The present two volume publication, the latest installment of the IGLS series, covers the epigraphic evidence from the plateau of Trachonitis and its immediate surroundings. It is the second publication of a group of epigraphic corpora from the Hauran prepared by the present authors, following IGLS XIII.2, the 2011 supplement to Sartre’s original Bostra volume, and preceding the forthcoming volumes IGLS XIV, on the plain of Batanaea, and XVI, on the Jebl al-‘Arab. Of the 641 inscriptions presented here, 211 were previously unpublished. 175 of these 211 inscriptions were found by the authors themselves. The expertise of the present authors in the epigraphy of this region is visible throughout. Readers are frequently directed to parallels in the other corpora from the Hauran (IGLS XIV and XVI), as well as to their many studies on this material.¹

IGLS XV follows the publication style and quality of recent IGLS volumes. Inscriptions are presented with translations, commentary, and pictures where possible. Where inscriptions have been taken from the drawings of others, they have been excellently reproduced here (most commonly those of W. J. Bankes).²

Volume one opens with a general overview of the geography, history, and scholarship of the region (3–17). Thereafter the introduction becomes a study of the inscriptions themselves (17–31). It discusses the issues prevalent in the epigraphic evidence with detailed reference to the present corpus as well as the forthcoming IGLS XIV and XVI.

The edition is organised geographically, by settlement, with sites given both their modern and, where possible, ancient name. It begins with sites in the north of the plateau and proceeds in a counter-clockwise direction. Dividing the edition by settlement accurately reflects the nature of the corpus. As has long been recognised, villages, both as a form of political and social organisation, are central to the epigraphy of this region. In what follows, I discuss a few issues that have particularly piqued my interest.

There are a number of inscriptions that shed further light on the organisation of village communities. Of particular interest is no. 73 (Meïhâh Hizqîn; undated) which commemorates the building of a «maison publique» (Δημόσιος οἶκος), a phrase that apparently is paralleled in the forthcoming IGLS XVI (no. 1015). The editors have interpreted this as a public building intended to house meetings of village magistrates. No. 318 (Waqm; AD 316) seems to confirm the existence of


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such a phenomenon. It commemorates the building of a «maison aux frais communs de tout le village» (ὁ οἶκος ἐκ κοινῆς δαπάνης πᾶσ<νη>ς τῆς κώμ(ῆς)) by two pistoi. There are, according to the commentary on no. 73, no fewer than twenty similar buildings across the corpora from the Hauran produced by the present authors. In addition to the amount of information provided about officials operating in villages in the region, for which there is a dedicated section in the introduction (20–1), this further illustrates the extent of organised village government in the Hauran.

Another interesting inscription regarding the socio-political make-up of the villages in this region is no. 228, from Dneibeh: an undated inscription dedicated by «Les Grecs résidant à Danaba» (ὁι ἐν Δαναβοις Ἕλληνες). Maurice Sartre has convincingly argued, both here and elsewhere, that this designation refers to a colony of veterans or mercenaries in the service of the Herodians in the first century AD.¹ The present inscription is a rare and valuable insight into Herodian interaction with this region of the Hauran (cf. nos. 62a; 107; 362). It is perhaps even more notable that the group identifies themselves as ‘Greeks’ rather than as soldiers or veterans. Ethnic and social designations like this are much more common in the evidence from Herodian Palestine than in the Hauran. It raises the interesting question as to the social or ethnic group these ‘Greeks’ were distinguishing themselves from.² It is important to note that in the villages of this region of the Hauran, being ‘Greek’ was self-distinction enough to serve as a means of distinguishing themselves.

A peculiar inscription from Sūr al-Lejā, no. 109, mentions the «couronnement (?) du roi Gama» (ἐστεφάνησα τὸν βασιλέα ΓΑΜΑ[-]). The editors point out two parallels where similarly unknown individuals have been given the title ‘king’, one from Jordan, the other from the Hauran in the forthcoming IGLS XVI. The ruler attested here may be a tribal leader of some sort, but this is rather speculative.

There is a wealth of information in this corpus about systems of dating on the plateau of Trachonitis. In particular, I would like to highlight a pair of inscriptions, nos. 263 and 264, from the same building in Harran, dated to the same year, AD 397/398. No. 263 is dated with the formula ἔτους σοβ´ τῆς Βοστρ<ρ>νών, «l’an 292 de Bostra». No. 264 features the dating formula ἔτους σοβ´ τῆς ἐπαρχίου, «l’an 292 de la province». We might ask why the inscribers of these inscriptions chose to express themselves differently when both formulae were clearly applicable and, indeed, shared the same start date.

On this point, Professors Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre discuss the difference between these two formulae: «On note que le rédacteur fait ici explicitement référence à l’ère «de Bostra» pour désigner l’ère «de la province», à la différence de l’inscription suivante où c’est cette dernière formule qui apparait» (328; cf. the commentary to no. 127). Throughout IGLS XV ‘l’ère de la province’ is seen as an

extension of ‘l’ère de Bostra’. For instance, no. 102 is dated ἔτους τεν’ τῆς ἐπαρχίας, which is interpreted in the commentary as being «L’an 353 de Bostræ» (163; cf. nos. 105; 235; 264; 319; 319a).

We should treat these two concepts, the ‘year of the eparchy’ and the ‘year of Bostra’ as distinct, despite the fact that they refer to the same beginning date.1 The dating formulae in nos. 263 (ἔτους σφί’ τῆς Βοστρα’ ς) and 264 (ἔτους σφί’ τῆς ἐπαρχίας), for example, are different and would surely have been treated as so by their inscribers. It is perhaps not accurate to refer to them as different eras, as they begin at the same time and they serve as a response to the same moment of political upheaval, but we cannot discount that they are different expressions. There are, as far as I am aware, only four inscriptions that are dated by ‘l’ère de Bostra’, all of which were found in the Hauran.2 We might speculate that this phenomenon implies an articulation of allegiance to Bostra whereby ‘l’ère de la province’ was appropriated to form the particular local expression of l’ère de Bostra’.

In the corpus there is a considerable amount of information for the religious life of this region. There is a dedicated section in the introduction, which summarises the evidence (27–9), and a separate index of «Dieux, héros, saints et personnages mythologiques» (683–4). I would like to point out one inscription in particular. No. 47 is a dedicatory inscription made to «Gad» (Γαδεί). As far as I am aware, this is the only occasion where the divine name Gad is attested in Greek.3 As the only instance where Gad is written as such in Greek instead of the typical interpretatio Graeca, Tyche, this inscription is indicative of the extent, or at least the form, of Hellenic expression in the plateau of Trachonitis. It might suggest that, while Greek was certainly the standard means of written communication, forms of Greek cultural expression were not particularly widespread in the Hauran in this period. It is certainly an important insight into the religious expression on the plateau of Trachonitis.

IGLS XV contains a huge amount of information, much previously unpublished, on personal names. There are hundreds of names attested in the corpus presented in a separate index (688–96). Inscriptions with personal names are complemented by a comprehensive concordance of parallels from the editors’ corpora of inscriptions from the Hauran. Both the index and concordance


throughout will be a significant tool to those researching individuals or naming conventions.

There is an appendix collecting the milestones from the Roman road running north to south from Mismiyyeh to Ariqah (615–30). The inscriptions are presented in the same clear and useful manner as the rest of the publication. The appendix does not add any new evidence to the original publication of Dunand detailing the milestones of the road through the Lejâ. It seems proper, however, to have them included in this compendium of inscriptions from Trachonitis. It is interesting that, despite the sheer weight of epigraphic material presented in this volume, the editors believe that significantly more is yet to be found (9).

As I have briefly shown here, the corpus is a rich resource for the political, social, and religious history of the plateau of Trachonitis and the Hauran in general. Both volumes are very well presented, although there are one or two very small changes that might be usefully made: the map of sites mentioned is only found at the end of volume two and not in volume one; there is no index of village magistrates or officials, one must use the list in the introduction. The two volumes benefit enormously from the considerable expertise of the editors. It is rare that a publication such as this is quite so well aware of the epigraphic context in the wider region. Inscriptions are given incisive and often comprehensive commentary; the publication as a whole benefits greatly from the wealth of useful interpretations given by the editors.

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No other region in the Mediterranean has been as innovative in cultural expression, while at the same time as conservative in accepting and adapting new ideas, and as insular in the communication of its own concepts during the Early Iron Age as Crete. During this period, the archaeological landscape of this Mediterranean rather than Aegean Island lived on the memories of its already legendary Minoan past, and then underwent initial major changes caused by the so-called colonization movement in the Mediterranean after a period in which ideas had restricted mobility. It was exactly due to these two adversarial factors that an Early Iron Age cultural identity on the island was formed, and pottery is its most modest witness. Crete was perhaps one of the last regions in the Aegean where the Protogeometric style found its way into local pottery production, occurring shortly before the style began to expire in Attica, usually supposed as its place of origin. However, a truly innovative pottery style only appeared with so-called Protogeometric B (PGB) pottery, plausibly contemporary with Attic Middle Geometric I (MG I).