

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910131920603321
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Titolo	Les notables de Palmyre // Jean-Baptiste Yon
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Presses de l'Ifpo, 2002 France : , : Presses de l'Ifpo, , 2002
ISBN	2-35159-459-2 2-8218-1993-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (vi, 378 pages) : illustrations; digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique ; ; 163
Soggetti	Regions & Countries - Asia & the Middle East History & Archaeology Middle East Tadmur (Syria) Antiquities Tadmur (Syria) History Tadmur (Syria) Civilization
Lingua di pubblicazione	Francese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Sommario/riassunto	This essay uses Greek and Latin epigraphy (thus preparing a corpus), Palmyrene Semitic epigraphy and the archaeological studies concerning the site to show the originality of Palmyra, which was a tribal society and became more and more influenced by the Roman Empire. The city shares some characteristics with the Roman province, despite its marginal position and its contacts with less hellenized areas, but is under a strong influence of oriental "cultures" (Aramaic, as well as Arabic, Iranian, Babylonian). The identity of the city can be defined and its leading inhabitants, notables who were part of the Greek city of Palmyra, are sometimes well-known. One can reconstruct their civic careers and note the prevailing role of some families. This rather classical aspect is only a part of the whole, with the permanence of local culture (language, art, religion, onomastic) being the other part. Caravan trade, one of the glories of Palmyra, is another area where the role of the notables, their influence, is to be seen, outside of the city

and in the Empire. In Palmyra itself, it is possible to draw a map of their social position, thanks to their monuments built following the special ways of evergetism existing there. Around the leading citizens was an entourage of people less apparent in the epigraphic evidence (women and freedmen), but they are not to be underestimated as shown by the example of Zenobia. Notables, beyond their own life, used to put on stage the power of their family, by the construction of tombs. Those monuments are also signs of the penetration of ways that originated in the Roman Empire, which does not mean that the local traditions were disappearing, as shown by the constant use of Aramaic.

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