

Community, Religion and Language in the Middle-Euphrates Zone in Late Antiquity

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1. Introduction

This paper aims, first, to assess the scattered literary and epigraphic evidence for the society of the middle-Euphrates zone in the Late Empire; then to ask whether we can find there contrasting social groups, designated by distinct ethnic names, and (perhaps) marked out by diverse social, linguistic or religious structures; and, thirdly, to discuss how we should understand the very striking patterns of social diversity which we do in fact encounter. In particular, should the concept of 'Diaspora' play a significant part? Are some of the groups which can be identified — Greeks, Syrians, Jews, and Arabs or Saracens — to be seen as immigrants, either settling as subordinate elements in a world dominated by others, or themselves arriving as a dominant group, imposing foreign social and linguistic structures on an indigenous population? In considering all these questions, we cannot ignore the sheer length of time which had elapsed since Alexander's army had crossed the Euphrates in 332 BCE. This study will take as its main focus the middle decades of the fifth century CE, uniquely illuminated by the evidence from the *Acta* of the Oecumenical Councils: Ephesus I and II in 431 and 449, and Chalcedon in 451. It was thus not far short of eight centuries since Greek military and political dominance had first been established in the Near East, and since Greek city-foundations in this region had begun. Similarly, Roman forces had reached the Euphrates in the first century BCE, half a millennium earlier, had established forts along the northern stretch of the middle Euphrates in the first-century-and-a-half CE, and had then extended their occupation both eastwards across Osrhoene and Mesopotamia and south-eastwards down the river, as far as the area north and south of Dura-Europos.¹

So, given that, as is undeniable, there were indeed distinct ethnic and linguistic communities in this zone in Late Antiquity, which (if any) were the 'Diasporic' elements, and which the indigenous? For instance, it is natural, and may be right, to think of speakers of Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, as the indigenous element, and of Greek as the language of dominant outsiders. But the earliest known Syriac inscription dates only to CE 6, while a network of Greek cities had already become established in the area in the course of the previous three centuries. We know only one of them 'from the inside': Dura-Europos — and in this case the evidence shows that the normal language used for both formal inscriptions and graffiti had been Greek; that Palmyrene had also been used, but only by immigrant Palmyrenes there; that Aramaic (and Hebrew) had been used by the Jewish community; that the one extensive Syriac document found there, a deed of sale of CE 243, had in fact been written in Edessa; that Latin had appeared, on a large

¹ For this process see F. Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 BC-AD 337*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993, 99f.

scale, after the arrival of Roman forces in the 160's; and that there is nothing whatsoever to suggest that Aramaic, or any dialect of it, was the normal language of the mass of the inhabitants.²

Dura-Europos, in the period with which we will be concerned, no longer existed; it was a *civitas deserta* in Persian territory, past which Julian's forces marched in CE 363 (Ammianus XXIV.1.5). The Roman frontier with the Sasanid Empire had retreated north from its greatest extent, and now stretched down-river only as far as Circesium, at the confluence of the Chabur and the Euphrates. The 'middle-Euphrates zone', as defined here is shaped by the Roman frontier, thus including the small cities along the Euphrates from Circesium up-river to Samosata, but also those of Osrhoene, situated around the headwaters of the two rivers which flowed into the Euphrates, the Balikh and the Chabur. (Nisibis, lying further East, had been lost to the Persians in CE 363.) Hence we are concerned, on the east side of the Euphrates, with the Late Roman province of Osrhoene, with its civil and ecclesiastical *metropolis* at Edessa.

Roman provincial structures will equally serve to define what is meant by the 'middle-Euphrates zone' on the west side of the river, namely the eastern part of the province of Euphratensis (or Euphratesia in Greek) whose *metropolis* was Hierapolis, and which had been carved out of the north-eastern area of Syria at a disputed date in the Tetrarchic or Constantinian period.³ In the north, it stretched up to the foothills of the Taurus, and in the northwest as far as Cyrrhus, the bishopric of the major theologian and church historian, Theodoret, and Germanicia, the native city of Nestorius. In the south it extended to Resafa, or Rosafa, lying in the steppe on the route between Palmyra and the Euphrates at Susa; this was a bishopric in the fifth century, but it was only in the sixth century that it was to be renamed 'Sergiopolis'.⁴ In the south, the western boundary of Euphratensis, running across the area of basalt steppe between the Orontes and the Euphrates, will serve somewhat arbitrarily to define the zone with which we are

² For a summary account of Dura in the Parthian and the Roman period, see Millar, *op. cit.*, 445f.; *idem*, 'Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule', in J. Wiesehöfer (ed.), *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse*, Stuttgart 1998, 473-492. For the Palmyrene presence there, see L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*, Leiden 1999; for the Jewish element, C.H. Kraeling (ed.), *Dura Final Report VIII.1: the Synagogue*², New Haven 1979, and D. Noy and H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Iudaicae Orientis III: Syria and Cyprus*, Tübingen 2004, Section 4 (133-212). For the Syriac parchment, see H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene: Texts, translation and commentary*, Leiden 1998, Appendix I (231f.). For the concept of 'diaspora' as applied to Dura, and as re-applied elsewhere throughout this paper, see M. Sommer, 'Dura-Europos e il medio Eufrate. Osservazioni su diaspora e costruzioni di identità culturali nella Mesopotamia parto-romana', *Mediterraneo Antico* 7.2 (2004), 837-857.

³ For a valuable recent account of Commagene, and then of the (considerably more extensive) area encompassed within Euphratensis, see now A. Breitenbach and S. Ristow, 'Kommagene (Euphratesia)', in *RAC* 163 (2004), cols. 233-73. I am very grateful to Dr. Margherita Facella (Pisa) for this reference.

⁴ For this very important site see E.K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran*, Berkeley 1999, an evocative study which, as we will see below, unfortunately misidentifies which place is being referred to in important documents of the 430's.

concerned. Seen from a different direction, this area is part of a wider zone, east of the Orontes, where Roman military occupation, the extension of settlement and construction and the spread of the Church were all significant, and interlinked, features of the Late Imperial period.⁵ Two places lying out in the steppe which were in fact Episcopal sees, Gabboula and Anasartha,⁶ thus fall outside the area concerned, as does Palmyra, now another small Greek provincial town with a bishop;⁷ and Androna, a major settlement which was not a city, and had no bishop.⁸ These four places were beyond the boundary of Euphratensis.

The 'middle-Euphrates zone' is thus defined for present purposes partly by physical geography: it is the stretch of the river between the Taurus gorge in the north and its confluence with the Chabur in the south, and includes those cities which lay on its two major tributaries on the East, the Chabur itself and the Balikh; and equally the area of steppe to its west. Secondly, it is defined by the fifth-century configuration of the Roman Empire, and of the two provinces of Euphratensis and Osrhoene. But the main focus will be on the line of small, and mainly little-known, cities which were situated on the river or near it. Cyrrhus, illuminated indirectly by the extensive works of Theodoret, will play no part, as (like Germanicia) lying too far to the west (and in an area from which no tributaries flowed into the Euphrates); and the very extensive evidence, in Greek and Syriac, for Edessa will be used only selectively. As will be seen, the evidence combines to illustrate how profound was the long-term influence of Alexander's conquests and of early Hellenistic settlement. The dominant social structure along the river, and on either side of it, was the Greek City, whose Greek identity is expressed most clearly in Late Antiquity in the language of Church and of the bishops of each see. Other social, religious or linguistic elements have to be seen against that framework. But we must also not forget another framework, whose role is fundamental: the Roman Imperial army, whose forces garrisoned a significant proportion of the known cities, and occupied forts at intervals along the roads. The social influence of the army is of obvious

⁵ See the classic studies of R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis: Organisation de la steppe en Haute Syrie romaine I-II*, Paris 1945, and A. Poidebard, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie: le limes de Trajan à la conquête arabe*, Paris 1934, and now B. Geyer (ed.), *Conquête de la steppe et appropriation des terres sur les marges arides du Croissant Fertile*, Lyon 2001.

⁶ See the account of each of these two places by P.-L. Gatier, "'Grande" ou "petite Syrie Seconde"? Pour une géographie historique de la Syrie intérieure protobyzantine", in Geyer (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 5 above), 91-109, on 97-8. For Anasartha see also D. Feissel, 'Les martyria d'Anasartha', in *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron (Travaux et Mémoires 14)*, Paris 2002), 201-220.

⁷ For Late Roman Palmyra, where excavations continue, see the excellent survey by S.P. Kowalski, 'Late Roman Palmyra in Literature and Epigraphy', *Studia Palmyrénskie 10* (1997), 39-62.

⁸ Androna is also the site of important current excavations, conducted by Marlia Mundell Mango in parallel with a German team under Chr. Strube. For the most recent reports see M.M. Mango, 'Excavations and Survey at Androna, Syria: The Oxford Team 2000', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 57* (2003), 293-297; Chr. Strube, 'Androna/al Andarin. Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen in der Jahren 1997-2001', *Arch. Anz.* (2003), 25-115.

importance for the Eastern frontier zone.⁹ But in this period we have no documentation to compare with that from second- to third-century Dura, and which might allow us to see the army 'from inside', and to assess the geographical and social origins of the soldiers, or the nature of their dealings with the civilian population. So we see the army units present in the area only from the outside, in the list presented in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (where many of the place-names can in any case not be identified), or in occasional references in literary sources. Two of these sources, however, serve to offer particularly vivid narrative representations of life and conditions in one part of this remote frontier zone, and we turn to these first.

2. Two Christian Narratives

The two narratives concerned, both in Greek, recount events occurring on the lower-middle Euphrates around its confluence with the Balikh, and along the route which led south from Sura across the steppe to Resafa, Oresa and eventually Palmyra (see Map 1). For the combined imprint of Greek city life and of the Roman army in this area, it should be stressed that Barbalissus, Neocaesarea, Sura, Callinicum, Resafa and (outside our area of immediate concern) Palmyra were all Episcopal sees, and hence must have counted as *poleis*;¹⁰ and that legions were stationed at Sura and Oresa at the beginning of the fifth century, and auxiliary units at Neocaesarea, Callinicum and Resafa.¹¹ Remote as it was, this zone, which, along with Circesium further south-east down the river, represented the easternmost context of the long-term implantation of the Greek City, was thus firmly within the sphere both of the Empire itself and of the Greek-speaking Church (for the latter point, see below).

The first of the two narratives to consider is the *Life* of Alexander Akoimetos (the 'non-sleeper').¹² Written, as it seems, in the later fifth century, with a substantial episode concerning bishop Rabbula of Edessa probably having been inserted later, this vivid and novelistic *Life* gains credibility from the confirmation of one detail (see below) by a bilingual inscription from the banks of the Euphrates, and from the undisputed fact that its protagonist did reach Constantinople in the third decade of the fifth century, and founded a famous monastery of 'non-sleepers' there.

In the relevant section of the *Life* (22-35) Alexander is found first at Edessa, where Rabbula has established theological schools functioning in Syriac (see below); Alexander converts a band of brigands, and establishes them in a monastery, and then makes a two-day journey to the Euphrates, on whose banks he founds another monastery,

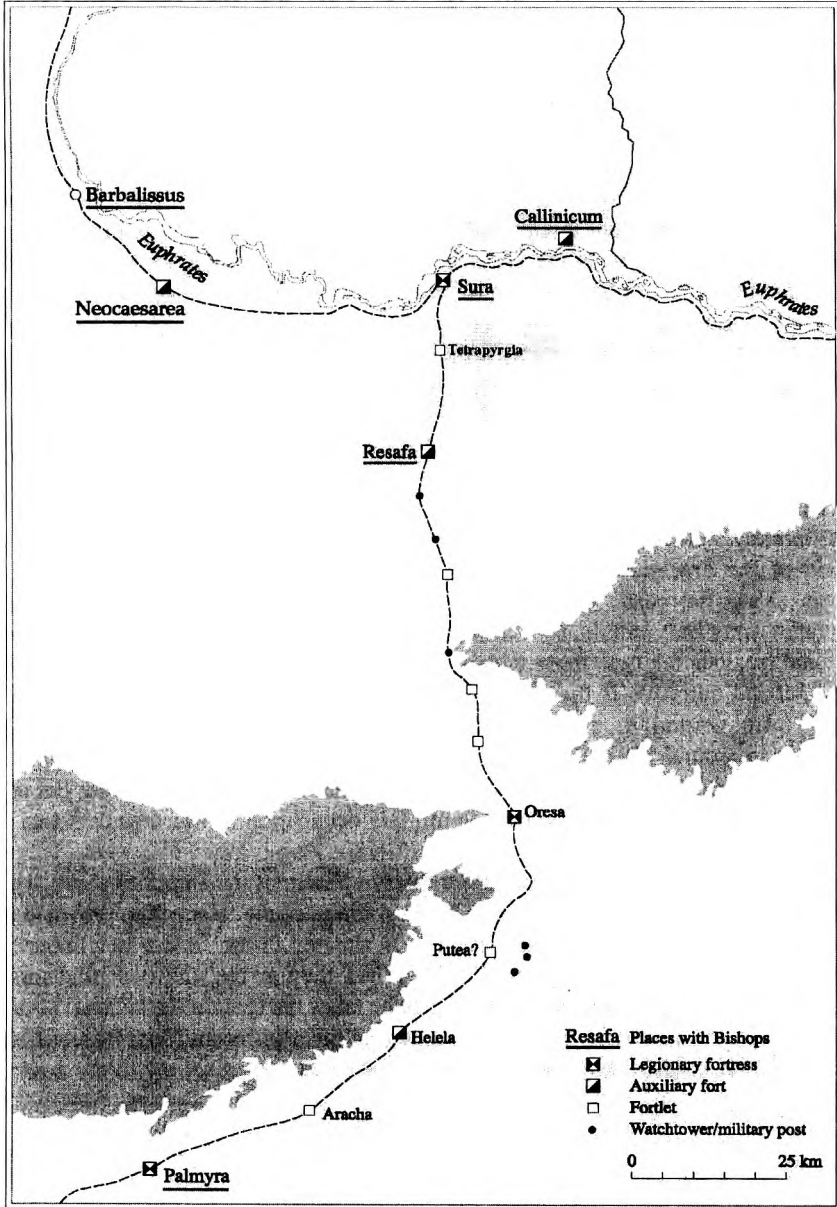
⁹ For a sketch of the dispositions of Roman forces at the beginning of the fifth century see the relevant sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum: Or.* XXXIII (forces under Dux Syriae et Euphratensis Syriae) and XXXIV (forces under the Dux Osrhoenae).

¹⁰ For the Episcopal sees of Euphratensis and Osrhoene I depend on the priceless reference work of G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis* II, Padova 1988, 782-821.

¹¹ *ND* XXXIII.23 (Oresa); 25 (Barbalissus); 26 (Rosafa); 28 (Sura); XXXV.16 (Callinicum).

¹² Ed. and Latin trans. by E. de Stoop, *PO* VI, 1911, 643-701; English translation in D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 2002, Appendix (249-80). See esp. P.L. Gatier, 'Un moine sur la frontière, Alexandre l'Acémète en Syrie', in A. Rousselle (ed.), *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l'Antiquité*, Perpignan 1995, 435-457.

Map 1



where he stays for twenty years, and is joined by ‘Romans’, ‘Hellenes’, ‘Suroi’ and ‘Egyptians’ (a small foretaste of the complexities of ethnicity in this period). The narrative seems on the face of it to imply that the monastery was on the western bank, and that when he then re-crosses the river, and heads off ‘into the Persian desert’, he will be on the left bank. But, whether the author had a clear conception of the geography or not, the inscription of CE 471 recording ‘the monastery of the blessed Alexander’ (see below) was in fact found on the left bank; and the journey which Alexander now makes takes him along a line of Roman *kastelloi* placed at intervals of 18 *semeia*, and leads him eventually to Palmyra (35) — so in fact he crossed from the left bank to the right, and took a route lying to the west of the river. The story provides a vivid picture of islands of military strong-points and of urban settlements surrounded by desert, within which starvation is an ever-present threat, and outside of which barbarians and brigands roam. Alexander travels along what the Greek text calls the *limiton*, and reaches a *kastron*, in which some of the rich inhabitants cause the itinerant monks to be shut out. Three years of drought follow, as a warning, but they persist. Since the place has a bishop (*episkopos*), it is probably Resafa, rather than Oresa. Given their obstinacy, further punishment follows: their children fall sick and die, their herds are driven away by *barbaroi*, and their houses are sacked by *lestai*. Subsequently (the chronology is far from clear) Alexander and his followers reach Palmyra, where the inhabitants, ‘being Jews under the name of Christians’, shut the gates on them for fear of being unable to feed them all. But God rescues the monks by sending *kamelarioi* from a distance of four stages (*monai*) to supply them with food. Novelistic as it is, the story offers a vivid impression of the precariousness of life in the small forts and settlements stretching at intervals along the road. Whatever the author means to imply by saying that the Palmyrenes were only nominally Christians, but really Jews, his remark clearly reflects communal tensions felt both more widely and (see below) in the Euphrates zone itself.¹³

The second narrative is the martyrdom of Sergius and Bacchus, also in Greek, and probably also written in the fifth century (and surely before Resafa was renamed Sergiopolis in around 530). The story is set in the context of the Tetrarchic persecutions, but has little claim to literal truth, and is best read not as a historical record, but as providing a vivid novelistic evocation of the military occupation of this area as it was at the time of writing.¹⁴

In the story Sergius and Bacchus are military officers at the Imperial court, who are discovered to be Christians, and are sent off to Antiochus, the ‘*dux* of the province of the Augoustoeuphratesioi’ (ch. 2). This province is situated in the ‘*limita* neighbouring on the people (*ethnos*) of the Sarakenoi’ (13). When they arrive, the two prisoners find Antiochus in the *kastron* of Barbalissus, where he takes his seat on the tribunal (*bema*) in his *praetorium* and examines them, without getting them to recant (16); Bacchus is then flogged to death (17-18). On the next day Antiochus is due to set off to the *kastron* of

¹³ For the striking degree of unease felt in the Greek Church about the continued presence, and perceived threat, of Jewish communities, see F. Millar, ‘Christian Emperors, Christian Church and the Jews of the Diaspora in the Greek East, CE 379-450’, *Journ. Jew. St.* 55 (2004), 1-24.

¹⁴ For the Greek text see I. van de Gheyon, ‘Passio antiquior SS. Sergii et Bacchi graece nunc primum edita’, *AB* 14 (1895), 373-395.

Sura, and has Sergius brought with him; at Sura, Sergius is again cross-questioned in the *praetorium*, with the same, negative, result (20-2). Then the *dux* moves to Tetrapyrgia, a *kastron* nine miles from Sura (the site has been clearly identified as the remains of a fort at Qusair as-Saila).¹⁵ At Tetrapyrgia the order to sacrifice is again refused, and Sergius is made again to run in front of the *dux*'s carriage (*ochēma*) for the further nine miles to the *kastron* of Rosafa (25). At Rosafa, Sergius is finally executed, and his body is burned, apparently outside the walls. People from Sura come to try to steal the body, but fire breaks out, witnessed by soldiers from the local unit, and they are frustrated. At this stage a tomb is built, evidently still outside the walls (as was normal). But at some unspecified later time a meeting of fifteen bishops decides to have a *martyrion* for Sergius built inside the *kastron*; healings take place there, and a festival is held each year on the anniversary of his death (30). The entire text reflects local competition for the cult of a martyr whose fame rapidly spread more widely (as we will see below, there was a shrine to Sergius at Hierapolis and another near Samosata, both already in the 430's). Christian piety had added a new element to the long-established pattern of rivalry between neighbouring cities.

3. The Greek Cities and the Greek Church

The middle-Euphrates zone is far too poorly documented (and relatively few sites there have been excavated), for it to be possible to write anything resembling a history of settlement since the conquest by Alexander, or still less to give an account of the context in which any of the known settlements acquired city status. (The Euphrates papyri of the mid-third century offer the striking example of a place called Appadana which in the early 250's suddenly appears as a city with *bouleutai* and the name 'Neapolis'; there is however no trace of it in the fourth-fifth centuries).¹⁶ Taking those places which are attested as having had bishops in the fifth century as a (reasonably) reliable list of places recognised as *poleis* is therefore a convenient procedure, which carries with it no assertion that there were not other places whose bishops happen not to be attested, or that those places which had the status of *polis* were necessarily more substantial urban-type settlements than other places which did not. But a list of the places known to have had bishops does immediately give an impression of the remarkable diffusion of 'the Greek City' in this remote area, eight centuries after Alexander. The *metropoleis* of the two provinces are listed first in each case, with the others following in an approximate north-south order (see Map 2):

¹⁵ See the study by M. Konrad, 'Römische Grenzpolitik und die Besiedlung in der Provinz Syria Euphratensis', in Geyer, *op. cit.* (n. 5 above), 145-158; and also, with an excellent local map, *idem*, 'Research on the Roman and Early Byzantine Frontier in North Syria', *JRA* 12 (1999), 392-410. For full reports see *Resafa V*: M. Konrad, *Der spätrömische Limes in Syrien. Archäologische Untersuchungen an den Grenzkastellen von Sura, Tetrapyrgium, Cholle und in Resafa*, Mainz 2001.

¹⁶ See P. Euphr. 3-4, published by D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'archives romaines inédits du Moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.)', *Journal des Savants* (1995), 65-119, on 94-107.

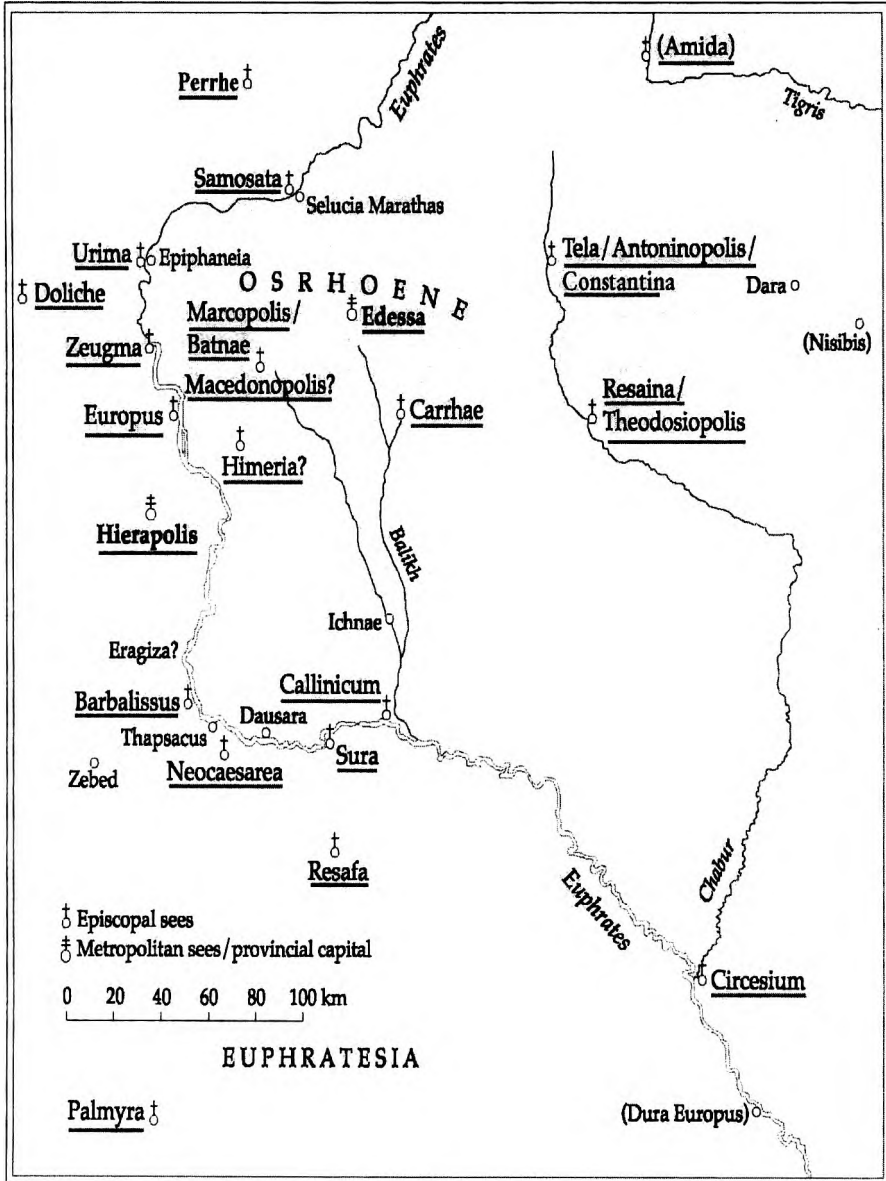
| (a) Euphratensis (Euphratesia) | (b) Osrhoene |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hierapolis | Edessa |
| Perrhe | Tela/Antoninopolis/Constantina |
| Doliche | Theodosiopolis/Rhesaina |
| Urima | Marcopolis |
| Zeugma | Batnae |
| Europus | Macedonopolis |
| Barbalissus | Carrhae |
| Neocaesarea | Himeria (location unknown) |
| Sura | Callinicum |
| Resafa (Rosafa) | Circesium |

Even though the list omits places situated in the broad and relatively fertile zone of north-west Euphratensis, such as Cyrrhus and Germanicia, which belong to the Fertile Crescent, but not to the middle-Euphrates zone itself, we are still presented with a list of twenty *poleis* situated in a geographical and ecological environment which is strikingly diverse from the original homeland of 'the Greek City'. Having said that, we have to admit that for the Late Antique period, Edessa apart,¹⁷ we have little or no direct evidence for their functioning, in the secular sphere, as Greek cities. So far as the author can determine, there is for these cities, as they were in the fourth-fifth centuries, no epigraphic record of city office-holders, of the city council, or (for instance) of statue-bases with inscriptions honouring prominent individuals. Nor do we have any but the most minimal evidence for public buildings, or for their overall character as minor urban centres. In a way which may seem paradoxical, the most extensive and consistent evidence for their identity as Greek cities is provided by the record of their (almost entirely) Greek-speaking bishops, as revealed by the *Acta* of the fifth-century Church councils (see below). Moreover, it happens that the *Acta* of Ephesus I, as edited by Eduard Schwartz, include an entire archive of official and Episcopal letters of CE 431-435/6, preserved in a sixth-century Latin translation, and focusing mainly on Euphratensis and its metropolis, Hierapolis (for the details see the Appendix). The archive owes its existence to a polemical contemporary history, with the title *Tragoedia*, written by Irenaeus, who was an Imperial official and lay participant, on the 'Nestorian' (or 'two-nature') side, at the Council of Ephesus of 431.

The letters all reflect the aftermath of this Council, and the attempt by Theodosius II to pressure the conflicting devotees of the 'two-nature' and 'one-nature' Christology in the Church to adopt a formula of reconciliation, and then to compel reluctant bishops to conform to it. Little of the correspondence overtly reflects the life of any one of the cities as such. But some of it does, and we may take as an example the report (*relatio*) of Libanius, the *iudex (praeses)* of Euphratensis, addressed to Titus, Comes and Vicarius, on public mourning in Hierapolis after its bishop, Alexander, had been deposed on Imperial orders for refusing to accept the formula of reconciliation (it may be noted that

¹⁷ For Edessa see E. Kirsten, 'Edessa. Eine römische Grenzstadt des 4. bis 6. Jahrhunderts im Orient', *JAC* 6 (1963), 144-172; J.B. Segal, *Edessa, the 'Blessed City'*, Oxford 1970.

Map 2



what is preserved is a sixth-century Latin re-translation of Irenaeus' Greek translation of a document originally written in Latin). The sixth-century editor, Rusticus, begins this section (para. 274) with a brief summary of the introduction provided by the original author of the collection, Irenaeus:¹⁸

A second *relatio*, he [Irenaeus] says, of the governor of Euphratesia, which, acknowledging the disturbance of the city caused by the departure of the most holy bishop Alexander, he sent to the most magnificent Comes of Oriens, also communicating the *acclamations* of the populace directed both at himself and at the most magnificent Comes, Titus, and also at the bishop of Antioch himself.

Hierapolis, in conformity with its loyalty and spurred by its impulse to piety, has yielded to the divine [Imperial] initiative and the magnificent order [from Titus], with sorrow. Now however it asks for pity, and if this is granted stresses its longing for the aged Alexander, raising sounds of mourning throughout the streets, bathing the ground in tears and all but daring to presume to a degree on the [Imperial] divinity. For the city has not gone through the customary expression of thanks, and has withdrawn, closing the holy churches and acting in the manner of someone who seeks to claim pardon... For the sacred sites are packed and the customary (places of assembly?) filled. What is more, I have inspected petitions laid before me under oath on the part of all who are regarded as respectable (*boni*) and who pray for their father, and petition that they may be tended by him who brought them up from boyhood as a most gentle teacher...

We may gain from this a powerful impression of the sense of community which could bind a Christian city to its bishop, without (as above) hearing anything of specific office-holders or institutions. Yet we do find evidence as regards at least three places, Samosata, Zeugma and Edessa, of town-councillors (*bouleutai* or *politeuomenoi*), if not of actual meetings of a *boule*. For instance, writing to the town-councillors (*politeuomenoi*) of Samosata in 374, in a period of Arian success as against the 'orthodox', Basil the Great, as bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, praises them for their steadfastness, saying that there is no *bouleuterion* as sound as theirs (*Ep.* 183). In the next year he writes again to the clergy of the city, during the exile of their bishop Eusebius (see below), and evokes an image of the interlinked secular and Christian communal structures of the city: 'all the people of God, those in *axiomata* and *dunasteiai politikai* and the whole complement of clergy' (*Ep.* 219.2). As regards Zeugma in Euphratensis, Theodoret records that Publius, who took to an ascetic life in the mid-fourth century, had come from 'bouleutic' rank in the city; while he also writes two letters to *politeuomenoi* there. In the first, addressed to Eulalius, Germanus and Proteus, he expresses indignation at the report that marriages between cousins, or between uncles and nieces, are being entered into there (which was forbidden, even if Imperial permission were sought); the second is an extensive letter on Christian doctrine addressed to a group of *politeuomenoi* of Zeugma, named Aphthonios, Theodoritos, Nonnos, Skylakios, another Aphthonios and Ioannes.¹⁹ Like all of Theodoret's

¹⁸ For this material see the text in E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* I.4, Berlin 1922, nos. 81-294 (25-225), and some preliminary remarks in F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408-450)*, Berkeley 2006, 168f. and App. I.

¹⁹ Theodoret, *Historia Philotheos* V (Publius); *Epp.* VIII and III.126 (Zeugma).

correspondence, the letters are in Greek, and neither this nor any other evidence suggests other than that the dominant culture of the city remained Greek.

By contrast, the Christian culture of Edessa, the metropolis of Osroene, was bilingual, in Greek and Syriac; though even here there are strong reasons for regarding Greek as having been still the dominant language deployed in the public life of the Church. A Hellenistic foundation, as its Greek name also shows, the city had become a Roman *colonia* in the early third century. Viewed from the centre of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, it was a Greek city like any other. An Imperial letter of 375 and another of 384 dealt with the question of obligation to serve on the *curia* (town council) of Edessa, as opposed to entry to the Imperial service.²⁰ In the fifth century the *Acta* of the second session of the Second Council of Ephesus of August 449, preserved in an early Syriac translation of the Greek original, record scenes in Edessa earlier in 449 which had involved mass popular acclamations against their bishop, Ibas, and a prominent role for the local *politeuomenoi* (transliterated as PLYT'WMNW) and notables — *axiomatikoi* (W'KSYWMṬYQW).²¹ All the public exchanges before the governors, and all the popular demonstrations, are implicitly described as taking place in Greek, with the fact that bishop Ibas had written a letter in Syriac, or that another bishop, Uranius of Himeria, spoke in Syriac and needed a translator, being specifically mentioned.²²

For the other cities concerned, we have no direct evidence for their functioning as remote and marginal examples of 'the Greek City'.²³ It is when we turn to the incomparably fuller evidence for the public role of their bishops, at least as regards communications with the wider Greek Church, that we see just how profound and long-lasting the legacy of Alexander had been. Without attempting to collect all the evidence for these bishops, available in Fedalto's magnificent reference work on the bishoprics of the Orthodox Church, from its origins to the present,²⁴ we may pick out three significant concentrations of evidence from the fourth-fifth centuries: the correspondence of Basil the Great; the *Tragoedia* of Irenaeus, focused on Euphratensis in 431-435/6 (see above); and the *Acta* of the Council of Chalcedon of 451, quoting long sections from the Second Council of Ephesus in 449, and from other proceedings in 448/9. What Episcopal correspondence, conducted in Greek, offers us is precisely a Christianised reflection of the colonialist dreams of Alexander, namely a network of cities/Christian communities stretching eastwards to the middle Euphrates and Osroene, and functioning publicly in Greek. What the *Acta* will show is both that bishops from these two relatively remote frontier provinces on either side of the Euphrates did participate in oecumenical councils — and that, when they did so, they all, with a single exception (see below), both spoke in

²⁰ *C.Theod.* XII.1.79; 105.

²¹ See J. Flemming, 'Akten der Ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449' (*Abh. d. Königl. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl.*, N.F. 1, 1917), 22; 25.

²² Flemming, *op. cit.*, 48 (the 'GRT' SWRYYT' sent by Ibas, followed by a Syriac re-translation of the Greek version, as in the (lost) Greek *Acta*, of the original Syriac letter); 68 (Uranius).

²³ For the known cities of this region see of course the unmatched survey by A.H.M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*², Oxford 1971, ch. IX-X.

²⁴ See n. 10 above.

Greek and wrote in their own hand 'subscriptions' (statements of assent to agreed propositions) in Greek.

It should be stressed that, just as, for the fourth and fifth centuries, we have no documentary records or narrative accounts of the internal politics or self-government of these places as (in principle) Greek cities, we also do not have direct evidence of internal Church affairs, of Biblical readings, liturgy or preaching, or as to whether the communal activities of the churches were conducted in Greek or Syriac. As we will see, it is certain that both languages were current; but it is fundamentally unclear how we should characterise the relations between them, and between speakers of one language or the other — or even whether these were in fact distinct groups.

What does allow us, none the less, to envisage these mostly small and remote places as long-term reflections of Macedonian, and then of Roman, imperialism and colonialism is that their bishops did function as members of the wider Greek Church, and that in doing so, with a single exception, they performed this role in Greek.

To take the three main concentrations of evidence in order, we find Basil of Caesarea, in the late 360's and 370's, corresponding repeatedly with bishop Eusebius of Samosata (as well as with the *politeuomenoi* and the *kleros* of the city, see above),²⁵ with Abramius of Batnae (*Ep.* 132), Eustathius of Hi(m)meria in Osrhoene (184, and see below), Vitus of Carrhae (255) and Barses of Edessa, while in exile (264; 267). No letters from any of them to Basil survive; and it may be significant that all these cities belong in the Fertile Crescent proper, either side of the upper-middle Euphrates, and not to the line of small places further down the river which we encountered earlier in connection with the stories of Alexander and Sergius. But the place of their bishops as representing them within the wider Greek Church is clear.

Far more extensive and significant is the evidence provided by the Latin version, produced by Rusticus in the 560's, of the contemporary history, entitled *Tragoedia*, written in Greek by Irenaeus, and narrating the continuing resistance to the 'monophysite' Council of Ephesus of 431, in Euphratensis (primarily), Osrhoene, Cilicia I and II, and Syria I.²⁶ The story told culminates in the exile of various recalcitrant bishops, including Alexander of Hierapolis (see above), the metropolitan of Euphratensis. Even if we confine ourselves to documents relevant to eastern Euphratensis and Osrhoene, the dossier, tabulated in the Appendix, is too extensive for more than a few specific features to be underlined here.

Both as (in origin) a very significant example of Greek ecclesiastical historiography and as a record of events, the *Tragoedia* would deserve extended study in its own right. What is relevant here is the mass of Episcopal correspondence which it presents, almost all now available only in a sixth-century Latin translation, but all originally written in Greek. The key figure is Alexander of Hierapolis, the *metropolis* of the province, while important roles are played by Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Andreas of Samosata. But we also find a letter sent by Meletius of Mopsuestia in Cilicia II to Theodoret, Abibus of Doliche, Heliades of Zeugma, Maras of Urima, David of Europus and Acylinus (or Aquilinus) of Barbalissus (para. 207; cf. 217-19). We may note also in particular the

²⁵ See *Saint Basile, Lettres I-III*, Paris 1957-66, ed. Y. Courtonne; Index in vol. III, 233.

²⁶ See n. 18 above. References in the Appendix and in the following pages are to paragraphs in Schwartz's edition.

libellus sent by Abbibus to Alexander of Hierapolis, Theodoret, Maras, David and Aquilinus about his unjust expulsion (para. 222) — and, perhaps even more strikingly, the letter of Alexander, Theodoret, Abbibus, Heliades, Maras, David and Aquilinus addressed to the ‘Augustae’ — that is, the sister of Theodosius II, Pulcheria, and his wife Aelia Eudocia (para. 223). They complain of oppression by Ioannes of Antioch, in conducting ordinations outside his own province (Syria I) and (in some way which is not clearly specified) usurping control of a martyrion of Sergius (see above) which lay near Hierapolis (‘sub Hierapolitana erat civitate’). As a shrine, it was evidently already substantial: ‘basilicam vero sancti et boni victoris Sergii martyris secundum pristinum morem sub ecclesia huius esse metropolis, ad quam et magnum id ipsum templum fabricatum est et illi altissimi muri et alia intra eandem munitionem aedificia’.²⁷

The dossier also, however, casts light on less prominent places, for instance Doliche. It will have been equally in Greek that Theodoret wrote a long letter (now preserved only in Latin translation) to the current Magister Militum in Oriens to complain of outrages committed at Doliche (again by Ioannes of Antioch, who is not actually named), namely the forcible expulsion of bishop Abbibus, and the ordination of Athanasius in his place, and of the collection of a large crowd with the intention of burning down the basilica of Cosmas and Damianus there; the attempt had evidently been frustrated by force (para. 221 = Theodoret, *Ep.* IV.25, ed. Azéma). To his letter Theodoret attached the *libellus* of complaint which Abbibus had sent to Alexander, to himself and to Maras, David and Aquilinus (para. 222).

The concerns of these small remote places were thus being brought to the attention of some of the highest authorities in the Eastern Roman Empire, the Magister Militum in Oriens and the ‘Empresses’ themselves, through the medium of correspondence in Greek. We touch on yet another of these provincial bishoprics, Barbalissus, when Alexander writes to its bishop, Aquilinus, warning him that he must face the alternatives of agreeing to reconciliation with Ioannes of Antioch or of suffering expulsion from his *castrum* (para. 242). The expulsion in fact took place, as we learn from a letter of Alexander’s to Meletius of Mopsuestia (para. 244), and also from the summary of the depositions of bishops which Irenaeus provides (para. 279): they included Alexander himself, sent to a *metallum* in Egypt; Abbibus of Doliche, deposed; and Aquilinus ‘exiled from his *castrum*’.

Some of these letters, as the Appendix shows, constitute an aspect of the correspondence of Theodoret, as bishop of Cyrrhus. A few other letters of his, from the 440’s and early 450’s, also cast light on the bishoprics of the middle Euphrates zone, and illustrate directly (that is, not through the medium of a sixth-century Latin translation) their integration in the wider network of Episcopal correspondence in Greek. So, using the

²⁷ Unfortunately Fowden (n. 4 above), 7f., takes this complaint as evidence for a shrine of Sergius situated at Rosafa, the later Sergiopolis. But the reference to Hierapolis is unambiguous, and it is in any case clear from the inscription recording the foundation of a shrine of Sergius at about the same moment (CE 431) at Yukari Söğütü, west of Samosata, that the cult of Sergius was already widespread, and that Rosafa/Sergiopolis had yet to assert a pre-eminent claim. See H. Candemir and J. Wagner, ‘Christliche Mosaiken in der Nördlichen Euphratesia’, in S. Sahin, E. Schwertheim and J. Wagner (eds.), *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens I*, Leiden 1978, 192-231, on 230f.

numbering in Azéma's edition, we have two letters (II.52 and III.133) to Ibas of Edessa, and equally two (I.xli and II.24) to Andreas of Samosata. Another (II.53) is addressed to Sophronius of Constantina, and yet another (III.132) to Longinus, an archimandrite at Doliche. There is also one letter (I.ii) referring to the despatch of a deacon from Hierapolis to perform some pastoral function with the army in Thrace (which clearly implies his functioning in Greek).

Correspondence apart, we are fortunate that the availability of A. di Berardino's great *Patrologia* on the Eastern Fathers of the fifth to eighth centuries allows us to check easily whether any bishops (or others) from these modest and remote cities are attested as authors, in either Greek or Syriac.²⁸ The following cases deserve note: a letter of Andreas of Samosata to Rabbula of Edessa, written in Syriac (178-9); extensive evidence of bilingual composition by Rabbula, including a letter in Syriac to Andreas, and another, at any rate preserved in Syriac, to Gemellinus of Perrhe (180-1); and a similarly bilingual Christian culture is also attested for Ibas (185-6). A number of works in Syriac are also attested as deriving from Edessa in the period around CE 400: Hymns by Cyrillianus, the *Liber Graduum* and the *Doctrina Addai*, as well as some martyr-act portraying events of an earlier period (443-6). It would be misleading to pursue the story beyond the middle of the fifth century; for the currency and geographical spread of Syriac developed rapidly over the fifth and sixth centuries, and it is essential not to confuse successive periods.

From around the middle of the fifth century, we encounter the vast mass of surviving evidence produced by the Council of Chalcedon of 451: not only the Acts of the Council itself, but within them, or associated with them, a whole series of illuminating 'local histories'.²⁹ These include episodes illustrating the public functioning of the Greek Church in Euphratensis and Osrhoene. First come the proceedings of hearings at Antioch in about 445, when Athanasius, bishop of Perrhe in Euphratensis, was accused of malpractices. During the hearing, there were spoken interventions, all in Greek, by Maras of Urima, Daniel of Carrhae, Ioannes of Theodosiopolis, Timotheos of Doliche and Sophronius of Constantina, as well as by Maras of Anasarth.³⁰ We will look later at a different set of proceedings, held in early 449, at which Ibas of Edessa, Daniel of Carrhae and Ioannes of Theodosiopolis were the accused; for it is this session which reveals most clearly the balance between Greek and Syriac within the Osrhoenian church; suffice it to say here that both a *libellus* of accusation laid against Ibas by four

²⁸ A. di Berardino, *Patrologia: I Padri orientali (secoli V-VIII)*, Torino 2000, now translated and updated as A. di Berardino, *Patrology: The Eastern Fathers from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to John of Damascus (†750)*, Cambridge 2006. References will be to pages of the English edition.

²⁹ See the second part of the magisterial project of E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* II.1.1-3, Berlin 1922-3, henceforward *ACO*, with the French translation of much, but not all, of the material by A.-J. Festugière, *Épêse et Chalcédoine: Actes des Conciles*, Genève 1982, and *Actes du Concile de Chalcédoine, Sessions III-VI: la définition de la foi*, Genève 1983, accompanied now by the outstanding presentation and English translation by R. Price and M. Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon I-III (Translated Texts for Historians 45, Liverpool 2005)*.

³⁰ *ACO* II.1.3, paras. 15-146 (69-81 [428-40]).

presbyters at Edessa and an ‘address and petition’ on his behalf by sixty-five lower clergy were written in Greek (see below).

As regards the Council of Chalcedon itself, the Acts of the various sessions record long lists of bishops from all parts of the Greek world, either simply as being present, or as making spoken interventions, or as giving their written ‘subscriptions’ (ὑπογραφαί) of assent at the conclusion. It is vital to note that the Acts record explicitly if any interventions were made in a language other than Greek, and that in principle each ‘subscription’ (normally a one-sentence affirmation) had to be written in the bishop’s own hand.

We may take as an example Session VI, at which the Emperor Marcian attended and made a speech. Consequently, an exceptionally large number of bishops attended also. The following bishops from the middle Euphrates zone ‘subscribed’ at this session:

From Euphratensis: Stephanus of Hierapolis; Rufinus of Samosata; Euolcius of Zeugma; Patricius of Neocaesarea; Timotheus of Doliche; Athanasius of Perrhe

From Osrhoene: two rival bishops of Edessa, Nonnus and Ibas; Sophronius of Constantina; Caioumas of Marcopolis; Ioannes of Carrhae; Abramius of Circesium

At the end, Stephanus, as metropolitan, subscribed on behalf of Uranius of Sura, Maras of Urima, David of Europus and Marinianus of Rosafa, bishops of Euphratensis.³¹ There was of course a strong element of formality, which was none the less highly significant, as indicating the attachment of these places to the wider network of Greek cities and churches. The Greek culture of these bishops was more than nominal, however. It is notable that at Session IV, the following bishops from the two provinces concerned made spoken interventions in Greek: Abramius of Circesium; Ioannes of Carrhae; Caioumas of Marcopolis; Athanasius of Perrhe; Euolcius of Zeugma; Nonnus of Edessa.³² It is not necessary to attempt to compile here all the evidence scattered throughout the Acts. But, since Circesium represents the extreme south-easterly extension of the Greek City in Late Antiquity, and lay exactly at the border of the Empire, we may note that bishop Abramius not only spoke in Greek at Session IV (above), but subscribed in Greek at Session XVII.³³ Perhaps this status of Late Antique Circesium deserves a moment’s further emphasis. Greek cities had for long existed in Mesopotamia and Babylonia, and as far East as Bactria. The evidence for Greek culture and language in these regions, scattered as it is, is still extremely striking. But none of it (bar the use of a modified Greek alphabet for writing the Iranian language labelled ‘Bactrian’) is as late as the fifth century.³⁴ In our period the world of ‘the Greek City’ stopped at the frontier of the Roman Empire, at Circesium.

³¹ ACO II.1.2, 130-155 [326-51].

³² ACO II.1.2, 84-121 [280-317]: paras. 9; 311; 55; 57; 67; 116.

³³ ACO II.1.3, para. 9³², 90 [449].

³⁴ For Greek material from east of the Euphrates see the priceless collection by F. Canali De Rossi, *Iscrizioni dello Estremo Oriente Greco: Un repertorio (Inscriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien LXXV, Bonn 2004)*, with the review-article by F. Millar, ‘Alexander’s Legacy: The Imprint of the Greek Language East of the Euphrates’, *Ancient West and East* 5 (2006), 287-296.

It is not necessary to claim too much for the material from the Acts of the Councils. The evidence for literacy in Greek on the part of bishops, and their capacity to speak in Greek at oecumenical or regional hearings, or at oecumenical Councils, leaves entirely open the question of the daily language of their congregations, and of the language of liturgy, Bible reading, and preaching. But it does serve to demonstrate the role of the ecclesiastical evidence in standing proxy for the secular Hellenism of these remote and modest cities, situated in the Fertile Crescent, along the Euphrates and on the borders of the steppe. The most difficult question remains the relation of Greek and Syriac (and correspondingly of 'Greeks' and 'Syrians'?) in these places, to which we will return in the end. But first we need to look at two other distinct groups which are found in this area: Jews (who necessarily represent an example of Diaspora); and the 'Arabs', 'Saracens', 'Ishmaelites' or (in Syriac and Jewish Aramaic) ܛܝܝܝ (Tayoye) of the surrounding steppe. They were of course mobile by definition, since it was only to unsettled groups that observers applied any of the relevant terms. Whether they in fact had, or saw themselves as having, any common history, and whether they, or any of them, had emigrated from some other region, or saw themselves as having done so, and thus might consciously have represented themselves as a 'diaspora', with a distant 'homeland', we cannot now tell. Our evidence for them is (almost entirely) that of contemporary outside observers. But, in those terms at least, they were seen as a strongly distinctive element in the social composition of the region. So also, in a very different way, were Jews.

4. Jewish Communities in the Middle-Euphrates Zone

We can hardly yet write anything like a history of the Jews in Babylonia proper, under the Sasanids; nor can we date, or locate in a defined social setting, the mass of Jewish writing which emanates from there.³⁵ Nor do we know whether those Jews with whom we are concerned, living in the Middle Euphrates zone, on the other side of the Sasanid/Roman frontier, enjoyed close relations with them — and it must be presumed that Jews travelling between Babylonia and Palestine passed through this area. All that is certain, even from very scattered evidence, is that there was quite a widely-attested Jewish presence in this zone. If we work from Sasanid Babylonia northwards along the Euphrates we come, as we saw earlier, to the now deserted Dura-Europos, with its clear evidence that in the third century there had been a Jewish community with a synagogue, using both Jewish Aramaic and Hebrew, as well as Greek (see above). More significantly still, the well-known wall-paintings from the Synagogue demonstrate their awareness of episodes from Biblical history, set in the Holy Land and in Egypt. Equally, a third-century inscription from Palmyra, lying to the west in the steppe, shows Jews having an epitaph inscribed in both Palmyrene (or Jewish Aramaic written in Palmyrene script?) and Greek, while some remarkable undated inscriptions in Hebrew, written in square Hebrew letters (perhaps of the Late Antique period?), record several lines of

³⁵ See the heroic attempt by J. Neusner, *History of the Jews in Babylonia I²-V*, Chico, Cal. 1969-70, to survey the available evidence, along with A. Oppenheimer, *Babylonia Judaica in the Talmudic Period*, Wiesbaden 1983, and his recent collection, *Between Rome and Babylon*, Tübingen 2005, Pt. III.

Deuteronomy (6:4-9) and some other brief Biblical texts.³⁶ In the fourth century there certainly was an established Jewish community at Callinicum, for it was their synagogue which was burnt down in 388/9 by the local Christians, led by their bishop. The response of Theodosius I, that the synagogue should be rebuilt at the bishop's expense, notoriously attracted a vigorous reproof from Ambrose of Milan.³⁷ The episode is alluded to only briefly, but can be taken as characteristic, in indicating communal co-existence punctuated by episodes of violence.

If we move further north, into Osrhoene, a similar picture presents itself, even on the basis of very slight information. A Jewish presence in Edessa is attested by a bilingual epitaph of uncertain date (possibly the fourth century), written in Greek and Aramaic or Syriac.³⁸ For the latter, the standard square Hebrew lettering is used — but the language is to be characterised as either Jewish Aramaic or the local Syriac: HN' BY(T) 'LM' — 'this is the tomb (or "house of eternity")...' It is highly relevant that contemporary scholarship takes it that the Syriac Bible was translated directly from the Hebrew, rather than through the medium of Greek, and moreover that this translation took place in Osrhoene, or perhaps Adiabene.³⁹ Here too, communal religious conflict could break out; the sixth-century *Chronicle of Edessa* records that the first act of Rabbula, as bishop from 412 onwards, was (according to the text as transmitted) to build a church on the site previously occupied by a Jewish synagogue — BYT ŠBT' DYHWDY' ('house of the Sabbath of the Jews').⁴⁰ Similarly, the Syriac *Life of Rabbula*, recently translated by Robert Doran, claims both that 'thousands' of Jews were converted by him as bishop (Doran, 92) and that the local Jews joined in the general lamentation when he died (104).⁴¹

Further Jewish-Christian interaction is revealed vividly in the Syriac Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus of 449. In the record of accusations brought earlier in the

³⁶ For these texts see now Noy and Bloedhorn, *op. cit.* (n. 2), Syr. 44-52 (69-83). For the language of Jewish documents in this area see also F. Millar, 'The Many Worlds of the Late Antique Diaspora: Supplements to the "Cambridge History of Judaism"', vol. IV', *Journ. Jew. St.* 59 (2008), in press.

³⁷ See Ambrose, *Ep.* 74 (Maur. 40) = *Epistulae extra collectionem* 1a, and *Epistulae extra collectionem* 1 (Maur. 41), re-edited by M. Zelzer in CSEL LXXXII (*Sancti Ambrosii Opera*), X.3 (1982), with Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 7/22. See now J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches (Translated Texts for Historians 43*, Liverpool 2005), 95f.: 'Letters on the Destruction of the Synagogue at Callinicum'.

³⁸ Noy and Bloedhorn, *op. cit.* (n. 2), Syr. 80 (130-2).

³⁹ See M. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction*, Cambridge 1999.

⁴⁰ See L. Hallier, *Untersuchungen über die Edessinische Chronik mit dem syrischen Text und einer Übersetzung (Texte und Untersuchungen IX, 1892)*, para. LI (150) and notes (106-8), where he suggests reading BYT ŠBT' D'WDY' — meaning the heretical Christian sect of the Audiani. Considerations drawn from the portrait of Rabbula in the Syriac *Life* (see next note) do not seem to me sufficient to justify emending the text, which is quite specific as to the Jewish identity of the building. Note that the Syriac *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, ed. J.B. Chabot (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 81, 1916-20), 180, refers to this building unambiguously as a synagogue: KNWŠT' DYHWDY'.

⁴¹ See R. Doran, *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula and Hiba in Fifth-Century Edessa*, Kalamazoo 2006, 39-105.

same year in Edessa against Ibas of Edessa, Daniel of Carrhae and Sophronius of Tela/Constantina, there is, first, ample reflection of the Christian fear and resentment of Jews as a hostile, and competing, religious group.⁴² More particularly, as regards Sophronius, it was alleged that his son Habib had invited a Jew into the Episcopal residence in Tela and had eaten with him there. He had also allegedly continued to do so during Pentecost, and had brought the Jew into the Church of the Apostles during a service. At that point the Christians had rioted, and Habib and the Jew, Hesychius, had fled to the *praetorium* of the Roman *dux*, whose soldiers had killed some of the rioters.⁴³ Jewish communities in both places are further attested by the early sixth-century *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Joshua. In Edessa in 499/500, during a famine, a group of Jewish women are found baking bread for sale on the market; and in Tela in 502, during the siege by the Sasanid king Kawad, the Jewish community were alleged to have plotted to betray the city by building a tunnel from their synagogue (BYT SGGT' — 'house of worship') to pass under the walls; a massacre of the Jews, young and old, followed.⁴⁴ Taken together with the anecdote which Theodoret records in his *Historia Philotheos*, of some Jews getting lost on a journey near one of the military posts (*phouria*) which protected the settled zone,⁴⁵ this scattered evidence is enough to show that Jews were a familiar component in the ethnic and religious map of the middle-Euphrates zone. We hear nothing, in the fourth-fifth centuries, of their beliefs or communal observances. But, as the wall-paintings of Dura had earlier demonstrated, they cannot but be seen as a Diaspora, whose identity was formed in relation to the Biblical story. This social context also makes plausible the very important claim by Sozomenus, that it had been not only Christians, but also Jews, who had acted to persuade the Saracens of the steppe that they were the descendants of Ishmael, and thus had a special claim to the inheritance of Abraham.⁴⁶

5. The Saracens

The extension of Roman forts and garrisons, and with that the growth of settlements, is one of the most distinctive features of the social history of the Near East in the Imperial period. It was largely as a result of this process that, as we saw earlier through the *Life* of Alexander Akoimetos, we find in existence urban communities separated by large uncultivated areas where armed nomads might roam. Roman forts offered intermittent protection along the main routes, or along the border of the cultivable area. This pattern could be found anywhere from the Taurus to the Red Sea, and was characteristic also of the two separate 'internal frontiers', of Sinai and the north Syrian steppe. For present purposes, however, we need merely to recall a few items of evidence which illuminate

⁴² Flemming, *op. cit.* (n. 21 above), 45; 47; 55; 116; 124.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, 82.

⁴⁴ *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, ed. and trans. W. Wright, Cambridge 1882, ch. 40 (Edessa) and 53 (Tella). See F.R. Trombley and J.S. Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite (Translated Texts for Historians 32*, Liverpool 2000).

⁴⁵ Theodoret, *Historia Philotheos* VI.2-3.

⁴⁶ Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccles.* VI.38. See F. Millar, 'The Theodosian Empire (408-450) and the Arabs: Saracens or Ishmaelites?', in E. Gruen (ed.), *Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations in Antiquity (Oriens et Occidens 8*, 2005), 297-314.

social relations specifically in the middle-Euphrates zone. So, for instance, looking back to the first half of the fourth century, Jerome in his *Life* of Malchus (4) portrays armed ‘Saracen’ or ‘Ishmaelite’ robbers, using horses and camels, attacking travellers on the road which led over the steppe and across the Euphrates, from Beroea to Edessa. The Empire was now beginning to ally itself with these peoples; so it was when he reached Hierapolis on his last campaign in 363 that Julian sent ambassadors to the Saracens to invite them to join him. The embassies were thus sent just as Julian entered the Euphrates-Balikh zone, and it was when he subsequently reached Callinicum that *reguli* of the *Saracenaе gentes* met him and offered obeisance (Ammianus XXIII.3.7-8). In the middle of the next century a group of Saracens again appears near Callinicum, for it was from there that their *phylarchos* came to make a request to Symeon Stylites to cure one of his men of an illness. The Saracens concerned were still pagans; so the cure was not carried out until the *phylarchos* had declared his renunciation of paganism and his acceptance of the Trinity.⁴⁷ ‘Barbarian Arabs’ (ΤΥΥ’ BRBRY’) were also to be found in the neighbourhood of Edessa in the mid-fifth century, as the Syriac *Acta* of the Second Council of Ephesus record: captured monks were reported to have been forced to serve their idols, and nuns to offer themselves as prostitutes in the marketplace. The church had duly collected a special fund to ransom them.⁴⁸

To ask how far we might see these groups as ‘diasporic’ is in fact a useful device. For it brings out painfully how little we know of them. Had they always been there, in the middle-Euphrates zone, and perhaps enduring pressure from the expansion of military occupation, of agriculture, and of urban and village settlement in the Imperial period? Were they recurrently migratory, and if so from where to where? Might they, or some of them, have undertaken long-distance migrations, for instance from the Tigris or lower Euphrates, or from the border-zone of the Roman province of ‘Arabia’ (roughly, northern Jordan), from the Empty Quarter or even from South Arabia? Given that they could and did fight either on the Roman or the Sasanid side, and also against each other, did they subscribe to any myth of common ancestry, and if so what myth? The only myth that we can encounter, but through the eyes of Graeco-Roman observers, is that which was supplied to them by Christian and Jewish contacts, namely descent from Abraham through his servant-girl Hagar and her son Ishmael.

Did they all speak a common language, and if so was that language closely related to, or identical with, Classical Arabic? What is certain at least is that the former Saracen *phylarchos*, Aspebetus, who converted to Christianity during the Roman-Sasanid war of 420-22, and was then ordained as ‘bishop of the camps’ with the name Petros, both spoke and subscribed in Greek at the First Council of Ephesus in 431. So also did the bishops ‘of the Saracens’ or ‘of the *ethnos* of the Saracens’ who participated at Ephesus II in 449 and Chalcedon in 451.⁴⁹ These groups too, therefore, could be involved in religious and linguistic transformations, under the influence of Christianity. It is furthermore an extremely significant fact, first, that it is only in the sixth century (but not in the fifth) that we find documents (namely inscriptions) which are both written in what is

⁴⁷ Theodoret, *Historia Philotheos* XXVI.16.

⁴⁸ Flemming, *op. cit.* (n. 21 above), 58.

⁴⁹ See F. Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 46 above), 302-3; *idem*, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408-450)*, Berkeley 2006, 105-6.

recognisably (Classical) Arabic and use the same script which would later be used for Classical Arabic; and second, that two out of three known examples come from Christian contexts. Two of the texts come from further south along the border of the Empire: the Jebel Usays graffito of 528/9, and the inscription of 568/70 from Harran in the Lejja: in this latter case, both the Greek and the Arabic texts record the foundation of a Christian *martyrion*.⁵⁰ But what may be the earliest relevant inscription, or group of (in some way) related inscriptions, from the middle Euphrates area itself comes from the extensive Late Roman site of Zebed, which lies some 18 km west-south-west of Neocaesarea (Dibsi Faraj) on the Euphrates.⁵¹ In view of the study currently being conducted by Denis Feissel, Françoise Briquel Chatonnet and Christian Robin, a few brief (and inconclusive) notes will suffice.⁵² Firstly, the relevant texts, whose mutual relationships are unclear, are in Greek, Syriac and Arabic. Secondly, the Greek and Syriac texts both record, with slightly different details, the foundation in the Seleucid year 823 (CE 512) of a *martyrion* of Sergius. Thirdly, the Arabic text carries a quite distinct message: 'May the Lord help Sergius, son of Amat Manaf, and Han(n)ai son of Imrulquais, and Sergius, son of Sa'ad, and Sitr and ShouraiKh and (two more names?)'. The question which remains unresolved is how the Arabic text relates, in either function or date, to the Greek and Syriac ones. However, on any understanding, it is a reflection, like the conciliar Acts and the Harran inscription, of the way in which the 'Arabs' (or 'Saracens') were being drawn into the orbit of the Christian culture and observance characteristic of the settled area. But was there in this region a single Christian culture, or were there two contrasting (or even opposed?) cultures?

6. 'Greeks' and 'Syrians' in the Middle-Euphrates Zone?

That two Christian languages of culture, Greek and Syriac, were in use in the Euphrates zone in the fourth and fifth centuries is beyond doubt, and there is no need to rehearse the evidence once again. Syriac, furthermore, was already the established language of the Christian church, and of Christian writing, beyond the Roman borders, in the Sasanid empire. The works of Aphrahat, and of Ephrem, who came from Nisibis, which since 363 had again been under Sasanid control, illustrate this vividly. So do the Syriac Acts of the councils held under Sasanid rule by the church of the East from CE 410 onwards.⁵³ Syriac-speaking Christians in the Sasanid empire, furthermore, lived within a still pagan environment, and could be seen as being under the protection of the now Christian

⁵⁰ See Chr. J. Robin and M. Gorea, 'Un réexamen de l'inscription arabe préislamique du Ġabal Usays', *Arabica* 49 (2002), 503-510; and, for the inscription from Harran, R. Dussaud, F. Macler, *Mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie moyenne*, Paris 1903, 324.

⁵¹ For the site of Zebed, which seems never to have been excavated, see H.C. Butler, *Architecture and Other Arts (Am. Arch. Exped. Syria 1899-1900 II*, New York 1903), 299-305.

⁵² For the most convenient texts currently available see *IGLS II*, no. 310. I owe to Michael Macdonald the information that the text, or texts, can be found in the Near Eastern section of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, under no. 1308.

⁵³ See J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale, ou Recueil des synods nestoriens*, Paris 1902. See also now V. Erhart, 'The Development of Syriac Christian Canon Law in the Sasanian Empire', in R.W. Mathisen (ed.), *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2001, 115-129.

Roman empire; hence, in Sebastian Brock's words, they were 'a case of divided loyalties'.⁵⁴ If we possessed contemporary pagan sources from within the Sasanid empire, they might turn out to have perceived the Syriac-speaking Christians among them as a separate social, or ethnic, group, as well as a religious one (or were there also still Syriac-speaking pagans in, say, Babylonia, in the fourth and fifth centuries?).

No such distinct political, or ethnic, or religious status seems to apply to the Syriac-speaking Christians of the Roman provinces of Euphratensis and Osroene. They belonged to a Christian empire, and there is nothing to suggest that they saw, or were suspected by others of seeing, Persian-ruled Mesopotamia, or (still less) the wider Sasanid empire, as their true 'homeland', or object of loyalty. So how should we imagine the contrast between them and the Greek-speakers of the region? As a distinct indigenous population whose ancestors had been settled there since before Alexander's conquests, and who were perhaps more normally to be found as a rural population outside the Greek cities of the region? Or as a relatively uneducated lower class living within urban contexts? Or as including an educated class, and one distinct from their Greek-speaking neighbours? If we return to the question of 'Diaspora', it is undeniable that 'the Greek City' as a political and cultural formation, was in origin an alien implantation in this zone. But by now it was an implantation which itself was some eight centuries old. How far these small provincial places, many of which had come within the scope of Roman rule only in the second century CE, had ever shared in the wider Greek pagan culture, we can hardly tell. It is however interesting to reflect on what Socrates in his *Ecclesiastical History* records of the education in Edessa of Eusebius, born in about CE 300, and later bishop of Emesa:⁵⁵

Who this person was, George, bishop of Laodicea... informs us. For he says in the book which he had composed on his life that Eusebius was descended from the nobility of Edessa in Mesopotamia; and that from a child he had studied the holy scriptures; that he was afterwards instructed in Greek literature by a master resident at Edessa: and finally that the sacred books were expounded to him by Patrophilus and Eusebius...

In other words a Christian upbringing was followed by immersion in Greek literature, and then by advanced study of Christian texts. But does what George had written imply a phase of education in Syriac, as distinct from Greek? Subsequently, Eusebius knew and used the Syriac version of the Bible; but all his known writing was in Greek. But what is clear also is that the Church, as represented in this zone, was, as we saw earlier, officially Greek-speaking, and that its bishops, when functioning on the wider stage of the oecumenical (or Roman Imperial) Church, communicated in Greek, just as other bishops did.

But is it in fact appropriate to speak of 'Greeks' and 'Syrians' as distinct social or ethnic groups? The actual word *ethnos* could on occasion be used of *Suroi*, just as it could of *Sarakenoi*. In a famous passage in his *Letter* 146, Theodoret speaks of Ephrem

⁵⁴ S. Brock, 'Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties', in S. Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity (Studies in Church History 18, Oxford 1982)*, 1-19 = *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, London 1984, no. VI.

⁵⁵ Socrates, *HE* II.9, trans. Zenos. On Eusebius see above all R.B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis*, Louvain 1997.

as 'the lyre of the Spirit, daily refreshing the *ethnos* of the *Suroi* with the waters of grace'. But we never hear of organised, or still less of armed, groups of *Suroi* who, like Saracens, might join Rome or Persia, or neither; nor (to the author's knowledge) do we hear of whole villages or towns characterised as being inhabited by *Suroi*. References to people from the Euphrates zone speaking Syriac tend to be quite casual, as in the report in the *Life* of Daniel Stylites, born in a village near Samosata in 409, of the archimandrite of a nearby monastery speaking to the boy in Syriac.⁵⁶ Nor do our sources report communal conflicts, comparable to those between Christians and Jews (above). A strictly religious or doctrinal basis for any such conflict was in any case not present, since there is nothing to show that in the fourth to fifth centuries doctrinal divisions mirrored, or arose from, linguistic or ethnic differences between Christians in this zone. Equally, Christian literature in Syriac can be seen in some respects, though not in all, as an offshoot of Christian literature in Greek; and some of it (like the entire content of the famous codex of CE 411, written in Edessa) consisted of translations from Greek.

That does not mean that we never find any distinction being drawn between groups defined as 'Greeks' and those as *Suroi*. A well-known example comes from Theodore's *Historia Philotheos* (ch. V). The same Publius whom we encountered earlier as a member of the bouletic class at Zeugma took up the ascetic life towards the middle of the fourth century, apparently in the neighbourhood of Zeugma, and found a growing group of other monks gathering round him. Divine services were conducted in Greek; but after a time 'those who used the local language' asked to have alternative services arranged, with each group using its native language. When Publius died 'Theotecnus inherited the leadership of (those of) the Greek language, and Aphthonius of the Syriac'.

In this case, the story as told reveals both unity and diversity as between users of Greek and of Syriac; but we are given no clue as to the bases (locality? social class?) of the distinction. In other evidence from this period what we can observe is a parallel use of the two languages within communities. Perhaps the most striking item of relevant evidence, given that it comes from within the church of Edessa, always regarded as the primary 'homeland' of Christian literature in Syriac, is the 'address and petition' (*didaskalia* and *paraklesis*) presented early in 449 to the Episcopal commission of enquiry held at Tyre and Berytus into charges against Ibas of Edessa, Daniel of Carrhae and Ioannes of Theodosiopolis (see above).⁵⁷ The address, written in Greek, was put forward in defence of Ibas, and was followed by the written 'subscriptions' in Greek of 65 clergy of various ranks from within the Edessene church. A 'subscription' in this sense, it will be recalled, is a (normally) one-sentence affirmation by each individual, written (if he could write) in his own hand, and attesting to his assent to the document in question. It is striking in itself that one side in the acutely divided church at Edessa could muster in support of the bishop as many as 14 *presbuteroi*, 37 *diakonoi*, 13 *hupodiakonoi* and an *anagnostes*. From one point of view the document is therefore

⁵⁶ For the *Life* of Daniel see H. Delehay, *AB* 32, 1913, 121-214; *idem*, *Les saints stylites*, Bruxelles 1923, ch. 2 and 1-94 (text). Translated by N. Baynes and E. Dawes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, Oxford 1928, 1-84. Note also R. Lane Fox, 'The Life of Daniel', in M.J. Edwards and S. Swain (eds.), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1997, 175-225.

⁵⁷ *ACO* II.1.3, para. 141, 85 [394].

vivid testimony to the currency of at least basic literacy in Greek among the Edessene clergy. But from the opposed point of view what is striking is that 17 of the ‘subscriptions’ as recorded are followed by the entry ‘and a Syriac subscription’ (καὶ ὑπογραφή Συριακή). The document is too long to quote in its entirety; but the first five lines will give a sense of how it is constructed:

Καὶ αἱ ὑπογραφαί
 Φεκίδας πρεσβύτερος πεποιήμαι τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην ἅμα ἑταίροις
 Οὐρσικίνος πρεσβύτερος πεποιήμαι τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην ἅμα ἑταίροις
 Εὐλόγιος πρεσβύτερος πεποιήμαι τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην ἅμα ἑταίροις. καὶ
 ὑπογραφή Συριακή
 Λιβάνιος πρεσβύτερος πεποιήμαι τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην ἅμα ἑταίροις
 Ῥόδων πρεσβύτερος πεποιήμαι τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην ἅμα ἑταίροις. καὶ
 ὑπογραφή Συριακή

Does the expression ‘and a Syriac subscription’, entered in a copy circulating in Greek, mean that the writer had in fact subscribed *only* in Syriac? Perhaps not — it should more naturally mean that on the original document the individual had subscribed both in Greek and in Syriac, with the latter version not being reproduced. If so, adding a subscription in Syriac was a choice on the part of these 17 clerics; whether the remaining 48 could have made the same choice is unclear.

In short, both languages were current within the one (if doctrinally divided) church of Edessa, and other evidence confirms this pattern. One of the charges against Ibas was that he had earlier written a letter, in Syriac, to ‘Maris the Persian’, giving a Nestorian version of events at the first Council of Ephesus and after it; but, as we have seen already, Ibas, like the other bishops of Osrhoene, could speak in Greek when required. Only one Osrhoenian bishop, Uranius of the unlocated city of Himeria, appears in these Acts (in the report of a hearing at Berytus) as unable to understand Greek (compare his appearance in the Syriac *Acts* above). Equally, the archimandrite Barsaumas, who came from the area of Samosata, is also recorded as not speaking in Greek, at Chalcedon. He too has a presbyter translate for him.⁵⁸

The very significant implications of the Acts of the Councils are confirmed by scattered items of epigraphic evidence, which show a co-existence of the two languages within Christian communities in this zone. Three items, in chronological order, deserve emphasis. Firstly there is the bilingual, Greek and Syriac, mosaic inscription of 471 from a site called Houedjit Haloua, on the east bank of the Euphrates, north of Barbalissus.⁵⁹ Both texts record the laying of a mosaic floor in the time of bishop Nonnus and of Sergius, ‘archimandrite of the monastery of the sainted Alexander’ (in Syriac MR SRGYS RYŠ DYR’ DDYR’ D ṬWBN’ MR ṽLKSNDR’), thus confirming the basic historicity of the narrative discussed above.

We may contrast with this the formally laid-out Syriac inscription of 20 lines, of some 14 letters each, from Tall Bi’a near Callinicum, recording the bishop, the

⁵⁸ For Uranius see *ACO* II.1.3, 19-21 [378-80], esp. para. 33 (20 [379]): Σαμουήλος εἶπεν: Παρακαλοῦμεν τὰ λεγόμενα Συριστὶ λεχθῆναι διὰ τὸν ὁσώτατον ἐπίσκοπον Οὐράνιον... Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 18 above), 107-16.

⁵⁹ P. Donceel-Voùte, *Les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, Louvain 1988, 145-50.

archdeacon ('RKYDQWN), the archimandrite and a list of the clergy of the monastery at the moment when the mosaic was laid in August 509.⁶⁰ In this case, though, while there are also two brief Greek inscriptions set in the mosaic, the Syriac text is clearly primary. That brings us very close in time to the third item, namely the parallel, Greek and Syriac, inscriptions, accompanied by an Arabic one, put up three years later at Zebed, in the steppe some 120 km to the west (above). Here, the Greek and Syriac texts once again function in parallel.

The question of how we should assess this overall linguistic parallelism, perhaps even indicating a widespread personal bilingualism, is one that we should admit to not being able to answer, above all because we do not possess even the rudiments of a social, linguistic and cultural history of this zone in the Hellenistic period. In the Roman imperial period there is at least a substantial body of epigraphic, papyrological and literary material, which quite clearly demonstrates the emergence of Syriac as a language of culture, and of Christian expression, alongside Greek.⁶¹ By the fifth century, however, Syriac had still not displaced Greek, but instead functioned in a complex symbiosis with it. In short we can say something about the history of Greek and Syriac as languages. But whether we should envisage a bilingual society, or two co-existing societies, of 'Greeks' and of 'Syrians', remains entirely unclear.

7. Conclusion

In some senses 'diaspora' — the concept of communal groups living at a distance from what they conceive of as their homeland — must be relevant to the intermingled communities which we find on either side of the middle Euphrates in Late Antiquity. It was not merely, for a start, that in (say) 350 BCE there had been no Greek cities, and no Greek-speaking communities, in this zone. That there were such eight centuries later is a striking demonstration of the long-term influence first of Macedonian, and then of Roman, imperialism. What is more, this was the easternmost area in which these long-term efforts were still felt. That is not all, however. For to be educated to any degree in traditional Greek pagan culture was to be immersed in a literature written centuries earlier in the Mediterranean. Now of course there was also an alternative Greek culture, namely Christianity, based on sacred texts which could be read in Greek, and which had also been written not far from the Mediterranean. Educated persons from the middle-Euphrates zone might partake of both traditions — for instance, as we saw above, what

⁶⁰ See M. Krebernik, *Schriftfunde aus Tall Bi'a*, *MDOG* 123, 1991, 41-70, on 42-7.

⁶¹ For a wide view of the background, extending well beyond the zone specifically considered here, see M. Mazza, 'Strutture sociali e culture locali nelle provincie sulla frontiera dell'Eufrate (II-IV sec. d.C.). Uno studio sui contatti culturali', *Sic. Gymn.* 45 (1992), 159-207; see now also M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze. Palmyra — Edessa — Dura-Europos — Hatra. Eine Kulturgeschichte von Pompeius bis Diocletian (Oriens et Occidens 9*, Stuttgart 2005).

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Socrates records of Eusebius of Emesa, who was born in Edessa in about CE 300. A person from this zone who received an education in both pagan and Christian literature necessarily came into relation with two different intellectual or spiritual ‘homelands’, both of them located far away from where he actually lived.

Equally, as is obvious, the communal life of the Jewish communities, as attested in several different cities in the area, will have been based on the Bible, whether read in Hebrew or in Greek. But while it is not difficult to see a minority community as ‘diasporic’, this concept becomes questionable in relation to dominant, and originally ‘colonialist’, communities, created by one imperialism, and reinforced later by another. We cannot but see the network of Greek cities scattered (very unevenly) across Euphratensis and Osroene as being the dominant element in the social structure of the region, and one whose dominance was reinforced, not weakened, by the emergence of a secondary network of Greek-using Christian bishoprics, which were in communion (and at times in active communication) with the wider world of the Greek Church. The network of Greek cities and Greek bishoprics stands in obvious contrast to the social patterns of the mobile nomads of the steppe; whether *they* were in any sense ‘diasporic’, namely incomers from some other region, or alternatively descended from nomadic ancestors within the same zone, is as uncertain as every other aspect of their social and cultural history. Equally mysterious is the question of how we should understand the steady emergence of the Syriac dialect of Aramaic, and of the Syriac script, in the first five centuries CE: as a vehicle for inscriptions, for perishable documents, for Bible translations, for other translations of Christian writing in Greek, for letters, and for the composition of original literary works. Does this reflect the re-emergence of a ‘native’ stratum of society, previously repressed by the descendants of colonialist, Greek-speaking, incomers? That is possible. But what the evidence most obviously suggests is something different, namely the rise of Syriac as a language of culture within a Greek-speaking environment.

Appendix

Correspondence from Euphratensis, CE 431-435/6, in Irenaeus, *Tragoedia*, in the abbreviated Latin version by Rusticus: *ACO* I.4, pp. 25-225. [Theodoret’s letters are also printed in Y. Azéma (ed.), *Théodoret de Cyr, Correspondance* IV (*SC* 429, 1998)]. The documents are numbered by the paragraph numbers from *ACO*. Only those items which involve places within the ‘middle-Euphrates zone’, as defined in this paper, are listed here.

- 96 ‘Oriental’ (Nestorian) bishops at Ephesus I, 431, to *presbyteri, diaconi, clerici* and Christian *populus* at Hierapolis
- 108 Theodoret of Cyrrhus to Andreas of Samosata [= Theod., *Ep.* IV.2a]
- 119 Theodoret of Cyrrhus to Alexander of Hierapolis [= Greek original in *ACO* I.1.7, 79-80, para. 6a = *Ep.* 3a]
- 132 Andreas of Samosata to Alexander of Hierapolis on Rabbula of Edessa
- 134 *Hypomnesticum* of Theodoret to Alexander *metropolitanus* [= *Ep.* 7]
- 139 Iohannes of Antioch to Alexander of Hierapolis
- 143 Alexander, Andreas and Theodoret to Helladius of Tarsus

- 144 Acacius of Beroea to Alexander of Hierapolis [Greek original in *ACO* I.1.7, 46-7, para. 106]
- 146 Alexander of Hierapolis to Acacius of Beroea
- 147 Alexander to Andreas of Samosata
- 148 Andreas to Alexander
- 150 Theodoret to Andreas [= *Ep.* 10a + 10b, from *ACO* I.5, 171, para. 45]
- 151 Andreas to Theodoret
- 152 Andreas to Alexander of Hierapolis
- 153 Alexander of Hierapolis to Andreas
- 154 Alexander to Theodoret
- 155 Theodoret of Cyrrhus to Alexander [= *Ep.* 11a + 11b, from *ACO* I.5, 171, para. 46]
- 156 Maxim(in)us of Anazarbus to Alexander
- 157 Helladius of Tarsus to Alexander
- 158 Alexander of Hierapolis to Helladius of Tarsus
- 161 Theodoret to Alexander of Hierapolis [= *Ep.* 14]
- 165 Iohannes of Antioch to Alexander of Hierapolis
- 166 Iohannes to Alexander
- 170 Theodoret to Alexander *Euphratisiae metropolitanus* [= *Ep.* 15]
- 171 Andreas of Samosata to Alexander of Hierapolis
- 178 Andreas of Samosata to Alexander of Hierapolis
- 181 Alexander to Andreas
- 182 Alexander to Theodoret
- 184 Alexander to Theodoret
- 185 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 19]
- 186 Andreas to Alexander
- 187 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 20a + 20b, from *ACO* I.5, 172, para. 48]
- 188 Alexander to Theodoret
- 189 Andreas to Alexander
- 190 Alexander (to Andreas?)
- 191 Andreas to Alexander
- 192 Alexander to Andreas
- 193 Alexander to Iohannes of Germanicia
- 194 Andreas to *oekonomi* of Alexander
- 202 Helladius of Tarsus to Alexander
- 207 Meletius (of Mopsuestia?) to Alexander, Theodoret, Abbibus (Doliche), Heliades (Zeugma), Maras (Urima), David (Europos), Aquilinus (Barbalissus)
- 214 Iohannes of Antioch to Alexander
- 215 Alexander to *magistrrianus* who brought letter of Iohannes
- 216 Theodoret to Meletius of Neocaesarea [= *Ep.* 24]
- 217 Alexander, Theodoret, Heliadis, Abbibus, Maras, David and Aquilinus to bishops of Syria I and II, Cilicia and Cappadocia II
- 218 Helladius (Tarsus), Matronianus (Pompeiopolis), Cyrillus (Adana) and Zenobius (Zephyrium) to Alexander, Theodoret, Heliadis, Abbibus, Maras, David and Aquilinus
- 219 Hermogenes (?), Meletius (Mopsuestia), Hesychius (Castabala), and Heliodorus (?), to Theodoret, Heliadis, Abbibus, Maras, David and Aquilinus
- 220 Alexander of Apamea to Alexander (Hierapolis)

- 221 Theodoret to Magister Militum (on outrages committed at Doliche against bishop Abbibus [= *Ep.* 25])
- 222 Libellus of Abbibus to Alexander, Theodoret, Maras, David, Aquilinus
- 223 Alexander, Theodoret, Abbibus, Heliadis, Maras, David, Aquilinus, *Euphratesiae provinciae episcopi*, to 'Augustae' (Pulcheria and Eudocia) on oppression by Iohannes of Antioch
- 224 Alexander to Iohannes (Antioch)
- 225 Dorotheus of Mysia to Alexander, *episcopus Euphratesiae*, and Theodoret
- 228 Fragment of Imperial letter (*sacra*) against Alexander, Helladius, Maximinus and Theodoret
- 230 Dionysius, *Magister Militiae*, to Titus, *Comes et Vicarius* [*PLRE* II, s.v. Fl. Titus 2] (on Helladius, Maximinus, Alexander, Theodoret)
- 231 Dionysius, *Magister Militum*, to same bishops
- 234 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 27]
- 235 Alexander to Theodoret
- 236 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 28a + 28b, from *ACO* I.5, 172, para. 49]
- 237 Alexander to Theodoret
- 239 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 29]
- 240 Alexander to Theodoret
- 241 Parthenius, presbyter and archimandrite in Constantinople, to Alexander
- 242 Alexander to Aquilinus of Barbalissus (possible expulsion from *castrum*)
- 244 Alexander to Meletius of Mopsuestia, referring to expulsion of Aquilinus from Barbalissus
- 250 Theodoret to Mocimus, *oeconomus Hierapolitanae ecclesiae* [= *Ep.* 32]
- 252 Helladius to Alexander
- 253 Alexander to Helladius
- 254 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 33]
- 255 Alexander to Theodoret
- 256 Theodoret to Alexander [= *Ep.* 34]
- 257 Alexander to Theodoret
- 269 Titus (see 230 above) to Alexander
- 270 Dionysius (*Magister Militum*, see *PLRE* II, s.v. Fl. Dionysius 13) to Alexander
- 271 Alexander to Titus and Dionysius
- 272 Flavius Titus, *Gloriosissimus Comes devotissimorum domesticorum, implens locum magistri militiae potestatis* (see 230 above), to Flavius Libanius, *iudex (praeses)* of Euphratesia
- 273 Libanius to Titus
- 274 *Relatio* of *iudex* (Libanius) to Titus (also reported as recording *populi acclamationes*) on popular mourning over expulsion of Alexander of Hierapolis (see above)
- (279) List of bishops deposed for refusing to communicate with Iohannes, including Alexander of Hierapolis, exiled to *metallum* in Egypt; Abbibus of Doliche, deposed; and Aquilinus of Barbalissus *a castro ... fugatus*)
- 291 Euthemius of Tyana to Alexander of Hierapolis