

# A REPORT ON ARABIA PROVINCIA

By G. W. BOWERSOCK

(Plates XIV–XV)

With the increasing sophistication of excavation and exploration our knowledge of the provinces of Rome has grown stunningly in recent years. It will, one may hope, continue to grow; but the prospect of further advances ought not to be a deterrent to periodic reassessment and synthesis. Specialization, inevitable and productive, nevertheless runs the risk of a loss of perspective. The study of the Roman provinces involves widely divergent skills, and this is especially true for regions at the fringes of the empire. The pages which follow constitute a gathering together of new material on the history of Roman Arabia. Incorporated in this report are various observations and discoveries of my own,—some the result of a profitable visit to the Middle East in January of 1970.<sup>1</sup> In writing I have had particularly in mind the needs of Roman historians, including myself: this paper represents a preliminary stage in the preparation of a history of the province of Arabia. Obviously there can be no continuous narrative history here or a balanced consideration of all aspects of the province. New evidence and important problems (old or new) are at issue.

It must be said at the outset that none of the discoveries in Israel and Jordan in recent years has eclipsed the magisterial work of Brünnow and Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* (1904–9). The magnitude of their achievement in both exploration and interpretation (often *res dissociabiles*) is impressive; their description of the *limes* system, as far south as they examined it, is still standard. Of less enduring value but still useful is that work of *haute vulgarisation*, A. Kammerer's *Pétra et la Nabatène* (1929), in two volumes, one of plates. Otherwise the older general books on the Arabian province, or parts of it, have all to be substantially mistrusted in the light of the new discoveries.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the drastic changes which are required in our view of Arabia may be assigned to four major areas of progress. One is our immensely enlarged appreciation of Nabataean culture as a result of Nelson Glueck's thorough surveys of Nabataean sites in Transjordan and the Negev. The extent of Nabataean settlement and the refinement of their civilization provide the indispensable explanation of the Roman organization of the province. The second area of progress is Petra. Excavations conducted in various stages since 1954 by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem (with the occasional collaboration of others) have forced scholars to revise some fundamental opinions about that city and its architecture. The third area of progress is Israeli work in the Negev, notably at the Nabataean sites of Oboda (modern 'Avdat) and Mampsis (modern Kurnub). Finally, there has been notable progress in Nabataean philology and epigraphy, much of which touches the origin and history of the province of Arabia. The names of the Abbé Jean Starcky and J. T. Milik are associated with this work, and it is from them that we shall eventually have the new fascicle of inscriptions to complete the Nabataean epigraphy in Part II of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*. To Starcky we also owe the admirable survey, 'Pétra et la Nabatène', published in 1964.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am glad to be able to acknowledge here my profound gratitude to those who aided me in Jordan and Israel: His Excellency Salah Abu Zeid, Minister of Information in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Mr. David Harris, of the N.R.A. Soils Division in Amman; Prof. Fawzi el-Fakharani, formerly visiting professor at the University of Jordan and now Chairman of the Archaeology Department in the University of Libya at Benghazi; Prof. Zvi Yavetz of the University of Tel-Aviv; Dr. Avraham Negev, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; and Lt.-Col. Mordechai Gichon, of the University of Tel-Aviv. I have also to thank for help and criticism Professors T. D. Barnes, C. P. Jones, John Strugnell and F. V. Winnett. The present report is concerned chiefly with work in or on Arabia since the excavation of Jerash, completed in 1934 and published in 1938 (C. H. Kraeling, *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis*). The following abbreviations should be noted: *AASOR* = *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*; *ADAJ* = *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*; *CIS* = *Corpus*

*Inscriptionum Semiticarum*; *IEJ* = *Israel Exploration Journal*; *PEQ* = *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*; *RB* = *Revue Biblique*; *SDB* = *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*; *ZDPV* = *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*. Page references are to the initial page of a discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Mention should be made, *honoris causa*, of the serviceable and up-to-date guidebook *The Antiquities of Jordan*, by G. Lankaster Harding, in the second (revised) edition of 1967.

<sup>3</sup> *SDB* 886; cf. Starcky's earlier 'The Nabataeans: a Historical Sketch', *The Biblical Archaeologist* 18 (1955), 84. The *SDB* contribution is now the fundamental study of Nabataean civilization. N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (1965), is of much more limited scope, preponderantly concerned with art, and, in particular, at Khirbet Tannur. On this book, cf. J. Starcky, 'Le temple nabatéen de Khirbet Tannur. À propos d'un livre récent', *RB* 75 (1968), 206. Note also M. Lindner, *Die Könige von Petra* (1968), with fine colour photographs.

# PROVINCIA ARABIA and adjacent territories

..... ANCIENT LIMES AND ROADS  
FOR DETAILS, SEE SUPPLEMENTARY MAPS

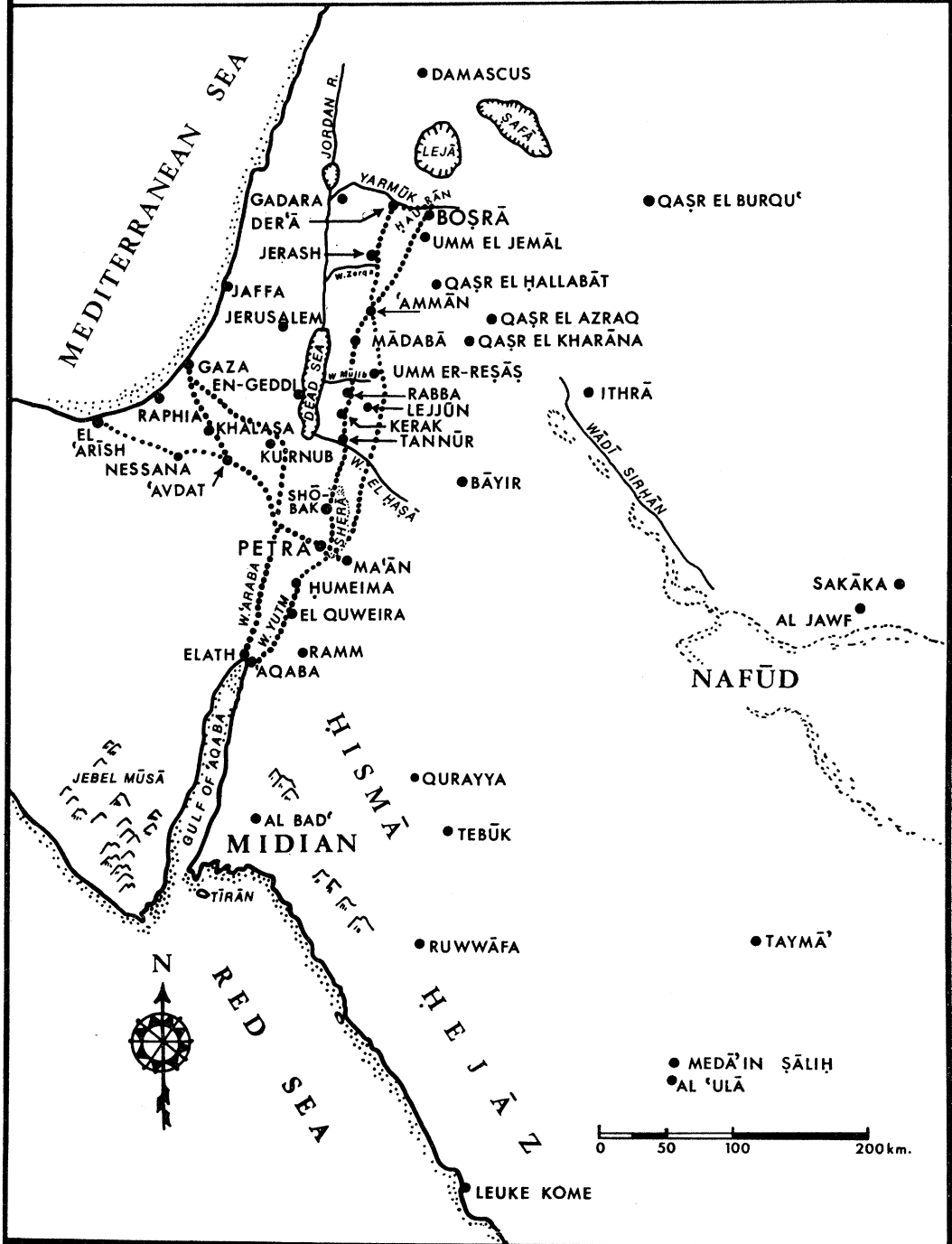


FIG. 33

Drawn by Barbara Westman in consultation with the author

## I. THE NABATAEANS

The Nabataean Arabs first appear in history in 312 B.C. in connection with the aggression of Antigonos Monophthalmos against Petra.<sup>4</sup> Old speculation that these Arabs were to be identified with the Nebāyôt of the Old Testament and the Nabaïati of the Assyrian chronicle of Assurbanipal has been largely rejected by recent scholars.<sup>5</sup> Starcky has stressed that, quite apart from the different dentals in Nabaṭu and Nebāyôt, the *t* of the Old Testament word is not one of the radical consonants of the word.<sup>6</sup> Winnett has recently discovered two inscriptions in the region of Taymā' in Saudi Arabia which provide the Arabic spelling of Nebāyôt as NBYT. Comparing the spelling NBT for the Nabataeans Winnett rightly declares that the theory of identification with the Old Testament people has received the *coup de grâce*,<sup>7</sup> although the Assyrians' enemies may well be identical with the Nebāyôt.

Coins of the early third century found at 'Avdat confirm the presence of Nabataeans at that site not long after their historical début.<sup>8</sup> This means that they were probably already engaged in the transport of spices and perfumes along the road from Petra to Gaza. A well known inscription, found at Khalāṣa (Eluza) on that road, mentions an undated Aretas (Hāritat in Nabataean), king of the Nabataeans; and, even before the 'Avdat evidence appeared, F. M. Cross had argued that the writing on the Khalāṣa text seemed to belong to the third century B.C.<sup>9</sup> This would appear historically plausible. Further, a third-century papyrus attests Nabataean presence in the area of the Ḥaurān.<sup>10</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the Nabataeans were established at Petra, in the Negev, and in the Ḥaurān by the end of the third century. These were to remain the three great centres of Nabataean power above the peninsula of Arabia itself.

The eventual diffusion of Nabataean settlement was nothing short of phenomenal. The detailed investigations of Nelson Glueck in Transjordan have revealed hundreds of sites, many of which were subsequently taken over by the Romans.<sup>11</sup> The Nabataean trade routes up from 'Aqaba and westward to Gaza are clearly indicated by forts, cisterns, and abundant pottery. Some important temples have been found, at Khirbet Tannūr and on the Jebel Ramm. There is strong reason to believe that the Nabataeans had a firm control over the desert east of the main caravan routes, for Nabataean remains have been discovered at the wells of Bāyir, at al-Jawf, and at Sakāka.<sup>12</sup> Not long ago Winnett discovered a Nabataean inscription in the village of Ithra near the head of the Wādī Sirhān: this gives strong support to the view of Glueck and others that the Wādī Sirhān served as an important desert route for Nabataeans as they passed northward from Arabia to Syria.<sup>13</sup> Now, as then, that vast depression in the desert, with its oases, serves as a vital communication link between the cities of the peninsula and the Ḥaurān. It is clear that the Nabataeans used it, and indeed the Qaṣr Azraq, at its head, may have been originally a Nabataean outpost.<sup>14</sup>

The presence of Nabataeans in the north, in the area of Bostra (Boṣrā eski-shām), is amply attested from buildings and inscriptions, but Glueck has repeatedly stressed the odd fact that north of a horizontal line at the level of Mādabā (east of the north end of the Dead Sea) scarcely any Nabataean pottery has been found.<sup>15</sup> There is no very obvious reason why this should be so; and although Glueck considers the possibility that the cities of the

<sup>4</sup> Diod. 19, 94-100.

<sup>5</sup> SDB 903.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> F. V. Winnett and W. L. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia* (1970), 99.

<sup>8</sup> A. Negev, 'Avdat, A Caravan Halt in the Negev', *Archaeology* 14 (1961), 123. cf. PEQ 98 (1966), 95; PEQ 101 (1969), 5. Also A. Negev, *Cities of the Desert* (1966), 12. The Nabataeans were originally nomadic, as Diodorus' report (n. 4) shows (from a considerably earlier source); by Strabo's day they had become sedentary (p. 779). Tetradrachms with Aramaic lettering of a date before 310 have recently been discovered in southern Palestine, but there is no reason to think them Nabataean: J. Starcky, *IX<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'archéologie classique: Rapports et Communications*, Damascus, 1969, 23 = *Die Nabatäer* (Catalogue of Munich Stadtmuseum exhibition, 1970), 81.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955), 160, n. 25.

<sup>10</sup> PSI IV, 406.

<sup>11</sup> N. Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine: I AASOR 14 (1934); II, AASOR 15 (1935); III, AASOR 18-19 (1939); IV, AASOR 25-28 (1951)*. Cf. also *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940).

<sup>12</sup> Bāyir (on a desert route to 'Ammān): N. Glueck, *AASOR 14 (1934), 73; The Other Side of the Jordan (1940), 41; AASOR 25-28 (1951), 47*. Al-Jawf: *AASOR 25-28 (1951), 16, 36, 44; Savignac and Starcky, RB 64 (1957), 196; Winnett and Reed, Ancient Records from North Arabia (1970), 15 and, in the same volume but by Milik and Starcky, 144. Sakāka: *ibid.* 7, 144.*

<sup>13</sup> Ithra: Winnett and Reed, *op. cit.* 60, 160. On the Wādī Sirhān: Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940), 40; *AASOR 25-28 (1951), 34; A. Stein, Geographical Journal 95 (1940), 434*.

<sup>14</sup> N. Glueck, *AASOR 25-28 (1951), 39*.

<sup>15</sup> Most recently, *Deities and Dolphins* (1965), 6.

Decapolis in the north might have impeded the Nabataeans, nevertheless the Nabataean caravan route, with its attendant settlements, clearly passed north from Petra and linked the southern part of the kingdom with the northern. One may simply have to reckon with chance and devastation from subsequent occupation. Anyhow, the relation of the Nabataean settlements in the Ḥaurān to the Wādī Sirḥān is a point about which Glueck is certainly correct. It explains the emergence of Bostra into prominence.

In the Arabian peninsula, out of which the Nabataeans must have come, the land of Midian in the north-west lay in their control. The tombs in the style of those at Petra which

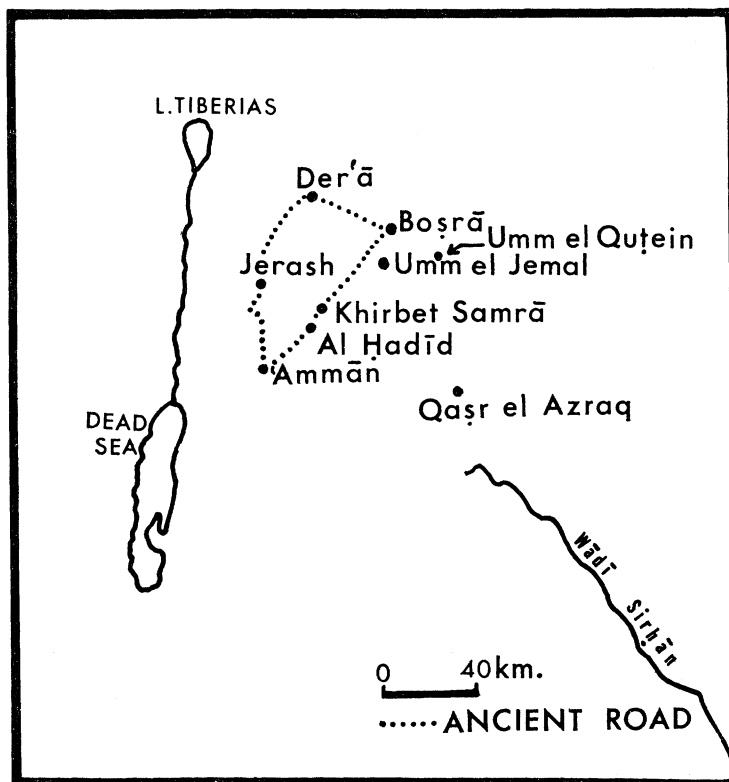


FIG. 34. NORTHERN JORDAN AND SOUTHERN SYRIA  
 Drawn by Barbara Westman in consultation with the author

exist in Medā'in Šāliḥ (al-Ḥijr) as well as the site of Midian itself are striking proof of the Nabataean presence; and this is to leave out of account the Nabataean inscriptions of Medā'in Šāliḥ.<sup>16</sup> It would appear that the Nabataeans took over the trade route from the south at a point not far below Medā'in Šāliḥ, presumably in the region of al-'Ulā.

It is not clear at what date the leaders of the Nabataeans took the title of king; but if the Khalāṣa text belongs to the third century, that yields a *terminus ante quem*. A tentative list of rulers for the second and early first centuries can be drawn up as follows:

Aretas I—mentioned as tyrant of the Arabs in 168 B.C. (*II Macc.* 5, 8).

Rabbel I—mentioned in *CIS* II, 349. This inscription records the restoration of a statue of a King Rabbel in the eighteenth year of a King Aretas. On epigraphic grounds this Aretas is believed to be the third of that name, hence *ca.* 67 B.C. The restoration of

<sup>16</sup> On Medā'in Šāliḥ, Doughty is very much worth reading still. Subsequent and scholarly, especially A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie* I (1909), 107, 301 and II (1914), 78; Winnett and Reed, *op. cit.* 42. On Midian (al-Bad') A. Musil, *The Northern Hegaz* (1926), 109; H. St. J.

Philby, *The Land of Midian* (1957), 257; P. J. Parr, *RB* 76 (1969), 392. Aramaic inscriptions from the oasis of Ḥaj, near Bahrein, are probably of Mesopotamian, not Nabataean origin: Starcky, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 23-4 (French) = 81 (German).

the statue is accomplished by the son or nephew of the original dedicator. The name of Rabbel's father ends in T: hence either [BD] T (Obodas) or [HRT] T (Aretas). If this Rabbel is correctly located here after Aretas I, his father was [HRT] T.

Aretas II—king at the time of Alexander Jannaeus' siege of Gaza (Jos., *AJ* 13, 360). He was the first Nabataean king to have issued coins: E.S.G. Robinson, *Num. Chron.* 16 (1936), 290.

Obodas I—king not long after the capture of Gaza (Jos., *AJ* 13, 375). He defeated Alexander Jannaeus in the Golan (loc. cit.), and in 85 he defeated the Seleucid king, Antiochus XIII (*AJ* 13, 387–391; *BJ* 1, 99–102; cf. Starcky, *SDB* 906). An inscription commemorating an Obodas at Petra is, because of the archaic writing, identified with this king: his father is named Aretas, thus Aretas II.

Aretas III—mentioned by Jos., *AJ* 13, 392 ff. in connection with the last years of Alexander Jannaeus, the efforts of his widow, and the struggle of his son Hyrcanus with Aristobulus. Aretas struck bronzes at Damascus from 84–72 B.C., and he took the epithet Philhellene.<sup>17</sup> On Obodas as Aretas' father, cf. Steph. Byz., s.v. Auara (also Starcky, *SDB* 907). It was Aretas III against whom Pompey intended to launch a campaign at the time of the incorporation of the province of Syria (Jos., *AJ* 14, 46 ff.), and it was against Aretas that M. Aemilius Scaurus did launch his abortive operation that ended in a disreputable settlement. Scaurus, however, issued coins at Rome in 58 showing Aretas on his knees beside a camel.<sup>18</sup> Starcky has proposed that Pompey had planned to annex the Nabataean kingdom (*SDB* 909).

From this point the Nabataean king list becomes clear and firm. There are no spaces for additional kings. The fact has not been fully appreciated of late, as will be seen below.

Malichus I (Malchus)—the enemy of Herod and partisan of Julius Caesar and Antony. He was already king by 56 (*SDB* 909).

Obodas II—Malichus' replacement not long after Actium. This was the Nabataean king at the time of Aelius Gallus' expedition into Arabia Felix.<sup>19</sup> He died in the winter of 9/8 (*SDB* 909).

Aretas IV—the most resplendent of the kings. His dates are 8 B.C.–A.D. 40, and he appears in inscriptions with the dependent phrase RHM 'MH, i.e. 'who loves his people'. It is becoming clear that the reign of Aretas IV was the period of greatest prosperity for the Nabataeans.<sup>20</sup>

Malichus II—king from A.D. 40 to 70. Mentioned on various inscriptions. It is attested that he ruled at least 24 years and that his son came to the throne in 71 (*SDB* 916). No space, clearly, for the Arab king Abias (Jos., *AJ* 20, 77), who belongs to Mesopotamia anyway.

Rabbel II—king from 71 to 106. The beginning of the reign is guaranteed by *CIS* II, 161. Rabbel presumably died when the province was formed in A.D. 106. His name appears on inscriptions with the phrase DY 'HY Y WŠYZB 'MH, 'who brought life and deliverance to his people'.<sup>21</sup>

The list of Nabataean kings is useful in various ways. It is particularly relevant to the problem of dating the anonymous *Periplus of the Red Sea*, in which (ch. 19) there appears to be a reference to one Malichas (*sic*), a Nabataean king at Petra.<sup>22</sup> A number of scholars in the last two decades have countenanced the possibility of a king at Petra under the Roman provincial administration, and a Malichus III was postulated in this position.<sup>23</sup> A heated controversy has ensued, and a papyrus mentioning an unnamed king of the Nabataeans has

<sup>17</sup> Newell, *Late Seleucid Mints* (1939), 92.

<sup>18</sup> *BM Coins Rom. Rep.* 1, 483.

<sup>19</sup> On that expedition: J. Pirenne, 'L'expédition d'Aelius Gallus en Arabie du sud', in *Le Royaume Sud-Arabe de Qatabān et sa Datation* (1961), not known to S. Jameson, 'Chronology of the Campaigns of Aelius Gallus and C. Petronius', *JRS* 58 (1968), 71. See also A. Dihle, 'Der Zug des Aelius Gallus', in *Umstrittene Daten* (1964), 80.

<sup>20</sup> See below, n. 39.

<sup>21</sup> *IEJ* 13 (1963), 113.

<sup>22</sup> Assuming the correction of ἀναβαταίως to Ναβαταίων ἀνάβασις; therefore, εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχων βασιλέα Ναβαταίων ἀνάβασις.

<sup>23</sup> R. Dussaud, *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (1955), 211; J. Pirenne, op. cit. 167; F. Altheim (with R. Stiehl), *Die Araber in der alten Welt* I (1964), 40, 100, 106, 134.

been invoked to prove the existence of a royal house in the Roman province.<sup>24</sup> The whole matter has got out of hand. The papyrus, as its editor now states, comes from a collection of documents which was found at En-Geddi; and it is certain from other of the papyri that the unnamed king is none other than Rabbel II,—that means before the annexation.<sup>25</sup>

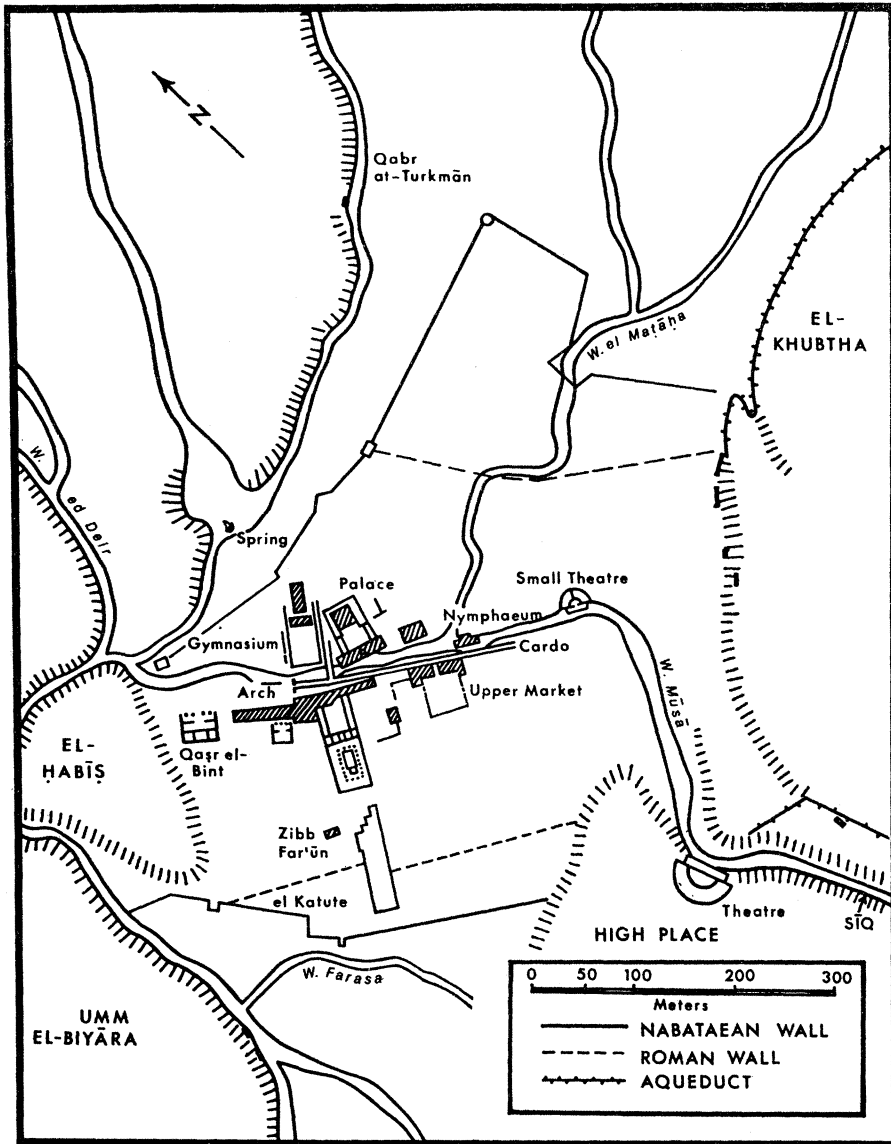


FIG. 35. PLAN OF PETRA

Drawn by Barbara Westman after SDB 949-50

There is thus no evidence whatsoever for a king under the province. What is more, the new papyri show that the Roman governor held assizes at Petra.<sup>26</sup> There cannot have been a king there. Accordingly, the Malichus of the *Periplus* must be either I or II of that name.

<sup>24</sup> J. Starcky, *RB* 71 (1954), 161. A. Dihle's criticism of the hypothesis of a third Malichus and related matters (*Umstrittene Daten* [1964], 13) was attacked in turn by Altheim, 'Zu einem Buch A. Dihle's', *op. cit.* IV (1967), 492. Dihle's good argument would have been even stronger had he

recognized that Malichus' name did not actually stand on the papyrus.

<sup>25</sup> cf. Starcky in *SDB* 918. The lot of other En-Geddi papyri: *IEJ* 12 (1962), 238.

<sup>26</sup> G. W. Bowersock, *Zeitschr. f. Pap. u. Epig.* 5 (1970), 44. And below, 231.

Probability inclines toward the later Malichus II on the basis of the trade situation depicted in the treatise.<sup>27</sup>

The excavations of 'Avdat and Kurnub have led the excavator, Dr. Avraham Negev, to formulate certain hypotheses of historical importance about the fortunes of the Nabataeans in the late Republic and early Roman Empire. These will require careful assessment. Dr. Negev sees Nabataean history in the Negev in three periods, with an interval between each.<sup>28</sup> The occupation which came in the third century ended presumably during the struggle with Alexander Jannaeus. The archaeological evidence indicates a cessation of habitation at this point, although there is no sign of destruction or violence. The middle period, however, is terminated, according to Dr. Negev, in the mid-first century A.D. by fire and devastation. A layer of ash is visible at 'Avdat and also at some other sites in the Negev. In an important article Dr. Negev has argued that the entire stretch of fortified road from Petra to Gaza, through Moyet 'Awād, Mezad Neqarot, 'Avdat and Eluza, passed out of use in the first century A.D. at the time of the destruction of 'Avdat.<sup>29</sup> That will have been the end of the Nabataean trade route to Gaza. The sites Moa (on the Mādabā map) and Moahila (in the *Notitia*) cannot accordingly be identified with any fort on the Petra-Gaza road.<sup>30</sup> Negev's conclusions depend heavily on the precise dating of the layer of ash in the Negev sites to the mid-first century A.D., in other words before what he calls the third and final period of Nabataean prosperity which lasted at least into the reign of Hadrian and ended without violence.<sup>31</sup> Such is the present hypothesis.

It is difficult to feel confidence in the precise dating of the destruction level at 'Avdat. In 1961 Dr. Negev associated this level with the annexation of the province in A.D. 106, and he wrote, 'A very thick layer of ashes was reached wherever the spade penetrated the latest Nabataean stratum in the acropolis area.'<sup>32</sup> Under the influence of two inscriptions recording building activity at 'Avdat after annexation (under Trajan and Hadrian), Dr. Negev later argued that the destruction occurred in the mid-second century A.D., subsequent to the building inscriptions.<sup>33</sup> He connected this postulated disaster with Thamudic and Safaitic graffiti in the Negev;<sup>34</sup> an invasion of nomadic tribes was imagined. Now, however, Dr. Negev states that the destruction came before the last great period of Nabataean prosperity: the forts on the road show only Nabataean pottery (but Romans might have used it). It is troubling to find that a layer of ash can be dated both before, during, and after an archaeologically documented era of prosperity. Furthermore, in the balance hangs the major question as to whether or not the incorporation of the province was accomplished by violence. The senescence of the Petra-Gaza road is also at issue here.

More new datings have emerged, with (it must be said) greater certainty, from the Jordanian and British excavations at Petra. Perhaps the most astonishing discovery was an inscription of Aretas IV in the temenos of the building known as the Qaṣr al-Bint.<sup>35</sup> The stone was the base of a statue and obviously closely connected with the Qaṣr. Further excavation was undertaken in 1965. That was necessitated because hitherto the Qaṣr al-Bint had been generally assumed to be a paradigm of Roman building of the second century A.D. at Petra.<sup>36</sup> Many had expressed themselves in positive terms, but since 1965 those scholars have graciously and no less positively acknowledged that the Qaṣr should be dated to the

<sup>27</sup> cf. the discussion by A. Dihle, op. cit. 29. (On Annius Plocamus, see 27, n. 24.)

<sup>28</sup> 'The Chronology of the Middle Nabataean Period', *PEQ* 101 (1969), 5.

<sup>29</sup> 'The Date of the Petra-Gaza Road', *PEQ* 98 (1966), 89.

<sup>30</sup> Moa has been identified with Bir Madkuūr (Alt, *ZDPV* [1935], 24) and with Moyet 'Awād (Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* II [1938], 181). Moahila has been placed at Qaṣr Mahalle (Abel, op. cit., II, 182). This road also served for merchants going to Rhinocoloura (el-'Arish), to which Strabo says the Nabataeans conveyed their goods from Petra (p. 781). After 'Avdat the way would probably be by Nessana. On Nabataean commercial links with Egypt, note the traffic in bitumen from the Dead Sea for use in embalming: P. Hammond, 'The Nabataean Bitumen Industry at the Dead Sea', *Biblical Archaeologist* 22 (1959), 40. On Nabataean Nessana, see

H. D. Colt, *Excavations at Nessana* I (1962).

<sup>31</sup> *PEQ* 101 (1969), 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Archaeology* 14 (1961), 125.

<sup>33</sup> *IEJ* 13 (1963), 121; *IEJ* 17 (1967), 46. Also A. Negev, *Cities of the Desert* (1966), 23.

<sup>34</sup> The graffiti: F. V. Winnett, *Aliqut* 2 (1959), 146; A. Jamme, op. cit. 150. Negev's interpretation of the graffiti: *IEJ* 13 (1963), 122; *PEQ* 101 (1969), 11. This interpretation was followed by N. Glueck in his *Deities and Dolphins* (1965), 527.

<sup>35</sup> J. Starcky and J. Strugnell, 'Deux nouvelles inscriptions nabatéennes', *RB* 63 (1966), 236.

<sup>36</sup> G. R. H. Wright, 'Structure of the Qaṣr Bint Far'un: A Preliminary Review', *PEQ* 93 (1961), 8; cf. P. J. Parr, *Ex Oriente Lux* 19 (1965-6), 555; *Syria* 45 (1968), 1 = *ADAJ* 11-12 (1967-8), 5. Starcky, however, had dissented from the old *communis opinio*: *SDB* 977.

end of the first century B.C., under Aretas IV or possibly even under Obodas II.<sup>37</sup> This new dating raises serious problems about the arched gate at the other end of the temenos, and it illustrates generally how treacherous is the dating of Nabataean buildings. One thinks of the controversial and magnificent Khazneh, with its problems of dating Hellenistic influence at Petra.<sup>38</sup> The theatre has also been investigated further in recent years, and there are indications that even this may also belong to the age of Obodas or Aretas.<sup>39</sup> In Roman terms that is precisely the Augustan age.

The disaster in which a party of visitors drowned in the Siq at Petra in 1963 led to a diversion of the watercourse to prevent further accidents at the times of the risings of the Wādī Mūsā. Attention has been called to the fact that the ancients themselves had taken this very precaution, and it is thought that the original dam might possibly have been Nabataean.<sup>40</sup> One of the inscriptions which came to light by chance in the modern operation provided the first epigraphic attestation of the Semitic name for Petra, Reqem.<sup>41</sup>

In writing about Petra Strabo reports, on the authority of Athenodorus (who had been there), that the Nabataeans had the same regard for their dead as for dung and that they buried even their kings beside dung-heaps (παρὰ τοὺς κοπρῶνας κατορύττουσι καὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς).<sup>42</sup> In 1895 the French orientalist, Clermont-Ganneau, proposed a brilliant explanation of this peculiar statement.<sup>43</sup> The Nabataeans used the word KPR to designate a tomb, and Athenodorus, hearing the word, confused it with Greek κοπρῶν. The word KPR means normally in Arabic and Aramaic 'village', and is vocalized *kafr*, *kaphar*, *kphār*, *kaphrā*, vel. sim. But the P does not have to be PH: cf. the Greek transliteration κόπρῶν.<sup>44</sup> Clermont-Ganneau's explanation has not suffered from a new attempt to explain Strabo's report as an account of ritual exposure at Petra.<sup>45</sup>

Two other literary texts dealing with Nabataean Arabia have recently been reinterpreted by J. T. Milik, whose views have been reported by Starcky.<sup>46</sup> Both texts are fragments of the *Arabica* of the historian Uranius (Jacoby, *FGrH* II C 675). It may be noted that Domaszewski argued in 1908 that Uranius composed his history in the mid-first century B.C.; and this opinion is taken over by Starcky.<sup>47</sup> There is much to be said against it, and Jacoby's marginal date beside this author suggests the sixth century A.D. There is no indication of Jacoby's reasons, but doubtless he was planning to argue from the allusions to a Uranius in passages of Agathias and Damascius (Jacoby's testimonia 2 and 3). Further, the reference to the Saracens (fragment 10) looks much later than the first century B.C. However that may be, frg. 25 alludes to the death of Antigonos at the hands of a Rabbel, king of the Arabs. The name Antigonos has regularly been emended to Antiochus and the passage referred to the death of Antiochus XII. But, as Milik points out, he was killed by Obodas I. Therefore, one will keep Antigonos in the text and refer the passage to the events of 312. Rabbel will be the Nabataean ethnarch, and Antigonos will in later tradition have been substituted for his subordinate Athenaeus. Such a tradition could have arisen if the place of death were Mauta (meaning 'death'): Stephanus of Byzantium, commenting on the scene

<sup>37</sup> Parr, *Ex Oriente Lux* 19 (1965-6), 556; *Syria* 45 (1968), 20 = *ADAJ* 11-12 (1967-8), 17.

<sup>38</sup> On the arched gate, G. R. H. Wright, 'Structure et date de l'arc monumental de Pétra', *RB* 73 (1966), 404; on the Khazneh, Wright, 'The Khazneh at Petra: A Review', *ADAJ* 6-7 (1962), 24. See also P. J. Parr, 'The Beginnings of Hellenization at Petra', *VIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'archéologie classique*, Paris (1965), 527.

<sup>39</sup> P. Hammond, 'The excavation of the Main Theater at Petra', *ADAJ* 8-9 (1964), 81. See J. Starcky's perceptive comments on the flowering of Syro-Palestinian civilization in the age of Aretas IV: 'La Civilization nabatéenne: état des questions', *IX<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'archéologie classique: Rapports et Communications*, Damascus (1969), 22. Likewise (in German), Starcky in *Die Nabatäer*, Catalogue of the Munich Stadtmuseum exhibition (1970), 81. On page 25 (French) and page 82 (German) Starcky compares with the Petra monuments the temple of Ba'al Shamīn at Sia', the Herodian temple at Jerusalem, the temple of Juppiter

at Damascus, the temple of Qōs at Tannūr, the temple of Bēl at Palmyra, the temple of Juppiter at Ba'albek, and (assigned to Rabbel II) the temple of Allāt on Jebel Ramm.

<sup>40</sup> P. J. Parr, 'La date du barrage du Siq à Pétra', *RB* 74 (1967), 45, or perhaps Roman, cf. p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> J. Starcky, 'Nouvelle épitaphe nabatéenne donnant le nom sémitique de Pétra', *RB* 72 (1965), 95. Also in *ADAJ* 10 (1965), 44. The *RB* publication is more complete.

<sup>42</sup> Strabo, p. 784.

<sup>43</sup> Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Études d'archéologie orientale* 1 (1895), 146.

<sup>44</sup> Note κόπρῶν on a boundary-stone: 'Atiqot 2 (1959), 152.

<sup>45</sup> G. R. H. Wright, 'Strabo on Funerary Customs at Petra', *PEQ* 101 (1969), 113.

<sup>46</sup> In *SDB* 903 and 906.

<sup>47</sup> 'Die Zeit des Schriftstellers Uranius', *Arch. f. Rel.* 111 (1908), 239; cf. *SDB* 906. See also J. Pirenne, *La Royaume Sud-arabe de Qatabān et sa datation* (1961), 128.



of the defeat (Μωθώ in Greek), says explicitly ὁ ἐστὶ τῆ Ἀράβων φωνῆ τόπος θανάτου.<sup>48</sup> Milik has also reinterpreted frg. 24, referring to Oboda as the place of burial of the king Obodas whom the Nabataeans worship as a god: this ought to be Obodas I, who has emerged as the conqueror of Antiochus XII, not (as usually assumed) Obodas II, who had small claim to such a commemoration. Nabataean inscriptions have shown that an Obodas was indeed worshipped as a god, similarly a temple of the late empire at 'Avdat (Oboda) itself.<sup>49</sup>

Something should be said here about the mission of Gaius Caesar to the East in the context of Augustan policy toward the Arabs. The campaign of Aelius Gallus at the beginning of the principate has always been something of a mystery,<sup>50</sup> but it is quite clear that Augustus had some kind of expansionist interest at that stage in controlling the rich trade in spices and perfumes. That meant moving, with Nabataean help, against the Sabaeans. The whole operation was, of course, a disaster; and there were suggestions that the Romans' Nabataean guide, Syllaenus, had deliberately misled them. Syllaenus' subsequent ambitious intrigues make this possible.<sup>51</sup> In any case, Augustus' interference in the dynastic crisis which Syllaenus precipitated indicated a concern for the Arabs' problems which may well underlie a part of Gaius' mission. The Pisan cenotaph alludes to Gaius' *consulatum quem ultra fines extremas pop. Romani bellum gerens feliciter peregerat*.<sup>52</sup> This cannot refer to the Armenian campaign, for that began definitely in A.D. 2 whereas Gaius was consul in A.D. 1.<sup>53</sup> A group of texts from the elder Pliny can help. We learn that Gaius received from Juba, the erudite king of Mauretania, a specially prepared treatise on the Arabs, in anticipation of a forthcoming *expeditio Arabica*.<sup>54</sup> Further, at some point Gaius reached the *Arabicus sinus* (either the Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of 'Aqaba) while he was *res gerens*; <sup>55</sup> it is also said that while Aelius Gallus took Roman arms into the Arabian peninsula, Gaius only looked at it ('prospexit tantum').<sup>56</sup> This must mean that the *Arabicus sinus* is the Gulf of 'Aqaba, and in this context the expression *res gerens* can scarcely mean anything other than 'waging a campaign'. And we know that an *expeditio Arabica* was projected. However, Gaius did not get into the peninsula; he only reached the *sinus*. What Pliny is telling us is that Gaius Caesar waged a campaign against Arabs north of the Gulf of 'Aqaba, in other words in the Nabataean kingdom. The date has to be before the Armenian campaign. It is inevitably, therefore, the Arabian campaign to which the Pisan cenotaph refers, the war of A.D. 1 outside the boundaries of the empire.

What sort of a campaign was this? Silence in the tradition and the manifest failure to annex make it unlikely that Gaius was fighting against the Nabataeans. They were by no means bellicose anyway, as both Strabo and Josephus knew.<sup>57</sup> The real threat in Transjordan and the Negev was the nomadic invaders pushing northward from Saudi Arabia, doing just what the Nabataeans themselves had probably done several centuries earlier. The point is of enduring importance: the threat to Arabs (and others) from Arab nomads. It may have been such people who caused the destruction of 'Avdat, whenever that happened. Further, if there was a genuine *limes* system in southern Palestine in Herodian and Flavian

<sup>48</sup> Steph. Byz. s. v. Μωθώ.

<sup>49</sup> Obodas the god: e.g. *CIS* II, 354 (Petra). The 'Avdat temple: *Archaeology* 14 (1961), 125; *IEJ* 17 (1967), 55 [Zeus Obodas].

<sup>50</sup> See above, n. 19. Note Strabo, p. 819: εἰ δὲ μὴ ὁ Συλλαῖος αὐτὸν (i.e. Γάλλου) προῦθιδου, κἄν κατεστρέματο τὴν εὐδαίμονα πᾶσαν. Cf. p. 780: (Augustus) προσοικειούσθαι δὴ διανοήθη τούτους ἢ καταστρέφεσθαι.

<sup>51</sup> Strabo, p. 780; Jos., *AJ* 16, 273. On his way to Rome to see Augustus Syllaenus left behind at least two dedications, both bilingual (Nabataean and Greek): at Miletus (Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen* II [1932], 46) and at Delos (unpublished, but see *SDB* 913).

<sup>52</sup> *ILS* 140, ll. 9-10.

<sup>53</sup> Dio 55, 10a, 5, which is explicit. Dio's notice that Gaius was consul in Syria (ἐν τε τῆ Συρίᾳ ὄντα καὶ ὑπατεύοντα) does not fit with the statement of the cenotaph; but Dio is simply reporting the news that Phraataces heard, presumably that Gaius had

arrived in Syria and become consul. He cannot be assumed to have passed his entire consulate there: the other evidence is decisive.

<sup>54</sup> Pliny, *NH* 6, 141; 12, 56; 32, 10; cf. *FGrH* III A 175, F 1-3.

<sup>55</sup> Pliny, *NH* 6, 160. S. Jameson apparently forgot about Gaius' presence in this area when she wrote that after Aelius Gallus 'the region attracted no further interest until the time of Nero' (*JRS* 58 [1968], 79).

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* As K. Wellesley has proved, there is no possibility that Gaius attacked Aden (as some inferred from the *Periplus of the Red Sea* 26): 'The Fable of a Roman Attack on Aden', *Par. del Pass.* 9 (1954), 401. J. Innes Miller, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire* (1969), 254 even says that Gaius sailed around the Arabian peninsula.

<sup>57</sup> Strabo, p. 780: οὐδὲ κατὰ γῆν σφόδρα πολεμισταὶ εἰσιν; p. 781 (lack of interest in warfare) κοινὸν δὲ τοῦτο πᾶσι τοῖς Ἀράβων βασιλεῦσιν; Jos., *AJ* 14, 31: οὐκ εὖ πρὸς πόλεμον διακείμενοι.

times,<sup>58</sup> it will be more reasonably explained as a protection against nomadic intruders rather than against the Nabataeans. In the first century A.D. the Nabataeans were becoming an increasingly sedentary people. The spice and perfume trade slipped from their grasp, as goods passed directly to Egypt, going from Leukos Limen to Coptos and on up to Alexandria. The Nabataeans turned to agriculture, and 'Avdat has shown that they learned how to make the desert bloom.<sup>59</sup>

## II. THE NEW PROVINCE

At the end of the reign of Rabbel II his kingdom became a Roman province, designated simply *Arabia*. Presumably Rabbel died, but it would be wrong to assume that the royal stock was exhausted. There was, evidently, an heir apparent, by the name of Obodas.<sup>60</sup> But it has become a matter of controversy whether or not the Nabataeans acceded peacefully to annexation. Rabbel II had had on inscriptions the designation 'he who gives life and deliverance to his people',<sup>61</sup> and on Negev's hypothesis of destruction from outsiders in the mid-first century Rabbel can be assumed to have delivered his people by encouraging re-settlement and agriculture toward the end of the century.<sup>62</sup> It is, in any case, likely that the Nabataeans, sedentary and vulnerable to invasion, no longer so economically strong as they had been through dependence earlier upon the caravan routes, would have succumbed at Rabbel's death peaceably, perhaps gladly, to the external protection of Rome.

One thing is quite clear, and important. Apart from the controversial burnt level in the Negev, there is no archaeological evidence for violence at the time of the annexation. There is certainly no justification for writing that the Nabataeans 'crashed on the rock of Roman imperium' and that Rome 'swallowed the Nabataean kingdom like a tasty morsel in its insatiable appetite for incontestable power'.<sup>63</sup> Of texts bearing upon the annexation three precisely might imply force or violence to some degree; the possibility, however unlikely it may seem, cannot be wholly ruled out. Xiphilinus' abridgement of Cassius Dio asserts (68, 14): κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον χρόνον καὶ Πάλμας τῆς Συρίας ἄρχων τὴν Ἀραβίαν τὴν πρὸς τῇ Πέτρᾳ ἐχειρώσατο καὶ Ῥωμαίων ὑπήκοον ἐποίησατο. Palma, the instrument of annexation, was the consular legate of Syria, A. Cornelius Palma (*cos.* 99, 11 109). The word ἐχειρώσατο is not decisive one way or the other, but *prima facie* some force would appear to be implied. Several centuries later Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of Nabataean Arabia, 'obtemperare legibus nostris Traianus compulit imperator'.<sup>64</sup> That is no more decisive than ἐχειρώσατο, but again *prima facie* the verb *compulit* would suggest a measure of armed force. Ammianus refers to the *tumor incolarum* in Arabia:<sup>65</sup> possibly an oblique allusion to the difficulties in subjugation, or possibly a personal opinion of Ammianus in the fourth century. The final relevant text is a Safaitic inscription mentioning SNT ḤRB NBṬ 'the year of the Nabataean war'.<sup>66</sup> Previous scholars, notably E. Littmann, have insisted that this text refers to a war of annexation,<sup>67</sup> but it is readily apparent that there is no compelling

<sup>58</sup> See the researches of M. Gichon, notably 'The Origin of the Limes Palaestinae and the Major Phases in its Development', *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms*, Beiheft 19 d. *Bonner Jahrb.* (1967), 175. Gichon argues against the view of Avi-Yonah that there was no Palestine limes until the age of Diocletian. cf. also *IEJ* 17 (1967), 27; *Provincialia: Festschr. Laur-Belart* (1968), 317.

<sup>59</sup> *IEJ* 17 (1967), 47, citing inscriptions; cf. N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (1959), 201; A. Negev, *Cities of the Desert* (1966), 20. See also the Nabataean irrigation arrangements (water-rights) recorded in the En-Geddi papyri: *IEJ* 12 (1962), 243; *Ex Oriente Lux* 17 (1963), 232. For a professional reconstruction of an ancient desert farming-system, see M. Evenari and others, *The Negev: The Challenge of the Desert* (1971). cf. also the agricultural regime at Byzantine Nessana: P. Meyerson in *Excavations at Nessana* 1 (1962), 211.

<sup>60</sup> He appears in the En-Geddi papyri: *IEJ* 12 (1962), 239. Cited also in *Ex Oriente Lux* 17 (1963), 230.

<sup>61</sup> cf. n. 21 above.

<sup>62</sup> A. Negev, *PEQ* 101 (1969), 14.

<sup>63</sup> N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (1965), 3, 45.

<sup>64</sup> *Amm. Marc.* 14, 8, 3.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Semitic Inscriptions, Part IV of the Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900* (1904), 143, no. 45. Professor F. V. Winnett has generously shown me an unpublished Safaitic text containing the same three words. It was found in 1958-9 by Winnett and Harding north of the H-4 pumping station and will be published by them as W-H no. 2113.

<sup>67</sup> E. Littmann, *Thamūd und Šafā* (1940), 122, no. 14; R. Dussaud, *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (1955), 139. Professor Winnett has also shown me another of his unpublished Safaitic texts (see note 66) and allowed me to make it public. It will be numbered W-H no. 1734 = 2815 and mentions SNT MRDT NBṬ 'L 'L RM, 'the year of the Nabataean revolt against the people of Rome.' Unfortunately, the R of RM is not a certain reading, and a secure date cannot be inferred from the script.

reason to do so. Any kind of tribal war, any confrontation between Nabataeans and Safaitic wanderers, could be meant. And there are no secure criteria for dating Safaitic texts on the basis of lettering. This third text is of little help.

It should be clear from this display of the evidence for the forcible annexation of Arabia that the layer of ash in the Negev is of paramount importance. The fact that the person who

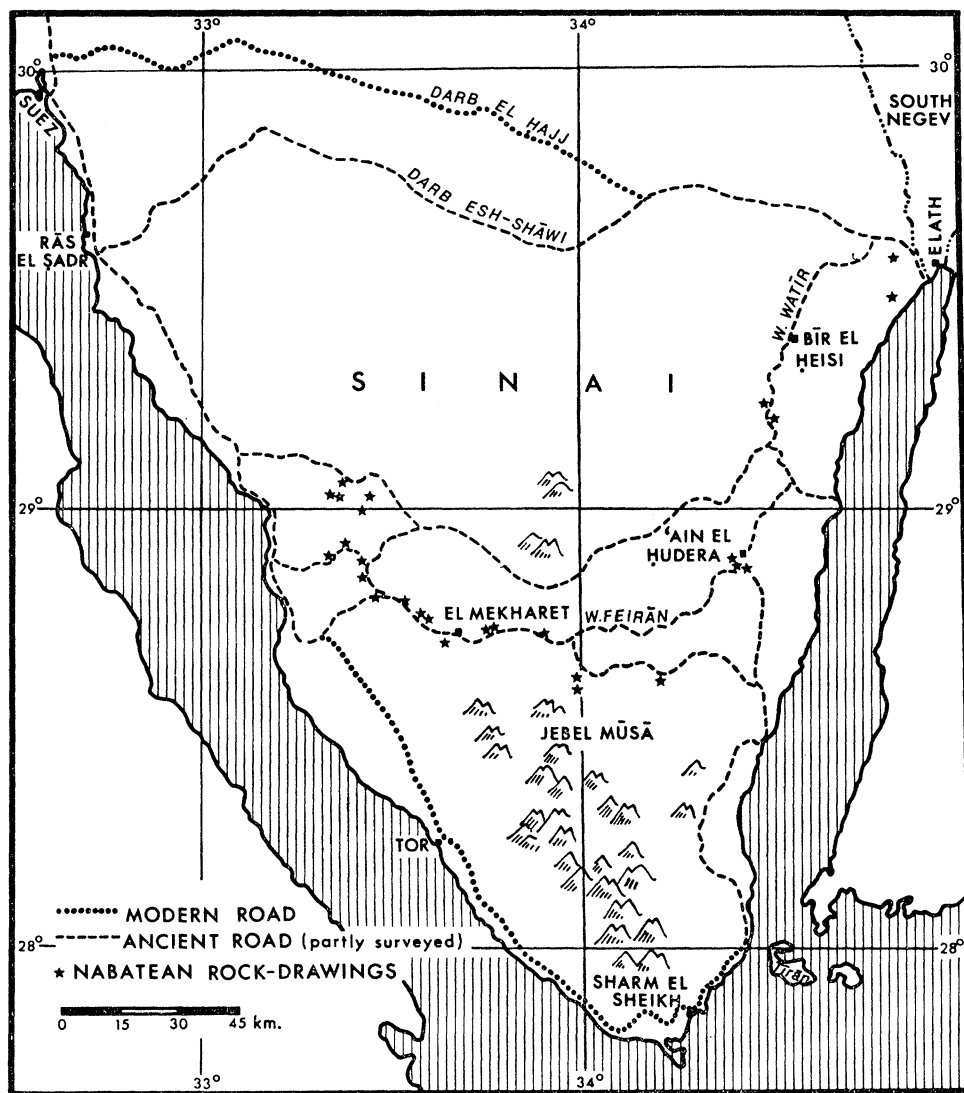


FIG. 36 MAP OF SINAI

Drawn by Barbara Westman after B. Rothenberg, *PEQ* cii (1970)

discovered it has been able to date it, at various times, before, during and after the annexation provokes the irrepressible suspicion that it may, in fact, support the view of violent subjugation. Against this view three items can be adduced: (1) the coin legend *Arabia adquisita*, not *Arabia capta*; <sup>68</sup> (2) the phrase on the many Trajanic milestones *reducta in formam provinciae*; <sup>69</sup> (3) the absence of the element *Arabicus* in Trajan's titulature. These items weigh about as heavily as the verbs used by Cassius Dio and Ammianus.

At 'Avdat (Oboda) and Kurnub (Mampsis) life and prosperity are amply attested for the early decades of the Roman province. On Negev's present assessment this prosperity

<sup>68</sup> cf. C. Préaux, *Phoibos* 5 (1950-1), 132.

<sup>69</sup> On milestones of C. Claudius Severus: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 1023.

continued and developed without interruption from the reign of Rabbel II. Such unbroken continuity is likewise implied, but certainly not proven, by the series of papyrus documents from En-Geddi on the western shore of the Dead Sea.<sup>70</sup> These constitute the archives of one Babatha, daughter of Sime'on; the father had settled in the reign of Rabbel in Mahōza in the territory of Zoar south of the Dead Sea, and the family remained there under the province. The sequence of documents concerning the affairs and property of the family apparently gives no hint of trouble or confusion during the transition to Roman administration. The documents are also of the greatest interest in revealing the easy mingling of this Jewish family with the Nabataean Arabs in whose territory they had settled. One wishes, unfortunately without optimism, for publication of all these papyri in the near future.

The extent of the new province has become clearer in recent years. Not long ago it was considered unlikely that the Negev was included;<sup>71</sup> there is no question about that now. Further Nabataean inscriptions from the Sinai have suggested that insofar as that peninsula formed a part of the kingdom it was also probably incorporated into the province (just as the Negev was). And indeed some of the Sinai texts are dated by years of the province (*eparchy*).<sup>72</sup> The inclusion of the Sinai has very lately received additional confirmation by the discovery of what is called a Nabataean-Roman road leading into the Wādī Feirān from the Negev.<sup>73</sup> The northern and eastern boundaries of the new province were carefully studied by Brünnow and Domaszewski, and there is still substantial agreement with their conclusions. The northern boundary passed through the Ḥaurān (it was pushed farther north under Septimius Severus), and to the west certain cities of the Decapolis were included but not all. Philadelphia ('Ammān), Gerasa (Jerash), Dium (not identified with certainty), and Adraa (Der'ā) all belonged to Arabia.<sup>74</sup> On the east, a limes-system lay to the west of the modern pilgrimage route and followed it approximately southward. The eastern 'boundary', if such it can be called, followed in effect the line at which the desert steppe begins. There will be more on this below.

To the south, the province must have extended as far down the north-west part of the Arabian peninsula as the Nabataean kingdom itself. Formerly not all were persuaded of this by the mere presence of an inscription or two at Medā'in Šāliḥ with a date by year of the eparchy.<sup>75</sup> But evidence accumulates. Mr. Thomas Barger found a stele in a well at Medā'in Šāliḥ with this text, which was read on the basis of a rudimentary squeeze and numerous photographs (one of which appears here as Pl. XIV, 1):<sup>76</sup>

Τύχη  
Βόσ-  
τρων  
'Αδρια-  
νὸς  
ζωγράφ-  
φος σὺν  
λεγ. III  
Κυ.

The legion III Cyrenaica was the garrison legion of Arabia, and it was stationed in Bostra. This is suggestive evidence for a detachment of the legion at Medā'in Šāliḥ, and the inclusion of that place in the province.

There is further evidence on *Arabia provincia* south of Aqaba in the reports of travellers in the land of Midian. At Ruwḡafa (see map), the great Czech orientalist Musil observed the ruins of a sanctuary, in which he discovered three inscriptions: one Greek, one Nabataean,

<sup>70</sup> Described with quotations in *IEJ* 12 (1962), 235 and *Ex Oriente Lux* 17 (1963), 227. Four of the least interesting of the papyri have been published with Hebrew commentary by H. J. Polotsky in *Eretz-Israel* 8 (1967), 46. These are documents nos. 12, 27, 28, 29. Note also that the third period of building at Khirbet Tannūr belongs to the time of the early province: N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (1965), 138.

<sup>71</sup> Doubted by Brünnow and Domaszewski,

vol. III, 268 and by A. Kammerer, *Petra et la Nabatène* (1929), 286.

<sup>72</sup> cf. recently A. Negev, 'New Dated Nabataean Graffiti from the Sinai', *IEJ* 17 (1967), 252.

<sup>73</sup> B. Rothenberg, *PEQ* 102 (1970), 18.

<sup>74</sup> H. Bietenhard, 'Die Dekapolis von Pompeius bis Traian', *ZDPV* 79 (1963), 44.

<sup>75</sup> *Répertoire d'Épig. Sémi.* II, 1128 (cf. II, 1175). See also the graffiti of soldiers in *Syria* 22 (1941), 219.

<sup>76</sup> *Archaeology* 22 (1969), 139 and 325.

and a bilingual (Greek and Nabataean).<sup>77</sup> This last, according to Musil, recorded that the building was a temple which a tribe of the Thamudeni had built to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.<sup>78</sup> In January, 1951, Philby visited the sanctuary at Ruwwāfa and found three inscriptions noted by Musil as well as a fourth (in Greek).<sup>79</sup> When Philby revisited the site a year later one of the Greek inscriptions had disappeared. The text of the missing inscription had been communicated to Henri Seyrig, who published it:<sup>80</sup>

Κ[λ]αυδίου Μοδέστου  
ἀντιστρατ[ή]γου

The man is an identifiable second-century governor of the province of Arabia, L. Claudius Modestus. Seyrig also published in the same place the other solely Greek inscription from Ruwwāfa, as follows:

CICΘΑΙΟΙ Θ[αμ]ουδηνῶ-  
ν φυλῆς Ῥοβάθου οἰκοδο-  
μησα τὸ εἶρόν τοῦτο

Philby, printing a mangled version of the text in his *Land of Midian*, insisted that Robatha and Ruwwāfa were the same word. In any case one should note the Robatha in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under Palestina Salutaris (the southern part of the original Arabian province). As for the bilingual dedication, Seyrig quotes the word καθειδρυσε and states that the titulature of Marcus and Lucius limits the date to 166–169. Further, under the auspices of the London Institute of Archaeology, P. J. Parr and others visited the Ḥejāz in 1968:<sup>81</sup> to the east of the tombs of Midian at al-Bad‘ they found the site of a large Nabataean-Roman city, where they discovered fragments of a monumental Roman inscription; and Parr has proposed that the Roman buildings at Qurayya suggest the presence of a garrison there. All of this buttresses the notion that the north-west peninsula belonged to the province.

The date of annexation of Arabia, once controversial, is now generally agreed upon. The dating indications in the papyrus documents from En-Geddi seem to settle the matter conclusively in favour of A.D. 106, against the date of 105 in the *Chronicon Paschale* (the only clear evidence for that year).<sup>82</sup> In some instances the papyri give dates in three styles: consuls, year of the emperor, and year of the province. The year of the province began, as has long been known, on March 22 (this marked a ‘regnal’ year and cannot be assumed to be the actual day of annexation). The date can be completed, A.D. 106.

Bostra became the capital of Arabia in the sense that it was the governor’s seat and the legionary headquarters, but a problem has arisen since the discovery of the En-Geddi papyri. Was Bostra the capital from the start? It is difficult to assess the value of the En-Geddi documents in this matter: the relevant ones have not been published. Since, however, Yadin has argued firmly from them in favour of Petra as the first capital of Arabia, the issues must be considered as best they can.<sup>83</sup> Yadin’s argument, as it stands, is weak. Three documents, nos. 11, 23, and 24 (all unpublished), refer to the governor of the province sitting in judgment at Petra. From document 11 (October 12, A.D. 125) Yadin quotes in translation as follows: ‘Therefore I summon you to come and be judged before the judgment seat of the governor Julius Julianus at Petra, the metropolis of Arabia.’ Petra also appears as the metropolis of Arabia in document 10 (of the year 124). Neither the references to the governor’s judging at Petra nor the references to Petra as metropolis warrant the assumption that Petra was the provincial capital. If Yadin has cited the strongest evidence in the papyri for his position, then this notion about Petra may well be wrong. For a governor

<sup>77</sup> A. Musil, *The Northern Hegaz* (1926), 185.

<sup>78</sup> *op. cit.*, 258.

<sup>79</sup> H. St. J. Philby, *The Land of Midian* (1957), 146, cf. 154. On the bilingual text see also A. Grohmann, *Arabien* (1963), 73. This inscription is due to receive a definitive publication from Milik. For a provisional text, see J. Teixidor, *Syria* 47 (1970), 378; cf. Altheim-Stiehl, *op. cit.* (n. 23), V/2 (1969), 24 and figs. 2–5.

<sup>80</sup> *Syria* 34 (1957), 259.

<sup>81</sup> P. J. Parr, ‘Exploration archéologique du Hedjaz

et de Madian’, *RB* 76 (1969), 390. A full report of this exploration is appearing in the *Bulletin* of the London Institute of Archaeology: for Part I, see *Bulletin* (1970), 193.

<sup>82</sup> *IEJ* 12 (1962), 258; cf. G. W. Bowersock, *Zeitschr. f. Pap. u. Epig.* 5 (1970), 39.

<sup>83</sup> Y. Yadin, *IEJ* 12 (1962), 257, n. 52; with more detail, *Ex Oriente Lux* 17 (1963), 234; cf. G. W. Bowersock, *op. cit.*, 44. It will be seen that I now maintain a still more cautious attitude to Yadin’s proposals than in my earlier study.

will certainly hold assizes in major cities throughout his province, not solely in the capital city; and the designation metropolis is honorific—worth having, but nothing more. Yadin would soon get into difficulty if he attempted to prove an equation between the title metropolis and the capital of a province.

Bostra had already become a major city before the province was formed, probably for reasons advanced earlier. The arch at the western entrance to the city belongs to the last years of the first century A.D. Under the province, Bostra became νέα Τροικιανή Βόστρα, and it served as the *caput viae* in the north for the great Trajanic road down to 'Aqaba.<sup>84</sup> It became the headquarters of the III Cyrenaica, and troops (of whatever legion) are clearly attested as present there in 107.<sup>85</sup> On many inscriptions the provincial era is known as the era of Bostra (i.e., the era of the eparchy). A new bilingual inscription underlines this point. It comes from Mādabā; with the Greek phrase ἔτους τρίτου ἐπαρχείας is correlated the Nabataean BŠNT TLT LHPRK BŠR' ('in the year three of the eparch of Bostra').<sup>86</sup> The year is therefore the third of the province, A.D. 108–9; and the governor is designated eparch, i.e. governor of Bostra. In the face of such evidence it is difficult to accept an ill founded hypothesis, based on still unpublished documents, that Petra was the first provincial capital.

As to Petra the metropolis, there is earlier and important evidence on a Greek inscription discovered in 1956 in the city itself amid the débris at the foot of the Triple Arch at the eastern end of the Qaṣr temenos. Although unpublished the text has been mentioned with excerpts so many times that its principal points are clear.<sup>87</sup> Petra is called μητρόπολις, and the titulature of the emperor Trajan (eighteenth *trib. pot.*, *imp.* for seventh time) fixes a date of A.D. 114; in addition, a Gaius Claudius is named, and he will certainly be C. Claudius Severus, governor of Arabia at least until 115. It is not clear what the function of the inscription was. It does, however, provide the earliest documentary attestation of *metropolis* for Petra, antedating the En-Geddi papyri by ten years.<sup>88</sup>

The garrisoning of the new province has always been a thorny problem. That the III Cyrenaica was stationed at Bostra from the later Hadrianic age onward is not questioned, but there has been dispute as to whether it was that legion that stood in Arabia from the beginning.<sup>89</sup> The debate acquired fresh vigor with the publication of two Michigan papyri from Karanis.<sup>90</sup> They gave details of the military service (including rock-splitting) of a certain Julius Apollinarius in the Arabian province; a cohort in Bostra is mentioned. Further, we hear of Apollinarius' commanding officer, Claudius Severus ὁ ὑπατικός τῆς λεγεῶνος. The date is A.D. 107, precisely. Claire Préaux argued from this that Claudius Severus was governor of Arabia in 107 and that his legion (governor and commander were one in Arabia) was the III Cyrenaica.<sup>91</sup> This has been widely accepted,<sup>92</sup> but it is demonstrably wrong in respect to the III Cyrenaica. Mlle. Préaux assumed that the III Cyrenaica, coming from Egypt, was replaced there by the II Traiana in 109; but her evidence for the presence of the latter force in Egypt in 109 had long since been shown to belong to the year 128.<sup>93</sup> The argument collapses. She was, however, wholly justified in assuming that the Claudius Severus of the papyri was the governor of Arabia, where Julius Apollinarius was serving. The use of ὑπατικός to refer to Severus before his consulate is no impediment to this view.<sup>94</sup>

There is evidence for the III Cyrenaica in Egypt still in 119, and the earliest date for the

<sup>84</sup> The new name is widely attested on the coins and inscriptions of the city. For Bostra as *caput viae* in the north, see S. Mittmann, *ZDPV* 80 (1964), 113 [German] = *ADAJ* 11 (1966), 65 [English]. cf. also G. Beyer, *ZDPV* 58 (1935), 143.

<sup>85</sup> *Michigan Papyri*, vol. 8 (1951), no. 466, l. 48.

<sup>86</sup> J. T. Milik, *Syria* 35 (1958), 244.

<sup>87</sup> G. Lankaster Harding, *PEQ* 90 (1958), 14; D. Kirkbride, *ADAJ* 4–5 (1960), 120; C. M. Bennett, *Archaeology* 15 (1962), 243; J. Starcky, *SDB* 948.

<sup>88</sup> One should not forget Strabo, p. 779: μητρόπολις δὲ τῶν Ναβαταίων ἐστὶν ἡ Πέτρα καλουμένη, cited by Starcky and Bennett in *Syria* 45 (1968), 53, n. 1 = *ADAJ* 12–13 (1967–68), 39, n. 40 à propos an inscription from Petra mentioning Ἀδριακὴ Πέτρα μητρόπολις.

<sup>89</sup> G. W. Bowersock, op. cit., 40.

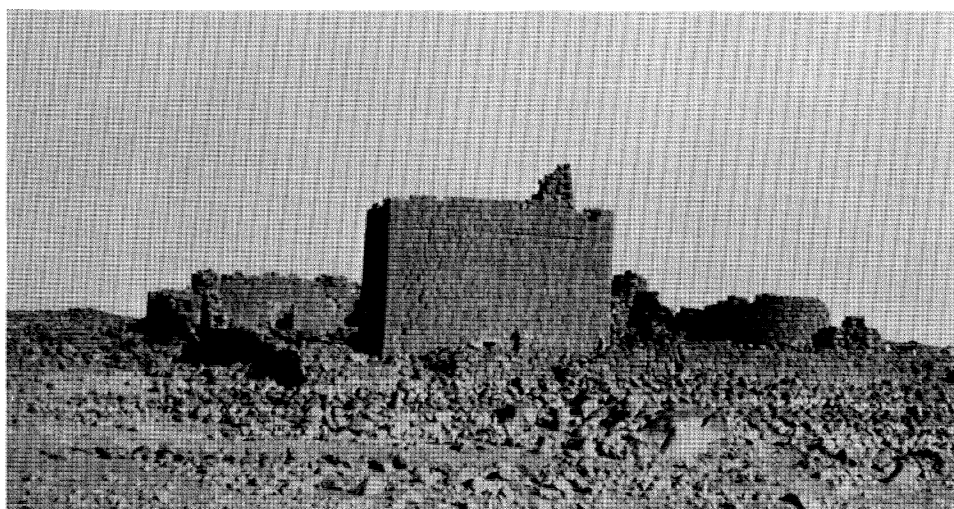
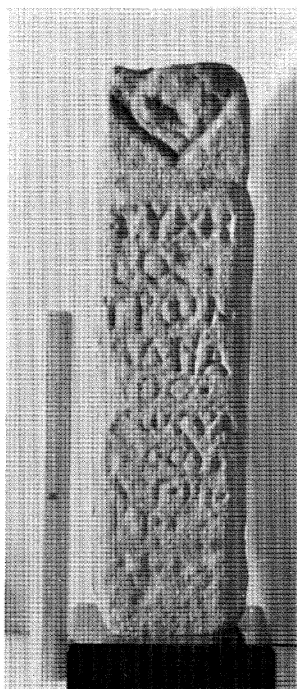
<sup>90</sup> *Michigan Papyri*, vol. 8 (1951), nos. 465 and 466.

<sup>91</sup> C. Préaux, 'Une source nouvelle sur l'annexion de l'Arabie par Trajan', *Phoibos* 5 (1950–1), 123.

<sup>92</sup> R. Dussaud, *La Pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (1955), 154; R. Syme, *Historia* 14 (1965), 353, n. 53; L. Petersen, *Klio* 48 (1967), 160 with n. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Préaux, op. cit. 127. The evidence is *CIL* III, 14147<sup>6</sup> (with the correct date given there).

<sup>94</sup> cf. A. Stein, *Die Reichsbeamten von Dazien* (1944), 54; E. M. Smallwood, *JRS* 52 (1962), 131. Hence the problem raised in *JRS* 48 (1958), 4 vanishes. ὑπατικός just means governor.

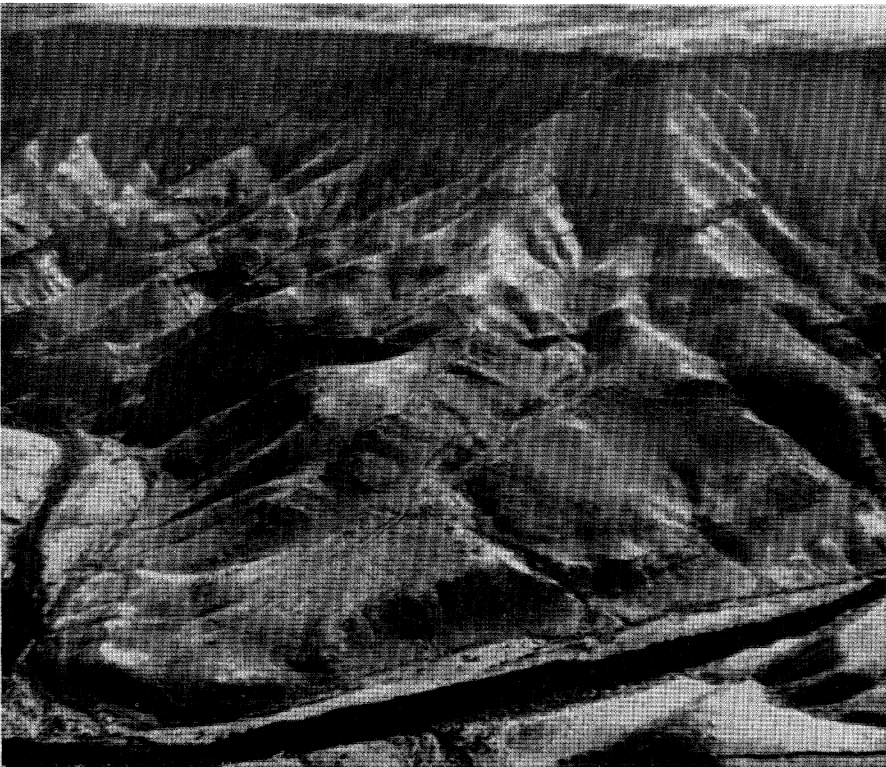
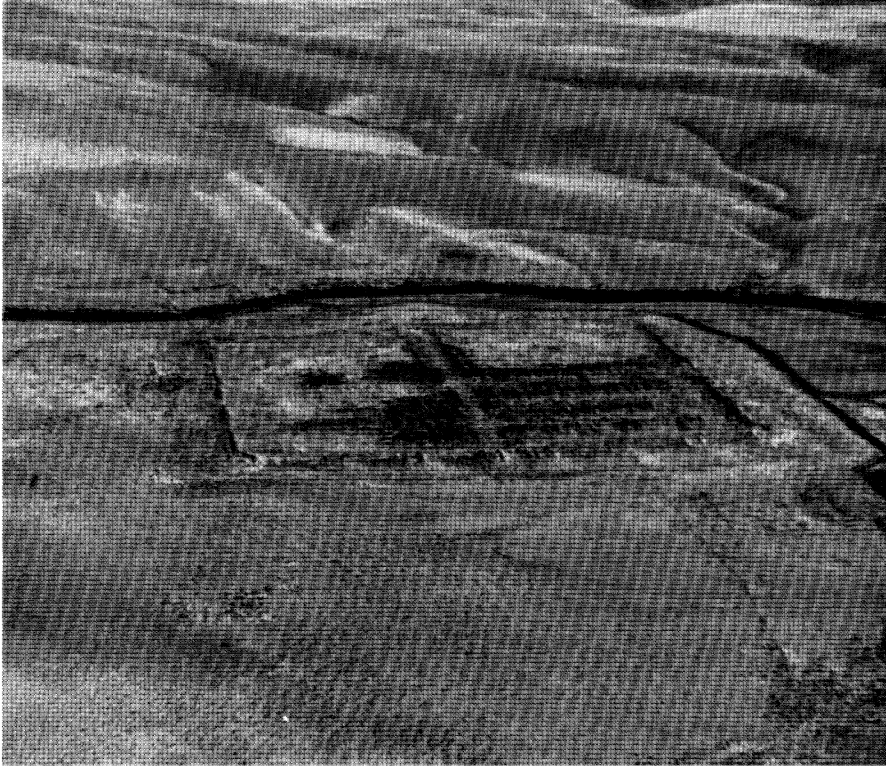


ARABIA PROVINCIA

1. STELE FROM MEDĀ'IN ŠĀLIH (see p. 230)
2. AZRAQ: *IGR* III, 1339 (see p. 241)
3. AZRAQ: LATIN INSCRIPTION (see p. 241)
4. QAŞR BURQU' (see p. 240)

*Photographs (1) by courtesy of Thomas Barger, (2, 3) by courtesy of F. Fakharani, (4) by courtesy of F. V. Winnett  
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ARABIA PROVINCIA

1. LEJJŪN FROM THE AIR (see p. 237). 2. TRAJAN'S ROAD OVER THE WĀDĪ MŪJIB FROM THE AIR (see p. 237)

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appearance of the II Traiana there is 127.<sup>95</sup> It appears, at the least, that the III Cyrenaica did not settle in Bostra until the reign of Hadrian. If that is the case, we must look for other forces in the new province. One would expect a Syrian legion, and hence many years ago Ritterling proposed either III Gallica or VI Ferrata. The latter should perhaps be preferred.<sup>96</sup>

New light on the cities of the province comes with the discovery at Mampsis of twenty-seven seal impressions on clay.<sup>97</sup> The impressions bore traces of the papyri which were consumed in a fire that baked the clay of the sealings. The seals themselves are evidently the official seals of the three major cities of the province. Their names appear in Greek. They are Petra, Rabbathmoba (er-Rabba), and Characmoba (Kerak). The Petra seal bears

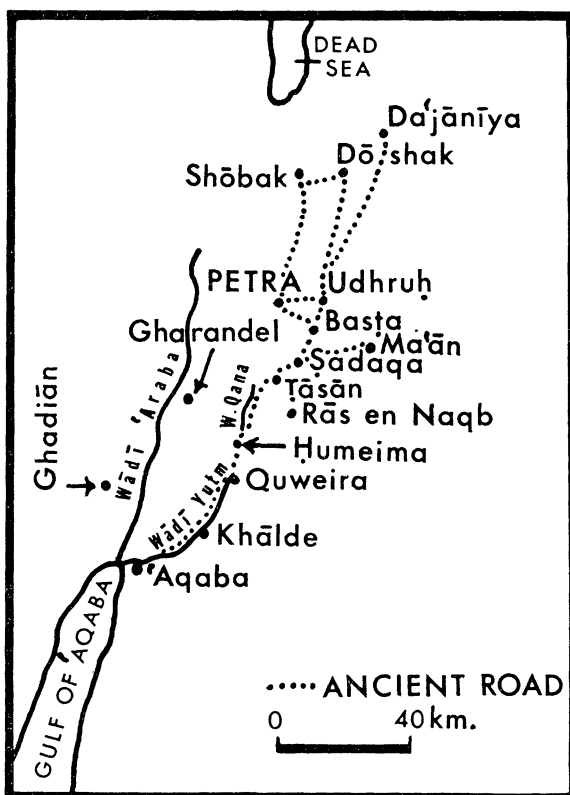


FIG. 37. SOUTHERN JORDAN

Drawn by Barbara Westman in consultation with the author

the legend Ἀδριανὴ Πέτρα μητρόπολις from which Dr. Negev argues for a Hadrianic date. He notes that the seal is nearly an exact copy of a coin of Petra, and this coin is assumed to have been struck in commemoration of Hadrian's visit to the city in 130, when (according to Negev) the city received the title of metropolis.<sup>98</sup> Hence a Hadrianic date for the seal-impressions, which were all found together in one tomb. This is going too far. Petra did not receive the title of metropolis in 130, and Ἀδριανὴ went on being attached to the city's name long after Hadrian had departed. However that may be, the seals do reveal three major

<sup>95</sup> III Cyrenaica in 119: *BGU* 1. 140. II Traiana in 127: *CIL* III, 42. The Michigan documents (note 90) imply that Apollinarius was recruited in Egypt. It might therefore be argued that he was serving with a formerly Egyptian force now in Arabia (i.e. all or part of III Cyrenaica). This, however, would mean either cutting the Egyptian garrison in half or leaving the new Arabian province without a legion; neither possibility seems likely.

Further, Egyptians are found in other eastern legions than those in Egypt: note 22 of them in X Fretensis in 125/6 (*PSI* IX, 1026 c).

<sup>96</sup> cf. Bowersock, *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>97</sup> A. Negev, 'Seal Impressions from Tomb 107 at Kurnub (Mampsis)', *IEJ* 19 (1969), 89; also Negev in *Die Nabatäer*, Catalogue of the Munich Stadtmuseum exhibition (1970), 40.

<sup>98</sup> Negev, *IEJ* 19 (1969), 90.

administrative centres of the province. It may be pointed out that Rabbathmoba already appears as such in one of the En-Geddi documents (dated December 2, 127).<sup>99</sup>

Petra's status was improved further under Elagabalus. It has been persuasively argued on the basis of colonial coins of the city that Petra received the title *colonia* in 221/2.<sup>100</sup> There exists a colonial coin of Bostra, for which the same date has been proposed.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly, it appears that the two chief cities of Arabia owed their elevation to colonial status to Elagabalus. This conclusion is not firm, but it is reasonable.

It appears from scrappy but valuable evidence that the splendour of Petra continued in the third century, when times were bad in many parts of the empire. The Suidas lexicon mentions two rival rhetors in the age of Gallienus, both from Petra.<sup>102</sup> Their names were Callinicus and Genethlius. It is clear that Callinicus was an intellectual of considerable prowess, for he practised (at least for a while) at Athens, addressed a treatise to a Roman senator, and even made bold to present a piece to Gallienus himself. It has been claimed that he became a part of the literary milieu in the court of Zenobia.<sup>103</sup> Jacob Bernays first perceived many years ago the importance of the Suidas notice for the history of third-century Petra, and in this connection he adverted to another precious entry in the same lexicon where mention is made of a philosopher and doctor of Petra in the late fifth century.<sup>104</sup>

The picture of culture and prosperity evoked at least by the notice about Callinicus and his rival may profitably be set beside the imperial sculpture fragments which have been found at Petra. Their interpreter speaks of a Roman renaissance in the city after the annexation, 'not just the imposition of an alien culture on a dormant people'.<sup>105</sup> It seems probable that still in the third century there existed at Petra 'a community sufficiently prosperous and sophisticated to appreciate imported works of art of western style and make.'<sup>106</sup> Petra did not experience the direct danger from Palmyra, which alarmed Adraa and crippled Bostra in the north.<sup>107</sup>

Of no less splendour was the city of Gerasa in the second and early third centuries, but fortunately knowledge of its glory in that age depends upon palpable and abundant remains uncovered by excavation. The emperor Hadrian visited Gerasa on the same trip that took him to Petra; and it too became a *colonia* in the early third century.<sup>108</sup> The evidence from Gerasa has been admirably set forth in the excavation report, and much of the material has percolated efficiently into subsequent publications: for example, its new information on the governors of the province.

### III. GOVERNORS

The list of governors of the Arabian province down to Diocletian has been substantially improved and augmented in recent years. For the period 193-305, H.-G. Pflaum has provided an invaluable register in *Syria* 34 (1957), 136-144, to which an interested person

<sup>99</sup> *IEJ* 12 (1962), 260. It is worth remembering that there are no coins of Characmoba before Elagabalus.

<sup>100</sup> S. Ben-Dor, 'Petra Colonia', *Berytus* 9 (1948), 41.

<sup>101</sup> Ben-Dor, *ibid.*, 43.

<sup>102</sup> The evidence is set forth in *FGrH* III A 281.

<sup>103</sup> A. Stein, 'Kallinikos von Petra', *Hermes* 58 (1923), 448. Stein argued from Callinicus' work πρὸς Κλεόπατραν περὶ τῶν κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἱστοριῶν βιβλία δέκα. The only evidence that Zenobia took the name Cleopatra is in the *Historia Augusta*, *Aug.* 27, 3; *Prob.* 9, 5 (*Corp. Pap. Jud.* III, 1449 is not secure).

<sup>104</sup> Suid. s. v. Γέσιος. cf. J. Bernays, 'Ein nabatäischer Schriftsteller', *Ges. Abhand.* II (1885), 291, an expanded version of *Rh. Mus.* 17 (1862), 304. Note also the brisk activity in Negev cities during the Byzantine era: N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (1959), 252; A. Negev, *Cities of the Desert* (1966), 33. On life in Byzantine Nessana, see C. J. Kraemer Jr., *Excavations at Nessana*, vol. 3 (1958): non-literary papyri.

<sup>105</sup> P. J. Parr, *PEQ* 89 (1957), 15. Some of the fragments had been found previously by George and

Agnes Horsfield during their pioneering investigations at Petra: cf. *Quarterly of the Dept. of Antiquities in Palestine* 7 (1938), 1; 8 (1938), 87; 9 (1942), 105.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.* For the vigour of Petra, note the panyriarchs delegated from Adraa to Petra: inscriptions in Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. 1, 220 (cf. the festival at Petra in the fourth century as reported by Epiphanius, *Panarion* II, 51, 22).

<sup>107</sup> On Adraa (and danger from desert Arabs as well as Palmyrenes) see H.-G. Pflaum, 'La Fortification de la ville d'Adraha d'Arabie (259-60 à 274-5) d'après des inscriptions récemment découvertes', *Syria* 29 (1952), 307. On Palmyrene destruction of a temple at Bostra see H. Seyrig, *Syria* 22 (1941), 46. cf. Malalas, *Chron.* 299 (Bonn) on Zenobia and Arabia.

<sup>108</sup> On second and early third century Gerasa: C. H. Kraeling, *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis* (1938), 52. There are many Hadrianic inscriptions from the year of Hadrian's visit: Welles *apud* Kraeling, *op. cit.* inscriptions no. 30, 58, 143-5. *Colonia Antoniniana*: inscriptions no. 179, 191—perhaps this honour was also due to Elagabalus, just as in the cases of Petra and Bostra.

may turn for ample documentation on the governors of those years. For the earlier period of the province, L. Petersen printed a list in *Klio* 48 (1967), 160–1. Here are all the names currently available, with special attention to the fresh evidence that has accrued.

*C. Claudius Severus*, attested in 107 at the earliest, 115 at the latest. Cf. p. 232 above. His name appears on the many milestones of the *via nova Traiana*: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 1023. Consul probably in 112 (in absence). The view of Bennett and Starcky that Claudius Severus was in charge of the legion at Alexandria in 107 is wholly untenable; so, therefore, is their view that the following person preceded Claudius Severus as governor.<sup>109</sup>

*Ti. Claudius Augustanus Alpinus L. Bellicius Sollers*, probably governor sometime between 115 and 119. The evidence is a new inscription in Latin from the temenos of the Qaşr at Petra.<sup>110</sup> Not included (inevitably) in Petersen's list.

*Iulius Iulianus*, attested in 125.<sup>111</sup>

*T. Aninius Sextius Florentinus*, attested in 127.<sup>112</sup> His tomb is at Petra (Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. 1, 382).

*T. Haterius Nepos*, attested in 130.<sup>113</sup> *Cos. suff.* in 134.

*C. Allius Fuscianus*, before 140, in which he was patron of collegia at Ostia (cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 544; add *AE* 1935, 84).

*L. Aemilius Carus*, attested 142/3 (cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 338). The hypothesis of two Arabian governors by the name of Aemilius Carus (so J. H. Oliver, *Hesperia* 36 (1967), 48 with 56) cannot be maintained in view of the interpretation of *Corinth* VIII, 3, no. 124 offered in *GRBS* 8 (1967), 279.

*L. Claudius Modestus*, before 152, if he was a consul suffect of that year (cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 938). Note the Ruwwāfa inscription published by Seyrig, *Syria* 34 (1957), 260 = *AE* 1958, 234. The stone was found in the ruins of a temple dedicated to Marcus and Lucius between 166 and 169.

*L. Attidius Cornelianus*, attested in 150 (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 1341).

*P. Iulius Geminius Marcianus*, attested within the period 162 to 166 (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 340).

*Q. Antistius Adventus Postumius Aquilinus*, attested in 166 (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 754). Consul designate in 166 or 167, while governor.

—*Severus*, attested between 177 and 179.<sup>114</sup>

*Fl. Iulius Fronto*, attested in 181. Name appears on milestones (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 327).

*P. Aelius Severianus Maximus*, attested in 193/4. Designated consul while legate (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 260). On a new milestone: *ZDPV* 80 (1964), 126 = *ADA*ŷ 11 (1966), 77.

*M. Caecilius Fuscianus Crepereianus Floranus*, before 198. See Pflaum, *Syria* 34 (1957), 128 ff.

*L. Marius Perpetuus*, ca. 200–202. Pflaum gives this and the next governor in the reverse order.

*Q. Aiacius Modestus Crescentianus*, between 204 and 208. Cf. the new Latin inscriptions from Petra: *ADA*ŷ 6/7 (1962), 16 ff., also *Syria* 45 (1968), 41 ff. The new texts reveal the name of this man's wife as Danacia Quartilla Aureliana. His two sons are also named: *Q. Aiacius Censorinus Celsinus Arabianus* and *L. Aiacius Modestus Aurelianus Priscus Agricola Salvianus*.

The remainder of Pflaum's list of governors is reproduced below for reference. There is new evidence for three names, and that is given in the appropriate places.

*Q. Scribonius Tenax*, between 193 and 211.

*L. Alfenus Avitianus*, between 210 and 220.

*Sex. Furnius Iulianus*, attested 213/4. On a new milestone: *ZDPV* 80 (1964), 127 = *ADA*ŷ 11 (1966), 78.

*Q. Flavius Balbus*, between 213 and 221.

*Pica Caerianus*, attested in 218.

*Fl. Iulianus*, attested in 219.

<sup>109</sup> *Syria* 45 (1968), 56 [French] = *ADA*ŷ 12–13 (1967–68), 42 [English]. Refuting this, G. W. Bowersock, *Zeitschr. f. Pap. u. Epig.* 5 (1970), 41.

<sup>110</sup> Bowersock, op. cit., 45.

<sup>111</sup> *IE*ŷ 12 (1962), 259.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *CIL* III, 6028.

- C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus*, served *vice praesidis bis*. Between 218 and 222.  
*P. Plotius Romanus*, between ca. 180 and 220.  
*Caecilius Felix*, between 223 and 226.  
*Cl. Sollemnius Pacatianus*, between 223 and 235.  
*Egnatius Victor Marinianus*, before the 230's.  
*D. Simonius Proculus Julianus*, 237/8.  
*M. Domitius Valerianus*, attested in 238/9. Add the inscription, giving this man's career, from Üskübü in Bithynia: E. Gabba, *Athenaeum* 34 (1956), 273 = *AE* 1957, 44.  
*Cl. Capitolinus*, attested in 245/6.  
*P. Pomponius Secundianus*, second century or first half of the third.  
 [.] *Amius F[laccus]*, dating as vague as preceding.  
*M. Aelius Aurelius Theo*, between 253 and 259. Add a new Greek inscription from Bostra, *Ann. Arch. Syrie* 15 (1965), 68–9, no. 4: Θέωνα/ὑπατικόν/Ἀντιοχιανός. The editor wrongly assumed that ὑπατικός meant that Theo served as consul while governor of Arabia. The word means nothing more than 'governor'.<sup>115</sup>  
*Virius Lupus*, shortly before 259. But cf. B. Malcus, *Opusc. Rom.* 7 (1969), 221–2.  
 . . . *ius Gallonianus*, attested in 259/60.  
*Coc( ) Rufinus*, 261/2.  
*Iunius Olympus*, attested in 262/3.  
*Statilius Ammianus*, attested in 263/4.  
*Fl. Aelianus*, attested in 274/5.  
*Aur. Petrus*, attested in 278/9.  
*Iulius [He]raclitus*, between 264 to 268 (?).  
*Domitius Antoninus*, attested between 284 and 305.  
*Aurelius Asclepiades*, attested between 293 and 305.  
*Aurelius Felicianus*, attested between 293 and 305.  
*Aurelius Gorgonius*, attested between 293 and 305.  
*M. Aur. Aelianus*, attested between 293 and 305.  
*Aurelius Antiochus*, after 264.  
*Bassaeus Astur*, second half of third century or fourth.

This list omits numbers 5, 19, and 29 in Pflaum's register. All three are governors without name. There is likewise a nameless governor in a new Greek inscription from the Qaşr temenos at Petra. Two new names of governors will be appended here without indication of date. One is *Aurelius Aurelianus*, attested on a milestone as governor and consul designate: *Ann. Arch. Syrie* 15 (1965), 71, no. 7. The title of Aurelianus is *leg. eorum pr. pr.*; the upper part of the inscription has been erased. The second new name for the list of governors appears on an unpublished Latin inscription from Petra: *Ael. Flavianus*, who is a *praeses*. (I owe this information to the courtesy of Professor John Strugnell.)

#### IV. ROADS AND THE LIMES SYSTEM

With an extraordinary thoroughness Brünnow and Domaszewski surveyed the Arabian limes-system from Bostra to Ma'ān. They did not go further south, but they did complete their account of the system by excerpting and reprinting all relevant travellers' reports on the area between Ma'ān and 'Aqaba (ancient Aila).<sup>116</sup> For the main forts, camps, and roads in the region which they surveyed Brünnow and Domaszewski have not been superseded. They worked in terms of a double limes-system: one following the line of the King's Highway, a Nabataean route still used (Tariq as sultāni) by way of Mādabā, Rabba, Shōbak, and Petra;<sup>117</sup> the other following a line along the edge of the desert steppe south of 'Ammān, through al-Qaşṭal to the legionary camp at Udhrūḥ and on to Ma'ān. The former

<sup>115</sup> Above, n. 94.

<sup>116</sup> Vol. I, 470.

<sup>117</sup> The main highway goes on to 'Ain Ṣadaqa. Thomsen (*ZDPV* 40 [1917], 35) and Abel, following him (*Géographie de la Palestine* II [1938], 229), consider the line from Doshak to Petra a branch road which rejoins the putative main road at 'Ain Ṣadaqa.

This is difficult to credit in view of Petra's importance, not to mention that two of the stops on the alleged branch road ('Ain Nejl and Petra) appear on the Peutinger Table on the main line south. In addition, Petra is the *caput viae* of the *via nova Traiana* in the south: cf. *ZDPV* 58 (1935), 129. Need one say more?

line was designated the inner limes and the latter the outer limes. Those designations have stuck. Obviously the frontier line of protection, with forts at regular intervals, was the outer one; but the inner one was also guarded. Both were traced by roads, with interconnecting crossroads linking the two north-south lines. All of this has been known for a long time and is well-documented.

While the outlines of the limes given by Brünnow and Domaszewski have not been substantially altered by subsequent investigation, neither have they been made much clearer.<sup>118</sup> Glueck has shown how regularly the Romans made use of sites already established by the Nabataeans before them.<sup>119</sup> That is what one should have expected, especially in a region like this where the presence of water automatically determined the location of a site. Furthermore, the evidence for the roads (including parts that Brünnow and Domaszewski did not visit) was superbly set out in a now classic article by P. Thomsen.<sup>120</sup> But what we have not had, in large measure owing to the troubled conditions of that land in modern times, is professional excavation of forts and camps. Other Roman *limites* have had a happier fate in the twentieth century. An enormous amount of archaeological work remains to be done in Transjordan. Particularly promising and important are the two great military camps at Lejjūn and Udhrūḥ. The outlines of these camps are clearly visible simply from a ground survey, and Brünnow and Domaszewski did the best they could with what they saw. While Lejjūn is not likely to disappear in the near future, Udhrūḥ is already fading as its village begins to encroach.

Aerial photography could be a great help. Père Poidebard showed what could be done in the Near East several decades ago with his pioneering work on the traces of Rome in the Syrian desert;<sup>121</sup> and Nelson Glueck has published some fine aerial photographs of Transjordan, including one of Lejjūn and several that show the course of the inner limes road and its branches with striking clarity.<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, at the present time aerial photography in Transjordan is viewed by the authorities with understandable suspicion.

In March, April, and May of 1939, Sir Aurel Stein explored various parts of the Arabian limes, as well as a number of the desert sites to the east of the outer limes. In 1940 he published a brief account of his observations and referred to a large number of aerial photographs which he had taken in the previous year.<sup>123</sup> These could be invaluable, since they were taken precisely to illuminate the Roman organization of Arabia. I have, however, been unable to trace them in the many boxes of Stein's photographs from 1939, which now repose in the house of the Royal Geographic Society in London. Nevertheless, the Stein Collection contains many excellent land photographs; and I should like to express my gratitude here to Brig. Gardner and Col. Drew, both of the Society, for allowing me to spend so much of their time in June, 1970, while inspecting various Stein materials. Since I shall have occasion to cite some of the photographs in the discussion to follow, it may serve some purpose for me to indicate (for any interested scholar) all the photographs that are available from Stein's visit to Transjordan in 1939:

- Box J 111-123, March 16-17, Burqu'
- Box J.O. 87-98, March 17-29, Azraq and Kharāna
- Box J.O. 99-110, March 29-April 8, Qaṣr Ṭūba
- Boxes J. 136-147 and 148-160, April 8-11, Azraq
- Box J.O. 111-122, April 11-14, Bāyir (?)
- Box J.O. 123-134, April 14-19, 'Aqaba and Wādī Yutm
- Box J.O. 135-146, April 19-23, Quweira, Wādī Qana
- Box J.O. 147-158, April 23-29, Rās en Naqb
- Box J.O. 159-170, April 29-May 2, Petra, Shōbak
- Box J.O. 171-182, May 2-5, Baṣṭa, Dhāt Rās, Kerak.

<sup>118</sup> Limes congresses have not shown a particular interest in the *limes Arabiae*, although work on the *limes Palaestinae* is sometimes relevant.

<sup>119</sup> *Explorations of Eastern Palestine*: see above, n. 11.

<sup>120</sup> P. Thomsen, 'Die römischen Meilensteine der Provinzen Syria, Arabia, und Palestina', *ZDPV* 40 (1917), 1.

<sup>121</sup> A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie* (1934).

<sup>122</sup> See plate xv, 1 and 2.

<sup>123</sup> A. Stein, 'Surveys on the Roman Frontier in Iraq and Trans-jordan', *Geographical Journal* 95 (1940), 428. The aerial photographs are mentioned on page 438.

Since Brünnow and Domaszewski progress has been achieved in the clarification of four main parts of the road system in the province of Arabia. They may be considered in a north-south order.

The course of the Trajanic road from Philadelphia ('Ammān) across the steppe to Bostra in the southern Ḥaurān has long been known. It passes near Zarqa and then strikes out in a northeasterly direction by way of al-Ḥadīd (which may be the camp at Adittha), Khirbet Samrā, and al-Khab.<sup>124</sup> One of the latter two may be the Thantia of the Peutinger Table (Thainatha in the *Notitia*). During the last decade Siegfried Mittmann, working on behalf of the German Evangelical Institute for Archaeology of the Holy Land, carefully traced another important route to Bostra from Philadelphia over the stretch from Gerasa to Adraa (Der'ā).<sup>125</sup> He was unable to continue his investigations in Syria, where the road passes east from Adraa through the Ḥaurān to Bostra. Mittmann's meticulous study shows that the road, leaving Gerasa by the north gate, ran along the Wādī Deir until it picked up the Wādī Asfar. It eventually runs into the Wādī Warrān, which it follows for a considerable distance into the plain of Irbid. The road then diverges to the east toward Ramtha, whence it passes in an almost straight line to Der'ā. Mittmann has published a set of milestones from this road; the earliest ones (five) are Hadrianic. The known governors Aelius Severianus and Furnius Julianus receive further attestation.<sup>126</sup>

The course of the Trajanic road in the south has always been something of a problem. This is, in a sense, a tribute to Brünnow and Domaszewski, because they did not explore it. They did, however, trace the road to 'Ain Ṣadaqa south of the great camp at Udhrūḥ by way of Baṣṭa and Ail. That the Trajanic road passed through 'Ain Ṣadaqa is virtually assured from the appearance of *Zadagatta* on the Peutinger Table; toponymy is a very strong argument here. There is a watch-tower at 'Ain Ṣadaqa, Nabataean in origin according to Glueck.<sup>127</sup> Sir Aurel Stein's supposition that the Trajanic road did not pass 'Ain Ṣadaqa is indefensible.<sup>128</sup>

The course of the road to the south, on to 'Aqaba, has been investigated by various persons, notably Musil, Savignac, Frank, Glueck, and Stein.<sup>129</sup> In 1828 Laborde had already seen and recorded some important parts of it.<sup>130</sup> It appeared quite certain that below the great escarpment of the Sherā' range the road could be recovered at the splendid ruins of Ḥumeima in the Hisma north of Quweira; milestones and stretches of road make this obvious to all who see it.<sup>131</sup> The road then passes south to Quweira whence it follows the Wādī Yutm by way of Khirbet al-Khāldē to 'Aqaba.<sup>132</sup> It is accordingly clear that the Roman road approximately followed the modern one to 'Aqaba, south from Quweira. North of Quweira it headed for Ḥumeima, whereas the modern road diverges to the northeast to ascend the Sherā' range by Naqb Ashtār (Rās en Naqb). No milestones have been found in the vicinity of the modern road between Quweira and Naqb Ashtār. If there is indeed none to be found, it would suggest that there was no means of descent from Naqb Ashtār in ancient times. Since, however, there exists a fort there and traces of an ancient road have been reported at Naqb Ashtār itself,<sup>133</sup> this is rather difficult to accept. In any case, one can say with conviction that the Trajanic road did not pass that way.

Recovering the Trajanic road between 'Ain Ṣadaqa and Ḥumeima has proved the most difficult part of the investigation of the road as a whole. Laborde had noticed the ancient

<sup>124</sup> cf. Thomsen, op. cit. (n. 120), with 'excellent map. El Ḥadīd is often identified with Adittha of the *Notitia* (Ḥatita in the *Tab. Peut.*). See also Butler's study, 'Trajan's Road from Boṣrā to the Red Sea', in the Princeton Arch. Exped. Publications III, A, 2 (1911).

<sup>125</sup> S. Mittmann, 'Die römische Strasse von Gerasa nach Adraa', *ZDPV* 80 (1964), 113 [German] = *ADAÿ* II (1966), 65 [English].

<sup>126</sup> Hadrianic milestones: op. cit., 123 in *ZDPV* and 74 in *ADAÿ*. Aelius Severianus: op. cit., 126 in *ZDPV* and 77 in *ADAÿ*. Furnius Julianus: op. cit., 127 in *ZDPV* and 78 in *ADAÿ*.

<sup>127</sup> *AASOR* 15 (1935), 71.

<sup>128</sup> Stein, op. cit. (n. 123), 437.

<sup>129</sup> Musil, *The Northern Hegaz* (1926), 53; Savignac, *RB* 41 (1932), 595; Frank, *ZDPV* 57

(1934), 235; Glueck, *AASOR* 15 (1935), 65; Stein, op. cit. (n. 123), 437. Stein, on p. 436, mentions that his surveyor prepared a map of the ancient road on a scale of 4 miles to 1 inch: the map survives in the Stein Collection at the Royal Geographical Society.

<sup>130</sup> *Apud* Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. 1, 477.

<sup>131</sup> e.g., Musil, op. cit. (n. 129), 59; Stein, op. cit. (n. 123), 437. The name of this place is vocalized in some works as *Aḥmeime*, which has induced a false belief that the spot is the site of the ancient Ammatha.

<sup>132</sup> cf. Savignac, op. cit. (n. 129); Stein, op. cit. (n. 123), 437; Glueck, *AASOR* 18-19 (1939), 15.

<sup>133</sup> Glueck, *AASOR* 15 (1935), 58 (plan of the fort on 173). Cf. Jaussen (visit of 1902), quoted *apud* Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. 1, 473: 'Au Naqb Eštar seulement, j'ai pu distinguer une voie antique à côté du chemin actuel'.

aqueduct that could be seen in the Wādī Qana bringing water from the Qana spring down to Ḥumeima; and he saw the ruins near the spring itself.<sup>134</sup> Musil and later Frank saw all or most of this.<sup>135</sup> Likewise Glueck, who assumed the ruins to be Nabataean in origin, later Roman.<sup>136</sup> In 1939 Stein also visited the Wādī Qana above Ḥumeima, and he observed milestones and paving.<sup>137</sup> There can be no doubt that the road passed from Ḥumeima to the Qana spring. From here it manifestly ascended the Sherā' and went on to 'Ain Ṣadaqa. It arrived on the plateau to the west of Tāsān, where it was seen by Glueck.<sup>138</sup> From there, as the observations of Frank and Glueck attest, the road went by way of al-Qrein and ad-Dūr to 'Ain Ṣadaqa.<sup>139</sup> Stein did not make the ascent from 'Ain Qana along the road of Trajan, and therefore when he thought that he had recovered it on the western ridge of the Sherā', he was simply mistaken. What he did come upon was a route to Petra, known locally as ar-Raṣīf, which functioned as an alternate to the road by 'Ain Ṣadaqa.<sup>140</sup> Stein's western road along the ridge was probably ancient, perhaps both Nabataean and Roman. He reported remains of watch-towers.

From Rās en Naqb northwards to the east of the road to 'Ain Ṣadaqa, which may well follow an ancient road to the escarpment, there lies a long stretch of stone wall, largely buried but visible. This wall continues north beyond 'Ain Ṣadaqa along the line of the so-called outer limes, as defined by Brünnow and Domaszewski. The wall is periodically punctuated by square enclosures. It is known as the Khaṭṭ Shabīb and appears to be a medieval Arab wall, but few persons seem to be familiar with it;<sup>141</sup> and I have so far been unable to locate (with expert help) any reference to it in medieval Arabic sources. It will be sufficient now to state that it appears to have been constructed very deliberately along the line of the Roman limes.

The Peutinger Table indicates the southern part of the road to 'Aqaba by two stations after Zadagatta. These are Auara and Praesidium. Stein and later Aharoni (without knowledge of Stein's paper) both argued that the distances given on the Peutinger Table for the stations below Zadagatta precisely coincide with the distances of Ṣadaqa-Ḥumeima, Ḥumeima-Khālde, and Khālde-'Aqaba. They therefore proposed equating Ḥumeima with Auara, and Khālde with Praesidium.<sup>142</sup> This meant the rejection of a highly implausible correlation of names and sites proposed by Albrecht Alt, who had attempted to find a site for Auara near a place with a similar name (Ḥawwāra) in modern times.<sup>143</sup> Toponymy is of the utmost importance in these studies, but care is always required, particularly with colour names for places (ḥawwāra is 'white'). Colour names are relatively common. Musil had also argued that Ḥumeima was Auara, and he provided the philological explanation: 'Al-Homejma obtained its name from the white colour of the rocks and soil which prevail in its environs. In Aramaic and Arabic this white colour is designated also by the word ḥawwāra, which the natives often interchange with homejma, and I conjecture that these ruins were originally called Ḥawwāra.'<sup>144</sup> It is reasonably certain that Ḥumeima is the site of Auara, and al-Khālde of Praesidium.

To the west Nabataeans sent their goods west from Petra over a road that passed by Moyet 'Awād at the 'Araba, thence by Meẓad Neqarot on to Oboda, Eluza, and Gaza.<sup>145</sup> Dr. Negev has, as we have already seen, argued that this road went out of use in the middle of the first century A.D.; Oboda itself, he maintains, was non-existent in the early third century.<sup>146</sup> That may be. The forts along the road, as well as the military camp at 'Avdat, are all assumed to be Nabataean rather than Roman on the basis of the exclusively Nabataean

<sup>134</sup> *Apud* Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. I, 478.

<sup>135</sup> Musil, *op. cit.* (n. 129), 58; Frank, *op. cit.* 235.

<sup>136</sup> *AASOR* 15 (1935), 65.

<sup>137</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 437.

<sup>138</sup> *AASOR* 15 (1935), 68.

<sup>139</sup> *ZDPV* 57 (1934), 235; *AASOR* 15 (1935), 70.

<sup>140</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 438.

<sup>141</sup> Its name implies a connection with the Jebel Shabīb in the south and the Qaṣr Shabīb near Zarqā. All these are probably traces of the medieval Shabīb ibn Tubbai, ruler of the land from below Ma'ān to

Mt. Hermon (cf. Doughty *apud* Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. II, 223).

<sup>142</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 437; Aharoni, *IEJ* 13 (1963), 41.

<sup>143</sup> Near 'Ain el Hawwāre: *ZDPV* 58 (1935), 24.

<sup>144</sup> Musil, *op. cit.* (n. 129), 59, n. 20.

<sup>145</sup> After Oboda a road will have diverged to Nessana, from there presumably on to Rhinocoloura.  
<sup>146</sup> cf. *IEJ* 17 (1967), 55: the earliest sign of resettlement is a burial dated to 242.

sherds found in these places.<sup>147</sup> That the forts were originally Nabataean is probable, but it is far from self-evident that Roman garrison forces would not have used Nabataean pottery. To be sure, as Nabataean trade diminished, the Petra-Gaza route could be expected to have become less important. But, as of this moment, it is hard to see why this road might not have been still fortified in the second century. The indications of destruction are not securely datable.

One would not cavil with the view that as the Petra-Gaza road ceased to be of great importance, the route connecting Jerusalem (Aelia Capitolina) with Aila was increasingly traversed. This road passed north from 'Aqaba through Ad Dianam and Aridela to make its ascent from the 'Araba by the Pass of the Scorpions and then go on to Mampsis in the northern Negev.<sup>148</sup> The westward road from Petra joined this one in the 'Araba. Dr. Negev may well be correct in stating that certain stations indicated on the Peutinger Table and the *Notitia* (e.g. Moahile and Moa) should no longer be sought along the course of the more southern road to the east but rather on the road through Mampsis.<sup>149</sup>

Further west, in the Sinai, a new (and plausible) Roman road has been reported.<sup>150</sup> It rises from Aila to the plateau west of the Gulf, crosses the Darb es-Shāwī west of the Qā' en-Naqb and proceeds due south. It runs through the Wādī Watīr and then the Wādī Ghazāla. At the gorge of Wādī Naṣb it branches west and south-west towards the Wādī Feirān. Along the length of the road there are said to be Nabataean inscriptions, rock-drawings, coins, and pottery; inscriptions in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Thamudic, Coptic, and Arabic are also reported. The road ends in the south at Tell el-Mekharet in the Wādī Feirān, where there was a Nabataean town.<sup>151</sup> A cemetery was discovered there, with Nabataean inscriptions. This town, we are told, was the only permanent Nabataean settlement in South Sinai. It is proposed that the explanation of the settlement and of the road to it was the proximity of Tell el-Mekharet to turquoise and copper mines in the south. The Nabataean presence in the Sinai, hitherto known through inscriptions (notably in the Wādī Mukattab),<sup>152</sup> was not due to commerce but to mining interests. The Sinai road is described by its discoverer as Nabataean-Roman, and it is reasonable that it should have figured in the road system of the province. One may anticipate new inscriptions of the III Cyrenaica from the Sinai road.

So much for recent progress and clarification in the road system. Another aspect of the provincial defences has become increasingly prominent as a result of recent investigations. That is the Roman control of the desert to the east of the outer limes. The Nabataeans, with their exploitation of the Wādī Sirhān and need to protect themselves from nomadic attack, had established points of protection in many areas, some very remote. It can hardly be established just now how many of these were taken over by the Romans, but in most cases the likelihood is great. In the northern desert inscriptions attest Roman activity at places like Umm el-Quṭein or Umm el-Jemāl, this last an important Nabataean site.<sup>153</sup> At the remote Qaṣr Burqu', north of the H-4 pumping station on the old oil pipe-line, Stein reported 'a massive tower solidly built and of Roman construction'.<sup>154</sup> While Stein was definitely wrong, Glueck believed that the settlement at Burqu' was originally Nabataean, then Roman; he mentioned the discovery of Roman sherds during a hurried visit to the

<sup>147</sup> On the camp at 'Avdat: *ibid.*, 47; also A. Negev, *Cities of the Desert* (1966), 18. Dr. Negev assigns considerable importance to the Nabataean army, but the issue is a delicate one: exclusively Nabataean sherds at the 'Avdat camp are no proof that this was not a Roman camp. The role of the attested Nabataean 'SRTG' (στρατηγός)—cf., e.g., *CIS* II, 196—may not have been very militaristic. See n. 57 above on the unwelcome character of the Nabataeans. What did the RB MŠRYT ('chief of the camp[s]') in *CIS* II, 196 do? The army supplied contingents (e.g. to Caesar [*Bell. Alex.* I] and Aelius Gallus [Strabo, p. 78c]), but that does not mean it was more than a police force to keep the routes open.

<sup>148</sup> Ad Dianam is 'Ain Ghadiān, and Aridela is

'Ain Gharandel; cf. Alt, *ZDPV* 58 (1935), 24. Toponymy is conclusive.

<sup>149</sup> See above, p. 225.

<sup>150</sup> B. Rothenberg, 'An Archaeological Survey of South Sinai', *PEQ* 102 (1970), 4. The account of the road begins on page 18.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>152</sup> cf. n. 72 above.

<sup>153</sup> See, for example, the inscriptions in R. Dussaud and F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie moyenne*, in *Nouvelles Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires* 10 (1903), 411.

<sup>154</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 433.



site.<sup>155</sup> A glance at the map will show how remarkable such an outpost as this would have been; and see Pl. XIV, 4.

In the region of the Azraq oasis, at the head of the Wādī Sirhān, whence goods from the south as well as salt from Azraq passed north to Bostra and Damascus, there is certain evidence of Roman occupation. A bilingual inscription of the age of Diocletian and Maximian was seen by Dussaud at Azraq at the beginning of the century,<sup>156</sup> and it is still there. No photograph, however, has been published until now (Pl. XIV, 2). Stein states that he saw at Azraq in 1939 a Latin inscription naming '5 detachments from legions apparently engaged in the construction of a road'.<sup>157</sup> I could not find this stone in 1970, but conceivably it is a stone photographed by Stein while at Azraq (Box J.O. 87-98). From the photograph I could make out only:

DIV  
RIAN VEXILL  
III CYR

There stood in 1970 another Latin inscription at Azraq; it was set up in the quadrangular court of the Islamic fortress (doubtless in origin a Roman *castellum*) alongside the bilingual altar stone. It is in Latin on basalt and exceedingly difficult to read. I have been able to make out the following from the excellent photograph (Pl. XIV, 3) taken for me by my friend Prof. Fawzi el-Fakharani, chairman of the Archaeology Department in the University of Libya at Benghazi.

ONSTA . . INOM . XI  
REACTRIVMFATORESE  
TCONSTANTINOET  
NTIONNBBCAESS  
VRIAVETVSTATE  
MRVINACONLAPSAM  
SSITET̄ . . . . .

C]onsta[nt]i]no M[a]xi[mo]  
pio victo]re ac triumphatore se[mp]er  
Augusto e]t Constantino et  
Consta]ntio nnbb. Caess.  
aedem (?) inc]uria vetustate  
parietu]m ruina conlapsam  
refici (?) iu]ssit et [

The date of the inscription, mentioning Constantius and two Caesars, should fall between 326 and 333.<sup>158</sup>

In his exploration of the Azraq area, Stein wrote that he found Qaşr Azraq 'the centre of a series of Roman posts and signal stations all so far unsurveyed'.<sup>159</sup> One of these, Qaşr Usaikhin, was a small *castellum* in a remarkable state of preservation. He discovered a Latin inscription there which recorded 'construction by a detachment of the III Legio Cyrenaica in A.D. 201'.<sup>160</sup> In Box J. 136-147 of the Stein photographs there is a photograph of an inscription; it cannot be read, but I suspect this may be the stone to which he alluded.

Thus the implications of the many Latin and Greek inscriptions which Dussaud discovered long since in the desert regions from Umm el-jemāl to the eastern Druze are reinforced. The Roman desert patrol is more clearly visible in the north than in the south. But none of it would make much sense unless the Romans made the same sort of use of the

<sup>155</sup> Stein's error is proven by the Arabic inscription dating the Qaşr Burqu' to A.D. 700: J. Sauvaget, *Journal Asiatique* 231 (1939), 23 and F. E. Day *apud* Henry Field, *North Arabian Desert Archaeological Survey*, 1925-50 (Papers of Peabody Museum, vol. 45, no. 2), 1960, 154. Glueck's observations: *AASOR* 25-28 (1951), 32. A Greek inscription was found at Burqu': S. Dow *apud* Field, *op. cit.* 161.

<sup>156</sup> Dussaud and Macler, *op. cit.* (n. 153), 670 no. 85 = *IGR* III, 1339.

<sup>157</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 434. Note also a milestone reported to have been at Azraq in *Antiquity* 3 (1929), 89: Group Capt. Rees said he 'rescued' the stone.

<sup>158</sup> Constans, whose name would appear last in a listing of three Caesars, is obviously not included. I am particularly grateful to T. D. Barnes for his acute suggestions concerning this inscription.

<sup>159</sup> Stein, *op. cit.* (n. 123), 434.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*

Wādī Sirhān as the Nabataeans. An important crossroad like Bāyir, which was clearly Nabataean, was probably not abandoned by the Romans: it stood on a route to Azraq from Medā'in Šālih and Taymā', and routes went west from it to Petra and east to the oasis at al-Jawf.<sup>161</sup> It is quite possible that certain sites in the desert where there now stand buildings of medieval Arab construction may, like the Qaṣr Azraq, indicate Nabataean and Roman outposts. Such, for example, may be the Qaṣr Ṭūba (on the route from Bāyir to Azraq), the Qaṣr Kharāna, or the Qaṣr 'Amrā. Note that at the Qaṣr al-Ḥallabāt, for which Roman presence is definitely attested,<sup>162</sup> there is beside the ancient ruin a ruin of an Umayyad mosque of the eighth century.

#### V. EPILOGUE

The province of Arabia became after Diocletian a shrunken thing. The whole southern part, of which Petra was the centre, was detached and soon incorporated as a part of Palestine.<sup>163</sup> It became known as *Palestina Tertia* (or *Salutaris*). Diocletian had, it seems clear, extended the old province's northern segment, dominated by Bostra, through the addition of Batanea and Trachonitis, i.e. Bashan and Lejā. So Brünnow and Domaszewski had argued, to the satisfaction of most scholars.<sup>164</sup> Another legion, the IV *Martia*, had arrived by the fourth century and taken its place, in all probability, at Lejjūn (the name preserves *legio*), which is therefore likely to be the *Betthorus* of the *Notitia*. Bostra, capital of the emasculated province, acquired a Christian population after Constantine, a bishop and a cathedral. Nabataean epigraphy came to an end.<sup>165</sup>

The history of Arabia the province is dark in the late empire. The chief problems have been the interpretation and explanation of administrative documents such as the *Notitia* and *Laterculus Veronensis*. Some of these issues, as we have seen, have already been touched upon, as they concern the system of defence. One topic has not yet been mentioned, and this seems a suitable place for it. The *Laterculus Veronensis*, a late copy of the administrative arrangements made under the Tetrarchy, includes among the provinces of the oriental dioecesis *Arabia item Arabia Augusta Libanensis*. In the last article he published before his death Albrecht Alt rightly contended, against Seston, that it was impossible to take *Arabia Augusta Libanensis* as a single province including the Lebanon and Antilebanon.<sup>166</sup> Both the form of naming provinces in the document and the extent of the imagined province make the notion implausible. The words enumerate three provinces, Arabia (proper), a second Arabia (the newly detached Petraea before it was joined to Palestine), and Augusta Libanensis, which will designate the territory of the Phoenice Libanensis to come. In publishing some boundary stones relevant to Alt's argument, Y. Aharoni concurred in the rejection of Seston's interpretation of the *Laterculus* evidence.<sup>167</sup>

Apart from the discussion of this problem of Diocletianic organization there has been no notable progress since the work at Jerash in our understanding of the late Arabian province (in its limited form). Perhaps not much can be expected until, if a hope may be expressed, Lejjūn is excavated. Arabia in the Byzantine age lies outside the scope of this report.

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<sup>161</sup> cf. N. Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940), 41.

<sup>162</sup> An inscription of the year 213, mentioning the governor Furnius Julianus, *apud* Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. III, 291 (*Princeton Arch. Exp. Syria* III, A, 2, 21, no. 17). On the Arab desert buildings, see above all J. Sauvaget, 'Remarques sur les monuments omeyyades,' *Journal Asiatique* 231 (1939), 1.

<sup>163</sup> There may have been a short time when the south was detached from the north but was still distinct from Palestine; cf. below, and chiefly Brünnow-Domaszewski, vol. III, 277.

<sup>164</sup> Vol. III, 266. Against: M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land: A Historical Geography* (1966), 170.

<sup>165</sup> For recently discovered Christian inscriptions at Bostra: *Ann. Arch. Syrie* 15 (1965), 73. Nabataean

epigraphy: Rosenthal suggests from lettering that the Nessana inscriptions in Nabataean belong to 150-350 (*apud* H. D. Colt, *Excavations at Nessana* I [1962], 201). This would make them among the latest Nabataean texts known. (A new Nabataean inscription which appears dated to A.D. 356 will be the latest so far discovered: *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte: Festschrift für Altheim* [1970], II, 87.) Note that in the fourth century Epiphanius says that certain cultic observances at Petra were conducted 'Ἀραβικῆ διαλέκτῳ and 'Ἀραβιστί (*Panarion* II, 51, 22). That may mean Arabic, not Nabataean.

<sup>166</sup> A. Alt, 'Augusta Libanensis', *ZDPV* 71 (1965), 173, against W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie* (1946), 373.

<sup>167</sup> *Atiqot* 2 (1959), 153.