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Annie SARTRE-FAURIAT & Maurice SARTRE, *Le plateau du Trachôn et ses bordures (Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie XV/1, XV/2, BAH 204)*

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## REFERENCES

Annie SARTRE-FAURIAT & Maurice SARTRE, *Le Plateau du Trachôn et ses bordures (Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie XV/1, XV/2, BAH 204)*, Beyrouth, Ifpo, 2014, 358 + 392 p., ISBN 978-2-35159-395-0.

- 1 This work is a welcome addition to the *IGLS* series, covering in two excellent well-presented volumes all the known Greek and Latin inscriptions of the modern day Lejā, the basalt plateau to the south of Damascus known in ancient times as Trachôn. The material collected in these two volumes is a combination of previously known inscriptions, re-edited where appropriate, and over 200 newly discovered inscriptions. The task of collecting and publishing together the pre-existing evidence would by itself have been a worthwhile task, facilitating the study of life in this area, and to this is now added a wealth of new information.
- 2 The overwhelming majority of the inscriptions are unsurprisingly in Greek, with a handful in Latin (including the milestones found along the Roman road which ran north-south through the Lejā, which have been brought together in the Appendix), and three bilingual inscriptions. Two of these are in Latin and Greek, but the third is a bilingual Greek-Arabic inscription from the village of Ḥarrān (no.261). The commentaries on individual inscriptions of course vary in length, with some

inscriptions being so fragmentary that there is very little that can be said. At a minimum any relevant bibliography is provided along with details of any variant readings.

- 3 The geographical, historical and social context of the inscriptions is amply supplied by the detailed introduction, which covers such topics as the civic organisations of the settlements, their religious and cultural life, and the nature of the ancient buildings, along with a history of excavations and explorations in the area from the 19th cent. onwards. There is also a useful reminder that the Lejā in Roman times was a region dominated by villages rather than cities, with the obvious exception of Philippopolis (p. 18), and the evidence from each individual site is preceded by an account of the village in question. This is particularly useful in clarifying the different ancient and modern names that have been applied to various villages in the area and, when used alongside the map provided in Vol. 2 (p. 631), aids in understanding the geographical connections between the villages.
- 4 Many of the inscriptions are presented along with good quality photographs, allowing for a far greater appreciation of the architectural context of these inscriptions than could be achieved by a description alone. On a practical note, having these photographs printed alongside the inscriptions rather than gathered together at the end of the work saves much time in searching back and forth through the corpus. The integration of religious symbols into inscriptions, particularly a variety of crosses in inscriptions from Christian contexts, can easily be seen, and it is hard to imagine how the several mosaics included in this corpus (such as those from Philippopolis, nos. 432-439a) could be properly appreciated without the large high quality photographs which accompany the details of the Greek labels and phrases which formed part of the mosaics. The space dedicated to the photographs (or, where photographs are not available, drawings) is well worth it.
- 5 Much of the excellent scholarship that is contained in this work would be hard to access without the fantastic index. Here one can search for inscriptions containing the names of particular gods or other mythical figures, the names of emperors or members of their families, governors of Roman provinces, ethnic and geographic terms, and Christian expressions. There is even an index of orthographic irregularities. Thanks to this index it is easy to discover, for example, a remarkable instance of the Semitic tutelary deity Gad being written in Greek transliteration (no. 47). The index makes this work a valuable tool to people with a wide range of interests in the area of the Lejā, from those concerned with the civic structures of the region to scholars of early Christianity.
- 6 Some of the newly discovered inscriptions are worthy of mention. No. 67 from the village of Saara appears to show a double name —Marôn Cheilos— rightly characterised by the authors as a rare phenomenon in the region. The newly published inscriptions in general have added several new personal names to those known to have been used in the Lejā, not least no. 130 from the village of Mjaidel, which has yielded the first known use of the feminine form of the name Molchos. Another interesting double name is that of Sempronia Ouaelathe (no. 111, from Saura), combining a Roman and an indigenous name. No. 209 from Zorava is “unique dans son genre” in the Hauran, recording an extended family tree of the ‘clan of Monenos’. An inscription from a tomb from the village of Şalākhed near Philippopolis (no. 403) was set up by a Julius Philippos, whom the authors speculate may have been some relation to the future Emperor Philip.

Although damage prevents the full name from being known, it also seems that Philippos' wife Julia possessed an indigenous cognomen (Ἰουλία [...]αθη). From Philippopolis itself is an interesting inscription recording the consecration of a sanctuary (no. 414). Although in Greek, the Latin dating formula 'the fourth day before the Ides of August' can clearly be recognised: ἀφιέρωσις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆ πρό δ' εἰδ(ῶν) Ἀυγούστων.

- 7 As with any contribution to the *IGLS* series, this work will be a valuable resource. The authors should be commended not only for adding greatly to the current store of knowledge about the Lejā, but also for presenting it in a manner which maximises its usefulness and accessibility.