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ALL THE MILESTONES LEAD TO ... SCYTHOPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

In the Roman period, Scythopolis was one of the major junctions in the imperial Roman road network of the Province of Iudaea/Palaestina. Six roads from the following destinations entered the city: From the north—the roads from Tiberias and Gadara; from the east—the road from Pella; from the south—the roads from Hierico and Neapolis; and from the west—the road from Legio. The name Scythopolis has been found in 35 milestone inscriptions, a number far higher than any other place name in the provinces of Iudaea/Palaestina and Arabia. This article deals with the unique phenomenon of the accumulation of an unusually high number of milestones bearing the name of one *caput viae* in the provincial landscape—Scythopolis.

More than 40 highways were built in the province of Iudaea/Palaestina between ca. the mid-first to the mid-fourth centuries CE, totaling about 1000 Roman miles of constructed roads. This communication network was the most important construction project of the imperial administration in the province. Although originally constructed for military and administrative purposes, this network also had far-reaching implications for the local population of the province. Hence, these roads are key to understanding many aspects of the history of Roman Iudaea/Palaestina, including administration, military presence, geographical history, economy, mobility, and urbanization. Along these imperial roads, stone road markers—milestones—were placed at intervals of one Roman mile. The Roman mile consisted of a thousand paces as measured by every other step; in other words, the total distance covered by the left foot hitting the ground 1,000 times. The Roman mile was empirically estimated at about 1,481 m (4,851 English feet or 1,617 English yards) in length.

The milestones, which were usually carved from local rock near the road, measured between 1.5 m and 2.5 m high. Most of them have a standard shape: a square base on which rests a round column. The column bears an incised or painted inscription that usually consists of two parts, official and functional. The official part, written in Latin, includes the name and titles of the Roman emperor in whose time the road was constructed or repaired. This part can be as many as 10 lines long and enables us to date the erection of the milestone. The functional part, usually no more than three lines long, in Greek, lists the name of the major city where the road begins and the distance from that city. Milestones were used first as propaganda for the reigning emperor. Every emperor who ordered work to be done on a road had his name and titles carved or painted on the milestones. Milestones also assisted travelers on the way to their destination. Out of respect for the emperor's predecessors, however, the old milestones were left in place. The result could be many milestones in one station.

In 1970, The Israel Milestone Committee (IMC) was formed by Mordechai Gichon as a branch of the International Curatorium of the *Corpus Miliariorum*. The committee aimed to assemble, study, and prepare for publication the milestone inscriptions found in Israel. The IMC also intended to conduct a systematic survey of all the remains related to roads, in order to provide a

comprehensive picture of the Roman road network in Israel. For almost 40 years, the committee's fieldwork and research were led by Israel Roll and Benjamin Isaac, along with other scholars.

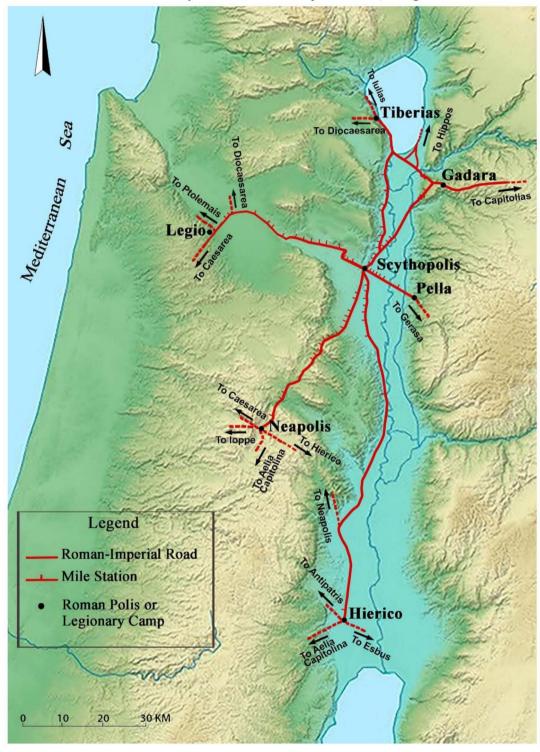


Figure 1. All Roman roads lead to Scythopolis, including mile stations (drawn by S. Krapiwko)

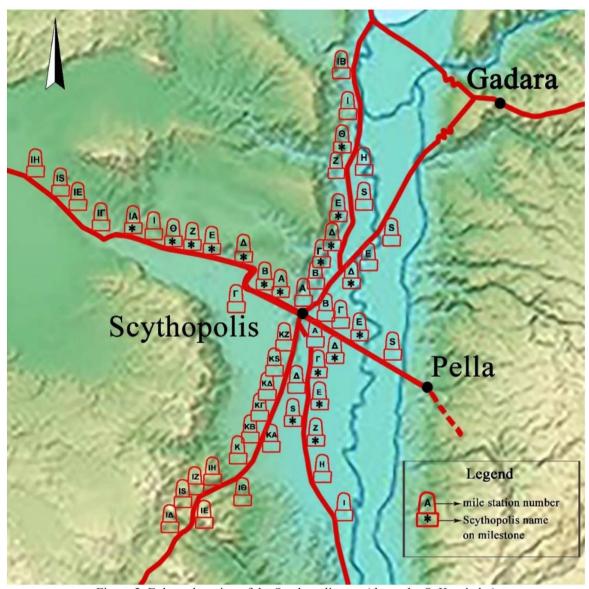


Figure 2. Enlarged section of the Scythopolis area (drawn by S. Krapiwko)

The IMC's activities involved fieldwork, including the documentation of milestones and sections of preserved roads and road installations. They also conducted library and archival work to gather relevant data from previous studies. The efforts yielded numerous scholarly articles and two monographs dedicated to entire roads: the Legio–Scythopolis road (Isaac and Roll 1982) and the Jaffa–Jerusalem roads (Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996).

In 1994, the *Tabula Imperii Romani* volume dedicated to the Roman province of Iudaea Palaestina was published. Roll made a significant contribution to that volume by marking all imperial Roman roads on the maps, as well as indicating the mile stations, albeit without providing further data (Roll 1994). In total, Roll examined 330 milestones in his publications, of which 113 contained inscriptions. The milestone inscriptions revealed the name and titles of the emperor responsible for the construction or repair of the road, along with the distance to and name of the

caput viae, which refers to the official destination of the highway—typically a major city or a principal military camp.

Most of the aforementioned inscriptions published by Roll were read and interpreted by his colleague Benjamin Isaac, who had published the most significant article on the subject until that time, entitled "Milestones in Judea, From Vespasian to Constantine" (1978, updated 1998). In this article, Isaac examined 112 milestone inscriptions and discussed various aspects, including the distribution of the inscribed milestones according to the Roman emperors, the formulation of the inscriptions, and the selection of the *caput viae*. As mentioned in Isaac's latest article (Isaac 2015, p. 42) he will publish these inscriptions in the final volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae-Palaestinae*.

The IMC archive, organized and managed by Roll in collaboration with Isaac, is an invaluable resource for reconstructing the Roman road network. The archive comprises hundreds of hard copies and handwritten materials, including cards, plans, photos, drawings, transcripts, and deciphered milestone inscriptions. It also contains references or photocopies of previous publications related to the road system. The core of the archive consists of the documentation of approximately 550 milestones, over a quarter of which bear inscriptions. The IMC archive is especially significant as it often holds the sole or last documentation of milestones and sections of roads. Over the past few decades, due to rapid development in Israel, many milestones have disappeared or been removed from their original location, and entire sections of Roman roads have been destroyed or covered by modern infrastructure. In 2009, the Department of Land of Israel Studies at the Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee initiated a new project to preserve the core of the IMC archive by computerizing, digitizing, and updating the milestone database. As part of this project, a website dedicated to Roman roads and milestones was launched in 2012, currently providing information on ca. 850 milestones.¹

RESEARCH HISTORY OF THE ROADS LEADING TO SCYTHOPOLIS AND THEIR MILESTONES

Exploration of the Roman road network in the region began with the mapping efforts of the *Palestine Exploration Fund* (PEF) in the 1870s. The *Survey of Western Palestine* (SWP) documented built sections, ancient side walls, and milestones, and identified three Roman roads on its survey maps leading to Scythopolis: From Neapolis, Hierico, and Tiberias. Detailed descriptions were provided for some sections of the road from Neapolis, such as:

The Road from Nablus to Beisan, through Wadi Bedan (where are pillars, perhaps Roman milestones) and by the head springs of the Farah; thence up the open valley to Tubas, and hence gradually falling to Teiasir. The road then bifurcates the northern branch, following the line of Wadi el Khashneh to the Ghor, being the direct route, and marked by three fallen Roman milestones at the point where the view of Beisan and of the plain is first obtained (Conder and Kitchener 1882, p. 232).

The SWP also noted the presence of four Roman mile stations: Three along the road from Neapolis (Vol. 2, p. 232) and one east of Scythopolis (Vol. 2, p. 130). Notably, this is the only site where the SWP marked a mile station not along a designated Roman road. Modern research has associated this site with the Roman road from Scythopolis to Pella.

¹ http://milestones.kinneret.ac.il/

In 1917, Peter Thomsen published his monumental article entitled "Die Römischen Meilensteine der Provinzen Syria, Arabia und Palaestina," which provided comprehensive information on the milestones and the roads on which they were positioned (Thomsen 1917). Thomsen presented data on nine mile stations along the road from Neapolis to Scythopolis and five mile stations on the road from Scythopolis heading northward toward Jisr el Majame.

In the archive of the Department of Antiquities of Mandatory Palestine (1919–1948), newer data from three mile station sites (from the Scythopolis–Tiberias road: Jisr el Majame and el-Bawati; from Scythopolis-Pella road: es-Sibi) have been presented since Thomsen's publication.

Michael Avi-Yonah (1946, pp. 96–99) was the first to mention milestones along the Scythopolis–Legio road, a road that had not previously been discussed by other scholars, except for its inclusion on a map published by Kiepert (1842), based on data from the journey of Robinson and Smith. However, it should be noted that the accuracy of the route depicted on the Kiepert map has been called into question by recent studies.

Nehemiah Zori (1962) surveyed the hinterland of Scythopolis and presented raw data regarding 24 mile stations along the roads to Scythopolis.

Benjamin Isaac and Israel Roll (1982) published a monograph on the Legio–Scythopolis road, providing complete data on 74 milestones along this road, of which 26 had inscriptions. Roll (1989) also published an article on the Neapolis–Scythopolis road, mentioning 53 milestones, with eight of them bearing inscriptions.

THE ROADS LEADING TO SCYTHOPOLIS

The data in the IMC files provides information on 232 milestones along the roads to Scythopolis, out of which 71 have inscriptions. Among these, 35 specifically mention Scythopolis. The data regarding these six roads leading to Scythopolis will be presented in the following tables (Figures 1 and 2). The roads will be presented in clockwise order starting from the north.

THE SCYTHOPOLIS-TIBERIAS ROAD

The Roman road between Scythopolis and Tiberias was constructed during the reign of Hadrian in the early second century CE. This road originated from the northeastern gate of Scythopolis, now known as the Damascus gate (Atrash and Overman 2022). It primarily followed the Jordan Valley, sometimes running just a few meters away from the Jordan River. The total length of the road was 23 Roman miles. To date, 33 milestones have been documented along this road, with 14 of them containing inscriptions (Figure 3). Notably, seven milestones bear the name of the *caput viae*, Scythopolis (Table 1).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City name and Distance
1.	33	Thomsen 1917: no. 247, Zori 1962: site 116	Theodosius I	X
	34–35	Thomsen 1917: no. 247, Zori 1962: site X		X
2	466	Zori 1962: site 117	X	X
3	30	Thomsen 1917, no. 246 a	Maximinus Thrax	Scythopolis, Mile 3
	31	Thomsen 1917, no. 246 b	Diocletian	X
	32	Thomsen 1917, no. 246	X	X
	840	Isaac 1998, p. 70	Vaballathus	X
4	414	Zori 1962: site 41a, Roll 1983, p. 154	Marcus Aurelius	Scythopolis, Mile 4
	434	Zori 1962: site 41a	Commodus	X
	492–494	Zori 1962: site 41a	X	X
	502	Zori 1962: site 42	X	X
	503	Zori 1962: site 41a	X	X
	841	Isaac 1998, p. 70	Vaballathus	X
5	392	Zori 1962: site 120	X	Scythopolis
	393	Zori 1962: site 120	X	Scythopolis
	429	Zori 1962: site 120	X	Scythopolis, Mile 5
	495	Zori 1962: site 120	Hadrian	X
	496	Zori 1962: site 120	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile 5
6	247	IMC Archive	X	X
7	497–500	Zori 1962: site 125	X	X
8	842	IMC Archive	Marcus Aurelius	X
9	29	Thomsen 1917, no. 245, Zori 1962: site 122	X	X
	467	Zori 1962: site 122	X	X
9a	28	Thomsen 1917, no. 244	Caracalla	Scythopolis
10	27	Thomsen 1917, no. 243, Zori 1962: site 124	X	X
12	266, 328	IMC Archive	X	X

Table 1: Scythopolis-Tiberias road data



Figure 3. IMC 393, 5th mile on the Scythopolis-Tiberias road (photo by I. Roll)

THE SCYTHOPOLIS-GADARA ROAD

The exact date of the Roman road between Scythopolis and Gadara is yet to be determined. Like the Scythopolis—Tiberias road, this road also originated from the northeastern gate of Scythopolis. After passing the third mile station, the road diverged from the Scythopolis—Tiberias road. After three additional mile stations, the road crossed the Jordan River toward Gadara. The total length of the road was 16 Roman miles. So far, 22 milestones have been recorded along this road, eight of which are part of the joint road to Tiberias. Among them, five contain inscriptions, and two bear the name of the *caput viae*, Scythopolis (one of them being part of the joint road; Table 2).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City Name and Distance
1	33	Thomsen 1917, no. 247, Zori 1962: site 116	Theodosius I	X
	34-35	Thomsen 1917, no. 247, Zori 1962: site 116	X	X
2	466	Zori 1962: site 117	X	X
3	30	Thomsen 1917, no. 246 a	Maximinus Thrax	Scythopolis, Mile 3
	31	Thomsen 1917, no. 246 b	Diocletian	X
	32	Thomsen 1917, no. 246	X	X
	840	Isaac 1998, p. 70	Vaballathus	X
4	501	Zori 1962: site 119	X	Scythopolis
	504-508	Zori 1962: site 119	X	X
5	400, 402- 403	IMC Archive	X	X
6	511-515	Zori 1962: site 121	X	X

Table 2: Scythopolis-Gadara road data

THE SCYTHOPOLIS-PELLA ROAD

The Roman road between Scythopolis and Pella was constructed during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in the mid-second century CE. This road originated from the eastern gate of Scythopolis, now known as the Gerasa gate. It primarily crossed the Bet She'an Valley and then crossed the Jordan River southeast of Scythopolis, continuing straight toward Pella. The total length of the road was eight Roman miles. Thus far, 19 milestones have been recorded along this road, with three of them situated on the eastern part of the road, beyond the Jordan River (Table 3). Four of the milestones contain inscriptions and two of them bear the name of the *caput viae*, Scythopolis (Figure 4).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City Name and Distance	Notes
1	831-832	IMC Archive	X	X	
2	834-835	IMC Archive	X	X	
3	296	Zori 1962, p. 114; Ben David 2019, p. 206	X	X	
4	297	Zori 1962, p. 115; Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 86	X	X	
	631	Zori 1962, p. 115, Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 86	X	Mile 4	
	632-633	Zori 1962, p. 115, Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 86	X	X	
	634	Zori 1962, p. 115, Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 86	X	Scythopolis, Mile 4	
4a	488	Mittmann 1970, p. 139	X	X	
5	635	Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 87	Septimius Severus	Mile 5	
	636-638	Kohn-Tavor 2012a: site 87	X	X	
	815	IMC Archive	X	Scythopolis	
6	489-491	Mittmann 1970, p. 139	X	X	East of the Jordan River

Table 3: Scythopolis-Pella road data



Figure 4. IMC 635, 5th mile on the Scythopolis-Pella road, courtesy of the IMC Archive

THE SCYTHOPOLIS-HIERICO ROAD

The Roman road between Scythopolis and Hierico was constructed during the reign of Hadrian in the early second century CE. This road started from the southern gate of Scythopolis, now known as the Neapolis gate. It mainly followed the Jordan Valley, running close to the slopes of the Samarian Mountains. The total length of the road was 54 Roman miles. To date, 32 milestones have been recorded on this road, 15 of which bear inscriptions (Table 4). Ten milestones along this road bear the name of the *caput viae*, Scythopolis (Figure 5).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City Name and Distance
3	401, 404- 405	IMC Archive	X	X
	406	IMC Archive	X	Scythopolis, Mile 3
	407	IMC Archive	X	X
	420	IMC Archive	X	X
	432	IMC Archive	X	Mile 3
	433	IMC Archive	X	Mile 3
4	61	Zori 1962: site 109, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 66	X	X
5	308	Zori 1962: site 110, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 75, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 65	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile 5
	699	IMC Archive	X	Mile 5
6	213	Zori 1962: site 111, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 58	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile 6
	214	Zori 1962: site 111, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 58	X	Scythopolis, Mile 6
	309	Zori 1962: site 111, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 58	X	X
	310	Zori 1962: site 111, Roll 1983, p. 154, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 58	Hadrian	X
	311	Zori 1962: site 111, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 58	X	X
7	312	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	Scythopolis, Mile 7
	313	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	Scythopolis, Mile 7
	314	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	Scythopolis, Mile 7
	315	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	Scythopolis, Mile 7
	316	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	Scythopolis, Mile 7
	317-322	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	X	X
	423	Zori 1962: site 118, Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76, Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 100	Marcus Aurelius	Scythopolis, Mile 7
8	465	IMC Archive	X	Mile 8
10	375	Mittmann 1970, p. 151	X	X
17	643	Avi Yonah 1962, p. 224	X	X
52	843	Hawari 2010, p. 25	X	X

Table 4: Scythopolis-Hierico road data



Figure 5. IMC 213, 6th mile on the Scythopolis-Hierico road, photo by O. Stein

THE NEAPOLIS-SCYTHOPOLIS ROAD

The exact construction period of the Roman road between Neapolis and Scythopolis is yet to be determined. The earliest inscribed milestone found on the road dates back to the reign of Septimius Severus, who ruled from the end of the second to the early third centuries CE. The road has been studied, and Roll (1989) provided a preliminary publication on it. Interestingly, although two milestones bear the name of the *caput viae*, it is not Scythopolis but Neapolis. The entire system of this road was different from the other roads leaving Scythopolis. The road departed Scythopolis from the southern gate of the city, now known as the Neapolis gate, and ascended the Samarian mountains after 7 Roman miles from Scythopolis. The total length of the road was 30 Roman miles. Thus far, 58 milestones have been recorded along this road, eight of them bearing inscriptions (Table 5).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City name and distance
4	268-272	Roll 1989, p. 369	X	X
7	60	Thomsen 1917, no. 256; Roll 1989, p. 369	X	X

8	274-276	Alt 1915, p. 34; Roll 1989, p. 369	X	X
14	57	Thomsen 1917, no. 255; Gofna and Porat 1972: site 77; Ilan 1973, p. 359; Roll 1989, p. 370	Septimius Severus	X
	58	Thomsen 1917, no. 255; Gofna and Porat 1972: site 77; Ilan 1973, p. 359; Roll 1989, p. 370	Maximinus Thrax	X
	59	Thomsen 1917, no. 255; Gofna and Porat 1972: site 77; Ilan 1973, p. 359; Roll 1989, p. 370	Constantine II	Mile 14
	816-817	Thomsen 1917, no. 255; Gofna and Porat 1972: site 77; Ilan 1973, p. 359; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	X
15	56	Thomsen 1917, no. 254; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	X
16	54-55	Thomsen 1917, no. 253; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	X
17	53	Thomsen 1917, no. 252; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	X
18	49	Thomsen 1917, no. 251; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	Mile 18
	50-52	Thomsen 1917, no. 251; Roll 1989, p. 370	X	X
19	48	Thomsen 1917, no. 250; Roll 1989, p. 371	Theodosius I	X
	829-830	Thomsen 1917, no. 250; Roll 1989, p. 371	X	X
20	42	Thomsen 1917, no. 249; Roll 1989, p. 371	Maximinus Thrax	Neapolis, Mile 20
	43-47, 348	Thomsen 1917, no. 249; Roll 1989, p. 371	X	X
21	36	Thomsen 1917, no. 248; Roll 1989, p. 371	Maximinus Thrax	X
	37	Thomsen 1917, no. 248; Roll 1989, p. 371	X	X
	38-41, 346-347	Thomsen 1917, no. 248; Roll 1989, p. 371	X	X
22	388-391	Roll 1989, p. 371	X	X
23	327, 341- 345, 416	Zori 1962: site 113; Ilan 1973, p. 355; Roll 1989, p. 371; Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 95	X	X
24	248	Zori 1962: site 112; Roll 1989, p. 372	Maximinus Thrax	Neapolis, Mile 24
	323-326	Zori 1962: site 112; Roll 1989, p. 372	X	X
26	487	Roll 1989, p. 372	X	X
27	469	Kohn-Tavor 2012b: site 46	X	X

Table 5: Neapolis-Scythopolis road data

THE SCYTHOPOLIS-LEGIO ROAD

The Roman road between Scythopolis and Legio was extensively researched and published by Isaac and Roll (1982). The road was initially constructed as part of the Caesarea-Scythopolis road, as indicated by IMC 395, which marks the thirty-fourth mile station from Caesarea. This longer road was built during the reign of Vespasian in the late first century CE. The Scythopolis–Legio road, with Scythopolis as the *caput viae*, was first built during the reign of Hadrian in the early second century CE. Our small contribution to the research involved adding the tenth mile station

to this road. The road departed from Scythopolis through the northwestern gate, now known as the Caesarea gate, and primarily traversed the valleys of Bet She'an, Harod, and Jezreel. The total length of the road was 24 Roman miles. To date, 76 milestones have been recorded on this road (Table 6). Twelve milestones along this road bear the name of the *caput viae*, Scythopolis (Figure 6).

Mile station	IMC num.	Bibliography	Emperor mentioned on inscription	City name and distance	Notes
1	196	Zori 1962: site 146; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 55	Septimius Severus	Scythopolis, Mile	
	196	Zori 1962: site 146; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 55	Constantine I	X	Inscription painted in red
	332	Zori 1962: site 146; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 55	X	X	
2	197, 292	Zori 1962: site 165; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 56	X	X	
	294	Zori 1962: site 165; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 56	Severus Alexander	Scythopolis	
3	198	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 56	Pertinax	Mile 3	
	431	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 56	Hadrian	Mile 3	
4	199	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	X	Scythopolis	
	333	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	Severus Alexander	Scythopolis	
	334	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	Septimius Severus	Scythopolis, Mile	
5	200	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	Marcus Aurelius	Scythopolis, Mile 5	
	201	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	Pertinax	Scythopolis, Mile 5	
	356-361, 760-761	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 57	X	X	
7	202	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	Marcus Aurelius	X	
	203	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	Marcus Aurelius	Scythopolis	
	204	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	Pertinax	X	
	205	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	Caracalla	X	
	207-208, 210, 335-336	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	X	X	
	337	Zori 1962: site 162; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58–59	Septimius Severus	Scythopolis, Mile	
	516	IMC Archive	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile	
	762-775	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 58-59	X	X	
9	209	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 59; Zori 1962: site 169	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile	

	211, 338-339	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 59; Zori 1962: site 169	X	X
	340	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 59; Zori 1962: site 169	Diocletian and Maximian	X
10	839	IMC Archive	X	X
11	362	Zori 1962: site 285; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 60	Caracalla	Scythopolis, Mile
	363	Zori 1962: site 285; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 60	X	X
	430	Zori 1962: site 285; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 60	Septimius Severus	X
13	776	Zori 1962: site 254; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 60	X	X
15	364, 396, 777-779	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 60-61	X	X
16	398	Zori 1962: site 292; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 61	X	X
16a	365-366	Isaac and Roll 1982; p. 61	X	X
	367	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 61	Septimius Severus	X
	780-784	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 61	X	X
18	395	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	Vespasian	Mile 34 (From Caesarea)
21	574	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	X	X
22	169	Hecker 1961, p. 180; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	X	X
	397	Hecker 1961, p. 180; Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	Caracalla	X
?	206, 295	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	X	X
	394	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 62	Marcus Aurelius	X

Table 6: Scythopolis-Legio road data

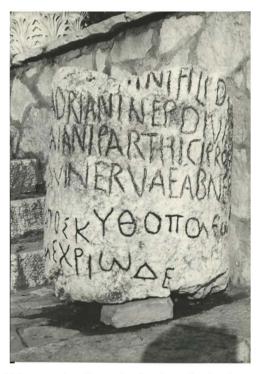


Figure 6. IMC 203, seventh mile on the Scythopolis-Legio road, photo by I. Roll

CAPITA VIARUM IN THE PROVINCES OF PALAESTINA AND ARABIA

The starting point of a Roman road, known as *caput viae* in Latin, is usually located in the city's center or central legionary camp (Kolb 2004, p. 136). The study of this topic has a long history, with the first comprehensive research conducted over 100 years ago (Laing 1908). Nevertheless, more focused studies have only emerged in recent years.

In the wider context of the Roman world, several studies have been conducted on this subject, including research in northern Italy (Calzolari 2000; 2002) and on the Iberian Peninsula (España-Chamorro 2017). However, in our specific research region, a detailed study on this subject has not yet been conducted.

In our region, Goodchild (1949) made significant contribution to the field by compiling milestone inscriptions along a single road and proposing correspondences between the inscriptions found and the appropriate *caput viae* for each road. His work took both a broad perspective (Antioch) and a local perspective (Byblos), based on specific stone inscriptions.

Isaac and Roll also devoted attention to the subject in their first book on the road from Scythopolis to Legio (Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 74, 83–84 note 15) and in their second book (together with Fischer) on the roads from Aelia Capitolina to Jaffa (Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996, pp. 331–332).

Roll's studies have revealed interesting insights regarding the measurement of Roman roads within the cities of the province of Palaestina, particularly exemplified by Caesarea (Roll 1983, p. 152). He noted that the measurement likely began within the cities, possibly at one of the central monuments. An example of this is the discovery of a milestone indicating the second mile about 3 kilometers north of Caesarea. Roll's measurements led him to conclude that the measurement point originated from the tetrapylon in the city center.

Roll's observation suggests that the column depicted on the Madaba Map within the city of Jerusalem could be a candidate for a central monument for the measurement point in the city. However, the precise role of the column depicted at the northern gate of Aelia Capitolina and the exact location of the measurement point in Aelia Capitolina remain subjects of debate. Gibson and Har-Peled proposed, based on the locations of milestone inscriptions and their measurements along the road from Jerusalem to Nablus, that the measurement point of the *caput viae* in Jerusalem originated from the meeting point between the Cardo Maximus and Decumanus in the center of the Roman city, near the Western Forum (Gibson and Har-Peled 2019). On the other hand, Wexler-Bdolah and Levi pinpoint the location at Café Bashourah in the center of the Old City (Wexler-Bdolah and Levi 2021, Wexler-Bdolah 2022). To validate their findings, Wexler-Bdolah and Levi conducted a comparison of distances to the milestone inscriptions that have already been published (Table 7).

Legio stands out as a unique example in Palaestina, as it served as a *caput viae* despite not having its explicit name inscribed on a milestone. There are several instances where distances are measured from Legio along two separate roads: Legio–Diocaesarea and Legio–Caesarea (see IMC 171, 172, 525, 526, available on the IMC website). Additionally, Isaac and Roll suggested that the name of the legionary camp has been found on two milestones (Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 79–80; IMC 397 and 436). The Greek inscription on IMC 397 along the Scythopolis-Legio road contains the letters PWN, which, according to Isaac and Roll, can be restored to $[\alpha\pi\sigma \kappa\alpha\sigma\tau]\rho\omega\nu$, meaning "from the camp" in English. This interpretation suggests that the milestone refers to the legionary camp in Legio. It is worth noting that Legio began to function as the starting point from the early second century CE, as evidenced by IMC 525 from the Hadrianic period (Ecker et al. 2023).

Isaac and Roll (1982, p. 74) noted that, based on their measurements on the Scythopolis–Legio road, the starting point in Scythopolis was from the city gate rather than a central monument within the city. Our own measurements support this observation, and it is also applicable to the roads heading north to Tiberias and Gadara, as well as east to Pella. In all of these cases, it appears that the measurement point was situated at the city's gates, which themselves served as significant monuments (Atrash and Overman 2022). Our proposal is further strengthened by measurements taken from the first mile stations to the north and east, some of which were uncovered during surveys conducted by the authors in recent years.

Another example within the province is represented by IMC 176 on the Legio-Diocaesarea road. This particular milestone features two inscriptions from the Hadrianic and Constantine periods, with the earlier inscription mentioning the tenth mile. Roll put forward the argument that the reference in this case is likely the distance from the city of Diocaesarea (Roll 1986, p. 297). However, he suggested that since the distance from the location of the stone to the center of the Roman city is close to 11 miles, it is more plausible that the distance was measured from the border of the city's territory rather than its center.

			IMC Num.	Bibliography	Latin/ Greek	Emperor	Notes
Full Name	Latin (as written on the Milestone)	Greek (as written on the Milestone)					
Hippos		ІППОУ	456	Ben David 2010, p. 30; IMC Archive	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
Diocaesarea	DIOC[.]ES[]		168	Avi-Yonah 1946, p. 96 no. 12	Latin	Caracalla (213)	Mile marking in Latin

		Δ[.]O[.]AICAP[.]IA	171	Hecker 1961, p. 180	Latin+ Greek	Hadrian (130)	Mile 5th in Latin, Mile 11th in Greek from Caesarea
		ΔΙΟ[.]AICAP[.]I[.]	178	Hecker 1961, p. 181	Latin+ Greek	Constantine (334–337)	
		[]AICAPEI[.]	180	Hecker 1961, p. 182	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
	DIOCAESARIA		688	Tepper 2018, p. 17; IMC Archive	Latin	Caracalla	
Hamatha	НАМАТНА			Di Segni and Tsafrir 2017, p. 295–296	Latin		Mile marking in Latin
Bostra	BOSTRA			Sartre 1982, p. 175 no. 9102	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Latin and Greek
	BOST[]NOR[]			Bauzou 1998, p. 200 no. 93	Latin	Philip the Arab (246)	Mile marking in Latin
	[]RENORVM		ļ	Bauzou 1998, p. 206 no. 103	Latin	Diocletianus (285–292)	
	BOSTRA			Bauzou 1998, pp. 166–167 no. 26	Latin+ Greek	Commodos (181)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
	BOST[]			Bauzou 1998, p. 199 no. 91	Latin+ Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235– 236)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
	BOSTRA		Ī	Bauzou 1998, p. 167 no. 27	Latin	Commodos (181)	Mile marking in Latin
Scythopolis		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	27	Thomsen 1917, no. 243	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		[.]ΚΥΘΟΠΟΛ[]	28	Thomsen 1917, no. 244	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (212)	Mile marking in Greek
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	30	Thomsen 1917, no. 246 a	Latin+ Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235)	
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	196	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 73– 74 no. 10	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (198)	Mile marking in Greek
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	199	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 82 no. 22	Greek		
		CKY[]AEWC	200	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 67– 68 no. 3		Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕ[]	201	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 71– 72 no. 8		Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		ΣΚΥΘΟΠΟΛΕΨ[.]	203	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 69– 70 no. 5	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	209	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 78 no. 15	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (213)	Mile marking in Greek

 СКҮӨОПОЛ[]	213	Roll 1983, p. 155	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (213)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	214	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Latin and Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕ[]	294	Isaac and Roll 1982, p. 80 no. 18	Latin+ Greek	Severus Alexander (?)	
 СКҮӨОПОЛ[]	308	Avi-Yonah 1966, p. 75; IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (213)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕ[]	312	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Latin, after the Greek inscription
 СІКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	313	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
 С[.]ҮӨОП[]	314	IMC Archive	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
 С[]ОПО[]	315	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
 []ΘΟΠΟΛ[]	316	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Latin, Between the Greek inscription
 СКҮӨ[]	333	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 80– 81 no. 19	Latin+ Greek	Severus Alexander	
 С[]ПОАС[]	334	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 75 no. 11	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (198)	Mile marking in Greek
 ТНСПОЛЕЖС	337	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 75– 76 no. 12	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (198)	Mile marking in Greek
 СКҮ[]ПОЛЕЖС	362	Isaac and Roll 1982, pp. 78– 79 no. 16	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (213)	
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	392	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	393	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	406	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek	Í	Mile marking in Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	414	Roll 1983, p. 154	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	423	Avi Yonah 1966, p. 76	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕ[]	426	IMC Archive	Greek		
 СК[.]ФОПОЛЕЖС	429	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
 СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	496	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla	Mile marking in Greek

		[]ОПОЛЕЖС	501	IMC Archive	Greek		
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	516	IMC Archive		Caracalla	Mile marking in Greek
		СК[.]ФОПОЛЕЖС	634	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		[]ΘОПОЛЕ[]	635	Yaacobi 1994, p. 14	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (210– 211)	
		СКҮӨОПОЛЕЖС	815	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		
Caesarea		KAICA[]	216	Lehmann and Holum 2000, p. 107 no. 100	Latin+ Greek	Pertinax (193)	
		[]AP[]	261	Lehmann and Holum 2000, p. 112 no. 108	Latin+ Greek		Possible mile marking in Greek
		[.]AICAPEIAC	330	Lehmann and Holum 2000, pp. 107–108 no. 101	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (198– 201)	Mile marking in Greek
		KAICAPEIAC	509	Ecker, Tepper, and Karasik 2023, p. 136	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Greek
Pella	PELLWN			McNicoll 1992, pp. 122–124	Latin	Caracalla (210–211)	Mile marking in Latin
Neapolis		ΦΛ ΝΕΑCΠΟΛΕWC	42	Thomsen 1917, no. 249	Latin+ Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235)	Mile marking in Greek
		Φ[.] NE[]EWC	248	Roll 1989, p. 372; IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235)	Mile marking in Greek
Gadora		ΓΑΔW[.]WN		O'hea 2002, pp. 235–238	Latin+ Greek	Commodos (181)	Mile marking in Greek
Antipatris		Α[.]ΤΙΠΑΤΡ[.]Δ	256	Roll 2000, p. 44 no. 11	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
Iamnia		[]MNIAN	265	Landau 1971, p. 389	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
Nicopolis		[]ПОЛЕЖС	531	Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996, p. 295 no. 5	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		NIKOПОЛЕWC	532	Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996, p. 295 no. 6	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
Esbus		ECBOYNTOC		Piccirillo 1998, p. 141	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		ECBOY[]		Piccirillo 1998, p. 141	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		ECB[]		Piccirillo 1998, pp. 142–143	Latin+ Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		ECB[]		Piccirillo 1998, p. 144	Latin+ Greek	Diocletianus (285-292)	Mile marking in Greek
	HESB	ECB		Piccirillo 1998, pp. 145–146	Latin+ Greek	Caracalla (213)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek

Aelia Capitolina	CO[.] AEL		4	Alt 1927, p. 10; Stiebel 2017, p.			Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		- Κ[.]Λ	65	Thomsen 1917, no. 260	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
	COL AEL CAPIT	ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛΙΑϹ ΚΑΠΙΤWΛ	66	Thomsen 1917, no. 261	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		- ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛΙΑC ΚΑΠΙ[]	72	Thomsen 1917, no. 266	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
		- ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛ []	73	Thomsen 1917, no. 267	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
	COL AE[.] [.]APIT		78	Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996, p. 294 no. 1	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin (?)
	COL AEL CAPIT	ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛΙΑϹ ΚΑΠΙΤWΛ	103	Thomsen 1917, no. 288, no. 305	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		- ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛ[] K[]	145	Thomsen 1917, no. 300	Latin+ Greek	Septimius Severus (194)	Mile marking in Greek
		- K[] ΑΙΛ[] [.]ΑΕΤΟΛΙ	148	Thomsen 1917, no. 303	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
		- ΚΟΛ ΑΙΛ[] [.]ΑΠ[]	234	Landau 1964, p. 233; IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
		- KOΛ []IAC KAΠITW[.]	307	Fischer, Isaac, and Roll 1996, p. 294 no. 2	Latin+ Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)	
Madaba	MEDA[]			Thomsen 1917, no. 119 a	Latin	Elagabalus (219)	Mile marking in Latin
	ME[]A			Thomsen 1917, no. 125 c 1	Latin	Elagabalus (219)	Mile marking in Latin
Ascalon		- ACK	538	Roll 2013, pp. 223–226	Latin+ Greek	Elagabalus and Diocletian	Mile marking in Latin and Greek
Eleuthero- polis		- ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΠΟΛΕΨΟ	83	Thomsen 1917, no. 276	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		- ЕЛЕҮӨЕРОПОЛЕЖС	112	Thomsen 1917, no. 291	1		Mile marking in Greek
		- ΕΛΕΥ[]	257	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		- ЕЛЕҮ[.]ЕРОПОЛ[]	412	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		- []ОПОЛ[]	413	IMC Archive	Latin+ Greek		
		- ЕЛЕҮӨЕРОПО[.]EWC	606	Alt 1929, 20	Greek		Mile marking in Greek
		- E[]	720	IMC Archive	Greek		

Rabba	RAB[]			Thomsen 1917, no. 126 c 1	Latin	Septimius Severus (194)	Mile marking in Latin
	RAB[]		ļ	Thomsen 1917, no. 158	Latin	Pertinax (193)	Mile marking in Latin
	RAB[]			CIL, III, p. 2307 no. 14149/35; Gysens 2008, p. 61	Latin	Pertinax (193)	Mile marking in Latin
Elusa		ЕЛО[]	703	Ben David and Isaac 2020, p. 241	Latin+ Greek		
		EAOY[]	710	Ben David and Isaac 2020, pp. 241–242	Greek		
Petra	PETRA			Thomsen 1917, no. 152	Latin	Caracalla (214)	Mile marking in Latin
Osia	OSIA		541	Roll and Avner 2008, pp. 269–270 no. 1	Latin	First Tetrarchy (293–305)	Mile marking in Latin
	OSIA		542	Roll and Avner 2008, p. 270 no. 2	Latin	First Tetrarchy (293–305)	Mile marking in Latin
	OSIA		543	Roll and Avner 2008, p. 270 no. 3	Latin	First Tetrarchy (293-305)	Mile marking in Latin
	OSIA		546	Roll and Avner 2008, pp. 270–271 no. 5	Latin	Second Tetrarchy (30–306)	
	OSIA		549	Roll and Avner 2008, p. 271 no. 6	Latin	Second Tetrarchy (305–306)	Mile marking in Latin
	OSIA		550	Roll and Avner 2008, p. 272 no. 7	Latin	First Tetrarchy (293–305)	Mile marking in Latin

Table 7: Caput viae indication on milestones in Palaestina and Arabia Provinces

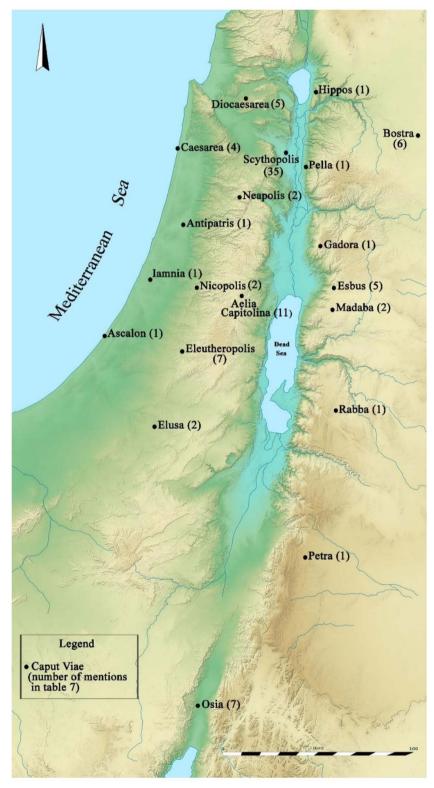


Figure 7. *Caput viae* mentioned on milestones in the Iudaea/Palaestina and Arabia provinces (drawn by S. Krapiwko)

MILESTONES THAT BEAR THE NAME SCYTHOPOLIS

The city of Scythopolis is prominently featured on 35 milestones discovered along five of the six roads leading to the city, underscoring its significance and the exceptional preservation of milestones within the city's boundaries (Table 8). It is worth noting that while many city names on milestones are written in Latin, Scythopolis is exclusively written in Greek, and in much greater numbers than other cities in the provinces of Palaestina and Arabia (Figure 7). In these provinces, the majority of city names were written in Greek, with only a few instances of Latin inscriptions (Table 7). However, it is noteworthy that milestones mentioning legionary camps were exclusively written in Latin without any mention of Greek. This could be attributed to the nature of the road users or the specific characteristic of the destination linked to these roads (Roll and Avner 1994, Di Segni 2022). Further investigation and discussion are required to delve into this topic.

Road	IMC No.	City name and distance	Inscription language	Emperor mentioned on inscription (year)
Scythopolis-Legio	196	Scythopolis; 1	Latin+Greek	Septimius Severus (198)
	198	3	Latin	Pertinax (193)
	199	Scythopolis	Greek	
	200	Scythopolis; 5	Latin+Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)
	201	Scythopolis; 5	Latin+Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)
	203	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)
	209	Scythopolis; 9	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
	294	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	Severus Alexander (?)
	333	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	Severus Alexander
	334	Scythopolis; 4	Latin+Greek	Septimius Severus (198)
	337	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	Septimius Severus (198)
	362	Scythopolis; 11(?)	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
	431	3	Latin	Hadrian (129)
	516	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
Scythopolis-Tiberias	27	Scythopolis; 8	Latin+Greek	
	28	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
	30	Scythopolis; 3	Latin+Greek	Maximinus Thrax (235)
	392	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	
	393	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	
	414	Scythopolis; 4	Latin+Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)

	429	Scythopolis; 5	Latin+Greek	
	496	Scythopolis; 5	Latin+Greek	Caracalla
Scythopolis-Hierico	213	Scythopolis; 6	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
	214	Scythopolis; 6	Latin+Greek	
	308	Scythopolis; 5	Latin+Greek	Caracalla (213)
	312	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	
	313	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	
	314	Scythopolis; 7	Greek	
	315	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	
	316	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	
	406	Scythopolis; 3	Latin+Greek	
	423	Scythopolis; 7	Latin+Greek	Marcus Aurelius (162)
	432	3	Greek	
	433	3	Greek	
Scythopolis-Gadara	501	Scythopolis	Greek	
Scythopolis-Pella	631	4	Latin+Greek	
	634	Scythopolis; 4	Latin+Greek	
	635	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	Septimius Severus (210–211)
	815	Scythopolis	Latin+Greek	
Scythopolis area	426	Scythopolis	Greek	

Table 8: Scythopolis as caput viae indications on milestones

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