

The Decapolis: History and Archaeology

2 History

330 BCE-363 CE

SARTRE, M. 2001: *D'Alexandre à Zénobie: Histoire du Levant antique IVe siècle av. J.C. – IIIe siècle ap. J.C.* Paris.

MILLAR, F. 1993: *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337.* Cambridge, London.

Note on periodization

	Historical	Archaeological
Hellenistic	330-64 BCE	~300-50 BCE
Early Hellenistic	330-200 BCE (Ptolemaic)	~300-150 BCE
Late Hellenistic	200-64 BCE (Seleucid/Hasmonaean)	~150-50 BCE
Early Roman	64 BCE-135 CE (Late Republic and High Empire)	~50 BCE-100/150 CE
Middle Roman	-	~100/150-250 CE
Late Roman	135-324 CE (Late Empire)	~250-350 CE

Before Alexander

Persian Levant

“In Syria the Phoenician nation inhabits the areas by the sea on a narrow strip less than 40 stades from the sea. In some places the width is not even 10 stades.”

Pseudo-Scylax 104, ca. 350 BCE



Before Alexander

Persian Levant

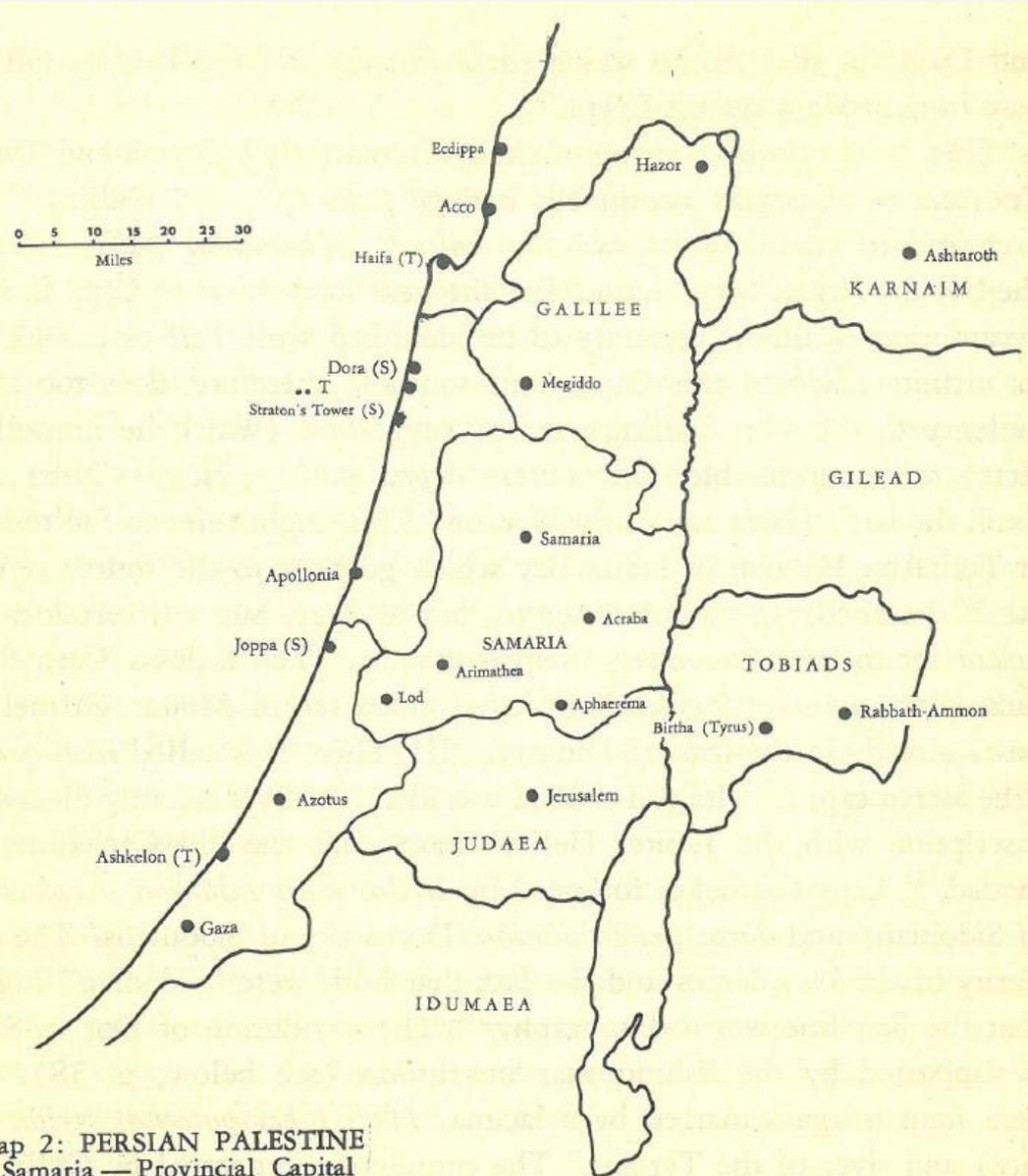
"...and a city of the **Ekdippoi**, and a river and **Ake** city. Next is **Belos** a city of the Tyrians and Mt. Karmel, a sanctuary of Zeus. **Arados** city of the Sidonians, **Sykaminon** city and river of the Tyrians; **Dor**, a city of the Sidonians. **Ioppe** where they say Andromeda was exposed to the sea monster; and **Askalon** city and palace of the Tyrians. Here is the border of Koile Syria."

"After Syria are the Arabs..."

Pseudo-Scylax 104-105, ca. 350 BCE

- Coastal region is actively involved in exchange (commercial, cultural) with the Greek world, inland (Jews, Samaritans etc.) far less

Avi-Yonah, M. 1966: Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography. Grand Rapids



Map 2: PERSIAN PALESTINE
Samaria — Provincial Capital
T) — Town belonging to Tyre
S) — Town belonging to Sidon

Before Alexander



36



2

Pseudo-athenian AG drachm, Samaria (4th c. BCE)
Imitation of internationally accepted money



10

AG hemi-obol, Judaea, reverse: YHD (4th c. BCE)
Lily - Jewish symbol; eagle - royal (Persian)



AG obol, Samaria,
obverse: ŠMRYN (Samaritans)
reverse: MBGY (name of the governor)
(4th c. BCE)



18



AG hemi-obol, Judaea, reverse: YḤZQYH / HPḤH (Yehizkiyahu ha-Pehah - the governor), note the poor imitation of the Athenian owl on the reverse
(4th c. BCE)

Alexander's conquest

- Siege of Tyre
 - Siege of Gaza
- Egypt → Gaugamela

"But **Sanballat** thought he had now gotten a proper opportunity to make his attempt, so he renounced Darius, and taking with him seven thousand of his own subjects, **he came to Alexander; and finding him beginning the siege of Tyre**, he said to him, that he delivered up to him these men, who came out of places under his dominion, and did gladly accept of him for his lord instead of Darius."

AJ 12.391-392



Alexander's conquest

Alexander as a founder

Tyre (Justin 18.3)

Gaza (Arrian 2.27.2)

Samaria (Curtius Rufus 4.8.9)

Claimed as a founder:

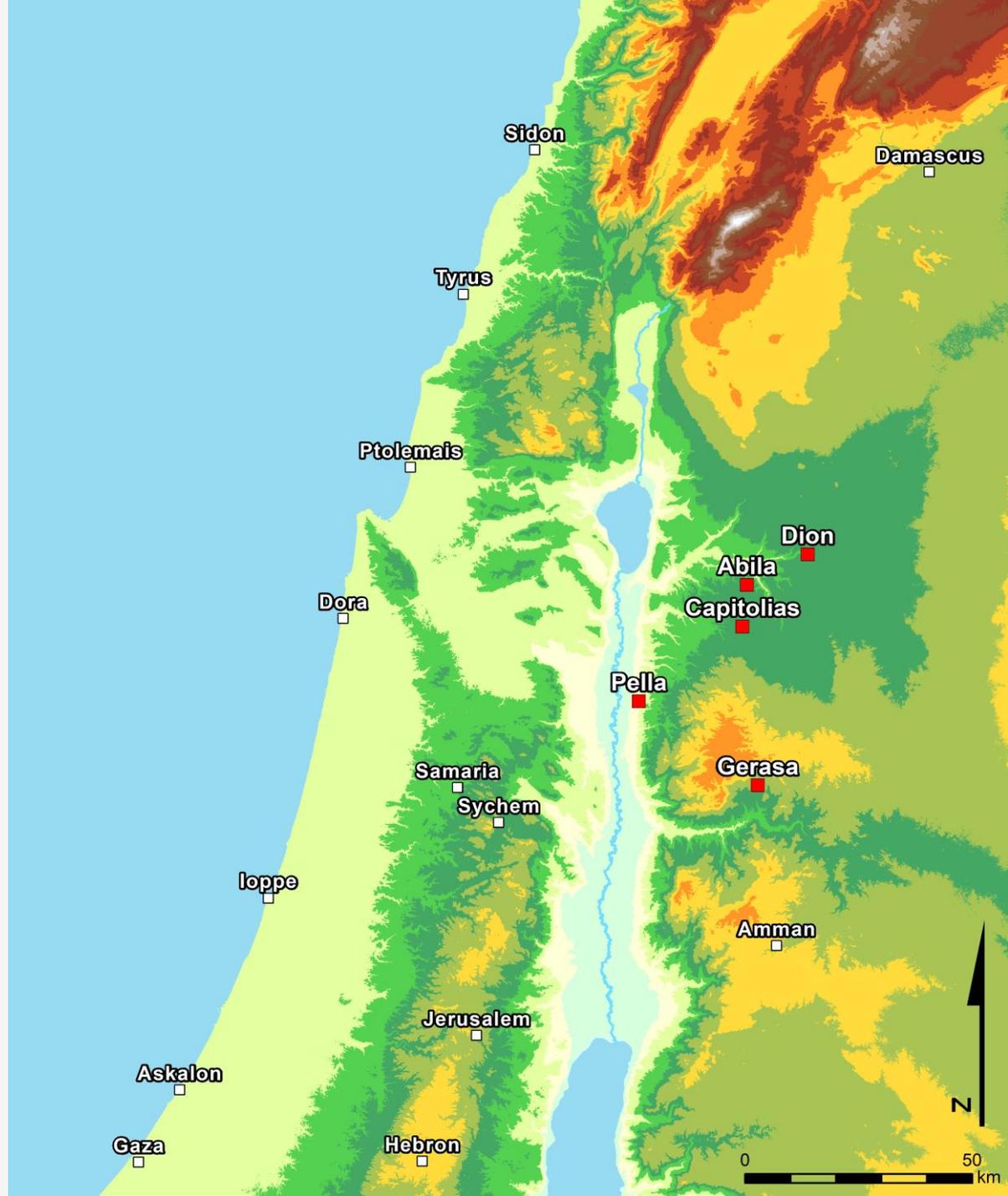
Capitolias (2nd c. CE coins)

Gerasa (3rd c. CE coins) - Perdikkas?

Abila (3rd c. CE coins)

Dion (Stephanos)

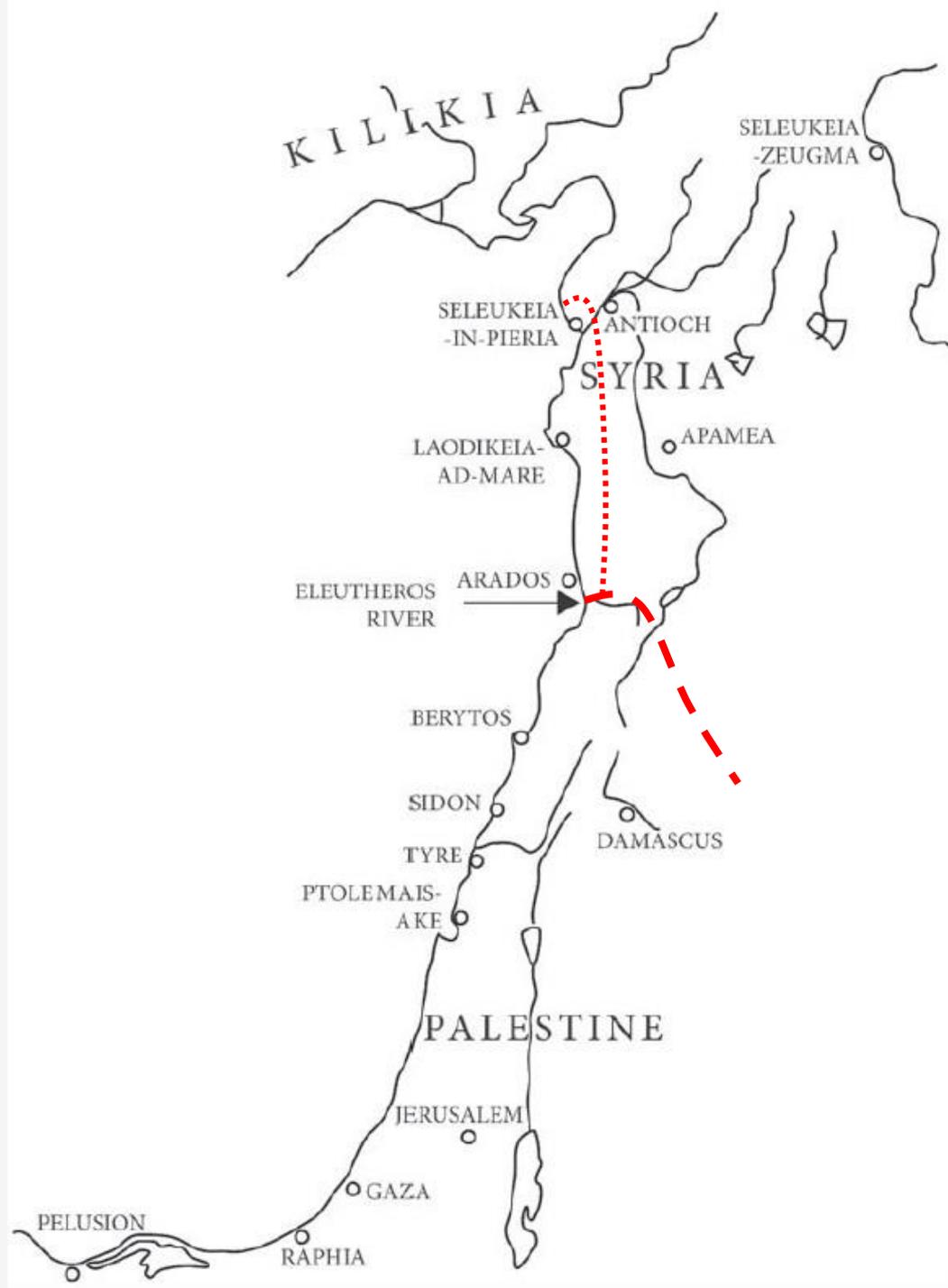
Pella (Stephanos)



Ptolemaic and Seleucid period

Syrian wars

1. 274-271 BCE (mainly Cilicia, Phoenicia)
 2. 260-253 BCE (northern coast of Syria?, Asia Minor, Aegean)
 3. 246-241 BCE (northern coast of Syria)
 4. **219-217 BCE (Antiochus III, battle of Raphia)**
 5. **202-195 BCE (battle of Paneion)**
 6. 170-168 BCE (Antiochus IV, campaign in Egypt)
- Ptolemaic province *Syria kai Foinike* extends up to the river Eleutheros (Nahr el-Kabir)
 - The coast between Eleutheros up to Seleukeia was in Ptolemaic hands from the Third to the Fourth War

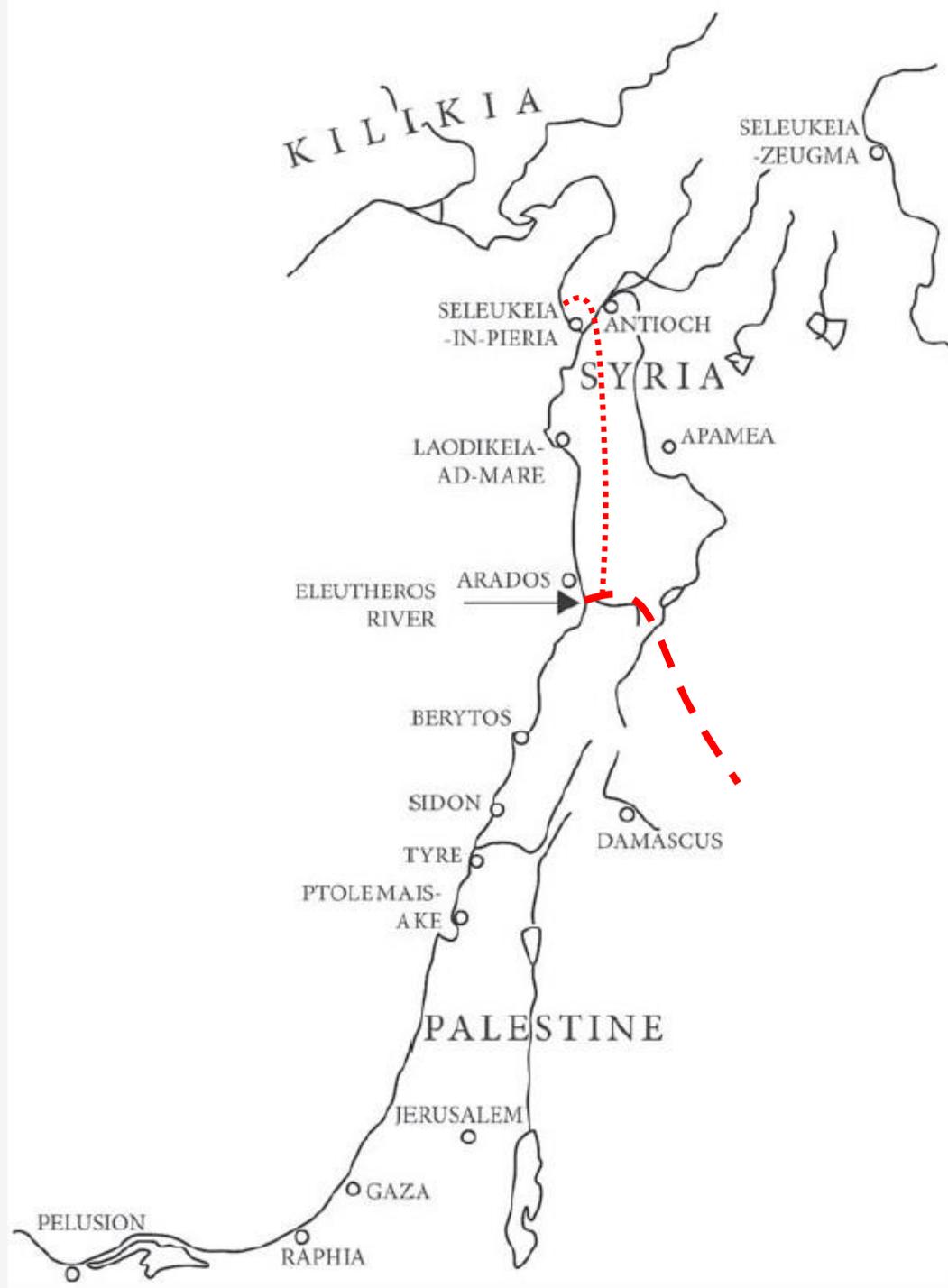


Ptolemaic period

“It possesses too suitable and commodious harbours at **Askalon, Joppa, and Gaza**, as well as at **Ptolemais which was founded by the King** and holds a central position compared with the other places named, being not far distant from any of them. The country produces everything in abundance, since it is well watered in all directions and well protected from storms. The river Jordan, as it is called, which never runs dry, flows through the land. Originally (the country) contained not less than 60 million acres (*arourai*) though afterwards the neighbouring peoples made incursions against it - **and 600,000 men were settled upon it in farms of a hundred acres (*arourai*) each.**”

Letter of Aristeas, 115-116 (2nd c. BCE)

- Still concerned mainly with the important harbour towns
- Indicated large-scale colonization of the land



Ptolemaic period

Zenon of Kaunos

- Papyri from *Syria kai Foinike* (260-258 BCE)

“Memorandum to Zenon from Herakleides the chariot-driver {*synōristēs*} concerning the activities of Drimylos and Dionysios . . . a slave girl and after using her he handed her over to the frontier-guard {*horophylax?*}, providing her with whatever she had. And she is in **Pēgai (=Aphek) with the frontier-guard**. They bought another girl from the **Ammonites** and they sold her in **Ptolemais**. This is the fourth time he has brought a sacred prostitute down to **Joppa**. And he went away to **Aurana (=Auranitis, Hawran)** taking a female slave with him and got 150 drachmas. And when he returned from there he collected a band of **Nabataeans**...”

PSI 4.406

Apart from information about the sacred prostitution, the letter provides information on the administration of the province (horophylax) and possibilities of commercial exchange.

“In the 27th year of the reign of Ptolemy son of Ptolemy and of his son Ptolemy, the priest of Alexander and of the gods Adelphi and the kanephoros of Arsinoe Philadelphus being those in office in Alexandria, in the month Xandicus, **at Birta in the land of Ammon (Ammonitis)**. Nicanor son of Xenocles, **Cnidian, in the service of Tobias**, has sold to Zenon son of Agreophon, Caunian, in the service of Apollonius the dioiketes, a Babylonian girl named Sphragis, about seven years of age, for fifty drachmas. Guarantor . . . son of **Ananias, Persian, of the troop of Tobias, cleruch**. Witnesses: . . . judge; Polemon son of Straton, **Macedonian, of the cavalrymen of Tobias, cleruch**; Timopolis son of Botes, **Milesian**, Heraclitus son of Philippus, **Athenian**, Zenon son of Timarchus, **Colophonian**, Demonstratus son of Dionysius, **Aspendian**, all four in the service of Apollonius the dioiketes.”

P.Cairo.Zen I, 59003

The sale deed of a slave girl gives two important information: 1) existence of a Ptolemaic military colony in Transjordan in the time of Ptolemy II, under command of a local Tobias; and b) the names and origins of the Ptolemaic colonists

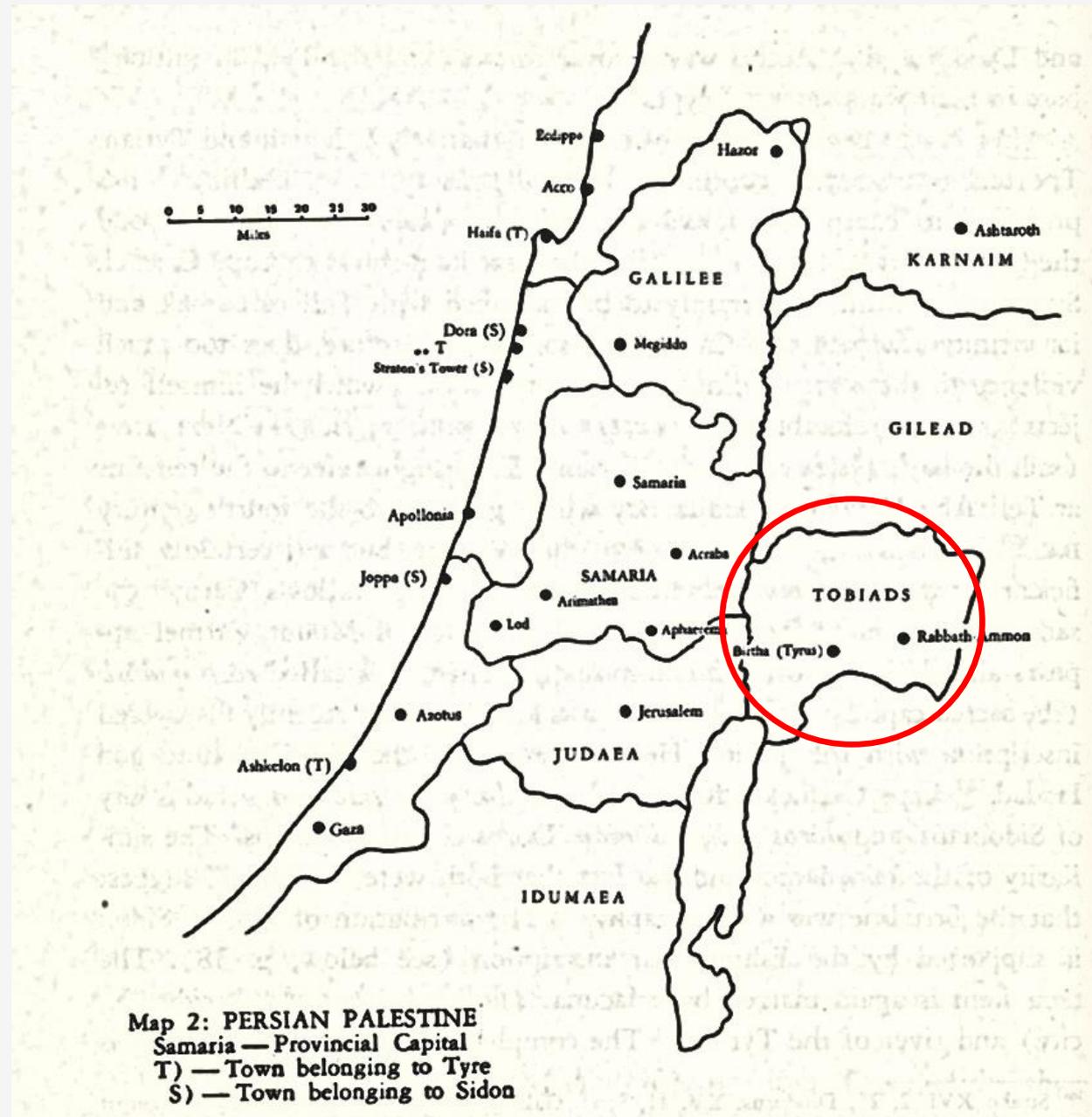
Ptolemaic period

Tobiads

"And [now] Hyrcanus's father, Joseph, died. He was a good man, and of great magnanimity; and brought the Jews out of a state of poverty and meanness, to one that was more splendid. He retained the form of the taxes of Syria, and Phoenicia, and Samaria twenty-two years. His uncle also, Onias, died [about this time], and left the high priesthood to his son Simeon."

AJ 12.223-224

- A prominent Jewish family, related to the high-priest in Jerusalem, established in Transjordan in the area of modern Amman
- Good standing with both Ptolemies and Seleucids



Ptolemaic period

Ptolemaic (re-)foundations

Dynastic names:

- Ptolemais
- Philoteria
- Philadelphia

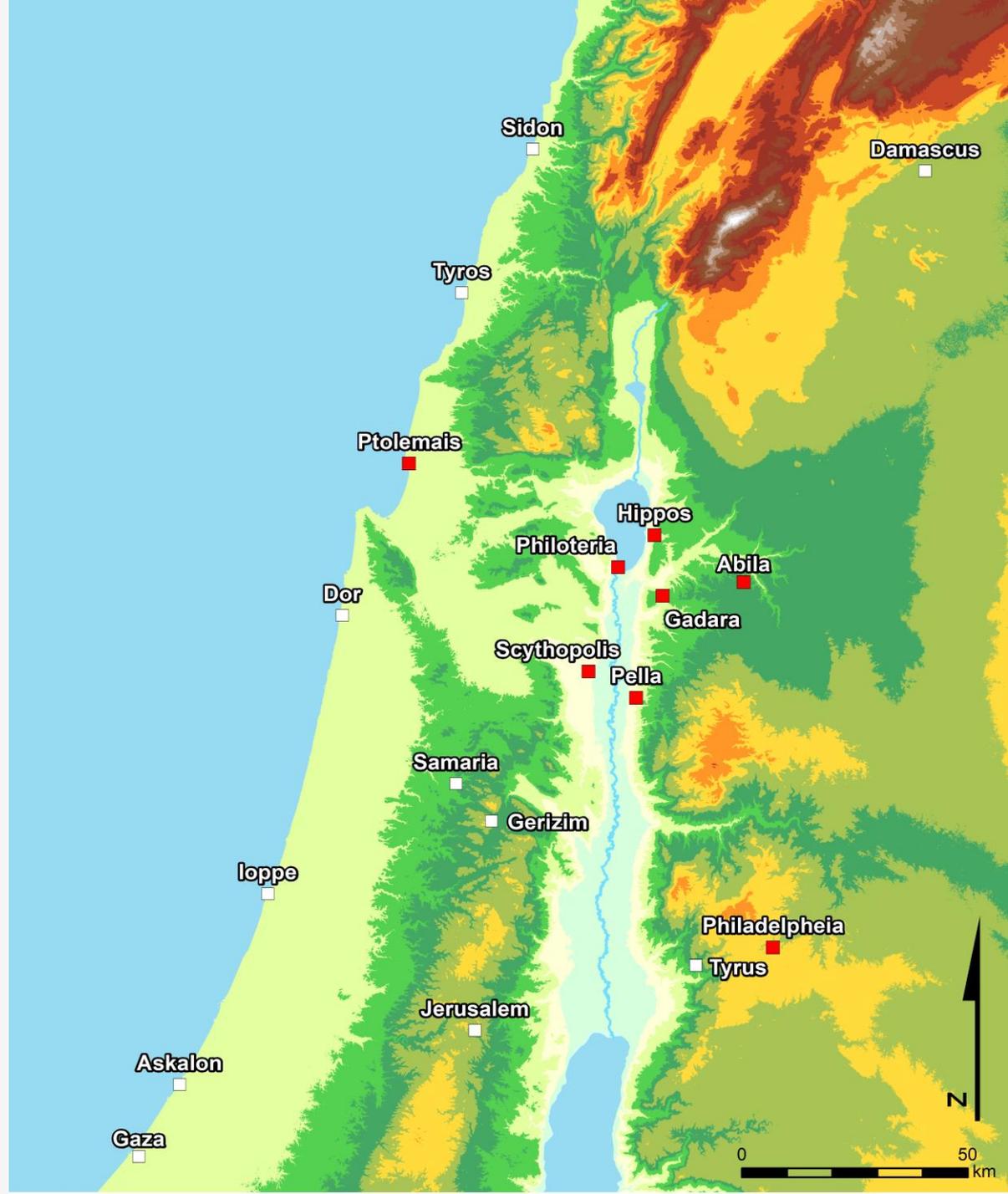
Non-dynastic names:

- Scythopolis
- Pella
- Gadara
- Abila

Last three are Graecized versions of Semitic names

Ca. 260-250 BCE

i.e. Ptolemy II Philadelphos
(Philoteria - his sister)



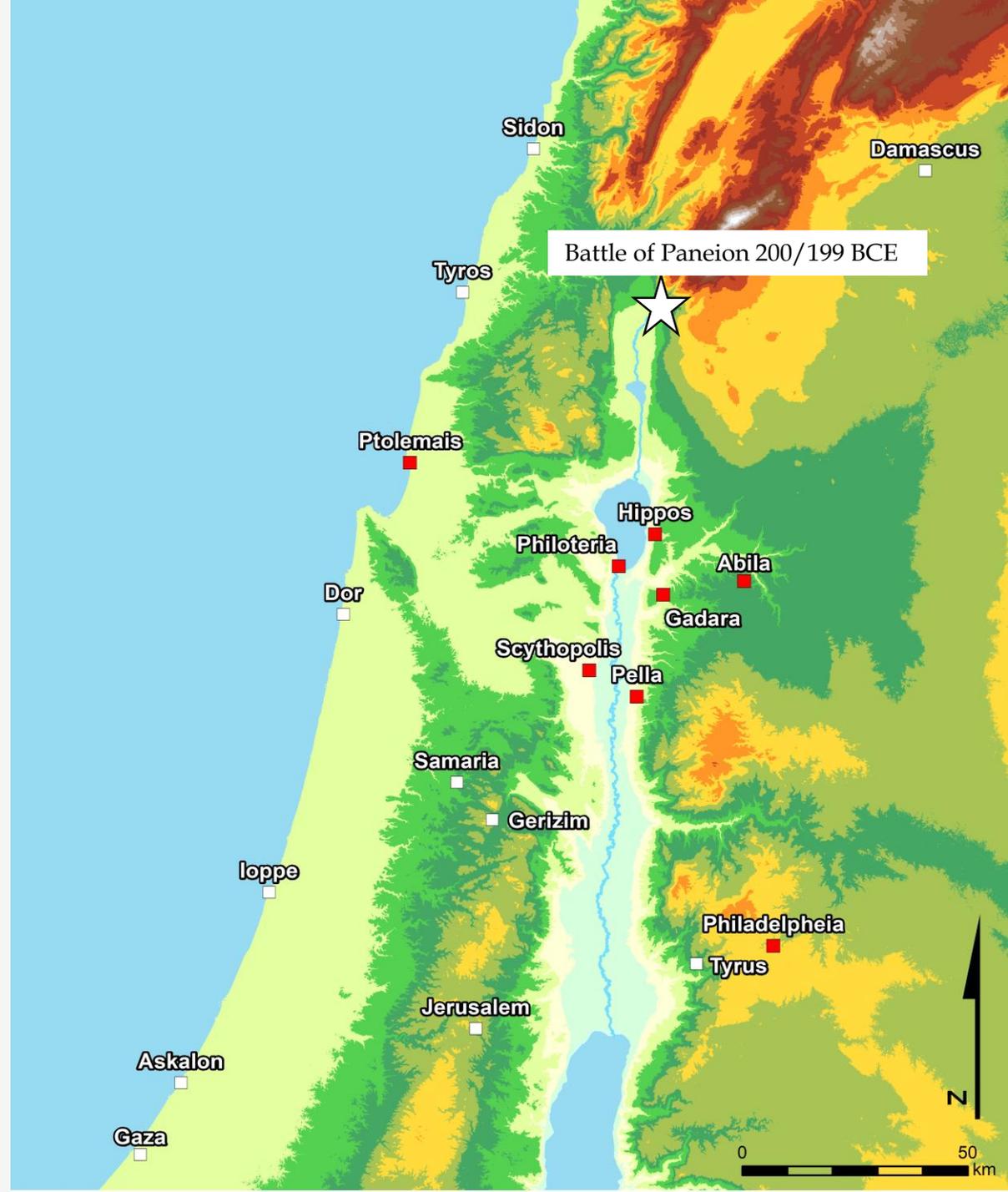
Ptolemaic period

Ptolemaic (re-)foundations

“Now **Philoteria** is situated right upon the shores of the lake into which the river Jordan discharges itself, and from which it issues out again into the plains surrounding **Scythopolis**... Having therefore secured Atabyrium also with a garrison, Antiochus started once more and took over **Pella**... and, arriving in the district of Galatis (=Galaaditis), made himself master of **Abila**... **Gadara** was the only town now left, which is thought to be the strongest of any in those parts. He therefore encamped under its walls and, bringing siegeworks to bear upon it, quickly terrified it into submission. Then hearing that a strong force of the enemy were concentrated at **Rabbatamana** (=Philadelphia) in Arabia...”

Polybius 5.70-71 (Fourth Syrian War 219-217 BCE)

- The Ptolemaic rule ends after the Battle of Paneion against Antiochus III



Ethnic makeup

Aramaic speaking population

- Phoenicians
- Jews
- Samaritans
- "Syrians"

Arabic speaking population

- Arabs
- Ituraeans

Mixed, later Judaized

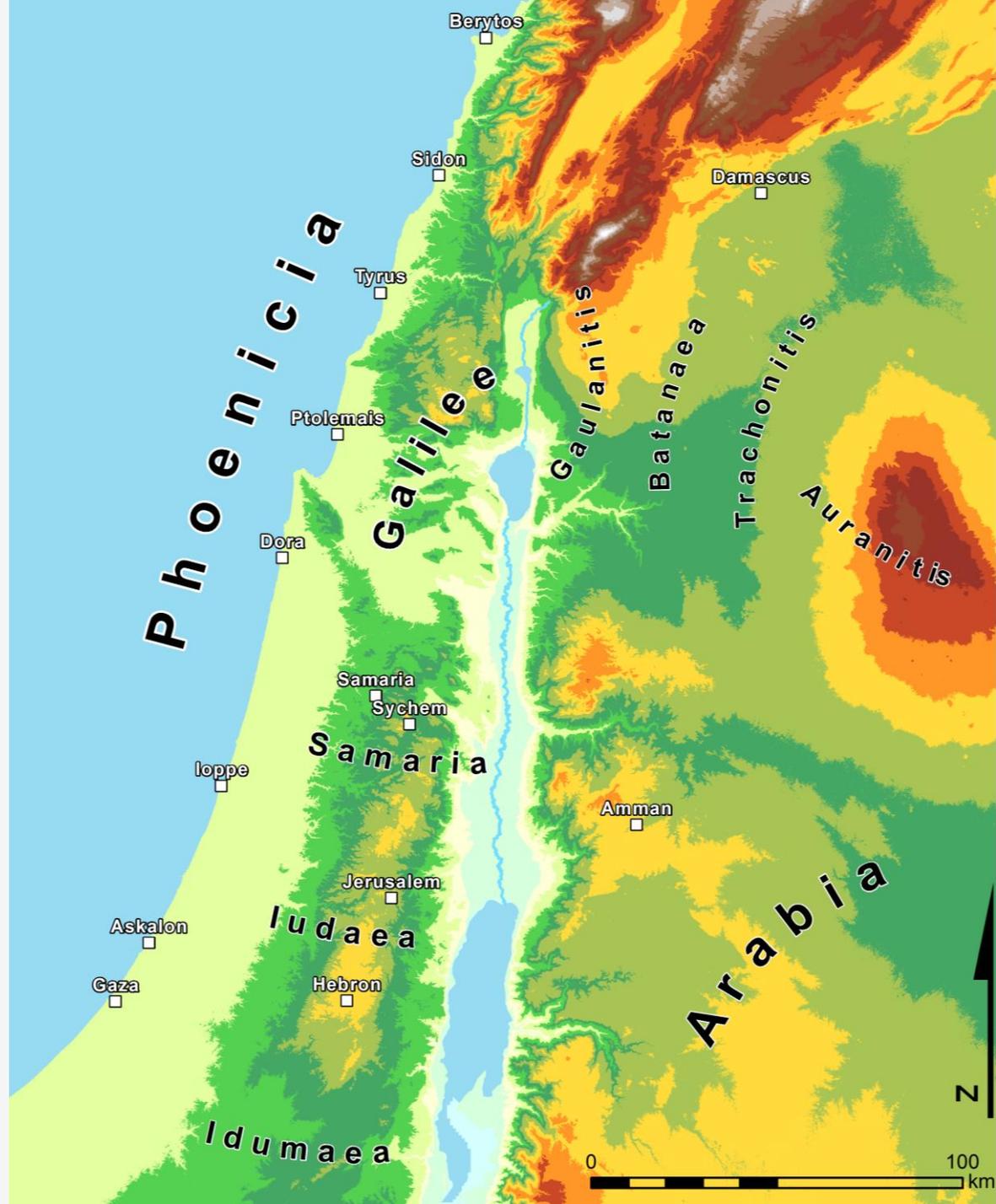
- Idumaeans

Fluid ethnic/linguistic/religious identities

Increasing Hellenization

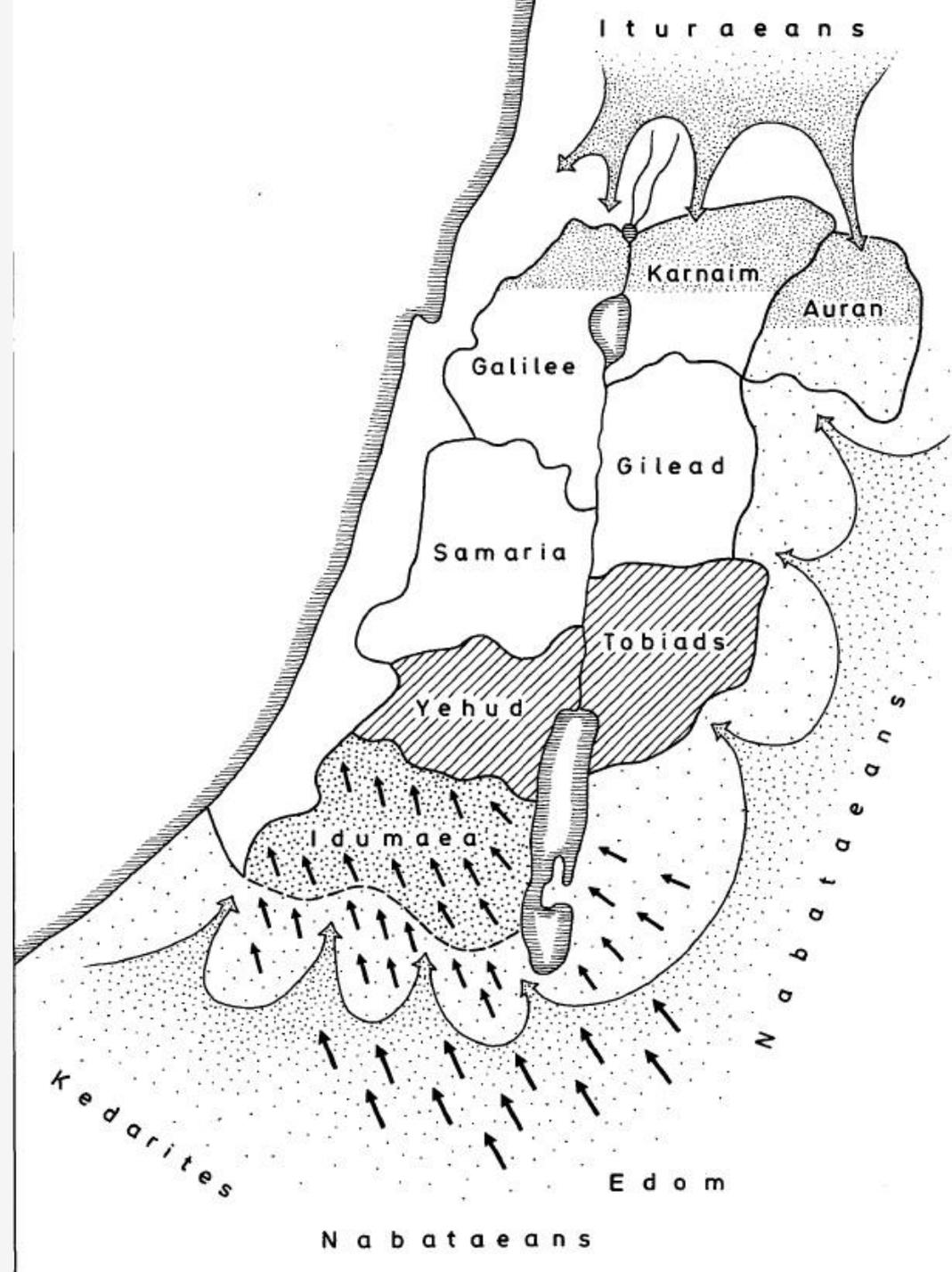
"Some writers divide the whole of Syria into Cœlo-Syrians, Syrians, and Phœnicians, and say that there are **intermixed** with these four other nations, Jews, Idumæans, Gazæans, and Azotii, **some of whom are husbandmen**, as the Syrians and Cœlo-Syrians, and **others merchants**, as the Phœnicians."

Strabo 16.2.2



Ethnic makeup

- Population centers greatly affected by Assyrian and Babylonian population transfers (740, 722, 587/6 BCE)
- Arab tribes (Nabataeans, Idumaeans, Ituraeans) slowly infiltrate the regions along the Jordan river between 6th-4th c. BCE (see map)
- "Return to Zion" during the Persian period after Cyrus' decree in 539 BCE
- Ezra (458 BCE), Nehemiah (445 BCE) - re-establishment of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple
- The Second Temple period



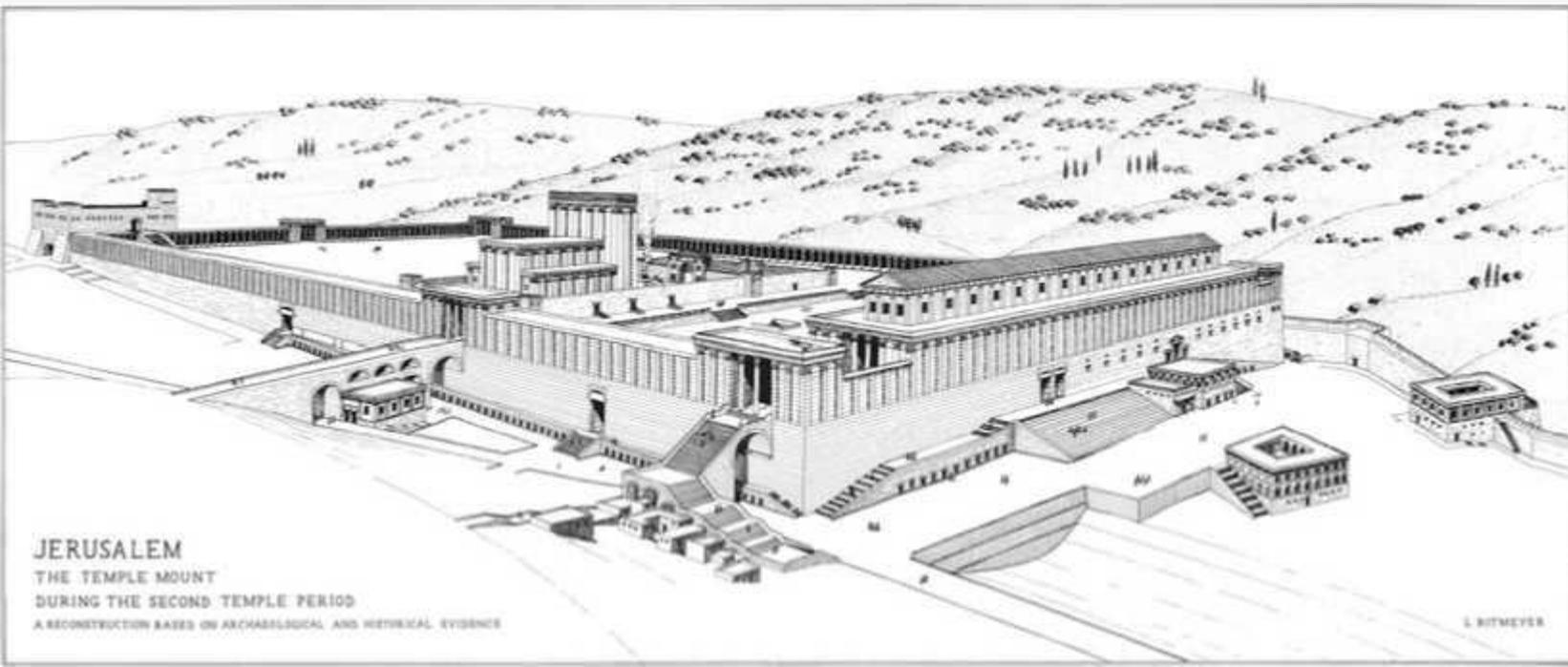
Ethnic makeup

Jews (Judaeans), Samaritans

- “Temple” polities
- Under high-priest and civilian governor
- Large degree of autonomy



Mt. Gerizim



Temple of Jerusalem after Herod's reconstruction

Ethnic makeup

Idumaeans

- Arab tribe with roots in the Aravah valley
- Iron Age kingdom of Edom
- Move north in the Persian period
- Southern Hebron Hills, Northern Negev
- Conquered by Hasmonaeans
- Gradually Judaized → Herod's family was of Idumaean descent
- Main center in Maresha
- "National" deity is *Kos*

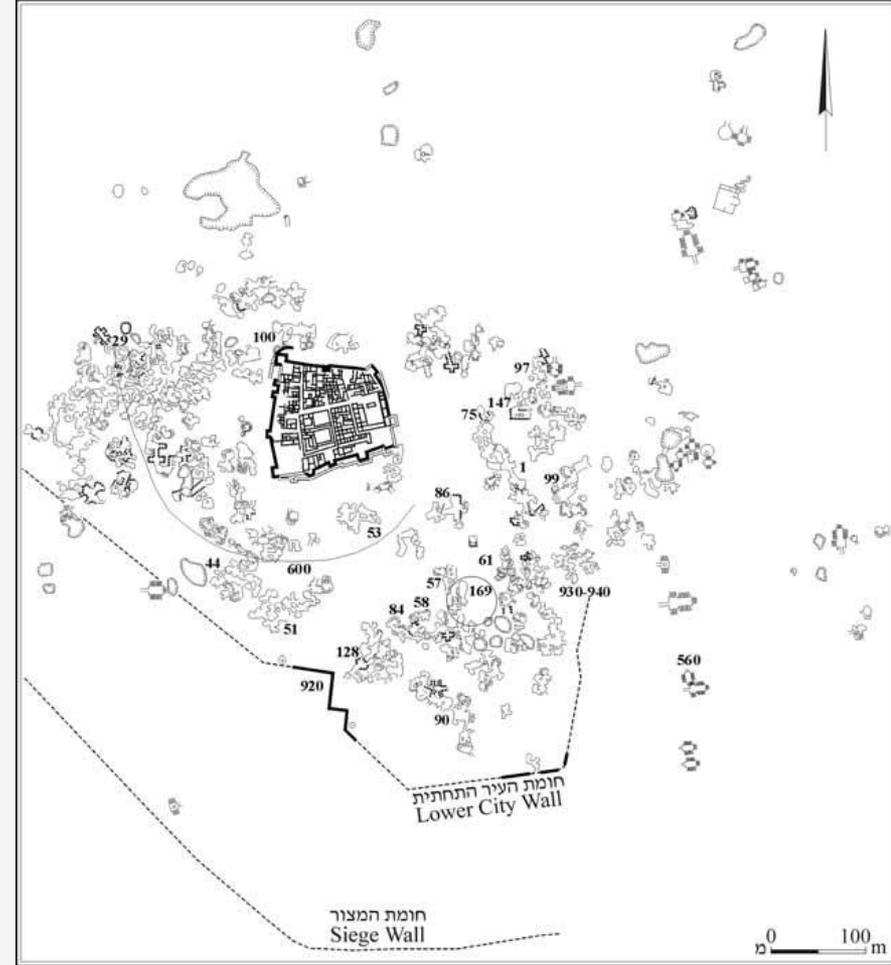


Ethnic makeup

Idumaeans



Funerary inscription from Maresha, 1st c. BCE
“Kosbanou” – Kosbanos = (god) Kos builds



Upper and lower town of Maresha with underground complexes

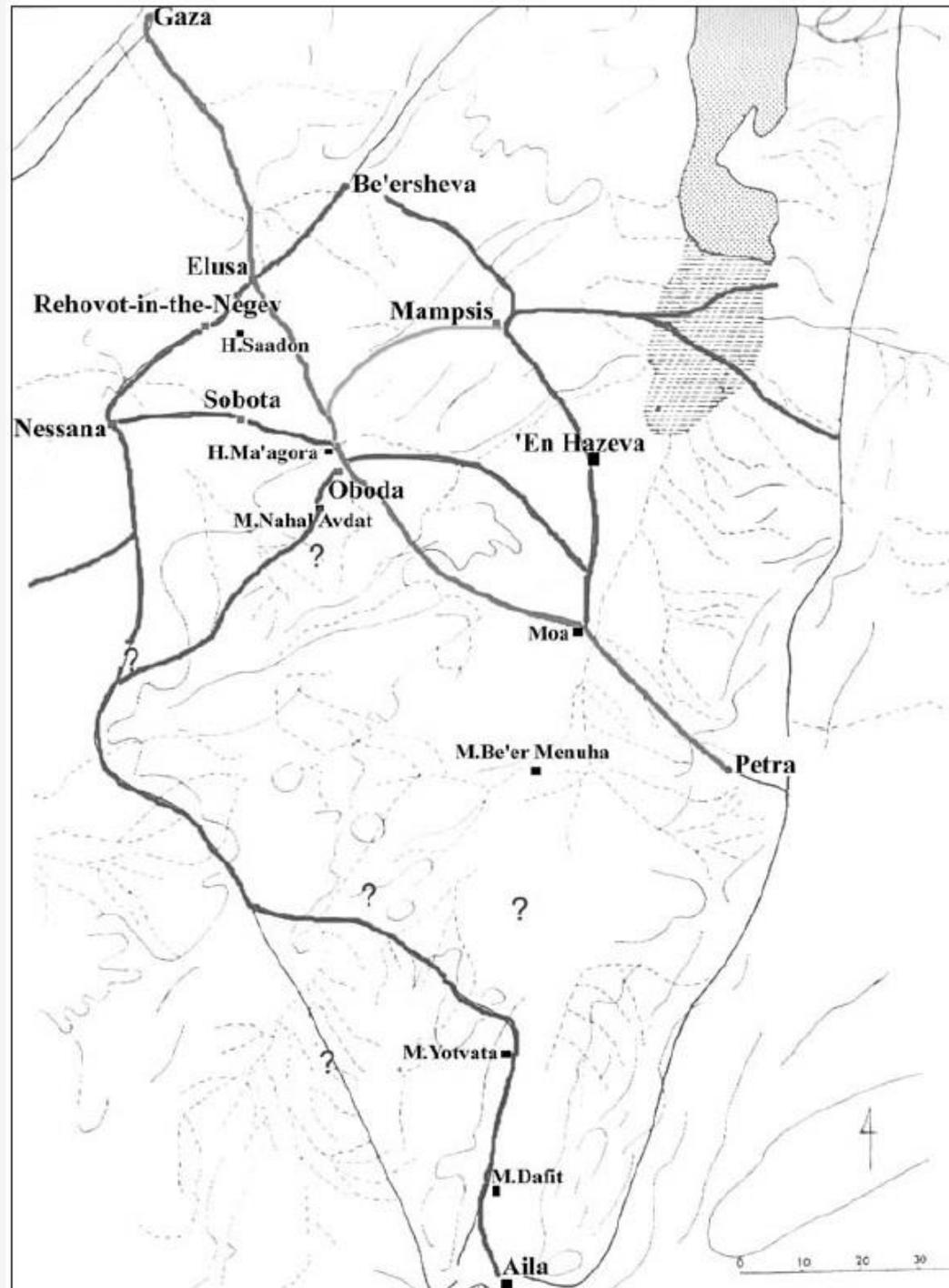
- Mixed community of Idumaeans, Phoenicians, Greeks and Jews
- Increasingly Hellenized since the 3rd c. BCE

Nabataeans

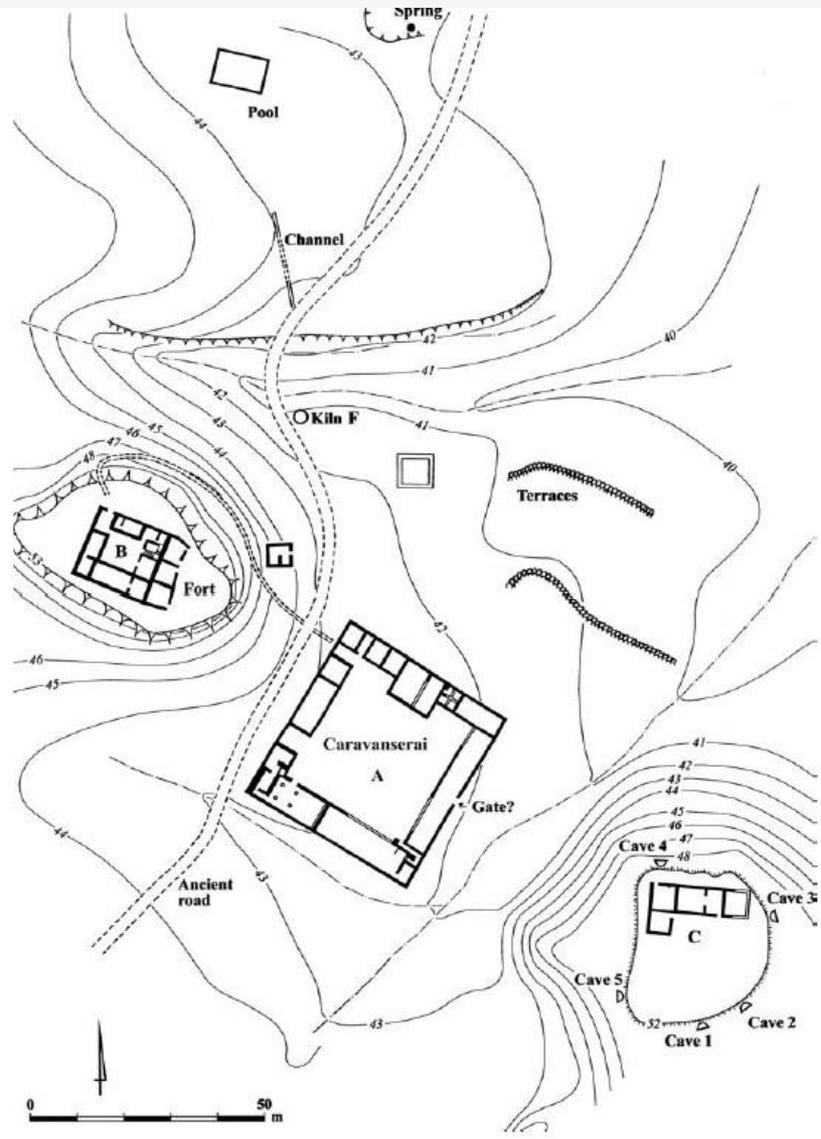
- First mentioned around 312 BCE
- First king mentioned 168 BCE (Aretas I)
- North Arabian nomad tribes
- Slow sedentarization in the southern Transjordan and Sinai along major international trade routes
- Expansion to the north - S. Syria
- Around 85-75 BCE briefly controlling Damascus
- Arab vernacular, Aramaic for inscriptions
- “National” deities Dushara (Dusares) - equated with Zeus

“Some of them **raise camels, others sheep, pasturing them in the desert...**not a few of them are accustomed to bring down to the sea **frankincense and myrrh** and the most valuable kinds of **spices**, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called **Arabia Eudaemon.**”

Dio.Sic. 19.94.4-5



Nabataeans



Painted Nabataean fine ware



18



Lead coin
 Obverse: Zeus/Ba'al? r.
 Reverse: Bull charching
 ל, נבט (Nabatu)
 Aretas II?

AG Drachm
 Obverse: Bust of Obodas r.,
 laureate, עבדת (=Obodas)
 Reverse: Bust of a queen r., veiled,
 ברכת דוסרא (=Blessing of Dusares)
 Year 15 (=16 CE)



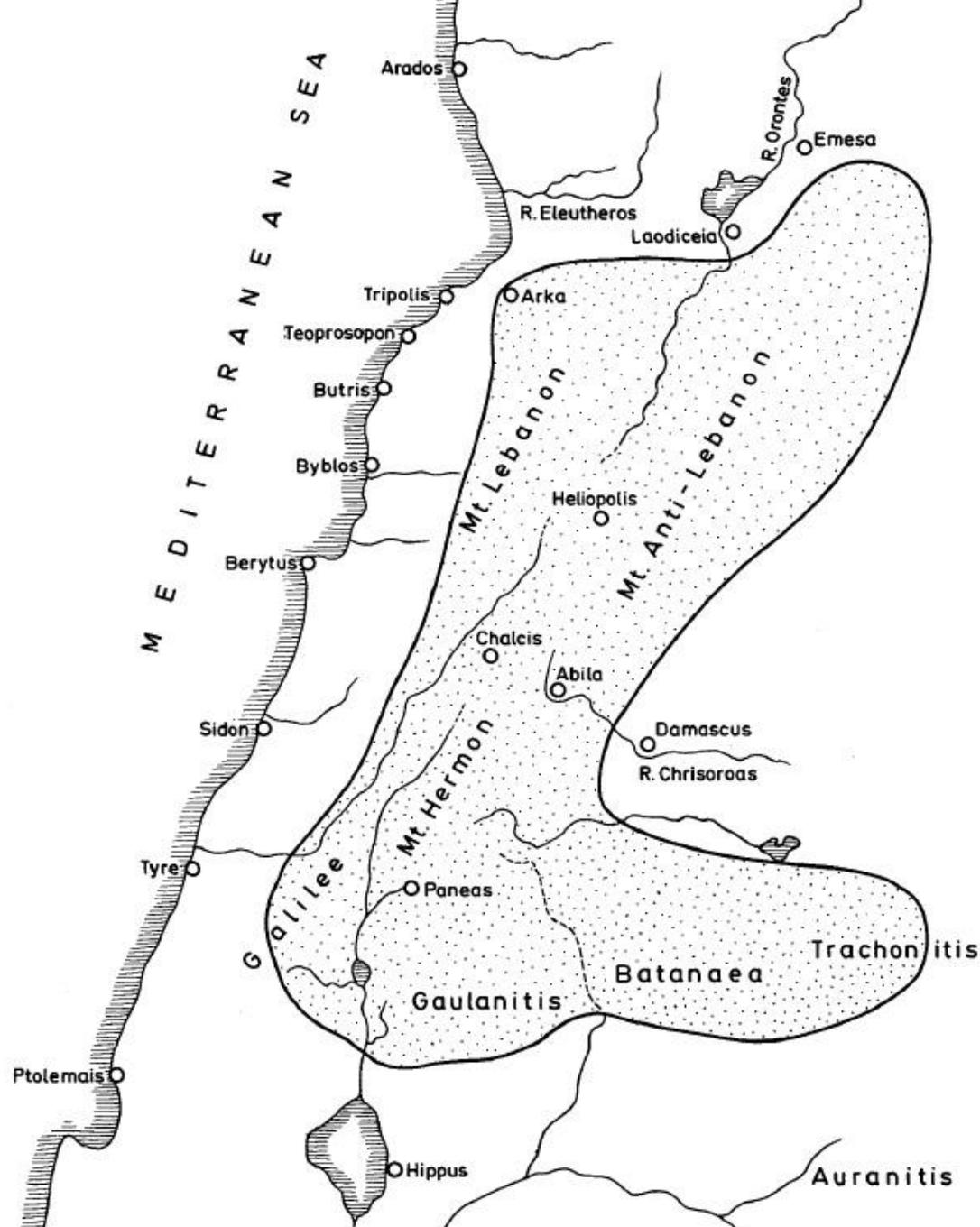
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Caravan station at Moyet Awad (2nd/1st c. BCE-3rd c. CE)

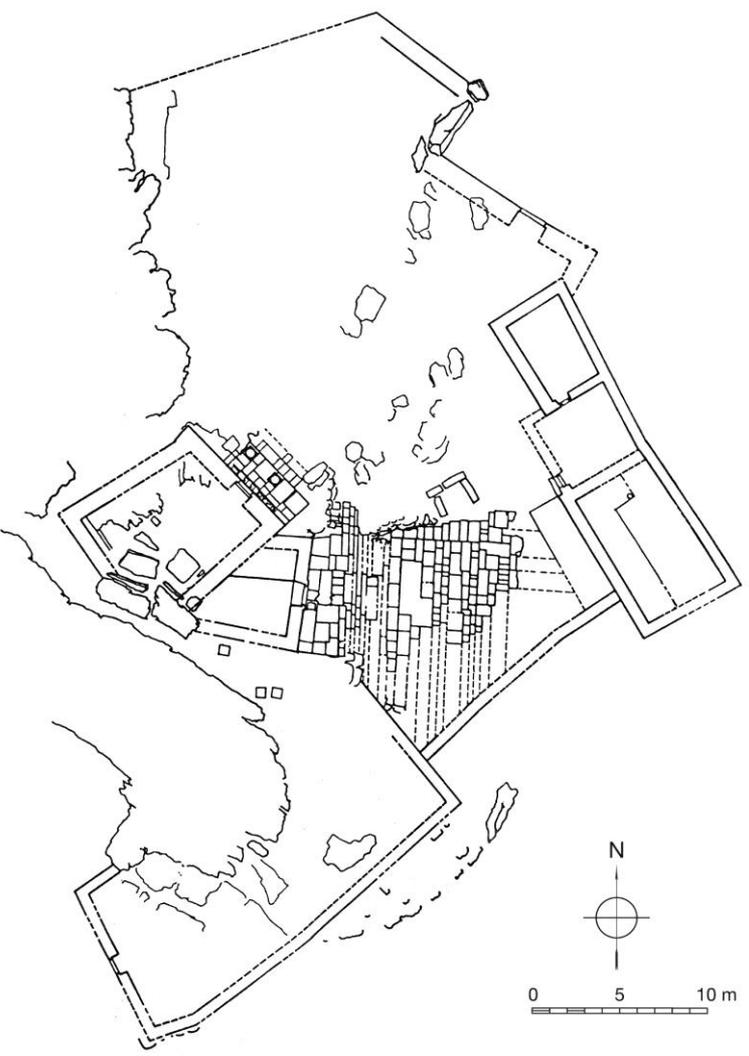
Ituraeans

- Mountain tribes mentioned during the siege of Tyre by Alexander?
- Mix of nomads, semi-nomads and settled population
- Growing sedentarization and expansion since the 2nd c. BCE
- Principality established at the beginning of the 1st c. BCE under tetrach Ptolemy son of Mennaios
- Rule of Herodian tetrarchs and gradual incorporation to the Roman province
- “Social banditry”

“Above Damascus are the two hills called Trachones; then, towards the parts **occupied by Arabians and Ituraeans** promiscuously, are mountains of difficult access, in which were caves extending to a great depth. One of these caves was capable of containing four thousand robbers, when the territory of Damascus was subject to incursions from various quarters. The **Barbarians used to rob the merchants** most generally on the side of Arabia Felix, but this happens less frequently since the destruction of the bands of the robbers **under Zenodorus, by the good government of the Romans**, and in consequence of the security afforded **by the soldiers stationed and maintained in Syria.**” Strabo 16.2.20



Ituraeans



Mountain sanctuary at Har Senaim (Mt. Hermon)
Hellenistic-4th c. CE



(L) Bronze coin, Ptolemy
Obverse: laureate head of Zeus r.
Reverse: Disocuri (?)
facing one another, hands
resting on spears
Year ΛΜΣ (240 = 74/3
BCE)



(R) Bronze coin, Lysanias (40-36 BCE)
Obverse: diademed head of Lysanias r.
Reverse: Athena standing looking l., resting hand over a shield, being crowned by Nike on her extended r.
ΛΥΣΑΝΙΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΣ (tetrach and high priest)



Cave sanctuary of Pan (from the 3rd c. BCE)

Seleucid period

Seleucid (re-)foundations

Dynastic names:

- Seleukeia Gaza
- Seleukeia Gadara
- Seleukeia Abila
- Seleukeia in the Gaulanitis

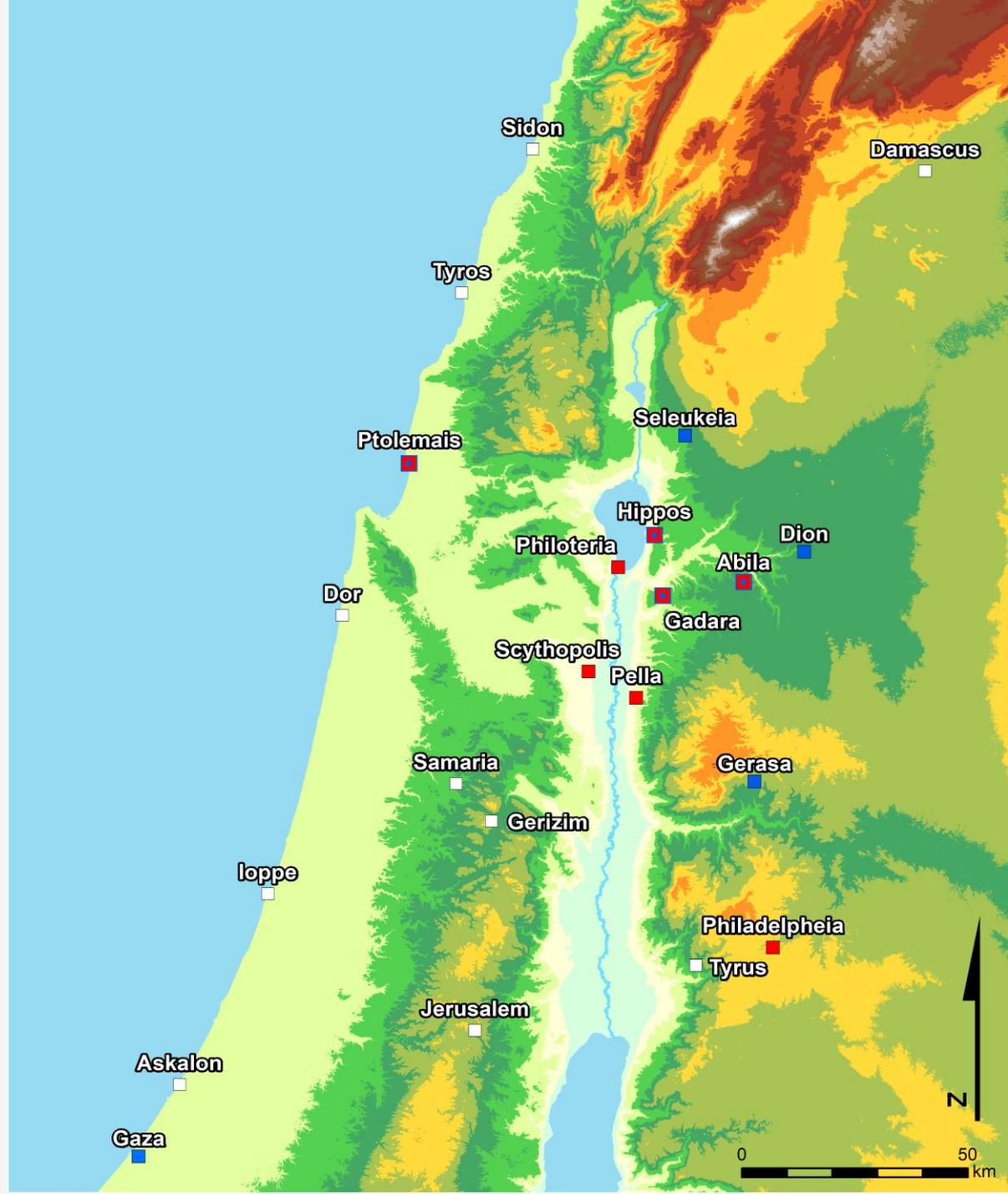
- Antiocheia-Ptolemais Ake
- Antiocheia-on-the-Chrysorroas
- Gerasa
- Antiocheia Hippos

Military colonies? Elevation of status?

Dynastic loyalties?

Seleucus IV/ Antiochus IV

Ca. 187-168 BCE



Seleucid period

The Maccabees

“Besides this he (=Jason the high-priest) promised also a hundred and fifty more (talents), if he might have license to set him up a place for exercise (**gymnasion**), and a place for youth (**ephebeion**), and to entitle them, that were at Jerusalem, Antiochians.”

2 Macc 4.9

(Jason/Ἰάσων vs. Jeshu'a/יֵשׁוּעַ) – dual identity; attempt to re-found Jerusalem as a Hellenistic *polis*?

“And king Antiochus wrote to all his kingdom, that all the people should be one: and every one should leave his own law.

And all nations consented according to the word of king Antiochus.

And many of Israel consented to his service, and they **sacrificed to idols, and profaned the sabbath.**”

1 Macc. 1.43-45

Antiochus' promotion of cult of Zeus Olympios

In those days arose **Mathathias** the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and he abode in the mountain of Modin.

And **he had five sons**: John who was surnamed Gaddis:

And **Simon**, who was surnamed Thasi:

And **Judas**, who was called Machabeus:

And Eleazar, who was surnamed Abaron: and **Jonathan**, who was surnamed Apphus.

1 Macc 2.1-7

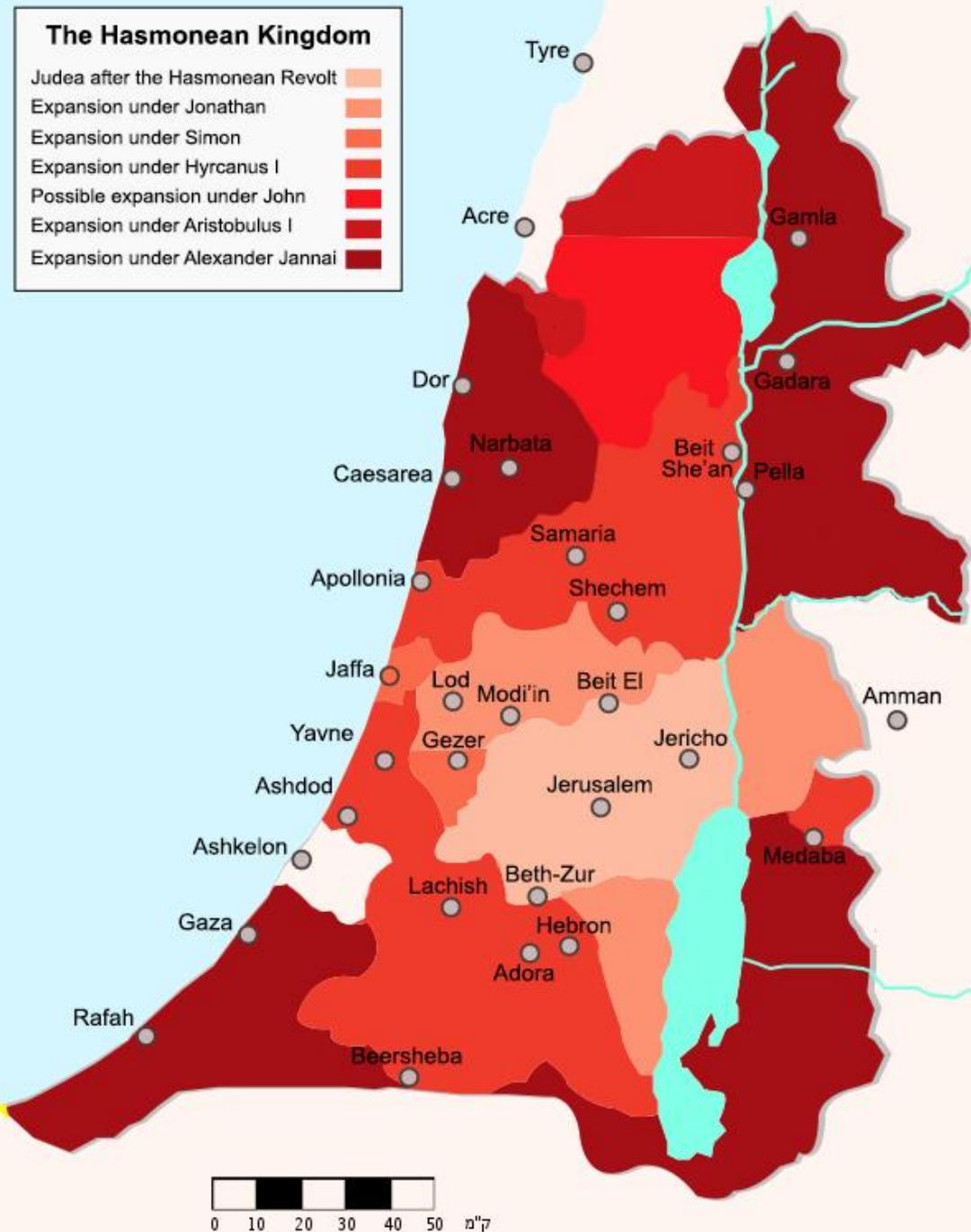
A conservative Jewish reaction to the previous developments

Seleucid period

The Maccabees

- Unexpected victories 167/6-164 BCE
- Bacchides' campaign 160-157 BCE
- Alexander Balas and Demetrius I effectively established Maccabees as autonomous dynasty (ca. 150-140 BCE)
- John Hyrcanus I (134-104 BCE) - Idumaea, central coast, Samaria
- Alexander Yannaeus (103-79 BCE) - southern and northern coast, Transjordan, Golan

“King Demetrius...I have decided to grant the Jewish nation certain benefits because they are our loyal allies and keep their treaty obligations. **I confirm their rights to the land of Judea and the three regions of Ephraim, Lydda, and Arimathea**, which are hereby annexed to Judea from Samaria with all the lands belonging to them. This will be of benefit to everyone who goes to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice, since payments of **the annual tax on produce and fruit from these lands will no longer be made to the king, but to the Temple**. And I also grant them relief from the payment of revenues now due me from tithes, tolls, salt taxes, and special taxes.” 1 Macc. 11:32-35



Hasmonaean kingdom



AE *Prutot* of John Hyrcanus
 Obverse: YHWHNN HKHN
 HGDL WHBR HYHDYM
 in wreath
 "Yehohanan the High-priest and
 the council of Jews"
 Reverse: double cornucopia with
 pomegranate between
 Appearance of non-Jewish
 images (cornucopiae),
 disappearance of Seleucid
 obverse
 Usage of Hebrew



AE *Prutot* of John Hyrcanus in the name of Antiochus VII
 Obverse: Lily flower
 Reverse: Anchor, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΗΤΗΟΥ
 Year 181 = 131/30 BCE
 Still using old Jewish symbol - lily, obverse is occupied by Seleucid symbol - anchor

"Now when their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son **Aristobulus**, intending to **change the government into a kingdom**, for so he resolved to do, **first of all put a diadem on his head**, four hundred eighty and one years and three months after the people had been delivered from the Babylonish slavery, and were returned to their own country again."

AJ 13.301

AE *Prutot* of Alexander Yannaeus
 Obverse: Anchor surrounded by ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΥΟ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (of king Alexander)
 Reverse: Eight-pointed star in diadem between rays: HMLK YHWNTN (king Jonathan)
 Macedonian star and anchor, Greek starts to appear along Hebrew



Hasmonaean kingdom

Disintegration of Seleucid realm

- Cities gaining autonomy/independence
- Emergence of local "ethnic" dynasties

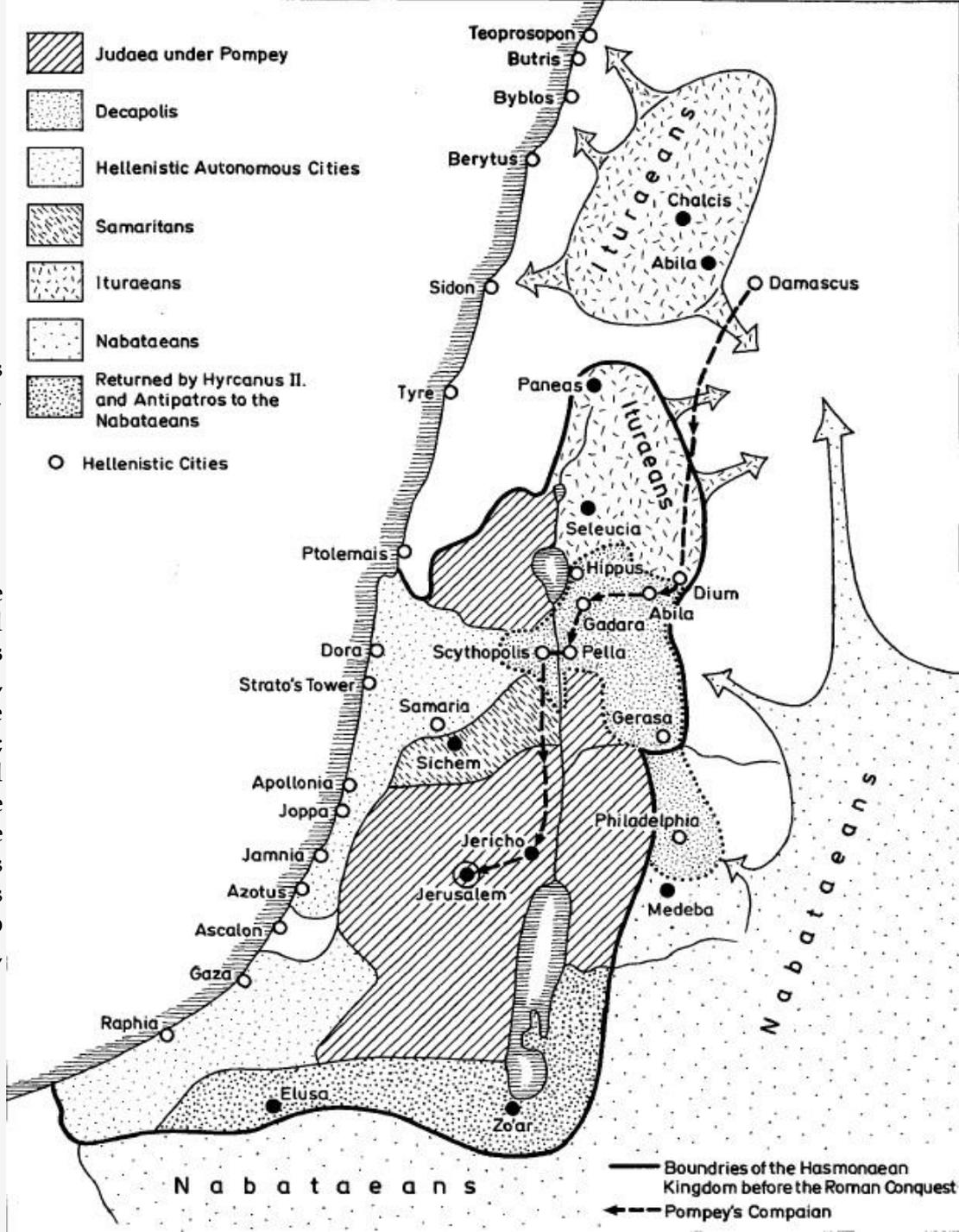
"...he fled to Zeno, who was called Cotylas, who was then the tyrant (*tyrannos*) of the city Philadelphia."

(ca. 130s BCE)

AJ 13.235

"Now at this time the Jews were in possession of the following cities that had belonged to the Syrians, and Idumeans, and Phoenicians: At the sea-side, **Strato's Tower, Apollonia, Joppa, Jamnia, Ashdod, Gaza, Anthedon, Raphia, and Rhinocolura**; in the middle of the country, near to Idumea, **Adora, and Marissa**; near the country of Samaria, Mount Carmel, and Mount Tabor, **Scythopolis, and Gadara**; of the country of Gaulonitis, **Seleucia and Gabala**; in the country of Moab...they utterly destroyed, because its inhabitants would not bear to change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews. **The Jews also possessed others of the principal cities of Syria, which had been destroyed.**"

AJ 13.395-397



Early Roman period

Pompey's re-organization

- Aftermath of the Third Mithridatic War and the war against Tigranes the Great



Early Roman period

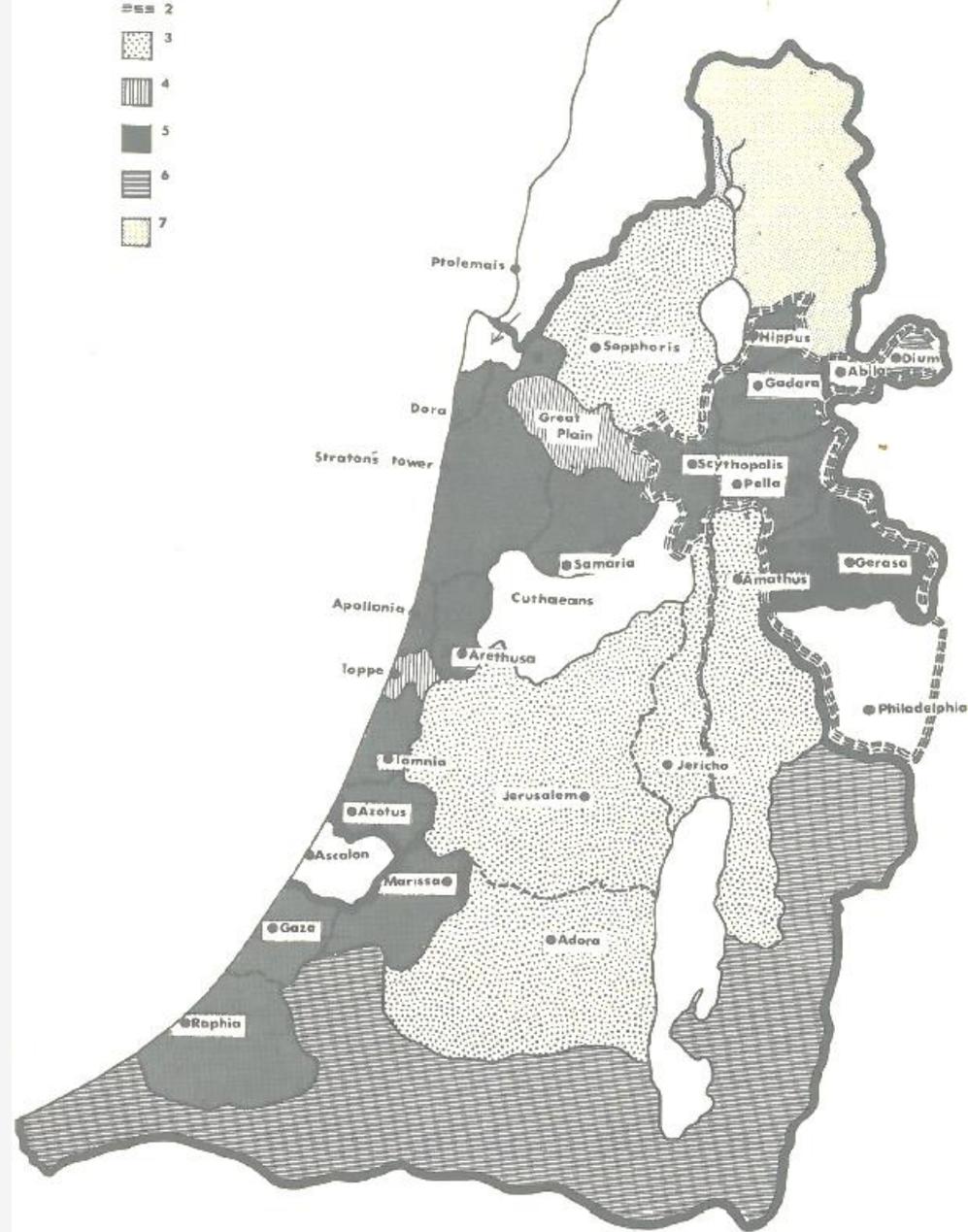
Pompey's re-organization

- War between Hyrcanus II and Aristobolus II

"A little afterward Pompey came to Damascus, and marched over Coelesyria... he passed by Pella and Scythopolis... pitched his camp at Jericho... the city (Jerusalem) was taken on the third month, on the day of the fast, upon the hundred and seventy-ninth olympiad, when Caius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero were consuls..."

AJ 14.34-68

"...restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus... and he made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans, and took away those cities of Coelesyria which the inhabitants of Judea had subdued, and put them under the government of the Roman president, and confined the whole nation, which had elevated itself so high before, within its own bounds.... he rebuilt Gadara, which had been demolished a little before... and restored the rest of the cities, Hippos, and Scythopolis, and Pella, and Dios (=Dion), and Samaria, as also Marissa, and Ashdod, and Jamnia, and Arethusa, to their own inhabitants: these were in the inland parts. ... and also of the maritime cities, Gaza, and Joppa, and Dora, and Strato's Tower... All these Pompey left in a state of freedom, and joined them to the province of Syria." AJ 14.73-76



Map 5: POMPEY'S SETTLEMENT

1. Judea at death of Jannaeus	5. Detached Greek Cities
2. Cities of the Decapolis	6. To Nabataeans
3. Area left to the Jews	7. To Ituraeans
4. Returned by Julius Caesar	

Early Roman period

AJ 13.395-397	AJ 14.75-76	BJ 1.155-157
Gadara	Gadara	Gadara
	Hippos	Hippos
Scythopolis	Scythopolis	Scythopolis
	Pella	Pella
Samaria	Samaria	Samaria
Marissa	Marissa	Marissa
Ashdod	Ashdod	Ashdod
Jamnia	Jamnia	Jamnia
	Arethousa	Arethousa
	Gaza	Gaza
Ioppe	Ioppe	Ioppe
	Dora	Dora
Stratonos' Tower	Stratonos' Tower	Stratonos' Tower
	Dium	
Apollonia		
Anthedon		
Raphia		
Rhinocolura		
Seleuceia (Golan)		

Cities held by Jews

Cities restored by Pompey

Gabinus (57-55 BCE)

"...at which time were rebuilt **Samaria, Ashdod, Scythopolis, Anthedon, Raphia, and Dora; Marissa also, and Gaza**, and not a few others besides..."

AJ 14.88



66

AE medallion Gadara
Reverse: ΠΟΜΠΗΙΩΝ
ΓΑΔΑΡΕΩΝ
Year 242 (=178/9 CE)
Pompeian Era 64/3 BCE



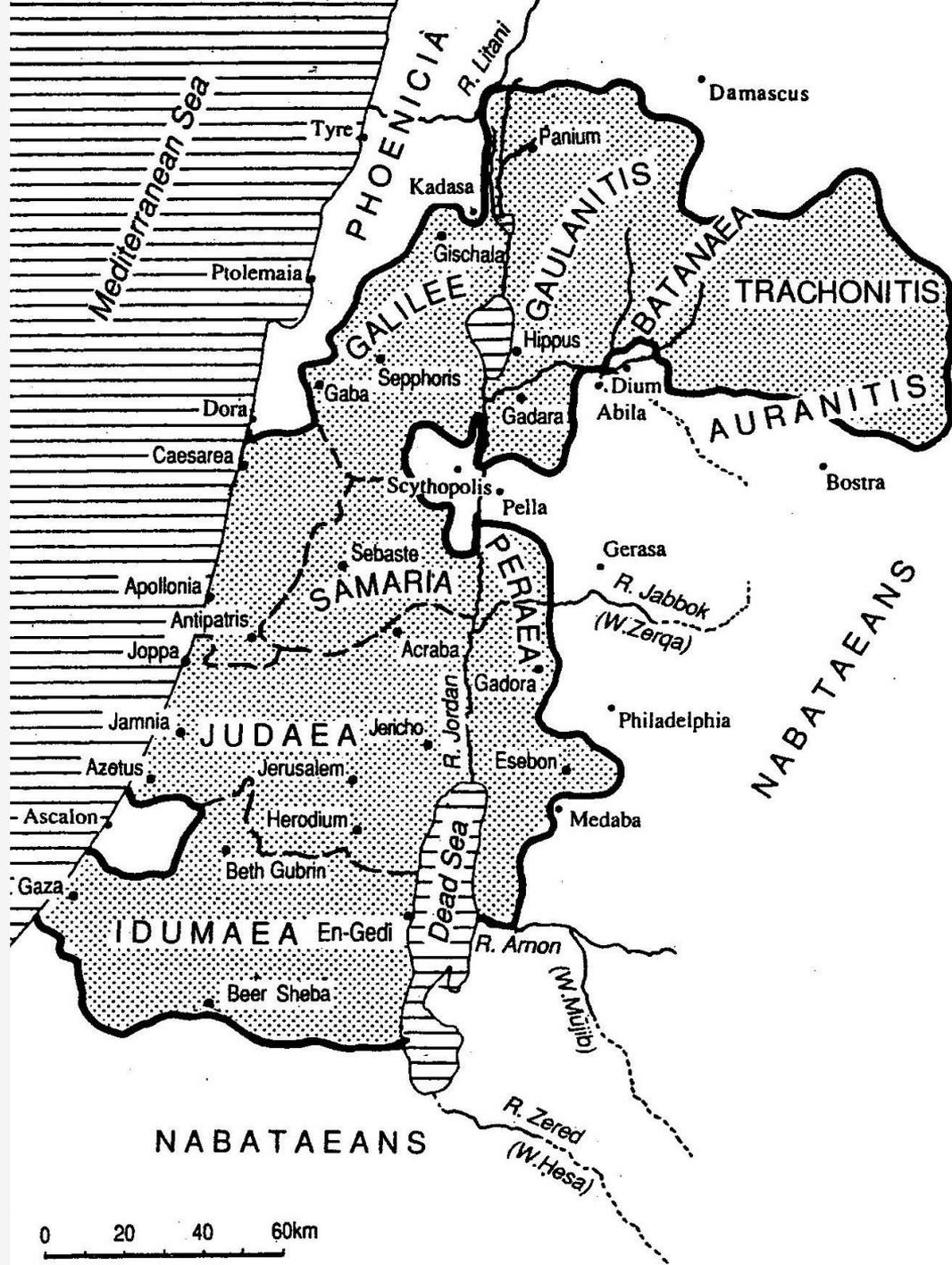
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AE coin Scythopolis
Obverse: ΓΑ(binia)
57-55 BCE

Early Roman period

Herod's kingdom

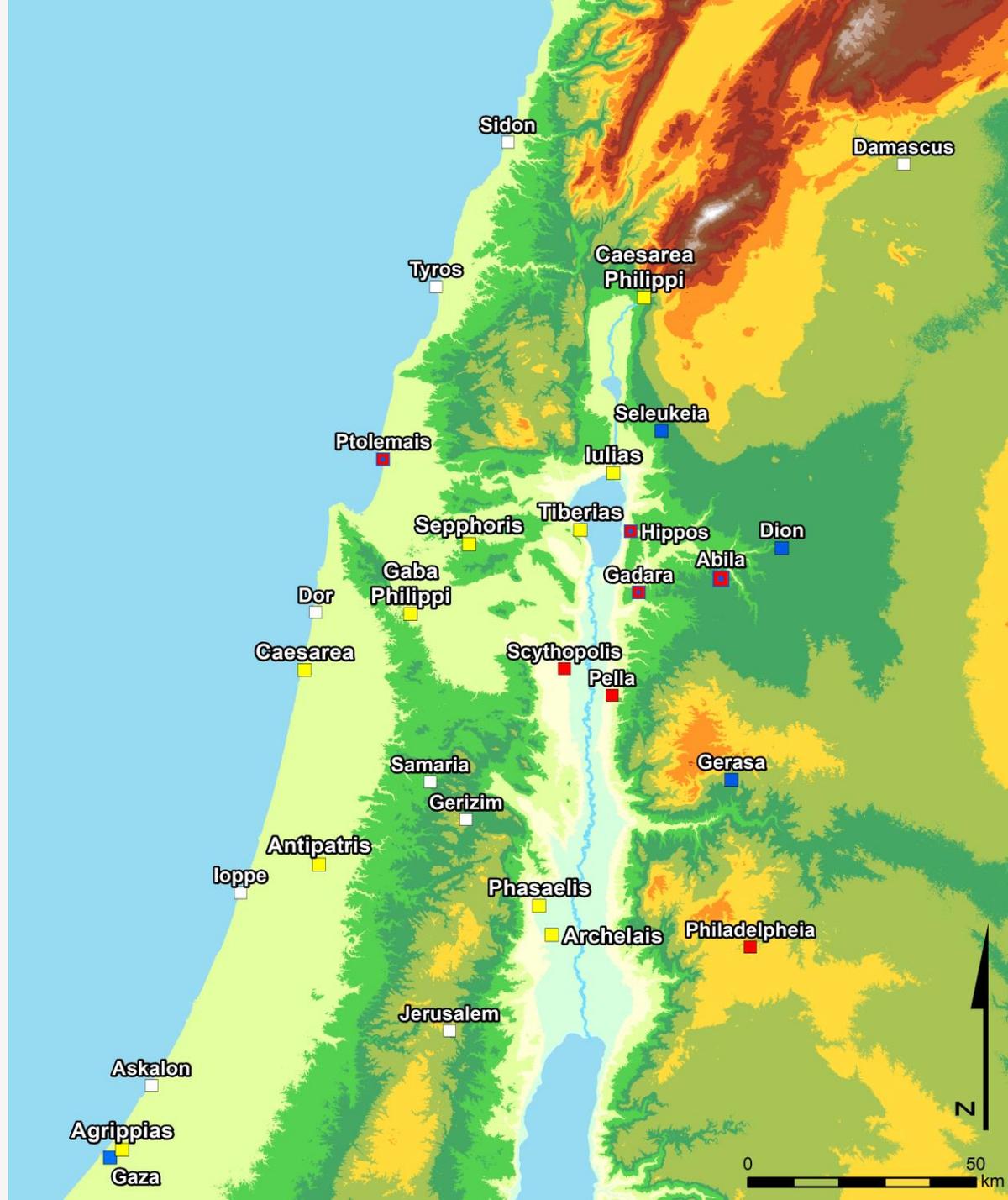
- 57-40 BCE period of unrest
- 40 BCE Parthian invasion, Antigonus (Hasmonaean) becomes king
- 37 BCE Herod captures Jerusalem
- 32-31 BCE war with Nabataeans/Cleopatra
- 23/20 BCE receives Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis
- Client kings of the Romans



Early Roman period

Herodians as founders

- Herod
 1. Samaria-Sebaste
 2. Straton's tower - Caesarea Maritima
 3. Gaba
 4. Antipatris
 5. Agrippias
 6. Phasaelis
 7. Military colonies
- Archelaus
 1. Archelais
- Antipas
 1. Tiberias
 2. Sepphoris
- Philip
 1. Caesarea Philippi
 2. Julias
- Names of family members
- Name of Emperor (Caesar) and his family members



Early Roman period



AE *prutah*
 Obverse: Anchor
 ΗΕΡΩ ΒΑΣΙ
 Reverse: Double cornucopiae
 Herod the Great

Continuing use of Greek and Hellenistic-Hasmonaean images



AE coin
 Obverse: bust of Tiberius r., laureate
 ΤΙΒ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΙ ΣΕΒΑΣ
 Reverse: Augustaeum
 ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΧΟΥ
 Tetrarch Philip

Tetrarchs in non-Jewish areas may put on the image of Emperor and pagan temples



AE *prutah*
 Obverse: simpulum
 ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ
 Reverse: Three ears of grain tied together
 ΙΟΥΛΙΑ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ
 Pontius Pilate, year 16 (=29/30 CE)

Roman governors cannot use images of people or deities in Jewish areas



AE coin
 Obverse: bust of Domitian r., laureate
 IMP CAES DIVI VESP F DOMITIAN
 AVG GER COS X
 Reverse: Moneta standing l., holding scales and cornucopia
 ΜΟΝΕΤΑ ΕΠΙ ΑΙΠΙ ΑΥΓΥΣΤ
 Agrippa II, year 25 (=84/5 CE)

On some types of coins Roman deities and Latin legends appear

Early Roman period

Direct Roman rule

- Archelaus 6 CE
- Philip 34 CE
- Antipas 39 CE
- Agrippa I 41-44 CE
- Agrippa II 48-92 CE

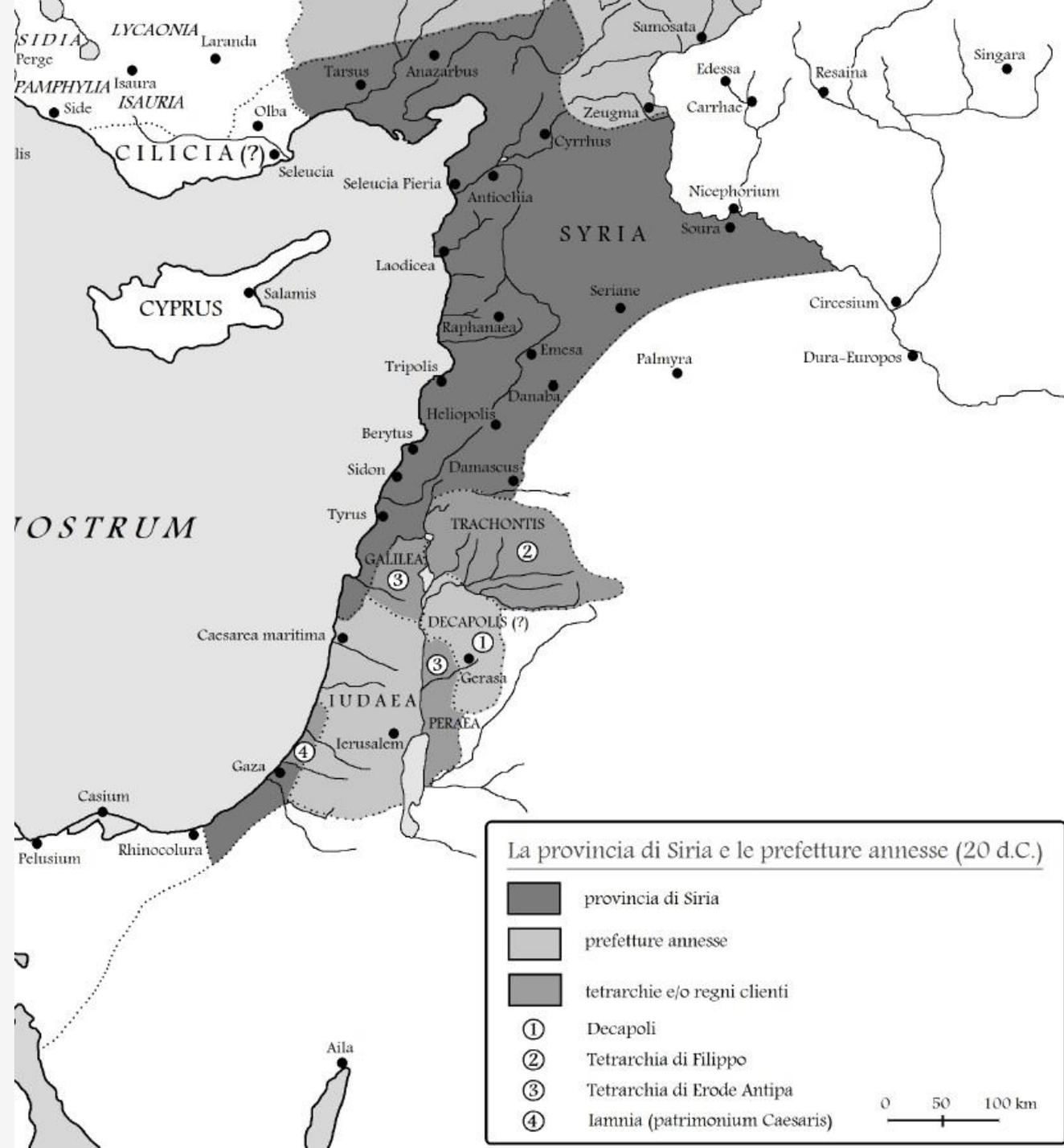
Under equestrian
praefectus/procurator (no legions,
subordinated to *legatus Augusti* in
Syria)

→
Propraetorial province (one legion)
after 72 CE

→
Proconsular province (two legions)
after 120 CE

Arabia

- Rabbel II 106 CE
- One legion



Early Roman period

The Jewish War (The Great Revolt)

- 66-72 CE
- Both internal and external factors
- Jewish millenarianism, Roman mismanagement, decay of local élites...

"Now the **people of Caesarea had slain the Jews** that were among them... Upon which stroke that the Jews received at Caesarea, the whole nation was greatly enraged; so they divided themselves into several parties, and laid waste the villages of the Syrians, and their neighboring cities, **Philadelphia, and Esebonitis, and Gerasa, and Pella, and Scythopolis, and after them Gadara, and Hippos; and falling upon Gaulonitis**, some cities they destroyed there, and some they set on fire, and then went to **Kedasa**, belonging to the Tyrians, and to **Ptolemais, and to Gaba, and to Caesarea; nor was either Sebaste or Askelon** able to oppose the violence with which they were attacked... they entirely demolished **Anthedon and Gaza**; many also of the **villages that were about every one of those cities were plundered**, and an immense slaughter was made of the men who were caught in them."

BJ 2.457-460

39



AE prutah

Obverse: palm tree flanked by two baskets of dates

LGL'T ŠYWN (for the redemption of Zion)

Reverse: Two bundles of lulav, myrtle and willow, with etrog between

ŠNT 'RB' (year 4 = 69/70 CE)

5



AG shekel

Obverse: Cup, ŠQL YSR'L (shekel of Israel)

ŠB (Year 2 = 67/8 CE)

Reverse: stem with three pomegranates

YRŠLM HQDŠ (Holy Jerusalem)

Minting of silver coins reserved only for Emperor - clear call of independence on part of the rebels

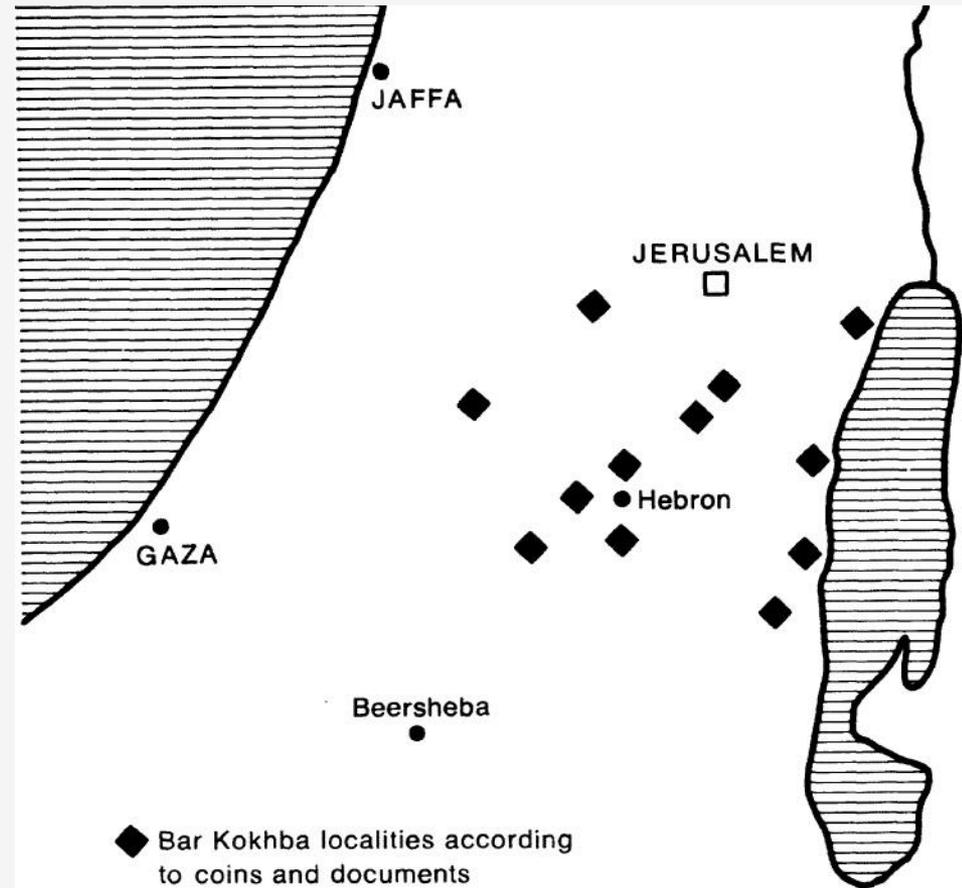
Early Roman period

Bar Kochba's Revolt

- Hadrian's visit in the east 129/130 CE
- 132-135 CE

"At **Jerusalem** he (Hadrian, ca. 130 CE) founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, **naming it Aelia Capitolina**, and on the site of the temple of the god he **raised a new temple to Jupiter**. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there... **Fifty of their most important outposts and nine hundred and eighty-five of their most famous villages were razed to the ground.** Five hundred and eighty thousand men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out... **Many Romans, moreover, perished in this war. Therefore Hadrian in writing to the senate did not employ the opening phrase commonly affected by the emperors, 'If you and our children are in health, it is well; I and the legions are in health.'**"

Dio 69.12-14



MAP 3. Judaea.

Early Roman period

Bar Kochba's Revolt



2

AE coin Aelia Capitolina
 Obverse: Draped bust of Hadrian r., laureate
 IMP CAES TRAI HADRIANO AVG PP
 Reverse: Emperor as a founder ploughing with an ox and a cow
 COL EL KAPIT COND



Tel Shalem triumphal arch



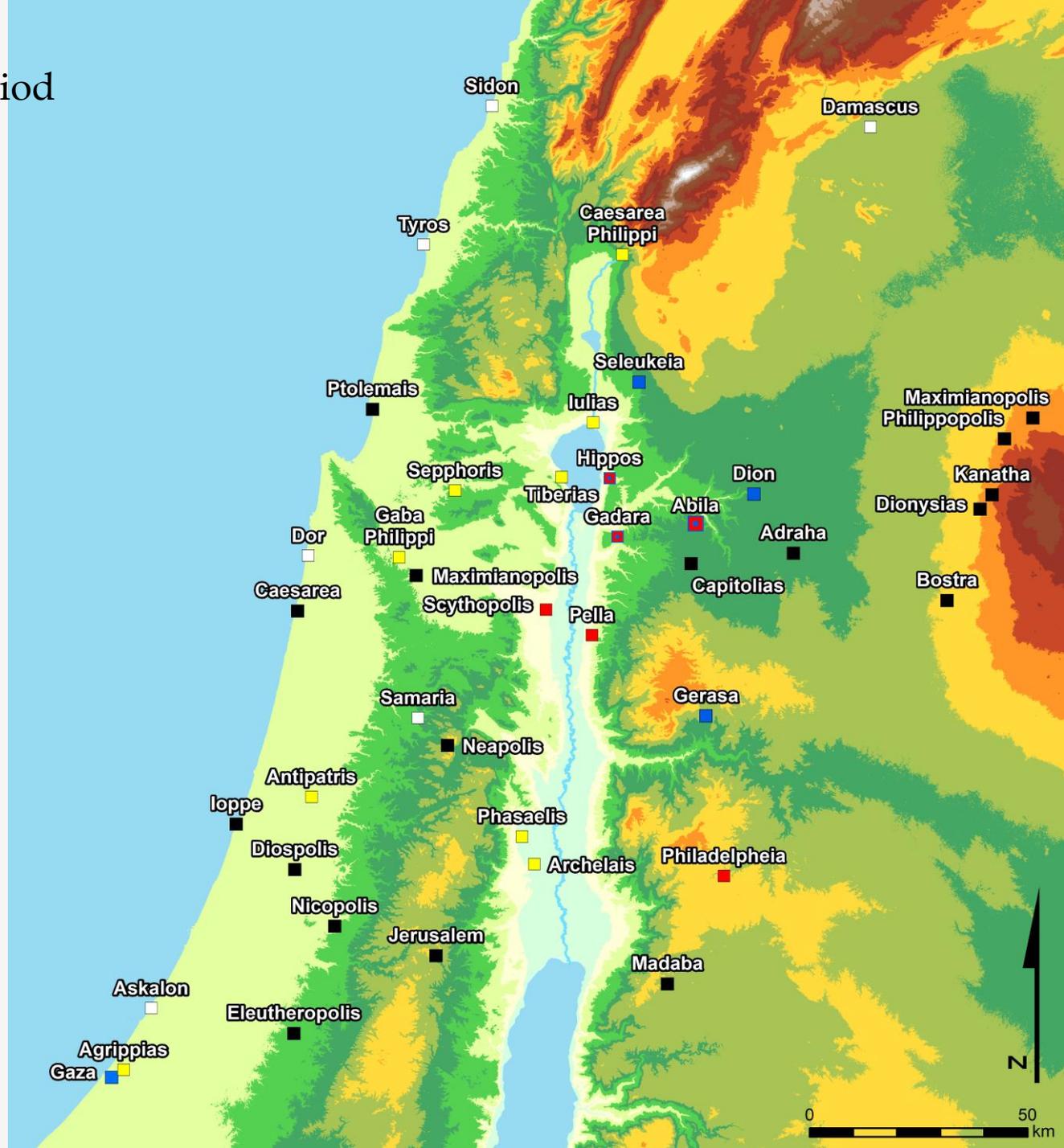
AG tetradrachm
 Obverse: Tetrastyle facade of the Temple in Jerusalem with Ark of Covenant in between the columns YRŠLM (Jerusalem)
 Reverse: bundle of lulav, myrtle and willow, on l. etrog
 ŠNT 'HT LG'LT YSR'L
 (Year 1 of the redemption of Israel)

Middle-Late Roman period

The *Pax Romana*

Roman (re-)foundations

- Claudia Ptolemais
 - Flavia Neapolis
 - Flavia Ioppe
 - Capitolias (ca. 97/8 CE)
 - Bostra
 - Aelia Capitolina
 - Septimia Canatha
 - Eleutheropolis-Beth Guvrin
 - Diospolis-Lydda
 - Nikopolis-Emmaus
 - Philippopolis-Shahba
 - Maximianopolis - Shaqqa
 - Maximianopolis - Legio/Caparcozna
 - Adraha, Madaba, Aeropolis...?
-
- Romans usually elevate status of an existing settlement and give it monumental development
 - Latin did not take root outside of genuine Roman veteran colonies (Aelia Capitolina, Ptolemais, Caesarea, Berytus, Heliopolis) and Greek remains main language



Middle-Late Roman period



13



AE coin Hippos
Reverse: Tyche standing l. holding horse
by the bridle
ANTIOX ΠΙΡ ΠΙ ΙΕΡ ΑΣΥΛΟΣ
("Antiochenes in Hippos, Sacred and
Inviolable") Marcus Aurelius 165/6 CE

Obverse is reserved for Emperor, city is
presenting itself on the reverse (Tyche -
patron deity, horse - reference to the
city's name "Hippos" = horse in Greek)



17



AE coin Scythopolis
Reverse: Zeus seated l., holding scepter
and Nike offering him a wreath
ΝΥΣ ΣΚ Τ ΙΕΡΑΣ Τ ΣΥ Ε Π
**Nysa Scythopolis Hierā kai Asylos tes
Syrias Eleuthera Polis**
(**Nysa-Scythopolis, Sacred and
Inviolable, free city of Syria**)
Marcus Aurelius 175/6 CE



4



AE coin Madaba
Reverse: Tyche standing l. resting foot
on a small base, holding cornucopia
and baetyl (?)
ΜΗΔΑΒΗΝΩΝ ΤΥΧΗ
Caracalla 210/11 CE

The fact that Madaba minted coins
and includes image of Tyche, suggest
its elevation to *polis* status.

Middle-Late Roman period

Rebellions

Crisis of the Third century

- Pescennius Niger 193-4 CE

- Wars of Shapur

Siege of Antioch 253 CE

Battle of Edessa 260 CE

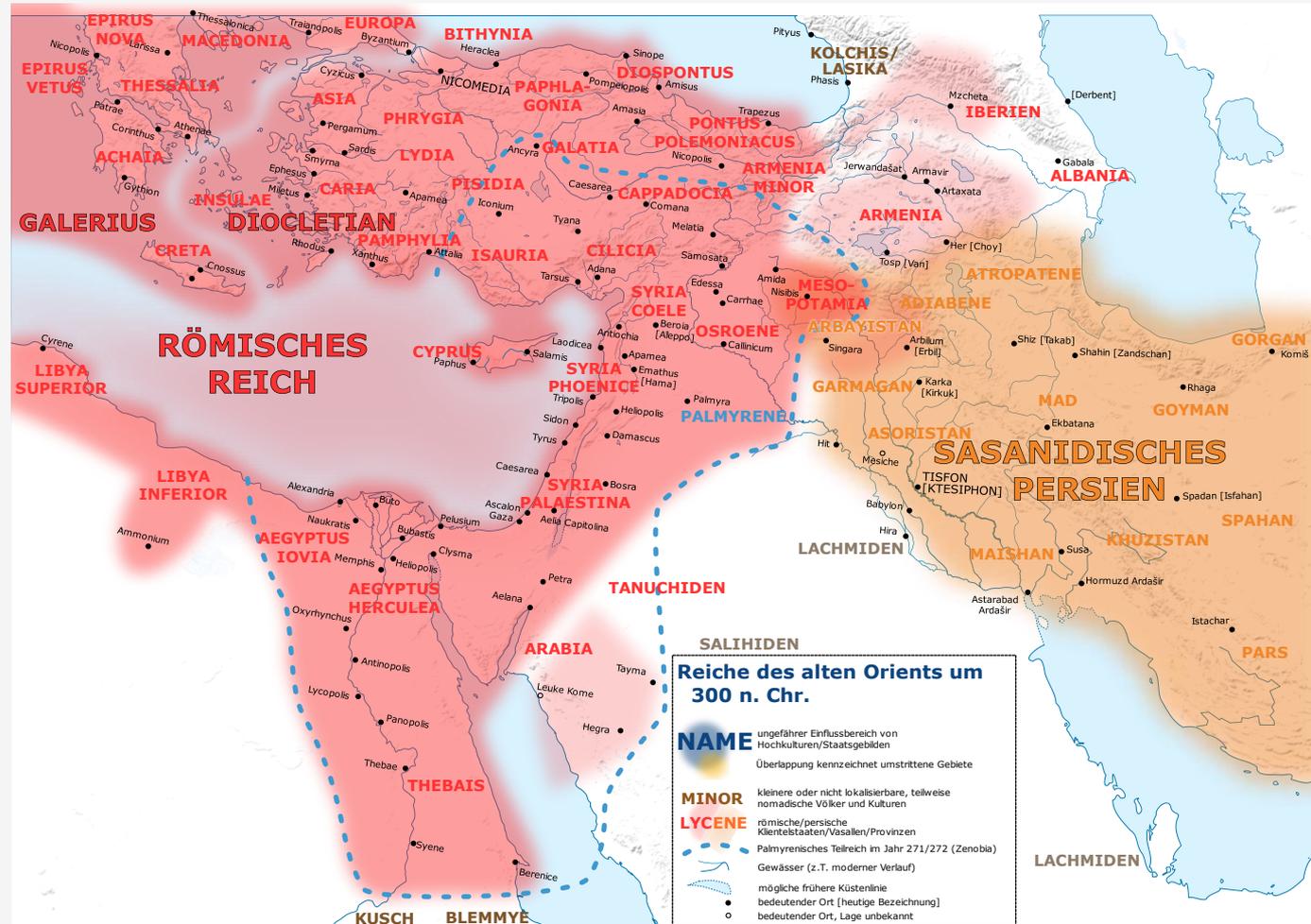
- Palmyrene Empire

260-272 CE

- Stabilization during the first tetrarchy (284-305 CE)

- War of Julian Apostata

362/3 CE



Middle-Late Roman period

- 325 CE Council of Nicaea (Eusebius of Caesarea, Macarius of Jerusalem...) → advent of Christianity
- 363 CE earthquake in southern Levant is archaeologically well visible and therefore constitutes good anchor point dividing Roman and Byzantine period