yeivin, *The Synagogue at Korazim: The 1962–1964, 1980–1987 Excavations* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2000), 29–31.

⁷⁷ Loffreda, "Coins" and the numerous studies cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 103–104.

⁷⁸ One synagogue might lie atop an earlier one (Mordechai Aviam, "The Ancient Synagogues at Bar'am," in *Jews*, 147–169).

⁷⁹ Lee I. Levine, "Ammudim, Horvat," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 55–56; Lee I. Levine, "Excavations at the Synagogue of Horvat 'Ammudim," *IEJ* 32 (1982): 1–12; Doron Chen, "The Ancient Synagogue at Horvat 'Ammudim: Design and Chronology," *PEQ* 118 (1986): 135–137.

⁸¹ Map coordinates 199/279; Avi Ilan, "Meroth," *NEAEHL*, vol. 3, 1028–1031.

⁸⁰ Dan Barag, "Japhia," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 659–660.

⁸² Jodi Magness challenges the dating of several of these synagogues, placing the Khirbet Shema' one in the late fourth or early fifth century, the Gush Halav one in the second half of the fifth century or even the sixth century, and the Capernaum one in the sixth century ("Synagogue Typology and Earthquake Chronology at Khirbet Shema' in Israel," in *Journal of Field Archaeology* 24 [1997]: 211–220; "The Question of the Synagogue: The Problem of Typology," 1–48 and "A Response to Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange," 79–91, both in Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner, eds., *Judaism in Late Antiquity: part 3, vol. 4: The Special Problem of the Synagogue* [Leiden: Brill, 2001]). The excavators of Khirbet Shema' and Gush Halav have offered a strong defense of their earlier dates (Eric M. Meyers, "The Dating of the Gush Halav Synagogue: A Response to Jodi Magness," 49–70 and James F. Strange, "Synagogue Typology and Khirbet Shema': A Response to Jodi Magness," 71–78, both in Avery-Peck and Neusner, *Judaism* 3.4).

⁸³ *CIJ*, vol. 2, no. 972.

evidence against that function. Perhaps it was some other form of public architecture.⁸⁴

Other buildings besides basilicas have also been cited as the architectural inspiration for Galilee's synagogues: Nabatean, Syrian, and Roman temples, and Herodian triclinia.⁸⁵ Asher Ovadiah has suggested that a variety of building types, rather than any single one, most likely influenced synagogue designs.⁸⁶ Since all of the synagogues discovered in Galilee thus far were built in the late second century or later,⁸⁷ it seems difficult not to draw the general conclusion that they reflected the increased visibility of Greco-Roman architectural conventions. By the times of their construction, basilical buildings stood in Galilee's cities and other rectangular, columned buildings could be found both within the region and nearby.⁸⁸

The proliferation of Greco-Roman architectural features in urban settings was characteristic of the Middle and Late Roman periods throughout Palestine, Arabia, and Syria. Several cities were at least partially re-aligned according to Roman orthogonal planning, with *cardos* and *decumani* (often accompanied by porticoes) and other streets built at right angles.⁸⁹ A few civic designs included

⁸⁴ Rachel Hachlili and Ann E. Killebrew, "Horbat Qazion," *HA* 109 (1999): 6–7; Aviam, "Borders," 17; Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 131.

⁸⁵ Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 102–103; Magness, "Question"; G. Foerster, "Architectural Models of the Greco-Roman Period and the Origin of the 'Galilean Synagogue,'" 45–48 and E. Netzer, "The Herodian Triclinia—A Prototype for the 'Galilean-Type' Synagogue," 49–51, both in Lee. I. Levine, ed., *Ancient Synagogues Revealed* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).

⁸⁶ Asher Ovadiah, "Observations on the Origin of the Architectural Plan of Ancient Synagogues," in Asher Ovadiah, *Art and Archaeology in Israel and Neighbouring Countries* (London: Pindar Press, 2002), 77–86.

⁸⁷ On the possibility that architectural remains under the synagogue at Capernaum are those of a first-century CE synagogue, see Chancey, *Myth*, 103–104.

⁸⁸ Compare Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 140–143.

⁸⁹ That is, Aelia Capitolina, Abila, Ashkelon, Antipatris, Gadara, Hippos, Neapolis (Segal, *From Function*, 48–49; Joshua J. Schwartz, "Archeology and the City," in Sperber, *City*, 149–187, esp. 150–151; Ball, *Rome*, 264–266), Paneas (Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi*, 52), and Hippos (Arthur Segal, "Horbat Susita [A]," *HA* 114 [2002]: 5–8). Gerasa's column-lined *cardo maximus* is even earlier, dating to 76 CE (Segal, *From Function*, 5). Though Stanislao Loffreda has claimed that Capernaum exhibited orthogonal planning (*Recovering Capernaum* [Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1993], 24), Reed has demonstrated that this was not the case: the streets do not intersect at right angles, no *cardo* or *decumanus* has been identified, and blocks of buildings do not appear to be arranged along axes (*Archaeology*, 151–157).

market areas, either Hellenistic-style agoras or Roman *macella*.⁹⁰ Some acquired basilical buildings,⁹¹ and numerous ones received new aqueducts.⁹² If the city gate at Tiberias was, in fact, a second-century freestanding arch, its construction was part of a larger trend; similar-looking triumphal arches, a distinctively Roman form of propagandistic architecture, appeared at a few other cities.⁹³

The construction of Galilee's two theaters was part of a larger regional trend.⁹⁴ Gerasa, Bosra, and Pella erected Roman-style theaters at the end of the first century or early in the second. By the third century, the number of theaters in Palestine had reached the thirties.⁹⁵ *Odeia*, roofed theater-like structures often intended as music halls, appeared at Beth She'an and Antipatris.⁹⁶ In

⁹⁰ Agoras: Philadelphia (date unknown), Antipatris (perhaps early third century), Philipopolis (244 CE), Ashdod (pre-70 CE); *macella*: Gerasa (125 CE), Gadara (date uncertain), Bosra (second century CE?); an example at Petra may be even earlier, from the late first century BCE (Ball, *Rome*, 296; Segal, *From Function*, 55–67; J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 150).

⁹¹ Ashkelon, Beth Shean, Tiberias, Dor, Paneas (J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 159); in addition, a late first-century palatial complex built by Agrippa II at Paneas included a two-story basilica (John F. Wilson and Vassilios Tzaferis, "Baniyas Dig Reveals King's Palace," *BAR* 24:1 [1998]: 54–61, 85; Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi*, 36–37).

⁹² Amit, Patrich and Hirschfeld, *Aqueducts*.

⁹³ Gerasa, Bosra, Jerusalem, Suweda (Ball, *Rome*, 273–287; Segal, *From Function*, 129–140). Gerasa and Bosra each had two arches. Inscriptions show that one arch at Gerasa was dedicated to Hadrian, and one at Bosra was dedicated to the garrisoning legion. The Roman army outpost at Tel Shalem, near Scythopolis, may have built an arch (Bowersock, "Tel Shalem"; Eck and Foerster, "Ein Triumphbogen"). A gate with flanking towers, perhaps from the end of the first century, has recently been uncovered at Hippos-Susita (Arthur Segal, "Horvat Susita," *HA* 115 [2003]: 13–17).

⁹⁴ Segal, *Theatres*; Segal, "Theaters," *OEANE*; J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 166–169; Weiss, "Adopting," 31–33 and the map on 24; Ze'ev Weiss, "Buildings for Entertainment," in Sperber, *City*, 77–91, esp. 78–83. For theaters in the larger Roman world, see Hazel Dodge, "Amusing the Masses: Buildings for Entertainment and Leisure in The Roman World," in D. S. Potter and D. J. Mattingly, eds., *Life, Death and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 205–255.

⁹⁵ Segal (*Theatres*, 4) notes Josephus's reference to the theater at Jerusalem and the archaeological remains of 30 in Palestine and the Transjordan from the first century BCE to the third century CE: Caesarea Maritima, Elusa, Sepphoris, Dor, Legio (perhaps an amphitheater), Scythopolis (2), Shumi (near Caesarea Maritima), Sebaste, Neapolis, Antipatris, Petra (2), Wadi Sabra, Sahr, Philipopolis, Kanawat, Hammat-Gader, Gadara (2), Abila, Adraa, Bosra, Pella, Gerasa (2), Birketein, and Philadelphia (2). The one at Tiberias should be added to this list. Weiss notes literary references to theaters at Gaza and Ashkelon ("Buildings," 78; "Adopting," 23; cf. J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 166–169; Retzliff, "Near Eastern Theatres.")

⁹⁶ Segal, *Theatres*, 60–61, 81–82; J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 169.

comparison to other theaters in the region, those at Sepphoris and Tiberias were mid-size, holding roughly 4,500 spectators each. They were larger than theaters like that at Hammat Gader, with room for 1,500–2,000, but significantly smaller than the Caesarea Maritima theater (renovated in the second century) and the primary theater at Scythopolis, both of which seated 6,000–8,000.⁹⁷

Most of the entertainment in these theaters, as elsewhere in the Roman world, was probably by mimes, pantomimes, musicians, poets, and jugglers, though the tragedies and comedies associated with earlier eras might still be performed on occasion.⁹⁸ Rabbinic texts attest that rabbis and other Jews in Palestine were familiar with theaters; indeed, with so many of the buildings in the area, it would have been difficult not to have known something of the activities that occurred in them.⁹⁹ How high Jewish attendance was, however, is difficult to determine. One rabbinic passage, for example, records that Rabbi Meier prohibited Jews from going to theaters because of their association with idolatry;¹⁰⁰ another notes that adorning a theater was considered a sin.¹⁰¹ The expression of such sentiments is sure proof that at least some Jews went to the theater – but who and how many, and how did habits vary among different cities?

The appearance of public bathhouses in Galilee likewise fits into a larger pattern.¹⁰² In the second through fourth centuries, numerous

⁹⁷ Weiss, "Buildings," 79–82.

⁹⁸ Weiss collects literary and epigraphic references to mimes at Tyre, Berytus, Caesarea Maritima, Bosra and Gaza and to pantomimes at Caesarea and Hammat Gader ("Adopting," 31–33). See also Retzlaff, "Near Eastern Theatres," 116; Mary T. Boatwright, "Theaters in the Roman Empire," *BA* 53 (1990): 184–192; Richard C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and its Audience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 117–153; Bieber, *History*, 227–253. On the continuation of performances of comedies and tragedies, however, see C. P. Jones, "Greek Drama in the Roman Empire," in Ruth Scodel, ed., *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 39–52.

⁹⁹ Goodman, *State and Society*, 81–83; Martin Jacobs, "Theatres and Performances as Reflected in the Talmud Yerushalmi," in Peter Schäfer and Catherine Heszer, eds., *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), vol. 1, 327–347.

¹⁰⁰ *T. Avodah Zarah* 2:5.

¹⁰¹ *Y. Taanit* 1:4, 64b (cited in Weiss, "Adopting," 33).

¹⁰² The second century, in particular, was the heyday of bathhouse construction throughout the Empire, especially in the east. See Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*

baths were built throughout the southern Levant,¹⁰³ including cities surrounding Galilee such as Scythopolis,¹⁰⁴ Hammat Gader,¹⁰⁵ Kursi,¹⁰⁶ Ptolemais,¹⁰⁷ and Paneas.¹⁰⁸ Though a few private bathing facilities had been built in the pre-70 CE period, these bathhouses were apparently the first designed for broader use.¹⁰⁹ The bathhouse at Scythopolis and the eastern baths at Gerasa were among the largest in the eastern Roman Empire.¹¹⁰

Bathhouses seem to have aroused little opposition among Jews. The potential for controversy was definitely there in the casual attitude towards nudity, the work required to heat water on the Sabbath, the typical adornment with statues.¹¹¹ Rabbinic traditions, however, reflect an awareness of the practices associated with bathhouses and an acceptance of them as a fact of life.¹¹²

(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 43; Inge Nielsen, "Early provincial baths and their relations to early Italic baths," in J. De Laine and D. E. Mohnston, eds., *Roman Baths and Bathing* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 35–43. On the association of bathhouses with Roman culture, see Nielsen, *Thermae*, vol. 1, 1, 60 and Dodge, "Amusing the Masses," 219 and 243.

¹⁰³ For example, Dor, Gerasa, Gadara, Pella, Aelia Capitolina, Emmaus/Nicopolis, Kurnub/Mampsis (Nielsen, *Thermae*, vol. 2, 35–36, 41–42, 45–46; J. Schwartz "Archeology," 165–168); 'En Ya'el (Gershon Edelstein, "En Ya'el," *ESI* 5 [1986]: 30–33); and Kefar Sava (no author, "Kefar Sava-Nabi Yamin [Tomb of Benjamin]," *ESI* 1 [1982]: 63. Foerster reports remains of a bathhouse at Tel Shalem ("Cuirassed Bronze Statue"). Additional baths were built in the Byzantine period, such as those at Gerasa and (probably) Beth Yerah (B. Maisler, M. Stekelis, and M. Avi-Yonah, "The Excavations at Beth Yerah [Khirbet el-Kerak] [1944–1946]," *IEJ* 2 [1952]: 165–173, 218–229, esp. 218–223).

¹⁰⁴ Gaby Mazar and Rachel Bar-Hathan, "The Beth She'an Excavation Project, 1992–1994," *ESI* 17 (1998): 7–38, esp. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997).

¹⁰⁶ Judith Sudilovsky, "Bathhouse Uncovered at Kursi," *BAR* 29:1 (2003): 18.

¹⁰⁷ Moshe Dothan and Zeev Goldmann, "Acco: Excavations in the Modern City," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 23–27.

¹⁰⁸ Wilson mentions one built in the second or third century (*Caesarea Philippi*, 41). Vassilios Tzaferis and Shoshana Israeli describe another built sometime from the third to the sixth century ("Banias 1996," *HA* 109 [1999]: 1–2).

¹⁰⁹ The facility at Ramat Hanadiv is a possible exception; see discussion in Chapter Three.

¹¹⁰ Elise A. Friedland, "The Roman Marble Sculptures from the North Hall of the East Baths at Gerasa," *AJA* 107 (2003): 413–448; on Scythopolis, see 419 n. 29.

¹¹¹ Reich, "Hot Bath-House"; Yaron Z. Eliav, "The Roman Bath as a Jewish Institution: Another Look at the Encounter between Judaism and the Greco-Roman Culture," *JSJ* 31 (2000): 416–454.

¹¹² Eliav, "Roman Bath"; Martin Jacobs, "Römische Thermenkultur im Spiegel des Talmud Yerushalmi," in Schäfer and Heszer, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, vol. 1, 219–311; Reich, "Hot Bath-House"; Goodman, *State and Society*, 83–84; and Sperber, *City*, 58–72.

Just as notable as the presence of certain forms of Greco-Roman urban architecture in Galilee is the absence of others.¹¹³ Apparently, neither Sepphoris nor Tiberias constructed *nymphaea*, monumental fountains elaborately decorated with columns, carvings, and often statues, though nearby cities like Hippos, Scythopolis, and Gadara did.¹¹⁴ No *tetrapyla* stood at the intersections of Galilean city streets, unless a large square pillar at Tiberias was once part of one.¹¹⁵ As already observed, temples, a standard feature in the empire's cities, were rare in Galilee.¹¹⁶ No amphitheaters, the characteristic building for Roman combat sports, were built within Galilee, though they were constructed at nearby Beth Shean, Caesarea Maritima, and perhaps Legio.¹¹⁷ Nor did Galilee see the construction of any circuses or Hellenistic hippodromes to supplement the old stadium at Tiberias and hippodrome at Taricheae, though such facilities appeared at Caesarea Maritima, Tyre, Gadara, and Scythopolis (the one at the latter site rebuilt as an amphitheater in the fourth century).¹¹⁸

With so few sports facilities, watching athletic events was probably not a major part of Galilean life, though Taricheae and Tiberias

¹¹³ The best synthesis of this material is Segal, *From Function*, to which I refer the reader for bibliographies of these sites. J. Schwartz's "Archeology" is also a helpful overview.

¹¹⁴ Compare *nymphaea* at Gerasa, Canatha, Bosra, Philadelphia, Suweda, and Petra. Coins of Ptolemais and Pella depict *nymphaea*, though none has yet been discovered at either site (Segal, *From Function*, 151–168). An early interpretation of a monumental building at Hippos-Susita as a *nymphaeum* (Arthur Segal, "Horvat Susita," *HA* 113 [2001]: 14–18) has been rejected (Segal, "Horbat Susita [A]").

¹¹⁵ Compare *tetrapyla* at Philippopolis, Bosra, Gerasa (2), Antipatris (Segal, *From Function*, 140–149); on the Tiberias pillar, see Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *OEANE*, vol. 5, 204.

¹¹⁶ On temple architecture in the Roman East, see Ball, *Rome*, 317–356.

¹¹⁷ Compare also amphitheaters at Beth Guvrin/Eleutheropolis, Neapolis, and Bosra (Weiss, "Buildings," 78 and "Adopting," 24, 39–40; J. Schwartz, "Archeology," 169–170; Ball, *Rome*, 305). On the Legio amphitheater, see discussion in Chapter Two. On the distribution of amphitheaters throughout the Empire, see Jean-Claude Golvin, *L'amphithéâtre romain: essai sur la théorization de sa forme et des fonctions*, 2 vols. (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1988), vol. 1, 275 and Jean-Claude Golvin and Christian Landes, *Amphithéâtres & Gladiateurs* (Paris: Les Presses du CNRS, 1990), 8–9.

¹¹⁸ Compare also structures at Bosra, Neapolis, and Gerasa (Weiss, "Adopting," 23 and "Buildings," 78), and Tyre (John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* [London: B. T. Batsford, 1986], 461–477). Weiss notes literary references to examples at Gaza and Ashkelon (Weiss, "Adopting," 23 and "Buildings," 78). On circuses and hippodromes in the eastern Mediterranean, see Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 438–539, esp. 442.

may have hosted occasional contests.¹¹⁹ Similarly, with no amphitheaters, most Galileans would have had only a vague familiarity with Roman animal shows, gladiator fights, and other combat sports.¹²⁰ Galilee's cities are conspicuously absent from the few extant inscriptions listing cities in Palestine where such contests were held.¹²¹ Though several early rabbinic sayings reflect awareness of the competitions,¹²² none specifically refers to such activities in Galilee itself or suggests that people regularly traveled outside of Galilee to see fights.

SPONSORSHIP, LABOR, AND ROMAN IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE

The timing of the construction of Roman urban architecture in Galilee in the second and third centuries is hardly coincidental. It corresponds to the increased presence of Roman troops and the growing integration of the area into the Roman Empire. In this respect, the extensive building activity in Galilee is typical: such construction was widespread in the southern Levant as Rome annexed the former Herodian and Nabatean client kingdoms and shifted a higher number of troops into the region.

One reason for the correlation between the increase in the Roman military presence and the more widespread appearance of imperial architecture is obvious: Roman soldiers did much of the building.¹²³ Because earlier examples of monumental architecture like bathhouses and theaters were relatively few in the region, indigenous

¹¹⁹ Weiss collects evidence for various athletic events (races, discus-throwing, javelin-tossing) at Ashkelon, Scythopolis, Gerasa, and Caesarea Philippi, but notes none for Galilee ("Adopting," 38).

¹²⁰ Goodman, *State and Society*, 83. Whether a wall painting in the catacombs at Beth She'arim depicts gladiators is unclear, in my opinion (*Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 183-184); cf. the lamp there with gladiatorial imagery (214 and fig. 22 no. 4).

¹²¹ Second- and third-century CE contests are attested at Ashkelon, Damascus, Caesarea Maritima, Neapolis, Scythopolis, Gaza, Philadelphia, and Caesarea Philippi (Weiss, "Adopting," 38).

¹²² Weiss notes references to the sale of animals (*m. Avodah Zarah* 1:7), bulls in a stadium (*m. Bava Qamma* 4:4), and gladiators (*b. Gittin* 47a) ("Adopting"). See also Jacobs, "Theaters and Performances."

¹²³ On this same pattern elsewhere, see the studies of Romanization cited in my Introduction.

architects and workers would have had little familiarity with how to draft the plans or implement their construction, especially in the early decades of the building boom. The Roman army, in contrast, was a source not only of military might, but also of surveyors, architects, and engineers, not to mention laborers. The use of soldiers in construction projects throughout the empire is well-documented, and in this regard, too, Galilee and the rest of Palestine were probably typical.¹²⁴ Inscriptions on the aqueduct at Caesarea Maritima, for example, record the work of soldiers from multiple legions.¹²⁵

Roman soldiers also brought with them something else of key importance: money. The stationing of thousands of Roman troops in the area in the late first and early second centuries could not help but have a massive economic impact. The army is usually thought of as an agent of taxation – a function it certainly fulfilled – but its salaries, paid in silver, introduced large amounts of high denomination currency into local economies. In provinces on the empire's periphery, like Judea and Arabia, it is likely that they added more silver than they extracted, as Keith Hopkins as argued.¹²⁶ The overall increase of silver in the region's money supply eventually made more funds available for construction projects, regardless of who sponsored them. It also created a need for smaller change, bronzes of various denominations, which may be one reason for the flourishing of eastern civic mints in the second and third centuries.¹²⁷

Acknowledging the role of Romans in construction activities does not, of course, preclude recognition of the important role that local workers also played. A Mishnaic tradition, for example, attests to Jewish participation in the building of basilicas and stadiums. It disapproved, probably because pagan prayers and ceremonies took

¹²⁴ Ramsey MacMullen, "Roman Imperial Building in the Provinces," *HSCP* 64 (1959): 207–236; MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian*, 32–48; Mitchell, "Imperial Building"; G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 143–145; Roy W. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 63–65; Isaac, *Limits*, 352–359; Futrell, *Blood*, 147–152; Nigel Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 242–250.

¹²⁵ *GLI*, 12–14, 71–77, no. 45–54.

¹²⁶ Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC–AD 400)," *JRS* 70 (1980): 101–125; cf. Safrai, *Economy*, 339–349.

¹²⁷ Compare Harl, *Civic Coins*, 19.

place in those institutions. On the other hand, it regarded Jewish work on bathhouses as acceptable – at least until construction had progressed to the point when niches were created for statues.¹²⁸

Who sponsored the construction of these new buildings? A dearth of euergetic inscriptions in Sepphoris, Tiberias, and, in fact, most cities in the region makes this a surprisingly difficult question to answer.¹²⁹ When discussing particular buildings in Galilee, in most cases we do not know who initiated their construction or who paid the expenses. We can only speculate on such details, though a few generalizations are probably safe to make.

The emperor himself may have played a role.¹³⁰ Coins of Sepphoris from the early second century bear legends reading “Trajan gave,” commemorating some type of benefaction to the city.¹³¹ We have no idea what Trajan donated, though the date of the aqueduct’s construction makes it a likely candidate.¹³² At Caesarea Maritima, inscriptions on the aqueduct explicitly credit Hadrian as its donor.¹³³ Hadrian was particularly well known for his munificence, personally paying for dozens of projects (especially bathhouses, aqueducts, temples, and theaters). The bulk of evidence for his benefactions lies in Asia Minor and the west, however, not the Levant.¹³⁴ His successor, Antoninus Pius likewise lavished gifts upon many communities in the Empire. After him, however, imperial sponsorship of civic buildings seems to have dwindled.¹³⁵ That the flourishing of Roman architecture in Galilee and nearby areas

¹²⁸ *M. Avodah Zarah* 1:7. As always with rabbinic materials, whether this tradition presents a realistic depiction of Jewish activities or an idealized vision is debatable.

¹²⁹ See discussion in Chapter Five.

¹³⁰ On the role of the emperor and other officials in Romanization, see C. R. Whittaker, “Imperialism and Culture: The Roman Initiative,” in Mattingly, *Dialogues*, 143–163.

¹³¹ See discussion in Chapter Six.

¹³² If this suggestion is correct, then it strengthens the argument that Roman soldiers had arrived in Galilee by 117 CE. Cf. Harl’s suggestion that the inscription refers either to the right to mint coins or to some major gift (*Civic Coins*, 24).

¹³³ *GLI*, 12–14, 71–77, nos. 45–54.

¹³⁴ Inscriptions do not identify Hadrian as the builder of any structures in Palestine other than the Caesarea aqueduct (*Hadrian*, 108–143; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 105–107; Isaac, *Limits*, 352–359, 369–371), though they do record construction that occurred during his reign and dedications to him (e.g., for Gerasa, see Welles, “Inscriptions,” 390–391 no. 30 and 424–425 nos. 143–145).

¹³⁵ Mitchell, “Imperial Building.”

corresponds to the reigns of these emperors suggests that they might be at least partly responsible.¹³⁶

Roman governors were also often concerned with building and maintaining civic facilities, as the letters of Pliny and Trajan demonstrate,¹³⁷ and the army might sometimes construct facilities for their own use. It is telling, for example, that amphitheaters are mostly limited to cities with a known Roman military presence.¹³⁸ At least some bathhouses are likely to be the fruit of Roman labor, such as the one at Tel Shalem, with its army base.¹³⁹ The army is also known to have occasionally provided its service to projects sponsored by other parties.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the mid-second century CE rabbi Shimon bar Yohai is said to have commented, "Everything that the Romans have built, they have built for themselves: market places, to house prostitutes, baths to pamper themselves and bridges to take tolls on them."¹⁴¹

It is difficult to imagine that civic elites and the local councils they controlled did not also sponsor at least some of this construction, in accordance with widespread Roman custom.¹⁴² Initiating and supporting such projects allowed elites to advertise their own status and to participate in the culture of the wider empire; it provided them with an opportunity to construct and promote their own identities as wealthy Roman subjects. At cities with a high Roman presence, military officers, whether active or retired, might also make individual donations.¹⁴³ For Galilee's cities, however,

¹³⁶ Richard Duncan-Jones makes the intriguing suggestion that Hadrian's generous financial policies, such as the empire-wide remission of unpaid taxes, sparked a century of prosperity and construction in many provinces (*Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 59–67, followed by Birley, *Hadrian*, 97–98 and Boatwright, *Hadrian*, 10–11); cf. *Historia Augusta: Hadrian* 7.6 and Cassius Dio 69.8.1, 72.32.2.

¹³⁷ Pliny, *Epistles* 10.17b, 39, 41, 61. For evidence of the involvement of governors at Gerasa, see Gatier, "Gouverneurs"; *SEG* 27.1009.

¹³⁸ See the sources cited on amphitheaters earlier in the chapter.

¹³⁹ Laughlin suggests that Romans are responsible for the Capernaum bathhouse, noting its similarity to one at Ein Gedi, home to a Roman garrison ("Capernaum"); cf. Benjamin Mazar and Dan Barag, "En-Gedi," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 399–409.

¹⁴⁰ See the sources cited above on the role of the military in building.

¹⁴¹ *B. Shabbat* 33b.

¹⁴² For evidence at Gerasa, see Kraeling, "History," 61; *SEG* 27.1008; 39.1646, 1648, 1650; and 46.2060–2061 (discussed in Gatier, "Gouverneurs").

¹⁴³ For example, a Roman decurion donated to the southern theater at Gerasa (Welles, "Inscriptions," 399 no. 52; see other examples mentioned in Kraeling, "History," 61. Cf.

epigraphic commemoration of such contributions is lacking, raising the question of how enthusiastically Galilean elites embraced the practice of Roman euergetism.

CONCLUSION

The second and third centuries saw the widespread dissemination of Roman-style buildings in the southern Levant and elsewhere in the empire, and Galilee was no exception. The very ubiquity of such architecture in urban environments served a propagandistic function by creating an empire-wide network of physical symbols of Roman culture.¹⁴⁴ The new name of Sepphoris, Diocaesarea, likewise symbolized the empire's domination of the region.

Yet while it is important to recognize the ways in which the cityscapes of Galilee changed, it is equally important to keep those changes in perspective. Architecturally, Sepphoris and Tiberias exhibited more characteristics of the Greco-Roman city in this period than they had in the early first century. In terms of the amount and variety of Roman architecture, however, neither compared to larger cities like Gerasa,¹⁴⁵ Scythopolis,¹⁴⁶ and Caesarea Maritima.¹⁴⁷

Though the exact architectural inspiration for the synagogue remains a point of considerable scholarly discussion, that debate should not hinder us from recognizing the obvious: in a general sense, synagogue designs also reflect the strong influence of Greco-Roman culture. Viewed from this perspective, the synagogue was,

two dedicatory inscriptions at Caesarea Paneas (Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi*, 40) and one at Gadara (*SEG* 39.1624).

¹⁴⁴ Compare Arthur Segal, "Imperial Architecture in the Roman East: The Local and the Unique," *Assaph* (B) 8 (2001): 31–48.

¹⁴⁵ Kraeling, *Gerasa*; Richardson, *City*, 78–102; David Kennedy, "The Identity of Roman Gerasa: An Archaeological Approach," *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998): 36–39; Jean-Pierre Braun et al., "The Town Plan of Gerasa in AD 2000: A Revised Edition," *ADAJ* 45 (2001): 433–436; and the sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 134–137.

¹⁴⁶ Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, "Urbanism at Scythopolis-Beth Shean in the Fourth–Seventh Century," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997): 85–146, esp. 88–99; Gideon Foerster, "Beth-Shean at the Foot of the Mound," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 223–235, esp. 223–228; Mazar and Bar-Hathan, "Beth She'an;" and the sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 140–143.

¹⁴⁷ *GLI*; Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*; Kenneth G. Holum, A. Raban, and J. Patrick, eds., *Caesarea Papers 2* (Portsmouth, R. I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999); Porat, "Caesarea"; Richardson, *City*, 104–128; and the sources cited in Chancey, *Myth*, 144–148.

ironically, the form of Greco-Roman public architecture that was most numerous and geographically widespread in Galilee. The number of synagogues in the region is greater than that of municipal basilicas, sports architecture, and bathhouses, and unlike those buildings, synagogues were more likely to be built in villages and smaller towns. Synagogue architecture thus provides us with an excellent example of one way in which an indigenous people might respond to the imposition of imperial architecture: by taking certain features of that architecture (in this case, the basic basilical shape and the use of columns) and incorporating them into a new style of structure that provided a communal expression of local religious and ethnic identity.

The use of Greek in Jesus' Galilee

A key component of the view that Galilee was thoroughly Hellenized is the belief that Greek was widely spoken. Proponents of this position cite several arguments for support: centuries of exposure to Hellenism; the growing urbanization of the area from Antipas onwards; the rabbis' use of Greek; the occurrence of Greek names; and, most importantly, epigraphic evidence. At times, the logic of these discussions appears circular: we know Galilee was Hellenized because Greek was spoken there; we know Greek was often spoken because Galilee was extensively Hellenized.¹

The idea that many Galileans knew Greek is hardly new. Adolf van Harnack and Shirley Jackson Case held it decades ago,² and a long series of essays in *The Expository Times*, many titled "Did Jesus Speak Greek?," sparred over the issue in the 1950s.³ What is new, however, is the extent to which the case is believed to have been settled. We can now be confident, it is sometimes claimed, that Greek was used frequently, not only among the elites but also

¹ On the languages of Palestine as a whole, see John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), vol. 1, 255–268; James Barr, "Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the Hellenistic Age," in *CHJ*, vol. 2, 79–114; Alan R. Millard, *Reading and Writing at the Time of Jesus* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), esp. 84–131; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century AD," in *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans; Livonia, Mich.: Dove Booksellers, 1997), 29–56; J. C. Greenfield, "The Languages of Palestine, 200 BCE–200 CE," in Herbert H. Paper, ed., *Jewish Languages: Themes and Variations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1978), 143–154; Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 52–80; Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 62–91.

² Adolf van Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (repr., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986; originally published in 1900), 33; Shirley Jackson Case, *Jesus: A New Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 200–212.

³ Meier collects the bibliographical data for these articles in *Marginal Jew*, vol. 1, 287 n. 2.

among many of the common people, not only in the cities but also in the countryside. Jesus himself, in this view, may have been fairly conversant in Greek, introducing the possibility that the occasional gospel passage preserves his actual words, rather than a translation from the Aramaic.⁴

This confidence is all the more surprising given that we have no extant first-century texts of proven Galilean provenance. Efforts to locate the composition of gospels, especially Mark,⁵ and the Q source⁶ there remain largely speculative. The earliest rabbinic text, the Mishnah, was not compiled until the early third century, and it was written in Hebrew, not Greek. As for Josephus, though he was active in Galilee during the revolt, he composed none of his works there. He wrote in Rome, and even there he remained ambivalent towards the use of Greek.⁷ We do know of at least one lost work from the end of the first century, the Greek account of the Jewish revolt by Justus of Tiberias,⁸ but this single book is hardly the basis for generalizations about the Galilean population as a whole.

Literary evidence for Greek is thus lacking, but what about other types of data, such as inscriptions and names? If those categories of evidence show that Greek was well-known in Galilee in Jesus' day, then that would be one aspect of culture we could deem thoroughly Hellenized. Conversely, if such evidence is lacking, then languages

⁴ On the languages of Jesus, see W. Argyle, "Greek among the Jews of Palestine in New Testament Times," *NTS* 20 (1973): 87–89; Ch. Rabin, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century," in S. Safrai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, and W. C. van Unnik, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976), vol. 1, 1007–1039; Stanley E. Porter, "Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee," in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 123–154; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Did Jesus Speak Greek?" *BAR* 18:5 (1992): 58–63, 76–77; Robert H. Gundry, "The Language Milieu of First-Century Palestine: Its Bearing on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *JBL* 83 (1964): 404–408; Sevenster, *Do You Know?*; Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946); Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, trans. D. M. Kay (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909).

⁵ Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, trans. James Boyce et al. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1969); Werner Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); and works discussed in Chancey, *Myth*, 13.

⁶ Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*; Mack, *Q: The Lost Gospel*.

⁷ See *Ant.* 20.262–265; Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 61–76; Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and his Society* (2nd ed., London: Duckworth, 2002), 46–64.

⁸ Rajak, "Justus."

would be one more issue where a gap exists between oft-heard arguments and the actual published archaeological findings.

While few, if any, scholars would argue that Greek was spoken nowhere in Galilee, a thorough investigation reveals that there is little reason to believe that it was widespread.⁹ On this issue, as on others relating to Hellenistic and Roman culture in Galilee, the quantity of our evidence has at times been exaggerated and its interpretation over-simplified. In this chapter, I provide a review of scholarship that reveals a now-familiar set of problems:¹⁰ the use of finds from all over Palestine to draw conclusions about Galilee and the lumping together of artifacts from a range of centuries to shed light on the first century. I then provide a chronological overview of Galilee's inscriptions, analyzing them through the lens of the region's "epigraphic habit" and comparing them to those of the surrounding areas. Lastly, I consider the extent of Greek and Roman names among Galileans.

CHRONOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, AND THE INTERPRETATION OF EVIDENCE

Even the staunchest advocates of the view that Galilee was highly Hellenized acknowledge that Aramaic remained the dominant language there, as it did elsewhere in the Jewish parts of Palestine.¹¹ Several factors make clear the continuity of its usage across a span of centuries stretching from long before Jesus to long after: its presence since the Persian period;¹² the seventeen Aramaic words of Jesus preserved in the Gospels, such as the *talitha cum* of Mark 5:41 and

⁹ For reviews of the evidence, see Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander*, 139–145; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels*, 171–172; and Horsley, *Archaeology*, 154–175.

¹⁰ The discussions of methodological issues by Meier (*Marginal Jew*, vol. 1, 255–268) and Horsley (*Archaeology*, 154–175) are among the best available. As the following discussion demonstrates, I share many of their perspectives.

¹¹ Compare Hengel, 'Hellenization', 8.

¹² On the development of Aramaic, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Daniel J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts (Second Century BC–Second Century AD)* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); Jonas C. Greenfield, "Aramaic and its Dialects," in Herbert H. Paper, eds., *Jewish Languages: Themes and Variations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1978), 29–43; Edward M. Cook, "Aramaic Language and Literature," in *OEANE*, vol. 1, 178–184.

the *epiphatha* of Mark 7:34;¹³ inscriptions (mostly from later centuries); and post-Mishnaic rabbinic texts, especially the targumim.¹⁴ Hebrew was probably used in Galilee, too, though to a much lesser extent. By the time of Jesus, Greek had definitely made some inroads there.¹⁵ As for Latin, no one seriously suggests that it was used much; even those scholars who believe (erroneously, as I have tried to show) that Romans were numerous in first-century Galilee acknowledge that many of the soldiers would have spoken Greek themselves.

Earlier scholarship on the languages of Palestine often emphasized the importance of rabbinic materials. Those texts themselves are, of course, in Hebrew and Aramaic, but they sometimes refer to other languages, especially Greek, and they contain Latin and Greek loanwords.¹⁶ Rabbinic works provide little help for the scholar investigating the use of Greek in the early first century, however. They were written after the two Revolts – indeed, most are much later – and thus reflect very different political, social, and, in many cases, geographical settings than early first-century CE Galilee.¹⁷ In light of their later dates, it should be no surprise that they reflect knowledge of Greek. Some might preserve earlier traditions, but sifting out this early material is notoriously difficult. While some of the texts were written or edited in Palestine, others were put together

¹³ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 3–8; the count would be eighteen if a text variant at Matt. 6:11 were included. Jeremias also notes eight Aramaic words attributed to Jesus in *b. Shabb.* 116b, though this late report is of dubious veracity.

¹⁴ Roger Le Déaut, "The Targumim," in *CHJ*, vol. 2, 563–590; Avigdor Shinan, "The Aramaic Targum as a Mirror of Galilean Jewry," in Levine, *Galilee*, 241–247; Steven D. Fraade, "Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum, and Multilingualism in the Jewish Galilee of the Third–Sixth Centuries," in Levine, *Galilee*, 253–286.

¹⁵ Sevenster, *Do You Know?*; Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries CE* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942); G. Mussies, "Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora," in Safrai et al., *Jewish People*, vol. 1, 1040–1064; Gundry, "Language Milieu"; Argyle, "Greek"; Laurence H. Kant, "Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin," *ANRW* II.20.2, 671–713; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 58–64; Porter, "Jesus"; Pieter W. Van der Horst, "Greek in Jewish Palestine in Light of Jewish Epigraphy," in Collins and Sterling, *Hellenism*, 154–174.

¹⁶ On loanwords in Jewish sources, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 60–61; Mussies, "Greek," 1050–1051; Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 53–55, 60, 62, 70–80.

¹⁷ On the difficulty of using the rabbinic materials to understand earlier centuries, cf. Barr, "Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek," 110–111.

in Babylon. Some passages are associated with non-Galilean locations, and one can draw few conclusions about Galilee from material that originated in Jerusalem or Caesarea Maritima and even fewer from the sayings of rabbis in Babylon. Other traditions are impossible to associate with any specific locale. Furthermore, the historical accuracy of many stories and sayings is questionable; there is much legendary material mixed in among the factual. So, it is possible that even a quote attributed to an early first-century CE Galilean rabbi (and there are few such rabbis mentioned in the texts) might not shed any actual light on first-century Galilee.

A few classic examples illustrate these issues. *Mishnah Sotah* 9:14 says that at the time of the first revolt, “they” (presumably, the rabbis) forbade fathers to teach Greek to their sons. This claim raises obvious questions. It suggests that at least some people were studying and speaking Greek – but who, how many, where, and for what reasons? It also presupposes that some fathers taught their sons Greek, but was this typical or rare? Since Judea seems to have been the primary locale of the pre-revolt rabbis, does the saying tell us anything at all about Galilee? Since the saying is in a document that post-dates the revolt by over a century, is it historically reliable? If a rabbi or group of rabbis did issue such a prohibition, was it observed and respected by anyone outside rabbinic circles? The fact that it is not attributed to a named individual only exacerbates these issues.

An extravagant claim in the opposite direction is made in *b. Sotah* 49b, in which Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel (mid-second century CE) speaks of a thousand students in his father’s house, five hundred studying Torah and another five hundred studying “Greek wisdom,” with the latter phrase usually interpreted as including the language. The numbers here are clearly exaggerations, and the reliability of the tradition is extremely doubtful, especially given its late date. All that can safely be deduced from it is that Gamaliel was viewed as a highly respected rabbi and teacher who was well-versed not only in Torah but in Greek culture as well.¹⁸ This and similar stories suggest that rabbis who were especially fluent in Greek were notable and worthy of special respect, not typical. Furthermore,

¹⁸ See Sevenster’s thorough discussion of this passage (*Do You Know?* 51–55).

such passages imply that learning Greek was somewhat unusual and required special study. It was often done for a particular purpose: to enable community leaders to communicate better with the governing Roman authorities.¹⁹

Other sayings refer to the use of Greek in legal documents. *Mishnah Gittin* 9:6 and 9:8, for example, allow for divorce certificates and the signatures of witnesses to be written in either Greek or Hebrew. From this we learn that scribes drawing up documents and witnesses might employ either language, but we do not learn what the norm was for different classes, different geographical areas, and different times.²⁰

Largely on the basis of loanwords in rabbinic sources, Saul Lieberman claimed in his classic study that Greek was widespread among Jews in the second through fourth centuries CE. While the Greek of the common people, he argued, might have been “poor and vulgar . . . that of the learned Rabbis was far superior and of higher taste.”²¹ Yet many have contested his position. Everyone agrees that the number of Greek and Latin loanwords is high, but no one agrees on just what that number is. The most famous attempt to tabulate them, by Samuel Krauss at the end of the nineteenth century, produced as many questions as it did answers.²² Krauss claimed to have found well over two thousand Greek and Latin loanwords,²³ but his sources, rabbinic writings from the third to the tenth centuries, covered such a large chronological and geographical canvas that it is difficult to draw too many conclusions about a given area or time period. Krauss’s work was poorly received from the very start. Over a third of his identifications were challenged within the two covers of his own book in comments by his assistant Immanuel Löw. The retrospective critique of Haiim B. Rosén is

¹⁹ Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 49.

²⁰ On Jewish legal documents, see Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 297–327.

²¹ Lieberman, *Greek*, 37; on the rabbis and Greek culture in general, see Saul Lieberman, “How Much Greek in Jewish Palestine?” in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Biblical and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 123–141; and more recently, Levine, *Judaism*, 96–138.

²² Samuel Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1898; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964).

²³ Mussies, “Greek,” 1050–1051.

typical. He argued that Krauss's study was characterized by "far fetched similarities, twisted meanings, omitting, adding and changing letters at . . . whim, invoking sound laws that hardly ever existed" – though it was still useful as a starting place for research.²⁴

Eight decades later, Daniel Sperber took up Krauss's mantle, proceeding far more carefully.²⁵ A perusal of his work confirms the impression that many of the loanwords are administrative and governmental terms, an understandable phenomenon in light of the political situation in Palestine after the revolts, when contact with Greek- and Latin-speaking authorities would not have been unusual.²⁶ An influx of Greek loanwords, in particular, is typical of Aramaic dialects throughout the Near East in the third through seventh centuries CE,²⁷ after the increased Roman presence there. In short, though Greek and Latin loanwords in rabbinic writings reflect the rabbis' contact with speakers of those languages, they are not a reliable indicator of how widely or frequently the rabbis themselves used those languages. Use of Greek loanwords does not necessarily indicate the use of Greek sentences.²⁸

Clearly, though, the rabbinic texts show that at least some rabbis spoke some Greek,²⁹ and we can infer the same about Jews outside of rabbinic circles. As J. N. Sevenster concluded, however, it is not clear exactly who spoke Greek, in what contexts and how fluently they spoke it, or how great the chronological variations in its usage were.³⁰ If we must be so guarded in drawing conclusions from rabbinic sources about the second and later centuries, then we

²⁴ Haiim B. Rosén, "Palestinian KOINH in Rabbinic Illustration," *JSS* 8 (1963): 56–73, quote from 57; cf. Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 39–41. Alexander puts the number of loanwords (not counting personal and geographical names and Roman administrative terms) at approximately 1,100, only 17 of them verbs ("Hellenism," 75–77).

²⁵ Daniel Sperber, *A Dictionary of Greek & Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1982); cf. Daniel Sperber, *Essays on Greek and Latin in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrashic Literature* (Jerusalem: Makor Publishing, 1982).

²⁶ Compare Greenfield, "Languages," 153.

²⁷ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Phases of the Aramaic Language," in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Chico, Cal: Scholars Press, 1979), 57–84.

²⁸ As Sevenster pointed out, no one argues on the basis of Latin loanwords that many rabbis were fluent in Latin (*Do You Know?* 41). Compare R. Katzoff, "Sperber's *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature* – a Review Essay," *JSJ* 20 (1989): 195–206.

²⁹ For additional pertinent passages, see Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 247–250.

³⁰ Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 38–61, esp. 59; cf. Mussies, "Greek," 1059.

should be all the more cautious in using them to understand the early first century.

The same problems – the mixing together of materials from different geographical and chronological contexts – are evident in the use of archaeological data, the focus of more recent scholarship. Hengel once again provides a helpful starting place for discussion. He amassed a considerable list of evidence for the use of Greek among Palestinian Jews, including Greek personal names, loan-words, papyri, Greek texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, ostraca, numismatic legends, and other types of inscriptions.³¹ He draws attention to finds from a variety of areas, citing, for example, the third–second century BCE tomb inscriptions of Marisa; coins and inscriptions from coastal cities, Shechem, and the Decapolis; the ample epigraphic finds from the vicinity of Jerusalem, such as ossuaries, the Theodotus synagogue inscription, and the temple warning sign (all from the first century CE); and the correspondence, legal documents, book-length texts, and ostraca of the Judean desert.

In Hengel's view, if all Judaism was Hellenistic Judaism, then it followed naturally that many Galileans spoke Greek. Fishermen, tradesmen, and craftsmen would have needed Greek just to make a living.³² One would have been especially likely to encounter Greek in Sepphoris and Tiberias, both of which (according to Hengel) had Greek schools that provided elementary training in rhetoric. Given Nazareth's proximity to Sepphoris, Jesus himself would surely have known some Greek, and the stories of his communicating with gentiles (the centurion at Capernaum, the Syro-Phoenician woman, Pontius Pilate) and traveling in non-Jewish areas like the Decapolis strongly suggest that he could converse in it.³³ Even some of Jesus' disciples – Philip, Andrew, and perhaps Thaddaeus and Bartholomew – had Greek names. What is notable about Hengel's argument, however, is just how short his list of Galilean archaeological evidence is: the Dionysos mosaic at Sepphoris; the inscriptions at the cemetery in Beth She'arim; the coins of Antipas. On the basis of

³¹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 58–65; 'Hellenization', 7–18.

³² Compare Argyle, "Greek"; Porter, "Jesus," 136.

³³ Hengel, 'Hellenization', 17. Compare Argyle ("Greek") and Sevenster (*Do You Know?* 27).

archaeological finds, his case for Greek is much stronger for the “Greek cities” of Palestine and cosmopolitan Jerusalem than for Galilee.

Other scholars also point to the epigraphic corpus of Palestine as a whole as proof of the thoroughgoing use of Greek. Pieter W. Van der Horst, for example, writes, “The burden of proof is on the shoulders of those scholars who want to maintain that Greek was not the lingua franca of many Palestinian Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman-Byzantine period” since 50–65 percent of the public inscriptions are in Greek.³⁴ He thus lumps together finds from all over Palestine from a time span of a thousand years.

The importance of attention to geography is made clear when we consider ossuaries, sarcophagi that held the bones of the dead. Ossuaries constitute the bulk of our epigraphic evidence from first-century CE Palestine.³⁵ Hengel rightly pointed out that of the ones found around Jerusalem, approximately 39 percent had Greek, or, in a very few cases, Latin inscriptions.³⁶ Finds and publications subsequent to Hengel’s study have been consistent with his statistic. L. Y. Rahmani’s catalogue of 897 ossuaries from the late first century BCE to the third century CE included 227 with inscriptions, approximately a third of which were Greek. How many of these *inscribed* ossuaries were from Galilee, however? Only one, a sarcophagus with a Greek inscription found in a tomb with first and second century CE pottery at Qiryat Tiv’on.³⁷ Another ossuary with a Greek inscription, from the early second century CE at the latest, was found nearby at Kefar Barukh, in the Jezreel Valley. In short,

³⁴ Van der Horst, “Greek,” 166; cf. Kee, “Early Christianity,” 20–22.

³⁵ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 364–373.

³⁶ Hengel, *Hellenization*, 10–11. James F. Strange once claimed, on the basis of the smaller body of evidence available at the time, that almost two thirds of ossuary inscriptions were in Greek (“Archaeology and the Religion of Judaism in Palestine,” *ANRW* 2.19.1, 646–685, esp. 661). Strange’s calculation was apparently derived from Fitzmyer, “Languages of Palestine,” which he cites (cf. Fitzmyer, 51 n. 47).

³⁷ L. Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 1994), 11–13, 172 no. 423 and 114 no. 145. Rahmani dates the Qiryat Tiv’on ossuary to the post-70 CE period, though whether he does so on the basis of ceramic finds or because of his theory that the practice of secondary burial spread to Galilee after the revolt is unclear. See Hengel’s discussion of Rahmani’s material in “Judaism and Hellenism Revisited,” 27.

ossuaries tell us about the languages chosen for secondary burial inscriptions in and near Jerusalem, but our body of evidence from Galilee is too small for us to draw conclusions.³⁸

The Dead Sea Scrolls, found far to the south of Galilee in the Judean desert, provide yet another example of finds deserving a more nuanced treatment than they sometimes receive. It is true that the scrolls include Greek manuscripts. One might argue that the fact that even a conservative Jewish sect like that at Qumran had Greek documents illustrates just how influential the language was. The evidence lends itself just as easily to another interpretation, however. The Greek texts at Qumran constitute only a small percentage of the total, about 25 manuscripts out of approximately 850, or 3 percent,³⁹ and in the remaining Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts, Greek loanwords are quite rare.⁴⁰ So, one could just as easily argue that here, only a few miles from the most Hellenistic Jewish city in Palestine, Jerusalem, Greek barely makes an appearance.

Methodological problems multiply when other documents from the Judean desert are pulled into this discussion. Aside from the Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek ostraca and papyri at Masada (a minority of the writings discovered there⁴¹), almost all of our Greek finds from the Judean desert are from after the first revolt. The Babatha archives (93–132 CE) and the Bar Kochba letters post-date the destruction of the temple and after the stationing of a Roman

³⁸ A similar point can be made about appeals to literary texts written in Jerusalem as evidence for the languages used in Galilee. For example, the fact that the historian Eupolemus, a member of the Hasmonean inner circle in Jerusalem, wrote in Greek tells us about the interest of Jerusalem elites in Hellenistic culture, but not about Galileans (or, for that matter, about most commoners in Jerusalem). See Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 138–146; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 92–95; Nikolaus Walter, “Jewish-Greek Literature of the Greek Period,” in *CHJ*, vol. 1, 385–408, esp. 397–400.

³⁹ See James C. Vanderkam, “Greek at Qumran,” in Collins and Sterling, ed., *Hellenism*, 175–181.

⁴⁰ This holds true even for the Copper Scroll (Florentino García Martínez, “Greek Loanwords in the Copper Scroll,” in Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen, eds., *Jerusalem, Alexander, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst* [Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003], 119–145).

⁴¹ Yigael Yadin, Joseph Naveh and Ya'akov Meshorer, *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1964 Final Reports* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, The Hebrew University, 1989); Hannah M. Cotton and Joseph Geiger, *Masada II: The Latin and Greek Documents* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, The Hebrew University, 1989), 9–10.

legion in Judea.⁴² Yet despite the growth of Hellenistic influence in the decades since Jesus, the Semitic texts in these collections greatly outnumber the Greek ones. Using these texts to understand the linguistic environment of second-century Judea is complicated enough; using them to understand that of first-century Galilee is almost impossible.

Some Historical Jesus scholars, though, suggest that epigraphic finds have been abundant in Galilee. The Jesus Seminar's depiction of this issue in *The Five Gospels* is typical: since "recent archaeological excavations in Galilee indicate that Greek influence was widespread there in the first-century of our era," it is likely that Jesus knew Greek.⁴³ The comments of Marcus Borg (a member of the Seminar) are similar: "Recent archaeological finds suggest that the use of Greek was much more widespread than we thought, and this creates the very real possibility that Jesus, and perhaps the disciples, were bilingual."⁴⁴ Stanley Porter argues that "evidence is increasing that it [Galilee] was the Palestinian area most heavily influenced by Greek language and culture . . ."⁴⁵ and claims that the epigraphic evidence "clearly points to the presumption that Jesus' productive bilingual capacity included the ability to speak in Greek."⁴⁶

But too often discussions purporting to concentrate specifically on Galilee are still characterized by the sorts of problems noted above, as Porter's study illustrates. Porter, characteristically, has done a remarkable amount of research. With its lengthy catalogue

⁴² Naphtali Lewis, Yigael Yadin, and Jonas C. Greenfield, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri, Aramaic and Nabatean Signatures and Subscriptions* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Shrine of the Book, 1989); Pierre Benoit, J. T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba'at* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). As Millar points out (*RNE*, 364), the sole pre-Bar Kokhba letter from the Wadi Murabba'at caves, dating to 55/56 CE, is in Aramaic, not Greek. On other Near Eastern papyri, see H. M. Cotton, W. E. H. Cockle, and F. G. B. Millar, "The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey," *JRS* 85 (1995): 214–235.

⁴³ Funk, Hoover, et al., *The Five Gospels*, 28. Compare Funk's comments in *Honest*, 34, 79, and *Credible Jesus*, 5.

⁴⁴ Marcus J. Borg, "The Palestinian Background for a Life of Jesus," in Hershel Shanks, ed., *The Search for Jesus* (Washington, D. C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1994), 37–58, esp. 46–47.

⁴⁵ Porter, "Jesus," 134–136.

⁴⁶ Porter, "Jesus," 128–129.

of Greek inscriptions and thorough bibliographical information, his study is among the very best places to start when investigating this topic. Porter's suggestion that Galilee was the most Hellenized area in Palestine is largely supported by a list of inscriptions from elsewhere in Palestine (though often from nearby sites like Scythopolis and Mount Hermon). From Galilee itself, he can point to only numismatic inscriptions, the imperial prohibition of tomb robbing, a dedicatory inscription on a column from Capernaum, and the burial complex at Beth She'arim. The tomb-robbing inscription, as we have already seen, probably post-dates the beginning of direct Roman administration in 44 CE.⁴⁷ Porter dates the column inscription from Capernaum to the first or second century CE, but here he relies on out-dated scholarship. The synagogue from which that column came is now securely dated to the fourth or fifth century at the earliest – post-Constantinian coins mixed in with the mortar make the date indisputable.⁴⁸ As for the Beth She'arim inscriptions, Porter notes that approximately 80 percent are in Greek and states that “the earliest catacombs (first and second centuries AD) are *all* [emphasis in original] in Greek.” The overwhelming majority of Beth She'arim's tombs, however, were constructed and used in the late second through the fourth centuries, and all of the complex's inscriptions are from this period. Not a single one dates to the first century.⁴⁹

GALILEE'S INSCRIPTIONS

The lack of a standard compendium of Galilee's inscriptions has contributed to the confusion about their quantity and nature.⁵⁰ Yet

⁴⁷ See discussion in Chapter Two.

⁴⁸ S. Loffreda, “Coins from the Synagogue of Capharnaum,” *LA* 47 (1997): 223–244; Stanislao Loffreda, “The Late Chronology of the Synagogue of Capernaum,” in Levine, *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, 52–56; Stanislao Loffreda, “Capernaum,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 291–295, esp. 294.

⁴⁹ Porter, “Jesus,” 147; Porter here relies on E. Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 84–85, but those scholars' wording was more reserved than Porter's. They stated that catacombs 6 and 11, which have Greek inscriptions, *may* (emphasis mine) be late first- or early second-century. In the excavation report itself, the sole inscription in Catacomb 6 is undated, and those in Catacomb 11 are dated to the third century (*Beth She'arim*, vol. 2, 87, 111).

⁵⁰ Jean-Baptiste Frey's classic work, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*, vol. 2 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1952), is over half a century old and full of

if we are to understand Galilee's linguistic milieu, a more detailed treatment of the evidence is needed than those currently available.⁵¹ When the myriads of archaeological publications are sifted and their inscriptions presented in roughly chronological order, from the Hellenistic period up to the early fourth century CE, a very different picture emerges than the claims found in much recent New Testament scholarship. Inscriptions are far less numerous than one might think.⁵²

As for the Hellenistic period (323–63 BCE), there is no abundance of inscriptions, of any type. Handles from imported amphorae (mostly from Rhodes) bearing Greek inscriptions have been found in both Galilee and surrounding sites, such as Ptolemais, Beth Yerah, Scythopolis, and Tel Anafa, particularly in Ptolemaic- and Seleucid-period contexts.⁵³ Coins with Greek legends circulated in Galilee, though none were minted in the region itself. Instead, they were struck by other parties – the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, the coastal cities, and a few cities of the Decapolis. From the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) onwards, Hasmonean coins bore Greek inscriptions. Though produced in Jerusalem, they are frequent finds in Galilee, not only in first-century BCE contexts but also in later strata.

Coins and amphora handles aside, only a few other Hellenistic-era inscriptions, of any language, have been published from the

questionable datings. Catherine Hezser's recent and impressive collection of writings from Jewish Palestine does not focus specifically on Galilee (Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 356–421).

⁵¹ Sources consulted to find inscriptions include the bibliographical references in *ABD*, *NEAEHL*, and *OEANE*; Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*; excavation volumes; archaeological journals; and epigraphic compendia, especially *SEG*. On inscriptions in general, see B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine (323 BC–AD 337)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002) and John Bodell, ed., *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁵² My survey thus omits Byzantine-era inscriptions, which are more numerous.

⁵³ Mordechai Aviam, "First Century Jewish Galilee: An Archaeological Perspective," in Edwards, *Religion and Society*, 7–27, esp. 12; Aviam, "Hellenistic Fortifications"; Gerald Finkielsztein, "Amphoras and Stamped Handles from 'Akko," *Atiqot* 39 (2000): 135–153; Donald T. Ariel, "Stamped Amphora Handles," 154–163 in Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*; Donald T. Ariel, "Two Rhodian Amphoras," *IEJ* 38 (1988): 31–35; Yohanan Landau and Vassilios Tzaferis, "Tel Istabah, Beth Shean: The Excavations and Hellenistic Jar Handles," *IEJ* 29 (1979): 152–157; Donald T. Ariel and Gerald Finkielsztein, "Stamped Amphora Handles," in Herbert, *Tel Anafa I*, i, 183–240. Several have been found at Yoqne'am (Rosenthal-Heginbottom, "Stamped Jar Handles").

interior of Galilee.⁵⁴ A situla with Phoenician and Egyptian inscriptions from the pagan temple at Mizpeh Yamim dates to the Persian period but appears to have been in use until the temple's destruction in the second century BCE.⁵⁵ A gaming die found in southwestern Galilee from the Ptolemaic or Seleucid era bears in Greek the name of the god of fortune, Hermes.⁵⁶ A base for an Apis figurine at Beersheba has three inscriptions, one in hieroglyphic, one that is unreadable but perhaps Greek, and one that is Aramaic – קרב.⁵⁷ An ostrakon from Sepphoris dated to the second century BCE has seven Semitic letters, אפמלסלש, the first five of which may reflect a Greek loan word, *epimeletes*.⁵⁸ At Kedesh, twenty-two sealings have been found, with Greek, Phoenician, and bilingual inscriptions, dating to the first half of the second century BCE.⁵⁹

Similarly, we have very, very few Galilean inscriptions from the Early Roman period. In the first century CE, almost all are numismatic, from old Hasmonean currency, Herodian issues, or coins minted in nearby cities, especially Tyre. The *only* extant inscriptions definitely produced within Galilee during the first part of that century, the lifetime of Jesus, are the bronze coins of Herod Antipas and a lead market weight from Tiberias from 29/30 CE naming its *agoranomos*, Gaius Julius.⁶⁰

Expanding the chronological parameters of our inquiry to include the decades between Antipas's reign and the end of the first century enlarges our epigraphic corpus only slightly. A mosaic at Magdala/Taricheae depicting a ship and *kantharos* includes the words ΚΑΙ ΣΥ ("and you"), probably an apotropaic warning directed to visitors, returning their wishes, ill or good, back to them; its exact date is unclear.⁶¹ A pre-67 CE ostrakon from Yodefath bears Semitic

⁵⁴ On inscriptions found in nearby areas, see discussion below.

⁵⁵ Map coordinates 193/260; Frankel and Ventura, "Mizpeh Yamim Bronzes."

⁵⁶ Rosa Last, "Inscribed Astragalus from Sha'ar Ha'amaqim," *ZPE* 130 (2000): 248.

⁵⁷ Map coordinates 189/259; Aviam, "First Century," 8–9.

⁵⁸ E. Meyers, "Sepphoris on the Eve," 130–131; Naveh, "Jar Fragment"; Naveh, "Epigraphic Miscellanea"; Joseph Naveh, "Jar Fragment with Inscription in Hebrew," in Nagy et al., *Sepphoris*, 170. See discussion in Chapter One.

⁵⁹ Ariel and Naveh, "Selected Inscribed Sealings."

⁶⁰ Qedar, "Two Lead Weights"; *SEG* 42.1473, 43.1076. On coins, see Chapter Five.

⁶¹ Avner Raban, "The boat from Migdal Nunia and the anchorages of the Sea of Galilee from the time of Jesus," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration*

letters.⁶² The remaining inscriptions, all Greek, are associated with government authorities: the imperial edict prohibiting tomb robbing;⁶³ several denominations of coins issued c. 53/54 CE by Tiberias, with Greek inscriptions; a coin issued by Agrippa II with Greek inscriptions, including the name of Tiberias;⁶⁴ and two coins minted by Sepphoris c. 68 CE with Greek inscriptions. In addition, one of the Sepphoris coins has a Latin inscription of the letters *SC* (the abbreviation for *senatus consulto*).⁶⁵ A market weight naming a city's *agoranomoi*, probably from Tiberias, apparently dates to the late first century; another weight may also have originated at one of those cities.⁶⁶

Other inscriptions possibly date to the first century, though they could be later. A cooking pot found at Khirbet Qana was apparently inscribed with the alphabet, as demonstrated by a sherd inscribed with three Semitic letters (גגב).⁶⁷ A fragment from an ointment vase at Gush Halav is inscribed with the Greek letters ΑΠΙΣΤ; though it was found in a pre-fourth century CE context, the pottery style appears to be much earlier.⁶⁸ The date of an imported amphora

17 (1988): 311–329. The *kai su* inscription is apparently the only one found thus far in Israel, though it appears several times at Antioch. On its function, see Christine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 19, 106 and Doro Levi, “The Evil Eye and the Unlucky Hunchback,” in Richard Stilwell, ed., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), vol. 3, 220–232, esp. 225–226.

⁶² Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, “Iotapata.”

⁶³ See discussion in Chapter Two.

⁶⁴ *Treasury*, 106, 177–178.

⁶⁵ See Chancey, “Cultural Milieu,” 132; Meshorer, “Coins of Sepphoris” and “Sepphoris and Rome.” The presence of Latin on Sepphoris’s coins makes them contrast all the more starkly with the nearest other revolt-era coinage, that of Gamla, which bore a paleo-Hebrew inscription referring to Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ One weight is dated to “year 43 of the great king Agrippa,” which can only be Agrippa II. The weight was found at Magdala, but Qedar thinks it is from Tiberias (“Two Lead Weights”). On the date, see Kushnir-Stein, “Two Inscribed Lead Weights.” Kushnir-Stein describes the second weight mentioned above, which was discovered in a museum collection.

⁶⁷ Esther Eshel and Douglas R. Edwards, “Language and Writing in Early Roman Galilee: Social Location of a Potter’s Abecedary from Khirbet Qana,” in Edwards, *Religion and Society*, 49–55.

⁶⁸ E. Meyers, C. Meyers, and Strange, *Gush Halav*, 126; cf. Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, Carol L. Meyers, Richard S. Hanson, “Preliminary Report on the 1977 and 1978 Seasons at Gush Halav (El Jish),” *BASOR* 233 (1979), 33–58, esp. 56.

handle with a Latin stamp is uncertain but in any case tells us little about the languages used at its find spot in northern Upper Galilee.⁶⁹ Other inscriptions that date to either the first or second century include: the Greek ossuary inscription at Qiryat Tiv'on;⁷⁰ graffiti (two letters, vθ – the number 59?) in a cave at Gush Halav,⁷¹ and an unpublished fragmentary Latin inscription of just a few letters, found at Sepphoris.⁷² The range of dates for these inscriptions is significant, especially when considering their value for understanding the linguistic milieu of first-century Galilee. There is a tremendous difference between Galilee in 50 CE and Galilee in 150 CE. The Latin inscription from Sepphoris, for example, probably post-dates the stationing there of Roman troops in the Revolt or the arrival of the legion in the second century.

Even inscriptions from later centuries of the Roman era are not as numerous as one might think. Many are from just two sites, Sepphoris and Tiberias. Both cities sporadically minted bronze coins with Greek inscriptions in the second and early third centuries.⁷³ At Sepphoris, a mid-second-century market weight identifies the *agoranomoi*, Simon son of Aianos, and Justus.⁷⁴ The basilical building there contains a mosaic inscription reading "Good Luck;" its date is uncertain, but it must be before the building's mid-fourth century destruction.⁷⁵ Some of the city's lavish mosaics also have Greek inscriptions. The early third-century triclinium mosaic with Dionysiac scenes has explanatory labels for each panel, and a mosaic in a nearby room reads *hygei*.⁷⁶ The more recently discovered

⁶⁹ Ariel, "Stamped Amphora Handles," 161 no. 34.

⁷⁰ Fanny Vitto, "Qiryat Tiv'on," *IEJ* 24 (1974): 279; "Kiriath Tiv'on," *RB* 9 (1972): 574–576; cf. Rahmani, *Catalogue*, 172 no. 423.

⁷¹ Raqui Milman Baron, "A Survey of Inscriptions found in Israel, and published in 1992–1993," *SCI* 13 (1994): 142–161, esp. 143 no. 2.

⁷² Strange commented on this unpublished inscription in his conference presentation, "Josephus on Galilee and Sepphoris," at the Josephus Seminar of the National Society of Biblical Literature Meeting, Denver, Col., November, 2001.

⁷³ See Chapter Six.

⁷⁴ Justus's father was probably also originally named, but that part of the inscription is lost. Meshorer, "Market Weight"; cf. his earlier reading in "Lead Weight."

⁷⁵ Strange, "Eastern Basilical Building."

⁷⁶ Talgam and Weiss, *Mosaics*, 47–73 and 19–20; Carol L. Meyers, Eric M. Meyers, Ehud Netzer, and Ze'ev Weiss, "The Dionysos Mosaic," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 111–116; E. Meyers, Netzer, and C. Meyers, *Sepphoris*, 34–35, 38–59.

Orpheus mosaic from the end of the third or early fourth century CE also has a Greek inscription, though the inscription may date to a later fourth-century restoration; likewise, an inscription on a later maritime mosaic in the same building probably also dates to later in the fourth century.⁷⁷ Yet another mosaic inscription was found in a nearby shop.⁷⁸ An amphora from the second or third century has red Greek letters on it,⁷⁹ and a Late Roman mortarium has a name, probably Eutychos, on its rim.⁸⁰ A tombstone with an Aramaic inscription and carved menorah is either Roman or Byzantine period.⁸¹ Inscriptions may have adorned the city's theater in antiquity, though they are long since gone.

Most of the inscriptions found at Tiberias have been burial inscriptions. One, in Greek, originally marked the grave of a certain Julianus, son of Crispus; another, that of a Yosephus son of Eleasaros; yet another, that of Simon bar Semia.⁸² Four inscriptions, two in Greek and two in Latin, are from the tombs of Roman soldiers and administrators.⁸³ Other Greek inscriptions include a marble plaque commissioned by a manumitted slave in honor of his former master⁸⁴ and a now lost dedication, perhaps of a statue (if so, it was a rare Galilean example of a statue-related inscription).⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Ze'ev Weiss and Ehud Netzer, "Zippori – 1994–1995," *ESI* 18 (1998): 22–27; Ze'ev Weiss, "Zippori – 1997," *HA* 109 (1999): 16–18.

⁷⁸ Weiss, "Zippori 1999"; Weiss, "Zippori 2000."

⁷⁹ E. Meyers, Netzer, and C. Meyers, *Sepphoris*, 22.

⁸⁰ The inscription's first letters are lost; the ones still on the rim are τυχοϛ. See B. Lifshitz, "Notes d'épigraphique Grecque," *RB* 77 (1970): 76–83, no. 14; cf. L. Y. Rahmani, "Miscellanea – Roman to Medieval," *Atiqot* 14 (1980): 103–113, esp. 104.

⁸¹ Ze'ev Weiss, "Tombstone with Menorah and Inscription," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 185.

⁸² That of Julianus is probably from the second century CE (Yossi Stepanski and Emanuel Damati, "Greek Funerary Inscriptions from Eastern Galilee," *ESI* 9 [1989/1990]: 79; Emanuel Damati, "Three Greek Inscriptions from Eastern Galilee," *Atiqot* 35 [1998]: 151–155). The inscription of Yosephos is probably late second- or early third-century (Emanuel Damati, "A Greek Inscription from a Mausoleum in Tiberias," *Atiqot* 38 [1999]: 227–228 [English Summary]). For that of Simon, see A. Ovadiah, "A Jewish Sarcophagus at Tiberias," *IEJ* 22 (1972): 229–232.

⁸³ For the Greek inscriptions, see Cagnat and LaFaye, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. 3, no. 1204 and Leah Di Segni, "Ketuvot Teveryah," in Yizhar Hirschfeld, ed., *Teveryah* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1988) (Hebrew), 70–95, esp. 90–91 no. 27. For the two Latin inscriptions, see Avi-Yonah, "Newly Discovered," 88–91 nos. 5 and 7. Other inscriptions (e.g., *CIF* 2.984–986) in the vicinity of Tiberias could be from either Roman- or Byzantine-period.

⁸⁴ Di Segni, "Ketuvot," 76–77 no. 8.

⁸⁵ Di Segni, "Ketuvot," 86 no. 19; cf. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 153.

Galilee's epigraphic record from the second and third centuries strongly reflects the impact of the Romans' arrival c. 120. Milestones on the roads connecting Sepphoris to Ptolemais and Tiberias and on the roads jutting out from Scythopolis in all directions had Latin inscriptions, according to normal Roman military conventions.⁸⁶ Many were also engraved with distances to nearby cities in Greek, presumably to make them at least somewhat more useful to a wider audience of travelers.⁸⁷ Roof tiles often bore the stamp of the VI Ferrata legion.⁸⁸ The graves of soldiers and administrators who died in service or after permanently settling in Galilee sometimes bore Latin inscriptions, as demonstrated by inscriptions at Tiberias, Gabara,⁸⁹ and Kefar Kanna.⁹⁰

The treasure trove of Galilean inscriptions – approximately 280 inscriptions – is at the burial complex of Beth She'arim.⁹¹ The overwhelming majority – roughly 80 percent – are in Greek. Some 16 percent in Hebrew, and the rest are in Aramaic or Palmyrene.⁹² Despite the frequency with which these inscriptions are cited in discussions of first-century Galilee, all are later. While some scattered tombs date to the first century, those with inscriptions are from the late second to the early fourth century.

The other published Roman-era evidence can be quickly summarized. The Greek honorific inscription to Septimius Severus at Qazyon in Upper Galilee dates to c. 197 CE.⁹³ In western Upper Galilee, at Horvat Asaf, the Greek inscription on the tombstone of a woman named Marona has been dated to the second or third century CE.⁹⁴ Two ostraca, one, Greek and the other, Hebrew,

⁸⁶ See discussion in Chapter Two.

⁸⁷ See, for example, the milestone on the Sepphoris–Legio route (Isaac and Roll, “Judaea”), several on the Scythopolis–Legio road (Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads*, nos. 3, 5, 8, 10–12, 15–19, 22) and a milestone on the Scythopolis–Pella road (*SEG* 39.1637). Cities may have occasionally erected or tended milestones (Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads*, nos. 10–12).

⁸⁸ For example, at Horvath Hazon (map coordinates 187/257) (Bahat, “Roof Tile”) and Kefar Hananya (Adan-Bayewitz, “Kefar Hananya”).

⁸⁹ Map coordinates 182/250.

⁹⁰ Avi-Yonah, “Newly Discovered,” 91 no. 7 and 88 no. 4; Mordechai Aviam will soon publish the one from Kefar Kanna (personal communication).

⁹¹ *Beth She'arim*, vols. 2 and 3.

⁹² Statistics from Lee I. Levine, “Beth She'arim,” *OEANES*, vol. 2, 309–311.

⁹³ See discussion in Chapter Four.

⁹⁴ Map coordinates 205/269; Stepanski and Damati, “Greek Funerary Inscriptions,” 79; Damati, “Three Greek Inscriptions.”

from the third and fourth centuries CE, were found in the store-room of a large residence at Meiron.⁹⁵ At Horvat Hesheq, a pagan altar of unknown date with a Latin inscription was found reused in a church.⁹⁶ In Lower Galilee, a Semitic inscription on the “chair of Moses” from the synagogue at Chorazin dates to the fourth century at the earliest.⁹⁷ Two column inscriptions from Capernaum, one (previously mentioned) Greek and the other, Hebrew, date to the fourth century or perhaps even the fifth.⁹⁸ A Greek column inscription from the second century was reused in the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth.⁹⁹ From the mid-fourth century on, inscriptions become more and more common in Galilee, especially in synagogues. And, of course, there are many inscriptions for which the dates are unclear, but which are probably from the Roman period.¹⁰⁰

The chronological dimension of this epigraphic corpus is undeniable. Simply put, there is not much evidence from the first century CE, especially the earliest decades. Claims that there are numerous inscriptions from the time of Jesus are thus misleading, and the very meager number of first-century Greek inscriptions is an insufficient basis from which to generalize that Greek was widely spoken.

Most of the published inscriptions are from the Middle and Late Roman eras, and they probably do suggest a more widespread use of Greek in those later periods. They date to a very different point in Galilee’s history than that of Jesus, and assuming they reflect the society of his day is extremely problematic. Since Jesus’ time, Sephoris and Tiberias had prospered and grown. Refugees from Judea, many presumably from Jerusalem, where Greek appears to have been more common, had come to Galilee following the revolts.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Meiron, 66; cf. critique of Gideon Foerster, “Excavations at Ancient Meron (Review Article),” *IEJ* 37 (1987): 262–269.

⁹⁶ Map coordinates 175/261; Mordechai Aviam, “Horvat Hesheq – A Unique Church in Upper Galilee,” in *Jews*, 205–240.

⁹⁷ Yeivin, *Synagogue*, 29–31; Ze’ev Yeivin, “Chorazin,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 301–304.

⁹⁸ *CJ*, vol. 2, 982–983. See discussion earlier in this chapter.

⁹⁹ Bellarmino Bagatti, *Excavations at Nazareth*, trans. E. Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1969), 316.

¹⁰⁰ Note the inscribed ring at Gush Halav (*Gush Halav*, 125) and an inscribed sarcophagus from Selame (map coordinates 185/254) (Sh. Applebaum, B. Isaac, and Y. Landau, “Varia Epigraphica,” *SCI* 6 [1981/1982]: 98–118; 99 no. 2).

¹⁰¹ Chancey, *Myth*, 60–61.

Most importantly, Rome's presence had increased dramatically. John P. Meier has suggested that 70 CE was a linguistic watershed for Palestine, after which Greek became more frequently spoken.¹⁰²

While this is probably true for Jerusalem and Judea, the watershed date for Galilee was more likely c. 120 CE, when the legion arrived.

The problem of determining how much Greek was spoken in Galilee is more complex than counting and dating inscriptions, however. The published epigraphic findings have another surprising aspect: not only are Greek inscriptions rare in the first century, so are Semitic inscriptions. If Aramaic was the dominant spoken language in Galilee, as most scholars acknowledge, then why does it make such a poor showing in the region's epigraphic corpus? To answer this question, we must consider more carefully the complex relationship between the epigraphic and the oral uses of languages.

THE "EPIGRAPHIC HABIT"

Looking at inscriptions through the lens of a region's "epigraphic habit" (to use Ramsay MacMullen's famous phrase) might prevent us from interpreting them too facilely.¹⁰³ The "epigraphic habit" refers to an area's customs relating to inscriptions, i.e., the types of inscriptions engraved; the languages chosen for those inscriptions; the events, facts, and ideas recorded epigraphically; the chronological variations in the frequency of inscriptions; the parties that commissioned and erected inscriptions; and the parties reflected in inscriptions. Attention to the concept of the "epigraphic habit" should make us leery of making too many assumptions about the languages of the masses on the basis of inscriptions alone.

The chronological aspect of Galilee's epigraphic habit – few inscriptions in the first century, more in later ones – is clear. Though some scholars might be tempted to dismiss this pattern as the result of accidents of survival and discovery, a look at other regions reveals otherwise. The increase in the number of inscriptions

¹⁰² Meier, *Marginal Jew*, vol. 1, 291 n. 27.

¹⁰³ Ramsay MacMullen, "The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire," *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982): 233–246; John Bodel, "Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian," in Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence*, 1–56, esp. 6–15; Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 357–364.

in the second and later centuries CE conforms to an empire-wide pattern: after Roman troops and administrators are introduced into a region, considerably more inscriptions are produced. This is true not only of governmental inscriptions and publicly-displayed inscriptions of individuals and groups, but also of private inscriptions such as those associated with burials.¹⁰⁴ The Romans did not introduce inscriptions to Palestine, but they do seem to have introduced the custom of engraving more of them for a greater variety of purposes.

In a very real sense, then, the quantity of inscriptions itself reflects the effects of Romanization, though obviously other factors (such as economic) also affect the frequency. The fact that Galilee seems to have avoided the “Augustan boom” in inscriptions that Rome and other parts of the Mediterranean world experienced is explained,¹⁰⁵ at least partly, by the fact that the processes of Romanization were in only their nascent stages under Herod the Great and Antipas. Before the physical presence of Romans, inscriptions were a less significant part of Galilean life.¹⁰⁶

Sensitivity to Galilee’s epigraphic habit helps to explain the conspicuous absence of Aramaic among early inscriptions. The reality is that a region’s inscriptions do not provide a full picture of the languages used. Instead, they usually reflect the values of the elites and the authorities.¹⁰⁷ In the inscriptions of the Roman world, local languages are often under-represented and Greek and Latin over-represented, a fact pointed out by Fergus Millar, Ramsay MacMullen, and others.¹⁰⁸ Because early Galilean inscriptions were

¹⁰⁴ MacMullen, “Epigraphic Habit”; MacMullen, “Frequency of Inscriptions in Roman Lydia,” *ZPE* 65 (1986): 237–238.

¹⁰⁵ Greg Woolf, “Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire,” *JRS* 85 (1995): 214–235, esp. 37; Bodel, “Epigraphy,” 8–10; Géza Alföldy, “Augustus und die Inschriften: Tradition und Innovation,” *Gymnasium* 98 (1991): 289–324.

¹⁰⁶ The advent of the Romans also typically caused an increase in other types of writings, such as ostraca and papyri (MacMullen, “Epigraphic Habit,” 237–240; Woolf, “Monumental Writing”; William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* [Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1989], 141–143, 276–280, 283, 325; and Cotton, Cockle, and Millar, “Papyrology”).

¹⁰⁷ Lapin, “Palestinian Inscriptions,” 245–258.

¹⁰⁸ Ramsay MacMullen, “Provincial Languages in the Roman Empire,” in *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 32–40; Fergus Millar, “Local Cultures in the Roman Empire: Libyan, Punic and Latin in Roman

mostly governmental, they were in the language typically used for official inscriptions in the Levant since the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, Greek. When the Romans arrived, they often deferred to the dominance of Greek, as the coins of the Judean procurators¹⁰⁹ and some issues from the imperial mints at Antioch and Alexandria demonstrate.¹¹⁰

Can we conclude from government-issued inscriptions, whether civic, Herodian, or Roman, that the Galileans who saw them knew Greek? When considering this question, we sometimes make what is probably a mistake: we imagine that most people were actually reading the inscriptions.¹¹¹ We too rarely ask an important question: if literacy rates were as low as we think – William V. Harris's comprehensive study suggests 10 percent for the empire, perhaps higher in the cities¹¹² – then who read these inscriptions? There is little reason to suppose that literacy was more common in Galilee than elsewhere in the Roman world; given that the region was mostly rural, it may have even been less common.¹¹³ If most people were not literate anyway, can we assume that the language chosen for "official" inscriptions reflects in any way what was spoken by the majority of the population?¹¹⁴ Greek letters engraved for governmental purposes tell us very little about what the masses spoke.¹¹⁵ Instead, they tell us about the region's epigraphic habit and the cultural orientations of those commissioning the inscriptions and ordering the posting of edicts, the creation of market weights, the minting of currency.

Africa," *JRS* 58 (1965): 126–134; Ball, *Rome*, 3–4, 447; Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 176–177, 187; Maryline Parca, "Local Languages and Native Cultures," in Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence*, 57–72; Horsley, *Archaeology*, 155–159, 168.

¹⁰⁹ *Treasury*, 167–176.

¹¹⁰ *RPC*, vol. 1, 606–630, 688–713.

¹¹¹ For examples of this reasoning, see Millard's discussion of Greek legends on Hasmonean coins (*Reading*, 107; cf. 167–168) and Sevenster's comments on the tomb-robbing edict (*Do You Know?* 120).

¹¹² Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 22; cf. Mary Beard et al., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, Mich.; *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 1991) and Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 18–26, 34–36, 170–176.

¹¹³ Hezser suggests that the literacy rate in Jewish Palestine was lower than in many other parts of the empire (*Jewish Literacy*, 496–504).

¹¹⁴ On this point, see especially Meier, *Marginal Jew*, vol. 1, 255–257.

¹¹⁵ *Contra* Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 120.

Coins provide the most obvious example of this point. It is clear from his money that Antipas, like the other Herods, wanted his currency to look like – and thus compare favorably with – other coinage emanating out of the eastern Mediterranean. His Greek numismatic legends attest to his Hellenizing and Romanizing aspirations. Similarly, Greek on the coins of Sepphoris and Tiberias reflects the civic elites' desire to have coinage like that of other Levant cities.¹¹⁶

Departing from convention by choosing a language other than Greek made a statement. This is seen clearly when one considers the Nabateans. Their early coins had Greek inscriptions, but after Rome's entrance into the area in the 60s BCE, they began minting coins with Nabatean legends, a statement of Nabatean distinctiveness in the face of growing Greco-Roman influence.¹¹⁷ When Sepphoris put the Latin letters SC on a coin during the first revolt, those letters made the city's pro-Roman position unmistakable. The Herodian king Agrippa II went even further in expressing his Romanophile tendencies, minting coins in 85/86 and 86/87 CE that were copies of coins issued at Rome, down to their Latin inscriptions.¹¹⁸

Governmental inscriptions would not have needed to be read to convey their points. They carried symbolic and propagandistic messages that were perhaps more important than their literal meanings.¹¹⁹ A few of Antipas's subjects could read the Greek legends on his coins, but probably not many. They did not have to, however, to understand what those legends communicated: that he was a tetrarch, ruling at the whim of the Romans, and that his new city Tiberias honored the emperor. Latin inscriptions at Paneas indicate that some of Agrippa's subjects knew Latin, but it is hard to imagine that most did. They also probably had little way of knowing that some of his coins were copies of Roman originals, but that did not

¹¹⁶ On numismatic designs as a reflection of the values of civic elites, see Kenneth W. Harl, *Civic Coins and Civic Politics in the Roman East AD 180–275* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 31.

¹¹⁷ Ya'akov Meshorer, *Nabatean Coins* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1975).

¹¹⁸ See *Treasury*, 111–112.

¹¹⁹ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, vol. 1, 256–257; Horsley, *Archaeology*, 155–157; and Chancey, "City Coins."

prevent them from understanding his coins' message of alliance with the Romans. Similarly, not too many Greek-readers in Lower Galilee would have been needed to disseminate the message from the first-century imperial edict that grave robbing was a crime,¹²⁰ but fewer still would have been needed to spread the more important information, that Galilee was now directly subject to the emperor, not a mere client king. Likewise, second-century Galileans did not have to read the Latin milestones to understand the significance of the new paved roads that so physically marked their territory as under Roman occupation.¹²¹

After the late second century, as people engraved or commissioned other types of inscriptions, such as mosaic labels and burial epitaphs, they, too, usually conformed to the conventions typical of the Roman Near East by employing Greek. But even with this wider, private use of Greek, it is still difficult to determine precisely the particulars of Galilee's linguistic situation. Clearly, some people knew Greek, probably more than in the first century – but who, and how many?

A consideration of burial inscriptions, the largest single category of inscriptions here as in most of the Roman Empire,¹²² sheds further light on Galilee's epigraphic habit. We have insufficient evidence to draw many conclusions about the first century, especially given the lack of inscribed ossuaries. Even in the third and fourth centuries, we have far fewer funerary inscriptions than might be expected, given how common such inscriptions were in other parts of the Mediterranean.¹²³

What we do have, fortunately, is the remarkable catacomb complex at Beth She'arim. Though some people interred there were from other parts of Palestine and a few may have hailed from various parts of the eastern Diaspora, especially Palmyra, most were probably Galileans. The complex apparently was not intended for the masses; burial in its thirty-one catacombs probably reflects that the interred and/or their families had considerable financial resources. Thus, at Beth She'arim we see the burial practices of the elites, not commoners.

¹²⁰ See discussion in Chapter Two.

¹²¹ Hezser argues similarly (*Jewish Literacy*, 362–363).

¹²² Bodel, "Epigraphy," 30–41. ¹²³ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 373–374.

Greek overwhelmingly dominates the approximately 280 inscriptions there, though Palmyrene, Aramaic, and Hebrew are also found. The Palmyrene inscriptions are easily enough explained; they reflect the origins of the interred. As for Aramaic, it is surprisingly rare. This is an important observation; despite being the commonly spoken language in Galilee, it was not the language typically chosen for burial inscriptions by the elites. Aside from isolated words here and there, it appears in only three inscriptions, all in one catacomb, and all with the same purpose: warning tomb robbers or other visitors to the complex not to tamper with graves. One of these Aramaic inscriptions is accompanied by a similar admonition in Greek.¹²⁴

Departures from the preference for Greek often reveal something about the social location of the interred and/or those who sponsored their burial. Thus, while Hebrew inscriptions are scattered throughout the complex, they are especially prevalent in caves 14 and 20,¹²⁵ tombs that belonged to the families of rabbis.¹²⁶ The choice of Hebrew in these tombs reflects the rabbis' respect for the sacred language as well as an interest in differentiating their tombs from those of non-rabbinic families.

Inscriptions are found throughout the complex, on the walls of halls, the sides of individual arcosolia, ceilings, doors, lintels, sealing stones, and sarcophagus lids.¹²⁷ They had various functions: demonstrating ownership, identifying the occupants of specific graves, providing directions for visitors.¹²⁸ In a third-century burial hall, for example, three inscriptions point the way to the grave of Julianus Gemellus, one on the entrance to the hall; another, on an arch connecting two rooms; the third, on the wall of the arcosolium itself.¹²⁹ The Hebrew "shalom" is not uncommon in the complex, serving partly as consolation and partly as a social marker of Jewish identity.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 233–235. Similar Greek warnings are found elsewhere in the catacombs.

¹²⁵ Avigad, "The Excavations," 230–258.

¹²⁶ Weiss, "Social Aspects," 367.

¹²⁷ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 193.

¹²⁸ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 193; Weiss, "Social Aspects," 358.

¹²⁹ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 2, 8–9, nos. 13–15 and discussion on 193, 219.

¹³⁰ On this point, see Lapin, "Palestinian Inscriptions," 260–261.

Does the presence of these various inscriptions indicate that those who commissioned them, presumably the relatives of the deceased, could read them? This was undoubtedly sometimes the case – but can we assume that it was always so? Obviously, inscriptions that provided directions to specific graves reflect the assumption that someone would read them (or at least recognize and remember them), as do, perhaps, warnings against tomb robbing, but not all inscriptions are so obviously functional. Again, low literacy rates must be taken into consideration.¹³¹ Inscriptions might sometimes be explained merely as convention. If so, they would reflect the mason's ability to carve such inscriptions, not necessarily the linguistic abilities of the deceased or the deceased's family.¹³² Many are not of the highest quality; they are crude, with grammatical errors and poorly shaped letters. Overall, they provide little evidence for a high level of proficiency in reading Greek.¹³³

Precisely because they are so different from the other inscriptions, two epitaphs are worthy of special mention. One marks the burial spot of Justus, son of Leontios and Sappho, the other that of Karteria. Both are considerably longer than most inscriptions in the complex, and both are written in meter, reflecting Hellenistic poetic conventions. The epitaph of Justus says that he has gone to Hades, in accordance with Fate (*Moirai*) – providing the only references to those Greek concepts at Beth She'arim.¹³⁴ The dates of these inscriptions (third century) corresponds to what we see in the cities of Arabia. There, metrical inscriptions had first appeared in the second century after the area became a Roman province, but they were becoming more common in the third and fourth centuries.¹³⁵

On the whole, the Beth She'arim evidence shows us that Galilean Jewish elites preferred Greek for burial inscriptions.¹³⁶ What

¹³¹ On epitaphs and literacy, see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 221–222.

¹³² Mussies, "Greek," 1041.

¹³³ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 220.

¹³⁴ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 2, 97 no. 127 and 157 no. 183; cf. van der Horst, "Greek," 96.

¹³⁵ Pierre-Louis Gatier, "Répartition des inscriptions grecques de Jordanie. L'exemple des inscriptions métriques aux époques romaine et byzantine," in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Ammon: Dept. of Antiquities, 1992), vol. 4, 291–294.

¹³⁶ As Hezser points out, however, these inscriptions are shorter and less elaborate than typical Roman inscriptions (*Jewish Literacy*, 396–397).

proportion of those elites could actually read or speak Greek remains open to debate – some, yes, but how many?¹³⁷ Whether burial inscriptions of the elites attest to a widespread, high-level competence in Greek among local Jews of all social classes is even more debatable.¹³⁸

Synagogue inscriptions provide an additional example of the complexity of the “epigraphic habit,” though almost all post-date our time period. With a few possible exceptions (e.g., Beth She’arim and Horvat ’Ammudim), synagogue inscriptions in Galilee are from the fourth century or later.¹³⁹ The same is true of most synagogue inscriptions elsewhere in Palestine,¹⁴⁰ though rabbinic sources attest to earlier inscriptions.¹⁴¹ Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew occur, with Aramaic the most common and Hebrew the least. The heightened visibility (literally) of Aramaic and Hebrew probably reflects the growing self-identity of “Jewishness” in late antiquity, a self-consciousness brought about not only by foreign domination but also by increasing Christian influence.¹⁴² Different languages are

¹³⁷ *Contra* Sevenster, *Do You Know?* 181–182; Vanderkam, “Greek,” 163.

¹³⁸ Strange (“Archaeology and the Religion,” 661) and van der Horst (“Greek,” 163) have made the opposite argument.

¹³⁹ Inscriptions from the synagogue at Beth She’arim are from either the third or fourth century (*Beth She’arim*, vol. 2, 189–198). The Aramaic inscriptions at Horvat ’Ammudim (one on a stone slab, one in a mosaic) are probably early fourth-century, though they could possibly be from the late third; see Levine, “‘Ammudim, Horvat’; Levine, “Excavations,” and Chen, “Ancient Synagogue.” Dothan suggested that the fresco of the early third-century stratum of the Hammath Tiberias synagogue was decorated with Greek writing, but it is difficult to identify any characters in the photograph he provides (*Hammath Tiberias*, 22 and plates 23:1–2 and 36:3). The Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions from that synagogue’s zodiac mosaic are from the fourth century.

¹⁴⁰ The most notable exception is the Theodotus inscription from Jerusalem (Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 54–56). See also this chapter’s earlier discussion of the Capernaum inscriptions, which are still often cited (erroneously) as second century evidence.

¹⁴¹ The standard collections of inscriptions are Joseph Naveh, *On Mosaic and Stone: The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Jerusalem: Carta and Israel Exploration Society, 1978) (Hebrew), updated in J. Naveh, “The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues,” *Eretz Israel* 20 (1989) 302–310 (Hebrew); Lea Roth-Gerson, *Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1987) (Hebrew); see also Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 347–350; Steven Fine, “Synagogue Inscriptions,” *OEANE*, vol. 5, 114–118; and Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 397–413. Several synagogue inscriptions once dated to the second through fourth centuries, such as *CIJ*, vol. 2, 974, 979, 987, must now be dated to the fourth century or later, in light of advances in our knowledge about the synagogue’s development.

¹⁴² Lapin, “Palestinian Inscriptions”; Seth Schwartz, “Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine,” *Past and Present* 148 (1995): 3–47, esp. 44.

associated with different functions. Hebrew is used in scripture quotations and allusions; labels of biblical scenes; and, in zodiac mosaics, to identify astrological symbols.¹⁴³ Greek and Aramaic are used for inscriptions that honor donors to the synagogue, the majority of inscriptions.

Who chose the languages for these inscriptions? The synagogue elders? The donors? The artisans? Regardless, they are expressions of beneficence, wealth, influence, and prestige by the elites.¹⁴⁴ Thus, one cannot necessarily conclude on the basis of the proportion of each language among a given synagogue's inscriptions what the majority of worshippers there spoke. The geographical distribution of the languages is also significant. Greek inscriptions are more common in larger communities, such as Sepphoris, than in smaller villages. Because Galilee's largest communities were in Lower Galilee, Greek inscriptions are more common there than in Upper Galilee.¹⁴⁵ Going beyond these most basic generalizations is difficult. Despite this abundance of evidence, our understanding of Galilee's linguistic situation in the fourth–seventh centuries remains partial.

The geographical dimension of Galilee's epigraphic habit highlighted by Byzantine-period synagogue inscriptions is reflected in the Roman-period evidence as well. Inscriptions from Lower Galilee outnumber those from Upper Galilee. The difference is probably due, at least in part, to the absence of major cities in the north. Upper Galilee's slower development of a tendency to create inscriptions may also be because of its greater distance from the bases of the Roman army.

An additional aspect of Galilee's epigraphic habit in the Roman period is the low number of certain types of inscriptions.¹⁴⁶ Pagan inscriptions – whether from altars, statues, votive objects, or

¹⁴³ Zodiac mosaics with Hebrew inscriptions have been found at Hammath Tiberias, Sepphoris, Na'aran (near Jericho), and Beth Alpha.

¹⁴⁴ Lapin, "Palestinian Inscriptions."

¹⁴⁵ Naveh, *On Mosaic and Stone*, v, 13 and Roth-Gerson, *Greek Inscriptions*, 9–10, 14; cf. discussion in Fine, "Synagogue Inscriptions"; Lee I. Levine, "Synagogues," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 142f–1427; Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 225–227.

¹⁴⁶ On the distinctive epigraphic habits of other regions in the Empire, see Millett, *Romanization*, 81–82 and Greg Woolf, "Beyond Romans and Natives," *WA* 28 (1997): 339–350.

temples – are rare. Given the predominantly Jewish population, this is perhaps not surprising, but one might have expected to find the worship of Roman soldiers recorded epigraphically more often. Because statues do not appear to have been common, related inscriptions (i.e., identification of the person portrayed or of the donor) are lacking, with the exception of one inscription from Tiberias. Indeed, honorific inscriptions of all types are lacking. We find only one inscription to the emperor, at Qazyon, and none to civic elites or provincial officials. Inscriptions identifying the sponsors of buildings are conspicuously absent, though they become common in the Byzantine period, as synagogue inscriptions demonstrate. What makes the absence of these various types of inscriptions so striking is that one would have encountered them regularly in some cities, such as Gerasa. The lack of euergetic inscriptions, in particular, raises the question of whether Galileans largely rejected this aspect of Roman culture.

THE NEIGHBORING AREAS

If one should insist that the “accidents of survival and discovery” are the only reason for the relatively small number of inscriptions from Galilee, the evidence from adjacent areas, most of it in Greek, stands as counter-testimony. Pre-Roman examples at many sites go beyond amphora handles and coins. Inscriptions from the vicinity of Scythopolis include at least four second-century BCE examples: the stele with orders from Seleucid kings and officials¹⁴⁷ two lead weights with the names of *agoranomoi*¹⁴⁸ and what is probably a list of priests of Zeus Olympios.¹⁴⁹ Two pagan dedicatory inscriptions from the mid-second century BCE were found near Ptolemais, one to Atargatis by a Didotous Neoptolemy,¹⁵⁰ the other to Zeus Soter by the Seleucid governor.¹⁵¹ Excavations at Ptolemais also

¹⁴⁷ Landau, “Greek Inscription Found Near Hefzibah.”

¹⁴⁸ *SEG* 27.1451; no author, *Inscriptions Revealed*, 110 no. 224; Kushnir-Stein, “New Hellenistic Lead Weights.”

¹⁴⁹ *SEG* 8.33.

¹⁵⁰ M. Avi-Yonah, “Syrian Gods at Ptolemais-Accho,” *IEJ* 9 (1959): 1–12.

¹⁵¹ Landau, “Greek Inscription from Acre”; cf. J. Schwartz, “Note complémentaire.”

revealed a second-century BCE epitaph memorializing a Cretan soldier.¹⁵² At Gadara, a Greek building inscription probably dates to 85/84 BCE.¹⁵³ Mt. Hermon's long history as a site for temples resulted in a number of Hellenistic- and Roman-era pagan inscriptions there.¹⁵⁴ At the mid-second-century BCE Iturean site of Khirbet Zemel, five *pithoi* were inscribed with Greek names.¹⁵⁵

As in Galilee, the number of inscriptions in the surrounding areas increases in the Roman period. They include the expected occasional ostraca, like the Aramaic example found at Jalame, southwest of Galilee.¹⁵⁶ They also include numerous burial inscriptions, like the probably third-century CE example at Kedesh reused by modern villages as a doorjamb,¹⁵⁷ the inscribed sarcophagus found near the coast at el Makr,¹⁵⁸ and the inscribed ossuary in the Jezreel at Kefar Barukh¹⁵⁹ (all three in Greek). Many are governmental, like

¹⁵² Moshe Dothan, "Akko: Interim Excavation Report: First Season 1973/4," *BASOR* 224 (1976): 1–48, esp. 39–40. Note also the two other inscriptions mentioned in Mordechai Aviam, "Regionalism of Tombs and Burial Customs in the Galilee during the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods," in *Jews*, 257–313, specifically 262.

¹⁵³ *SEG* 50.1479.

¹⁵⁴ Shimon Dar, "The Greek Inscriptions from Senaim on Mount Hermon," *PEQ* 120 (1988): 26–44; Avraham Biran, "To the God who is in Dan," in Avraham Biran, ed., *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981), 142–151.

¹⁵⁵ Map coordinates 229/289; Moshe Hartel, "Excavations at Khirbet Zemel, Northern Golan: An Ituraean Settlement Site," in Gal, *Eretz Zafon*, 75–117.

¹⁵⁶ On the second-century or later eight-character Aramaic inscription on a jar handle, see Joseph Naveh and G. D. Weinberg, "Appendix: Inscriptions," in Gladys Davidson Weinberg, ed., *Excavations at Jalame: Site of a Glass Factory in Late Roman Palestine* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 255–256.

¹⁵⁷ Chester C. McCown, "Epigraphic Gleanings," *AASOR* 2–3 (1921–1922): 109–115, esp. 114–115. This burial inscription is dated to year 393; my proposed third-century date reflects the assumption that it uses the era of Tyre, which began in 126/125 BCE. Other burial inscriptions include: two sarcophagi, one (early third-century) with a painted Greek inscription and another (late second-century) with a Hebrew inscription, found at Kefar Gil'adi, west of Paneas (J. Kaplan, "Kfar Gil'adi," *IEJ* 12 [1962]: 154–155; J. Kaplan, "Kfar Gil'adi," *IEJ* 8 [1958]: 274); a Greek epitaph (date unknown) from Yoqne'am (Applebaum, Isaac, and Landau, "Varia Epigraphica," 100 no. 4). At Belvoir (map coordinates 200/223), a second third-century Greek epitaph was recovered (*SEG* 50.1465). Further north, at Sidon, sixty-two Roman period epitaphs are in Greek (*SEG* 50.1400–1461). Gadara has recently yielded a third- or fourth-century CE Greek epitaph on a basalt rock (*SEG* 50.1516).

¹⁵⁸ Aviam, "Regionalism," 272.

¹⁵⁹ Rahmani, *Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries*, 114 no. 145.

the inscribed market weights from Paneas¹⁶⁰ and Gaba.¹⁶¹ A few inscriptions are honorific, like one at Gaba naming a citizen “first of the city and its founder.”¹⁶² The Roman colony at Ptolemais marked its boundary with a Latin inscription,¹⁶³ and along with the villages of Nea Come and Gedru, it honored Nero with a Latin inscription.¹⁶⁴ At the end of the third and in the early fourth century, Roman officials used Greek inscriptions to mark boundaries (apparently for taxation purposes) for many villages in the Huleh Valley and Golan.¹⁶⁵

Unlike Galilee’s inscriptions, many of those from the neighboring regions are explicitly pagan. At Qeren Naftali, a Tyrian village on the northern fringe of geographical Galilee, two dedicatory inscriptions, one to Athena (c. 50–150 CE), the other to the Heliopolitan Zeus (third century CE) were found.¹⁶⁶ Five inscriptions are associated with the early second-century CE temple at Kedesh, also in Tyrian territory.¹⁶⁷ Further north still, pagan worshippers left behind other inscriptions.¹⁶⁸ At Paneas, numerous pagan inscriptions from the second through fourth centuries have been found.¹⁶⁹ Other examples in the region are plentiful.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁰ Alla Kushnir-Stein, “Two Inscribed Weights from Banias,” *IEJ* 45 (1995): 48–51. Both are post-first century CE.

¹⁶¹ Ayriel Siegelmann, “The Identification of Gaba Hippeon,” *PEQ* 116 (1984–1985): 89–93.

¹⁶² Z. Safrai and M. Lin, “Mishmar Ha’Emeq,” *ESI* 6 (1987–1988): 111; Benjamin Isaac, “Two Greek Inscriptions from Tell Abu-Shusha,” in Isaac, *Near East*, 31–33.

¹⁶³ Avi-Yonah, “Newly Discovered,” 85–86 no. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Avi-Yonah, “Newly Discovered,” 85–86 nos. 2–3.

¹⁶⁵ Danny Syon and Moshe Hartal note forty such stones in “A New Tetrarchic Boundary Stone,” *SCI* 22 (2003): 233–239; cf. Millar, *RNE*, 194–195, 535–544.

¹⁶⁶ E. W. G. Masterman, “Two Greek Inscriptions from Khurbet Harrawi,” *PEQ* 20 (1908): 155–157; cf. the conjectural readings offered in F. Abel, “Tell el-Harraouy,” *RB* 17 (1908): 574–578 and J. Gabalda, “Bulletin,” *RB* 18 (1909): 492–495. Dating is provided in Mordechai Aviam, “The Hellenistic and Hasmonaean Fortress and Herodian Siege Complex at Qeren Naftali,” in *Jews*, 59–88.

¹⁶⁷ Four inscriptions are described in Fischer, Ovadiah, and Roll, “Epigraphic Finds.” An unpublished additional inscription is mentioned in Aviam, “Borders.”

¹⁶⁸ Mordechai Aviam, “Galilee,” in *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 453–454; Aviam, “Borders.”

¹⁶⁹ Vassilios Tzaferis, “Cults and Deities Worshipped at Caesarea Philippi-Banias,” in Eugene Ulrich et al., eds., *Priests, Prophets, and Scribes* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992): 190–204; Zvi Ma’oz, “Banias, Temple of Pan – 1990,” *ESI* 10 (1991): 59–61; Zvi Ma’oz, “Banias, Temple of Pan – 1993,” *ESI* 15 (1996): 1–5; Robert C. Gregg and Dan Urman, *Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Golan Heights* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 280–283.

¹⁷⁰ Roman soldiers left behind Latin dedicatory inscriptions (Eck and Tepper, “Dedication”; Avi-Yonah, “Newly Discovered,” 89–91 no. 6). Note the Greek reference to an *archiereus*

Focusing on the epigraphic finds from three nearby cities helps to reveal the distinctiveness of Galilee's epigraphic habit. The number of inscriptions at Scythopolis also increases after the wave of development that swept over the city in the second century CE. Most are Greek,¹⁷¹ though a few are Latin.¹⁷² At Caesarea Maritima, excavators have found over 400 Latin and Greek inscriptions, many from the Byzantine period, but a considerable number from the first three centuries CE.¹⁷³ Gerasa, furthest removed from Galilee of these cities, seems to provide an unending supply of new inscriptions. The 271 pre-Constantinian inscriptions in Kraeling's classic excavation volume¹⁷⁴ are constantly being supplemented with new ones,¹⁷⁵ usually in Greek but often in Latin. At these cities,¹⁷⁶ we find more than epitaphs; we also find inscriptions recording participation in pagan cults,¹⁷⁷ dedication of statues,¹⁷⁸ the honoring of

at Gaba (Safrai and Lin, "Mishmar Ha'Emeq"; Isaac, "Two Greek Inscriptions"). A fragmentary Greek inscription (date unknown) on a limestone block at Tel Jezreel possibly mentions the deity Leukothea (Pinhas Porat, "A Fragmentary Greek Inscription from Tel Jezreel," *TA* 24 [(1997): 167–168]. At Omrit, a Greek inscription names Aphrodite (Overman, Olive, and Nelson, "Discovering," 45).

¹⁷¹ In addition to the inscriptions mentioned in subsequent notes, see *SEG* 8.32, 20.457, 20.458, 20.546, 37.1530, 47.2057.

¹⁷² Last and Stein, "Ala Antiana"; Baron, "Survey," 148 no. 13 and 156 no. 28; two mentioned in Gatier, "Gouverneurs."

¹⁷³ *GLI*. Because most of the inscriptions are undated, providing an exact proportion of those from the Roman period is impossible.

¹⁷⁴ Welles, "Inscriptions" (in Kraeling, "Gerasa").

¹⁷⁵ In addition to the inscriptions cited below, see *SEG* 14.831, 32.1539, 35.1568, 35.1572–1573, 39.1453, 39.1651, 44.1400, 45.1997, 46.2057–2058, 46.2062, 46.2064, 47.2066–2067.

¹⁷⁶ In this and the following notes, categories overlap. For example, an inscription from an honorific statue is noted both as statue-related and as honorific, and an inscription recording euergetism for a pagan temple is listed as both pagan and construction-related. The examples cited here are illustrative; the full lists of inscriptions are too lengthy to include.

¹⁷⁷ At Scythopolis: *SEG* 20.456 (138–139 CE), 27.1446 (Severan period), 37.1529 (second century?), 41.1575 (144/145 CE), Leah Di Segni, "A Dated Inscription from Beth Shean and the Cult of Dionysos Ktistes in Roman Scythopolis," *SCI* 16 (1997): 139–161 (141/142 CE). At Caesarea: *GLI*, 67–70 nos. 43, 118–124 nos. 119–128. At Gerasa: Welles, "Inscriptions," 373–395 nos. 2–44 and 445–446 nos. 195–198 (nos. 2–9, 17–18, 29 are first-century; the rest are mostly second- and third-century); *SEG* 35.1569 (27/28 CE), 27.1009–1010 (90–91 CE), 37.1550/45.1998 (date unknown), 39.1647–47 and 1649–1650 (mid-second century), 39.1655–1658 (early third century).

¹⁷⁸ At Scythopolis: 37.1531/40.1509 (second–third century), 46.2048 (second–third century portrait bust), possibly 27.1446. At Caesarea: *GLI*, 35–37 nos. 2–3, 132 no. 145. At Gerasa: Welles, "Inscriptions," 424–442 nos. 141–191 (mostly second–third century); *SEG* 14.831

dignitaries,¹⁷⁹ and donations for construction projects (often columns), whether temples, theaters, or other public buildings¹⁸⁰ – the very types of inscriptions that are largely lacking in Galilee’s cities.¹⁸¹

The greater frequency of Greek inscriptions in these other cities may reflect a greater use of spoken Greek, but the complex set of issues revolving around oral and written languages must be kept in mind with them, as with Galilee. At Caesarea Maritima, for example, Latin inscriptions outnumber Greek inscriptions 2.5:1 in the pre-Constantinian period.¹⁸² This is due to the city’s self-identity as an island of Romanism in the Hellenistic East. Undoubtedly, more Latin was heard at Caesarea Maritima than at most places – but one suspects that more Greek was spoken than the 2.5:1 Latin: Greek ratio implies.

Dialects of Aramaic continued to be spoken in the Greek cities, though we will never know to what extent. Eusebius provides a glimpse of this phenomenon, though, recording a tradition that Christians worshipping in Scythopolis during the reign of Diocletian (284–305 CE) needed to have Greek scriptures translated into Aramaic.¹⁸³ One imagines that Aramaic was even more commonly heard in rural areas and small villages, though our lack of sources prevents us from knowing how much.¹⁸⁴

(143 CE); 32.1537 (184 CE), 39.1646–47 and 1649–1650 (mid-second century), 46.2061 (late second century); Friedland, “Roman Marble Sculptures.”

¹⁷⁹ In addition to inscriptions already mentioned, note at Gerasa: *SEG* 7.813 (early second century), 27.1008 (early second century), 39.1653 (first century), 39.1651 (mid-second century), 46.2057 (late first century CE), 46.2058 (130–135 CE); Caesarea: *GLI*, 35–64 nos. 2–24, 27–38 (mostly second–third century). References to the emperor are particularly frequent.

¹⁸⁰ At Scythopolis: Last and Stein, “Ala Antiana” (two columns); *SEG* 20.455/43.1073 (early fourth century?). At Caesarea: *GLI*, 37–54 nos. 4–38, 67–71 nos. 43–44. At Gerasa: in addition to inscriptions noted above, see Welles, “Inscriptions,” 395–417 nos. 45–115 (nos. 45–52 are first century; the remainder are mostly second–third century), *SEG* 27.1009–1010 (theater); 39.1647–47 and 1649–1651 (brackets for temple of Artemis), 46.2059 (mid-second century, column).

¹⁸¹ Similar inscriptions occur also at smaller cities; see, for example, John Dennis Wineland, *Ancient Abila: An Archaeological History* (Oxford: BAR, 2001), 70–76.

¹⁸² *GLI*, 23.

¹⁸³ Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 75 n. 252.

¹⁸⁴ Compare MacMullen, “Provincial Languages,” 34.

Two aspects of this comparison stand out. First, we see the same chronological pattern with the surrounding cities, especially Caesarea Maritima, Scythopolis, and Gerasa, that we saw for Galilee, with a huge quantitative leap following the arrival of Roman troops in the region – though it is important to note that we also have a considerable number of first-century inscriptions for some of these cities, too. Second, we have a significant discrepancy between the number of inscriptions in some of these cities and the number in Sepphoris and Tiberias. This discrepancy is due to several aspects of the non-Galilean cities: their size; a more extended period of excavation, at least for Gerasa and Caesarea Maritima; perhaps greater prosperity; and longer established histories. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the higher number of inscriptions in some cities also reflects a greater receptivity to this aspect of Greco-Roman culture than offered in the Galilean cities.

GREEK AND LATIN NAMES IN FIRST-CENTURY GALILEE

Much has been made of the fact that some Palestinian Jews had Greek and Latin names. Such names are often cited as indicators that these languages were spoken, though this argument seems to be made more often regarding Greek than Latin. Yet the problematic nature of such reasoning is obvious. A number of factors go into picking a name, such as what names are currently in vogue, the symbolic or cultural value given to particular names, and cultural orientations and/or social aspirations.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, these considerations reflect not the name bearers, but the name givers – typically, the parents. Greek and Latin names reflect Greco-Roman influence, but they are not sufficient evidence to theorize about what languages either the name-bearers or name-givers actually spoke.

Some scholars, like Schürer, have given the impression that such names were widespread: “The use of Greek and Latin personal names was . . . very frequent, even among the common people and the Pharisees and the rabbis.”¹⁸⁶ Generalizations like this mask

¹⁸⁵ Compare MacMullen, “Provincial Languages.”

¹⁸⁶ Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 73. Schürer nonetheless acknowledges Aramaic as the predominant language.

the complexity of the issue. Because some names were perennially popular while the popularity of others varied over time, synchronic descriptions are extremely problematic.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, this topic, like others, has often been treated with insufficient attention to chronology, geography, gender, and class. For example, Hengel's oft-quoted list of Greek names in the Maccabean and Hasmonean periods is drawn mostly from the elite classes of Jerusalem and its vicinity.¹⁸⁸ Rabbis with Greek and Latin names are typically from either the post-Bar Kokhba period or, if earlier, from Judea.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, the Greek names in many of the papyri from the Judean Desert date to the Bar Kokhba period.¹⁹⁰

The most famous first-century examples of Galileans with Greek names are two of Jesus' disciples, the brothers Philip and Andrew.¹⁹¹ The occurrence of the name Philip might have a geographical explanation. If the brothers were natives of Bethsaida, as John 1:44 reports, then they were from the territory of Herod Philip.¹⁹² It is possible that Philip's parents chose that name because of its raised profile under the tetrarch or even in honor of him, though because we do not know the year of the disciple's birth we cannot determine this.¹⁹³ The name Andrew is more unusual among first-century CE Palestinian Jews, with only two known parallels.¹⁹⁴ Hengel plausibly suggests that Thaddaeus and Bartholomew were also Greek names, Thaddaeus a deformation of Theodotus¹⁹⁵ and Bartholomew

¹⁸⁷ N. Cohen, "The Jewish Names as Cultural Indicators in Antiquity," *JSJ* 7 (1976): 97–128; Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names," 108. On the chronological variation of names elsewhere in the Roman world, see MacMullen's comments on Egypt in "Provincial Languages," 36–37.

¹⁸⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 64.

¹⁸⁹ Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 73; Krauss, *Griechische*, vol. 2, 647–650.

¹⁹⁰ Schürer, *History*, vol. 2, 74 n. 249.

¹⁹¹ On Palestinian names in the New Testament, see Evans, *Jesus*, 67–89.

¹⁹² Mark 1:29, however, cites Capernaum as the hometown of Andrew.

¹⁹³ There are two other first-century CE Philips from this general area, one, an officer of Agrippa II, whose father was from Gamla (also in the territory associated with Herod Philip) (*Life* 46, 179; *War* 2.421, 556; 4.81), and one from the Galilean village of Ruma (*War* 3.233). The fact that the name does not occur at Beth She'arim suggests that it enjoyed only a temporary popularity (*Beth She'arim*, vol. 2, 227–228).

¹⁹⁴ Both are in ossuary inscriptions (Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity: Part I Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002], 262).

¹⁹⁵ Compare Ilan, *Lexicon*, 283–284.

derived from “Bar Ptolemy.”¹⁹⁶ At least one follower of Jesus had a Latin name or nickname, if Acts 1:23 is trusted: Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justus.

At times, even Semitic names could reflect the influence of Hellenistic culture, as is conceivably the case with another name found among Jesus' disciples, Simon. The biblical name Shimon was quite similar to the common Greek name Simon and so was very easily Graecized. N. Cohen has pointed out that the name Shimon was used much more often in the Roman East than in the less Hellenized Jewish community in Babylonia.¹⁹⁷ The name's popularity in Palestine may also be due to its association with Simon the Maccabee.¹⁹⁸

Despite such examples, Greek and Latin names seem to have been relatively uncommon in the Jewish parts of first-century CE Palestine, occurring much less often than in Diaspora Jewish communities.¹⁹⁹ Tal Ilan's impressively comprehensive study finds that only 14.5 percent of the known named Palestinian Jews from 330 BCE to 200 CE had Greek names, and only 3 percent had Latin names.²⁰⁰ As Ilan points out, when considering these numbers we must take into account that our pool of known individuals is heavily weighted towards the elites. Thus, it is possible that these statistics are misleadingly high, and that an even smaller proportion of people had Greek and Latin names.

Most of the names from Palestine we know of are those of males, for several reasons.²⁰¹ Josephus's emphasis on politics results in a focus on men, and many of the women he does mention are connected somehow with political figures – wives, mothers, and daughters. Ossuaries, our primary source of inscriptions from this period, usually don't bear women's names.²⁰² Even in later

¹⁹⁶ Ilan agrees with both identifications (*Lexicon*, 283–284 and 304). Williams argues that Bartholomew comes from בר תלמי (“Palestinian Jewish Personal Names,” 94 and 99–100), but Ilan lists no attestations of תלמי.

¹⁹⁷ N. Cohen, “Jewish Names,” 112–117.

¹⁹⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, 64; Ilan, *Lexicon*, 6–8; Markus Bockmuehl, “Simon Peter's Name in Jewish Sources,” *JJS* 55 (2004): 58–80.

¹⁹⁹ Williams, “Palestinian Jewish Personal Names,” 106.

²⁰⁰ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 10, 13.

²⁰¹ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 3; Tal Ilan, “Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women's Names in Palestine in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods,” *JJS* 40 (1989): 186–200.

²⁰² Yifat Peleg, “Gender and Ossuaries,” *BASOR* 325 (2002): 65–73; cf. Ilan, *Lexicon*, 43.

synagogue and burial inscriptions, female names are less common than men's, and those women who are named are usually mentioned in conjunction with a male relative.²⁰³ The Mishnah is primarily concerned with halakhic matters and rarely mentions individual females by name.

Despite such challenges, we have enough evidence to know that most Jewish women in late Second Temple Palestine, like most men, had Hebrew and Aramaic names. Ilan's survey demonstrates this beyond doubt. She found that of the 247 women named in our sources, 145 had Hebrew names and 42 had Aramaic names. Only 45 bore Greek names, and only 10, Latin.²⁰⁴ Many of the women with non-Semitic names were from Hasmonean and Herodian circles; one suspects that such names were even rarer amongst the masses.

One of Ilan's most surprising discoveries was that the 145 women with Hebrew names shared only eleven different names. Nearly half were called Salome, its longer version, Salomezion, Mariamme, or its shortened form, Maria – all Hasmonean names.²⁰⁵ The fact that Hasmonean names are also remarkably common among males (31.5 percent)²⁰⁶ suggests, perhaps, a celebration of that dynasty, a celebration turned into commemoration in Herodian times. In light of this trend, the abundance of women called Mary in the Gospels – Mary, mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; Mary, sister of Martha; Mary, mother of the disciple James; Mary wife of Clopas²⁰⁷ – is more understandable, and it is no shock to find a Galilean named Salome at the foot of the cross.²⁰⁸

In first-century Galilee, the overwhelming majority of known names – and we have a sizable sample – are Semitic.²⁰⁹ In addition to Mary and Salome, many of the other names in the Gospels – Jesus, James (Jacobus), Judas, Levi, John, Simon – are also typical of Palestinian Jews, being well-attested in Josephus, later rabbinic sources and epigraphic evidence. Only at Tiberias do we find

²⁰³ Ilan, "Notes"; Peleg, "Gender"; Lapin, "Palestinian Inscriptions," 249–250.

²⁰⁴ Of the remaining names, four are Persian and one is Nabatean (Ilan, "Notes," 31).

²⁰⁵ A greater variety of names were found among the 45 women with Greek names (Ilan, "Notes," 31; cf. Ilan, *Lexicon*, 9).

²⁰⁶ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 6–8, 56.

²⁰⁷ Mark 6:3; Luke 8:2; 10:39; 24:10; John 19:25.

²⁰⁸ Mark 15:40. ²⁰⁹ See Appendix I.

a clustering of non-Semitic names. As early as the reign of Antipas an *agoranomos* had a Latin name, Gaius Julius.²¹⁰ A weight from the reign of Agrippa II from either Tiberias or Magdala/Taricheae identifies the *agoranomoi* as Aianimos (or Animos; the reading is unclear), son of Monimos and Iaesaias, son of Mathias.²¹¹ The first two names appear to be Greek;²¹² the latter two, Semitic. A similar weight from Agrippa's reign, perhaps also from the same city, noted two *agoranomoi* with Latin names, Rufus and Julius.²¹³ At the time of the revolt, several prominent Tiberians had Greek and Roman names. Justus, son of Pistus, the critic to whom Josephus responds in his *Life*, led a pro-rebellion group. A pro-Roman and pro-Agrippan party was led by Julius Capellus, Compos son of Compos, Herod son of Miarus, and Herod son of Gamalus.²¹⁴ Justus, Pistus, Herod, Julius, Capellus, Compos – all are Latin names.²¹⁵ Given the city's traditional association with the Herodian dynasty – not only was it founded by Antipas but at the time of the revolt was ruled by Agrippa II – the occurrence of the name Herod among royalist supporters is expected.²¹⁶ Some of these names – Compos son of Compos and Justus son of Pistus – reflect a pattern typical of the Roman East, in which Latin names are accompanied by the individuals' fathers' names, reflecting the Greek patronymic custom.²¹⁷ Other residents had more traditional Semitic names, such as Jesus, son of Sapphias, the leader of a pro-war group that Josephus characterizes as

²¹⁰ Qedar ("Two Lead Weights") identifies the *agoranomos* as a Roman because of this name, but since the weight pre-dates the arrival of significant numbers of Romans, Gaius Julius was more likely a local Galilean with a Roman name.

²¹¹ Qedar, "Two Lead Weights"; Alla Kushnir-Stein, "Two Inscribed Lead Weights of Agrippa II," *ZPE* 141 (2002): 295–300.

²¹² Ilan, *Lexicon*, 257, 297.

²¹³ Kushnir-Stein, "Two Inscribed Lead Weights of Agrippa."

²¹⁴ *Life* 34.

²¹⁵ N. Cohen, "Jewish Names," 120–121. The fact that Justus is equivalent in meaning to the Hebrew name Zaddok may explain its popularity (Mussies, "Jewish Personal Names," 245; Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names," 104–105).

²¹⁶ Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names," 98.

²¹⁷ On this phenomenon elsewhere in the Roman Empire, see the studies in D. Rizakis, ed., *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Roman Onomastics Athens, 7–9 September, 1993* (Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation 1996).

“composed of the most insignificant persons.”²¹⁸ One wishes we knew of more names at Sepphoris, to see if they, too include as many non-Semitic examples among the upper classes. Josephus identifies no first-century Sepphoreans by name, but rabbinic sources refer to a Sepphorean priest named Joseph ben Elim (a Semitic name).²¹⁹

Though Greco-Roman names appear to have been more common in later centuries, Semitic names still probably predominated. Beth She’arim provides our best example, though, again, we must realize that its sample is weighted towards the elites. Michael L. Peppard’s analysis shows that 44 percent of the names were Semitic in origin (most of them biblical), 30 percent were Greek and 13 percent were Latin, with the remaining 13 percent difficult to categorize.²²⁰ Greek and Latin names, though not rare,²²¹ are not as common here as they are in many Diaspora contexts.²²² The inscriptions also show that members of a single family might have names from different languages. Leonard V. Rutgers notes that one inscription refers to a mother with a Greek name (Eumatheia), a son with a Semitic name (Jacob), and another son with a Latin name (Justus).²²³

Some Greek and Latin names at Beth She’arim are the equivalents of Semitic names, such as Simon for Shimon and Leontios for Judah, but whether such names were selected because of these similarities or simply because they were popular cannot be determined.²²⁴ A few Greek names are theophoric, but rather than referring to El or Yahweh, they allude to pagan deities – a custom wholly unattested for first-century Galilee. The names Diodora and Zenobia refer to Zeus, Dionysia refers to the god of wine, and Eisas

²¹⁸ *Life* 36, 66.

²¹⁹ *T. Yoma* 1:4 and elsewhere; see Miller, *Studies*, 63–88. Josephus does not identify this priest as a Sepphorean (*Ant.* 17.165ff).

²²⁰ Michael L. Peppard, “Personal Names and Ethnicity in Late Ancient Galilee: The Data from Beth She’arim,” in H. W. Attridge, D. B. Martin, and J. Zangenber, eds., *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck) (in press).

²²¹ *Beth She’arim*, vol. 2, 207–212 and vol. 3, 230–231.

²²² Leonard Victor Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 153–155.

²²³ Rutgers, *Jews*, 153–155, using an example from *Beth She’arim*, vol. 2, page 95 no. 125. Rutgers demonstrates that within a single family, names might shift from one language of origin to another across the generations (see in particular his tables 6a and 6b).

²²⁴ The same point can be made regarding Latin names with Semitic equivalents; cf. Ilan, *Lexicon*, 11 and Rutgers, *Jews*, 143–144.

is probably an abbreviation of Isidoros.²²⁵ Graecized Latin names include Justus and the related feminine form Justa, as well as Agrippas, Germanus, and Julianus.

Full Roman names – a *praenomen*, *nomen*, and *cognomen*, or, at the least, *nomen* and *cognomen* – are wholly absent at Beth She'arim.²²⁶ This was characteristic of the larger region; complete Roman names with the full *tria nomina* were uncommon throughout Syria and Arabia. They became slightly more frequent after the granting of universal Roman citizenship in 212 CE,²²⁷ but this increase was eventually offset by an empire-wide trend of using only two names, or, by late antiquity, only one.²²⁸

CONCLUSION

Many of the standard claims about how extensively Greek was spoken in Galilee rely on evidence from a variety of areas and a wide range of centuries. Such generalizations are useful for understanding broad linguistic trends in a sizable geographical area across a large span of time, but they do little to help us understand a particular sub-region in a particular period. To understand Galilee, we must give priority to specifically Galilean evidence. Likewise, to understand the first century, we must give priority to first-century evidence.

When we do so, we see that enthusiastic claims about the high number of Galileans proficient in Greek are difficult to support.

²²⁵ Mussies, however, argues that Dio ("Zeus") was sometimes associated with the Jewish god ("Jewish Personal Names," 249). The names of Muses were given to two women, Ourania, a Galilean also named Rachel, and Kalliope, from the coastal city of Byblos.

²²⁶ On Roman names, see McClean, *Introduction*, 112–127; Olli Salomies, "Names and Identities: Onomastics and Prosopography," in Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence*, 73–86, esp. 83–87; and Rutgers, *Jews*, 158–159.

²²⁷ Maurice Sartre, "Les Progres de la citoyennete romaine dans les provinces romaines de Syrie et d'Arabie sous le haut-Empire," in Rizakis, *Roman Onomastics*, 239–250. A glance at the epigraphic corpus of the Decapolis city Gerasa is instructive: Roman names are more common, but they seem to be almost entirely associated with Roman soldiers and administrators or their descendents (whose ancestry is easily traced through the names themselves) (Pierre-Louis Gatier, "Onomastique et présence Romaine a Gerasa," in Rizakis, *Roman Onomastics*, 251–259). MacMullen argues that the frequency of Roman names in the provinces was probably lower than inscriptions suggest ("Provincial Languages").

²²⁸ Rutgers, *Jews*, 159.

The number of first-century CE inscriptions is very low. This point is worth emphasizing: from the time of Jesus – the first thirty years of the century – a market weight from Tiberias and Antipas's coins constitute the full body of our published evidence.²²⁹ There are not many inscriptions from Galilee from the rest of the first century, either. Most of Galilee's epigraphic corpus post-dates Jesus not only by decades, but centuries. That evidence probably does correspond to a greater use of Greek in the second century and afterwards, though we must always keep in mind that inscriptions often reflect epigraphic conventions as much as or even more than the languages typically spoken and read.

In first-century CE Galilee, who spoke Greek, how much did they speak, and in what contexts did they speak it? Even after reviewing all of the published evidence, these questions remain difficult to answer, though we can hazard a few observations. Obviously, at least some Herodian administrators and supporters did. The use of Greek on Herodian coins shows that officials could speak and/or read it (different skills, it must be remembered). This association of Greek with the elites means that it was probably more often encountered in the cities and thus in Lower Galilee than in Upper Galilee.²³⁰ At least some elites in Sepphoris and Tiberias had facility in Greek. It is worth pointing out again, however, that neither city has been the source of many first-century inscriptions. After Galilee was put under direct Roman administration in 44 CE, there would have been greater impetus for members of the upper class who wanted to communicate with the Roman authorities to learn Greek, though there is little reason to assume that Romans were especially numerous until after c. 120 CE.

The extent of the non-administrative use of Greek, especially in the first century, remains in question. It is easy to demonstrate that Greek was the language of the governmental sphere. It is much harder to demonstrate that it was the primary conversational language, whether public or private, even among those elites who knew it. The fact that official inscriptions were made in Greek does not

²²⁹ I refer here to inscriptions produced within Galilee, not those found in Galilee but originating elsewhere.

²³⁰ Compare the studies by Eric M. Meyers cited in the Introduction.

mean that even the ones commissioning those inscriptions regarded Greek as their primary language. The association of Greek with government probably also means that there may have been a strong gender dimension to competence in it, since government was primarily the arena of men. If we are correct in assuming that some elites knew Greek, then obviously they were learning it from somewhere. Even so, there is no reason to suppose that Greek education, if available at all, was widespread. Though Hengel claims that Sepphoris and Tiberias had schools providing a Greek education,²³¹ there is no reference to them in our sources.

If we are unsure about the extent of Greek even amongst those connected with governments, we are all the more in the dark for everyone else.²³² Some scholars have claimed that Galileans of all classes would have needed to know Greek for various reasons – to trade with or travel in other regions; to converse with neighbors in the border areas; to sell fish, pottery, and other wares; to import and export various products. Such statements reflect the assumption that the epigraphic data from surrounding regions conveys the whole linguistic picture for them. It is true that Greek inscriptions were more common, even in the first century CE, in some nearby cities and areas, but it is also likely that local languages – dialects of Aramaic – continued to be spoken, even if they are not represented in the epigraphic record. So, while Greek may have been used more in some of the surrounding communities, especially those with longer established identities as Greek cities, it is likely that Galileans who needed to communicate with people from those areas could get by without an advanced, or perhaps even basic, knowledge of Greek. While some Galilean commoners – again, how many is impossible to determine – probably knew some Greek, to generalize that many had considerable competence in it is to go far beyond the evidence. As for Jesus, how much Greek he knew will never be clear, but he most likely would not have needed it to be a carpenter, to teach the Galilean crowds, to travel around the lake, or to venture into the villages associated with Tyre, Caesarea Philippi, and the Decapolis cities. The probable association of Greek with urban elites also renders problematic reconstructions of Q that simultaneously argue

²³¹ Hengel, *'Hellenization'*, 17.

²³² Compare Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 243.

for a Galilean provenance, a mid-first-century date for the earliest stratum, and a social context of poor, wandering charismatics. It is unlikely that literacy would have been widespread among such a group and unclear why the rare literate member would have chosen to compose such a text in Greek rather than Aramaic.²³³

It is possible that Greek was more widely spoken than our evidence suggests – but how could we ever tell? Because of our general ignorance about who used Greek, how often, and in what circumstances, it is extremely difficult to apply socio-linguistic models such as multilingualism (speaking multiple languages) and multiglossia (using different languages in different social contexts) to the first century.²³⁴

Consider a hypothetical Jewish male who was an elite of Tiberias in the mid-first century CE. That he spoke Aramaic, we can be fairly certain. Whether he spoke Hebrew is more difficult to determine, since our knowledge of how that language was used is so limited. If he did, then it would be appropriate to characterize him as bilingual. He probably rarely encountered Latin. But what of Greek? Was he multilingual, shifting comfortably back and forth between Aramaic and Greek, using both languages in a variety of settings: in his home, at social occasions, for business purposes? Or is the model of multiglossia more helpful for understanding him? Did he know how to speak Greek, but use it (for example) only when civic business required him to converse with Roman provincial officials, otherwise almost always opting for Aramaic? Or, as an elite, did he have rudimentary reading ability in Greek, enough to make him the rare citizen who could actually decipher what local coins and market weights said, but have little capacity for oral communication in it? Or was he wholly lacking in the language? We have no way to adjudicate between these possibilities, and if we are unable to do so

²³³ For example, Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*. Kloppenborg's reconstruction of Q addresses these issues by rejecting the itinerancy thesis and postulating a scribal authorship (Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*).

²³⁴ For attempts to apply such models, see Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 243–247; Rabin, “Hebrew,” 1007–1009, followed by Horsley, *Archaeology*, 158–162; Porter, “Jesus,” 132–133; and Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). Note Schwartz's reservations about these models in “Language,” 17–18.

for our hypothetical civic elite, then we are all the more unable to do so for common Galileans, both in the cities as well as in the villages scattered across the region.

If our understanding of the extent of Greek is incomplete, at least we can safely observe that the most important factor for measuring its epigraphic use is chronology. Antipas's reign marked the beginning of a process in which Greek would be used more and more in inscriptions, but it was a process that took time. After the Romans arrived in large numbers in the second century, the number of Greek inscriptions increased noticeably. Even then, however, Aramaic probably remained the most commonly-spoken language. Understanding Galilee's *linguistic* development requires us to be attentive to where Galilee was in its *historical* development – and to retroject data from the second or third century into the early first is to misunderstand the Galilee of Jesus.

CHAPTER 6

The coinage of Galilee

Coins provide us with a vivid example of how Hellenistic, Roman, and local tastes might be combined. The placement of a portrait on the obverse and a symbol on the reverse and the use of inscriptions to identify the minting authority had been widespread under the Greeks.¹ The Romans and their subject peoples refashioned Hellenistic numismatic customs to suit their own needs. They used busts to propagate the emperor's image and legends to advertise his honorific titles. The designs of coins reflected the values and tastes of their minting authorities, whether imperial officials, the staffs of client kings, or civic elites.² Coins thus offer us insight into the ideologies and preferences of the upper classes, and they might sometimes reflect deference to the values of the masses. Though we can rarely discern what commoners thought of these designs, we can understand, at least in a general sense, some of the messages to which they were exposed.³

In Galilee, coins were quite likely the primary source of most people's exposure to writing, the portrait of the emperor, and explicit pagan imagery. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of Galilee's coinage, both the coins struck in the region and those minted elsewhere.⁴ Because coins often remained in circulation for a

¹ Christopher Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1–12.

² See Harl, *Civic Coins* and Chancey, "City Coins."

³ On the use of coins to convey messages, however vague or general, see Chancey, "City Coins," 103–104.

⁴ For overviews, see Rappaport, "Numismatics," 25–29 and C. H. V. Sutherland, "The Pattern of Monetary Development in Phoenicia and Palestine during the Early Empire," in Arie Kindler, ed., *The Patterns of Monetary Development in Phoenicia and Palestine during Antiquity* (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1967), 88–105.

long time and sometimes traveled far from their places of origin, many Galileans would have been aware of changes in numismatic trends over time and of features that made locally-minted coins similar to and different from those produced elsewhere. They would have had some cognizance of the cultural and political stances reflected in the choice of language, the presence or absence of a bust, and the use of a plant symbol versus that of a deity or a temple. Galileans in the early first century CE would have recognized how Hasmonean coins differed from those of the coastal cities, and how newer Herodian issues represented something of a middle ground. Those living a century and a half later would have known that the middle ground had disappeared as Galilee's coins became virtually indistinguishable from those minted elsewhere in the Roman East.

THE COINAGE OF HELLENISTIC GALILEE

Though no coins were minted in Galilee until the early first century CE, coins produced elsewhere had entered the region long before. Persian-period pieces, usually struck at either Jerusalem or one of the coastal cities, typically Tyre or Sidon, occasionally turn up in excavations, and a few Early Hellenistic-period hoards have been found.⁵ More commonly discovered are coins of the Ptolemies and Seleucids.⁶ Both kingdoms struck coins at Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais,

⁵ *Treasury*, 1–18; *City-Coins*, 12; Rappaport, “Numismatics,” 25–29. Persian-period coins (mostly Tyrian and/or Sidonian) have been found at Moshav Dalton in Upper Galilee, and, to the west, Tel Abu Hawam (map coordinates 152/245) (Stern, *Archaeology*, 561 and *Material Culture*, 12–13). The quantities of Persian coins from Meiron and the Franciscan excavations at Capernaum are more typical: two and one, respectively (Joyce Raynor, Ya'akov Meshorer, with Richard Simon Hanson, *The Coins of Ancient Meiron* [Winona Lake, Ind: ASOR, Eisenbrauns, 1988], 84). Early Hellenistic hoards have been recovered at Beth Yerah (J. Baramki, “Coin Hoards from Palestine, II,” *QDAP* 11 [1945]: 86–90) and Tarshiha (map coordinates 175/268) (Arnold Spaer, “A Hoard of Alexander Tetrachms from Galilee,” *INJ* 3 [1965–1966]: 1–7).

⁶ See the chart of finds at several sites in Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84. At et-Tell (Bethsaida?), a mostly Hellenistic site, 26 Ptolemaic and 64 Seleucid coins were found (a 1996 tally) (Arie Kindler, “The Coin Finds at the Excavations of Bethsaida,” in Arav and Freund, *Bethsaida*, vol. 2, 250–268). Finds at nearby Gamla included several hundred Seleucid coins, but only a few Ptolemaic issues (Danny Syon, “The Coins from Gamala: Interim Report,” *INJ* 12 [1992–1993]: 34–55; Syon and Yavor, “Gamla 1997–2000.” See also Danny Syon, “Coins from the Excavations at Khirbet esh-Shuhara,” in

and other cities, with Alexandria being the most important mint of the Ptolemies and Antioch serving that function for the Seleucids.⁷

The currencies of the two kingdoms provide good examples of the variations found in the Hellenistic period. Ptolemaic coinage was based on the Phoenician standard, with the shekel as the standard numismatic unit. Obverses of silver coins bore portraits of the Ptolemaic ruler and sometimes his queen; those of bronze coins, Zeus.⁸ Reverses of both types typically depicted an eagle. Their inscriptions were usually in Greek, though a few coins found in Palestine have Hebrew inscriptions. In contrast, Seleucid coins were based on the standard of Athens, with denominations based on the drachm. Antioch, the mint nearest Palestine, struck coins with the ruler's bust on their obverses and usually a deity (often a seated Zeus or Apollo) on the reverses.⁹

After the Hasmonean conquest of Galilee, the influx of Seleucid currency into the region ceased, replaced with coins minted in Jerusalem by John Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus (most likely Aristobulus I), Alexander Jannaeus, Hyrcanus II (perhaps), and Mattathias Antigonus.¹⁰ These coins, the very first in history to be struck by an independent Jewish government, are found often throughout Israel. Those of Alexander Jannaeus, who struck coins in large numbers, are especially common.¹¹

The Hasmoneans' coins provide a good example of how the dynasty adopted and adapted some aspects of Greek culture. Like the Seleucids, they apparently minted coins according to the Attic standard.¹² Unlike both the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, they placed no animals, deities, or royal busts on their coins. This choice

Gal, *Eretz Zafon*, 181; Donald T. Ariel, "The Coins from Khirbet Zemel," in Gal, *Eretz Zafon*, 119–124; and Y. Meshorer, "Coins 1968–1986," in Herbert, ed., *Tel Anafa I, i*, 241–260.

⁷ On coins minted in Jerusalem in the time of Antiochus VII, see *Treasury*, 30–31.

⁸ Ptolemaic gold coins are rare (R. A. Hazzard, *Ptolemaic Coins: An Introduction for Collectors* [Toronto: Kirk & Bentley, 1995]).

⁹ Edward T. Newell, *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch* (Chicago: Obol International, 1978).

¹⁰ Determining which Hasmonean ruler struck specific coins is notoriously difficult because of the repeated use of names (i.e., John, Judah, Jonathan) within the dynasty (*Treasury*, 23).

¹¹ Shachar, "Historical and Numismatic Significance."

¹² For example, the smallest denomination of Hyrcanus I (identified by Meshorer as a half-prutah) was roughly the weight of the smallest Seleucid unit, the lepton. The smallest coin

presumably reflects deference to the Jewish prohibition of “graven images.”¹³

We should not characterize the coins of the Hasmoneans as “aniconic,” however, because such a term obscures the fact that images do appear on them. Wreaths often encircled inscriptions – a common numismatic design in both the Hellenistic and Roman eras. The most prevalent symbol was that of double cornucopiae, with the addition of a pomegranate between the horns differentiating it from the cornucopiae found on Seleucid and other Hellenistic coins.¹⁴ Ya’akov Meshorer, the premier authority on ancient Jewish numismatics, has argued that most Hasmonean symbols had distinctively Jewish meanings. The lily, for example, was commonly depicted in Jewish art and appeared in the decoration of the temple, and the palm branch may have been intended to recall the festival of Sukkot.¹⁵ Whether many Jews would have made such associations cannot be determined. Only on the coins of the last Hasmonean king, Mattathias Antigonus, do we find what we can truly consider a Jewish symbol: the earliest known artistic depiction of a menorah.¹⁶ Aside from it, most of these designs (or at least similar ones) also appeared on other Mediterranean coins as well, and so their use reflects the Hasmoneans’ comfort with such standard Hellenistic motifs.

Another feature that differentiated Hasmonean coins was their limited use of Greek. Greek characters and monograms, their meanings unclear, are found on certain coins of Hyrcanus I.¹⁷ Most of his money, however, uses a script of Hebrew already ancient by his reign; the choice of script thus symbolically connected the Hasmonean dynasty to earlier Jewish history. The inscriptions included Hyrcanus’s name and a title legitimizing his authority as

of Mattathias Antigonus (a prutah, according to Meshorer) was probably equivalent to a dilepton (*Treasury*, 23–33, 39, 54).

¹³ See discussion in Chapter Seven.

¹⁴ Other symbols include single and double cornucopiae without the pomegranate, a wreath, an anchor, a star, a star within a diadem, and a crested helmet (*Treasury*, 33–38).

¹⁵ *Treasury*, 8–10, 35.

¹⁶ *Treasury*, 54–57. Another symbol on his coins might also have special Jewish significance; Meshorer regards it as the table for the shewbread in the temple, but Rappaport (“Numismatics,” 40) interprets it as a four-candle menorah.

¹⁷ *Treasury*, 42–43.

ruler and high priest: “Yehohanan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews.”¹⁸ Hyrcanus’s son Aristobulus followed his example, also using paleo-Hebrew.

The coins issued by Alexander Jannaeus reflect a very different choice. While some have only paleo-Hebrew inscriptions, others are bilingual, with Greek on one side and paleo-Hebrew or Aramaic on the other. We thus see Alexander Jannaeus combining Hyrcanus’s symbolic appeal to Israel’s past with his own openness to Greek as the standard numismatic language. In addition, his coins identify him by his Greek name and demonstrate that he proclaimed himself “king,” the first Hasmonean to do so.¹⁹ The last of the Hasmonean kings, Mattathias Antigonus, also put both Greek and paleo-Hebrew on his coins.

Hasmonean coins circulated long after the end of the dynasty itself, often appearing in Roman-period contexts.²⁰ For first-century CE Jews, they would have been numismatic reminders of an era before the Herods and the Romans, the old Semitic inscriptions all the more in contrast with the Greek found on the coins minted in their own day.

THE COINAGE OF THE ROMAN PERIOD

A remarkable mixture of currency was used in Roman Palestine. Coins issued by the Herodian rulers joined older Hasmonean ones, and an occasional Nabatean piece probably made its way north. In addition, the number of Levant cities striking coins grew, so that

¹⁸ Some coins added *ros h* to the inscription, reading “Yehohanan the High Priest and the Head of the Council of the Jews” (*Treasury*, 201, 207).

¹⁹ *Treasury*, 209–210.

²⁰ The proportion of Hasmonean coins found at Yodefat, for example, is 41.2 percent (81 out of 221) (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, “Iotapata,” 155–159); at Meiron and Khirbet Shema, approximately 10 percent (108/1003 and 42–54/517, respectively) are Hasmonean. At all three sites, most Hasmonean coins are issues of Alexander Jannaeus. The numbers of Hasmonean coins at Gush Halav and Nabratein are considerably lower (both sites had fewer Hellenistic and Early Roman remains in general) (Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84; Richard S. Hanson and Michael L. Bates, “Numismatic Report,” in *Khirbet Shema*, 146–169; Joyce Raynor, “Numismatics,” in *Gush Halav*, 230–245). For Sepphoris, see Catharine S. Bunnell, “Catalogue of the Coins,” in Waterman, *Preliminary Report*, 35–86 and Meyers, “Sepphoris on the Eve,” 110. Nearly two thirds of Gamla’s over 6,300 coins are Hasmonean (Syon, “Coins from Gamala”; Syon and Yavor, “Gamla”).

practically every city of any stature issued coins at some point. Roman imperial coinage grew increasingly common as the centuries progressed.

Of the civic mints, Tyre had special importance, supplying much of Palestine's coinage.²¹ Tyre's coins are especially common in Galilee because of its proximity.²² Earlier research interpreted high numbers of Tyrian coins at Galilean (particularly Upper Galilean) sites as evidence of extensive trade between the city and those specific communities.²³ While there was indeed considerable exchange between Tyre and Galilee,²⁴ the primary reason so much Tyrian coinage is found is because so much of it was struck. That is to say, the presence of a large number of Tyrian coins at a particular site might or might not be the result of direct trade with the city; it might simply reflect how widely used Tyre's mass-produced coins were.²⁵

The main imperial mints, both near and far, added considerably to the diversity.²⁶ Their coins were a primary means of spreading Roman propaganda, particularly in their widespread dissemination of the emperor's image.²⁷ Antioch was an especially important source of currency for much of the eastern Mediterranean, and its coins are fairly common in Galilee.²⁸ The number of imperial coins in Galilee increased considerably in the third and fourth centuries.

²¹ Tyrian coins make up 15 percent of the 3,000 city coins held by the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv (Ze'ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* [London and New York: Routledge, 1994], 401).

²² Dan Barag, "Tyrian Currency in Galilee," *INJ* 6/7 (1982–1983): 7–13; Freyne, "Galileans, Itureans and Phoenicians," 200–203; Richard S. Hanson, *Tyrian Influence in the Upper Galilee* (Cambridge, Mass.: ASOR, 1980). At Magdala, for example, a hoard of 188 bronze coins from 74–222 CE was 40 percent Tyrian, and at Meiron over 10 percent of the coins came from Tyre (Ya'akov Meshorer, "A Hoard of Coins from Migdal," *Atiqot* 11 [1976]: 54–71; Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 79). At Gamla, approximately 14 percent of the coins are either Tyrian or Sidonian (Syon, "Coins from Gamala"; Syon and Yavor, "Gamla"). In contrast, at Yodefah, Seleucid coins minted at Tyre have been found, but not later Tyrian civic coins (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, "Iotapata," 160).

²³ Hanson, *Tyrian Influence*.

²⁴ Chancey, *Myth*, 156, 162.

²⁵ Barag, "Tyrian Currency."

²⁶ On imperial mints, see Harold Mattingly et al., eds., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, 10 vols. (London: Spinks, 1923–1994) and *RPC*.

²⁷ Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 8–9, 215–228.

²⁸ *RPC*, vol. 1, 606–630.

Antioch continued to predominate, but coins of Alexandria, Rome, Caesarea of Cappadocia, Constantinople, and other mints were also numerous.²⁹

Other parties sometimes issued coins. Between 6 and 62 CE, several of the Roman governors of Judea did so, though few of these pieces (typically referred to as “procuratorial coinage”) have turned up in Galilee.³⁰ During the two Jewish revolts, rebels issued coins from Jerusalem, in the first case, minting new ones, in the latter, overstriking on older ones.³¹ Their circulation does not seem to have extended very far north; only a few from the first revolt have been found in Galilee, and none from the Bar Kokhba revolt. Likewise, coins struck by Vespasian and Titus at Caesarea Maritima celebrating their victory over the Jews with Greek inscriptions of “Judea captured” made little headway into the region.³²

Almost all of the coins struck in Palestine itself were bronze. More valuable coins of gold and silver were produced elsewhere. Coins made of these precious metals were less likely to be accidentally dropped (and thus preserved) and more likely to be melted down at some point than those made of bronze and other copper alloys. The result is that finds of gold coins are extraordinarily rare in Galilee.³³ Even silver is fairly uncommon, though enough has been found to allow general observations about its usage.

²⁹ At Meiron twelve different Late Roman imperial mints were represented (Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 89). At nearby Jalame, imperial coins form the majority (Gloria S. Merker, “The Coins,” 103–115, esp. 103, in Weinberg, *Excavations*); note also coins at Hurfeish (map coordinates 182/269) (Danny Syon, “The Coins from Burial Caves D and E at Hurfeish,” in Gal, *Eretz Zafon*, 167–175) and Hanita (map coordinates 166/277) (Dan Barag, “Hanita, Tomb XV: A Tomb of the Third and Early Fourth Century CE,” *Atiqot* 13 [1978]: 1–60).

³⁰ On procuratorial coins, see *Treasury*, 167–176. For rare Galilean examples, see Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84; Raynor, “Numismatics,” 231; John F. Wilson, “The Bronze and Silver Coins,” in Vassilios Tzaferis, ed., *Excavations at Capernaum: Volume I: 1978–1982* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 139–143, esp. 140 no. 1; Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, “Iotapata,” 155–160; Syon, “Coins,” 239; Syon and Yavor, “Gamla.”

³¹ *Treasury*, 115–165; Mildenburg, *Coinage*; Boaz Zissu and Hanan Eshel, “The Geographical Distribution of Coins from the Bar Kokhba War,” *INJ* 14 (2000–2002): 157–167.

³² *RPC*, vol. 2, 317–318. Similar “Judea Capta” coins, albeit with inscriptions in Latin rather than Greek, were struck elsewhere in the empire (*Treasury*, 185–191).

³³ I could find reference to only one such coin, southwest of Galilee at Jalame (Merker, “Coins,” 103).

Most of Palestine's silver was produced at Tyre until the mid-60s CE, when the city began producing bronze alone.³⁴ Its shekels and half-shekels were exceptionally pure (95 percent silver), a fact that, along with the sheer number minted, helps account for their widespread popularity.³⁵ This unparalleled level of quality may be why the Jerusalem temple required that the half-shekel temple tax be paid in Tyrian currency,³⁶ despite the pagan imagery of the city's chief deity Melqart-Hercules on its obverse and an eagle on its reverse. Alternatively, Tyrian coinage may have been the required form of payment because it was the most prevalent form of silver currency available, both when the tax was instituted during the Hasmonean era³⁷ and in the first century CE. The continuing requirement that the tax be paid in it even after silver tetradrachms and (to a lesser extent) denarii had entered the region might reflect deference to longstanding custom, or, perhaps, a rejection of Roman coins as symbols of imperial domination.

Tyre was not the sole producer of silver coins in the southern Levant, however. Sidon minted shekels until 30/29 BCE and half-shekels, though only on a few occasions, until 43/44 CE.³⁸ The Nabatean kings also struck silver, as did Jewish rebels in Jerusalem in the first revolt.³⁹ From 55 CE on, the imperial mint at Antioch struck silver coins, usually tetradrachms but occasionally denarii, the silver denomination widely used in the Roman West, and other types.⁴⁰

³⁴ The exact date of the cessation of Tyre's silver is unclear (*RPC*, vol. 1, 655–656; *Treasury*, 78; Hanson, *Tyrian Influence*). Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Pere Paul Ripollès (*RPC*, vol. 1, 655–656) successfully argue against Meshorer's proposal (*Treasury*, 78) that after 20 BCE, "Tyrian" shekels were produced in Jerusalem to provide the temple with high-quality currency.

³⁵ *RPC*, vol. 1, 655.

³⁶ *Treasury*, 74. *M. Shekalim* 2:4 preserves a memory of this tradition, and *t. Ketubot* 13:20 declares that any time silver is specified in the Pentateuch, it should be understood as Tyrian silver. See also *m. Bekhorot* 8:7 (references are drawn from *Treasury*). On the temple tax in general, see Sanders, *Judaism*, 156–157 and *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London: SCM Press, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 49–51.

³⁷ On the invention of the custom in the Hasmonean era, see Albert I. Baumgarten, "Invented Traditions of the Maccabean Era," in Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer, eds., *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), vol. 1, 197–210.

³⁸ *RPC*, vol. 1, 651.

³⁹ Meshorer, *Nabatean Coins and Treasury*, 115–134.

⁴⁰ Antioch produced denarii in the reign of Vespasian, for example (*RPC*, vol. 2, 270–273).

For the remainder of the Roman period, it and other imperial mints provided most of Palestine's silver, though several cities were allowed to mint tetradrachms during the reigns of Caracalla, Macrinus, and Diadumenian.⁴¹ Of the various silver denominations, tetradrachms were dominant in Galilee, if hoards at Tiberias⁴² and Gush Halav⁴³ are representative. Denarii are less frequently found, especially in early contexts.

If all of Palestine's coins had been made according to the Roman system, determining their values would be a simpler task. In the Augustan period, for example, we know that 1 gold aureus was worth 25 silver denarii, and, in turn, that 1 denarius = 4 sestertii = 8 dupondii = 16 asses = 64 quadrantes. Instead, as we have already seen, we find a bewildering mixture of coins of different sizes and weights, minted by different authorities, and struck on different standards – Roman, Phoenician, and Greek.⁴⁴ The fact that very few coins have inscriptions specifying their values complicates the matter further, as does the difficulty in associating particular coins with the denominations mentioned in literary sources. Changes over the centuries, such as the disappearance and addition of denominations and the devaluing and debasing of silver muddy the situation even more.⁴⁵ Ancient people may have understood the system, but we probably never will, at least not completely – though not for lack of scholarly efforts.⁴⁶

⁴¹ For example, Ptolemais, Caesarea, Gaza, Aelia Capitolina, Neapolis, and Gadara (*City-Coins*, 12–13 no. 5; 20–21 nos. 27–28; 30–31 no. 61; 62–63 no. 173; 50 no. 135; 82 no. 222; Sutherland, "Pattern," 96). Other silver denominations issued at various times by imperial mints included antoniniani, quinarii, cistophori, drachms, and didrachms.

⁴² H. Hamburger, "A Hoard of Syrian Tetradrachms from Tiberias," *Atiqot* 2 (1959): 133–145. The 218 tetradrachms are dated from 59/60 CE–119 CE.

⁴³ The third-century hoard held 180 tetradrachms but only 22 denarii (H. Hamburger, "A Hoard of Syrian Tetradrachms and Tyrian Bronze Coins from Gush Halav," *IEJ* 4 [1954]: 201–226). Nonetheless, the denarius does appear to have been in use (however limited) in Palestine. Sperber counts approximately 220 occurrences of the Hebrew word *denar* in Tannaitic sources; in later traditions, however, the word came to refer to gold, rather than silver pieces (*Roman Palestine*, 31–34).

⁴⁴ On denominations and standards, see David L. Vagi, *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire, c. 82 B. C.–A. D. 480* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999), 77–116 and David R. Sear, *Greek Coins and Their Values* (London: Seaby, 1951), vol. 1, xxix–xxxiv.

⁴⁵ Compare Michael Crawford, "Finance, Coinage and Money from the Severans to Constantine," *ANRW* II.2, 560–593.

⁴⁶ See *RPC*, vol. 1, 26–37 and 585–590, vol. 2, 20–29 and 301–303; Kenneth W. Harl, *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 BC to AD 700* (Baltimore and London: The Johns

The complexity of the situation is reflected in the disparate monetary references in the gospels.⁴⁷ The denarius, for example, is mentioned numerous times – this, despite the fact that the coin, produced at distant mints, appears to have had only limited circulation in Palestine at the time of Jesus.⁴⁸ References to it might reflect the dating and provenance of the gospels more than the historical setting of Jesus.⁴⁹ The famous saying about taxes illustrates the problem. According to Mark 12:13–17, the Pharisees and Herodians approached Jesus on his visit to Jerusalem and asked him whether it was lawful to pay the census tax to the Romans.⁵⁰ Jesus requested that they bring him a denarius and then asked whose image and inscription were found upon it. When they answered “‘Caesar’s,” Jesus enigmatically replied that they should “render unto Caesar the things of Caesar, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Even putting aside questions of historicity, it is difficult to know what to make of this numismatic reference. Asking for a Tyrian shekel would not have allowed Jesus to make his point, since it bore no imperial portrait. On the other hand, one might have expected him to ask for a tetradrachm, which was much more common than the denarius. Perhaps Jesus’ request for a denarius heightens the political edge of his comment, since it was even more distinctively Roman than a tetradrachm. Or perhaps the reference to the denarius reflects the setting of Mark, not of Jesus.

The story of Peter and the fish in Matthew 17:24–27 raises similar issues. After Peter is asked whether Jesus pays the didrachm tax

Hopkins University Press, 1996). On the use of rabbinic sources to understand the third- and fourth-century currency and economy, see Daniel Sperber, *Roman Palestine 200–400: Money and Prices* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1974). Rachel Barkay provides an excellent treatment of civic denominations and rabbinic terms in *The Coinage of Nysa-Scythopolis (Beth-Shean)* (Jerusalem: Israel Numismatic Society, 2003), 171–184.

⁴⁷ On coins mentioned in the gospels and Josephus, see Sutherland, “Pattern,” 91–93. On coins and the New Testament, see Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁴⁸ Burnett et al. provide an overview of the denarius’s use in *RPC*, vol. 1, 26–30, 36–37.

⁴⁹ For example, Mark 6:37; 12:15; 14:5; Matt. 18:28; 20:2, 9, 10, 13, 19; 22:19 (= Mark 12:15); Luke 7:41; 10:35; 20:24 (= Mark 12:15); John 6:7 and 12:5 (which are curiously similar to Mark 6:37 and 14:5).

⁵⁰ Compare parallels in Matthew 22:15–22 and Luke 20:20–26.

(apparently the temple tax), Jesus tells him to cast a hook into the Sea of Galilee, pull up the first fish he catches, and open its mouth to find a stater, presumably a silver coin.⁵¹ In this pericope, Matthew refers to a denomination of the widely used Attic standard (didrachm) rather than to the half-shekel of the Phoenician standard that was actually required for the tax.⁵²

Other passages include a mixture of numismatic references. In the story of the “widow’s mite,” Mark 12:42 notes that two lepta are equivalent to a quadrans, thus explaining how the Greek denomination relates to a Roman one. The parallel passage, Luke 21:2, retains the reference to two lepta but omits mention of the quadrans, while Matthew leaves out the story altogether. In reporting that Jesus said that one should settle his differences with his opponent before going to court, lest he lose his last coin, Luke 12:59 again opts for a Greek term, lepton, while Matthew 5:26 specifies a quadrans. To complicate matters further, we also find references to larger and older units of measurement such as the talent (Matt. 18:24) and the mina (Luke 19:12–27).⁵³

As even this brief survey suggests, a full description of the different types of coins used in Galilee during the time of Jesus and the following centuries is impractical. Concentrating on the relatively small number of coins actually struck there by Herodian client kings and the region’s two cities, however, is quite illuminating. An examination of these coins within their larger regional and political contexts illustrates the region’s changing cultural climate.

⁵¹ The exact meaning of stater in this passage is unclear; the term was used variously to refer to gold, silver, or electrum coins.

⁵² Warren Carter suggests that the reference reflects the post-70 situation, when the Romans changed the tax to the didrachm amount and directed it to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (*Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* [Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001], 130–144).

⁵³ We find another reference to a drachm in Luke 15:8–9 and a reference to an assarion (a Roman as?) in Luke 12:6/Matt. 10:29. The other well-known references to money occur in Matthew’s story of the betrayal of Jesus. The writer gives us no clue what he has in mind when he specifies Judas’s reward as thirty pieces of silver (26:15, 27:3–10); his wording is seemingly intended to echo Zech. 11:12–13.

HERODIAN COINS

Bronze coins of all members of the Herodian dynasty circulated in Galilee, though apparently not in great numbers.⁵⁴ At Yodefat, only a handful of the 221 identifiable coins are from the Herodian kings; at Meiron, 19 of 1003; from the 1931 excavations at Sepphoris, 2 of 390. Nearby Gamla has yielded an unusually large number of coins, but the proportion of Herodian issues is low: only 245 of over 6,300 coins, compared to over 3,900 Hasmonean pieces. Finds at other sites are similarly limited.⁵⁵ Herodian coins are modest in number because relatively few were made and most were struck outside the region. Only Antipas, Agrippa I (perhaps), and Agrippa II minted any in Galilee itself. For the two Agrippas, production within the region was extremely limited; both produced almost all of their coinage elsewhere.⁵⁶

Simply by issuing coins, the Herodian kings signaled that they still had considerable autonomy. When Antipas and Philip struck coins, for example, they demonstrated to their subjects (and perhaps also to the Roman officials at Caesarea and Jerusalem) that they remained in power, unlike their brother Archelaus, who had been deposed in 6 CE.⁵⁷ The designs on the Herods' coins also conveyed political messages. Commoners looking through a handful of coins would have recognized the importance of at least some of their details: whether the obverses were decorated with busts, and, if so, of whom; what symbols were chosen for the reverses; the royal or imperial titles found upon them; and the languages of such inscriptions

⁵⁴ The Herods struck no silver, unlike the neighboring Nabatean rulers (Meshorer, *Nabatean Coins*) and some more distant kings (*RPC*, vol. 1, 26).

⁵⁵ Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, "Iotapata"; Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84; Syon, "Coins from Gamala"; Syon and Yavor, "Gamla"; cf. Freyne, "Itureans." McCollough and Edwards note the discovery of a coin of Archelaus at Sepphoris ("Transformations," 138). Other Herodian dynasty coins have been found at Nabratein (one) and Gush Halav (one) (Raynor, "Numismatics," 237); Capernaum (one out of 617 at the Franciscan excavations) (Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84 and Augusto Spijkerman, *Cafarnaio: Catalogo delle Monete della Città* [Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1975], no. 122); et-Tell (eight out of approximately 220) (Kindler, "Coin Finds").

⁵⁶ Because none of Herod the Great's money was minted in Galilee, his coins are not numerous there.

⁵⁷ Strickert suggests that Antipas and Philip issued coins at approximately the same time as Pilate to demonstrate their independence from the prefect ("Coins," 170–171).

(regardless of whether they could actually read them). Given the diversity of currencies in the region, they would also have had some sense of the similarities and differences between coins of the Herods and those of other authorities, and thus some sense of the ways in which the kings were adapting certain Greco-Roman norms while rejecting others.

The single most notable feature was probably the presence or absence of a bust. Coins without one would have stood out from many, though not all, of the coins produced in the surrounding areas. If a bust was present, it typically was that of the client king, the emperor, or one of their family members.⁵⁸ Portraying himself or a relative was a way for a ruler to express his own authority and relative independence.⁵⁹ Depicting the emperor or his family members was, on some level, a statement of Roman identity, an assurance of loyalty, a propagation of imperial ideology, and a sign of respect for numismatic norms. Similarly, a mixture of royal and imperial busts on an individual king's coins implicitly illustrated his subordinate status, since anyone holding coins that included busts of both rulers would have no trouble determining who was more powerful. The same can be said of someone holding the coins issued by Philip that had his bust on one side and emperor's on the other.⁶⁰

The coins of a client king often reflected his ambiguous status in other ways. They might proclaim him *basileus*, ethnarch, or tetrarch, but, whatever the title, it had been bestowed by the emperor and could be changed or removed at his whim. The choice of language also had cultural and political significance. The use of Greek on the Herods' coins made them comparable to most other money

⁵⁸ Deities were extremely rare on the Herods' coins, though Tyche appears on a coin of Agrippa I minted at Caesarea (*Treasury*, 232 no. 122).

⁵⁹ Compare coins from Bosphorus, Armenia Minor, and Cilicia (*RPC*, vol. 1, 330–334, 570, 575).

⁶⁰ In any case, variations in portraiture are not unusual on client king coinage. Possibilities include: portraits of figures other than rulers (e.g., deities on Galatian coins [*RPC*, vol. 1, 536–537]); fluctuations between members of both the royal and imperial families (coins of the Nabateans [Meshorer, *Nabataean Coins*, 9–12, 17–18]; Paphlagonia, Pontus, Commagene [*RPC*, vol. 1, 536–537, 567–569, 571–574], and Armenia [Paul Z. Bedoukian, *Coinage of the Artaxiads of Armenia* {London: Royal Numismatic Society, 1978}]); imperial portraits alone (e.g., coins of Thrace [*RPC*, vol. 1, 312–315]).

circulating in the region.⁶¹ It clearly differentiated their coins from those of the nearest other client kings, the Nabateans, who had switched from Greek to Nabatean after Pompey.⁶² It would also have distinguished them from the still circulating Hasmonean coins, with their Semitic inscriptions. On a few coins, Agrippa II utilized Latin, a decision that emphasized his staunchly pro-Roman loyalties.

When Antipas issued coins, the very first ever to be struck in Galilee, he apparently modeled them after those of his father.⁶³ Herod the Great had avoided anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery almost entirely,⁶⁴ choosing symbols that apparently were acceptable to most Jews.⁶⁵ Both Antipas and his brother Archelaus did the same.⁶⁶ In an important respect, however, Antipas differed from Herod. Antipas's coins were apparently based on Roman standards rather than the Hellenistic standards used by his father and the Hasmoneans before him. His brothers and the later Herodian rulers followed suit, issuing coins that appear to have been most compatible with Roman denominations.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Outside the East, Latin was the norm, though with some variation; cf. the mixture of Neo-Punic, Greek, and Latin on client king coins in Mauretania and Numidia until the early first century CE (Jean Mazard, *Corpus Nummorum Numidiae Mauretaniaeque* [Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1955]).

⁶² Meshorer, *Nabatean Coins*. After the Roman annexation of Nabatean territory in 106 CE, city coins there used Greek (e.g., Petra's coins in *City-Coins*, 120).

⁶³ *Treasury*, 81–85; *RPC*, vol. 1, 679–680.

⁶⁴ *Treasury*, 61–78. The exception was an eagle, which Meshorer associates with the Roman eagle as well with the golden eagle Herod placed over the temple (Josephus, *War* 1.648–655 and *Antiquities* 17.150–152; *Treasury*, 67–69; cf. Fine, *Art*). The eagle was a common numismatic symbol (e.g., coins minted at Rome 29–27 BCE in C. H. V. Sutherland and R. A. G. Carson, eds., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 1.1 [London: Spink and Son, 1984], 61) and at Tyre, Sidon and Ascalon in *RPC*, vol. 1 part 2, 800).

⁶⁵ Meshorer (*Treasury*, 65–71) differentiates between symbols on Herod's undated coins (e.g., tripod, apex, winged caduceus, aplatstone, laurel branch), which he plausibly argues were minted in Samaria, and those on his dated coins (a table, diadem, wreath, palm branches, vine, anchor, double cornucopiae with caduceus, single cornucopia, galley, and eagle), which were probably struck in Jerusalem. He argues that these latter symbols are all associated with Jewish art and the temple. While this may be true, similar symbols show up elsewhere on Mediterranean coins.

⁶⁶ *Treasury*, 78–81.

⁶⁷ *Treasury*, 71–72, 80, 84–85, 90; Strickert, "Coins," esp. 173–178. Though Archelaus initially minted coins compatible with Greek denominations, his later issues were heavier, following the Roman system.

The first of Antipas's coins appears to have been minted in year four of his reign (c. 1 CE).⁶⁸ The coin was presumably struck at Sepphoris, the only sizable city in the region at the time. Its legend is the earliest Greek inscription from Sepphoris and one of the earliest from all of Galilee. Though not all of the letters on its obverse are legible, they apparently read "Herod Tetrarch." One side of the coin bears an image of a grain of barley or wheat, the other, that of a seven-branched palm tree.

The subsequent coins of Antipas all appear to have been struck at Tiberias. He released multiple denominations in 20 CE, presumably in conjunction with the foundation of the city, and in 29, 30, 33 and 39 CE. The reverses of all but the last series have inscriptions with the name of Tiberias (often abbreviated) encircled by a wreath, reflecting the ruler's pride in his new city as well as his flattery of the emperor.

Like the coin from Sepphoris, Antipas's later coins were inscribed with the ruler's name and title, "Herod Tetrarch," as well as a date according to the year of his reign.⁶⁹ The obverses of those struck in 20 CE depicted a reed, a symbol presumably chosen because of the plant's presence at the Sea of Galilee.⁷⁰ Other coins were decorated with imagery associated with palm trees. Coins of 29, 30, and 33 CE bore a solitary palm, while those issued in 39 CE varied by denomination, the largest depicting a palm tree with clusters of dates; the middle, a palm branch; and the smallest, dates.

It is probably no coincidence that Antipas's last coins bore no references to Tiberias, since the emperor for whom it was named had died in 37 CE. The coins of 39 CE had a new element, however: inscriptions of the emperor's name and titles. This addition probably reflects the tetrarch's attempt to flatter Caligula as he unsuccessfully sought the more prestigious title of *basileus*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ David Hendin, "A New Coin Type of Herod Antipas," *INJ 15* (in press).

⁶⁹ Unlike the earlier coin, where the name and title apparently were in the nominative case, in later issues, they were in the genitive case. In this chapter, I do not distinguish between inscriptions that occur in the genitive and those in the nominative, since the case is unimportant for my central points.

⁷⁰ The symbol apparently has no parallels among contemporary coinage (index in *RPC*, vol. 1, 793).

⁷¹ *Treasury*, 82–83; *Ant.* 18.230–256.

It has been suggested that Antipas struck coins to help shift Galilee from a barter economy to a monetized economy. William E. Arnal hypothesizes that the tetrarch minted coins to address a regional shortage. By increasing the money supply, he hoped to facilitate more efficient collection of taxes and to enable the masses to descend into debt more easily. Arnal suggests that although the efforts of Antipas were not entirely successful, they did hasten the pace of monetization. In this view, Antipas's introduction of local coins created a socio-economic crisis that is reflected in the earliest stratum of Q.⁷²

This proposal is problematic. The tetrarch's coins were all bronze and thus relatively small change; it is unlikely that their main purpose was to make taxation and the transfer of wealth easier, since silver would have been preferable for both purposes. Furthermore, the theory assumes that the primary reason a client king issued currency was economic. Such coins were often intended primarily as propaganda, however, serving to express cultural, political, and ideological values. Antipas does not seem to have minted very many coins, probably because a considerable amount of Hasmonean currency was still in circulation as well as money from nearby cities like Tyre.⁷³ While the overall trajectory of the Roman period was toward further monetization,⁷⁴ the relatively small amount of money issued under Antipas probably did little to hinder or hasten the process.

The conservative nature of the designs on Antipas's coins is clear when we compare them to those of his brother Philip.⁷⁵ Philip's bore portraits, the first coins issued by a Jewish king to do so.

⁷² Arnal, *Jesus*, 134–146.

⁷³ Compare *Treasury*, 85. The site that has yielded the most coins of Antipas is nearby Gamla, where 55 were found (Syon, "Coins from Gamala"). Other find spots include Yodefat, Gush Halav, and nearby et-Tell (one coin at each site; Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, "Iotapata"; Kindler, "Coin Finds"; Raynor, "Numismatics," 237) and Meiron (three coins, Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 84). Meshorer notes that coins of Antipas are often found in excavations of later synagogues (e.g., Hammath Tiberias, Meiron, Gush Halav, Nabratein, Arbel, Capernaum; *AJC*, vol. 2, 41, 205n. 27–28), showing that people sometimes held on to them for centuries, despite their low value.

⁷⁴ By the Late Roman era, significantly more coins circulated throughout Palestine (Safrai, *Economy*, 302, 404–414, 427–428).

⁷⁵ *Treasury*, 85–90; Strickert, "Coins."

Perhaps he felt comfortable departing from Jewish numismatic custom since most of his subjects were gentiles. On some he placed images of the emperor, on others, of himself. On the largest of his earliest series, for example, he put Augustus on the obverse and himself on the reverse; on a later coin he put jugate heads of Augustus and his wife Livia. His inscriptions typically named both himself and the emperor.⁷⁶ Philip was also the first Jewish king to depict a pagan temple on his coins, a tetrastyle building, perhaps the temple to Augustus built by Herod the Great.

The coins of Agrippa I made even more extensive use of imperial and royal images,⁷⁷ as demonstrated by a series minted c. 40/41 CE (perhaps at Tiberias, since they are most common in its vicinity). The largest denomination, clearly a copy of a coin issued at Rome,⁷⁸ had Caligula on its obverse and a man riding a quadriga on its reverse.⁷⁹ The next smallest had a bust of Caligula's wife Caesonia on its obverse and his favorite sister (and purported lover) Drusilla on the reverse, standing and holding a Nike figure. The third size was decorated with Agrippa's portrait and, on the back, a depiction of his wife Cypros. The smallest coin showed the king's son, Agrippa II, with double cornucopiae on the reverse. Thus, as the coins decreased in size, the statures of those portrayed decreased, with the largest coin depicting the emperor and the smallest the client king's heir.⁸⁰

Many of Agrippa's other coins, minted at Paneas, Jerusalem, and Caesarea Maritima, display similar receptiveness to Greco-Roman customs, with busts on their obverses and anthropomorphic imagery or temples on their reverses. Two make the stature of client kings

⁷⁶ In addition, Strickert argues that a coin depicting Livia found at et-Tell was probably minted by Philip, though it has no inscription naming him ("Coins," 172).

⁷⁷ *Treasury*, 90–114.

⁷⁸ *Treasury*, 91–93. Earlier coins of Agrippa had also been modeled after those at Rome, such as two from 37/38 CE (A. Burnett, "The Coinage of King Agrippa I of Judaea and a New Coin of King Herod of Chalcis," in H. Huvelin, M. Christol, and G. Gautier, eds., *Mélanges de Numismatique: Offerts à Pierre Bastien à l'occasion de son 75e anniversaire* [Wettern, Belgium: Editions NR, 1987], 28–39, esp. 27–28).

⁷⁹ On the Roman coin, the rider was Caligula's father Germanicus, but whether the rider on Agrippa's coin was intended or perceived as Germanicus (as suggested in *Treasury*, 93–95) or as Agrippa himself is impossible to determine. Cf. Burnett, "Coinage" and Meshorer's earlier comments in *AJC*, vol. 2, 53–54.

⁸⁰ Compare a series with similar images minted in 39 CE, probably at Paneas.

relative to that of the emperor especially clear. The first depicts Agrippa and Herod of Chalcis crowning the emperor Claudius, with an inscription naming the three figures. Its reverse depicts two clasped hands, a Roman sign for a treaty, and the inscription “Sworn treaty of the great king Agrippa to Augustus Caesar, the Senate and the Roman People: his friendship and alliance.” The coin probably refers to an agreement in 41 CE that enlarged Agrippa’s kingdom.⁸¹ The second coin depicts Claudius on its obverse and a temple with four figures on its reverse, Claudius, Agrippa, and two unidentifiable people. The image may refer to the consecration of the aforementioned treaty at Rome.⁸² The reverse image is surrounded by the inscription “Great King Agrippa Philocaesar.” The last word, also found on a smaller coin of the same series, is a title that rarely appeared on mid-first-century client king coinage⁸³ though it is occasionally found in other inscriptions.⁸⁴

At least one coin of Agrippa II was probably minted in Galilee, as reflected by the wreath-encircled Greek “Tiberias” on its reverse. An image of a palm branch and the inscription ΒΑ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΑ ΝΙΚ ΣΕΒ, “King Agrippa, Victory of the Emperor” are found on the obverse, as well as the date, “Year 15.” The coin is clearly a celebration of the Roman victory in the Jewish revolt.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Burnett, “Coinage,” 31–35; on the treaty, see Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.275 and *War* 2.216; Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25.5. Meshorer accepts this interpretation in *Treasury*, 100–101; it differs considerably from his earlier position in *AJC*, vol. 2, 55–57. Herod of Chalcis minted an almost identical coin c. 42/43 CE. A similar image can be seen on a coin issued by King Artaxis of Armenia, but with the positions reversed: the king is being crowned by Tiberius’s son Germanicus, rather than the emperor being crowned by a king (Bedoukian, *Coinage*, 77, no. 168).

⁸² Burnett, “Coinage,” 35–37; cf. Meshorer’s reservations in *Treasury*, 98–99.

⁸³ A similar title, *philoclaudius*, is found on coins of Herod of Chalcis from 43 CE (*Treasury*, 263 nos. 362–364). For discussion of such titles (i.e., *philoromaios*, *philosebastos*, and *philogermanicus*), see Braund, *Rome*, 105–107. In the first century CE, they are more often found on civic coins in reference to local officials, especially in the province of Asia; cf. the appearance of *philocaesar* at several cities (*RPC*, vol. 1, 443, 493, 496, 496), the use of *philantoniou* in Cilicia in 39–31 BCE (*RPC*, vol. 1, 575), and the later occurrence of such titles at Edessa (*philoromaios* c. 166 CE) and Lower Cilbiani (*philosebastos*, under Caracalla) (Barclay V. Head et al., *Historia Numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, rev. ed. [Chicago: Argonaut, 1963], 814, 649–650).

⁸⁴ Richardson, *Herod*, 204–208 nos. 2a-b and 6–8, 210.

⁸⁵ *Treasury*, 106–107. *NIK SEB*, an unparalleled inscription, is apparently the abbreviated Greek equivalent for the Latin *Victoria Augusti*, a common numismatic inscription in the west.

Agrippa's other coins were mostly struck in Paneas.⁸⁶ Their designs showed that he, even more than his predecessors, fully joined the numismatic mainstream of the Roman world. Missing entirely are portraits of himself or his wife, replaced instead with busts of the emperor. Perhaps Agrippa's reluctance to depict himself reflects an additional measure of deference to the emperor in the wake of the first revolt. Deities – Tyche, Nike, Moneta, and, because of the importance of the cultic site at Paneas, Pan – are frequently shown on the reverses, though on smaller denominations other symbols sometimes appear (e.g., an anchor, single and double cornucopiae, a palm tree, and corn).⁸⁷ His inscriptions honor the emperor as well as himself, sometimes adding a date based on the year of his reign. Coins minted in the mid-80s CE, some of them copies of coins of Rome, had Latin inscriptions, the first and only Herodian coins to do so. Latin was unusual enough on the region's coins that his subjects must have recognized its use as an emphatic statement of Roman identity.⁸⁸

Agrippa was the last of the Herodian client kings. After his death in the 90s,⁸⁹ the Romans annexed his territory. With the end of his dynasty and that of the Nabateans in 106 CE came the end of royal coinage in the area and, with it, the end of numismatic expressions of nominal independence from Rome.

CIVIC COINS

Sepphoris and Tiberias struck no civic coins until after Jesus' lifetime.⁹⁰ When they began doing so, they joined the dozens of cities in Syria, Palestine, and the Transjordan and the hundreds of cities

⁸⁶ *Treasury*, 102–114, 233–240; note that Meshorer mistakenly attributes the wartime coins of Sepphoris to Agrippa II.

⁸⁷ Tyche and Pan would later appear on Paneas's civic coinage (Ya'akov Meshorer, "The Coins of Caesarea Paneas," *INJ* 8 [1984–1985]: 37–58).

⁸⁸ *Treasury*, 111–112. Other coins with Latin inscriptions may also be from Agrippa II (*RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4845–4846).

⁸⁹ See discussion in Chapter Two.

⁹⁰ There is no one compendium that includes all of the civic coins of Sepphoris and Tiberias; one must consult multiple works. For Sepphoris, see Meshorer's works ("Coins of Sepphoris," "Sepphoris and Rome," *City-Coins*, 36–37 and "Hoard of Coins from Migdal," nos. 145–148) and M. Rosenberger, *City-Coins of Palestine*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: 1972–1977), vol. 3, 60–63. For Tiberias, see Meshorer, *City-Coins*, 34–35, "Hoard of Coins

elsewhere in the Roman East that also produced currency.⁹¹ This proliferation of civic mints is all the more notable since the exact opposite phenomenon happened in the western empire, where civic minting ended by the mid-first century CE.⁹² Cities issued coins for a variety of purposes, which Rachel Barkay succinctly describes: to “supply local currency, produce revenue, finance special projects (whether civil or military), express the city’s pride in itself, commemorate extraordinary events . . . or [for] a combination of several of these reasons” – goals she sums up as “profits, prestige, and publicity.”⁹³ The changes in coin designs over the decades reflect the growing openness of civic elites to Greco-Roman numismatic customs.

As would be expected, the coins of both Sepphoris and Tiberias utilized Greek. The use of indigenous languages on civic coins was rare throughout the Empire.⁹⁴ In the east, most cities opted for Greek, except those with the status of Roman colony, which usually chose Latin. Thus, during the Jewish revolt, Ptolemais, recently declared a colony, departed from its four centuries of tradition and switched from Greek to Latin. After Vespasian declared Caesarea Maritima a colony, it did likewise.⁹⁵ Other cities that later received colonial status followed the same pattern.⁹⁶

The first Galilean civic coins were a series of three denominations minted at Tiberias c. 53 CE.⁹⁷ The designs of all three are identical,

from Migdal,” nos. 129–130; *Treasury* 177–178 (see discussion below); Kindler, *Coins*, and Rosenberger, *City-Coins*, vol. 3, 63–67.

⁹¹ On the city coins of Palestine and the Transjordan, see Barkay, *Coinage*, 185–196; *City-Coins*; Spijkerman, *Coins*; Rosenberger, *City-Coins*; Arie Kindler and Alla Stein, *A Bibliography of the City Coinage of Palestine: From the 2nd Century BC to the 3rd Century AD* (Oxford: BAR, 1987); Chancey, “City Coins.”

⁹² *RPC*, vol. 1, 18–19; Howgego, *Ancient History*, 58.

⁹³ Barkay, *Coinage*, 27–30, quote from 29.

⁹⁴ Compare the unusual use of Phoenician alongside Greek on some Tyrian coins (*RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4704–4739) and the letter *mem* on coins of Gaza (nos. 4894–4896).

⁹⁵ *RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4749–4751; *RPC*, vol. 2, no. 2231; *City-Coins*, 110–111. Cf. also Beirut (*RPC*, vol. 1, 648–651).

⁹⁶ *City-Coins*, 114–116, 119, 120; Kindler, “Status.” Though Meshorer proposed that a coin of Tiberias attests to colonial status (*City-Coins*, 35, 113 no. 86), Joshua Ezra Burns’s recent first-hand inspection of the coin found no evidence to support Meshorer’s reading (personal communication).

⁹⁷ Meshorer earlier suggested that these coins were minted under Agrippa II (*AJC*, vol. 2, 166–167, 279), but in *Treasury* (177–178, 261) he suggests they were issued by the Roman

with a palm branch, the date (“year 13”), and the name of the emperor (Claudius Caesar) on the obverse and a wreath surrounding the city’s name on the reverse. The avoidance of figural art and the use of the palm branch reflect continuity with the earlier coins struck at the city by Antipas.

No other Galilean civic currency was issued until Sepphoris released two coins c. 68 CE, during the first revolt.⁹⁸ Its coins served as political propaganda, making the stance of the city (or at least its leadership) clear to its own citizens, the Roman forces, nearby King Agrippa, and other Galileans. The obverse of each bore an inscription within a wreath, ΛΑΙ/ ΝΕΡΩΝΟ /ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΥ/ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟ/ C (“Year 14, of Nero Claudius Caesar”). The reverses read ΕΠΙ ΟΥΕΣΠΑΙΑΝΟΥ ΕΙΡΗΝΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΑ ΣΕΠΦΩ (“Under Vespasian, Eirenopolis-Neronias-Sepphoris”), showing that the city renamed itself in honor of Nero and proclaimed itself “Eirenopolis,” that is, the “City of Peace.” While the exact meaning of the phrase *epi Vespasian* is unclear – it could be a dating formula, purely honorific, or an indication that he authorized the city to mint coins⁹⁹ – it clearly shows respect to the general. In addition, one reverse was decorated with the Latin abbreviation SC, the only Latin ever to appear on Sepphoris’s coins. The two letters are a widely used abbreviation for *senatus consulto* and thus a strong pro-Roman statement. Rather than representing an actual decision of the Roman Senate, they probably reflect flattery of the Romans, an honorific gesture toward the Senate, and an intentional mimicking of imperial coins minted at Antioch.¹⁰⁰ The other coin’s reverse

administration, thus agreeing with Kindler (*Coins*, 17). Nothing about the coins themselves suggests they are procuratorial issues, however, and there is little reason for the Roman authorities to have issued coins at Tiberias. I am now convinced that they are civic coins (cf. my earlier uncertainty in *Myth*, 92).

⁹⁸ See Meshorer, “Coins of Sepphoris”; Meshorer, “Sepphoris and Rome”; Henri Seyrig, “Irenopolis-Neronias-Sepphoris,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 10 (1950): 284–289 and “Irenopolis-Neronias-Sepphoris: An Additional Note,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 15 (1955): 157–159. Meshorer mistakenly attributes these coins to Agrippa II in *Treasury* 103–106; cf. H. Hamburger, “The Coin Issues of the Roman Administration from the Mint of Caesarea Maritima,” *IEJ* 20 (1970): 81–91, who attributes them to Vespasian. For earlier discussions, see Chancey and Meyers, “How Jewish”; Chancey, “Cultural Milieu”; Chancey, *Myth*, 81–82.

⁹⁹ *RPC*, vol. 1, 1–5.

¹⁰⁰ *RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4297–4298.

displayed a symbol used on both non-Jewish and Jewish coinage, a caduceus between two cornucopiae.¹⁰¹

Sepphoris was far from alone in using coins to make a political statement during the war. Ptolemais and Caesarea both issued coins that displayed legionary standards, and those of Ptolemais expressed pride in the city's elevation to colony, showing Nero ceremonially determining its boundaries by plowing with an ox.¹⁰² Other wartime coins reflected the opposite end of the political spectrum. Silver and bronze coins produced by rebels in Jerusalem eschewed Greek inscriptions, using archaic Hebrew letters instead, a robust statement of distinctive Jewish identity in a time of crisis. "Holy Jerusalem" appeared on some; "Freedom of Zion" or "of the redemption of Zion" on others. The dating system was equally political, noting the year of the revolt ("Year One," "Year Two"). The coins were based on the Phoenician, rather than the Roman or Attic, standard, and, in another departure from normal practice, inscriptions specified each one's value (a shekel, half-shekel, or quarter-shekel). Their symbols were all associated with the Jerusalem Temple, depicting either vessels (e.g., chalice, amphora), decorations (a branch with three pomegranates, a vine), or items used in the festival of Sukkot (*lulav* bundles, a date palm).¹⁰³ Gamla also issued a revolt coin that depicted a chalice and bore paleo-Hebrew inscriptions, with "of the redemption" on one side and "Holy Jerusalem" on the other. Gamla's coins were struck not out of a need for additional bronze currency but as a statement of solidarity with the rebels and opposition to Rome and its client, Agrippa II, in whose territory they were located.¹⁰⁴

Against this backdrop, the pro-Roman message conveyed by the coins of Sepphoris is even clearer. Yet even with their desire to make an unambiguous statement, the leadership of Sepphoris chose not to cross the line of Jewish tradition by placing the emperor's bust on these coins. This decision clearly distinguished them from most civic

¹⁰¹ The same symbol appears on revolt-era coins issued at Paneas by Agrippa II; that city, like Sepphoris, renamed itself in honor of Nero (*Treasury*, 233 no. 132).

¹⁰² *City-Coins*, 12 no. 2 and 20 no. 32; a coin with plowing emperor image was issued by Caesarea under Septimius Severus (20 no. 26).

¹⁰³ *Treasury*, 115–134. ¹⁰⁴ *Treasury*, 130–131; Syon, "Coins from Gamala."

coins struck in the region during the war, which did depict the emperor.¹⁰⁵

When the next Galilean coins were issued, under Emperor Trajan (98–117 C. E.), a shift in sensibilities was evident. For the first time, both cities' coins bore the emperor's portrait. The willingness of both cities to place a human image on their coins reflects the growing influence of Greco-Roman culture and a desire to symbolize their loyalty to the governing authorities.

The four coins of Sepphoris had an inscription around Trajan's bust, ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΕΔΩΚΕΝ or "Emperor Trajan gave." Each reverse bore the city's ethnic label, ΣΕΠΦΩΡΗΝΩΝ, and one of four symbols: a laurel wreath, caduceus, two ears of grain or corn, and a palm tree.¹⁰⁶ Meshorer has argued that these symbols are all Jewish and that the reference to Trajan's gift (a unique inscription on Roman coinage) reflects his granting permission to the city to mint distinctively Jewish coinage.¹⁰⁷ Yet, there is little that is unique about the coins. The symbols on the reverses do appear on earlier Jewish coins, but they were also found on coins of pagan cities. Thus, the phrase "Emperor Trajan gave" probably refers not to special permission to strike special Jewish coins, but, some other gift to the city.¹⁰⁸

The coins of Tiberias had a more typical inscription around their imperial busts: ΑΥΤ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΡ ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΣ ΣΕΒ ΓΕΡ, or "Autocrat Caesar Nero Trajan Sebastos Germanicus."¹⁰⁹ Their reverses had dates, calculated in years from the city's foundation¹¹⁰ and

¹⁰⁵ For example Ascalon, Hippos, Gadara, Gerasa, Scythopolis (*RPC*, vol. 1, nos. 4889–4892, 4807–4808, 4822–4824, 4839–4841, 4834–4835).

¹⁰⁶ Meshorer, "Sepphoris and Rome," 163–164; "Coins of Sepphoris."

¹⁰⁷ Meshorer, "Sepphoris and Rome," 163–164; "Coins of Sepphoris." As Meshorer observes, the coins are similar to those of Neapolis under Domitian ("Sepphoris and Rome," 164 n. 24).

¹⁰⁸ Compare Harl, *Civic Coins*, 24 and plate 27 and discussion in my Chapter Four. Noting that no other coins were struck at Sepphoris until the time of Antoninus Pius, Meshorer speculates that the city was punished for its support of the Diaspora Jewish revolt in 115–117 CE (*City-Coins*, 36; "Sepphoris and Rome," 165). There is no evidence to suggest that the city was sympathetic to that revolt, however, and civic currency was often issued sporadically rather than at regular intervals. There is thus no reason to think that the absence of coins under Hadrian reflected his punishment.

¹⁰⁹ Kindler, *Coins*, 55–57 nos. 3–6; *City-Coins*, 112–113 nos. 77–80.

¹¹⁰ This technique of dating was typical, though it stands out when juxtaposed with the more Romano-centric dates on the coins of many older cities in the region, which were based on

“Tiberias Claudiopolis,” the name that would appear on most subsequent coinage. The two smallest coins had conservative symbols on their reverses, both surrounded with circular borders of dots: one, an anchor, and the other, a palm branch between two cornucopiae. The largest coin was decorated with an image of Tyche, the city-goddess, holding a rudder and cornucopiae and standing upon the prow of a ship, a clear reference (like the anchor) to the city’s lakeside location. The second largest denomination depicted the goddess of health, Hygieia, a deity undoubtedly chosen because of the hot baths at Hammath Tiberias. She sits on a rock from which water flows, holding a snake that eats from a phial in her other hand. These coins were the first minted in Galilee to have images of gods.

For the duration of their minting activity, Tiberias and Sepphoris produced coins that were strikingly similar to those of other cities. Their adoption of the imagery of deities, temples, and emperors indicated their elites’ full-scale participation in this aspect of the civic culture of the eastern Roman Empire. Three of Tiberias’s coins, the earliest dating to Hadrian, depicted the ancient image of a seated Zeus within a tetrastyle temple.¹¹¹ A later coin had a Hygieia motif and another showed Hygieia and Asclepius, the god of healing, holding serpents and facing each other. Others depicted deities associated with water and shipping – Tyche, holding a bust, with her right foot on the prow of a galley, and Poseidon, likewise standing with his foot on a galley, holding a dolphin.

The coins of Sepphoris were similar. One depicted a seated Zeus within a tetrastyle temple, an appropriate image for a city named Diocaesarea, while another showed the Capitoline Triad, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, within a tetrastyle temple, an image probably intended as a pro-Roman statement.¹¹² Other deities also appear:

Pompey’s arrival in 63 BCE (Chancey, “City Coins,” 105–106 and discussion in Chapter Two).

¹¹¹ Meshorer (*City-Coins*, 34) has plausibly suggested that the building might be the shrine to Hadrian mentioned in Epiphanius (*Adv. Haereses* 30.12.1.), since the emperor was often associated with that deity. He also suggests that these coins were made when Hadrian visited Palestine, though there is no explicit evidence that the emperor came to Galilee.

¹¹² *City-Coins*, 60 no. 163. The trio is rare on coins from Palestine and Jordan, though they are found on a Hadrianic coin of Aelia Capitolina (Meshorer, *Coinage of Aelia Capitolina*,

one coin has a bust of a goddess, perhaps Hera, while the other shows a goddess with helmet, spear, and shield, sometimes identified as Athena.

From Antoninus Pius on, the coins of Sepphoris bear its new name, Diocaesarea, often accompanied by a traditional civic title, “the Holy, City of Asylum, Autonomous” (or, in one case, just “Holy and Autonomous”).¹¹³ Titles like these had a long history in the Mediterranean, going back to at least the second century BCE, but they appear to have become especially popular in the second and third centuries CE.¹¹⁴ They were largely honorific; the days of truly autonomous cities were long over by the Roman period. Rachel Barkay suggests that titles like these were used in the Roman period to affirm a city’s sense of a Greek identity.¹¹⁵

During the reigns of Caracalla and Elagabalus, Sepphoris minted coins with reverse designs that consisted solely of wreaths surrounding inscriptions proclaiming faithfulness to Rome. Because of the use of abbreviations, their exact wording remains open to debate. One minted under Caracalla read ΔΙΟΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΙΕΡΑΣΑΥΤ ΠΙΣΦΙΛΕΣΥΜ ΜΑΧ ΡΩΜΑΙ or “Diocaesarea the Holy, City of Shelter [asylum], Autonomous, Faithful Friend and Ally of the Romans.”¹¹⁶ There are variations among the abbreviations on other coins of the same series; some refer also to the ΣΚΔΡΩ, presumably the Greek equivalent for the Latin SPQR, “Senate and the Roman

27–28, 70 no. 1). Schwartz suggests that the image reflects the city’s payment of the required Jewish tax to the Capitoline Jupiter (*Imperialism*, 139).

¹¹³ A coin under Antoninus Pius read ΔΙΟΚΑΙ ΙΕΡ ΑΣ Υ ΑΥΤΟ; that of Julia, ΔΙΟΚΑΙ ΙΕΡ ΑΣ Υ.

¹¹⁴ Tyre’s coins had borne them since at least 126 BCE; Sidon’s, since 82/81 BCE; Ptolemais since 39/38 BCE (Kindler, “Status”). For Hippos, Gadara and other Decapolis cities, see Spijkerman, *Coins*, 300–303; for Paneas and other east Mediterranean cities, see Head, *Historia Numorum*, lxxx and 927.

¹¹⁵ Barkay, *Coinage*, 160–165. Scythopolis went further than other cities in the region, adding the title “Greek city” (ΕΛ ΠΙΟ) to its coins of 175/176 CE; this title is also attested in an inscription (Foerster and Tsafir, “Nysa-Scythopolis”). Note the inscription on a limestone block at Gerasa from 130 CE referring to the city as “Holy, Inviolable, and Autonomous,” with the Greek terms transliterated, rather than translated, into Latin (Welles, “Inscriptions,” 390–391 no. 30).

¹¹⁶ ΔΙΟΚΑΙΣΑΡΙΑΣ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΑΣΥΛΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΝΟΜΟΥ ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΣ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ, following Harl’s reading (*Civic Coins*, 81; cf. C. M. McCray, “Jewish Friends and Allies of Rome,” *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 25 [1980]: 53–57), rather than Meshorer’s (“Sepphoris and Rome,” 168).

People,” while others refer just to the “Roman People” (ΔΡ).¹¹⁷ A coin minted under Elagabalus had a similar inscription.¹¹⁸ Such references to the “Roman People” may have been especially appropriate after Caracalla’s broad grant of citizenship in 212 CE to all free people. Declarations of fidelity to Rome were common on city coins of the third century, a particularly difficult time for the Empire because of economic troubles and the Parthian threat. Perhaps the inscriptions of Sepphoris’s coins indicate, as Harl has suggested, that the city sent money, supplies, or some other type of support to Elagabalus during his military expeditions, as other cities did.¹¹⁹ One wonders if the armed goddess mentioned earlier who graces a smaller coin minted under Elagabalus should be identified as Roma, rather than Athena, in a similar display of patriotic sentiment.¹²⁰

Civic minting reached its peak under the Antonines and Elagabalus, with large amounts of currency struck throughout the eastern empire.¹²¹ This spurt of activity turned out to be the last, however, as the debasement of silver currency and the resulting inflation made bronze civic coinage impractical and prohibitively costly. The coins of Sepphoris and Tiberias struck under Elagabalus were the final coins minted in Roman Galilee. One by one, cities in Palestine stopped issuing new coins until Ptolemais, one of the last active civic mints in the Empire, ceased production in 268 CE. From this point on, imperial mints would be the sole source of new currency.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Meshorer reconstructs ΣΚΑΡΩ as ΣΥΓΚΛΗΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ.

¹¹⁸ Meshorer, “Sepphoris and Rome,” 168 no. 4.

¹¹⁹ Harl, *Civic Coins*, 81–82. In light of similar inscriptions on other cities’ coins, there appears to be little reason to accept Meshorer’s argument that these coins reflect an alliance between the rabbinic Sanhedrin and Rome or confirmation of rabbinic traditions that Caracalla and Judah ha-Nasi shared a special friendship (“Sepphoris and Rome,” 166–171, citing *b. Avodah Zarah* 10a–b).

¹²⁰ Similar images on other coins might also be interpreted as Roma. Such symbols might be intended to evoke both deities, rather than one or the other. See Rosenberger, *City-Coins*, vol. 3, 63 no. 17; cf. images Spijkerman identifies as Roma on the slightly later (244–249 CE) coins of Philippopolis (*Coins*, plate 58). On numismatic depictions of Roma in general, see Harl, *Civic Coins*, 73.

¹²¹ Harl, *Civic Coins*, 107; Crawford, “Finance,” 572–575; Barkay, *Coinage*, 30; cf. finds in the Franciscan excavations at Capernaum, where coins from Elagabalus greatly outnumber those of other emperors (Raynor and Meshorer, *Coins*, 87).

¹²² Barkay, *Coinage*, 31–32, 193–195; Sperber, *Roman Palestine*, 133–135, 143–144; Harl, *Civic Coins*, 9; Howgego, *Ancient History*, 138–140.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Galilee's coinage attests to a comfort level with the numismatic conventions of the Greco-Roman world that increased over time. In the early Hellenistic period, the Ptolemies, Seleucids and coastal cities provided its coins, which had Greek legends, human portraits, and images of animals or deities. After the Hasmonean annexation of Galilee, Jewish coins minted in Jerusalem became an important source of currency, their lack of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery and their use of Semitic inscriptions (sometimes instead of Greek, sometimes alongside it) notably contrasting with other regional coinage.

By the early first century CE, a variety of coinages were in use in Galilee. Coins struck by Antipas reflect a selective adaptation of Greco-Roman numismatic practices – the consistent use of Greek and the selection of plant motifs, but the continuing avoidance of figural art. The series produced under Agrippa I c. 40/41 CE at Tiberias depicted members of both the imperial and royal families. These coins were much more like those struck in other areas than the coins of Agrippa's predecessor Antipas – a difference apparent to any Galilean who encountered them. Coins produced later in the century by Sepphoris and Tiberias returned to the more reserved course charted by Antipas.

In contrast, coins minted in Galilee in the second and third centuries reflect a wholesale adoption of Greco-Roman numismatic customs. This development is exemplified by the coins with the emperor's bust, deities, and a tetrastyle temple that Tiberias issued c. 119/120 CE – the same approximate time that the VI Ferrata legion arrived in the region. Within a few decades, Sepphoris had struck similar bronzes.

After the mid-third century, all new currency came from the emperor's mints. Coins might employ Greek for their inscriptions or be nominally based on the old Attic standard, but they still were designed according to primarily Roman, not local, tastes and values. In this respect, the Romanization of coinage, not only of Galilee but of the entire eastern Mediterranean, was complete.

CHAPTER 7

Greco-Roman art and the shifting limits of acceptability

In the first century CE, Galileans seem to have had a conservative attitude towards Greco-Roman art, particularly in regard to figural representations – that is, depictions of animals, humans, deities, and mythological figures.¹ As we have seen, such images were absent even from coins struck in Galilee, despite the fact that Galileans encountered them frequently on coins minted outside the region. In the early second century, however, they began appearing on Galilean coins, and by the late second and the third centuries, they were found on a variety of media, such as sarcophagi, mosaics, and lamps. The timing of this trend strongly suggests that it, too, should be considered within the context of Romanization. This chapter will explore the development of Greco-Roman art in Galilee, paying special attention to the shifting boundaries of acceptability regarding anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery.

JEWISH ART AND FIGURAL REPRESENTATION IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

The most significant difference between the art of first-century CE Jews in Palestine and the art of most (though not all) other areas of the Roman world was the avoidance of figural art.² For Jews, this

¹ Hellenistic-era examples of such figural art are rare. There is little in the interior of Galilee to compare with the mythological and anthropomorphic imagery on the sealings of the Hellenistic archive from the Tyrian village of Kedesh, for example (Ariel and Naveh, “Selected Inscribed Sealings”). Note, however, the possibly Hellenistic-period life-sized anthropomorphic relief carving in northwest Upper Galilee (Frankel et al., *Settlement Dynamics*, 109) and the figurines mentioned below.

² Compare the rarity of animal and human images in Britain before the Roman conquest (Catherine Johns, “Art, Romanisation, and Competence,” in Scott and Webster, *Roman Imperialism*, 9–23).

avoidance was grounded in the Torah's prohibitions of "graven images" (Exodus 20:4–6, Deuteronomy 4:15–18), a category interpreted broadly in this period to include representation in a variety of media – mosaics, frescoes, reliefs, statues, and figurines.³ This attitude comes across clearly in Josephus's descriptions of Herodian and first-century Palestine, as Steven Fine points out.⁴ Josephus reports Jewish hostility to the golden eagle Herod the Great erected over the gate of the Jerusalem temple and anxiety over the trophies he placed in his theater.⁵ He notes in passing that Jews were forbidden to honor statues and sculptures,⁶ and he describes in detail how the emperor Caligula's attempt to install a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple brought the province's Jews to the brink of revolt (c. 40 CE).⁷ His report of an incident that occurred in Tiberias early in the revolt suggests, however, that there were class-based variations in Jewish attitudes towards figural representations. The Romanophile Antipas had built a palace in the city that was decorated with images of animals. The building had probably been steadily used by other Herodian and Roman administrators in the three decades since Antipas. Josephus claims that he himself was sent to Tiberias by the revolt leadership in Jerusalem to destroy the palace. Its art was thus exceptional enough to be famous even several days' journey to the south. As Josephus portrays the situation, the elites of Tiberias, led by a man with the Latin name Capella (a possible indicator of high social status), saw no need to burn it down. This reluctance did not stop other parties from doing so. Josephus identifies those who razed the structure as Tiberians and Galileans and denigrates them as "sailors and [the] destitute class." In contrast to the elites, they were led by a man with a Semitic name, Jesus. Even allowing for the pejorative nature of Josephus's

³ Fine, *Art*; Lee I. Levine, "Archaeology and the Religious Ethos of Pre-70 Palestine," in James H. Charlesworth and Loren L. Johns, eds., *Hillel and Jesus: Comparative Studies of Two Major Religious Leaders* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 110–120; Rachel Hachlili, "Synagogues in the Land of Israel: The Art and Architecture of Late Antique Synagogues," in Fine, *Sacred Realm*, 96–129, esp. 112–115; Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 79–82.

⁴ Fine discusses the pertinent passages (*Art*); cf. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 225–239, 332–336.

⁵ *War* 1.648–654; *Ant.* 15.272–279.

⁶ *War* 1.650; *Ant.* 17.328–329.

⁷ *War* 2.192–203; *Ant.* 19.261–309.

description of them, it seems probable that their actions reflected sentiments of at least some of the Galilean masses.⁸

Archaeological evidence also reveals diversity in Jewish attitudes towards figural art. Excavations in Jerusalem, mostly in the domestic quarters of temple elites, have revealed representations of birds, fish, and other animals in frescoes, stucco moldings, and reliefs on table tops – all this, despite Deuteronomy's explicit prohibition of likenesses of any living things.⁹ Steven Fine has persuasively argued that these finds, especially when considered in conjunction with images of inanimate objects, such as vines and flowers, demonstrate that characterizations of Jewish art as “aniconic” are inadequate, failing to reflect that certain images, even of animals, were acceptable to at least some Jews in particular contexts. Images that could be interpreted as idols were clearly prohibited, but those occurring in “safe” contexts, such as private domestic space, might be acceptable to some parties. Fine suggests that a term like “anti-idolic” better captures the nuances of Jewish attitudes towards art.¹⁰ It is important to emphasize that these images were found in residences of the upper class, not the commoners, and that images of animals appear to have been the exception, not the norm. Most decorations consisted only of geometric and floral patterns.

FRESCOES AND MOSAICS

Frescoes and mosaic art had entered Palestine in the Hellenistic period,¹¹ but it was under the influence of Roman culture that they gained popularity. Herod the Great's palaces (none of them in

⁸ *Life* 65–67. Josephus refers to “Herod the tetrarch,” a title that can only refer to Antipas, since Agrippa I and II both received the title “king.”

⁹ Fine collects references to the Jerusalem material in *Art*.

¹⁰ Fine, *Art*; cf. Meyers, “Jewish Art and Architecture” and “Jewish Art in the Greco-Roman Period.”

¹¹ The walls of the pagan tombs at Maresha were covered with paintings of animals (Amos Kloner, “Mareshah,” *OEANE*, vol. 3, 412–413), the luxurious building at Tel Anafa was painted in Greek-style (Herbert, “Introduction,” 17), and some of the houses at Beth Yerah were decorated with colored plaster (Hestrin, “Beth Yerah”). An early example (second century BCE?) of a colorful mosaic was found at Dor, depicting what seems to be a comedic theatrical mask (no author, “Victory on the Harbor: Greek Remains Found at Dor,” *BAR* 27:4 [2001]: 17). Hasmonean palaces also had frescoes (Berlin, “Between Large

Galilee) were extensively decorated in Italian styles, with frescoed walls and mosaics that reflected awareness of trends from the Italian peninsula – with the notable difference that Herod’s decorations were free of figural representations. By the first century CE, both frescoes and mosaics were occasionally found throughout Palestine, including Galilee, where they adorned the interiors of at least some public buildings and elite residences. At Sepphoris, for example, fragments of painted plaster were found inside the remains of a house on the western side of the acropolis. The walls had been decorated at least twice. Unfortunately, the pieces of plaster were too small to allow reconstruction of the overall pattern, but it appears to have consisted of blocks of color broken up by basic lines and dots.¹² As for Galilee’s mosaics, those from the first century show a strong preference for geometric and floral patterns and motifs.¹³

The use of such art forms in the domestic space of Galilean elites reflects their openness to these aspects of Roman culture, both in terms of the media themselves and the styles of decoration. Yet, the difference between their manifestations in Galilee and those found on the Italian peninsula is striking. Unlike the frescoes at the most famous site in Italy, Pompeii, Galilee’s frescoes have no human images, whether of elites or of people holding everyday occupations, such as a baker; no still-life scenes of fruit or animals, no fantastic depictions of architecture or columns, and no mythological motifs.¹⁴ Galilee’s frescoes show how its elites mediated between two different

Forces,” 34–35, 42; Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces*, vol. 1, 1–7). On the likelihood that the Hasmonean kings themselves were open to figural art, see Meyers, “Jewish Art in the Greco-Roman Period” and Fine, *Art*.

¹² This description of the fresco is based on my participation in the excavation of Area 85.1 of the Duke University excavations; see also Reed, *Archaeology*, 126. Similar pieces of fresco have been found in houses at Yodefat (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, “Totapata,” 165; Aviam, “First Century,” 17), Cana (Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 104), Kh. et-Taiyiba (map coordinates 169/243) (M. Peleg, “Horvat ‘Ofrat [Kh. et-Taiyiba],” *ESI* 4 [1985]: 88–89), and Gamla (Andrea Rotloff, “Gamla – Das Masada des Nordens?” in Faßbeck et al., *Leben am See Gennesaret*, 110–117, esp. the photo on 111).

¹³ For example, the first-century CE building with eight pools at Sepphoris (Strange, “Six Campaigns”). We see a similar restraint even at a pagan site like Hellenistic-period Tel Anafa, where thousands of tesserae have been found (Herbert, “Occupational History,” 64–65). R. and A. Ovadiah, however, suggest that one mosaic there may have once depicted humans (*MPI*, no. 234).

¹⁴ August May, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, trans. Francis W. Kelsey (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1982), 471–485; L. Richardson, Jr., *Pompeii: An Architectural History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 96–104.

values: the desire to participate in the artistic culture of the larger Roman world and the desire to observe the Jewish prohibition of “graven images.”

As we saw with the elite residences in Jerusalem, however, the boundaries of acceptability were flexible. This is shown quite clearly by a mosaic from Magdala,¹⁵ one of the few sizable, mostly intact mosaics recovered thus far from first-century CE Galilee.¹⁶ Because its images are not limited to the standard motifs, it provides a striking contrast to other mosaics. Several objects, such as a *kantharos* and a plate, are depicted, but the image that has received by far the most attention is a boat, because of the rough similarity between it and an actual boat recovered from the mud of the Sea of Galilee in 1986.¹⁷ What differentiates this mosaic most, however, is another image, a fish, the only example of figural representation published thus far from Galilee’s first-century mosaics.

This mosaic includes a Greek inscription – also a rarity in first-century Galilee – the apotropaic phrase *kai su*.¹⁸ The presence of these words suggests an awareness on the part of the owner or the artisans of trends in mosaic design from elsewhere in the Roman East, since no other inscriptions of this sort have yet been discovered in Palestine. Whether that familiarity was gained by first-hand viewing of such mosaics or by looking through mosaic pattern books cannot be determined.¹⁹

The house containing this work was sizable, suggesting that it belonged to someone of wealth and status. Was the owner a member of the area’s gentile minority, for whom such images would presumably have been uncontroversial? Or was he or she a Jew who was not offended by depictions of living things? Were the artisans local Galileans? If not, from where did they come?

¹⁵ Raban, “Boat”; cf. also Virgilio Corbo, “Piazza e villa urbana a Magdala,” *LA* 28 (1978): 232–240 and J. Richard Steffy and Shelley Wachsmann, “The Migdal Boat Mosaic,” *Atiqot* 19 (1990): 115–118.

¹⁶ The rarity of such mosaics is demonstrated by the fact that none from the first century is cited in the comprehensive *MPI*.

¹⁷ For the other objects depicted, see Raban, “Boat” and R. Reich, “A Note on the Roman Mosaic at Magdala on the Sea of Galilee,” *LA* 41 (1991): 455–458.

¹⁸ See discussion in Chapter Five.

¹⁹ On mosaic pattern books, see Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 391–395.

Compared to later Galilean mosaics, however, the image of the fish is reserved. Soon, the region's mosaics would reflect the dramatic shift in its cultural climate that followed the arrival of the Romans. This change is nowhere more evident than in the early third-century peristyle residence on the acropolis at Sepphoris. The triclinium mosaic in the largest room shows none of the shying away from figural representations that earlier ones did; it depicts not only humans, but also deities and other mythological figures. In both its subject matter and the high level of its craftsmanship, it is unparalleled in Roman-period Galilee.²⁰ With twenty-three different colors of tesserae, the smallest only two or three millimeters wide, this mosaic is every bit the artistic equal of the finest in neighboring Syria.²¹

The rectangular mosaic (9 meters by 7 meters) is arranged lengthwise from north to south. A female portrait is found at each of its shorter ends, in the center of the border that surrounds its fifteen interior panels. Very little of the southern portrait has survived the centuries, but the northern one is fairly well-preserved, depicting a woman whom excavators have evocatively dubbed the "Mona Lisa of the Galilee."²²

Striking as this human image is, it is less startling than the dominant theme of the mosaic, the deity Dionysos. The central and largest of the mosaic's panels depicts Dionysos and Heracles, with a Greek inscription identifying the scene as a "symposium." Heracles tips back a cup of wine while Dionysos holds his aloft upside down, revealing that he has already emptied it. The two are surrounded by Dionysos's followers, maenads and satyrs. The fourteen panels surrounding the "symposium" contain typical Dionysiac

²⁰ For detailed descriptions, see Talgam and Weiss, *Mosaics*, 47–113; Eric M. Meyers, Ehud Netzer, and Carol L. Meyers, "Artistry in Stone: The Mosaics of Ancient Sepphoris," *BA* 50 (1987): 223–231; and C. Meyers, E. Meyers, Netzer, and Weiss, "Dionysos Mosaic."

²¹ E. Meyers, Netzer, and C. Meyers, *Sepphoris*, 42; Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 188; Talgam and Weiss, *Mosaics*, 1–16. Asher Ovadiah and Y. Turnheim suggest that the artisans were from Antioch, since the mosaic is so unusual for Palestine ("The Female Figure in the Dionysiac Mosaic at Sepphoris," in Ovadiah, *Art and Archaeology*, 349–373).

²² Ovadiah and Turnheim suggest that this face represents some idealized value, such as happiness or moderation ("Female Figure").

scenes, each with an explanatory Greek inscription, such as the “bathing of Dionysus” (ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ ΛΟΥΤΡΑ) by nymphs; “gift-bearers” (ΔΩΡΟΦΟΡΟΙ), including a centaur; the “procession” (ΠΟΜΠΗ) of Dionysos, riding in a chariot holding his thyrsos, preceded by two satyrs; and the “wedding” (ΥΜΕΝΑΙΟΣ) of Dionysos and Ariadne. Two of these panels show the predictable outcome of a drinking bout in which one of the participants is the god of wine. The first has Dionysos surrounded by his entourage, leaning back and holding up his cup. The other shows Heracles who, in contrast, needs to be physically supported by two attendants, one of whom holds a bowl for him. Does the bowl hold wine or water, or is it a container in which he may get sick? Both panels are labeled “drunkenness” (ΜΕΘΗ).

In addition to the two female portraits, the border framing the fifteen interior panels is filled with medallions of acanthus leaves, wildlife scenes, and pictures of *erotes* hunting birds. Additional panels form a “U” around the mosaic’s southern end and reveal another Dionysiac scene: a processional of people, some on foot and others riding animals, bearing what appear to be gifts. One carries a duck; another walks with a chest or box upon her head; another has a stick across his shoulder with a basket of fruit attached to each end. Surrounding this section are smaller panels that alternate fish or birds with images of what are either faces or theatrical masks. At some point, a portion of this section of the mosaic was replaced with a Nile river scene.²³

As surprising as the appearance of such motifs in Galilee is, they are appropriate, in some respects, for this specific location. It is not hard to imagine the wining and dining that must have occurred around this mosaic. Dionysiac imagery was also a very appropriate choice for a house located so near the theater, given the deity’s traditional association with the theatrical arts. Perhaps one of the city’s gentile minority lived in the house and commissioned the mosaic. Alternatively, perhaps it belonged to a member of the city’s

²³ A more complete Nilotic scene is found in a fifth-century CE building at Sepphoris. For discussion of such scenes, see Yehudit Turnheim, “Nilotic Motifs and the Exotic in Roman and Early Byzantine Eretz Israel,” *Assaph (B)* 7 (2002): 17–40.

Jewish elite who was comfortable disregarding earlier Jewish understandings of the prohibition of graven images, at least in private domestic space.²⁴

Dionysiac motifs are found on mosaics and frescoes throughout the Mediterranean, and so we see in the Sepphoris mosaic the work of artisans fully in touch with the artistic currents of the larger Greco-Roman world.²⁵ There were not many such mosaics in Palestine, however. One might expect to find similar art at Nysa-Scythopolis, given its association with Dionysos, but thus far no mosaic depictions of him have been discovered there, though statues and relief carvings have.²⁶ The (geographically) nearest parallel is at Gerasa: the second- or third-century CE Mosaic of the Muses and the Poets, with its Dionysiac procession, Heracles, and other mythological characters.²⁷ Other Dionysiac mosaics are found in Syria at Antioch and Seleucia; two of these, roughly contemporary with that of Sepphoris, also depict the god drinking with Heracles.²⁸ Noting the similarity in dates of these mosaics, Sean Freyne has raised the possibility that their appearance reflects the association of Dionysos and Heracles as the patronal gods of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. If Freyne is correct, then the

²⁴ On attempts to identify the owner of the house, see Talgam and Weiss, *Mosaics*, 27–131. The *mikveh* mentioned in E. Meyers, Netzer, and C. Meyers, *Sepphoris*, 36, apparently dates to an earlier phase of use (Talgam and Weiss, *Mosaics*, 27–28).

²⁵ Such motifs are especially common in North Africa (Hédi Slin, “Dionysus,” in Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, ed., *Mosaics of Roman Africa: Floor Mosaics from Tunisia* [New York: George Braziller, 1996], 87–119; Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], 173–187). See also Shelley Hales, “The Houses of Antioch: A Study of the Domestic Sphere in the Imperial Near East,” in Scott and Webster, *Roman Imperialism*, 171–191; Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 41–53; and Caroline Houser, ed., *Dionysos and His Circle: Ancient through Modern* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1979).

²⁶ Nysa was the legendary burial place of Dionysos’s nursemaid. See Asher Ovadia and Y. Turnheim, “Dionysos in Beth Shean,” in Ovadia, *Art and Archaeology*, 203–226; Belayche, *Judaea-Palaestina*, 262–267.

²⁷ Michele Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Ammon: American Center of Oriental Research, 1993), 20, 283.

²⁸ Four Dionysiac mosaics are found at Antioch (Sheila Campbell, *The Mosaics of Antioch* [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988], 16–17, 63–64, 73, 20–21) and one at Seleucia (Roger Ling, *Ancient Mosaics* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998], 53). Dionysos and other mythological figures appear in the Byzantine-period mosaics at the non-Galilean sites Sheikh Zeweid and Erez (*MPI*, nos. 69 and 77).

Dionysos mosaics at Sepphoris and elsewhere were reflecting the political ideology of their day.²⁹

The rarity of mosaic depictions of Dionysos is matched by the rarity of those of other deities, not only in Galilee but throughout Roman-period Palestine and the Transjordan.³⁰ The central panel of another, less well-published triclinium mosaic at Sepphoris, from a house on the eastern plateau, shows the god Orpheus playing a stringed instrument (late third or the fourth century) and scenes of everyday life; a later mosaic in the same building had maritime imagery.³¹ For the most part, though, with one additional striking exception, one must go elsewhere in the Roman East to find such mosaics.

That exception is the synagogue at Hammath Tiberias, where renovations added several mosaics that reflect no hesitancy at all about figural representation.³² Parts of these mosaics seem to date to the early fourth century, though other portions may be later. Several in the eastern part of the building bear images of circles, squares, lines, flowers, scales, diamonds, and similar designs, along with an Aramaic and a Greek inscription. It is in the western part of the synagogue, however, that we find the more daring designs. Three panels form a north–south rectangle, with the central panel dominated by a zodiac circle. This zodiac is the first of several that would later appear in Galilean synagogues. In this case, the twelve astrological signs are each represented by their symbol (e.g., a lion for Leo, a woman for Virgo, etc.) and a Hebrew inscription identifying them. At the center of the circle is a depiction of the sun god, Helios, driving his solar chariot. Depictions of the Four Seasons, represented by human busts with accompanying Hebrew inscriptions, adjoin the

²⁹ Sean Freyne, "Dionysos and Herakles in Galilee: The Sepphoris Mosaic in Context," in Edwards, *Religion and Society*, 56–69.

³⁰ Other examples include a pavement at Neapolis showing Achilles and other figures (third century CE); an unidentified scene at Antipatris (third century CE) (R. Ovadiah and A. Ovadiah, nos. 217 and 233; cf. discussion on 175); and a mosaic showing marine deities at En Ya'el (Edelstein, "En Ya'el").

³¹ Ze'ev Weiss in several articles: "Zippori 1997," "Zippori 1998," *HA* 110 (1999): 20–23; "Zippori 1999;" "Zippori 2000;" also Weiss and Netzer, "Zippori – 1994–1995." On Orpheus mosaics, see Asher Ovadiah and S. Mucznik, "Orpheus Mosaics in the Roman and Early Byzantine Periods," in Ovadiah, *Art and Archaeology*, 528–548.

³² Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias*, 33–52.

outside of the circle to fill out the panel's rectangular shape. All of these symbols are paralleled to varying degrees elsewhere in Roman art. Here we see the full-scale appropriation of Greco-Roman motifs, Judaized by their Hebrew labels and their placement within Jewish sacred space. Here, figural art is clearly no hindrance to worship and may even be an aid. A later renovation of the synagogue might reflect a different attitude, since it placed a wall through the center of the circle.³³

Other symbols are found in the panels atop and below the zodiac, each of which is surrounded by a multi-colored guilloche pattern. The panel to the north shows two lions flanking Greek inscriptions identifying the synagogue's founders and donors.³⁴ That to the south depicts a Torah shrine with a triangular gable, flanked on each side by a large menorah and several smaller Jewish symbols – a *shofar*, an incense shovel, and a *lulav*, the latter grouped with an *ethrog* and myrtle and willow branches – that were associated with Jewish festivals and temple rituals. The mosaic thus provides early examples of symbols that would become even more common in later synagogue art. It also shows us how Jews adapted the Roman medium of mosaics to express Jewish identity by depicting distinctly Jewish symbols.

The elaborate mosaic at Hammath Tiberias and a less well-preserved fourth-century zodiac mosaic at Japhia's synagogue are forward-looking in this respect, having more in common with Byzantine-period designs than with those from the Roman period.³⁵ Other Galilean mosaics were simpler, though they were decorated with motifs drawn from the standard Greco-Roman repertoire, sometimes depicting living things, sometimes not. The basilical

³³ The specific functions or meanings of zodiac circles in synagogue art are a matter of debate; see Fine, *Art*; Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 301–309; Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 572–578.

³⁴ For the inscriptions, see Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias*, 55–60.

³⁵ Note, for example, the third-century phase of the mosaic at Hammath Tiberias, or the late third- or early fourth-century phase at Horvat 'Ammudim (Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias*, 24; Levine, “‘Ammudim, Horvat”). On Japhia, see Dan Barag, “Japhia,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 659–660. For an overview of synagogue art, see Hachlili, “Synagogues,” 116–127 and *Ancient Jewish Art*, 221–223, 287–289; Fine, *Art*; Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 561–579; Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 149–160.

building at Sepphoris, for example, contains several mosaics (probably third-century), the largest of which shows birds, fish, and various sea creatures.³⁶ The “House of Orpheus” contained several additional mosaics besides that depicting the deity, one of which also depicted maritime life, and other mosaics were found in nearby shops and in another peristyle house.³⁷ The floors of the multiple rooms of the fourth-century bathhouse at Tiberias portrayed birds, fish, donkeys, panthers, and an elephant.³⁸ In addition, lines and floral and geometric motifs are found on other mosaics scattered across Galilee.³⁹ In this context, the reference in a fragment of *y. Avodah Zarah* 3:3, 42d to “images on mosaics” and “images on the walls” in third-century Tiberias make perfect sense as a reflection of the growing popularity of these art forms.⁴⁰ Mosaics would become even more common in the Byzantine period, and Jewish aversion to figural representation even more relaxed.⁴¹

It is more difficult to get a sense of the designs found in Middle and Late Roman fresco and other forms of interior painting, because so much of the pertinent evidence is in the form of small pieces. It is clear, however, that by then, some wall decorations included depictions of animals. James F. Strange has provided a helpful description of the paint found on the walls and columns of the basilical building at Sepphoris. Noting that the structure’s interior had been plastered four different times, he points out that

³⁶ Such motifs were increasingly common in Palestine in the second and third century; see Lucille A. Roussin, “The Birds and Fishes Mosaic,” in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 123–125 and Strange, “Eastern Basilical Building.”

³⁷ Weiss, “Zippori 1997” and “Zippori 1999.”

³⁸ Hirschfeld, “Tiberias,” *NEAEHL*; cf. the animals in a mosaic in Judea at Lod/Diospolis (Asher Ovadiah and Sonia Mucznik, “Classical Heritage and Anti-Classical Trends in the Mosaic Pavement of Lydda [Lod],” *Assaph (B)* 3 (1998): 1–15.

³⁹ On the bathhouse at Rama, see Tzaferis, “Roman Bath,” 68–69; on a third-century public building at Tiberias, see Hirschfeld, “Tiberias,” *NEAEHL* and *Guide*, 30. On eleven mosaics at Beth She’arim, all either Late Roman or Byzantine, see Fanny Vitto, “Byzantine Mosaics at Beth She’arim: New Evidence for the History of the Site,” *Atiqot* 28 (1996): 115–146. On the fourth–fifth century CE mosaic at nearby Beth Yerah, see Hestrin, “Beth Yerah.”

⁴⁰ See discussion in Fine, *Art*, from which the reference above is taken.

⁴¹ The explosion in the number of mosaic pavements in Israel is reflected in a 1980 survey that noted less than a dozen from the Roman period but 335 from the fourth–sixth centuries (Claudine Dauphin, “Mosaic Pavements as an Index of Prosperity and Fashion,” *Levant* 12 [1980]: 125–134).

the second and fourth layers featured not only several colors and patterns, but also images of birds, in styles typical of the third and fourth centuries – and probably typical of frescoes from other public buildings.⁴²

STATUES

Statues were a ubiquitous feature in much of the Roman world, particularly in the cities, where they were prominently displayed in the forum or agora and in bathhouses, theaters, amphitheaters, hippodromes, stadiums, and municipal buildings. For the Romans, statues of the emperor were a primary means of propagating imperial ideology,⁴³ and city councils and leading citizens often honored him by placing his statue in public spaces. He was not the only person so honored; so were provincial officials, civic leaders and local citizens, often as thanks for sponsoring the construction of a building or for some other act of benefaction. Statues of deities were found in similar contexts, and, of course, in temples, which held images of the deities worshiped there and of other gods, often donated by grateful worshippers. Private homes might contain the busts of ancestors, and gardens of the elites might be decorated with portraits of philosophers. Statues were not limited to cities; they have also been recovered from smaller communities, although with less frequency.

None of this was the case in Galilee. Statues were one form of Greco-Roman art that apparently never became widespread there. One suspects that encountering statues would have been just as jarring to Jesus as not encountering them would have been to a traveler familiar with the statuary of the Italian peninsula or western Asia Minor. If any stood in the Galilee of his day, they were few in number. That, at least, is the impression left by the meager archaeological evidence for statues, all of it post-first-century. At Sepphoris,

⁴² Strange, "Eastern Basilical Building," 118–119. For another example, note the painted stucco found in a house at Jalame (275–350 CE) (Saul S. Weinberg, "The Buildings and Installations," in G. Weinberg, *Excavations*, 5–23, esp. 8).

⁴³ Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 228–245.

only a few marble fragments have been found.⁴⁴ Second-century coins of both Sepphoris and Tiberias depict cult statues standing within temples, and others have freestanding images of deities that may correspond to cult statues.⁴⁵ As noted earlier, however, whether numismatic images always reflect actual temples and indicate specific gods worshiped is unclear, at least in regard to predominantly Jewish cities. A sixth-century CE inscription at Sepphoris shows that at some unknown point, a column that served as a pedestal for “divine statues” was erected there.⁴⁶ A (now lost) Greek inscription from Tiberias reflects the dedication of a statue of a goddess in the mid to late second century,⁴⁷ and fragments of statues have been found at Nazareth and at Arav el-Khif.⁴⁸

Rabbinic references convey the same basic impression: while statues may have been present in second- and third-century Galilee (especially Tiberias), they were neither especially numerous nor were they popular among Jews. Most such references are general in nature, lacking geographical specificity.⁴⁹ *M. Avodah Zarah*, a tractate on avoiding idolatry, provides examples of rabbinic treatments of the subject; it is especially pertinent, since the Mishnah was compiled in early third-century Galilee.⁵⁰ The tractate usually does not refer explicitly to statues, typically using the standard rabbinic

⁴⁴ Ze'ev Weiss, “Greco-Roman Influences on the Art and Architecture of the Jewish City in Roman Palestine,” in Hayim Lapin, ed., *Religious and Ethnic Communities in Late Roman Palestine* (Baltimore: University Press of Maryland, 1998), 219–246, esp. 245. Weiss does not date the objects, but the rarity of marble in Palestine before the second century makes it a likely *terminus post quem*.

⁴⁵ Kindler, *Coins*, 57 no. 7; 59 no. 11; 60 no. 13; *City-Coins*, 37 nos. 91–93.

⁴⁶ Because the inscription specifies that the column stood before a Christian basilica, M. Avi-Yonah speculates that the statues may have been of emperors rather than of classical deities (“A Sixth Century Inscription from Sepphoris,” *IEJ* 11 [1961]: 184–187).

⁴⁷ Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 153.

⁴⁸ At Nazareth, two votive feet were found in a cistern below the Church of the Annunciation; their place and date of origin are not known (Bagatti, *Excavations*, 316). In addition, a fragment of a white stone statue was discovered in either the Jezreel or in Lower Galilee (A. Berman, “Lower Galilee and Jezreel Valley – Reports,” *ESI* 7–8 [1988–1989]: 200).

⁴⁹ On rabbinic references to statues, see Yaron Z. Eliav, “Viewing the Sculptural Environment: Shaping the Second Commandment,” in Schäfer, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, vol. 3, 411–433.

⁵⁰ When discussing the tractate, we must keep in mind that not all of the sayings recorded in it necessarily originated in Galilee, that their level of historical accuracy varies widely (and often cannot be judged one way or the other with confidence), and that the rabbis' judgments do not appear to have been universally accepted by their contemporaries.

phrase for idolatry, *avodah zarah*, though a few sayings refer explicitly to “images” (*tselemim*).⁵¹ Regardless of the terms used, many of its references to idolatry include statues within their purview. The legal topics addressed include whether Jews could build bathhouses (yes, until supports for idols are set up),⁵² whether they could make jewelry for an idol (opinions differed),⁵³ whether they could rent a house or bathhouse to a gentile who might bring idols into it (no),⁵⁴ whether all images were prohibited to Jews (opinions varied),⁵⁵ whether one could keep sherds of broken images (not if they were pieces of the hand or foot),⁵⁶ whether the wall of a house that had fallen on an idol could be rebuilt (no),⁵⁷ how a Jew might nullify an idol (by cutting off the tip of its ear, nose, finger),⁵⁸ and whether pedestals for statues of kings could be set up (yes).⁵⁹ These discussions appear hypothetical, but they reflect contexts in which it was imaginable that Jews might encounter idols.

At no point, however, do they identify any Galilean communities as having idols. Indeed, the tractate assumes that while some cities in Palestine had idols, others did not.⁶⁰ When the rabbis discussed whether a Jew could do business with a shop displaying idols, the example they cited was not Sepphoris or Tiberias but Beth Shean.⁶¹ Likewise, a story in which Rabban Gamaliel is asked why he felt comfortable bathing in a bathhouse with a statue of Aphrodite is set not in Galilee but in Ptolemais. Gamaliel replied that the statue was ornamental in that context, and not an object of worship, thus revealing how some rabbis found ways to differentiate pagan art from pagan cultic practices.⁶²

The later commentary in the *Palestinian Talmud*, in contrast, preserves traditions about statues in Tiberias. One passage records the instruction of R. Yohanan, a third-century rabbi there, to Bar Derosai to destroy the idols in the city’s bathhouse; Bar Derosai

⁵¹ For example, 3:1, 2.

⁵⁴ 1:9.

⁵⁸ 4:4–5.

⁵⁵ 3:1.

⁵⁹ 4:6.

⁵² 1:7.

⁵⁶ 3:2.

⁶⁰ 1:4.

⁵³ 1:8.

⁵⁷ 3:6.

⁶¹ 1:4.

⁶² 3:4; see Fine, *Art*; Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 167–171 and “The Rabbi in Aphrodite’s Bath: Palestinian Society and Jewish Identity in the High Roman Empire,” in Simon Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 335–361.

broke all of them but one.⁶³ Another summarizes events that purportedly occurred at the deaths of several prominent third-century rabbis, claiming that “when R. Nahum bar Simai died, they covered the *eikonion* with mats. . . . When R. Hanan died, the statues bent over. . . . When R. Yohanan died, the *eikonion* bent over – they said it was because no *eikonion* was as beautiful as he.”⁶⁴ Obviously, these descriptions are metaphorical or legendary, but they nonetheless provide evidence of sculptures and other images in the city.

A quick glimpse at certain other parts of Palestine shows that archaeological evidence for statues is abundant in comparison with Galilee. As is the case for the Levant as a whole, most statues discovered thus far are from the second century or later, a date that reflects when Palestine and other parts of the Levant became integrated into the Roman Empire’s marble trade.⁶⁵ Not all statues were made of marble, however; some were sculpted from local materials, limestone and basalt.⁶⁶ Little evidence for statues made of easily-melted bronze has survived the centuries, as is typically the case throughout the empire.

The largest corpuses of marble sculptures in the entire Levant have come from Caesarea Maritima and Paneas, each of which has yielded numerous fragments of various sizes as well as related inscriptions.⁶⁷ At Caesarea Maritima, a lengthy list of deities were represented,⁶⁸ as were several emperors from Hadrian onwards,⁶⁹

⁶³ *Y. Avodah Zarah* 4, 43d; Eliav, “Roman Bath,” 434–435.

⁶⁴ *Y. Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c. The exact meaning of *eikonion* here is unclear; see Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 145–148 (from which the translation above is drawn) and Schwartz, “Rabbi,” 342.

⁶⁵ Hellenistic-period evidence is very rare, although Dor, Ptolemais, and Scythopolis have provided examples (Andrew Stewart, “Marble Sculpture,” in Stern, *Excavations at Dor*, vol. 1, 457–459; Mordechai Aviam, “A Hellenistic Marble Statue from a *Favissa* at ‘Akko-Ptolemais,” in Mordechai Aviam, *Jews*, 36–40; Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 38). We know statues existed in the first century in non-Jewish areas, such as Sebaste and Caesarea Maritima (*War* 1.413–414; *Ant.* 15.339, 19.357). On Palestine and the marble trade, see Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 40–41, 233.

⁶⁶ Basalt statues were particularly common in the Golan (Gregg and Urman, *Jews, Pagans and Christians*, 50–52, 131–132, 183, 269, 284).

⁶⁷ In addition to the sources cited below, see Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 140–150, 157–158.

⁶⁸ Moshe Fischer, “Marble, Urbanism, and Ideology in Roman Palestine: The Caesarea Example,” in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 251–261, esp. 258; Rivka Gersht, “Representations of Deities and the Cults of Caesarea,” in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 305–324.

⁶⁹ Fischer, “Marble,” 256–259, 260.

Hadrian's lover Antinoos,⁷⁰ the philosopher Olympiodoros, a Roman official, and an unidentified woman.⁷¹ Inscriptions on statue pedestals preserve information about sculptures that are themselves long lost. One records that a friend of Titus Flavius Callistus, a freedman of Augustus, honored him with a statue; another shows that the city dedicated a statue to Marcus Flavius Agrippa, "priest, *duovir*, orator of Caesarea, the first colony of Flavius Augustus."⁷² At Paneas, excavators have found nearly 250 marble fragments from at least 28 sculptures of deities and mythological figures. Most of these statues were associated with the temples outside the city. The cliff wall behind those temples is dotted with niches, some with inscriptions identifying the statues that once stood within them.⁷³

Similar discoveries, such as whole statues, busts, fragments, and inscriptions from statue bases, have been made at numerous other nearby sites,⁷⁴ including Tyre,⁷⁵ Mt. Carmel,⁷⁶ Beth Yerah,⁷⁷ Gadara,⁷⁸ and Abila.⁷⁹ At Scythopolis, a major importer of marble, finds include portions of statues of deities (e.g., Athena, a young Dionysos, Tyche) and of a cuirassed Roman official, as well as a pedestal inscription referring to a statue of Marcus Aurelius. Excavators also discovered over 150 limestone funerary busts, an especially unusual find for Palestine. Just as surprising as the busts themselves

⁷⁰ Birley, *Hadrian*, 259.

⁷¹ Rivka Gersht, "Three Greek and Roman Portrait Statues from Caesarea Maritima," *Atiqot* 28 (1996): 99–113; cf. *GLI*, 35 no. 1.

⁷² *GLI*, 35–37 nos. 2–3.

⁷³ E. Friedland, "Graeco-Roman Sculpture in the Levant: The Marble from the Sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi (Baniyas)," in Humphrey, *Roman and Byzantine Near East*, vol. 2, 7–22; Tzaferis, "Cults"; Zvi Ma'oz, "Baniyas," *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 136–143, esp. 140–141. Note also the discovery of a statue of Aphrodite near Tel Dan that may be pre-Roman (Biran, "To the God," 147).

⁷⁴ For other sites, see Friedland, "Graeco-Roman Sculpture," 8; Thomas Weber, "A Survey of Roman Sculptures in the Decapolis: Preliminary Report," *ADAJ* 34 (1990): 351–352; and Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 133–203.

⁷⁵ Nina Jidejian, *Tyre through the Ages* (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq Publishers, 1969), 110.

⁷⁶ Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 150–151.

⁷⁷ Sukenik, "Ancient City"; Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 158.

⁷⁸ Peter Cornelius Bol et al., "Gadara in der Dekapolis," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1990): 193–266; Thomas Weber, *Umm Qeis, Gadara of the Decapolis* (Amman, 1989), 20, 27; Ilona Skupinska-Lovset, *Funerary Portraiture of Roman Palestine: An Analysis of the Production in its Culture-Historical Context* (Gothenburg: Paul Åströms, 1983), 99.

⁷⁹ W. Harold Mare, "The Artemis Statue Excavated at Abila of the Decapolis in 1994," *ADAJ* 41 (1997): 277–281; Wineland, *Ancient Abila*, 42–43, 108.

are depictions of the deceased, who are shown wearing clothing, jewelry, and hair styles typical of the Roman world.⁸⁰ Not far away, at the Roman army camp at Tel Shalem, a cuirassed bronze statue of Hadrian in splendid condition⁸¹ and a bronze head of a youth⁸² were recovered.

Elise Friedland has drawn attention to the significance of imported marble statues as a reflection of Romanization, using third-century CE statues and inscriptions from Gerasa as an example.⁸³ Within the basilical hall of the city's eastern bathhouse stood statues of mythological figures, local elites, the governor of the province, and the emperor. Inscriptions, all in Greek, record that the city had dedicated several of these statues. Two statues of local figures depict them clad not in *himation* and tunic, the garb shown on most eastern statuary, but in the Roman attire of the toga.⁸⁴ Here, in one of the most Roman of rooms, a basilical hall, in one of the most Roman of buildings, a bathhouse, we find one of the most Roman of customs, the donation of statues by the city to honor prominent people. Together, the statues and inscriptions demonstrate how Gerasa's civic elites participated in Roman euergetic customs and showed loyalty to Roman authorities. Commoners using these facilities may or may not have shared such sentiments, but they would have had no doubt about the feelings of their city's leaders.

⁸⁰ Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 160–162; Fanny Vitto, “Two Marble Heads of Goddesses from Tel Naharon-Scythopolis,” *Atiqot* 20 (1991): 33–45; Gideon Foerster and Yoram Tsafrir, “A Statue of Dionysos as a Youth Recently Discovered in Beth Shean,” *Qadmoniot* 23 (1990): 52–54 (Hebrew); Tsafrir and Foerster, “Urbanism,” 90–96; Ilona Skupinska-Løvset, “Funerary Busts from Tell El-Hammam,” *Atiqot* 29 (1996): 35–41; Skupinska-Løvset, *Funerary Portraiture*, 120–140. In addition, a marble head of a young woman may be from Scythopolis (Ilona Skupinska-Løvset, *Portraiture in Roman Syria: A Study in Social and Regional Differentiation within the Art of Portraiture* [Lodz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1999], 81).

⁸¹ Foerster, “Cuirassed Bronze Statue”; Skupinska-Løvset, *Portraiture in Roman Syria*, 60–63. Richard A. Gergel suggests that Hadrian's bust has been combined with an earlier Hellenistic-period cuirassed statue (“The Tel Shalem Hadrian Reconsidered,” *AJA* 95 [1994]: 231–251).

⁸² Skupinska-Løvset, *Portraiture in Roman Syria*, 117.

⁸³ Friedland, “Roman Marble Sculptures”; cf. Friedland, “Graeco-Roman Sculpture,” 8.

⁸⁴ Compare R. R. Smith, “Cultural Choice and Political Identity in Honorific Portrait Statues in the Greek East in the Second Century AD,” *JRS* 88 (1988): 56–93, esp. 63–70.

But for Galilee, we have almost none of this – just a few statue fragments, the numismatic images, one sixth-century inscription, and the mostly vague rabbinic references. Statues appear to have been rare there not only in the early phases of the region's Romanization, but for the entire Roman era. The lack of evidence for statues of gods is not that surprising, since the region remained predominantly Jewish. Statues and busts of the emperor, if they existed at all, also appear to have been uncommon, probably for the same reason, especially given their association with the imperial cult. More unexpected, perhaps, is the lack of portraits of Roman officials and prominent citizens, statues that clearly would not have been understood as divine images. Perhaps this fact is related to the avoidance of imperial portraits – how could someone honor a provincial or civic official with sculpture if it was unacceptable to honor the emperor in the same way? The lack of such statues might also be interpreted as a rejection of this aspect of Roman euergetic culture.

OTHER FORMS OF FIGURAL REPRESENTATION

The decorations on Galilee's lamps exemplify the region's changing cultural atmosphere. Prior to 70 CE, most lamps in Palestine had been made by spinning clay on a pottery wheel and then paring the resulting lamp with a knife. After the revolt, though, more and more lamps were cast from molds, as was typical elsewhere in the Mediterranean region. This form of manufacturing made decoration easier.⁸⁵ In addition, round disk-shaped lamps, also common in the Roman world, began appearing in Palestine in the late first century CE and were widely used for the rest of the Roman period, becoming particularly common in the third century. Some were locally made, but many were imports.⁸⁶ Their central disks provided

⁸⁵ Before the Roman period, lamps with figural representation were quite rare, though Aviam notes two Hellenistic-period lamps with images of Eros at Yodefat ("Hasmonaean Dynasty's Activities," 47–48; cf. "First Century," 13–14). At Qeren Naftali, in northern Upper Galilee, several lamps with figural depictions date to either the first century BCE or the first century CE (Aviam, "Hellenistic and Hasmonaean Fortress," 82–83).

⁸⁶ Anna Manzoni MacDonnell, "The Terracotta Lamps," in Weinberg, *Excavations*, 116–136, esp. 117–120. On the increase in the use of discus lamps, see Varda Sussman, "Caesarea Illuminated by its Lamps," in Raban and Holm, *Caesarea Maritima*, 346–358.

space for more complex images. These two developments encouraged the use of a greater variety of motifs on lamps from the late first through the early fourth centuries throughout Galilee: gladiators,⁸⁷ a lion,⁸⁸ erotic scenes,⁸⁹ a Medusa, Helios, a man's head,⁹⁰ a dolphin,⁹¹ a female head, a winged figure,⁹² a male figure, a horse, and other animals.⁹³ The menorah also entered the decorative repertoire, especially in the fourth century, as finds at Sepphoris and Jalame show. An *aedicula* found on a lamp at Sepphoris might also be a Jewish symbol, since it closely resembles ancient depictions of a Torah shrine, though it could also be interpreted as a niche for statues.⁹⁴ In the first half of the fourth century, as the Christian presence in Palestine grew, an occasional lamp was decorated with the Greek monogram *chi rho*, an abbreviation for *Christos*.⁹⁵ Many lamps of various shapes, styles, and sizes, including those both with and without figural representation, were decorated with ovolo patterns, leafs, and similar designs.⁹⁶ Perhaps the low cost of lamps allowed them to become "popular art" – that is, art for the masses who could not afford mosaics for their floors or sarcophagi for their loved ones. The range of motifs found on them allowed the purchaser some choice and thus some self-expression – though we are not able to determine what options were available at any given place or time.

Funerary art from the second through fourth centuries also reflects Greco-Roman culture. Spectacular examples of decorated sarcophagi were found at Beth She'arim in catacomb 20. Many of the more than 125 limestone sarcophagi there were decorated in

⁸⁷ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 1, 213–218, esp. fig. 22 no. 4.

⁸⁸ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 184 no. 2.

⁸⁹ Avigad, *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 184–185 nos. 3–3a; Eric C. Lapp, "Clay Oil Lamps," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 217–224, esp. 220–221 no. 114.

⁹⁰ The Medusa at Sepphoris, the Helios at Nabratein, and the man's head at a Galilean tomb; see Lapp, "Clay Oil Lamps," 220 no. 113, 221 no. 115, and 220 no. 111.

⁹¹ At Dishon and Jalame: Lapp, "Clay Oil Lamps," 219 no. 110; MacDonnell, "Terracotta Lamps," 124 no. 19.

⁹² *Meiron*, 152.

⁹³ At Jalame: MacDonnell, "Terracotta Lamps," 117–120, 124 no. 19, 125 no. 27, 126 nos. 36–37.

⁹⁴ See Lapp, "Clay Oil Lamps," 221–222 no. 116; MacDonnell, "Terracotta Lamps," 120.

⁹⁵ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 188 no. 23.

⁹⁶ See the lamps from Gush Halav, Jalame, and Beth She'arim (*Gush Halav*, 158–161; MacDonnell, "Terracotta Lamps," 120; *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 185–190 nos. 4–33).

Roman style with garlands, rosettes, and geometric and floral patterns and, in some cases, figural designs – e.g., animals, winged figures, a bearded male face. Numerous fragments of marble sarcophagi in the same catacomb also displayed images typical of contemporary Roman sarcophagi, including humans in togas, the goddess Nike, the battle between the Amazons and the Greeks, the rape of Leda by a swan-like Zeus, and other mythological scenes.⁹⁷ These sarcophagi were imports, like all marble items in Palestine, and many had been decorated in their places of origin.⁹⁸ What makes the sarcophagi of Catacomb 20 all the more surprising is that it was the place of interment for many rabbis and their families. The use of these sarcophagi shows that many rabbis were quite open toward figural art. It also reminds us once again that at Beth She'arim we see expressions of the values of elites, not of the masses.⁹⁹

In graves outside the catacombs, excavators found five lead coffins, a form of burial introduced to the region in the third century CE.¹⁰⁰ The decorations on one of them are representative of what is found on the others. On its lid, vines run down each of the long edges. Intertwined with the vines are vases, clusters of grapes, heads of women, and birds. Between the vines, running down the lid's center, are intersecting lines that form a diamond

⁹⁷ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 164–173; Fischer, *Marble Studies*, 206–207; on the Leda and the Swan sarcophagus, see Michael Avi-Yonah's study, "The Leda Sarcophagus from Beth She'arim," in *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), 257–269. For similar designs elsewhere in the Roman world, see Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 256–259, 304–305, 350–351.

⁹⁸ Many of them, particularly those with the garland design, probably originated at Proconnesus and entered Palestine through the port at Caesarea. Similar sarcophagi have been found at Samaria, Neapolis, Gadara, and Tyre (*GLI*, 24–25; Byron R. McCane, "Sarcophagus," *OEANE*, vol. 4, 481–482). On the importing of carved sarcophagi, see Rivka Gersht, "Imported Marble Sarcophagi from Caesarea," *Assaph (B)* 2 (1996): 13–26.

⁹⁹ Vitto suggests that the marble sarcophagi were brought to Beth She'arim during the Byzantine period to be melted down for glass ("Byzantine Mosaics," 141), but there seems little reason to pose such a theory, since similar designs are found in other media in Late Roman Jewish contexts.

¹⁰⁰ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 137, 173–182; the coffin described above is no. 1; cf. L. Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Roman and Byzantine Lead Coffins from Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1999), nos. 1, 3–6. In addition, a fragment of a lead coffin decorated with the image of Dionysos was found in Catacomb 20 (*Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 177 and Rahmani, *Catalogue of Roman and Early Byzantine Lead Coffins*, no. 90).

pattern, with flowers and menorahs in the diamonds. The patterns on the long sides of the coffin are similar to that on its top. Only one of the short sides is decorated, with an image of a menorah in an arch. Lead coffins were made on the Phoenician coast in the third and fourth centuries,¹⁰¹ and the excavator suggests that these were brought to Beth She'arim for the interment of Phoenician Jews, several of whom were buried there.

Beth She'arim is highly unusual, however. Elsewhere in Galilean burial art, figural representations appear to have been relatively uncommon even after the first century. Tombs at Hanita and Kh. el-Humsin were painted with floral designs and, in the case of the former site, birds.¹⁰² A few decorated lead coffins have been found in and near Galilee, with stamped images of grape clusters, vines, columns, deities, animals, and humans (often nude).¹⁰³ Ossuaries at Daburriya, Kabul, Mashhad, and Sepphoris bore carvings of wreaths, columns, and the facades of buildings, but not animal images.¹⁰⁴ Decorated limestone sarcophagi in western Galilee often bore rosettes, garlands, and circles, while many in the Sea of Galilee area often had a *tabula ansata* between two discs, and architectural façades on the edges.¹⁰⁵ Clay sarcophagi from various sites in Galilee, many of them imported from Cyprus and the southern coast of Asia Minor, were likewise usually decorated with only simple carvings, or occasionally paint.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, at the northern pagan site, Kedesh, a funerary stele with portraits of the

¹⁰¹ Rahmani, *Catalogue of Roman and Early Byzantine Lead Coffins*, 4–7.

¹⁰² Map coordinates 166/277 and 163/272; Aviam, “Regionalism,” 296.

¹⁰³ At K. Gil'adi and K. Yuval (west of Dan), el Makr and el-Bi'na (both east of Akko), Kibbutz Mesillot (southwest of Beth She'arim), Yagur (northwest of Beth She'arim), and at a now unknown location (Rahmani, *Catalogue of Roman and Early Byzantine Lead Coffins*, nos. 10–15, 84–88).

¹⁰⁴ For example, at Daburriya (185/233), Kabul (170/252), Mashhad, and Sepphoris. See Aviam, “Regionalism,” 277 and the following articles in the English summary section of Gal, *Eretz Zafon*: Mordechai Aviam, “Finds from a Burial Cave at Daburriya,” 181; Mordechai Aviam, “A Burial Cave at Kabul,” 182; Zvi Gal, Butrus Hana and Mordechai Aviam, “A Burial Cave at Zippori,” 182.

¹⁰⁵ Aviam, “Regionalism.”

¹⁰⁶ Anastasia Shapiro, “Petrographic Analysis of Roman Clay Sarcophagi from Northwestern Israel and Cyprus,” *Atiqot* 33 (1997): 1–5; Mordechai Aviam and Edna J. Stern, “Burial in Clay Sarcophagi in Galilee during the Roman Period,” *Atiqot* 33 (1997): 19.

deceased was found, as were elaborately decorated sarcophagi like those at Beth She'arim.¹⁰⁷

The limited amount of monumental and public architecture in first-century Galilee, most of it in the cities, would have resulted in a correspondingly limited amount of relief art and other carved decorations. Where such art was present, it probably consisted of standard non-figural designs like those found both in Palestine and elsewhere in the Roman world. In subsequent centuries, relief art became more common in both interior and exterior contexts. Beth She'arim again provides one of the best examples. The outside entrances of two of its caves are framed by carved arches,¹⁰⁸ and scattered throughout the complex are reliefs, carvings, and paintings. Geometrical patterns predominate, but one also finds architectural motifs (e.g., columns and arches), depictions of animals and humans, and Jewish symbols (incense shovels, Torah arks, *lulavs*, *ethrogs*, *shofars*, and, especially, menorahs).¹⁰⁹ Carved decorations are also found at synagogues, though almost entirely in Byzantine, rather than Roman contexts. At the synagogue at Nabratein, the limestone pediment of a Torah shrine from the building's third-century phase is decorated with carvings of two lions flanking a triangular gable.¹¹⁰ Carvings of animals (lions and eagles) and menorahs at other synagogues (Horvat 'Ammudim, Hammath Tiberias, Japhia) may also date to the Late Roman period, though they are probably later.¹¹¹ Even in Byzantine-period synagogues, most decorative carvings were of the standard floral and geometric patterns, not of animal or anthropomorphic designs.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ The stele is probably late first-century CE. Another such stele, probably from the early second century CE, was found at Scythopolis. Funerary steles are rare throughout Palestine, though they are found in Syria (Skupinska-Løvset, *Portraiture in Roman Syria*, 231–232). On the sarcophagi, see Aviam, “Regionalism,” 278–284.

¹⁰⁸ *Beth She'arim*, vol. 3, 88.

¹⁰⁹ *Beth She'arim*, vols. 1 and 3; Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Mazar, “Beth She'arim,” *NEAEHL*, vol. 1, 236–248.

¹¹⁰ This Torah shrine is the earliest discovered thus far; see Carol L. Meyers, “Replica of a Limestone Ark Fragment,” in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 181–182.

¹¹¹ Levine, “‘Ammudim, Horvat”; Levine, “Excavations”; Chen, “Ancient Synagogue”; Dothan, “Hammath Tiberias”; Barag, “Japhia.”

¹¹² Notable exceptions include decorations at Chorazin (the carvings are probably fifth century, though the synagogue was built in the fourth) and Bar'am (fifth-century) (Natalie Naomi May, “The Décor of the Korazin Synagogue Reliefs [Summary],” in Yeivin,

Figurines appear to have been rare in Galilee.¹¹³ Early Roman finds include the curly-haired female head from et-Tell and a first- or second-century CE bone carving of a female from Tiberias.¹¹⁴ A small (6cm high) eagle figurine at Tiberias probably dates to the Middle or Late Roman periods.¹¹⁵ A few other figurines have been found in later contexts at Sepphoris. Two from the second or third century, one of Prometheus and the other perhaps of Pan, were found in a cistern.¹¹⁶ Were they cultic objects, or could they have served some decorative purpose? They may have belonged to one of the city's gentile minority or to a Jew with syncretistic religious practices or who was especially receptive to Greco-Roman art. In contrast, the tiny bronze bull, incense altar, and bowl, all from the fill of a cistern sealed in the mid-fourth century, were clearly intended for cultic use.¹¹⁷ The function of a third- or fourth-century bone carving of a Roman soldier found elsewhere on the site is difficult to determine.¹¹⁸

Synagogue, 51–54; Ruth Jacoby, *The Synagogues of Bar'am; Jerusalem Ossuaries* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; the Masto Grust, Hebrew University, 1987]; Aviam, "Ancient Synagogues").

¹¹³ Figurines from earlier periods include three Iron Age examples and one Persian at et-Tell (Arav, "Bethsaida Preliminary Report, 1987–1993," 18; Arav, "Bethsaida Preliminary Report, 1994–1996," 92, 95, 104), two Persian-era and one Hellenistic terracotta figurines at Yoqne'am (Rosenthal-Heginbottom, "Stamped Jar Handles," 65), the Persian-period figurines at Mizpeh Yamim (map coordinates 193/260) (Frankel and Ventura, "Misphe Yamim Bronzes"), a small fragment of a man (Hercules?) holding a snake at Meiron from between 200 and 50 BCE (*Meiron*, 152), three Hellenistic-period figurines (Apis, Aphrodite, and Horus) at Beersheba (map coordinates 189/259) (Aviam, "First Century," 8–12; Aviam, "Hellenistic Fortifications," 28–29); Hellenistic figurines at Ptolemais (Natalie Messika, "Excavation of the Courthouse Site at 'Akko: The Hellenistic Terracotta Figurines from Areas TB and TC," *Atiqot* 31 [1997]: 121–128); Hellenistic-period figurines of Greek mythological figures (one of Pan, another perhaps of Demeter) at Tel Anafa (Herbert, "Tel Anafa, 1980," *Muse* 14 (1980): 24–30; Weinberg, "Tel Anafa").

¹¹⁴ On the figurine at et-Tell, see the discussion in [previous](#) chapter; on the Tiberias figurine, see Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *ESI* 9 (1989/1990): 107–109.

¹¹⁵ Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *ESI* 16 (1997): 35–42, esp. 40–41.

¹¹⁶ C. Meyers and E. Meyers, "Sepphoris"; Sarah H. Cormack, "Figurine of Pan (?) or a Satyr," and "Figurine of Prometheus," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 171–172.

¹¹⁷ Strange, "Six Campaigns," 345 and "Some Implications," 40; Dennis H. Groh, "Figurine of the Head and Forelegs of a Bull" and Thomas R. W. Longstaff, "Miniature Altar," both in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 173.

¹¹⁸ Renato Rosenthal, "Late Roman and Byzantine Bone Carvings from Palestine," *IEJ* 26 (1976): 96–103, esp. 99. In addition to the figurines noted above, mention should be made of the small head of an Athena figurine found just outside Galilee at Gaba (Raphael Giveon, "Geva, a New Fortress City: From Tuthmosis to Herod," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeology Society* 3 [1983–1984]: 45–46).

A few examples of anthropomorphic and animal imagery appear in other media.¹¹⁹ A handful of sites have yielded gems and jewelry engraved with such designs, like the red carnelian gem with a depiction of a helmeted goddess – Athena or Roma? – found in fourth-century CE fill at Khirbet Shema'.¹²⁰ A Late Roman ceramic fragment at Gush Halav was stamped with an image that resembles a hare.¹²¹ At Hanita, in northern Upper Galilee, a Late Roman stone weight was inscribed with a human face.¹²² At Sepphoris, a bronze plaque showing a winged figure seated on a goat, standing in front of what is perhaps an altar, was found in an early context (first century BCE or CE).¹²³ Such an image apparently was highly unusual for Early Roman Galilee.

CONCLUSION

In Jesus' time, some Galileans were indeed using, albeit in a relatively limited way, forms of art, decorative patterns, and motifs that

¹¹⁹ In addition to the other examples discussed in this paragraph, note the ring decorated with an image of a lion found at Iksal; whether it is Roman or Byzantine is unclear (Abdalla Mokary, "Iksal," *HA* 115 [2003]: 27). Note also the small stone slab from Yodefah (c. 67 CE) with a carving of a column, trees, and an image that Mordechai Aviam identifies as a crab ("The Archaeology of the Battle at Yodefah," in Mordechai Aviam, *Jews, Pagans and Christians*, 110–122, esp. 120).

¹²⁰ The deity is compared to Athena in *Khirbet Shema'*, 250–253, but Roma and Athena were often portrayed very similarly (see Cornelius C. Vermeule, *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire* [Cambridge: Spink and Son, 1959]); cf. gems found at Gadara with images that have been identified with Roma (Martin Henig and Mary Whiting, *Engraved Gems from Gadara in Jordan: The Sa'd Collection of Intaglios and Cameos* [Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archeology, 1987], nos. 161–164). Large numbers of gems have been found at Gadara (423 gems) and Caesarea Maritima (165 gems; Anita Hamburger, "Gems from Caesarea Maritima," *Atiqot* 8 [1968]: 1–38); note also the discovery of twelve at Jerusalem (Orit Peleg, "Roman Intaglio Gemstones from Aelia Capitolina," *PEQ* 135 [2003]: 54–69). Several sites in and near Galilee have each yielded a third- or fourth-century engraved gem: a tomb at H. Kenes (map coordinates 178/258) (Lea Porat, "Quarry and Burial Caves at H. Kenes [Karmiel]," *Atiqot* 33 [1997]: 15); Asherat (map coordinates 165/264) (Howard Smithline, "Three Burial Caves from the Roman Period in Asherat," *Atiqot* 33 [1997]: 11–12); Hanita, midway between Ptolemais and Tyre (Barag, "Hanita," 43); Giv'at Yasaf (map coordinates 159/263) (Hana Abu Uqsa, "A Burial Cave from the Roman Period East of Giv'at Yasaf," *Atiqot* 33 [1997]: 10–11).

¹²¹ *Gush Halav*, 126.

¹²² Map coordinates 166/277; Rahmani, "Miscellanea," 106–107.

¹²³ Ellen Reeder, "Relief Plaque with Figural Scene," in Nagy, *Sepphoris*, 174.

reflect Greco-Roman cultural influence. They did so, however, in ways that reflected the traditional Jewish abhorrence of “graven images.” Avoidance of depictions of living creatures appears to have been the norm. There were exceptions, though, as demonstrated by the images of animals reported at Antipas’s palace at Tiberias and by the fish in the Magdala mosaic. Both examples reflect the desires of elites to decorate their homes in ways that resembled residences elsewhere in the Roman world. Without knowing more about Antipas’s palace, we cannot know whether the controversial images were in areas accessible to citizens and official visitors, or whether they were in more private rooms. With the Magdala mosaic, we know that it was in domestic space, open only to those whom the household invited in.

Greco-Roman styles of art and decoration became more common in the second and third centuries. The most obvious difference from the first century (especially the pre-70 period) was the growing acceptance of figural art. Mosaics clearly reflect changes in the region’s artistic tastes. At Sepphoris, we find panels depicting a full-blown mythological narrative; at Hammath Tiberias, a mosaic depicting a pagan deity, astrological symbols, and objects associated with the Jewish temple, all on a synagogue floor. Other Galilean mosaics contain a variety of motifs: a few have images of deities; several, images of animals; and several more, the standard geometric and floral patterns and symbols. Other forms of decoration also reflect a willingness to display images that would once have been considered off-limits by most Jews. Some sarcophagi and lead coffins were decorated with anthropomorphic and animal designs; others, with rosettes, garlands, and other motifs typical of Roman art. A wide range of designs appears on lamps.

When interpreting this evidence, we must keep in mind the importance of social class. Because most mosaics are in residences of the upper classes or in public buildings, which also reflect the values of the elites, it is difficult to determine what commoners thought of them, though they would probably have encountered them often, especially in the cities. Our sample of burial containers is also heavily weighted towards the elites. Many of the coffins of the lower classes were presumably made of wood and have thus decayed over the centuries, leaving us with little idea how, if at all, they were

decorated. In contrast, the decorated sarcophagi that have survived the centuries, whether of marble, clay, or lead, were used by people of high social status.

The limitations of those forms of evidence highlight the importance of lamps. From the late first century CE on, a broad cross-section of Galilean society was willing to purchase and use lamps decorated with animal and anthropomorphic designs. Perhaps such lamps were first imported to Palestine for Roman soldiers and administrators or for other pagans; we do not yet have enough information to trace their spread through the region. In any case, they quickly made their way into Jewish contexts. This was one form of Greco-Roman decoration with which many Jews apparently had little problem. Fine's concept of "anti-idolic" is helpful for understanding their popularity; even when they depicted pagan deities, they were clearly not objects of worship.

Decorated lamps are also exceptional in that they appear in a variety of geographical contexts – both urban and rural, in both Lower and Upper Galilee. Other forms of art also appear throughout Galilee, but at a higher frequency in larger communities than smaller ones and in the south than in the north (mosaics are the clearest example). We thus find the same regional and urban-rural distinctions that we observed with architecture and inscriptions.

Galilean art in the Middle and Late Roman periods also reflects another important development, the growing usage of Jewish symbols, such as *lulavs*, *ethrogs*, *shofars*, and incense shovels.¹²⁴ The most common of these is the menorah, which appears in the Beth She'arim graffiti, on lead coffins discovered nearby, on lamps from several sites, and in the synagogue mosaic at Hammath Tiberias. The symbol itself was not new,¹²⁵ but its frequent depiction on a variety of objects was. Such symbols would become even more common in the Byzantine period. Their increasingly widespread usage reflects Jewish appropriation of Greco-Roman art forms to express Jewish identity. It can hardly be a coincidence that

¹²⁴ For discussion of individual symbols, see Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art*, 234–285.

¹²⁵ See Fine's discussion of the menorah in *Art*.

the proliferation of Jewish symbols begins at the same time that Hellenistic images become more common, at the same time that Jews struggled to interpret and adapt to the destruction of one of their chief institutions, the temple, and at the same time that they dealt with the harsh reality of a long-term foreign military presence. One way Jews responded to these challenges was to increase their own use of symbols to construct and assert their distinctive identity.¹²⁶

Synagogue art from the third and fourth centuries brings all the strands of this chapter's discussion together. Reliefs, other carvings, frescoes, mosaics – all demonstrate how Jews accepted the art forms of their Roman dominators while simultaneously using them to express their Jewishness.¹²⁷ The mosaic at Hammath Tiberias illustrates the extent to which Jews could adapt that medium for their own needs. The zodiac and Helios show the adaptation of astrological signs to Jewish usage, even though we do not fully understand their function. The temple-related symbols and the Torah ark make a robust statement of Jewish identity. These latter images might also be interpreted as commentary on Roman rule, pointing backward to the Roman destruction of the temple, and forward to its eschatological restoration, when the Romans would no longer be able to obstruct the sacrificial cult.

The willingness to tolerate and perhaps even appreciate mythological, animal, and human images in some media apparently did not extend to statues. We have little sign of their presence in first-century Galilee. We have slightly more evidence in later centuries, but not nearly as much as we have for some nearby pagan cities. Some Jews might learn to live with statues in certain contexts – witness Gamaliel's willingness to enter the bathhouse in neighboring Ptolemais – but for the most part, statues do not appear to have gained the same level of acceptability in Galilee as did other forms of representation. The same can be said of figurines, which never became commonplace.

¹²⁶ Jewish symbols became even more common in the Byzantine period, as Jews responded to an increased Christian presence in Palestine.

¹²⁷ Compare Fine, *Art*.

In the early first century CE, Greco-Roman art was making inroads in Galilean culture, especially in elite circles. But Jewish acceptance of such art had its limits. Animal representations stretched them and anthropomorphic representations were beyond them. In this regard, Galilean art was like that of other Jewish areas of Palestine. Galilean attitudes towards art were not monolithic. The boundaries dividing acceptable from unacceptable varied within and between artistic media, social classes, and different geographical areas. The most important variable, however, was chronology.

Conclusion

The image of Greco-Roman culture in the Galilee of Jesus suggested by this investigation is a complex one. By Jesus' time, the region's encounter with Hellenism was over three centuries old. Despite occasional scholarly claims to the contrary, however, the penetration of Greek culture does not seem to have been especially deep, at least in respect to the spheres of culture we have considered. Greek inscriptions appeared on the region's Hellenistic-period coinage (all of it minted elsewhere), but otherwise inscriptions appear to have been uncommon. So, too, were examples of Hellenistic architecture and Hellenistic art. Other aspects of Hellenism may well have affected the lives of many Galileans – one thinks, for example, of the administrative changes that would have marked shifts of power – but describing those effects in detail remains a challenge.

Antipas's rise to the throne, which occurred at approximately the same time as Jesus' birth, brought with it significant changes. The rebuilding of Sepphoris and establishment of Tiberias allowed the client king to demonstrate his enthusiasm for the mingling of Greek, Roman, and local cultures that was taking place throughout the Levant. Both cities exhibited some of the characteristics of the typical Greco-Roman city. From early in the first century, for example, at least some of Sepphoris's streets were arranged on a grid. Evidence from the mid-century shows that the civic government of Tiberias was organized along Hellenistic lines, and presumably that of Sepphoris was structured similarly. Antipas issued the first coins ever struck within the region, and most of them advertised the foundation of his new lakeside city. At some point, Sepphoris built a basilica and by the time of the revolt, Tiberias had acquired a stadium. Other

Greco-Roman buildings appeared elsewhere in Galilee, such as the basilica at Beth She'arim and the hippodrome at Magdala.

As important as these developments are, they must be kept in perspective. Antipas inherited his father's passion for construction, but apparently not his father's financial resources. Sepphoris and Tiberias were modest in comparison to Caesarea; neither had the extensive array of monumental architecture found there. Greco-Roman urban architecture was now more a part of the cultural and physical landscape of Galilee (especially Lower Galilee) than it had ever been before, but it is not as if such buildings were evenly distributed throughout the region. Aside from coins, inscriptions – in any language – still appear to have been uncommon. Though Greek had made inroads as a language of government and probably (to some extent) of the civic and cultural elites, it is difficult to demonstrate that it was widely spoken. Admittedly, our understanding of the language's role in first-century Galilean society is incomplete, but it seems safe to say that arguments for its extensive use have sometimes been oversimplified and that the amount of epigraphic evidence for it has often been overstated. Greco-Roman art was becoming more common in first-century Galilee, as demonstrated, for example, by the increasing production of mosaics, but the biblical prohibition of figural representations was a line that most Galileans did not yet feel comfortable crossing. It is difficult to imagine that Jesus and other first-century Galilean Jews were totally ignorant of Greek mythology, but with few if any statues or other portrayals of deities and heroes, no temples except those on the region's fringes, no pagan festivals or pageants, and no evidence for widespread Greek education, there is little reason to assume thorough familiarity with it, either. Coins minted outside the region would have been the main sources of exposure to images of Greek and local deities and demigods. The beliefs, images, stories, and rituals in which those figures played a role would have been associated with pagan cities, not Galilee's own. Some of those cities, however, stood only a very few miles away, such as Scythopolis and Hippos, and many Galileans would have known something of the pagan rituals that took place there.

Clifford Ando describes a universal symbolic language in the Roman Empire, a language comprised of statues of the emperor,

coins with imperial portraits and other Roman symbols, Roman milestones, Roman military standards and the soldiers who carried them, and Roman architecture, all combining to propagate imperial ideology.¹ Yet it is notable that these symbols are mostly absent from the Galilee of Jesus, not appearing for decades. Even numismatic portraits of the emperor, though present, were less common there in the early first century than in most of the Empire, since they were not found on Hasmonean, Tyrian, and much Herodian coinage.

Other symbols, though, would have been more familiar to most Galileans, by oral report if not by first-hand experience. These were the new cities planted by Antipas and named in honor of the ruler of Rome. The rebuilt Zippori-Sepphoris became Autocratoris, and Tiberias was named eponymously from its foundation. Every spoken reference to Sepphoris was accompanied by a decision to utilize either the traditional name or the honorific one, and every reference to Tiberias was also a reference to the emperor. The Romans may not have been physically present on a regular basis in early first-century Galilee, but these two cities reminded Galileans of Roman domination. Galileans would also have known of the auxiliary troops in Judea, especially in Jerusalem, where they overlooked Judaism's most sacred spot, the temple. Later, those troops were replaced by the X Fretensis legion, which watched over the temple's ruins.

By 120 CE, a Roman legion had arrived in northern Palestine, supplementing the legion to the south. Whereas Roman troops had previously traversed or briefly campaigned in Galilee, the VI Ferrata came to stay. Its main base was in the Jezreel Valley, but various detachments were stationed within Galilee itself, especially Lower Galilee. Its deployment was part of a larger reorganization of Roman forces. Previously, Rome's might in the East had been concentrated primarily in northern Syria, but now two legions occupied Palestine and a third, the III Cyrenaica, was stationed in adjacent Arabia.

The changes in the material culture of Palestine and the Transjordan that followed in the wake of this influx of Roman soldiers were dramatic. In most of the region, Greco-Roman influence is far more visible in the remains of the second and third centuries CE

¹ Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 8–9, 206–273.

than in the strata of the first and earlier centuries, and the chronological differences are significant enough to problematize efforts to draw conclusions about the first century from this later data. Newly paved Roman roads, marked by Roman milestones, connected prominent towns with the region's major routes. Monumental architecture became more common in many cities – especially Roman-style theaters and baths but occasionally stadiums, hippodromes, *nymphaea*, and, in a few cases, amphitheaters. The use of inscriptions increased and the number of civic mints multiplied. The mosaics that decorated public buildings and elite residences became more lavish and more numerous.

Developments in Galilee, particularly in its two cities, were a part of this larger pattern. Monumental architecture was more common in these centuries than it had been in the first. Inscriptions became more frequent. More Galileans grew comfortable with images of animals, men, even gods. The coins of Sepphoris and Tiberias grew indistinguishable from those of other cities. Once again, however, maintaining perspective is key: Galilee's cities were more Hellenized and Romanized than its villages; they were not as Hellenized and Romanized as the larger cities in Judea, Arabia, and Syria. Galilean communities had some characteristics common to Greco-Roman cities; they did not have others. In this respect, too, Galilee was typical, for such variety was common among the cities of the Roman East.

Some may object that to emphasize the differences between the evidence from the second and third centuries CE and that of earlier centuries is to ignore the haphazard nature of archaeological discovery, the randomness of survival, and the obliteration of earlier buildings by later construction – factors that all suggest that there was considerably more evidence for Greco-Roman culture in the first century CE than what we have now. There is some legitimacy to this objection. First-century Galilee had buildings, inscriptions, and other artifacts that exemplified Hellenistic and/or Roman culture that were destroyed long ago or have not yet been found. We must always remain mindful that we do not have the full picture.

Nonetheless, we must base our historical reconstructions on what we have, not on what we do not have. We cannot let our understanding of antiquity be based on speculation about what has been

lost – especially if that speculation is marked by the erroneous assumption that Greco-Roman culture was thoroughly uniform across centuries and regions. Instead, we should acknowledge the implications of the evidence that we are fortunate enough to possess. Galilee will yield more buildings, inscriptions, coins, mosaics, and other artifacts. Those future finds, however, are likely to conform to the patterns we have already discovered: some evidence from the earlier centuries, but more from the later; some evidence, occasionally, from smaller settlements, but more from the cities; some evidence from Galilean communities, but more from the larger cities of the region. Those patterns are consistent enough that they most likely reflect ancient social realities, not accidents of survival and discovery.

All Judaism was Hellenistic Judaism, but not all Judaism was affected by Hellenism in the same ways or to the same extent. In making this point, I am not trying to turn back the clock to the pre-Hengel period. As Hengel rightly demonstrated, the idea that we can dichotomize Judaism into Diaspora/Hellenistic Judaism and Palestinian/non-Hellenistic Judaism is clearly wrong. Nonetheless, to replace that simplistic dichotomy with a view that levels out the differences in how Hellenism and local culture interacted, as some readers of Hengel have done, is to replace one erroneous view with another. The reality is that when considering Hellenism, issues of geography, chronology, and class matter a great deal. Some sectors of Palestine were, indeed, less Hellenized than parts of the Diaspora. Hellenism in Galilee may have had points of contact with Hellenism in northern Syria, the various subregions of Asia Minor, or the Greek peninsula, but it was not identical to them. Furthermore, the interactions of Hellenistic and local culture in each of those areas also had distinctive characteristics. At an earlier point in scholarship, the aim seemed to be to demonstrate that Galilee was just as Hellenized as “everywhere else.” The reality, of course, is that no place was just like everywhere else.

Much of what scholarship has designated as “Hellenization” occurred not under Alexander or the Diadochoi but under the Romans. In the East, the processes of Hellenization and Romanization were inextricably intertwined. It was under the Romans, not the Greeks, that urban architecture, figural art, and Greek inscriptions

became more common. Galileans would have been aware of the newness of such developments, and they probably associated them with heightened Roman influence.

What parties were responsible for the dissemination of Roman culture in Galilee? The question is more complicated than it first appears, and though we are sometimes able to speak definitively, we must often think in terms of possibility and probability. Such is the nature of our evidence.

Antipas played a key role. His efforts at Sepphoris and Tiberias were a strong and intentional statement of his Romanness. The tetrarch's administrators, supporters, and clients, probably concentrated in the cities, may have enthusiastically embraced his Romanizing agenda. Antipas's works paled in comparison to what would follow after the arrival of Roman troops in the second century, however, when large public columned buildings, aqueducts, bathhouses, and other structures became more common. Indeed, it appears that in Galilee as throughout the southern Levant, the single most influential agent of Romanization was the Roman military. At least some Roman urban architecture was probably imposed upon local culture by the Romans themselves. Once soldiers made such buildings more common, local builders may have mimicked them.

A fuller understanding of the variegated processes of Romanization eludes us. Our lack of building inscriptions keeps us from determining how extensive a role civic councils and wealthy individuals played in sponsoring the construction of distinctively Roman buildings. Nor do we have enough information to identify who frequented Roman bathhouses and theaters. The use of Roman motifs on civic coinage tells us that elites chose to conform to the norms of the Empire in this regard, but we have no way of determining how other Galileans responded to such coinage – how many regarded Roman designs as something of which to be proud and how many saw it as a cause for regret. The same can be said for certain forms of Greco-Roman art, such as mosaics, the more elaborate of which only the wealthy could afford. The appearance of figural representations on second- and third-century lamps, however, demonstrates that some Galileans, commoners and elites alike, had few problems with such decorations.

When trying to comprehend this complicated picture, we see again that the sometimes very different insights produced by various studies of Romanization can each prove useful.² F. Haverfield was partly right: the Romans sometimes deliberately spread aspects of their culture, and the elites sometimes embraced it. So, too, was Martin Millett: the elites sometimes emulated the Romans, and the commoners sometimes emulated the elites. But all too often we can speak only of *sometimes*, not of *always*, and the further down the social ladder we examine, the more difficult it becomes to say anything at all.

Recent studies on Romanization elsewhere in the Empire by Jane Webster and others have emphasized that indigenous peoples developed strategies of resistance to imperial power. It is easy to recognize overt resistance – in the case of Galilee, the participation of some villages in the first revolt against Rome – but harder to recognize subtler forms, largely because of methodological difficulties.³ How does one determine, for example, if Galilee’s seeming avoidance of the Roman custom of euergetism reflects resistance to imperial culture or merely a slow rate of acculturation? The same question can be posed regarding Galilee’s gradual acceptance of figural art. Can slow rates of acculturation ever be “mere,” or do they always have political implications as well?

Consider again the social and political implications of trends in personal names. Jesus bore the name of a biblical hero, Joshua, who had successfully led Israel against its enemies. That name pointed beyond Joshua himself, however, with its literal meaning of “Yahweh saves.” The name Joshua is attested several times in first-century Galilee,⁴ and it continued to be widespread among Palestinian Jews into the rabbinic period. Does its frequent usage reflect, on some level, personal or corporate hopes for Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel again – or merely a long-lasting trend? Similarly, by giving their children Hasmonean names (like Mary) long

² See discussion in the Introduction.

³ Compare Douglas Edwards and Peter Richardson, “Jesus and Palestinian Social Protest: Archaeological and Literary Perspectives,” in Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime, and Paul-André Turcotte, eds., *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Walnut Creek, Cal.: AltaMira, 2002), 247–266.

⁴ See Appendix I.

after that dynasty had faded, were Galileans and other Jews celebrating the memory of the independence that preceded Roman domination? Interestingly, though Greek and Latin names seem to have grown more common over the centuries, they never displaced the popularity of indigenous Semitic names.

Webster has noted that strategies of resistance sometimes resulted in the creation of artifacts that hybridized aspects of local and imperial cultures. We can identify multiple instances in Galilee's material record of what we might consider resistant adaptation:

- the striking of coins in the first century that utilized common numismatic motifs but avoided anthropomorphic or zoomorphic imagery
- the more frequent creation of inscriptions but the occasional use of local languages, rather than Greek
- the growing repertoire of Jewish symbols, such as the menorah
- the use of those symbols on round discus lamps of the post-70 CE era, in contrast with the mythological figures, animals, and sexual poses found on other discus lamps
- the creation of architecturally distinct synagogues that put Greco-Roman building styles to use for the construction of Jewish identity
- the “iconographic silence” of the earliest of those synagogues.⁵

But are such phenomena properly categorized as resistance? The fact that our methodology for identifying resistance is in need of further refinement should not stop us from acknowledging the legitimacy of the question and its importance for how we reconstruct and write history. Indeed, many of the developments that are typically understood as – depending on one's terminological and methodological preferences – examples of fidelity to Judaism or efforts to construct a distinctive Jewish ethnic and/or religious identity should also be understood within the context of a local people adjusting to and at times resisting imperial rule.⁶ The survival of Jewish monotheism meant the rejection of Rome's gods and Rome's rituals, and the emphasis on halakhah resulted in the

⁵ The phrase “iconographic silence” comes from James F. Strange, “Some Implications,” 39–40.

⁶ Compare Schwartz, *Imperialism*.

creation of counterculture(s) to the ways of Romans and of other pagans. These efforts to maintain distinctiveness were particularly Jewish, but other peoples in other parts of the Empire also made their choices about which aspects of Roman culture to embrace, which ones to adapt, and which ones to reject.

In general, we scholars have been quicker to recognize the diversity in the *Judaism* of Hellenistic Judaism than in the *Hellenism* of Hellenistic Judaism. Likewise, we have not always emphasized sufficiently the significance of the *Roman* in Greco-Roman. Much of Galilee's encounter with Hellenistic culture occurred in the context of its encounter with Roman imperial culture.

The extent of that Greco-Roman culture in Galilee during the lifetime of Jesus has often been greatly exaggerated. Many of the characteristics that are routinely ascribed to early first-century Galilee more properly apply to Galilee in the second and third centuries. In the Galilee of Jesus, the Galilee of the Roman client king Antipas, we see hints of what was later to come. It was a time of transition, a fact of which many Galileans themselves were probably fully aware. The Romans did not occupy Galilee, but Jesus, growing up a few miles from Autocratoris, traveling extensively around what would become known as the Sea of Tiberias,⁷ would have had daily reminders of Rome nonetheless. Recent scholarship has rightly emphasized that his proclamation of an alternative kingdom, the Kingdom of God, must be understood within the context of a people aware that the imperial shadow that had already fallen on Judea would one day likely cover Galilee as well.

⁷ John 6:1.

Appendix: Galilean names in the first century CE¹

NAMES OF GALILEANS IN THE CANONICAL GOSPELS AND ACTS²

Jesus and his Family (Mark 6:3/Matt. 13:55)

Jesus of Nazareth
Mary, mother
Joseph, father
James, brother (cf. Acts 12:17)
Joses, brother
Judas, brother
Simon, brother

Disciples (Mark 3:14–19/Matt. 10:1–4/Luke 6:12–16, Acts 1:13, John 1:35–50)³

Andrew
Bartholomew
Boarneges, surname of James and John
James, son of Alphaeus
James, son of Zebedee
John, son of Zebedee
Judas Iscariot

¹ For additional information about a given name, see Ilan, *Lexicon*.

² Though some New Testament characters may be fictional, I include them for the sake of thoroughness. Because names in non-canonical gospels are, in my opinion, even less likely to refer to historical personages or to reflect first-century Galilee, I have not included them.

On particular names, see Ilan, *Lexicon* and Evans, *Jesus*, 67–89.

³ I make no attempt to here to address historical questions about the number of disciples or the differences between the gospels' lists of names.

Judas, son of James
Levi
Matthew
Matthias, appointed after the resurrection (Acts 1:23)
Nathanael
Philip
Simon (Peter)⁴
Simon (the Cananaean/Zelot)⁵
Thaddaeus⁶
Thomas

Parents of disciples

Alphaeus, father of Levi (Mark 2:14)
Alphaeus, father of James (Mark 3:18, Acts 1:13)
James, father of Judas (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13)
Jonah, father of Simon (Matt. 16:17)⁷
Mary, mother of James (Luke 24:10)⁸
Simon Iscariot, father of Judas (John 6:71)
Zebedee, father of James and John (Mark 3:17/Matt. 10:1–4)

Members of the Herodian family

Herod (Antipas)
Herodias (wife of Herod Philip and Herod Antipas) (Mark 6:17/Matt. 14:3; Luke 3:19)

Other Galileans

Chuza, steward of Herod (Luke 8:3)
Clopas, husband of Mary (John 19:25)⁹
Jairus, *archisynagoge* (Mark 5:22/ Luke 8:41)

⁴ See discussion in Bockmuehl, “Simon Peter’s Name.”

⁵ On the possibility that *καναναϊτός* is related to the Semitic name *נר*, see Ilan, *Lexicon*, 409.

⁶ Note the text critical problems in Matthew 10:3, where some manuscripts have Lebbeaus or Lebbeaus called Thaddaeus.

⁷ See discussion in Bockmuehl, “Simon Peter’s Name.”

⁸ Presumably the James here is Jesus’ disciple, though this is debatable.

⁹ See note below on Mary, wife of Clopas.

- Joanna, wife of Chuza (Luke 8:3, 24:10)
 Joseph called Barsabbas, also called Justus (candidate for disciple)
 (Acts 1:23)
 Martha, sister of Mary (Luke 10:38)¹⁰
 Mary from Magdala (Taricheae) (Mark 15:40/Matt. 27:56/Luke 24:10,
 Luke 8:2, John 19:25)
 Mary, mother of James and Joseph/Joses (Mark 15:40/Matt. 27:56)¹¹
 Mary, sister of Martha (Luke 10:39)
 Mary, wife of Clopas (John 19:25)¹²
 Simon (Luke 7:40, 44)
 Salome (Mark 15:40)
 Susanna (Luke 8:3)

NAMES FROM JOSEPHUS

- Annaeus/Jannaeus, son of Levi (Taricheae) (*War* 2.597, *Life* 131)
 Antyllus, father of Capella (Tiberias) (*Life* 69)
 Capella, son of Antyllus (Tiberias) (*Life* 69)
 Cleitus (Tiberias) (*Life* 170; *War* 2.642)
 Compsos, son of Compsos (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)
 Compsos, father of Crispus and Compsos (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)
 Crispus, son of Compsos (Tiberias) (*Life* 33, 382, 388, 393)
 Dassion (Taricheae) (*Life* 131)
 Eleazar, converter of Izates (*Ant.* 20.43–47)
 Eleazar, son of Sameas (from Saba, at Jotapata) (*War* 3.229)
 Gamalas, father of Jesus (see Jesus, son of Gamalas)¹³
 Gamalus, father of Herod (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)
 Gephtaios/Tephthaios (from Garis) (*War* 5.474)
 Herod Antipas
 Herod of Tiberias (*Life* 96)
 Herod, son of Gamalus (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)

¹⁰ Luke places these sisters in an unspecified village through which Jesus passes while en route to Jerusalem; theoretically, he could have intended a village in southern Galilee. John 11:1, however, places Mary and Martha in Bethany, near Jerusalem.

¹¹ This Mary may well be Jesus' mother, noted on the previous list, though this is impossible to determine with certainty.

¹² John does not specify that Mary, wife of Clopas, was a Galilean, but it is possible that she was the same person as Jesus' mother's sister (also mentioned in 19:25), who was presumably a Galilean.

¹³ Ilan understands Gamalus as the equivalent of the Semitic name Gamaliel (*Lexicon*, 282, "Herod," no. 9).

- Herod, son of Miarus (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)¹⁴
 Jacobus, bodyguard of Josephus (*Life* 96, 240)
 Jeremiah, military leader (*Life* 240, 399)
 Jesus the Galilean, military leader (*Life* 105, 200)
 Jesus, son of Gamalas (*War* 4.160, 238, 270, 283, 316, 322, 325; *Life* 193, 204)
 Jesus, son of Sapphias, chief magistrate at Tiberias (*War* 2.599; 3.450, 452, 457, 467, 498; *Life* 66, 67, 134, 178, 186, 246, 271, 278, 279, 294, 295, 300, 301)
 John of Gischala (*Life* 43 and elsewhere)
 Jonathan, son of Sisenna (*Life* 186)
 Judas, father of Simon (*Ant.* 20.102)
 Julius Capellus (Tiberias) (*Life* 32, 36, 67, 69, 296)
 Justus, son of Pistus (Justus of Tiberias) (*Life* 36, 42, and elsewhere)
 Levi, father of Annaeus/Jannaeus (*Life* 131)
 Levi, father of John of Gischala (*War* 2.575, 585, 4.85; *Life* 43, 122, 189)
 Levi, associated with Josephus (*War* 2.642; *Life* 171, 319)
 Manaemos, son of Judas the Galilean (*War* 2.433, 437, 440, 442, 446, 447, 448, 449; *Life* 21, 46)
 Miaros, father of Herod (Tiberias) (*Life* 33)
 Netiras (from Ruma, at Jotapata) (*War* 3.233)
 Philip (from Ruma, at Jotapata) (*War* 3.233)
 Sameas, father of Elezar (see Eleazar)
 Sapphias, father of Jesus of Tiberias (see Jesus, son of Sapphias)
 Simon (Gabara) (*Life* 124)
 Simon, brother of John of Gischala (*Life* 186)
 Simon, son of Judas (*Ant.* 20.102)
 Sisennas, father of Jonathan (Gischala) (*Life* 190)
- Note also the following individuals, associated with nearby Gamla:
- Chares, kinsman of Philip (*War* 4.18, 68; *Life* 177, 186)
 Jacimus, father of Philip (*War* 2.421, 556; 4.81; *Life* 46, 179)
 Jacobus, son of Judas the Galilean (*Ant.* 20.102)
 Jesus, kinsman of Chares (*Life* 186)
 Joseph (*War* 4.56, 66; *Life* 185)
 Judas the Galilean (*War* 2.118, 433; 7.253; *Ant.* 18.4, 23; 20.102)
 Philip, son of Jacimus (officer of Agrippa II) (*War* 2.421, 556; 4.81; *Life* 46, 179)
 Simon, son of Judas the Galilean (*Ant.* 20.102)

¹⁴ Ilan understands Miarus as the equivalent of the Semitic name Meir (*Lexicon*, 282, "Herod," no. 10).

NAMES FROM INSCRIPTIONS

- Gaius Julius (market weight, Tiberias)¹⁵
 Aianimos (or Animos), son of Monimos (market weight, Tiberias or Magdala)
 Iaesaias, son of Mathias (market weight, Tiberias or Magdala)¹⁶
 R [. . .] Rufus (market weight, possibly Magdala or Tiberias)
 Julius [. . .]os (market weight, possibly Magdala or Tiberias)¹⁷
 Maria, daughter of Saulos (grave inscription, Qiryat Tiv'on)¹⁸
 Salome (possibly identified as “the Galilean” on an ostracon at Masada)¹⁹

NAMES FROM RABBINIC SOURCES²⁰

- Elisha ben Avuyah (Ginnosar, Tiberias)²¹
 Halafta (Sepphoris) (*t. Shabbat* 13:2)²²
 Hanina ben Dosa (Arav) (*b. Berakhot* 34b)²³
 Hanina ben Teradyon (Sikhnin) (*b. Sanhedrin* 32b)
 Ishamel (*t. Bava Qamma* 8.14; the name is Shimon Shezuri in the Vienna manuscript)²⁴

¹⁵ Qedar, “Two Lead Weights.”

¹⁶ For this and the previous name, see Qedar, “Two Lead Weights” and Kushnir-Stein, “Two Inscribed Lead Weights of Agrippa.” Kushnir-Stein argues that a similar weight from Agrippa’s reign, now in a private collection, also originated in Galilee; it notes two *agoranomoi* with Latin names, Rufus and Julius.

¹⁷ For the weight with this and the previous name, see Kushnir-Stein, “Two Inscribed Lead Weights of Agrippa.”

¹⁸ Rahmani, *Catalogue*, 172 no. 423.

¹⁹ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 251, “Salome” no. 61.

²⁰ As the brevity of this list suggests, there are few rabbis that we can confidently associate with first-century Galilee. The number goes up in the second century, particularly in the post-Bar Kochbah period. Günter Stemberger discusses individual rabbis in *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl, 2nd edn. (London: T & T Clark, 1996), and Shmuel Safrai provides a helpful overview of first-century Galilean rabbis in “The Jewish Cultural Nature of Galilee in the First Century,” *Immanuel* 24/25 (1990): 147–186, esp. 149–165. Safrai includes a few names not listed here (mostly because of concerns about dates).

²¹ See Safrai, “Jewish Cultural Nature,” 158–159 for discussion of possible references.

²² *T. Shabbat* 13:2 refers to him traveling to Tiberias, thus suggesting he lived in Lower Galilee, and a late commentary on the Mishnah makes his presence in Sepphoris explicit (Safrai, “Jewish Cultural Nature,” 152–154).

²³ See discussion in Stemberger, *Introduction*, 68.

²⁴ This tradition notes that the father of Ishmael/Shimon was from Galilee; whether we should regard the son as Galilean, too, is open to debate; see discussion in Goodman, “Galilean Judaism,” 606.

Jose ha-Galili (Galil?)²⁵

Joseph ben Elim (Sepphoris) (*t. Yoma* 1:4)

Nehemiah (Shihin) (pre-135 CE)²⁶ (*y. Sotah* 2:5)

Nittai/Mattai (Arbel) (*m. Abot* 1:6, *m. Hagigah* 2.2)²⁷

Yohanan ben Zakkai (Arav) (*m. Shabbat* 17:7, 22:3; *y. Shabbat* 16.15d)²⁸

Yose Holiqopri (Tiv'on) (*m. Makshirin* 1:3)

Zaddok (Tiv'on) (*t. Niddah* 4:3–4)

²⁵ The name could mean “the Galilean,” or it could designate Jose as being from Galil. See Safrai, “Jewish Cultural Nature,” 163–164 and Stemberger, *Introduction*, 73 for discussion of possible references.

²⁶ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 197.

²⁷ See discussion in Stemberger, *Introduction*, 64.

²⁸ On Yohanan ben Zakkai’s activity in Galilee, see Goodman, “Galilean Judaism,” 603 and Safrai, “Jewish Cultural Nature,” 149–152.

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