

## SYRIAN IDENTITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

By engaging with recent developments in the study of empires, this book examines how inhabitants of Roman imperial Syria reinvented expressions and experiences of Greek, Roman, and Syrian identification. It demonstrates how the organization of Greek communities and a peer polity network extending citizenship to ethnic Syrians generated new semiotic frameworks for the performance of Greekness and Syrianness. Within these, Syria's inhabitants reoriented and interwove idioms of diverse cultural origins, including those from the Near East, to express Greek, Roman, and Syrian identifications in innovative and complex ways. While exploring a vast array of written and material sources, the book thus posits that Greekness and Syrianness were constantly shifting and transforming categories, and it critiques many assumptions that govern how scholars of antiquity often conceive of Roman imperial Greek identity, ethnicity and culture in the Roman Near East, and processes of "hybridity" or similar concepts.

NATHANAEL J. ANDRADE is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Oregon.

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Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-01205-9 — Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World  
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# SYRIAN IDENTITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

NATHANAEL J. ANDRADE



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-01205-9 – Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World  
 Nathanael J. Andrade  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107150874](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107150874)

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First published 2013

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Andrade, Nathanael J.

Syrian identity in the Greco-Roman world / Nathanael J. Andrade.

pages cm. – (Greek culture in the Roman world)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01205-9

1. Syria – History – 333 B.C.–634 A.D. 2. Identity (Psychology) – Syria – History – To 1500. 3. Group identity – Syria – History – to 1500.
4. Syria – Civilization – Greek influences. 5. Syria – Civilization – Roman influences. I. Title.

DS96.2.a63 2013

939.4'305 – dc23 2012040133

ISBN 978-1-107-01205-9 Hardback

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*For Oliver and my parents*

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(courtesy of Ian Mladjov)

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## *Preface and technical notes*

My work on Roman imperial Syria began as a dissertation at the University of Michigan. As it was being completed, the inhabitants of the region and adjacent lands that it describes continued to confront the legacy of western imperialism and persisting western intervention. In this region, there has been much popular protest, regime violence, global antagonisms, and the pursuit of human rights and just self-governance in the face of oppression, both foreign and domestic. It scarcely needs to be stated that this work is paltry in comparison to all these.

Many inscriptions of Roman Syria have been published numerous times. While I have endeavored to consult, compare, and collate the diverse publications of specific epigraphic texts, spatial constraints have prevented me from integrating and citing them all. The documentation that I provide naturally varies according to the contingencies of individual inscriptions, and I have accordingly cited standard corpora (such as *IGLS*, *IGSK*, or *OGIS*), original publications, or up-to-date readings. For Palmyra in particular, I consistently cite *PAT* and *IGLS* 17.1 (J.-B. Yon), as well as *CIS*, *Inv.*, or other publications. This work's other limitations are outlined in the introduction, and scholars from the many various disciplines with vested interest in the ancient Near East will certainly stress other interpretations, approaches, and materials. But scholars writing a finite composition must make choices regarding what and how to include, emphasize, and interpret. Being a social and cultural historian, I have made mine. For many readers, this narrative may raise questions more than it provides closure. If so, it has still fulfilled its purpose.

Transcribing names from multilingual contexts is a messy endeavor; any choice of representation will likely bring some offense. In rendering names, I have tried to be consistent, and I have pursued the following principles. First, I have used traditional Latinized versions for the Greek or Aramaic names that extremely notable figures, cities, and regions once bore. Otherwise, I have mostly reproduced original Greek names in

Latin characters (with “y” for upsilon and “ch” for chi). With regard to names that appear in bilingual sources, I use the Greek versions, but I provide Aramaic transliteration upon first mention. For Semitic names that documents render in Greek, I transcribe “H” for the initial letter of the Greek whenever a known Semitic antecedent suggests a rough breathing. I do not do this for other syllables. Finally, I generally present Aramaic words and names in transliteration and leave vocalization and pronunciation to true experts.

Similar statements can be made regarding the use of terms that describe Near Eastern languages or societies, which often leave traces but facilitate few certainties in the documents and materials. For instance, this study sometimes uses the term “Arab” for societies or ethnicities of the Near East that Greek and Roman sources classified in etic terms as “Arab”; it is not meant to represent how such “Arabs” defined themselves, which is almost entirely unobtainable. Even my frequent references to “ethnic Syrians” pose problems of specificity and are sometimes used in etic terms to represent how people were defined by Seleucid Greeks and Romans. But in this case, evidence suggests that many inhabitants of the Seleucid and Roman imperial Near East appropriated this identity category and interwove it with many others, even if the complex social constellation to which ethnic Syrians belonged cannot be entirely reconstructed and are omitted by the label. In sum, such terms are used for purposes of concision to stress how empires structured social categories, experiences, and orientations within their socio-political framework, and at various points my text qualifies further the nature of their usage.

Finally, this study sometimes describes Semitic or Near Eastern names, words, or cultural idioms rendered in Greek as Aramaic, Arabic, or Phoenician, and the like. These terms are not necessarily meant to represent precise, definitive origins for names or words, which are sometimes unverifiable or simply beyond the author’s expertise to provide. After all, various Near Eastern societies often adopted cultural forms from one another. Such terms therefore instead mark either the society for which the name, word, or idiom is particularly well known or the putative (if not totally verifiable) stage at which words or names passed into local Greek usage based on social contexts. For instance, if evidence indicates that local populations spoke Aramaic, the Semitic name or word that appears in Greek is most often identified as “Aramaic.” Likewise, names plausibly linked to populations that either spoke Arabic dialects or maintained Arabic names and cultural traces in Aramaic are sometimes described as “Arabic.” Similar statements can be made for the numerous other societies that populated the Near

*Preface and technical notes*

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East. The main interest of this work is not to establish definitive origins but simply to show how idioms and practices in circulation among various Near Eastern societies were domesticated by Greek communities and embedded in Greek practice. Such labels help outline this social process even if definitive origins are harder to theorize.

## *Acknowledgements*

Numerous people have breathed life into this work, as both a dissertation and a book manuscript. In all its stages, David S. Potter shared his massive depth and breadth of knowledge of the ancient world, and he has routinely shaped my approach to matters both great and small. Raymond Van Dam encouraged me to seek improvement constantly and has conferred numerous insights regarding historical composition. Arthur M. F. W. Verhoogt and Yaron Z. Eliav contributed immensely to my grasp of Hellenistic and Judeo-Christian social formations and my handling of papyrus and epigraphic documents. J. V. A. Fine and Sara Forsdyke profoundly influenced my treatment of Greek communities and Hellenism over a vast chronology.

As I endeavored to transform the dissertation into a book, the Series editors and readers contributed unsurpassable wisdom and critique; their advice has been invaluable. Michael Sharp, Josephine Lane, Thomas O'Reilly and Gillian Dadd were indispensable in facilitating publication and entirely forgiving of my confused queries. Emma Dench, Kathleen Coleman, Christopher Jones and Christopher Krebs gave me immense intellectual support, advice, and encouragement as I reworked the manuscript. Ian Mladjov was very generous and helpful in producing maps, and Dimitrios Krallis gave me priceless aid at critical times. The guidance that Robert Hawley and Eric Reymond conferred regarding Aramaic enabled me to initiate my research. Derick Alexandre, Alexander Angelov, Emily Rush, Stephanie Bolz, Karen Acton, Jared Secord, Matthew Vester, Joshua Arthurs, and James Siekmeier read vast portions of the work, which benefited from their insight and vision. Ted Kaizer, G. W. Bowersock, Ariel Lewin, Michal Gawlikowski, Angelos Chaniotis, Donald Sanders, J. F. Healey, Nicholas Wright, and J.-Ch. Balty generously shared with me their scholarship or advice on critical issues. Waleed al-As'ad at the Palmyra Museum, Megan Doyon at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Thomas James and John Larson at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago kindly allowed me to reproduce museum materials.

*Acknowledgements*

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Jacques Seigne, Andreas Schmidt-Colinet, and John McCoy showed ample benevolence in granting permission to reproduce plans. Gillian Cloke was a truly magnificent and kind copy-editor in every sense of the term. Marion Zelasny, Maria Tuya, Terrie Bramley, Julia Bernheim, Jane Sykora, and Sarah Rich exceeded all expectations in helping me finish the proof-reading and images at the Institute for Advanced Study. Amid it all, my spouse Jinny and new son Oliver have given me great joy and support at every turn. I have also been gifted with unwavering support by my parents, Paul and Marcia, and by Matt, Ben, Joe, Aquila, and numerous friends and relatives who merit more mention than this. I am grateful for all such acts of kindness, and I alone am responsible for any shortcomings.

Many institutions sustained my research and travels to Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, Greece, Bulgaria, and Italy. Many of those provided faculty and staff to guide me on my way. The Departments of Classical Studies and History at the University of Michigan sustained me as a graduate student. The Department of History at Simon Fraser University enabled me to teach my first overseas course, and the Department of the Classics at Harvard University welcomed me as a postdoctoral research and teaching fellow. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens (funded by the Michael Jameson Fellowship) and, most recently, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, NJ (funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowships for Assistant Professors) have generously supported my research. The Department of History at West Virginia University and now the Department of History at the University of Oregon have each provided a collegial home. To them all I owe a great debt.



## Abbreviations

<i>AAAS</i>	<i>Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes.</i>
<i>ABC</i>	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles.</i> Ed. and trans. A. K. Grayson. Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1975.
<i>Agora</i>	“Les inscriptions de l’agora.” Ed. Christiane Delplace and Jean-Baptiste Yon, in Delplace and Dentzer-Feydy, (2005b), 151–254.
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L’année épigraphique.</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology.</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology.</i>
<i>AMSS</i>	<i>Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum Syriace.</i> Ed. Paul Bedjan. Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1890–1897.
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.</i>
<i>Ant. Or.</i>	<i>Antioch-on-the Orontes.</i> Princeton University Press, 1934–1970.
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.</i>
<i>Be. Sh.</i>	<i>Beth She’arim: Report on the Excavations during 1936–1940.</i> Ed. Benjamin Mazar. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973–76.
<i>BMC Arabia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1922.
<i>BMC Galatia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia, and Syria.</i> Ed. Warwick Wroth. London: British Museum, 1899.
<i>BMC Lycaonia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1900.
<i>BMC Phoenicia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1910.

## Abbreviations

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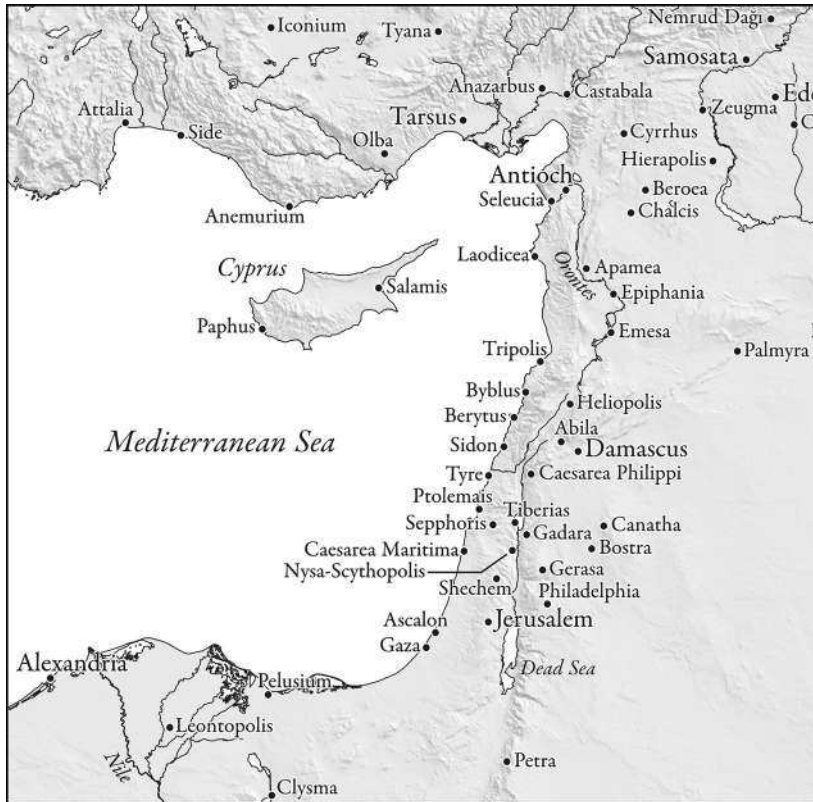
- Choix* *Choix d'inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.*  
 Ed. Jean-Baptiste Yon and Pierre-Louis Gatier. Beirut:  
 IFPO, 2009.
- CIIP* *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae.*
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.*
- CIS* *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.*
- CP* *Classical Philology.*
- CRAI* *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions  
 et Belles-Lettres.*
- Doura* *Inventaire des inscriptions palmyréniennes de  
 Doura-Europos.* Ed. Robert de Mesnil du Buisson.  
 Paris: Geuther, 1939.
- EA* *Epigraphica Anatolica.*
- FGrH* *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.*
- GGM* *Geographi Graeci minores.* Ed. Karl Müller. Paris:  
 Firmin-Didot, 1855–1861.
- H* *Inventaire des inscriptions hatréennes.* Ed. Basile Aggoula.  
 Paris: Geuthner, 1991. *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus  
 Assur, Hatra, und dem übrigen Östmesopotamian (datiert  
 44 v. Chr. bis 238 n. Chr).* Ed. Klaus Beyer. Göttingen:  
 Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998.
- IEJ* *Israel Exploration Journal.*
- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae.*
- IGF* *Inscriptions grecques de la France.* Ed. J.-C. Decourt.  
 Lyon: MOM.
- IGLS* *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.*
- IGR* *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes.*  
 Ed. R. Cagnat *et al.* Paris: Leroux.
- IGSK* *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, vol. LXV:  
 Iscrizioni dello estremo Oriente.* Ed. Filippo Canali de  
 Rossi. Bonn: Habelt, 2004.
- IJO* *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis, vol. III: Syria and Cyprus.*  
 Ed. David Noy and Hanswulf Bloedhorn. Tübingen:  
 Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
- ILS* *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.* Ed. Hermann Dessau.
- INJ* *Israel Numismatic Journal.*
- Inv.* *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre.* Ed.  
 J. Cantineau *et al.* 1930–1975.

- IP* *Inscriptions de Palmyre: promenades épigraphiques dans la ville de Palmyre.* Ed. Khaled al-As'ad and Jean-Baptiste Yon. Beirut: IFAPO, 2001.
- IosPE* *Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini.*
- JECS* *Journal of Early Christian Studies.*
- JHS* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
- JJS* *Journal of Jewish Studies.*
- JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies.*
- JQR* *Jewish Quarterly Review.*
- JRA* *Journal of Roman Archaeology.*
- JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies.*
- JSJ* *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period.*
- JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*
- MEFRA* *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome.*
- MUSJ* *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph.*
- NemDag.* *Nemrud Dağı: the Hierothesion of Antiochus I of Commagene; Results of the American Excavations Directed by Theresa B. Goell.* Ed. Donald Sanders. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996.
- OGIS* *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae.* Ed. Wilhelm Ditterberger. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–1905.
- P. Yadin* *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters, vol. 1: Greek Papyri.* Ed. Naphtali Lewis. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Authority, 1989.
- P. Dura* *The Excavations at Dura Europos. Final Report v, Part 1: the Parchments and Papyri.* Ed. C. Bradford Welles. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- PAT* *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts.* Ed. Delbert Hillers and Eleonora Cussini. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- REA* *Revue des études anciennes.*
- REG* *Revue des études grecques.*
- RIC* *Roman Imperial Coinage.*
- RPC* *Roman Provincial Coinage.*
- RTP* *Recueil des tessères de Palmyre.* Ed. Harald Ingholt, Henri Seyrig, and Jean Starcky. Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1955.
- SC* *Seleucid Coins: a Comprehensive Catalogue.* Ed. Arthur Houghton *et al.* New York and Lancaster: American

*Abbreviations*

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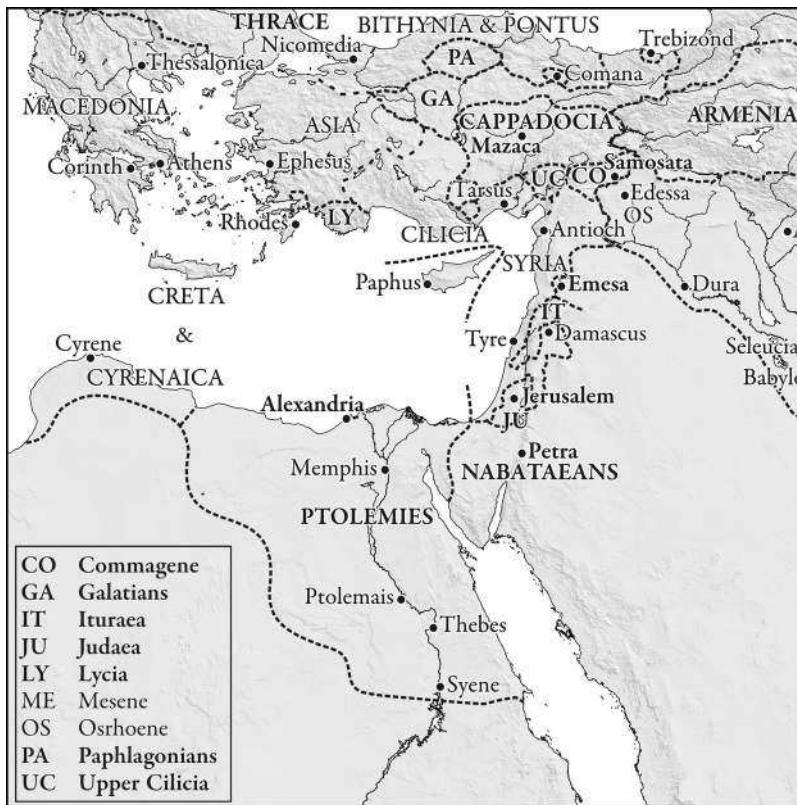
	Numismatic Society and Classical Numismatic Group, 2002 and 2008.
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica.</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.</i>
<i>Syll.</i>	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum.</i> Ed. Wilhelm Dittenberger. 3rd. ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association.</i>
<i>TEAD</i>	<i>The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Preliminary Reports.</i> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929–1952.
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies.</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.</i>



Map 1. Map of Roman Syria (general)

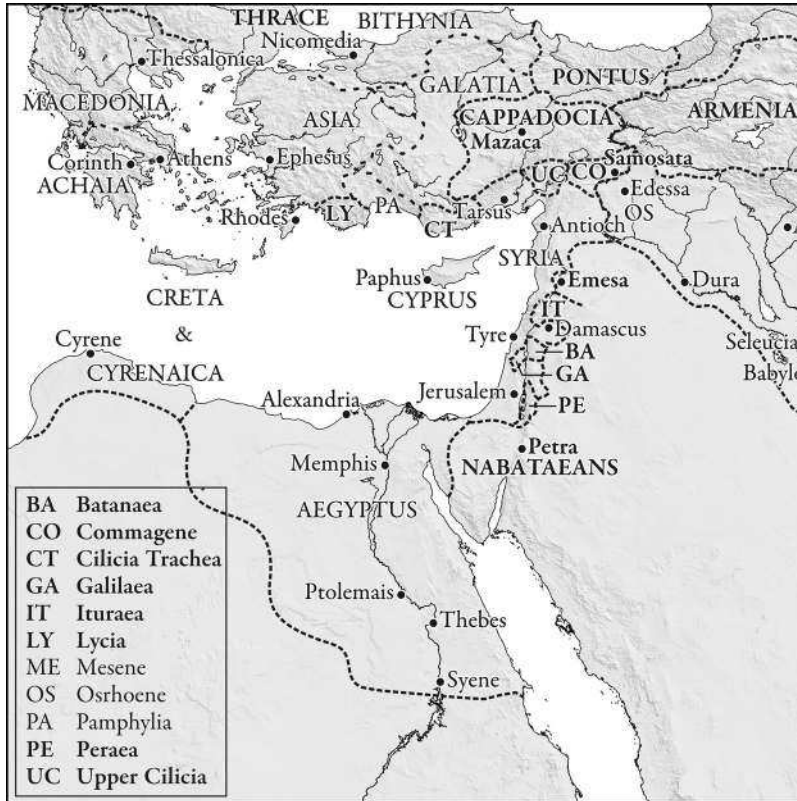


Map 2. 170 BCE



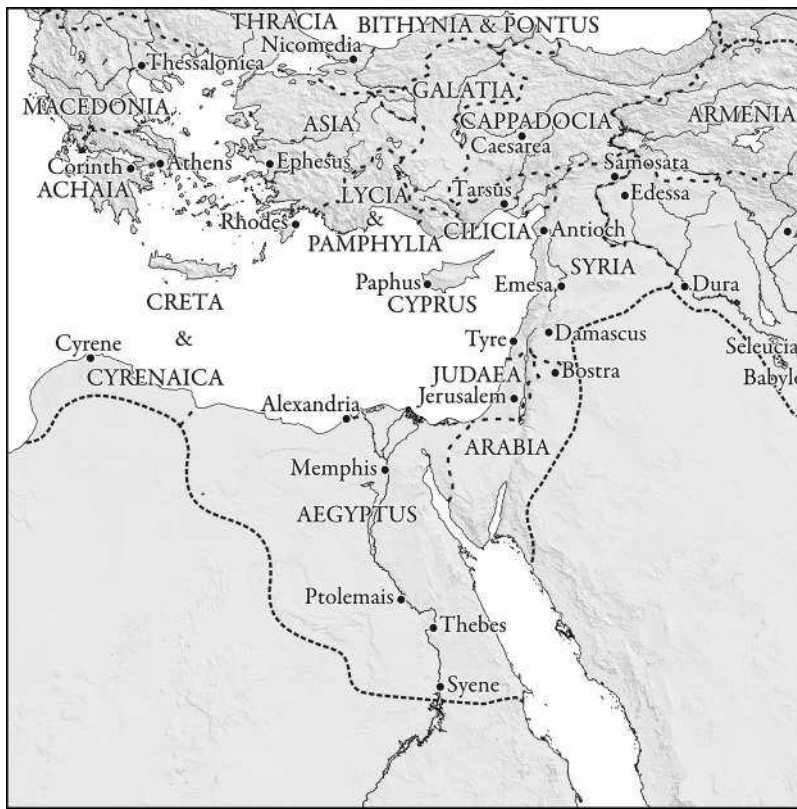
Map 3. 60 BCE



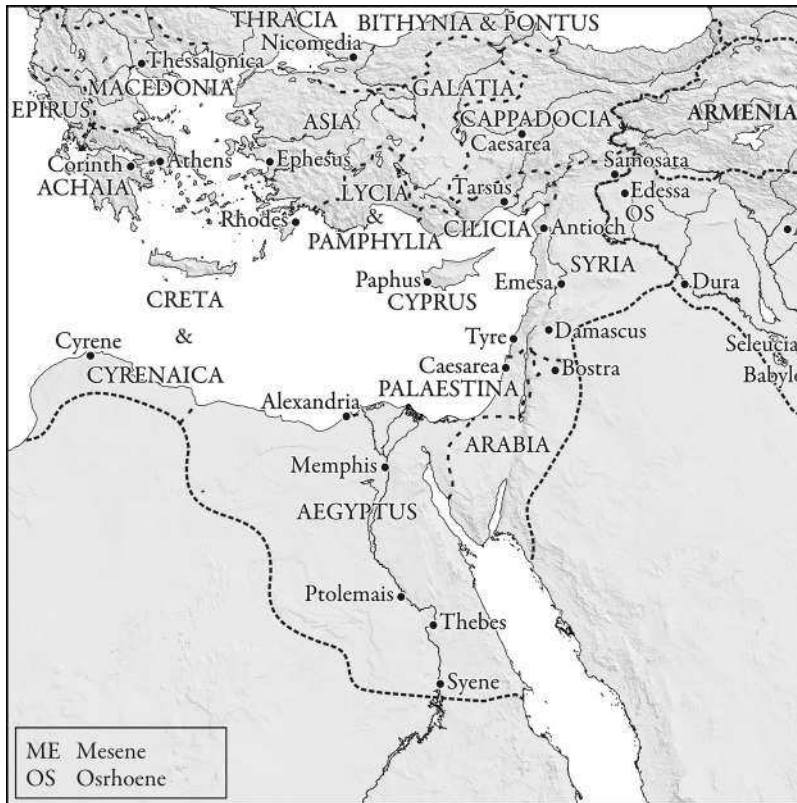


Map 4. 14 CE





Map 5. 117 CE



Map 6. 180 CE



Map 7. 235 CE