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Nota di contenuto	Cover; Contents; Preface; Abbreviations; The Decapolis; Principal ancient and modern place-names; List of illustrations; 1. Defining the topic; 1.1. The topic; 1.2. Study area; 1.3. The problem; 1.4. Conclusion; 2. Evidence and methodologies; A. Evidence; 2.1. Scale and survival; B. Methodologies; 2.2. Archaeological interpretation and texts; 2.3. Nomads; 3. The natural and human landscape and environment; 3.1. Introduction; 3.2. A 'virtual island'; 3.3. Broad patterns; 3.4. Micro-regions: diversity and difference; 3.5. Natural routes; 3.6. Ancient climate and environment; 3.7. Discussion 4. Settlement 4.1. Hellenistic beginnings, c. 300-50 BC; 4.2. Early Rome, c. 50 BC - AD 200; 4.3. Opening up the interior: communications and security, AD 200-350; 4.4. A 'world of villages' ... and churches, AD 350-600; 4.5. Ruling from the margins, AD 600-850; 4.6. Discussion; 5. Population and people; A. Population size; 5.1. Introduction; 5.2. Population numbers; 5.3. Northwest Jordan; 5.4. Discussion; B. Application; 5.5. Cemeteries; 6. A world of writing; 6.1. Introduction; 6.2. Writing in the Near East; 6.3. Greeks and Romans; 6.4. The scale of writing; 6.5. Visibility and use 6.6. 'Safaitic' inscriptions 6.7. Conclusion; 7. The structures of the Roman state; 7.1. The provinces; 7.2. Provincial governors at work; 7.3. Provincial administration; 7.4. The Roman census; 8. Everyday life; 8.1. Health, disease and poverty; 8.2. Seasonality of birth, marriage and

death in the Decapolis; 8.3. Occupations; 8.4. Markets; 8.5. Miscellaneous; 9. Where to next?; A. Change; 9.1. Overview; 9.2. Explaining change; B. Data and analysis; 9.3. Survey; 9.4. Places; C. Interpretations; 9.5. Nomads and traders; 9.6. Arid-land farming; Bibliography; Index; Place-names; A; B; C; D; E; G  
H; I; J; K; L; M; N; O; P; Q; R; S; T; U; Y; Z; People; A; B; G; H; P; S; U; Subjects; A; B; C; D; E; F; G; H; I; J; K; L; M; N; O; P; R; S; T; U; V; W

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## Sommario/riassunto

During the Long Classical Millennium (fourth century BC to eighth century AD), Northwest Jordan was part of two worlds, looking west to the Mediterranean as well as east towards the Arabian desert. It was not only a collection of distinctive micro-regions but a "virtual island", isolated by geography on all sides. Here one finds historical and archaeological data of an intensity and quality probably superior to that of any region in the Near East other than Israel. This book exploits some of that evidence to explain the character of an unusual region with a dense network of cities and an un

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