Lords of the Levant: The Borderlands of Syria and Phoenicia in the First Century*

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In the Levant of the early Roman empire, banditry was an ubiquitous problem identified by the dominant states of the time with the highlands of Anatolia, Syria, and the Lebanon.[1] The phenomenon of *latrocinium* or *lēsteia*, as banditry was called, is a conundrum of political sociology, a matter of cultural perception, and an aspect of the montane history of the Mediterranean.[2] As such, the individuals and communities that were labelled "brigands" must be set within the wider framework of Roman imperial power. Ideas and actualities of legitimacy and domination defined the roles of a wide range of non-state and proto-state actors, who extended from violent opportunists and raiders at one end of the spectrum to established figures of regional power at the other.[3] The single most detailed literary source that relates the activities of these bandits in the Levant in the first century of the Common Era are the writings of Josephus. For this

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1 The model of banditry that I am using is one that I developed in the mid-1980s, but which I subsequently modified in some of its particulars: see B.D. Shaw, 'Bandits in the Roman Empire,' *P&P* 105 (1984), 3-52; revised version as chap. 13 in R. Osborne (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society*, Cambridge, 2003, 326-74; 'The Bandit,' in A. Giardina (ed.), *The Romans*, Chicago – London, 1993, 300-41; 'Räuberbanden,' in *Der Neue Pauly* 10, 758-63. The model of "personal power" is one that I developed in the following decade, with specific reference to Josephus' writings: see 'Tyrants, Bandits, and Kings: Personal Power in Josephus,' *JJS* 44 (1993), 176-204, and 'Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It,' *Athenaeum* 83 (1995), 357-90.

2 The bibliography is immense. The following are noted, in addition to the classic formative work by Braudel: C. Saulnies, 'Le rôle stratégique de la montagne au service de l'histoire militaire: l'exemple de la conquête romaine en Italie centrale au Ve-IVe siècles,' in G. Fabré (ed.), *La montagne dans l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1992, 83-95; R. Syme, 'The Subjugation of Mountain Zones,' in A.R. Birley (ed.), *Roman Papers*, vol. 4, Oxford, 1988, 648-60; and, for general historical significance, see J.R. McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, Cambridge, 1992, 117-19 and 266-70.

3 In addition to the works above, some of the others that will be considered are: T. Grünewald, *Räuber, Rebellen, Rivalen, Rächer*: *Studien zu Latrones im Römischen Reich*, Stuttgart, 1999 (Engl. transl. J. Drinkwater, *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and Reality*, London – New York, 2004), with my remarks in *BMCR* 11 (2000); see also W. Riess, *Apuleius und die Räuber: ein Beitrag zur historischen Kriminalitätsforschung*, Stuttgart, 2001, with my remarks in *Ancient Narrative* 2 (2001), 1-12.

reason, his bandit narratives have often been closely inspected.[4] The bandits described by him are also sporadically noted in other sources, such as Strabo, and these other writers sometimes see these same men in a rather different light — as more legitimate holders of local power.

By considering a range of exemplary cases of these bandits, we can see that the labels of *latrocinium* and *lēsteia* referred to a type of personal power that was frequently called "dynastic" or "tyrannical".[5] A critical point in this spectrum of types marks a distinction between men of power who were wholly subject to central state authority and others who possessed real autonomy but who were nonetheless compelled to have significant dealings with dominant state powers. Some of the latter bandits functioned in spaces of relative freedom where performance was a sufficient basis for their rank and status.[6] From the perspective of the great powers of the time, however, men of local authority who were constrained by dominant states into formalized relationships of subordination appeared to be marginal, even illegitimate, holders of power. The typological distinction raises further problems about the labelling of men who were classified as bandits. These include the perspectives of writers like Cicero and others who composed their works from the optic of the Roman state, or those of writers, like Josephus, who had strong political commitments that called the legitimacy of lesser local players into question. And it also raises questions about the relationship of this labelling to the morphology of state and personal power in the world of men like Cicero and Josephus.

These problems require an investigation of the *tyrannoi* and the *dynastoi*, as these men are frequently designated, in the wider regional context of the Levant. A good test case is offered by the numerous big men who dominated the mountainous regions of Syria, the Lebanon, and regions further to the south during Josephus' lifetime and in the decades immediately preceding. To begin, let us consider the northern edges of our designated zone of interest, taking as an example the highland *tyrannoi* in the Amanus

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4 The bibliography is extensive; the following are typical: T.L. Donaldson, 'Rural Bandits, City Mobs and the Zealots,' *JSJ* 21 (1990),19-40; R.A. Horsley, 'Josephus and the Bandits,' *JSJ* 10 (1979), 37-63, and 'Ancient Jewish Banditry and the Revolt against Rome, A.D. 66-70,' *CBQ* 43 (1981), 409-32; R.A. Horsley & J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*, New York, 1985; B. Isaac, 'Bandits in Judaea and Arabia,' *HSCPh* 88 (1984), 171-203; G. Jossa, 'Novatori' e 'briganti' negli scritti di Flavio Giuseppe,' *Vichiana* 12 (1983), 224-34.

5 Consider other moves to find strands of familialism or dynastism in the formation of local power, even within empires, in montane zones in the East: see P. Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*, London, 2008, 3, 53-55, who draws attention to the ideas of C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington DC, 1963.

6 See M.A. van Bakel, R.R. Hagesteijn and P. van de Velde (eds.), *Private Politics: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to 'Big-Man' Systems*, Leiden, 1986, especially the editors' introduction, 1-10, and their valuable concluding remarks, "Big-Man": from Private Politics to Political Anthropology,' 211-15, where they make the distinction between figures that function in personal-based societies and ones that are in some fashion institutionalized. They show that ascribed positions and achieved positions can co-exist in the same society in transition, and can be held in one lifetime by the same individual where the society is in transition from one type to the other.

mountains between the Adana Plain and the northern frontiers of the Lebanon. It was a highland whose autonomous lords and strongmen had not been made subject to any external authority. Records of the first movement of the arms of a central state into this region at this time, the letters of Cicero when he was Roman governor of Cilicia in 51-50 BCE, leave little doubt about the entrenched local power of the tyrants.[7] The inhabitants of the Amanus, Cicero reports, were a source of perpetual hostility whom the Roman state had yet to pacify.[8] Doubtless, some part of this attitude is Ciceronean rhetoric produced because of the fact that this Roman governor had yet to achieve the triumph that would confirm his perception of his own proper high status in the political world at Rome. But his strident assertion that the so-called Free Cilicians had never given obedience to any foreign king had some substance to it. Cicero also claimed that their lands were a haven of freedom for oppressed dwellers in the plains below and a shelter for fugitives from the lowlands. He therefore categorized the Free Cilicians as bandits.[9] Although there was some truth to the claim, this too was a fact that could be finessed or simply ignored if any big power decided to do so. The purposeful mobilization of the image of banditry by Cicero was surely made in support of his military adventure into the mountains.

For reasons such as these, Cicero thought it necessary for the reputation of Roman power that the "audacity" of the highland peoples had to be crushed. They were to be an example used to break the spirit of other locals who were still holdouts against the fact of Roman rule.[10] Cicero's account of his campaigns in the Amanus reveals an island of authority isolated from the centers of Roman control in the nearby Adana Plain, lowlands that were threatened on all sides by zones of permanent dissidence in the mountains. Whatever Cicero's armed intervention was intended to accomplish, the intrusion of violent Roman force into the mountains did not go much beyond the type of punitive and extractive "terror raids" staged in earlier epochs by Near Eastern states. When Cicero returned to Cilicia in June 50 BCE, after a five month stay back in his province of Asia, the situation had not changed. He reports that he found 'great banditry' in the region.[11] Although Cicero's campaigns did bring Roman arms into the mountains above the Adana Plain, the immediate impact of his raid (perhaps exaggerated in Cicero's eyes) for a permanent Roman control of the mountains was negligible. Already from the time of

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7 Cic. *Fam*. 15.1.3; 2.9.1-2. For the context of the highlands of southeastern Anatolia, see, in greater detail: B.D. Shaw, 'Bandit Highlands and Lowland Peace: the Mountains of Cilicia-Isauria, Pts. I & II', *JESHO* 33 (1990), 199-233, 237-70, esp. 223-28; with the revisions suggested by N. Lenski, 'Basil and the Isaurian Uprising of A.D. 375,' *Phoenix* 53 (1999), 308-29; and 'Assimilation and Revolt in the Territory of Isauria, from the 1st Century BC to the Sixth Century AD,' *JESHO* 42 (1999), 411-65. For wider regional coverage, see C. Wolff, *Les Brigands en Orient sous le Haut-Empire romain*, Rome, 2003, with my remarks in *JRS* 95 (2005), 270-71.

8 Cic. *Fam*. 2.10.3, 15.4.8-9.

9 Cic. *Fam*. 15.4.10; *Att*. 5.20.5; cf. e.g. Plut. *Cic*. 36.

10 Cic. *Fam*. 15.4.10: *Confectis his rebus ad oppidum Eleutherocilicum Pindenissum exercitum adduxi. Quod cum esset altissimo et munitissimo loco ab iisque incoleretur qui ne regibus quidem umquam paruissent*. cf. *Att*. 5.20.5; and note the use of hostages.

11 Cic. *Att*. 6.4.1: *magna in Cilicia latrocinia*.

Cicero's departure from his base at Cybistra, it was manifest that Rome was dependent on personal contacts with men of power in the mountains. In the case of the Amanus, this man was one Tarkondimotos.[12] The familial power of the Tarcondimotids was to last through several generations in the upper highland regions of the Amanus and in the valley of the Pyramos-Cydnus.[13] Although armed struggles in the highlands of the Amanus had created many different local tyrants who ruled from their individual strongholds, by the time Cicero went into the mountains, one of them, Tarkondimotos, had subjugated the others and had made himself master of them all, king of the mountain.[14] And it was Tarkondimotos, not Cicero, who was to remain the power to be dealt with in the highlands of the Amanus.

With the severe fissioning of the Roman state in the late 50s and early 40s BCE, increasingly the indirect control of the Amanus had to be managed principally through personal agents in the highlands. As just noted, *the* big man in the Amanus was Tarkondimotos, whom Cicero hailed as Rome's 'best friend' in the region. His assertion of power in the mountains had begun with the fragmenting of Seleucid power.[15] A decade or so before Cicero, Pompeius Magnus had already formally recognized Tarkondimotos as 'a friend and ally of the Roman people.' No doubt it was Pompeius' armed intervention in the late 60s, signalling the disappearance of the last vestiges of the Seleucid state that assisted Tarkondimotos' assertion of his own authority.[16] The forging of new bonds of personal friendship with Pompeius' successor in the East probably explains the nomenclature of Tarkondimotos' daughter, called Julia, and his grandson, named Gaius Julius Strato.[17] Where the permanent presence of the armed forces of the Roman state was not possible, it was understood that indirect rule through friends was

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12 Cic. *Fam*. 15.1.2 where Tarkondimotos is *fidelissimus socius trans Taurum amicissimusque p. R.*; for overviews, see R. Syme, "Tarcondimotus," in A. Birley (ed.), *Anatolica: Studies in Strabo*, Oxford, 1995, 161-65, and O. Lange, 'Tarkondimotos, König von Kilikien, und seine Dynastie,' *Berichte aus allen Gebieten der Münzen- und Medaillenkunde* 159 (1989), 336-43.

13 See R.D. Sullivan 'Cilicia. The Tarcondimotids,' in *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome, 100-30 BC*, Toronto, 1990, 185-92, for a general outline; and M.H. Sayar, 'Tardondimotos, seine Dynastie, seine Politik und seine Reich,' in E. Jean, A. M. Dinçol and S. Durugonul (eds.), *La Cilicie: espaces et pourvoirs locaux (2e millénaire av. J.C. - 4e siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Paris, 2001, 373-380, esp. p. 377 on the new inscription found twenty km north of Anazarbos in which Tarkondimotos II is hailed as *basileus.*

14 Strabo 14.5.18 (C 676). Later coin issues indicate c. 70 BCE as the founding date of the dynasty's power: N.L. Wright, 'A New Dated Coin of Tarkondimotos II from Anazarbos,' *AS* 59 (2009), 73-75, at p. 73; Syme (n. 12), 163, goes so far as to guess that Tarcondimotos might have been 'one of the pirate chiefs of Trachaeia' mentioned by Strabo, but without much good evidence in support, I think.

15 N.L. Wright, 'Tarkondimotid Responses to Roman Domestic Politics: From Antony to Actium,' *JNAA* 20 (2010), 73-81, at p. 73; dynastic stemma at fig. 2, p. 74.

16 For Pompeius' confirmation of Tarkondimotos' position, soon after 66 BCE, see Strabo 14.5.18 (C 676); Dio 41.63; Florus 2.13.5; J. Tobin, 'The Tarcondimotid Dynasty in Smooth Cilicia,' in E. Jean, A. M Dinçol & and. Durugönül (eds.), *La Cilicie: espaces et pourvoirs locaux (2e millénaire av. J.-C. - 4e siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Paris, 2001, 381-87, at p. 381.

17 The interpretation of Tobin, (n. 16), 383; cf. Dio 41.62.

the necessary option for controlling the mountain highlands.[18] The model of personal friendship and fictive kinship that was employed by earlier powers in the region (usually a kind of fictive brotherhood) was gradually adopted and reformulated as an instrument of Roman political practice. Although the relations remained personal in nature, in the Roman case the control of the mountains by means of *philoi* or 'friends' was mediated through state institutions. From the official Roman perspective such political 'friends' were always glossed as friends of the Roman Senate and People.

With the internal breakdown of the Roman state in the 40s BCE, Tarkondimotos became a more autonomous man of power in the Amanus. But he was still linked to Roman friends — this time to Marcus Antonius. His loyalty to Rome in the face of threatened Parthian incursions was recognized: he became the personal friend, the *philos*, of Antonius, naming himself Philantonius.[19] Although of a personal nature, this friendship had practical sides to it, extending as far as providing military forces for Antonius and, in the end, to dying on his friend's behalf at Actium.[20] Tarkondimotos' brother, who styled himself more aggressively and more independently as the *philos* of his predecessor, had his brother's personal power or *dynasteia* recognized by Octavian.[21] Over this period, Tarkondimotos' brother and his descendants asserted their autonomy in the mountains and the subservient plains below. The coins issued from their new mint at Anazarbos in the Pyramos basin proclaimed as much.[22] But the coins also reveal an increasing loss of autonomy and a growing integration with the Augustan hegemony. It is no surprise that in the year 19 BCE, Anazarbos was renamed Caesarea in honour of the imperial monarch.[23] Although matters were permanently changing in favour of Rome in the miniature history of power relations in the Amanus from the 50s BCE to the 10s CE, we still witness the limitations of the military resources of a great Mediterranean central state and the continuing resilience of the men of power in the highlands. There was a continual ebb and flow of power in which the connections between the state and local tyrants were construed as types of ritual friendship — although in the peculiar case of Rome it was a friendship that was embedded in the institutional structures of the dominant state.

The story of the Amanus reveals the occasional opening of interstitial political spaces in highland zones — spaces located in the temporal gap between a fragmenting Seleucid

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18 Strabo 14.5.6 (C 671), principally concerning Rough Cilicia further to the west, but referring to this zone as well, and equally applicable to it.

19 On his coin legends, see B. Head, *Historia numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, Oxford, 1911 (reprint: Chicago, 1967), 735; cf. Tobin (n. 16),. 383 and Wright (n. 15), 75.

20 Plut. *Ant*. 61.1: καὶ Ταρκόνδημος [sic] ὁ τῆς ἄνω Κιλικίας; Dio 50.14.2.

21 Strabo 14.5.18 (C 676), cf. Dio 54.9.2 (20 BCE) for Augustus' 'gift' of *dynasteia* over Cilicia to Tarkondimotos the brother; for this Tarkondimotos as the brother not son of the first Tarkondimotos, see Syme (n. 12), 163.

22 N.L. Wright, 'Anazarbos and the Tarkondimotid Kings of Kilikia,' *AS* 58 (2008), 115-25; cf. M. Gough, 'Anazarbus,' *AS* 2 (1952), 85-150, at 221-30.

23 See Suet. *Aug*. 60; A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd rev. ed., M. Avi-Yonah *et al*. (eds.), Oxford, 1971, 202-05; although to speak with certainty of either Hierapolis/Castabala, earlier, or Anazarbos, later, as the 'capital' of a Tarkondimotid kingdom is perhaps overly confident.

power and the assertion of Roman imperial authority. These temporary openings were filled with nascent figures of authority. The tyrants and dynasts welled up in a manner that simultaneously reacted against the great states around them and also mimicked them. They had an ambiguous relationship to the superior powers. One result was that the conventional label that was used by big states to label localized supra-criminal entities, that of banditry, was also used on occasion to designate these newly efflorescing mini or quasi-states.[24] The tyrants and dynasts, like Tarkondimotos in the highlands of Cilicia, might present themselves as emerging powers that had full normal authority. As much is signalled by their self-given titles, their use of coinage as a sign of legitimacy, and their assumption of other appurtenances of formal state power. But they were only tolerated by the larger powers of the time as long as they were necessary friends. Usually these proto-states were ruled by three or four generations of local dynasts, often drawn from the same larger kinship group, before the spaces in which they flourished were finally closed by the great powers surrounding them.

Further to the south, in the rough highlands of the coastal or Bargylos range of mountains, the modern Jabal Ansariyya, and those further inland to the east of the Orontes (the modern day Jabal Zawiyya and environs) in the hills north of the city of Apamea, was located the domain of the dynast Sampsikeramos and his son Iamblikhos. Samsikeramos' home base was located at Emesa; his power was based on the ethnic group of the *Emesenoi* and on the pyramided personal relationships he was able to forge with other *phylarchs* in the region roundabout.[25] In the long term, a weighty factor that aided local autonomy was not just the heavily accidented terrain of the mountains, but the much higher levels of population in the highlands relative to the plains.[26] Instituting centers of local autonomy *in* the highlands was simply easier than imposing a centralized control over them from the plains below. In consequence, the region fell only weakly under Seleucid control. The severe internal crises in the Syrian state in the late 70s BCE, marked by a struggle between two pretenders to the throne, Antiochos XIII Asiatikos and Philippos II, only exacerbated a difficult situation that was exploited by local strongmen. Although Antiochos was nominally the king of Syria, to maintain his position he was compelled to seek help from the highland dynast Samsikeramos. Samsikeramos apparently volunteered his assistance, but in dealings typical of this type of personal power, he made common cause with another Arab dynast, a certain 'Aziz, who was pretending to support the pretensions of Philippos II. By exploiting the two Syrian pretenders through the mid-60s BCE, both tyrants were able to consolidate their respective bases of power.

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24 A pattern that, as with the Ituraioi and the Biqa' valley environment to the south, continued to repeat itself: see A.G. Gould, 'Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7 (1976), 485-506.

25 Strabo 16.2.10 (C 753).

26 L. Marfoe, 'Empire and Ethnicity in Syrian Society: "From Archaeology to Historical Sociology" Revisited,' in *Archéologie au Levant: Recueil à la mémoire de Roger Saidah*, Lyon, 1982, 463-79, at 465-66: the lower slopes of Mt. Lebanon have supported population densities on the level of 200 per km^2 whereas the inland Biqa' Valley have barely sustained 50 per km^2. Although these are modern statistics, there are no good reasons to doubt the long-term existence of the demographic imbalance between mountain and plain.

When the Roman generalissimo Pompeius Magnus moved through the region in 63 BCE, Samsikeramos, already accustomed to these types of dealings with lowland powers, provided critical "personal services" to the Roman commander. The services were mutually beneficial since they abetted the collapse of the last vestiges of Seleucid power in the East. Samsikeramos was subsequently declared to be 'a friend of the Romans.'[27] From more than one Roman point of view, however, this big man was seen as wielding an unacceptable kind of outlaw power. As early as 59 BCE, Cicero was able to use his name repeatedly as a snide and knowing way of labeling the illegitimate power that was wielded by Pompeius Magnus at Rome.[28] The one kind of power was exploited to reflect on the questionability of the other. The relationships detailed in the Samsikeramos case were stereotypes of other ones found in this same region over these same decades. The same give-and-take of power and extension of symbols of power marked a game of disputed legitimacy. Samsikeramos' son, Iamblikhos, behaved no differently. He probably succeeded to his father's power in the late 40s or early 30s BCE. After his victory at Actium, Octavian, in a telling response, moved quickly to arrest Iamblikhos' brother, Alexander, and to deprive him of his lands and his *dynasteia*.[29] After 20, although now under Roman aegis, Augustus returned the 'paternal *dynasteia*' to a man named Iamblikhos, who was either our man or, perhaps, more probably, his son.[30]

The fortunes of various members of this family can be traced down to the mid-first century CE, at which point its leading members reveal signs of formal integration with the Roman state, mainly via grants of citizenship.[31] Caius Iulius Sohaemus, son of the great king or *rex magnus*, Samsigeramus (viz. Samsikeramos), is found as the local strongman of Emesa (modern Homs) who received a dedication from a Roman at Heliopolis (modern Ba'albek) around 60 CE.[32] The family's links of personal friendship with Roman individuals were now being transferred to Caesar and his descendants, and *via* this conduit to the Roman people and state. The new embeddedness of this friendship perhaps explains why the dynasts' funerary monuments assumed a form that affirmed both local and central identities.[33] Surely this is why C. Iulius Sohaemus bore the

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27 Cic. *Att*. 2.16.2.

28 Cic. *Att*. 2.14.1, 2.16.2, 17.1.2, 23.2.3. It must have been in common use. It was a backhanded compliment, somewhat like calling one of the George Bush's allies a wonderful 'Ghaddafi' or 'Arafat.'

29 Dio 51.2.1-3: paraded in Augustus' triumphal procession and later put to death.

30 Dio 54.9.2.

31 J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Inscription inédite de Qalamoun: notables de l'Antiliban sous le Haut-Empire romain,' *Ktèma* 19 (1994), 39-49, for traces of Iulii, Antonii, and Claudii in the epigraphy of the mountainous zone.

32 A.A. Barrett, 'Sohaemus, King of Emesa and Sophene,' *AJPh* 98 (1977), 153-59: he had succeeded his brother 'Aziz on throne of Emesa, and was 'almost certainly' related to the Sohaemus who was established as ruler of Ituraea by Gaius (Dio 59.12.2), who died in 49 CE (Tac. *Ann*. 12.23) and who was the son of Samsigeramus.

33 W. Oenbrink, '"… nach römischer Art aus Ziegelsteinen…": das Grabmonument des Gaius Iulius Samsigeramos im Spannungsfeld zwischen Fremdeinflüssen und lokaler Identität,' in M. Blömer, M. Facella and E. Winter (eds.), *Lokale Identität im Römischen Nahen Osten:*

sobriquets of *Philocaesar* — Friend of Caesar — and *Philorhomaios*, Friend of the Roman People.[34] Here we find the same domination of the lowlands, only in a reversed fashion. Sohaemus was hailed as the patron of a Roman city by Lucius Vitellius Sossianus who was *duumvir quinquennalis* of the colony of Berytos on the coast, the city to which Heliopolis was now subject and on which the big men in the highland zones of the interior were now bestowing their allegiance and their benefactions.

The zone of control exercised by this family probably extended over most of the coastal range between Laodicea and Arados. It also covered the rough hills to the east of the Orontes as far south as Emesa, near Laodicea ad Libanum and Caesarea ad Libanum, at the head of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains to the south.[35] And to the east of this region, matters were no different. Strabo reports that the lands between the mountains of the hinterland and the Euphrates were under the domination of an Alkhaidamnos, a self-styled king of the Rhambaioi who were nomadic raiders in the region. Like Tarkondimotos in the Amanus, Alkhaidamnos had been a *philos* or friend of the Romans. Feeling that he had been treated unjustly by them, however, he removed his forces to the east of the Euphrates, beyond the immediate reach of their power. Both Alkhaidamnos and Iamblikhos became powerful personal supporters of the Pompeian freebooter, Q. Caecilius Bassus, who, from the early to mid-forties BCE made the city of Apamea the base of his personal baronial principality in the east, much as the Caesarean henchman Publius Sittius had done in the western Mediterranean. Although placed under siege by two of Caesar's commanders and their armies, Bassus readily held out against them with the support of Iamblikhos and Alkhaidamnos, both of whom made agreements with him and supported Bassus in return for monetary "gifts".[36]

It is manifest that the repeated efflorescence and recession of micro-powers was not just some strange accident of time and place. The ecology of the region in which extremes of fragmentation contributed strongly to the consolidation of distinct local unities was a basic underlying cause of the political results: economic and social arrangements intensely bonded kinship units and militated against the development of vertically integrated urban elites. It is a pattern that can be traced back at least as early as the mid-first millennium BCE.[37] When substantial wealth and other resources poured

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Kontexte und Perspektiven, Stuttgart, 2009, 189-221: dating to some time before 78-79 CE, his funerary monument at Emesa reveals both architectural and iconographic idioms.

34 *CIL* 3.14387a = *ILS* 8958 (Heliopolis, Ba'albek): *Rei magno / C. Iulio Sohaemo, / regis magni Sam/sigerami f(ilio), Philo/caesari et Philo/[r]homaeo, honora/t[o ornam(entis)] consulari/b[us] .... / patrono coloniae, / II viro quinquenn(ali), / L(ucius) Vitellius L(ucii) f(ilius) / Fab(ia tribu) Soss[i]a[nus]*.

35 Strabo 16.2.10 (C 753).

36 Strabo 16.2.10 (C 752): When the senate turned against Antonius in 42 BCE, Cassius went east and was able to persuade Bassus, and the Caesarean generals Staius Marcius and Marcius Crispus, who were besieging Apamaea, to join him.

37 L. Marfoe, 'The Integrative Transformation: Patterns of Sociopolitical Organization in Southern Syria,' *BASOR* 234 (1979), 1-42, esp. the statements at 16-17, with concentration on the historical ecology of the Biqa' Valley, confirming in local detail some of the larger perspectives evident in P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of*

into the montane zones they tended to fragment upon entering it. They tended to consolidate the power of individual highland families and to discourage the formation and empowerment of urban elites.[38] The pattern has been repeated time and again down to the modern period of Ottoman rule. There seems to have been a close link between the fragmented ecology and systems of personal power in which local big men built networks of kin, friends, and neighbours that were 'confined to a small radius of action defined by the limits of local environments.'[39] Ecological forces in the highlands were disaggregative ones that encouraged local autonomy and the rise of figures of personal authority.[40] The montane emirates of the Ottoman period illustrate the same process whereby dendritic social networks and the 'replicative pattern of cellular units, each roughly uniform in area and in number of settlements, formed, in essence, the basis of feudal domains and hereditary chieftainships.'[41] The connections between environment and social structure remained strong well into the nineteenth century and even, partially, to more recent times.[42]

We might now turn our analysis to the mountainous zone of the Lebanon, to the Anti-Lebanon mountains, to the intervening plain, and to the place of the Ituraeans in this different ecology.[43] The whole southern region was regarded by outsiders as a preserve of ethnicity, although these external observers were uncertain as to what larger ethnic identity, Syrian or Arab, the local inhabitants ought to be assigned.[44] The main ethnic subgroup identified with the center of the region, however, were known as the Ituraeans.[45] The earliest reference to them comes in the Jewish historian Eupolemos who claims that they were among the peoples, like the Nabataeans, who had been subdued by King David.[46] But this notice, and the name of the people, is almost certainly a retrojection of later knowledge of Ituraeans into the distant past. Writing in the early 150s BCE, Eupolemos knew of the name and a recognized subregion associated with the people precisely because 'the Ituraeans' had recently emerged in tandem with the gradual fragmentation of the Seleucid state. It is not that there were no known peoples in the region before, but that the recognition of groups with specific named identities like

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Mediterranean History, Oxford, 2000, 54-59, and 88 (quoting the work of Marfoe (n. 37), 18.

38 Marfoe (n. 37), 7, refers to some striking modern examples of the phenomenon.

39 Ibid., 19.

40 Ibid., 22-25.

41 Ibid., 25-29, quotation from p. 27.

42 Exemplary of the immense bibliography concerning more recent times, see M. Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*, Berkeley, 1996.

43 See E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, rev. G. Vermes and F. Millar, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1973-87, vol. 1, 561-73. See E.A. Myers, *The Ituraeans and the Roman Near East: Reassessing the Sources*, Cambridge, 2010, chaps. 2-5, on the literary sources, archaeology, coins and inscriptions, respectively.

44 Plin. *NH* 5.23.81: Syrians; Dio 59.12.2: Arabs; Strabo 16.2.18 & 20 (C 755-56): Ituraeans and Arabs.

45 K. Butcher, 'The Ituraeans,' in *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London, 2003, 92-94.

46 *FGH* 723 F2: 673.

'Ituraean' is not found. In speaking of the violent inhabitants of the mountain and inland regions of the Lebanon in the later fourth century BCE, writers generally referred to the locals as 'Arabs.'[47] When Josephus first refers to Ituraeans by the name, it is in the context of the conflicts that followed in the process of the disintegration of Seleucid rule. Competition among and between emerging communities — in this case between the Hasmonaean state to the south under Aristoboulos and uncertain groups to the north — produced the conflict that created the identity.[48]

The southernmost of the three subdivisions of the Lebanon mountains encircle the plain of the Royal Valley located to the south and west of Damascus. This region marks the southern terminus of the Lebanon ranges properly speaking and their merging with rough hill lands that dominate the terrain south and west of Damascus. This highland zone was dominated in our period by one Zenodoros. In the earliest notices concerning Zenodoros, dating to the late 20s BCE, he is powerful and wealthy enough 'to lease' from Cleopatra (i.e. to pay tribute to her) part of the *oikos* of one Lysanias. His predicament went back to the mid- 30s BCE when Cleopatra had persuaded Antonius to put to death Lysanias, the tyrant of the region, so that she could seize his lands.[49] As was her wont in dealing with such acquisitions, she put her new lands out to lease, with the result that Zenodoros took them up.

We hear about Zenodoros at this time precisely because he was part of the second bandit episode of Herod's career as retailed by Josephus.[50] In this bandit story, Zenodoros' relationship to the brigands who operated out of Rough Zone is perhaps obscure, but it is presented as one of remote connections rather than outright identity with them. Zenodoros is said to have collaborated with the bandits living in Trachonitis, encouraging them to go on raiding expeditions against Damascus and its territory.[51] When the Damascenes appealed to Varro, the Roman governor of Syria, Augustus ordered him to exterminate the bandits. At some later time, after the repression had been successfully accomplished (probably after Zenodoros' death in c. 20 BCE) Augustus finally gifted the lands between the Galilee and Trachonitis to Herod.[52] In the version in the *Jewish War*, the emphasis is on the role of banditry in the Trachonitis and its repression by Roman authorities *before* the transfer of the fractious region to Herod. In the *Antiquities* account, on the other hand, Zenodoros, who is directly contrasted with Herod the 'good king', is made a much more prominent central figure of the story.

In the latter version, Josephus offers a "sociological" explanation of the causes and extent of the banditry in the Trachonitis. He first explains that the inhabitants of the region are poor and resourceless and then suggests that this is the primary reason why

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47 Quint. Curt. *Hist. Alex*. 4.2.24; Plut. *Alex*. 24; Arrian, *Anab*. 2.20.4

48 Joseph. *AJ* 13.318-19: where he tries to include them in the Jewish ethnic group by using the criterion of circumcision.

49 Joseph. *AJ* 15.4.1.92; *BJ* 1.22.440; Dio 49.32; Jones (n. 23), 271 and 461 n.58; probably in 37-36 BCE: Butcher (n.45), 38.

50 See Shaw, (n. 1), 188-89.

51 Joseph. *BJ* 1.398.

52 Joseph. *AJ* 15.10.1, 344-45; *BJ* 1.20.399-400; Strabo 16.2.20 (C 756); see Jones (n. 23), 271 and 461 n. 58.

they were compelled to engage in raiding at the expense of the Damascenes.[53] Josephus emphasizes the difficulty that any king would have had in repressing this brigandage, since banditry had become a customary pursuit for a people who had no other viable livelihood. According to him, the bandits had no towns or fields of their own, but only large underground caverns and shelters in which they lived along with their animals and in which they stowed the loot from their raids. Josephus draws a forbidding picture of the cave-dwelling habitations of the raiders: the harsh rock-strewn landscape in which the locals were forced to live. When external force became sufficient to contain their raiding on neighbouring communities, the bandits turned on each other, producing a state of *anomia* or lawlessness.[54] In this version, Zenodoros was no more able to control the life-style of the inhabitants of the region than was any other ruler. Even within this version, however, the putative distance between Zenodoros and the bandits is not entirely (narratively) "true", since Josephus portrays Zenodoros as a protector of the bandits, as someone who had connections with them in directing their operations, and as one who shared in their gains. He deliberately exploited banditry as a means of supplementing the revenues of his mini-state.[55]

Which perception or presentation in Josephus is the truer? That seems to be a matter of the angle of perspective and of who was doing the perceiving. This is the difference of perspective between the *Jewish War* version in which the Roman governor of Syria represses banditry in Trachonitis and then later hands the zone of dissidence over to Herod's control, and the version in the *Jewish Antiquities* that highlights the opposition of Herod and Zenodoros, that pictures Zenodoros himself as a bandit, and that explicitly credits Herod, not the Roman governor, with the repression of the bandits.[56] Strabo also reports the same behaviour of the Ituraean and Arab inhabitants of Trachonitis, whom he labels as 'barbarians' not bandits. He claims that it was their customary mode of life to rob and plunder not only Damascus and its hinterland, but also merchants on the road to and from Arabia Felix. 'But,' he reports, 'this is less the case now that the bandits attached to Zenodoros have been broken up both because of the good order established by the Romans and because of the safe conditions created by their soldiers in Syria.'[57] On this interpretation, Zenodoros is almost merged with the 'barbarians' and bandits whose repression produced the conditions of peace described by Strabo.

The sum of the evidence suggests that this Zenodoros was none other than the son of the tyrant Lysanias who had earlier ruled over the same region and who, from the perspective of more powerful states, held legitimate power over it.[58] What is more, Zenodoros' self-perception was manifestly not that of a bandit: he saw himself, rather, as

53 Joseph. *AJ* 15.344; the picture of the poverty of Ituraean lands gained some general purchase, appearing, for example, in Apul. *Flor*. 6.

54 Joseph. *AJ* 15.346-48.

55 Ibid., 15.344-45.

56 Ibid., 15.348, explicitly credits the restoration of conditions of peace and security in the region to Herod *after* he had received the gift from Augustus.

57 Strabo 16.2.20 (C 755).

58 *IGRR* 3.1085 = *IGLS* 2.851 (Heliopolis) mentions a Zenodoros son of the tetrarch Lysanias.

a legitimate ruler of the land. He later struck coins — an act which was in itself a signal of autonomy — on which he entitled himself 'Zenodoros the Tetrarch and High Priest.' The title of "tetrarch" was a further part of the self-representation of rulers like Zenodoros as fully legitimate men of power.[59] But the iconography of his coins, featuring the profile of Octavian on one side and the tetrarch's on the other, also signalled a growing dependence on the new Roman overlords.[60] As with the coins of the other Ituraean dynasts before him, Zenodoros' coins also reflected a cultural dichotomy. The tyrants were members of northwest Semitic ethnic groups living in the montane regions of the Lebanon. But their coins depict only Greek and Roman iconography of figural themes (usual mythological ones) and the legends are almost always written in Greek.[61] Their use of Hellenistic modes has been interpreted, surely correctly, as an attempt to signal a kind of political legitimacy in the monetary *koinē* of the age.[62]

The flatlands between the Lebanon and the anti-Lebanon ranges, lowlands lying to the west of the Trachonitis, formed the Massyas Plain. It is better known today as the Biqa' Valley, a riverine plain centered on the Nahr al-Litani. The depression runs along a line of about fifty miles northwards in the direction of Ba'albek, ancient Heliopolis. The valley is shielded from the centers on the coast by the Lebanon mountains, and from major centers to the east by the peaks of the anti-Lebanon. Although it is still in close proximity, only about twenty-five miles to the southeast, Damascus is in a distinctly different ecological zone. Here, too, the highlands were a reserve of autonomous ethnic power, especially the region around Chalkis which Strabo calls the *akropolis* of the Massyas. The mountainous terrain was inhabited by 'Ituraioi and Arabs,' all of whom, according to Strabo, were *kakourgoi* or bandits who had fortified strongholds in the highlands. From these strong points in the mountains, they were accustomed to raid the settlements of farmers in the plains below.[63] From the 90s and through the 80s BCE, the big strongman in this region was one Mennaios.[64] By the mid-80s, it was his son,

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59 A. Coskun, 'Die Tetrarchie als hellenistisch-römisches Herrschaftsinstrument. Mit einer Untersuchungen der Titulatur der Dynasten von Ituräa,' chap. 8 in E. Baltrusch and J. Wilker (eds.), *Amici-socii-clientes? Abhängige Herrschaft im Imperium Romanum*, Berlin, 2014.

60 Jones (n. 23), 271; Schürer – Vermes – Millar (n. 43), 1, 566; for the coins, see B.V. Head (with G.F. Hill, G. MacDonald and W.V. Wroth) (n. 19), 783-84: ΖΕΝΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΣ. The coins were issued only in bronze of a single weight, were of crude production, with occasional errors of spelling in the legends — they seem more a symbolic than a genuine currency.

61 D. Herman, 'The Coins of the Itureans,' *Israel Numismatic Research* 1 (2006), 51-72, at 53, refining the work of A. Kindler, 'Coins of the Ituraeans,' in T. Hackens and G. Moucharte (eds.), *Proceedings of the 11th International Numismatic Congress, Bruxelles, 1991*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993, 283-88.

62 See W. Schottroff, 'Die Ituräer,' *ZDPV* 98 (1982), 138.

63 Strabo 16.2.18 (C 755); see B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: the Roman Army in the East*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1992, 60-62, and for some interesting modern continuities.

64 For an historical guide, see G.M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa*, Berkeley, 2006, 241; for an outline of this dynastic family, see R.D. Sullivan, 'The Ituraeans,' in, *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome*, 206-08.

Ptolemaios, who was the main power in the region.[65] One of his occupations was the occasional raiding of the lowlands, in which he and his supporters threatened the coastal settlement of Berytos (Beirut) directly to the west, Botrys (Batrûn) to the northwest, and Damascus, in the hinterland, to the southeast.[66] To exert control over surrounding regions, Ptolemaios used not only threats of violence, but also the resources of kinship: the tyrant who controlled Tripolis (Tarabalûs) on the coast was a relative of his by marriage.[67] The only way the targeted communities could protect themselves was by having their leaders become *philoi* of Ptolemaios, by paying the tribute demanded by him or (which was not much better) by paying another big man to oppose him.[68] But how did a man like Ptolemaios son of Mennaios relate to men who possessed much greater power than his own?

The first serious threat to Ptolemaios came from the massive Roman intervention in the region in the mid-60s BCE led by Pompeius Magnus. As the great Roman marshal worked his way along the Levant coast towards Egypt, he sometimes used his superior power to terminate the powers of local big men — like the rule of the tyrant of Byblos that he ended by having the man beheaded.[69] Or there was the Jewish tyrant Silas, lord of a mountain fortress in the Lebanon, who suffered a similar fate. Dionysios, the strongman of Tripolis, and close relative of Ptolemaios, was another local tyrant whom Pompeius had beheaded.[70] Faced with a series of regime decapitations, how was Ptolemaios son of Mennaios to relate to the new Roman overlord of the East? He gave him a large gift, an outright payment of a thousand talents.[71] Why should Pompeius have responded favourably? For one thing, he understood the power relations typical of the eastern world well enough to manipulate local rulers. He established his reputation among them as a 'man of justice' who could be relied upon to forge relations based on 'trust' and to accept large gifts for himself and his friends.[72] Ptolemaios' overture to Pompeius succeeded. From that time, he regarded himself as a recognized king and he

65 I. Lévi, 'Tétrarques et grands-prêtres ituréens, ' in *Hommages à Jean Bidez et à Franz Cumont* , Brussels, 1949, 183-84.

66 Strabo 16.2.18 (C 755); see Schottroff (n. 62), 125-52, at 140.

67 Joseph. *AJ* 14.39, where Ptolemaios is called an *anēr ponēros* which, like 'evildoer = bandit' was a typical designation for this type of ruler.

68 Joseph. *AJ* 13.418 = *BJ* 1.115; somewhat earlier, around 85 BCE, the Damascenes had called on the Nabataean king Aretas to help them defend their interests against Ptolemaios: Joseph. *AJ* 13.392 = *BJ* 1.103.

69 Strabo 16.2.18 (C 755).

70 Joseph. *AJ* 14.39.

71 Joseph. *AJ* 14.39, which Pompeius then used to pay his own soldiers; Schottroff (n. 62), 40 n. 74, for comparison with other 'payments' to Roman commanders in the period.

72 See App. *Mithr.* 104, on Pompeius and Tigranes. But there were limits, and that is the critical difference. As with Ptolemaios' big gift, a good portion of the one given by Tigranes was redistributed to Pompeius's officers and men. When Tigranes later called on Pompeius as his *philos* against representatives of the Parthian king Phraates, who stressed that the king wished to establish *philia* with the Roman lord, Pompeius submitted the whole affair to the arbitration of the Senate at Rome: see App. *Mithr*. 105. That is to say, on the Roman side of the equation, the personal effects of *philia* passed through a screen of official legitimation.

began issuing his own coinage bearing the legend 'Ptolemaios Tetrarch and High Priest.' The coins date from 63 BCE, the year of his recognition by Pompeius.[73] The move signalled the decision by Ptolemaios to portray himself as a legitimate player in the new state world of the East.

In the decade following the intervention of the Roman overlord, Ptolemaios continued to behave much as he had before, but now, as a new state player, he moved to strike personal connections with the Jewish kingdom to the south. Josephus reports the sequel as follows: 'At about this time Ptolemaios son of Mennaios died, and his son Lysanias, on taking up his rule, forged a relationship of *philia* with Antigonos, son of Aristoboulos.'[74] Lysanias' relationships with the new Roman man of power in the east, Marcus Antonius, were less fortunate than those of his father: Antonius imposed a huge *phoros* on him and on all other dynasts in the region.[75] Under this stricter regime, Lysanias' days were numbered: in 34 BCE, he was assassinated at Antonius' behest.[76] By the mid-20s BCE, however, his son Zenodoros was once again in power over part of his father's former domains in the mountains of the Lebanon. The most plausible origin of his power was that, as son of Lysanias, he was forced 'to lease' what was left of his father's *oikos* from Cleopatra immediately after his father's assassination. Another Lysanias, who was perhaps one of Zenodoros' grandsons, held a northern part of the Lebanon mountains into the late 30s CE.

For a few years, centralized power in this region lay in abeyance. But not for long. In 38, Caligula confirmed the power of Sohaimos (Sohaemus) over the northerly stretch of the Lebanon mountains between Heliopolis and Laodicaea centered on Emesa (modern Homs). This territory continued to be held by a relative of the same name, and also the son of a Samsikeramos, until the early 70s.[77] Integration with the Roman state had become almost total, however, as his participation in the Romano-Jewish conflict of 66-72 shows.[78] The position of Heliopolis (modern Ba'albek) in these arrangements is critical, although not always manifest. But the long-term history of the mountains and the valleys below them is reasonably certain. The Augustan settlements removed these lands from the purview of the local big men whose power bases they had been and attached them to the cities on the coast and in the interior. Roman military expeditions led by commanders under the governor of Syria from 6 CE, men like P. Sulpicius Quirinius, worked their way into the mountain homes of the Ituraean chieftains and seized their

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73 Schürer – Vermes – Millar (n. 43), 1, 565.

74 Joseph. *AJ* 14.330 = *BJ* 1.249; Dio Cass. 49.32.5 calls him 'king of the Ituraioi'. Josephus adds the rider that in striking this bond of *philia* Lysanias simultaneously acquired 'influence' with the Parthian satrap Barzaphanes since Aristoboulos had 'influence' with him.

75 App. *BC*, 5.7: Antonius took a rather stricter line in these regions of the East; he imposed 'heavy tributes' on Cilicia, Coele-Syria, Palestine and Ituraea, and removed 'tyrants' from power in the cities of Syria.

76 Joseph. *AJ* 15.92 = *BJ* 1.440

77 Schürer – Vermes – Millar (n. 43), 1, 567-70; Dio 59.12.2 (Caligula's confirmation)

78 Joseph. *BJ* 2.500-02; 3.68; Tac. *Hist*. 5.1.2.

fortified castles from them.[79] Augustus established a Roman military colony at Berytos (Beirut) on the coast and assigned to it a large *territorium* in the hinterland that encompassed the Massyas Plain as far north as the source of the Orontes.[80] The great significance of this major Roman anchor-base on the coast has been noted: 'this colony, Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Berytus, not only was the sole colonial settlement in the Near East under Augustus, but represented by far the most profound and long-lasting Roman or Latin intrusion into the culture of the region in the entire Roman period.'[81]

In this arrangement, Heliopolis was no longer paired as the lowland base of a highland lord. Instead, it became an urban center that was now subservient to Berytos on the coast. And so it was to remain at least until the reign of Septimius Severus, when the allowance of colonial status to the inland center was made in the circumstances of what was a now different Roman Empire.[82] The Augustan geopolitical move was akin to the establishment of Caesarea Maritima on the coast to the south, and the subordination of the temple-city of Jerusalem in the interior to the harbor city that was later to become a Roman colony under Vespasian. Similarly, the colonial *territoria* of the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon were extended deep into the interior, with the lands under the control of Sidon actually touching those of Damascus in the interior. In this fashion, the hegemony of a large Mediterranean power was centered in cities along the coast which were to be the new interfaces with the lands in the interior — these latter were no longer left in the

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79 For example, the actions of Quintus Aemilius Secundus (*CIL* 3.6687 = *ILS* 2683, Beirut): …. *idem missu Quirini adversus Ituraeos in Libano monte castellum eorum cepi* … This officer helped carry out the census of Apamaea — as was done in the region of Judaea, as is well known from Luke: 2.1 and Joseph. *AJ* 17.13.3, 18.1.1 and 18.2.1. E.A. Knauf, 'The Ituraeans: Another Bedouin State,' in H. Sader, T. Scheffler and A Neuwirth (eds.), *Baalbek: Image and Monument, 1898-1998*, Beirut, 1998, 275, oddly mistakes Aemilius Secundus' voting tribe, the Palatina, for his personal name, and then mistakenly makes this fictitous person the subordinate of the governor of Syria. See, further, D.L. Kennedy, 'Demography, the Population of Syria and the Census of Q. Aemilius Secundus,' *Levant* 38 (2006), 109-24, at 112-115, for background and discussion of the inscription. My concern is not so much with his activities as *censitor* of Apamea, as with the fact that his activities in the mountains of the Lebanon were connected with the nesting of these areas under the province of Syria, all under the aegis of Quirinius.

80 See Isaac (n. 63), 318-21: the settlement of legionary veterans here by Agrippa as early as 15/14 BCE; and L. Hall, 'Berytus as *Colonia* and *Civitas*,' in *Roman Berytus: Beirut in Late Antiquity*, London – New York, 2004, 45-60, at 46-47.

81 See F. Millar, *The Roman Near East* 31 BC - AD 337, Cambridge MA, 1993, 36.

82 Ibid., 123-24: probably in the later 190s, it became *Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Heliopolis*, and it was surely freed from the control of Berytos on the coast at this point: see F. Millar, 'The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: A Study of Cultural Relations,' in H. Solin and M. Kajava (eds). *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History*, Helsinki, 1990, 7-58 = H.M. Cotton and G.M. Rogers (eds.), *Rome, the Greek World, and the East, 3: The Greek World, the Jews and the East*, Chapel Hill NC, 2006, 164-222, at 177-78 and 193-95.

control of the quasi-autonomous lords of the mountains.[83] In this way, the montane *tyrannoi* found themselves squeezed out of power in a process that was happening as part of the broader Augustan closure of the littoral regions of the Mediterranean.[84] The evangelist Luke noted that, as part of this process, the emperor Augustus assigned Trachonitis and southern Ituraea to be ruled by Philip, the son of Herod.[85]

By the mid-50s CE, the Roman state had foreclosed on most of these forms of personal rule from the rough lands of southeastern Cilicia to Trachonitis in southern Syria.[86] But there remained the problem of what was to be done with the violent men in the mountains of the Lebanon, with all those Ituraioi who had been labeled bandits by the state. The defanging of the men of power in the mountains was effected by driving a wedge between them and their violent servitors. We know part of the attempted solution. It had started as early as the big Roman move into the region in the years between Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Antonius. Roman commanders began to recruit the violent men as auxiliary fighters in the armed forces of the empire. The process began earlier yet, however, since the first mention of the Ituraeans is found in the account of Caesar's invasion of Africa.[87] Caesar's Ituraioi were later inherited by Marcus Antonius and, apparently, made part of his personal bodyguard. The employment of the Ituraean warriors is further evidence of personal links between the headmen and the Roman men of power.[88] The Ituraioi would soon be absorbed into the formal structure of the Roman imperial army.

From the early decades of the first century CE, large numbers of the Ituraioi are attested as *cohortes Ituraeorum*. These cohorts were made part of the Roman army and were shipped out of the Biqa' Valley to serve in the policing of distant regions of the empire.[89] Sometimes they were dispatched to analogous environments, although far removed from the Lebanon: they were sent to the desert frontiers of Egypt and to the Saharan borderlands of the *limes* in North Africa. But sometimes they were transferred to more forbidding climates: to the cold and to the remote (as far as they saw it, to be sure)

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83 On the colony of Berytos see Strabo 16.2.19 (C 756); later granted *Ius Italicum*: *Dig*. 50.15.1.1; 7.8.3; see also Head (n. 19), 790; on the evidence for the extension the coastal cities' *territoria* into the interior, see Jones (n. 23), 461 n. 59.

84 M. Coltelloni-Trannoy, *Le Royaume de Maurétanie sous Juba II et Ptolémée (25 av. J.-C.)*, Paris, 1997, and my remarks in *Gnomon* 72 (2000), 422-23, on the case of the Mauretanias.

85 Luke 3:1: 'In the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governing Judaea, when Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene…'.

86 The Tarcondimotids had disappeared by this time, following the absorption of their region into the Roman provincial system: Wright (n. 15), 73.

87 Ps.-Caes. *Bell. Afr*. 20.1: … *sagittariisque ex omnibus navibus Ityraeis Syris et cuiusque generis*….

88 Cic. *Phil*. 2.19; 2.112; 13.18.

89 E. Dabrowa, 'Cohortes Ituraeorum', *ZPE* 63 (1986), 221-30, is the now standard treatment; E.A. Myers, 'Inscriptions Relevant to the Roman Auxiliary Units,' in Myers (n. 43) 180-85, offers a reasonably complete summation.

northern marchlands of the Rhine and the Danubian frontier.[90] These recruits are already found at Moguntiacum (Mainz) as early as the first decades of the first century CE.[91] As a means of permanently emasculating local sources and forms of personal power, this was a short-term solution. But the draining off of potential violent manpower was nonetheless significant. This recruiting by the Roman state was happening at the same time to other ethnic groups in this same region. The Hamii and the *cohortes Hamiorum* were another case.[92] There were at least five mounted cohorts of archers and perhaps a separate cavalry wing of Ituraeans who served in the imperial army, units that would have to be maintained by the on-going recruiting.[93] The significant point is that this armed interface between the empire and the Ituraioi is also the last evidence that we have for them as an ethnic group. With the last Ituraioi recorded in the last military diplomas appearing in the 160s, the Ituraioi, under this name, disappear from the historical record.[94]

Ethnic continuities do exist, but they must be considered with care and attention to the peculiarities of each historical situation, to understand what they suggest about long-term structures of power. The interstitial regions opening up in the aftermath of the fragmenting Seleucid hegemony permitted, even encouraged the emergence of local powers that gradually began to form into proto-states.[95] Most of the bandits well enough known to find a place in the historical writings of the time were, in reality, men involved in the formation of these nascent proto-states. For this very reason, their legitimacy was

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90 For the Ituraean auxiliary units that left some evidence of their presence on the Rhine, see Schottroff (n. 62), 125-29, 148-49.

91 See ibid., 127-28.

92 A.R. Birley, 'The *Cohors I Hamiorum* in Britain,' *AC* 55 (2012), 1-16, at 2-4, where he reviews the history of recruiting among the Hamii whose home center of Hama(th), Hellenistic Epiphaneia, was about 110 miles north of Damascus on the Orontes.

93 It has been conventionally assumed that recruits for the *Ituraean auxilia* would have continued to have been drawn from their home region for some time because of the peculiar talents of these soldiers. It must be admitted, however, that there is little actual evidence in support of the assumption: D.L. Kennedy, 'The Military Contribution of Syria to the Roman Imperial Army', in D. French and C. Lightfoot (eds.), *Proceedings of the Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire Colloquium*, (Oxford, 1989, 235-46, at 241-42.

94 This is also partly a correlate of the abandonment of the use of so-called military diplomas in this same decade. Egyptian papyri confirm the continued presence of 'Ituraean' auxiliary troopers into the early Severan period. But this does not gainsay the simple point being made here about military service being the core container and preserver of ethnic identity. Other later references to them, such as that found in Dio 59.12.2 — the land given to Sohaimos was that of the 'Ituraean Arabs' — only reflects their need to cite earlier sources, not their access to contemporary ones. Other references are much like the useless one in the HA, *Aur.* 11.3: *habes sagittarios Ityr<a>eos trecentos*. It is found in a wholly invented and fictitious letter, taken seriously by some: e.g. Knauf (n. 79), 269-77, at 275; and Myers (n. 43), 38.

95 In saying this, I must note my skepticism of Knauf's concept of the Ituraioi as a 'Bedouin state' (Knauf [n. 79], 276-77). This is not what I mean. For more doubts in a comparable case, see M.C.A. Macdonald, 'The Nabataean Kingdom: a "Bedouin State"?,' *ZDPV* 107 (1991), 102-19.

tenuous and outsiders could easily merge them with the status of more nebulous and ill-formed groups of raiders and plunderers. The inquiry with which we are concerned therefore must not focus on these men in isolation. In such a case, these tyrants would represent either local big men or tiny independent entities in their own right. For us, the important question concerns the position of each emerging center of local power at the point when its ruler faced the powerful intrusion of much larger territorial states, especially a more institutionalized one like the Roman empire. In this situation, holders of local power found themselves confined in a physical space with peculiar ecological constraints and caught in a temporal space of three to four generations duration. Whatever their pretentions to formal state power, the short term blossoming and contraction of proto-states in the temporary spatial interstices left the local power holders exposed to labelling as bandits by superior powers.

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