

Arabs in the Aegean in the Early Hellenistic Period

“[do not sh]ow an Arab the sea or a Sidonian the st[eppe], for their occupations are different” (*The Sayings of Aḥiqar* 110)¹

The characterization of the Nabataeans as nomads, who made the transition to sedentary life only when they came under Roman rule, obscures their important role in early Hellenistic commerce. From 312 / 11 BC, when they first emerge on the scene, till the second century AD, they have the reputation as merchants and traders, primarily in aromatics from South Arabia (Graf and Sidebotham 2003). In Hieronymus of Cardia’s contemporary account of the Nabataeans in the late fourth century BC, they are characterized as intermediaries, who “bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most valuable kinds of spice, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudæmon” (*apud* Diodorus 19.94.4-5; 2.48.2). Nevertheless, based on Hieronymus’ ethnographic narrative, the Nabataeans are depicted as “entirely nomadic” (Parr 2003: 27) and Petra as “a great tent site” until the Augustan era (Wenning 2007: 29). Ignored are elements in his description that contradict a “rigid doctrinaire nomadism” (Bosworth 2002: 191), such as their hydrological sophistication (19.94.6-8), literacy in Aramaic (19.96.1) and their participation in the asphalt trade with Egypt (19.99.3), as well as the

new documentary evidence that indicates many of the “tribute paying” Arabs (19.94.10) were farmers of Nabataean stock (Graf 2003). Hieronymus’ ‘stylized’ narrative is filled with literary topoi, and should be read with caution for the ‘facts’ of Nabataean culture and society at the time (Graf 1990: 52-53).

In contrast, there is overwhelming evidence of the Arabian incense trade throughout the Mediterranean world in the early Hellenistic period. After the siege of Gaza, Alexander the Great distributed much of the spoil in Macedonia to his family and friends, but sent 500 talents in weight of frankincense and 100 more of myrrh to his tutor Leonidas as a token gesture of his plan to conquer Arabia which his teacher had promoted (Plutarch, *Al.* 25.4). According to Pliny, it was also after his “conquest” of Arabia (!) that Alexander sent a cargo loaded with frankincense to Leonidas, informing him he could now worship the gods as often as he pleased (*N.H.* 12.62). This is probably an allusion to Alexander’s exploratory naval mission to conquer Arabia, when ships were sent from the Persian Gulf and Suez to gather logistical information. The latter ships reached Hadramawt in South Arabia, where they collected some frankincense and loaded it on their ships to bring back to Egypt (Theophrastus, *History of Plants* IX.4.5). After this enterprise, the four

¹ The translation of Aḥiqar saying 110 is by Lindenberg (1983: 209). The “Words of Aḥiqar” are preserved on a single Aramaic manuscript of fourteen columns on a papyrus from Elephantine in which the Aḥiqar text was written over an erased customs account for year 11 (= 475 BC). The manuscript was originally probably twenty-one columns in length. The fourteen surviving columns of Aḥiqar preserve a narrative in five columns and the proverbs in nine columns. The rest is lost completely and many are preserved only in fragments. The right and left margins of the preserved proverbs are all damaged and columns 13 and 14 are also cracked in the middle. The Aḥiqar text is dated paleographically to the late fifth century BC (Porten and Yardeni 1993: 23). The interesting

Customs Account has been dealt with extensively (Yardeni 1994; Briant and Descat 1998; Tal 2009), but is not relevant to this discussion except in helping establish the date of the Aḥiqar text.

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incense kingdoms of South Arabia appear for the first time in classical texts (IX.4.2, “Saba, Hadramyta, Kitibana and Mamali” = Saba, Hadramawt, Qataban and Mamali, a corruption of “Ma‘īn”: see Amigues 2006: 83). As a result of these ventures, aromatics were reaching the Macedonian court in quantity in Alexander’s lifetime, accompanied with the first knowledge in the Aegean of the political states of South Arabia.

The “Successors” (or Diadochoi) of Alexander the Great maintained this interest in aromatics and a desire to gain greater access to the commerce of Arabia. In 312 / 11 BC, the Macedonian war-lord Antigonos the One-Eyed directed two expeditions against the Nabataean Arabs at Petra (Diodoros 19 94-98), perhaps in an effort to gain control and monopolize the incense trade as part of his larger economic policy for his developing empire (Billows 1990: 130, 288). In capturing the “Rock” of the Nabataeans, Antigonos’ army seized a large quantity of frankincense and myrrh, and 500 talents of silver (19.95.3). According to Theophrastus, Antigonos even persuaded some Arab traders to bring incense trees to the Mediterranean (*History of Plants* IX.4.8), reminiscent of the Arab ambassadors who brought some twigs of frankincense trees to Rome in the early imperial era (Pliny *N.H.* XII, 57). The fact that Antigonos’ campaign is because of Nabataean ‘hostility’ to him makes it possible that the Nabataeans were already allies of the Ptolemies (Bosworth 2002: 190), as they were certainly later in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (Graf 2006), when the incense trade seems to have flourished in their realm, as apparently it did also in the Seleucid realm. In 205 BC, the Seleucid king Antiochos III’s conducted a campaign against Gerrha in East Arabia and received a payment of 500 talents of silver, 1000 talents of frankincense and 200 more of precious “stacte” myrrh (Polybius 13.9.4-5; cf. Pliny, *N.H.* 12.35), perhaps to preserve their ‘freedom’ and redirect their trade to Babylonia rather than the Ptolemaic Mediterranean (Potts 1990: 92-95). In this respect, Agatharchides of Cnidus in the last part of the second century BC reports that on a promontory of Arabia that stretches towards the “Rock” (Petra) of the Nabataean Arabs, “the Gerrhaeans, Minaeans, and all the Arabs whose settlements are nearby,” bring frankincense and cargoes of incense [by ship?] from South Arabia, from where they transported them by land to Petra (*On the Erythraean Sea* 89a and c = Photius,

Cod. 250.87, 457a-457b and Strabo, *Geog.* 16.4.18 [776] = Burstein 1989: 148-149), probably reflecting his third century sources (Burstein 1989: 31-35). From Petra, the incense route then led through the Negev in Palestine to Gaza (Pliny, *NH* VI.143-144), probably via the Darb es-Sultan that skirted to the north of the Ramon Crater (Cohen 1993 with Erickson-Ginni 2010: 21-22). In the Augustan age, the entry and exit points are identified as Leuke Kome to Petra and the North Sinai harbor of Rhinocolura (Strabo, *Geog.* 16.4.24 [781]), but this may have been the temporary result of Alexander Jannaeus’ destruction of Gaza in 96 BC (Jos. *AJ* 13.13.3 [358-364]) forcing an alternative route to Rhinocolura (Sachet 2000: 53). It is generally assumed that at the harbor at Gaza or Rhinocolura (el-‘Arish), the Nabataeans goods were loaded onto Phoenician or Greek ships to be shipped to the waiting ports in the Greek world. Finds of Nabataean pottery at Gaza (Sachet 2000: 51-53) and el-‘Arish (Oren 1993: 1395) confirm Nabataean activity at the Mediterranean ports.

Nevertheless, the literary sources are completely silent about any involvement of the Arabs in the sea trade. It is in this regard that the aphorism of Aḥiqar is often cited, “[do not sh]ow an Arab the sea or a Sidonian the de[sert], for their occupations are different” (*The Sayings of Aḥiqar* 110). This maxim is commonly employed to suggest that in the Persian and early Hellenistic period the Arabs and Nabataeans were immutably landlocked nomads. Although engaged in overland camel caravan trade in aromatics, they were simply “intermediaries between southern Arabia and the [eastern] Mediterranean ports, principally Gaza” (Briant 2002: 717). On the basis of Aḥiqar’s maxim, it is assumed the Arab merchants “had no direct interest in maritime activity and were no longer [involved] in the spice trade once the goods reached the coast and were shipped out” (Eph‘al 1982: 196; cf. Lemaire 1994: 25 n. 62), as they lacked any port they could call their own (Katzenstein 1989: 77 n. 84). It is rather the Phoenicians and Greeks who are identified as the seafaring merchants, involved in shipping the goods from the port cities of Palestine to their destinations in the Aegean and elsewhere in the West. Although this generalization is derived from Herodotus’ description of North Sinai in the sixth century BC (2.12; 3.5-8; cf. Lemaire 1994: 24-30), it is applied to the Arabs and Nabataeans in subsequent periods.

It is time to sound a caveat about Aḥiqar's dictum. The Aramaic text of Aḥiqar is represented by a single manuscript, from the Jewish military colony at Elephantine dating to the late fifth century BC (Lindenberger 1983: 11; 1985: 480; Porten and Yardeni 1993: 23). Although found in a Jewish setting and context, there is nothing in the text that suggests a Jewish origin, and the popularity of Aḥiqar in the Near East into late antiquity indicates it had widespread appeal (Lindenberger 1985: 481, 491-492), perhaps penetrating the classical Greek world of the Aegean even earlier (cf. West 2003: 423-426). The story of Aḥiqar, the wise scribe and counselor in the Neo-Assyrian court of Esarhaddon in 680-669 BC (Vanderkam 1994) was attached later to this earlier Aramean collection of over a hundred aphorisms, fables, riddles and sayings. This proverbial section of the text probably reflects the sayings of the Aramaic-speaking population of Syria in the eighth century BC (Lindenberger 1985: 481-482). In fact, the Saying of Aḥiqar 110 concerning Arabs and Sidonians may even be much earlier (Israel 1990), its parallelism reflecting earlier Ugaritic texts and the last phrase merely an explanatory gloss supplied later (Watson 1984: 259). After the Assyrian expansion to the West and conquest of the Aramaeans, the collection was probably brought to Mesopotamia and became associated with a notable Aramaic scribe (Lindenberger 1985: 484). The first mention of Arabs is that of Gindibu the Arab who with his thousand camel army fought against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar in 853 BC, more than a century earlier (Eph'al 1982: 21). The context of the maxim is therefore at least four centuries earlier than the Persian period and more than half a millennium before the appearance of the Nabataeans at Petra. It therefore has little relevance for Arab society in the Persian and Hellenistic periods or their subsequent life-style.

In addition, there is now new documentary evidence of Arabs directly involved in incense trade in the Mediterranean Sea earlier than the Aḥiqar papyrus (cf. Liverani 1992). A recently published Sabaean South Arabian inscription records a journey by a commercial (*rkl*) agent engaged in international maritime trade. The text is inscribed on a bronze plaque and mentions a commercial agent's caravan that passed from "Dedan, [Gaz]a, and the towns of Judah (*'hgr Yhd*)," and afterwards "from Gaza [by ship] to Kition (*Kty*)", during the war between "Chaldea and Ionia" (*Kšdm wYwn*) in the reign of

the Sabaean king Yada'il Bayin (I or II?), probably around 600 BC (Bron and Lemaire 2009). It is generally agreed that the term Kittim (*Kty*) is derived from the Cypriot city of Kition, a city of primarily Phoenician character (Yon 1997), but very early the ethnic became a general term to designate the Phoenicians and subsequently even the Greek and Roman world further in the west. This enlargement of the ethnic appears to have developed very early, as a number of Hebrew ostraca from Arad around 600 BC — contemporaneous with the new Sabaean text — appear to use the term for Phoenician or Greek mercenaries in the service of Judah (Dion 1992: 94). The war between the Chaldeans and Ionians is interpreted as a Neo-Babylonian campaign against Cilicians (*Ywn*) around 600 BC, where Greek presence is attested at Tarsus already in the mid-seventh century BC (Schmitz 2009). As the new text indicates, Gaza was not only the destination of the incense trade, but the outlet for Arab commercial agents to engage in maritime contacts with their customers in the islands and littoral regions of the Mediterranean world beyond Gaza. Greek inscriptions from the Aegean in the third and second centuries BC, as we will see, attest to the expansion and enhancement of these activities.

The Port of Gaza and Incense Commerce

During the Persian period, it is suggested that "Gaza's markets were very busy, full of merchandise and crowded with traders and customers," and a diverse population of Phoenicians, local Arabs and South Arabians (Katzenstein 1989: 77), with an active mint in the fourth century producing a variety of types that utilized the Attic standard and imitated the standard Athenian types — with the head of Athena and owl (Rappaport 1970; Augé 2000: 70-72). But the pseudo-Athenian types designated "Philisto-Arabian" (Hill 1914: lxxiii-lxxxix, 176-183; Seyrig 1972), or more recently just "Philistian" (Gitler and Tal 2006: 35), and assumed to be issues of Gaza or southern Palestine, are probably now to be attributed to north-west Arabia because of recent finds in the region (Christian Augé, pers. comm.). At the time of Alexander the Great's arrival, Gaza still was a flourishing major port connected with the incense trade from the Arabian Peninsula, and its harbor played the primary role in the sea-trade. At the time of Alexander's campaign it is described as a "large city" (Arrian 2.26.1) and "the most important city in Syria" (Plutarch, *Al.*

25.3). During the siege of the city, the casualties mentioned are 10,000 Persians and Arabs (Curtius 4.6.30; cf. Kasher 1992: 915); the city was later repopulated with tribesmen from the environs (Arrian 2.27.7). The basic Arab character of this new population is indicated by Antigonos being assisted by the “Arabs” at Gaza for his campaign against Ptolemy in 306 BC (Diod. 20.73.3). The possibility that Nabataeans were included among this population has been increased with the newly published Idumean Aramaic ostraca from Judaea, which contain a substantial number of Nabataean Arabic names (Graf 2003).

For the mid-third century BC, the importance of the port at Gaza in the incense trade is illuminated by the Zenon papyri, which refer to Gaza frequently (Pestman 1981: B 482, lists 12 times, e.g. P. Cairo Zen. 59009b.3, 5; 590093.11 etc; cf. Tscherikower 1937: 25-29), as well as the “harbor at Gaza” (P. Cairo Zen. 59006.64 and 59804.2, Γαζαίων λιμὴν). Furthermore, at Gaza, a Ptolemaic customs official named Diodoros is in charge of incense (PSI 628.4, [ὁ] ἐπὶ τῆς λιβανωτικῆς). References of purchases by Ptolemaic officials of “Gerhean incense” (P. Cairo Zen. 59009.23), “Minaean incense” (P. Cairo Zen. 59009b II 6 and 20; 59011 II R 15) and “Gerrhean and Minaean incense” (P. Cairo Zen. 59536.11-12) are recorded, including a quantity from a Moabite named Malichos (P. Cairo Zen. 59009.20-22). These transactions date between approximately 260 and 258 BC (Pestman 1981: A.264), but may be regarded as typical for the third century BC.

From a South Arabian perspective, a number of Minaean texts from their homeland in the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula indicate their wide-scale commercial activities in the Near East. Mentioned in these itineraries are “Dedan (Al-‘Ulā in the Hijāz), Egypt, Tyre and S(idon)” (Bron 1998: no. 10, 4, *Ddn wMšr wŠr wŠ(ydn)* = Robin 1999: 139), “Egypt, Gaza, and Assur” (Bron 1998: no. 7, 3-4, *Mšr wĠ\zt w’’šr*), “Egypt, Assur and Beyond the (Euphrates) River” (RES 3022 = Garbini 1974 : no. 247-1, *Mšrw’’šr, w ‘br nhrn*) and perhaps “[Egyp]t, Assyria and B[eyond the River]” (RES 2930 = Garbini 1974: No. 152-1, [*Mš*]r, w’’šr w ‘[br nhrn]; cf. Robin 1999: 145). The chronological problems with Minaean texts are complex, so only a general date of the Persian period is assigned (Bron 1998: 13-19 would date the majority in the fifth century BC). However, a precise date of the

mid-third century BC is offered by another Minaean text in the Cairo Museum, recording the transporting of aromatics to Ptolemaic Egypt (Garbini 1974 : no. 338; cf. Fraser 1972: II, 310 n. 381).

These Minaean activities in the Levant also are reflected in the so-called “Hierodulenlisten” found at the Minaean capital at Ma‘īn in Yemen, which record more than eighty “foreign wives” acquired by Minaean merchants from twenty-four scattered locations, but mainly in the Levant (Bron 1998: 102-121, nos. 93-98). Most are from Gaza (30), followed by Dedan (9), Egypt (6) and Qedar (3). The importance of Gaza is indicated by the numerous women from the harbor town. The onomasticon of the women from Gaza represents a mélange, reflecting North Arabian, North-West Semitic and Egyptian names (Bron 1998: 119). The rest of the women are distributed among various other regions, including Sidon (*sydn*), Ammon (*‘mn*), Moab (*m‘b*) and Gerrha (*hgr*), and even one from “Greece” (*Ywn^m*, with mimation). This “Greek” wife bears a Semitic name (*S¹LMT*), surely an adopted name, just like Semitic peoples adopted Greek names when operating in the Greek sphere. Although the “Hierodulen” texts are traditionally dated between 320 and 150 BC (Ryckmans 1961), with the earlier date most likely the highpoint, a date of the fifth century BC has been recently proposed (Bron 1998: 19 and 105). This would help explain the absence of any reference to the Nabataeans or Edom in the texts, and the presence of Qedar. Nevertheless, a number of Minaean texts have been discovered on the major arteries leading to Petra from the Arabian Peninsula (Ghabban 2007; cf. Graf 1983: 562), and a bronze scarab inscribed in Minaean has been found at Petra (Garbini 1974: no. 376). This evidence clearly supports Gaza as a major entrepôt in the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, the number of Gazeans who surface in the Aegean world of the Classical or Hellenistic period are very few (Masson 1969: 691 n. 1 cites just three, but a few more can now be added to his list). There is a probably a slave from Gaza at Eretria on Euboea in the fourth century BC (SEG 28, 725, c. 168) and a Περσαῖος Γαζαίου at Demetrias in Thessaly ca 300-250 BC (Arvanitopoulos 1909: 331, no. 109), where the patronym may be the ethnic form of the toponym of “Gaza”. For the early Hellenistic period, another possibility at Demetrias is an “Antipatros Apollophanos” from [Γ]αζα[ῖ]ος (Arvanitopoulos 1909: 461, no.

215); the Greek name “Antipatros” is used by a Phoenician in a bilingual inscription at Athens in probably the fourth century BC (KAI 54), and the patronymn probably conceals a theophoric Semitic name (Amadasi Guzzo and Bonnet 1991: 6), implying that this Gazean at Demetrias possibly was of Semitic origin. At Delos, a Ptolemaios son of Ptolemaios from Γαζ[αί]ος made a dedication to the gods of Cynthios (*IDelos* 1896). Finally, a funerary monument at Cos was erected for a Nikaios, son of Ptolemaios, from Gaza and is dated to the second / first centuries BC (Segre 2007: 782). Not a single Arab can be identified for certain as one of the Gazeans mentioned in these Aegean Greek texts.

In contrast, there are a number of Greek epigraphic texts in the early Hellenistic era that explicitly mention Arabs in all the major ports of the Aegean — Athens, probably Demetrias in Magnesia and the Aegean islands of Delos, Tenos, Cos and Rhodes. These texts suggest the presence of Arab sailors, merchants, warehousemen and commercial interlocutors in the international markets of the Aegean. As is well known, the Phoenicians and Syrian merchants at these cosmopolitan commercial ports were organized into formal ‘associations’ called a *thiase* or a *koinon*, representing communities united by their common ethnic heritage with a precinct where they worshipped their native gods (Bazlez 1988, 1998). These associations are attested at Athens (Bazlez 1988: 139 and n. 4), Delos (Bruneau 1970: 457-633; Rauh 1993: 75-150) and Rhodes (Pugliese Carratelli 1939-40; Moretti 1956). The names of some of the ‘associations’ like the “Heracleistes of Tyre” at Delos and Rhodes, and the “Posidoniastes of Berytus” at Delos reveal the nature of the organizations. Each ‘association’ had an isolated common space separated from areas of private use that was used for its meetings, with a covered market, storage areas and marked borders. The nature of the merchant organizations was religious, centered on their ancestral cult. The sanctuary was a place of reunion and the ritual banquet (*marzeah* or *thiase*) was fundamental. These foreign communities were isolated from the local population for practical and ideological reasons. The visibility of these ‘associations’ is primarily epigraphic, involving their legal regulation by the local authorities, their dedications to the local sanctuaries and other activities.

These institutions have a long ancestry in the Near East, perhaps documented best in the Old As-

syrian network of colonies (*kārums*) and network of trading stations (*wabartums*) that linked Assur and Kanesh in Central Anatolia between *ca* 2000-1750 BC (Veenhof 2010). More than 25,000 cuneiform tablets document the activities of these Assur traders and their negotiations and supervision by the local ruler (Larsen 1967). The resident foreign Assyrian traders at Kanesh were organized into a separate community, with their own archive center, warehouses, assembly place and a shrine for the gods of Assur, where oaths could be consummated. The Greek pattern for the emporium was probably derived from these older Near Eastern practices, and by the Hellenistic era the standard practice of the Phoenician and Arab merchants residing in foreign ports. The specific ethnic identity of these Arab merchants in texts is often hard to ascertain, as they assumed a Greek pseudonym as a double name for their commercial activities, their original Semitic name disclosed only rarely when the text was bilingual (Amadasi Guzzo and Bonnet 1991). But, fortunately, an ethnic often accompanies their name and, on occasion, even their particular place of origin or home. The following Greek texts from the Aegean that mention Arabs represent only those that I am aware of from the third and second centuries BC (cf. Vattioni 1987-88 for selected texts and Roche 1996 primarily for later Nabataean texts).

Athens

There are only a few references to “Arabs” in the funerary inscriptions from Attica, all from the Acropolis, dating from the classical period to the early Roman imperial era (Urdahl 1959: 79-80; cf. Pope 1935, who excludes epitaphs). Of these, one is dated to the third century BX, an epitaph for Δημήτριος Δημητρίου Ἀραψ' (IG II² 8631). The only other tombstone of an “Arab” from the Hellenistic period at Athens is a Μύστης (IG II² 8362, s. II a), whose identity is disguised by his typical Athenian name. The other epitaphs of Arabs from the Acropolis date to the Roman imperial era (IG II² 8360, s. II p, and 8363 aet. Rom). No Arab appears in the 182 texts commemorating foreigners in the Piraeus; but 110 of the epitaphs are from the fourth century BC and only 34 from the Hellenistic era (Garland 1987: 64-65). Nor do any Arabs appear in the 300 other texts subsequently published from the Agora excavations between 1931 to 1968 (Bradeen 1974: nos. 386-685). The absence of Arabs from subsequent finds on the Acropolis, the

Agora or any of the funerary inscriptions of the Piraeus may only reflect the haphazard nature of the discoveries.

Of the Athenian epitaphs from the Acropolis, the one mentioning “Demetrios the Arab” in the third century BC is intriguing, as his Greek name may reflect the toponym where he resided or operated. The city of Demetrias in Thessaly was founded sometime after 294 and before 288 BC by the Macedonian king Demetrius Poliorcetes on the western Gulf of Volos in Thessaly, and became rapidly a prominent commercial center. As one of the “fettlers of Greece” (Strabo, *Geog.* 9.5.15; Plut. *Dem.* 53.3), it was also a well fortified administrative center and naval station (Cohen 1995: 111-114). The use of a Greek code name by eastern merchants appears common, as a few bilingual texts reveal, providing the actual name of the trader in his native tongue. Among these is an individual named Δημήτριος Ἰερωνύμος, a native of Arados residing at the port of Demetrias in ca 200 BC; his bilingual Phoenician — Greek epitaph indicates his Semitic name was ‘bdy bn ‘bd’lnm ‘arwdy, revealing his Greek name apparently was adopted from the port-city where he resided (Vattioni 1982: 73 no. 3; cf 1987-88: 107 no. 19). The use of ‘double names’ in the Mediterranean was especially common later in the Roman Empire, but they were also a standard professional practice for Phoenicians residing in the Aegean ports in the Hellenistic era (for a list see Amadasi Guzzo and Bonnett 1991: 6-9). The Attic tombstone of “Demetrios the Arab” then may signify the emporium where he and his father operated during the third century BC (cf. Masson 1969: 698), perhaps even contemporaneous with the Phoenician from Arados also named Demetrias.

Delos and its Neighbors

After the Third Macedonian War, Rome transformed Delos into a duty-free *emporium* in 167 BC under Athenian auspices. The native population was evacuated and replaced by an Athenian colony, and soon became the center for the trans-Mediterranean luxury trade. After the destruction of Corinth in 146 BC, there was a dramatic influx of foreign traders from Italy and the Near East (Bresson 2000: 222-224). The population increased from an estimated 10,000 in 167 BC to between 20,000 to 30,000 by the end of the second century BC (Couillard 1974: 307). The foreign traders from the Near East attracted to the island’s tax-free status includ-

ed many from Syria and Phoenicia, but also some Arabs. This foreign population is indicated by the establishment of cultic centers and votive offerings made on behalf of foreign gods (Rauh 1993: 1-29). The Eastern cult centers included the Sanctuary of the Syrian Goddess and an array of small temples on Mount Cynthos erected to various Phoenician gods by merchants from Berytus, Tyre and Ascalon (see Couillard-Le Dinahet 1997: 328 for a new text mentioning a Tyrian), but also a few offerings by traders from Arabia.

The most frequent Arabian dedications are by an Arab named Τημάλλατος Γερραῖος, “Temallatos of Gerrha” (clearly *Taym-Allat*, “servant of Allat” ; cf. Masson 1971: 71) from East Arabia, between 146 and ca 135 BC (*IDelos* nos. 1439 A bc 2.24-25 [restored], 1442, A, 1.82 and B, 1.58-59; 1443, B.I, 1.161; 1444, Aa, 45 and 51; 1445, B, 7-8; 1449, A ab, 61; 1450, A, 119; and 1452, face B, 7-8). The dedications were made at the Serapieion, the Kynthios, the Artemision and the temple of Apollo, and included a silver incense burner and an object with a solar emblem (*IDelos* 1444 Aa51; cf. Couillard 1974: 326; Potts 1990: 96). As we have seen, the Gerrhaeans are known to have been prominently engaged in aromatic commerce at Petra and Palestine during the third century BC, so their presence on the island of Delos is not surprising. Moreover, an even earlier dedication to Helios on Cos ca. 200 BC is by an Arab named Κασμαῖος Ἀβδαίου Γερ[....], who probably represents another Gerrhaean active in the Aegean before the Delian Gerrhaeans (for the restoration of the ethnic see J. T. Milik in Seyrig 1965: 26 n. 2, emending Paton-Hicks 1890: no. 64 Γερ[...], and *contra* Eissfeldt 1941: 434, who restored the ethnic as Γερ[ασηνός], “Gerasene”; L. Robert, *BE* [1942] 128, no. 128, initially accepted Eissfeldt’s restoration, but later adopted Milik’s “observation importante” in *BE* 1966: no. 307; cf. Sherwin-White 1978: 246, 370-371 and Potts 1990: 96). Both names are represented in ENA and ESA as QSM (Harding 1969: 482) and ‘BDY (Harding 1969: 401). Although the reference could be to the Gerrha in the Central Bīqā’ of Lebanon mentioned by Polybius (5.46.1-3), perhaps the Iturean Arab fortress at Chalkis (Cohen 2006: 240-241), this seems rather obscure, and the Arab merchants at Gerrha in East Arabia are far more likely the reference in the Cos text.

In addition to the Gerrhaeans of East Arabia, there are also inscriptions indicating the presence

of South Arabians at Delos. A marble altar found north of Mount Cynthos inscribed in South Arabian script is a dedication by an individual named “Ghalib son of Galib” to “Sin of Alam” (*IDelos* 2319), the god of Hadramawt. Since the kingdom of Hadramawt was the source and supplier of frankincense, their appearance is not altogether surprising, but they appear normally to have used intermediaries like the Minaeans to handle the caravan traffic. Another inscription by a Sidonian on Delos has ANATPAM inscribed at the end, which P. Roussel and M. Launey initially proposed to be a reference to a deity AN followed by the name Ἀτραμ[ι], ‘from Hadramawt’ (see the commentary of *IDelos* 2314), but since the text is by a Phoenician, a reference to the Phoenician goddess Anat seems much more plausible, although the last three letters remain puzzling; P. Ronzevalle’s proposal that it preserves an element of the name “Semi-RAM-mis” is far from compelling (cf. Bruneau 1970: 477). Nevertheless, the dedication in South Arabian script to the Hadramawt deity provides evidence for members of the Incense Kingdom on the island. In addition, an altar was found in a house just northwest of the Agora of Theophrastos inscribed with a Greek - Minaean bilingual inscription dedicated to “Wadd and the gods of Ma’in” (*IDelos* VII, no. 2320 [Minaean] = Garbini 1974: no. 349). As Clermont Ganneau recognized, the dedication must be by a Minaean merchant residing on Delos (1906: 556). The presence of Gerrheans, Hadramawtians and Minaeans together at Delos is powerful evidence for the flourishing of the Arabian aromatic trade at Delos in the middle of the second century BC.

Finally, there is a small altar dedicated to Helios by an Arab discovered near the Byzantine church and monument of Tritopator, with the inscription Χαύαν Θεοφίλου Ἄραψ Ἡλίω[ι] κατὰ τρόσταγμα (*IDelos* no. 2321). Although the altar is a surface find without any context, it is probably from one of the Oriental sanctuaries at Cynthos (Bruneau 1970: 478). The date is assigned to the Athenian period at Delos between ca 166 and 130 BC (Bruneau 1970: 449), although there is a dedication to Helios at Delos from around 200 BC (IG XI/4, 1288) and the deity appears at Athens by the third century BC (IG II² 4678). Roussel originally suggested this Arab was “sans doute un Nabatéen” (1916: 84), in spite of the fact that Helios never appears in Nabataean texts (Roche 1996: 84). But

this silence is haunted by Strabo’s overt statement that the Nabataeans worship the sun (16.4.26 [784]); some epigraphic and artistic evidence has suggested that the Nabataean god Dushara is to be identified with the sun-god (Petersmann 1989: 408-410; Healey 2001: 102-105). The problem is that the cult of Helios was widespread in the Near East, involving Syrians, Egyptians and Arabs at Delos (Bruneau 1970: 449-450 lists ten texts and reliefs for Helios including that of Temallatos the Gerrhean in *IDelos* 1444, Aa, 51). The name of the dedicant Χαύαν is equally ambiguous. The name *Kwn* (*Kawwān*) appears both in ENA (Safaitic and Thamudic) and ESA (Qatabanian, and Sabea) texts (Harding 1971: 507), and can be compared to Nabataean *wnw* (Cantineau 1932: 128; Negev 1991: no. 858) and Arabic *ʿawn* (Caskell 1966: 213,2). The name *hawwān* also is theoretically possible (Masson 1971: 72; cf. Vattioni 1987-88: 124 n. 242), but it is unattested in the Arabian onomasticon as far as I can determine. His Greek patronym may reflect a Semitic theophoric equivalent (e.g. *whb’lh*), but the normal practice is for both names to be Hellenized or transcribed into Greek (Vattioni 1987-88: 100-109; Amadasi Guzzo and Bonnet 1991: 2-9). As a result, the specific identity of this Arab dedicant cannot be ascertained, but he must be included among the other Arabs at Delos, with the Gerrhaeans, Minaeans and Hadramawtians, and assigned a date after 166 BC when the island was transformed into an *emporium*.

Rhenia

It is also not until the end of the second century BC that the ethnic “Nabataean” appears in a Greek text from Rhenia in a list of slaves that belonged to a certain Protarchos at Delos, probably the casualties from a fire or collapsed workshop on Delos between 125-100 B.C (Klaffenbach 1964: 16, no. 28; cf. Robert, BE 1965: 89, no. 61; cf. Bruneau 1989: 50). Of the twenty-two slaves listed, many were Easterners, from Syria-Phoenicia (Apmamea, Rhosos and Marathos), Palestine (Joppa and Marissa) and a Nabataean from Arabia — Ζαῖδε Ναβαταῖε (Couilloud 1974: no. 418, line 18; cf. Masson 1971: 64). The name is not common, but it is attested in Nabataean texts at Petra in Arabia and Pouzzoles in Italy, and also appears in ENA Safaitic and ESA Minaean (Cantineau 1932: 92; Negev 1991: no. 380; for Rome see CIS 157 no. 16; cf. Wuthnow 1930: 49). It should be noted that

this text is only one of several epitaphs that explicitly attest slaves at Delos (Couillard 1974: 332-334, adding no. 348 and *IDelos* 1771). The onomasticon of the Italian community at Delos does indicate a larger number of freedmen and slaves (Couillard-Le Dinahet 1984: 349-350). Nevertheless, in view of the fact that an estimated 90 % of the epitaphs at Delos date to the last part of the second century and early first century BC (Couillard 1974: 307; Couillard-Le Dinahet 1984: 346), when Delos is assumed to have been the major slave market in the East, such a sparse number of slaves attested is enigmatic. Since it is deemed possible that slaves participated in the Oriental cults (Bruneau 1989: 51), it might be suspected that some of the Arabs attested on Delos were also slaves, but this assumption seems highly unlikely given the problematic status of the slave trade on Delos.

The basis for Delos representing a major slave market is Strabo's comment that 10,000 slaves "could" pass through the Delos on the same day (14.5.2 [668]), but that such huge numbers of slaves were sold as a daily affair and then transported to Italy and the West remains troublesome. "Ten Thousand" is obviously a symbolic number for "a great many" (as noted by Tarn 1952: 266, and more recently by De Souza 1999: 64 n. 78 and Trümper 2009: 32; cf. Scheidel 1996: 236-237, who argues such large rounded numbers are "stylized" evaluations of "a certain order of magnitude"). Furthermore, Strabo associates the emergence of the *emporium* at Delos with the fall of Corinth in 146 BC (10.5.4 [486]), but places it in the context of the Sicilian slave revolt in the 130s, which led to uprisings in Greece and at Delos (Diodorus 34.2.19 = Posidonius), and the subsequent activities of opportunistic Cilician pirates (Kidd 1988: 904-905 argues that the Attic and Delos revolts may have been later than the Sicilian uprising in the 130s and linked to the piracy problem (cf. Strabo 14.5.2 [668-669], with Will 1982: 465-466 and Mavrojanis 2002: 166-177). The time of the First Sicilian Revolt in the 130s also would be at a time when a decrease is expected in the demand for any more slaves to be imported to Italy and the West (Bresson 2008: 224). Moreover, Strabo's accuracy has been questioned in regard to other statements about Delos, namely that Mithridates "completely ruined" Delos in 88 BC, that it remained "desolate" until 69 BC when the Romans arrived and that it remained "impoverished" until his time

(10.5.4 [486]), as archaeology has demonstrated that the "devastations" were far less significant than described (Bruneau 1968: 684; cf. 1989: 52). In similar fashion, the epigraphic record of Delos fails to support Delos constituting a major slave market of the magnitude that Strabo describes: no inscription from Delos mentions a slave trader or the slave trade, nor is there any iconographic representation of slave traders or slaves from Delos such as are known elsewhere. It is tempting to see Strabo's account influenced by his growing up in Amasia where his family was active in the court of Mithridates (12.3.33 [557-558] and Clarke 2009: 295-296).

Furthermore, a large area at Delos would have been required to process such a large quantity of slaves. It has been proposed that the courtyard of the "Agora of the Italians" would be just such an ideal market-place for handling large quantities of slaves (initially made by Cocco 1970), but this suggestion has been sharply challenged as it involves substantial logistical problems for the facilities of the Agora (Bruneau 1975, 1985, 1995: 44-45). As a consequence, it has been proposed the Agora served as a recreational facility for gladiatorial contests (Rauh 1993: 289-338; but cf. Bruneau 1995: 45-54) or, more attractively, as just a "garden-porticus complex" for leisure activities by the residents (Trümper 2008 and 2009: 40-45). In any case, since it appears the Agora was constructed *ca* 130-127 BC (2009: 37), after the First Sicilian Slave Revolt, just when one would anticipate a decrease in the demand for slaves in the West.

There also are problems with both the supply and demand for slaves in this period. It is difficult to believe that Cilician pirates could have generated such numbers from their raids (De Souza 1999: 63-64 suggests many were merely recycled slaves captured in raids). In addition, the slave population in Italy — once estimated at 2-3 million or 33 to 40 % of the total population of Italy in the reign of Augustus (by Julius Beloch in 1888 and reiterated by Brunt 1971: 124 and Bradley 1994: 12), recently has been reduced dramatically to half that total (Scheidel 2005: 64). More importantly, during the time of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC, Italy's slave population has been estimated at only 500,000 or less than 13 % of the Italian population at the time (Roselaar 2010: 185-186). This estimate is supported by the hundreds of census declarations in Egypt, primarily of the second and third centu-

ries CE, that indicate slaves represented less than 11 % of the population (Bagnall and Frier 1994: 48-49). If 10,000 slaves passed through Delos per day, the entire slave population of Italy could be replenished within two months. In sum, the Arab texts from Delos, with the exception of the Rhenia text, appear to be from the period between 167-130 BC, before Strabo's alleged slave market at Delos. At this time, Arab presence on Delos is better understood as merchants engaged in the commercial activities on the island.

Tenos

Just to the north-west of Delos, on the adjacent island of Tenos, one of a string of islands leading to Athens, there is an a text that mentions a Nabataean — Σαλαμίνης Ἐδήμωνος Ναβαταῖος who was inducted into the political community of the island sometime between 150 and 100 BC (*IG XI, Supplementum* no. 307, 3-4, 14; Vattioni 1987-88: 122, no. 97). The local boule and demos honored him for rendering continual service with zeal and generosity to the city and its citizens. The official decree indicates he was appointed as the honorary president for the tragedian competition of the city festival for Poseidon and Dionysius as the friend and guest of the state. For the future, he is provided admission to the meetings of the boule and demos whenever he has need of them. This decree of the boule and demos was erected in the shrine of Poseidon on the island. The details of his activities in behalf of the polis remain unknown, but the fact that this Nabataean rose to such prominent status in the island community creates a curiosity for an explanation that will probably never be answered. But since Phoenician merchants were also active on the island (Roche 1996: 86), we can at least reasonably suspect he was a wealthy commercial agent residing on the island.

Rhodes

At Chalki, a small island off the south-western coast of Rhodes, an altar is dedicated with the phrase ὑπὸ Θουσαριαστᾶν (*IG XII/1*, no. 963), suggesting the presence of an association of Δουσαριασταί (F. Cumont, "Dusarès," *RE* 5.2 [1905] col. 1866; cf. Lacarenza 1988-89: 122 n. 20). The text is of uncertain date (Roche 1996: 78), but it could be late Hellenistic. It signals a community of Nabataeans integrated into the local community and organized as part of the local emporium. Other such Arab and

Nabataean communities must have existed on the adjacent island of Rhodes, whose strategic location in the south-east Aegean made it ideal for transporting goods across the Aegean to mainland Greece and Macedonia. In the third century BC, equipped with a magnificent harbor and a large fleet, it rose to prominence as a major commercial power and was a magnet for foreign merchants, including a few Arabs.

In 1979, excavations in the Pika plot (Doukouz Sokak) in the south-east cemetery at Rhodes revealed a series of seventeen grave stelai of foreigners, mainly from Syria (Antioch, Laodikeia and Apamea) and Phoenicia (Sidon), but including one Macedonian and one Arab, a Ἡρακλείδης Ἀραβὶ ἀπὸ τᾶς Σμυρνοφόρου, "Herakleidas, an Arab from Smyrophoros" (Papachristodoulou 1979 [1987]: B, 433 = SEG 38 (1988) no. 789). The toponym "Smyrnophoros" is located by Ptolemy deep in the aromatic heartland adjacent to the Minaeans in South Arabia (*Geog.* VI 7, 23 and 26). These stelai are dated between the fourth century and late Hellenistic period, but a date in the earlier stages of this period is preferred when the Minaeans were active elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The Semitic name of the Hellenized Arab named "Heracleidas" is unknown, but one can assume that he bore a native Arabic name, such as the Phoenician named Ἡρακλείδης of similar date at Rhodes, whose full name is disclosed as *'bdmlqrt bn 'bdssm bn tgnš* in the Phoenician counterpart of the bilingual text (Fraser 1970: 31; Amadasi Guzzo and Bonnet 1991: 6).

Another Arab on Rhodes is mentioned in a decree regulating the burial of foreign residents in the *koinon* of the Aphrodisiastai Hermongenioi at Rhodes. The practice of burying members of diverse ethnic, religious and social groups in a common grave is typical elsewhere in the Greek world. Among the names that appear in the document is Θευδότῳ Ἀραβί (Fraser 1970: 31; cf. Morelli 1956: 148 lists only one Arab of 171 foreigners mentioned in Rhodian texts; omitted in Sacco 1980). The name of the Arab Θευδοτος appears on Face B of the decree, which appears earlier than Face A. A date in the last quarter of the second century BC seems likely (both Mauri 1922: 228 and Pugliese Carratelli 1942: 159 dated Face B to the late third century BC; Fraser 1977: 151 n. 343, notes that "in A iota adscript appears once only, in B invariably." But the eponyms involved suggest a date a century later: Archinos

(ca 120 BC) appears on Face B and Aratophanes II (ca 109) and Agoranax (ca 108) on Face A (for the 'lower' chronology of the eponyms see Finkielsztejn 2001: 195 and Habicht 2003: 550). These texts suggest the presence of Arab commercial communities on the island facilitating trade between Arabia and the Aegean.

The contacts between Rhodes and Petra are reflected by the transport amphorae that begin to appear in the Levant during the Hellenistic era. Some 300,000 known Rhodian stamped amphorae handles are known from the Mediterranean world (Finkielsztejn 2001). Their distribution provides a general scheme of Rhodian trading patterns (Empereur 1982; Gabrielsen 1997; Lund 1999). Rhodian stamped amphorae handles are found from the Crimea in the Black Sea to the Nile in Egypt, and from Italy, Sicily and Carthage in the West to Mesopotamia in the East. Rhodian amphorae represent over 70 % of the 125,000 amphora handles of various types found in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea. More than three dozen have been found in excavations at Petra (Graf, Bedal and Schmid 2005: 418), a few of the third century BC, the earliest dated to 240 BC (Schneider 1996: 129 no.1). The same phenomenon is found at Amman (Mansour 2004), Beersheba (Coulson, Mook and Rehard 1997) and all across the Negev (Cohen 1993: 1133), where Arab and Nabataean communities were located in the Hellenistic period (Graf 2003).

Conclusion

At the time of Hieronymus of Cardia's description of Antigonos' campaigns against the Nabataeans in 312 / 11 BC, Arabs were already attested at Athens, and their presence continued at the harbor city into the third century BC and beyond. Unfortunately, these texts only employ the generic designation of "Arab" without any specific Arabian ethnic or toponym, but by the second century BC, Greek texts begin to disclose the particular Arabian identity of the Arabs in the Aegean, revealing an array of specific groups from the Arabian Peninsula, and, by the end of the century, the Nabataeans. In contrast to Ahikar's dictum, these Arabs appear to have been engaged in maritime commerce in the Mediterranean from the seventh century to the late Hellenistic period. The Hellenistic Greek texts from the Aegean in the third and second centuries BC discussed above indicate the presence of Arabs in the major ports of Greece and the Aegean islands.

The details of their commercial activities lack documentation, but we can suspect that Arabs were involved in every facet of the Arabian incense trade, not just transporting the goods, but involved also in the sea commerce, with workers in the warehouses, sailors transporting the goods, and merchants facilitating and fostering the trade in the ports and harbors of the Aegean. Although the Nabataeans are not mentioned specifically in the earlier texts, there is every reason to suspect they also were involved in these commercial activities, along with their Arab colleagues from the Arabian Peninsula. At any rate, by the late second century BC, the importance of Petra is signaled by the honors received in 129 BC by Moschion son of Kydimos from Priene for serving on a diplomatic mission to Alexandria in Egypt and "Petra in Arabia" (*IPriene* no. 108, line 168, τῆς Ἀραβίας εἰς Πέτρα). A few years later, in ca 126 AD, the report of Chang Ch'ien, an envoy from the Han Dynasty court in China, who gathered information in Bactria about the Hellenistic East, appears to refer to Petra (as *Li-kan*, representing the Semitic name of Petra, *Rekem*; see Graf 1996: 207-210). The attraction Petra drew from the Aegean world and distant China suggests it has achieved international importance before the first century BC, primarily as an emporium. There is clearly an earlier history of the Nabataeans that needs to be pursued. At present, it is ironic that our best evidence for Arab and Nabataean commercial activities in the early Hellenistic period is from the Aegean.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations for journals are from *L'Année philologique*, those for inscriptions from McLean 2002: 387-472, and for papyri from Pestman 1981.

CIS = Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum
 ENA = Epigraphic North Arabian
 ESA = Epigraphic South Arabian
 RES = Répertoire d'épigraphique sémitique

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