The Palmyrene Gate was the main entrance to the city of the Dura-Europos. Dating to the mid-second century BCE, during the city’s Hellenistic phase, the Gate was built into the western wall contemporary with other fortifications along the wall.[[1]](#footnote-1) It opened at the west end of the main street of Dura onto the adjacent plateau, leading to the west-bank Euphrates Road, allowing travel between Dura and the city of Palmyra.[[2]](#footnote-2) Since the earliest excavations at Dura beginning in 1928, the Gate has been a treasure trove of historical information, containing up to 200 texts of ancient graffiti and inscriptions.[[3]](#footnote-3) These were first recorded by archaeologist Jotham Johnson and published in 1931, from which source we are drawing our data.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Greek[[5]](#footnote-5) graffiti and inscriptions suggest a good amount military activity around the Gate, particularly during the Roman period. As James suggests, these soldiers, who identified themselves as *stator* or *beneficiarius tribuni*, might have acted as “police official scrutinizing traffic coming through the gate.”[[6]](#footnote-6) There is a small shrine on the inner part of the gate, containing various altars; perhaps this shrine served for the soldiers as a sanctuary to Tyche, which is mentioned in the inscription D42.[[7]](#footnote-7) Most of the texts in our database are graffiti from the South and North Walls of the Passage; but some are more formal inscriptions, and some occur in various other places on the gate.

Citations:

Baird, Jennifer A. *Dura-Europos*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

James, Simon. *The Roman Military Base at Dura-Europos, Syria: An Archaeological Visualization*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Johnson, Jotham. “Inscriptions.” Essay. In *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of Second Season of Work, October 1929-April 1929*, edited by P. V. C. Baur and M. I. Rostovtzeff, 114–61. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1931.

1. Baird 2018, p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. James 2019, p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Johnson 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. There are also a few Latin and Palmyrene texts on the Gate, which are not included in our database. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. James 2019, p. 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Johnson 1931, pp. 128, 159; James 2019, p. 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)