

# **Qur'ānic Geography**

**Independent Scholars Press**



# **Qur'ānic Geography**

**A SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE  
GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES IN THE  
QUR'ĀN WITH SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS  
FOR VARIOUS PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

**DAN GIBSON**

**Independent Scholars Press  
Canada**

## **Qur'ānic Geography**

by Dan Gibson

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In memory of my father, David J. Gibson,  
who worked so long and hard on matching the  
Edomites with the Hyksos.



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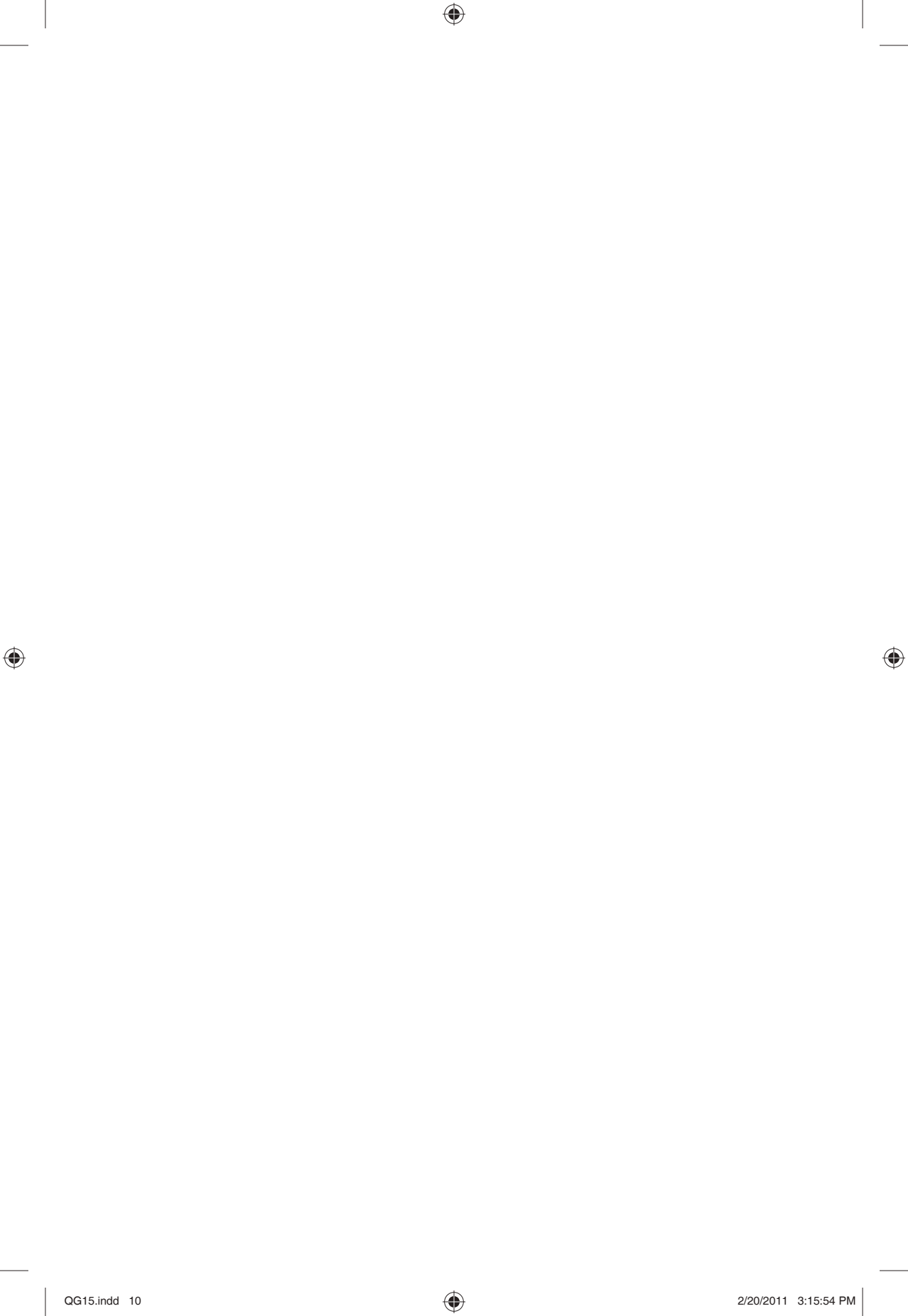
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AD	Anno Domini (Originally used as Anno Domitian)
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
Alī	Maulana Muḥammad 'Alī's translation of the Qur'ān (1917)
ARAM	Journal published by the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies
Asad	Muḥammad Asad's translation of the Qur'ān (1980)
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BASP	The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
BC	Before Christ
BNP	Date according to Brill's New Pauly
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CE	Coptic Encyclopaedia, ed. A.S. Atiya. 8 vols. New York 1981
EL2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, ed. H.A.R. Gibb et al. Leiden and London, 1960- proceeding
ELs	Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, ed. H.A.R. Gibbs and J. H. Kramers, Leiden and London, Brill 1953
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IRAQ	British School of Archeology in Iraq
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
KJV	King James Version (Bible)
NIV	New International Version (Bible)
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
Pickthall	Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of the Qur'ān (1930)
Yusif Alī	'Abdullāh Yūsuf 'Alī's translation of the Qur'ān (1934)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have always found it difficult to write acknowledgements because I greatly fear I will leave out someone of importance. In the past, every time I have written such a page, I have indeed failed to acknowledge someone. I suppose this comes from being such a poor writer that I must rely on so many people to help me. Researchers, fellow historians, English language proofers, artists, graphic artists and more have participated in preparing this book for printing. Not only this, my family have been supportive in allowing me to take two years to concentrate on getting it into print. In reality this means feeding me, telling me when it's too late or too early to be working, and knowing that husband or father will not be available to do things that he normally does. Two years is a long time to give up a loved one, so I very much appreciate their cooperation that allowed me to do this project. As for the others, here are a few of the people who were of help along the way. Hopefully I haven't missed too many.

During the years of doing research and forming opinions my son Josiah and I talked for countless hours, checking facts and sparking one another with ideas. Then we would argue against ourselves, and often as not would end up dismissing our ideas as unsupportable. In time however, more and more supportable ideas came to light. Josiah grew up in the Middle East, walking the deserts and climbing the hills with his older brothers. His interest in history and archeology usually meant he was the first to arrive at a place of interest and was often the last one to leave. Without his input and dialog this project would possibly not have seen the light of day.

I must especially thank Colin Bearup from the UK who has helped me by arguing with me through this and several other books in the past. It is always good to have a friend who says: "You can't say that," then tells me why not, and then ends up telling me how to say it better!

I must also thank John Hill, an ex-Canadian living in Australia, with expertise on China 2000 years ago and its relations with the outside world, including Rome and Islam, who gave many helpful insights and ideas. Years earlier when he came to me for help in locating Arabian places named in an-

cient Chinese documents, I had no idea how great an impact this would have on me or my view of history. John taught me to also look at Arabian history from an Asian perspective rather than considering only European, Biblical, or Islamic views.

Dr. Joshua Lingel has also been a big help in obtaining research materials and providing me with access to other historians and experts. While Joshua was not an expert in Islamic history per se, he had several in his group of friends who could intelligently speak into parts of this study. Along with this he has also been a good friend with helpful comments and criticisms.

Dr. Alan Guenther was also very helpful in pointing out several small errors and suggesting additional materials that related to the founding of Islam. His probing questions stimulated me to present my arguments better, and his kind thoughtful manner is what makes for a good friend as well as a scholar.

Along with these I would also like to express thanks to Eldon Boettger who proofread the initial manuscript. Without the help of these and others along the way, a project such as this would never have been completed and I owe them all my profound thanks.

My wife Mary also did a great deal of copy-editing, pointing out my English grammar mistakes and I am indebted to her for all her work, and her sharp eye in catching both my English and Arabic mistakes.

Lastly I must include a disclaimer, that although all of these people helped in the process and production of this writing, not all of them agreed with everything presented in the book, and I would not wish their names to be associated or assumed as supportive of the various theories that I present here.

Dan Gibson



## INTRODUCTION

When I first began this project, I discovered to my great pleasure that I would receive assistance from my father, even though he died when I was only nine years old. All of his research was packed away in cardboard boxes and stored in closets and basement nooks until someone came along with an interest in ancient history and decided its worth. Since no one seemed to be forthcoming when my mother was moving into smaller accommodations, the books and papers found a place in our home. Now don't get me wrong, I knew what I was getting, and I appreciated the years of patient research my father put into his projects. But his interest was Biblical history, and mine was Arabian and Islamic history. They were worlds apart, or so I thought, until I began to read through the material and realized how much the two worlds overlapped. In the years that followed, time and time again I paused to think and appreciate all of the groundwork my father laid. His study of the geography of the Holy Land and the Edomite people in particular laid a firm foundation for this book.

Even though my father's research and writings on the Edomites and Hyksos was never published, I am sure he would be delighted to know how deeply his work impacted section two of this book, and indeed the overall tenor of this entire project.

Along the way, other scholars have also been of great assistance, although sometimes they would soberly question whether I or anyone for that matter, was up to the task I set out to do. Their reservations were exceedingly helpful, as they prepared me for the thousands of hours of pure slogging that would be required before this book was complete.

In 1979 I moved to the Levant and began my study of Middle Eastern culture and language. This was followed by more than twenty years of study and observation of the people and history of the Arabian peninsula. Then in the year 2000 our family moved into the deserts of southern Jordan, living among the bedouin, and at the same time studying the ancient Nabataean civilization.

It was during these years that I began to realize the problems of matching the history of the Nabataeans with the Islamic history that follows. Nabataean history ends in 200 AD with the breakup of a massive merchant empire in Arabia, while Islamic history starts with a vague, somewhat empty Arabia filled with petty tribes raiding each other.

As I worked on matching these two histories I became convinced that there were inconsistencies in the historical records, especially when it came

to geography. Eventually this came to a head in 2004 when a Muslim reader challenged the materials I was presenting on <http://nabataea.net>. Several of the photos puzzled him, as he felt they should be closer to Mecca, when in reality they were in Northern Arabia, in the heartland of Nabataea. He suggested to me that perhaps the Holy City of Islam had been moved. At the time I considered his opinions to be little more than a “conspiracy theory,” much like those that fill idle conversation in the Middle East. I put the idea in the back of my mind and moved on to other studies.

Several years later, I was a guest lecturer at a college in Europe and had free time each afternoon. Browsing through the library I came across “*The Life of Muḥammad*,” (Ibn Ishāq) translated by A. Guillaume. I decided that a re-read of the book might be a good way to fill my afternoons. As I began to read, I remembered the “conspiracy theory” and kept it in the back of my mind. To my amazement, as I read and imagined the story playing out in the geography of Arabia that I was so familiar with, I was drawn again and again to picture the geography of north Arabia. The imagery fit. At the end of the week as I flew back to North America, I was determined to pursue the concept of northern Arabia rather than southern Arabia as being the founding place of Islam. In the years that followed, I carefully kept watch for information that would support either one side or the other. During those years I also approached other scholars and historians and told them of this ‘conspiracy theory.’ Then they too began to notice things and pass them on to me. It wasn’t until 2009 that I became convinced that enough materials were in hand to actually begin a serious study. Fortunately I was given the opportunity to more or less isolate twelve months to concentrate on research and writing. This book is the result of that research. It originally began in the 1920’s with my father’s research, and came to completion in late 2010.

As an independent scholar and historian, I have become increasingly aware of the tension that exists between literary history and modern archeology. Ancient documents often describe countries, cities, and peoples that archaeologists have trouble matching to the archeological records. Added to this tension is the struggle that modern readers of history face when trying to understand and interpret worldviews and cultures that have now been lost to history. If this isn’t enough, the worldview of the nomads who made up much of Arabia is vastly different from the worldview of today’s sedentary reader.

For instance, when describing ancient peoples and empires, modern readers are interested in international borders and boundaries. For the ancients,

these borders were often undefined, unless a particular reason existed to define them. A modern parallel might be the international borders in the arctic. Until recently Canada, Russia and Denmark have been content to leave these borders only vaguely defined. However, with the discovery of valuable minerals and resources, the old undefined borders are no longer suitable.

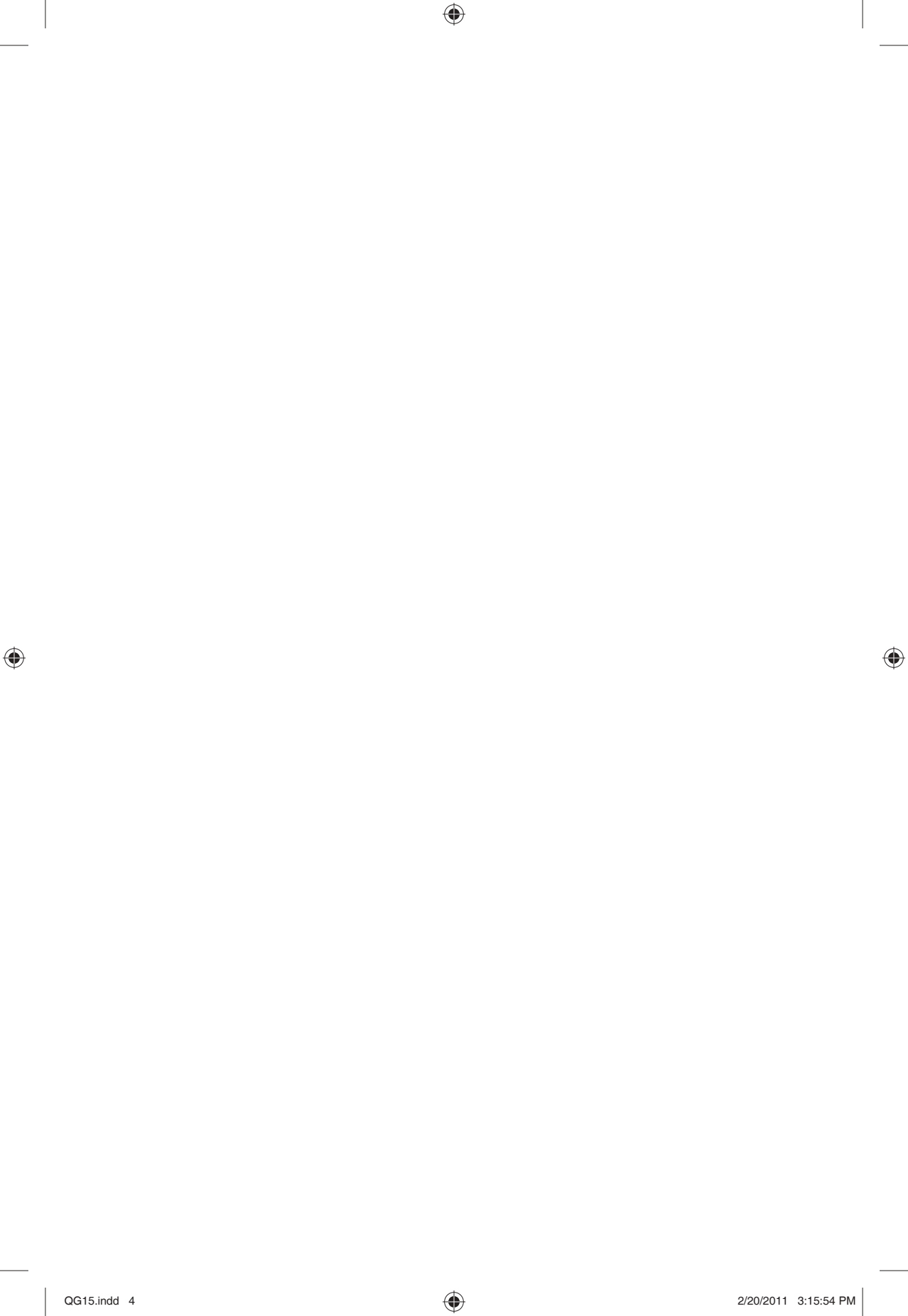
Arabia is very similar. Even today some of the borders remain undefined, as they end in vast, trackless deserts. This leaves the historian and geographer with a problem. How does one draw an undefined border on a map? How does one define the extent of a kingdom, especially if that kingdom grew or shrank with each year's battles with neighbors? What is even more difficult is trying to define the borders of nomadic people who may only briefly occupy a region.

And what does one do with cities that appear in history and then disappear under the onslaught of conquering kings? What about cities that change names with every new invasion? And finally, how does one deal with the multiplicity of complex languages and dialects where each kingdom names or nicknames the other's cities and rulers. A good example of this is the records of Chinese explorers who gave every place a Chinese name, rather than trying to phonetically pronounce existing names. For the uninitiated, the records of Chinese explorers can be terrifyingly complex.

To sum this up, we face the nearly impossible challenge of looking back through multiple layers of history to try and understand the events in one single layer, centuries ago, in which people had not been influenced by all of the factors that influence our understanding today. This is why it is hard for the amateur historian or the interested bystander to make critical observations and conclusions, and why, in the end, historians are a strange group of people who inevitably withdraw from others and immerse themselves in the world of the past.

I trust you will enjoy this book, and that you will be challenged to pursue the references and to check the geographical data, and grapple with the conclusions that I have arrived at. Stones often write history, but history as we know it is not written in stone. It is the result of collective study and interpretation. Through this publication I invite others to study and discuss what I present here.

Note on transliterations: Please do not quote this book as proof of any correct or incorrect use of transliteration. These are meant to be guides to Arab readers and not authoritative statements on how transliterations should be used.



**PART I**

**GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND TO  
ARABIA**



## CHAPTER ONE

### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN THE QUR'ĀN

For students of the ancient world, dealing with geographical locations is a common task. Some locations are well known while others are harder to pin down. Today there are countless atlases of ancient Israel, Egypt, Greece and the Roman Empire. Students of Biblical and classical history seldom consider debating where ancient cities were located, as archeology has now revealed almost all of them. Historians on the other hand, sometimes love to argue about names of places whose locations are yet unknown or uncertain.

When reading Greek and Roman classical literature, or even the Christian and Jewish scriptures, most readers are struck with the sheer number of geographical locations mentioned, most of them with names that are difficult to pronounce. I believe that these records abound with geographical references for several reasons. First, locations were important in ancient history as it helped the reader understand what was being referred to. In today's news reports, the listeners all understand where Russia, India and China are. We are not confused by terms like Great Britain, England, the United Kingdom and the British Isles. We are familiar with the White House, the Kremlin, and Number Ten Downing Street. But for the uninformed, these terms could prove daunting. In much the same way, those who study ancient manuscripts must gain an understanding of the worldview and known geography of the ancient world to understand what the ancient writers were addressing. Likewise, most of the ancient writers were either eye-witnesses or were copying from someone before them who was personally involved in the story in some form.

Therefore, when the Gospel of Luke tells us that a man went “down from Jerusalem to Jericho” (Luke 10:30) no one argues that there were two cities by these names and that there was a road linking these cities. It is accepted that the city of Jericho lies several thousand feet below Jerusalem. The descriptions aptly fit the known geography. So it comes as no surprise that geographical references pop up every 200 words or so in many ancient writings.

What is strange, however, is that some ancient writings have far fewer geographical references than others. For instance, when reading the Gnostic writings from ancient Egypt the lack of geographical references is most striking. (Donehoo, 1903, xxiv-lvii) This is probably due to the fact that these stories were most likely invented and written in Egypt, not in Israel, and the writers were unfamiliar with the detailed geography of the Holy Land. Therefore they omitted geographical references in their writings in case they got them wrong. Today, when law enforcement officers listen to a witness, they pay attention to the details. If a person’s story is short on details, it is possible that he or she is simply making it up or passing on something they have heard.

So, using this as a premise, we want to start this book by observing some ancient religious manuscripts and take notice of the frequency in which geographical terms occur. At the end of the chapter, we will draw some conclusions from this simple bit of research.

The chart on the next page compares the four canonical Gospels with four Gnostic writings, noting the number of places that are mentioned and the number of times a geographical reference is made. The last column provides an indication of the ratio of words per geographical mention. The data for this and the following charts is listed at the end of this chapter.

This chart demonstrates that there is a clear difference between the number of geographical references that are mentioned and their frequency. The canonical Gospels contain far more geography than the less accepted Gnostic writings from ancient Egypt. There are many reasons why the church fathers rejected the Gnostic writings, including differences in philosophy and theology. However, from a geographical point of view, the Gnostic writings focus far more on the story than on the setting. Not only do they have fewer geographical references, but these references include only main cities and seldom add much background detail. Some of the Gnostic writings mention Egypt more than locations in the Holy Land. The church’s rejection of these writings was based on a complex set of arguments that encompassed theology, philosophy, and physical evidence, including their failure to evoke a sense that the writers were truly eye witnesses. (Groothuis, 1990)



When one comes to the Qur'ān, the holy scriptures of Islam, geography is also an issue. Interestingly, even though the Qur'ān addresses many of the same stories and events as recorded in the Bible, it contains very few geographical references. Second, very few of the locations that are mentioned in the Qur'ān are clearly known to us today. Third, when there are descriptions of some known ancient locations, one wonders if they are indeed referring to where these locations are identified today.

Examine the chart below which compares these earlier writings with the Qur'ān.

Writing	Number of Words	Number of Geographical Places	Words per geographical mention
Gospel of Matthew (KJV)	24,755	31 locations, 108 references	229
Gospel of Mark (KJV)	15,844	26 locations, 79 references	200
Gospel of Luke (KJV)	27,090	31 locations, 110 references	246
Gospel of John (KJV)	19,973	14 locations, 69 references	289
The Gospel of Nicodemus (Wake, 1730)	14,346	15 locations, 36 references	399
Gospel of the Birth of Mary (Wake, 1730)	3,573	5 locations 8 references	447
The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ (Wake, 1730)	11,730	6 locations 25 references	469
The Protevangelion (Wake, 1730)	6,467	3 locations 12 references	539
The Qur'ān *	149,450	9 locations 65 references	2,299

\* Qur'ān translated by Dr. Rashad Khalifa into English. All these manuscripts include reference numbers.

In the chart above we see that there is one geographical reference for every 2,299 words in the Qur'ān. One reads page after page of text, finding them bereft of geographical locations.

Additionally, the locations mentioned by name are limited to nine. These are:

- 'Ad – mentioned twenty three times (7:65 & 74, 9:70, 11:50, 11:59 & 60 14:9 22:42 25:28 26:123 29:38 38:12, 40:31 41:13 & 15, 46:21, 50:13, 51:41, 53:50, 54:18, 69:4 & 6, 89:6) Associated with “many-columned Iram” in 89:7
- Thamud – mentioned twenty four times (7:73, 9:70, 11:61&68 & 95, 14:9, 17:59, 22:42, 25:38, 26:141, 27:45, 29:38 38:13, 40:31 41:13 & 17, 43:51, 50:12, 53:51, 54:23, 69:4 & 5, 85:18, 89:9)
- Midian – mentioned seven times (7:85, 9:70, 22:44, 28:22-23&45, 29:36)
- Medina – mentioned twice (9:101 & 120)
- Valley of Mecca – mentioned once (48:24)
- Valley of Bekka – mentioned once (3:96)
- Tubb'a - mentioned twice (44:37, 50:12,14)
- Al-Ras - mentioned twice (25:38, 50:12)
- Hijr - mentioned once (15:80)

Instead of clear geographical references, the Qur'ān is full of descriptive references. For instance there are:

- the dwellers of the town
- the people of the cave
- the people of the ditch
- the people of the garden
- the people of the woods
- the people of the fountain
- the people of the tangled-wood (Puin, 2010)
- the owners of the elephant
- the Ka'ba (which today is universally associated with Mecca)

It is a curious fact that the holy city of Mecca is never mentioned directly by name. The valley of Mecca and the valley of Bekka are referred to once each

in 48:24 and 3:96. Most Muslim scholars believe these to be the same place. The locations of the empires of 'Ad and Thamud, which are mentioned so much more frequently, are not firmly established. By presenting these charts I am not saying that I regard the Qur'ān as fabrication, I am simply pointing out that the Qur'ān is different from other ancient scriptures and early writings. However, with careful and sensitive study, I believe many clues about history and geography can be found within the Qur'ān.

So at the beginning, it appears that our task of researching Qur'ānic Geography is quite simple. Since so few concrete locations are mentioned, there are only a few places we have to identify. However, as we begin the task of identifying these locations, all of them including Mecca present unique problems.

Now, my Muslim friends will point out that the Qur'ān presents a simple message in poetic form. It calls on history and geography to support its message, but it does not present facts in a chronological manner. And they are completely correct. To find the narrative of Adam and Eve for example, you have to assemble several separate passages. The Qur'ān never attempts to recount history. It calls on things that were known by at least some of the listeners and weaves them into its message. Although some hints of Arabian history can be gleaned from its text, recounting history was never the intention. This is in marked contrast to the Gospels. Arguably this could be said of the Gnostic materials as well, which assumed historical shape to gain credibility, but history was incidental to their message. The Qur'ān does not have to be a historical record for credibility, and so it is even less fact dependent on geography. One should note that even the chapters of the Qur'ān are not ordered with any regard to chronology, date of revelation or content.

### **Scope of this study**

In this book we will focus on five locations since they are central to the message of the Qur'ān, and deal with the others along the way. These five are:

1. The Empire of 'Ad (23 references)
2. The Empire of Thamud (24 references)
3. The Empire of Midian (7 references)
4. The city of Medina (2 references)
5. The city of Mecca/Bekka (2 references)

Since the Qur'ān addressed an Arab audience, it is natural to assume that 'Ad, Thamud and Midian were well known to the first hearers, as indeed was

the city of Mecca. Therefore we will need to examine Arabian history to locate these three great civilizations and one great city which was known as “the mother of all cities.” (Qur’ān 6:92). Muslim historians tell us that this is obviously Mecca, but it will be challenging to actually prove this.

In the chapters that follow I wish to develop a train of thought that will help us understand the history of Arabia, and therefore identify the places mentioned in the Qur’ān. First we will look at the overall history of the Arabian Peninsula. We do this so that we can understand the view of history that the pre-Islamic Arabians held. This will help us understand the message of the Qur’ān as it was spoken through Muḥammad to the people of his time. Second we will look at three ancient empires that united the Arabian Peninsula during their time of greatness. We will compare them with the three ancient empires referred to in the Qur’ān. One of the purposes of this book is to demonstrate that the three empires mentioned by name in the Qur’ān were indeed the three empires that united Arabia under one banner. Lastly we will look at the names of Mecca and Becca and seek to understand where these were located and some of the controversy surrounding them.

### Source materials

In writing this book, it has been my desire to deal with original texts and documents as much as possible. This does not mean I do not value the comments of historians and writers over the last fifteen hundred years, but by concentrating our thought on the worldview and mindset of the Arabian people present at the time of the revealing of the Qur’ān, we can better understand its message. I have listed the sources used in the appendices at the end of this book. They are organized into two bibliographies, the first being an annotated bibliography of early Islamic sources. A second bibliography contains Secondary Sources, such as modern journals and books by recognized authorities. Additionally I have provided a time-line of Arabian history. This time-line is the backbone of our studies, as it demonstrates when books were written, when buildings were constructed, when rulers reigned, and when battles were fought. This information is vital to our study, as often Muslim writers who wrote much later are unknowingly referred to as primary sources for events that occurred in very early Islam. A good example of this is the often quoted Yāqūt, who wrote some 600 years after Muḥammad’s death. There are also other resources in the appendices that will be of interest to those wishing to study this material further.

## **The author**

The Middle East has always been my passion. For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in understanding this complex area of the world. My grandfather and then my father collected books and journals that had to do with Middle Eastern history and archeology. As a young boy I would often read through the articles and try to fathom what they meant. As I already mentioned, I was fortunate enough to inherit my father's library, filled with books written from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1960's. I studied these diligently until at age seventeen, I moved away from home and entered college. At that point I discovered that once I had access to academic libraries I did not need to collect books and journals. After college, at twenty-two years of age, I moved to the country of Jordan and began studying the Arabic language. I began visiting many of the historical sites that I had only read about in the past. Over the next thirty years I was able to spend seventeen years roaming the Middle East, exploring the Levant, traveling around the Empty Quarter, and spending almost four glorious years in the mountains of Yemen. The last three years in the Middle East were spent living among the Bedouin near Wadi Rum in the south of Jordan. In the years in between, I was able to comb through some of the great museums of the world as well as visit many historical Muslim sites from Spain to China.

## **The intended audience**

As I write this book, I have several audiences in mind. First, I am writing to scholars, so therefore I try to note all of the sources that I use. These can easily be cross-referenced with the bibliographies at the back of the book. Second I am writing to the "man on the street." Therefore I am deliberately trying to keep the vocabulary and sentence structures simple and readable. I am very aware that many of my readers will not have English as their first language, and as I write this book, I am also trying to keep the language simple enough so that they can understand. Finally, I am writing to my Muslim brothers and sisters who for years have urged me to read the Qur'ān, for in doing so they believed that the powerful message of the Qur'ān would convert me to Islam. Over the past thirty years I have not only read the Qur'ān several times, but I have studied it in detail. In the last ten years I have revisited it many times as I

tried to make sense of the geography it contained. I urge Muslims to carefully study their own books and seek to understand their content and message. It is my belief that through careful scholarly study, and open honest dialogue that truth can be discerned. In the end, the entire reason for writing this book is simply a search for truth. As I have studied the Qur'ān and more specifically the geography of the Qur'ān, I have discovered more questions than answers. It is my hope that this book will bring people together for discussion rather than separating them.

## Geographical References

### Gospel of Matthew

Jerusalem (12)  
Holy City (2)  
Bethlehem (5)  
Babylon (3)  
Judaea (8)  
Egypt (4)  
Jordan River (6)  
Nazareth (4)  
Galilee (17)  
Capernaum (4)  
Sodom (4)

Sea of Galilee (13)  
Syria (1)  
Decapolis (1)  
Gadara (1)  
Gomorrhah (1)  
Samaria (1)  
Chorazin (1)  
Bethsaida (1)  
Gennesaret (1)  
Tyre (3)  
Sidon (3)

Canaan (1)  
Caesarea Philippi (1)  
Jericho (1)  
Bethphage (1)  
Bethany (2)  
Mount of Olives (3)  
Cyrene (1)  
Gethsemane (1)  
Golgotha (1)

**108 references 31 locations**

### Gospel of Mark

Jerusalem (11)  
Judaea (4)  
Jordan River (4)  
Nazareth (5)  
Galilee (12)  
Capernaum (3)  
Sodom (1)  
Sea of Galilee (9)  
Decapolis (2)  
Canaan (1)

Gomorrhah (1)  
Chorazin (1)  
Bethsaida (2)  
Gennesaret (2)  
Tyre (3)  
Sidon (3)  
Caesarea Philippi (1)  
Jericho (2)  
Bethphage (1)  
Bethany (4)

Mount of Olives (3)  
Cyrene (1)  
Gethsemane (1)  
Golgotha ( 1)  
Phonicia (1)  
Greece (1)

**79 references, 26 locations**

### **Gospel of Luke**

Jerusalem (32)  
Bethlehem (2)  
Judaea (8)  
Jordan River (3)  
Nazareth (7)  
Galilee (14)  
Capernaum (4)  
Emmaus (1)  
Sodom (2)  
Sea (Mediterranean) (1)  
Sea of Galilee (1)

Syria (3)  
Ituraea (1)  
Trachonitis (1)  
Lysanias (1)  
Abilene (1)  
Judah (1)  
Nain (1)  
Samaria (1)  
Bethsaida (2)  
Gennesaret (2)  
Nineveh (1)

Tyre (3)  
Sidon (4)  
Jericho (3)  
Bethphage (1)  
Bethany (2)  
Mount of Olives (4)  
Cyrene (1)  
Calvary (1)  
Zarephath (1)

**110 references, 31 locations**

### **Gospel of John**

Jerusalem (13)  
Bethlehem (1)  
Judaea (6)  
Jordan River (3)  
Nazareth (5)  
Galilee (16)  
Cana (4)

Capernaum (5)  
Sea of Galilee (3)  
Sea of Tiberias (2)  
Samaria (4)  
Bethsaida (2)  
Bethany (3)  
Mount of Olives (1)

Golgotha ( 1)

**65 references, 14 locations**

### **The Gospel of the Birth of Jesus**

Nazareth 2  
Jerusalem 2

Galilee 2  
Bethlehem 1

Judea -1

**36 references, 15 locations**

### **The Protevangelion**

Bethlehem -7  
Judea -4

Jerusalem -1

**12 references, 3 locations**

### **The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus**

Bethlehem - 6  
Jerusalem -6

Judaea -2  
Nazareth -2

Egypt -8  
Memphis-1

**25 references, 6 locations**

### **The Gospel of Nicodemus**

Egypt -5  
Cana -1  
Galilee -1  
Capernaum -3  
Nazareth -1  
Bethlehem -1  
Galilee -5  
Jerusalem -4  
Mount Olivet -3

Judea -1  
Red Sea -1  
Golgotha -1  
Arimathea -3  
Zabulon -1  
Jordan -5  
**36 references,  
15 locations**

Note: It is hard to know what to include. Should "Joseph of Aramathea" be included as a geographical reference or not? We have chosen to NOT include these kinds of secondary references, as they do not tell us if Aramathea was a location or a tribe. So Aramathea is only mentioned when it is actually called a city.

## The Quran

Mecca -1 (48:24)

Valley of Becca -1 (3:96)

Midean -7 (7:85, 9:70 22:44 28:22&23& 45, 29:36)

Medina -2 (9: 101 & 120)

'Ad - 23 (7:65 & 74, 9:70, 11:50, 11:59 & 60 14:9 22:42 25:28 26:123 29:38  
38:12, 40:31 41:13 & 15, 46:21, 50:13, 51:41, 53:50, 54:18, 69:4 & 6, 89:6)

Thamud – 24 (7:73, 9:70, 11:61&68 & 95,, 14:9, 17:59, 22:42, 25:38, 26:141,  
27:45, 29:38 38:13, 40:31 41:13 & 17, 50:12, 43:51, 53:51, 54:23, 69:4 & 5,  
85:18, 89:9)

Tubb'a - 2 (44:37, 50:12,14)

Ar-Ras - 2 (25:38, 50:12)

Hijr - 1 (15:80)

**65 references, 9 loctions**

Note: We have not included references to various peoples such as: people of the ditch,  
people of the elephant, people of the book etc.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FOUNDING OF THE NATIONS

Most historians of Arabian or Islamic history either start with the life of Muḥammad, or they work their way back from modern times to the founding of Islam. While this process often suits the western mind, Muslim historians such as al-Ṭabarī and others start earlier and work their way forward. I also have found it useful to use this approach and begin with the more ancient and move forward. The easiest way to do this is to use the Torah or the first books of the Bible, as they give us insight into the thinking of people long before the rise of Islam. Then we will cross-reference this material with records left by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians and others.

Many people who read the Bible skip chapters like Genesis 10 which contain long lists of people who were the sons of sons of other sons and so on. However, to the historian or chronologist these chapters are gold mines of information for they provide us with insight into how people related together. It is no surprise then to find Islamic historians also delving into genealogies and histories that existed long before. So from the beginning we will also start with the ancient view of how the nations were founded.

In the pages that follow I will use a chart which was first constructed by my father many years ago. It was foundational in his research and later to my own enquiries, and is helpful in laying a foundation that will help us understand some of the worldview of the ancient Arabians.

For most Middle Eastern Jews, Muslims, and Christians, history has a specific beginning. The histories of these three great religions all go back to Noah. So when considering the nations of ancient Arabia we should begin at Noah and his three sons, and the peoples that descended from them.

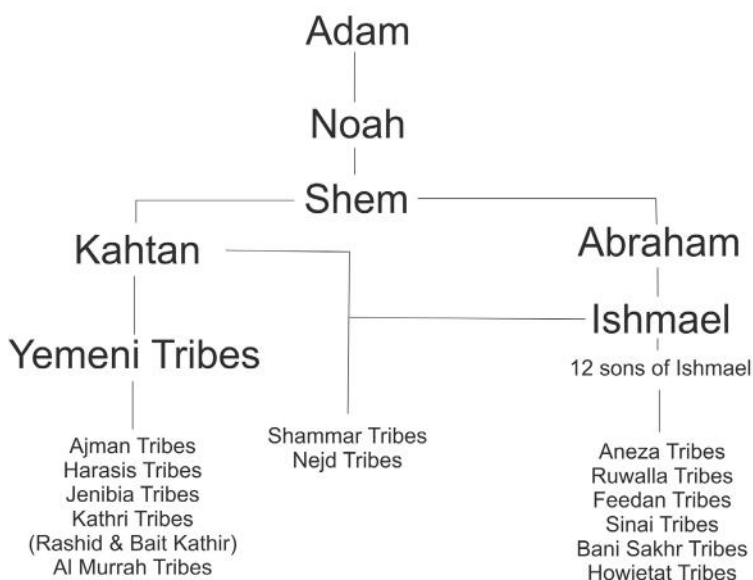
Jewish and Christian historians have long talked about the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. I found it interesting when

listening to Muslim poets in the Bedouin villages of southern Jordan or on the edge of the deserts of Yemen and Oman, that they too traced people back to Noah's three sons. All of the Arabs of Arabia claim that they are descendants of Shem. (Hitti, 1964, chap. 1) The Arabian tribes of southern Arabia (specifically Yemen) claim to have descended from Kahtan. (Biblical Joktan) The Arabian tribes that claim this ancestry are the Ajman, Harasis, Jenibia, Kathri (Rashīd and Bait Kathīr) and Al Murrah tribes. (Keohane, 1994, page 16)

The Arabs of the Nejd claim ancestry to both Kahtan and Ishmael. In the north of Arabia most Bedouin tribes claim Ishmael as their ancestor. These tribes include the Aneza, Ruqalla, Feedan, Sinai, Bani Şakhr, and the Howi-etat. These lines of descendants are illustrated below.

When we use the Torah to provide us with further information, it is possible to piece together the origins of many of the tribes and peoples of the Arabian Peninsula. The reason for doing this is to provide ourselves with a "pool of tribes and people" which we can turn to in later chapters when we seek to identify people and places mentioned in the Qur'an and the later Islamic literature.

Most western trained historians, especially Jewish and Christian ones, have focused such intense attention on the history of the people of Israel that they have totally ignored and even misunderstood the histories of the other peoples who also occupied the Middle East down through history.



During my years of research, much of which was spent in the Middle East, I was continually frustrated when Christians and Jews seemed to think that Arabian history, chronology and geography were really very unimportant. To them the important civilizations were the Jews, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans and Greeks. Most of them had never heard of the Kedarites, Nabataeans or Edomites even though these nations are found in the Biblical records. While there was a little interest in the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites, most historians chose to marginalize these people and consider them small and unimportant.

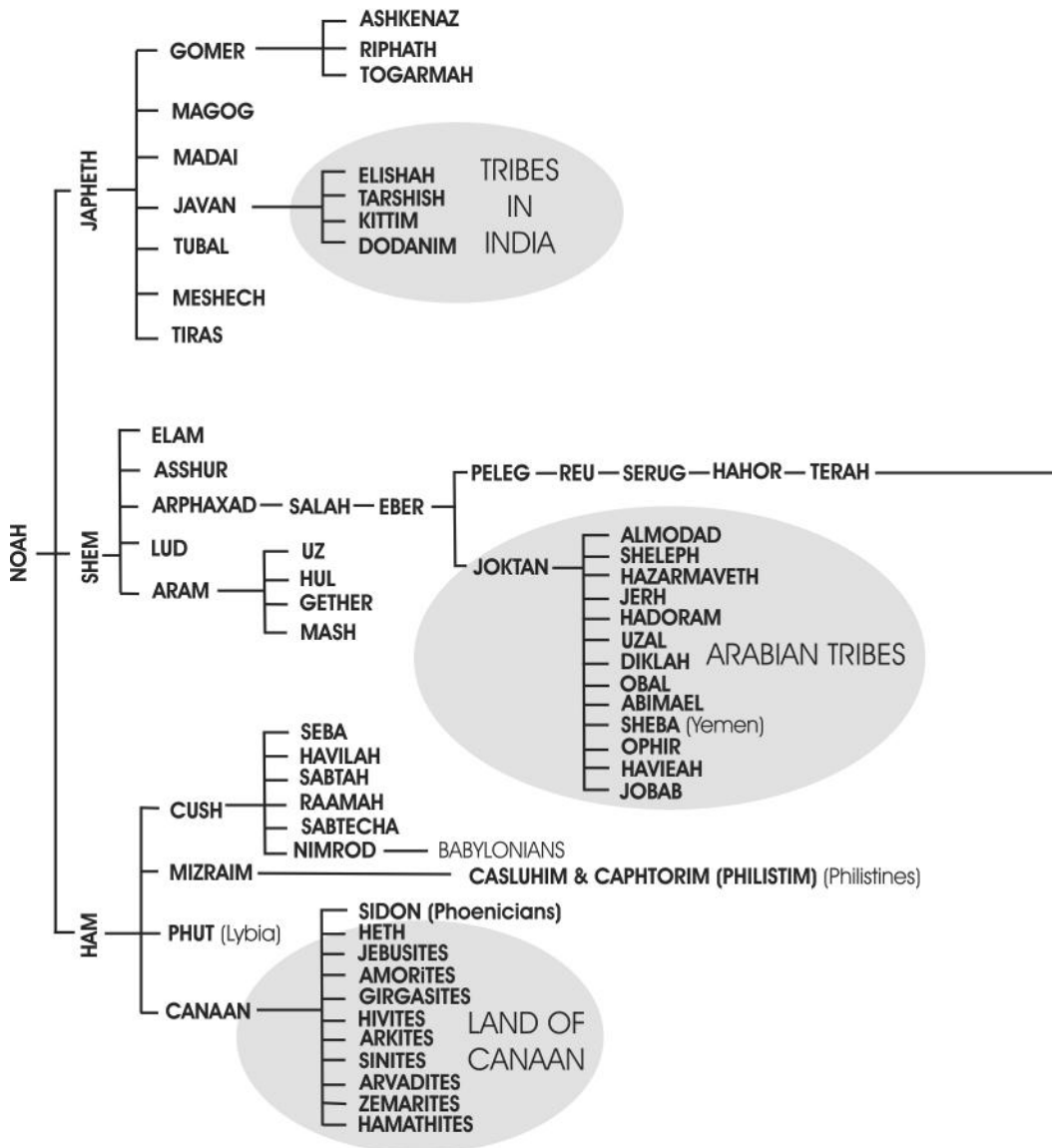
In the interest of good science, let us try and understand the ethnic and geographical makeup of Arabia in ancient times, as it has profound implications on our understanding of later writings and even on commonly held conceptions today.

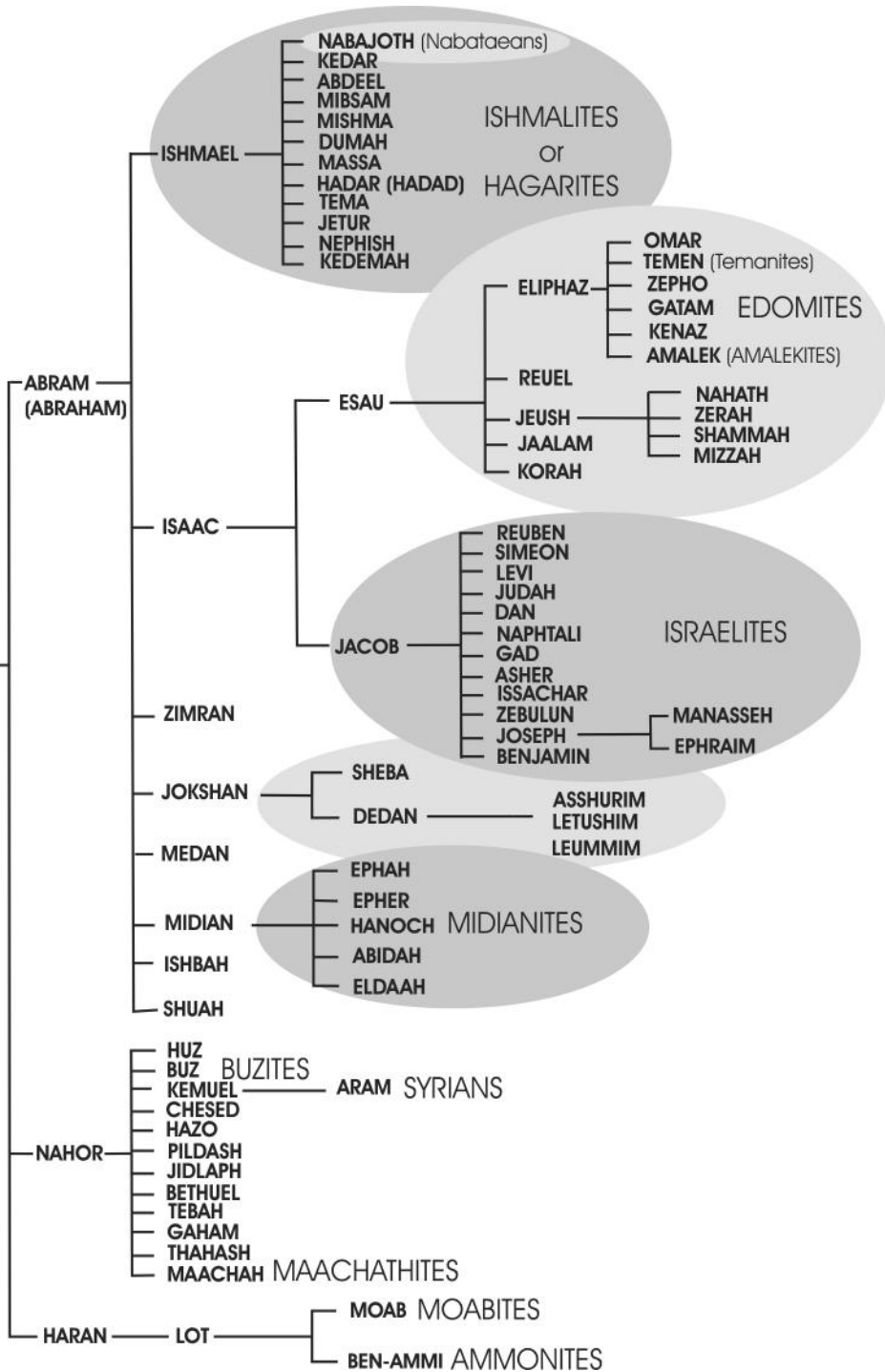
First let us look at the chart on the next page titled “*The Founding of the Nations*.” This chart is drawn from Genesis 10, with some additional materials drawn in from the parallel passages in II Chronicles chapters 1 – 8. It is important to understand that whether we agree with this material or not, it describes the worldview of ancient Middle Easterners many centuries before Christ. This is important because their view of history was different from our view, and it was into a similar worldview that the Qur’ān speaks.

You will notice the names of the sons of Noah on the left of the *Founding of the Nations Chart*. The descendants of Japheth are commonly understood to have moved east becoming the peoples of India, Greece and East Asia. (Morris, 1976)

The descendants of Ham are shown as becoming the people of Cush (and from them the Babylonians) the Philistines, the Canaanite, the Phoenicians, and also the people of Phut or the early Africans. Therefore, in the worldview of early people, all the peoples of the world were blood relatives.

Third, the descendants of Shem are singled out because of the impact they have on the Jews and also the history of Arabia. Muslim and Jewish family trees begin with Noah, then Shem, then Arphaxad, then Sālih and then Eber. It is here that there is a separation as understood in the minds of the ancient Middle Easterners. Two lines emerge from the two sons of Eber. This explains why the people of southern Arabia are distinctly different from the later Ishmaelites and other tribes. In the Septuagint version of the Bible and other versions of the Bible derived from it, Eber is called *Heber*. It is from this word that the modern term “Hebrew” is derived. In Jewish tradition, Eber, the great-grandson of Shem, refused to help with the building of the Tower of Babel, so his language was not confused when the tower was abandoned. He and



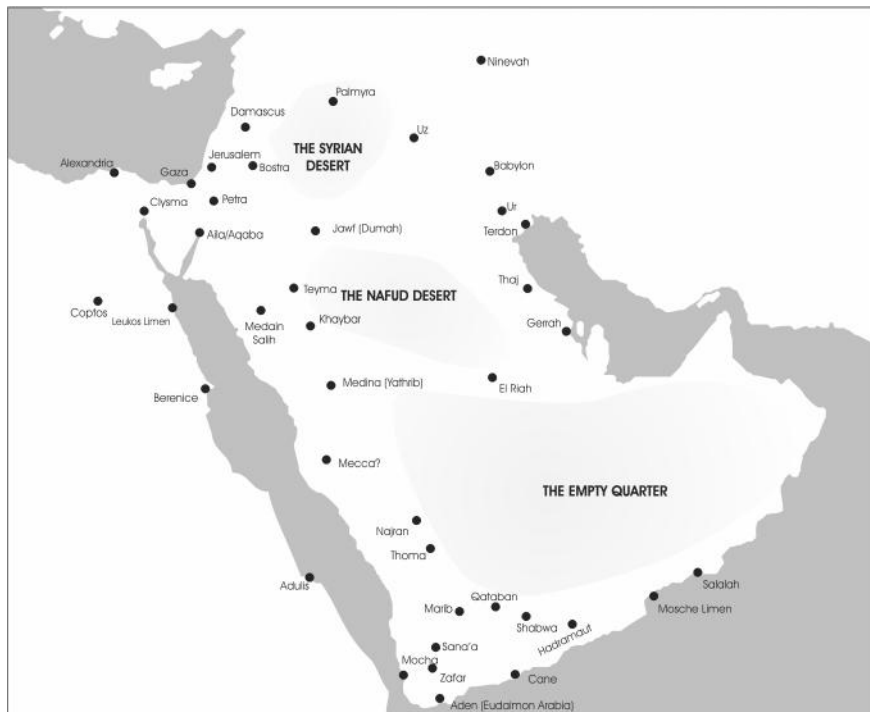


his family alone retained the original human language, Hebrew, a language named after Eber (Heber), also called *lingua humana* in Latin. In view of this the Arabs of Arabia, who are descendants of Eber, can also lay claim to being called Hebrews. (Hirsch, 2002) (Easton, 1893)

From this point on, several generations pass (no one is sure when the Hebrew term for “son of” means the literal son of, or a later descendant (for instance, Jesus is called the “son of David” in Matthew 1:1) so we are unsure of the actual generations. However, all of the rest of the peoples discussed in Genesis 10 and in I Chronicles 2-7 descend from one man, Terah, the father of Abraham.

When one looks at the tribes and people that emerge only three or four generations later, it becomes clear that all of these ethnic groups originally had the same language and culture. Centuries later their languages and cultures would evolve and eventually they would become enemies, but at this time in history they were cousin tribes who would defend one another. This will become a very important fact as we move through the next few chapters.

In short, the Ishmaelites, Temanites, Edomites, Amalekites, Midianites, Buzites, Syrians, Maachathites, Moabites and Ammonites were all closely related tribes sharing the same ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.



*Important centres related to the ancient Arabian Peninsula*

In later chapters we will examine the twelve tribes that came from the Ishmaelite line, as these are important in determining the background behind the Quraysh tribe from which Muhammad later descended. In a later chapter we will also investigate the tribes of Yemen, seeking to understand the kingdoms that emerged from there and their impact on the history of the Qur'an. For the rest of this chapter we will focus on the peoples known as the Ishmaelites, Temanites, Edomites, Amalekites, Midianites, Buzites, Syrians, Maachathites, Moabites and Ammonites.

### **Ishmaelites**

Much of chapter fourteen is taken up with locating the twelve tribes of Ishmael, so here we will simply mention that all of the twelve tribes were associated with Arabia north of the Nafud desert which would later become the heartland of the Nabataean empire. (See the map on the previous page.) Most of their histories take place in the modern countries of Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia.

### **Temanites**

The Temanites were descended from Eliphaz, the son of Esau, the son of Isaac, the son of the patriarch Abraham. (Genesis 36:11, I Chronicles 1:36) The genealogies stop at this point because from this point on the people were known as Temanites. Eg: Job 4:1 Eliphaz is called a Temanite. In chapter five we will demonstrate that this same Eliphaz was none other than the father of Teman, but years later was known as Eliphaz the Temanite because of the fame of his son. This would be the equivalent of someone calling Noah a Hebrew, even though the Hebrews didn't exist as a people until several generations later.

There has been some disagreement by historians as to where the Temanites originally settled. Some have thought that it would have been at the oasis of Tayma in north western Arabia. (Lewy, 1945-46, pages 405-498) However, the existence of Temanites in Assyrian records indicates that the Temanites most likely settled farther north and became the ancestors of the Arameans. (Lipinski, 2000)

The location of the northern Arabia oasis of Tayma can be seen to the left of the Nafud Desert in the map on the previous page. The name of the oasis comes from forgotten ancient history, so the Temanites may have stopped in this location long ago before migrating farther north.

## Amalekites

The Amalekites are seen by most historians as nomads since they appear at different times in different places in the Biblical record. Originally they were regarded as part of the tribal alliances of the Edomites by blood. (Gen. 36:12 & 16) Centuries later when the Israelites were journeying from Egypt to the land of Canaan, some Amalekites are said to have taken advantage of their weak condition and attacked the stragglers in the rear. As a judgment for their hostility, because they were a related tribe and were taking advantage of their weaker cousins, it was ordained that their memory should be blotted out from under heaven (Deut. 25:17-19).

The Amalekites appear to also have had tents in the land of Canaan, as they are mentioned among those who are in Canaan in Numbers 14:43-45 and Deuteronomy 1: 44-46. Joshua also attacked some Amalekites who were camping in the Sinaitic peninsula. The event was commemorated by the erection of the altar “Yahwehnissi” (“Yahweh my banner” or “memorial”) and rendered memorable by the utterance, “Yahweh hath sworn: Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” (Exodus 17:8-16)

The Kenites and the Amalekites seem to have been allied during the time of the exodus, as Balam spoke of them both in Numbers 24:20-22. Years later it appears that the Amalekites were still with the Kenites (I Sam. 15:6; 30: 29). A few Amalekites were left, for right after King Saul’s death on the battlefield a passing Amalekite tried to claim he killed Saul, thinking to please David who was well known to be one of Saul’s enemies. The Amalekite was executed for killing the king of Israel.

From the wide geographical references associated with the Amalekites, it would seem that they were indeed a nomadic people for much of their existence. It is interesting to note that their name is celebrated in Arabian tradition. (Th. Noldeke, *Ueber die Amalekiter*, Göttingen, 1864) The district over which they ranged was south of Judah and extended into northern Arabia. They are mentioned as part of the Moabite alliance that attacked Israel in Judges 3, and also part of the Midianite alliance during the time of Gideon in Judges 6. The last surviving Amalekites seem to have been destroyed during the reign of Hezekiah in Judah when five hundred sons of Simeon attacked them in the mountains of Seir near modern day Petra. (I Chronicles 4:43)

## Midianites

We will cover the Midianite people in chapter nine, as they were instrumental in uniting the Arabs of Arabia into an alliance that attacked the nations



neighboring Arabia. Records of their activities are found in both the Bible and Babylonian writings.

### **Buzites**

Nahor the brother of the patriarch Abraham had a son known as Buz. It seems that the Buzites became a well known tribe in Arabia as we find that Elihu one of Job's counselors was known as "the son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram" (Job 32:2) The Buzites are also mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20 – 24 where he addresses all the kings of Uz, the Philistines, Moab and Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, as well as the kings of Dedan, Tema, and Buz. The prophet Jeremiah wrote sometime between 630 and 580 BC, so the Buzites were a known entity up until that time. We will investigate the Buzites a bit more in chapter six.

### **Syrians**

The Syrians settled in what is known today as Syria. This is one of the areas of the world that has the longest history of continuous occupation by one people group, even though surrounding nations have controlled portions of Syria at different times. Syria is known in Hebrew as Aram, first mentioned in Genesis chapter ten, and specifically mentioned as a defined area in Genesis 24:10. Aram (Syria) was also variously referred to as Mesopotamia or Aram-naharain (Syria of the two rivers), and Padan-aram (plains of Aram) (Genesis 31:10). Some sections of Syria were also known as Aram-maahah, Aram-beth-rehob, Aram-zobah.

### **Maachathites**

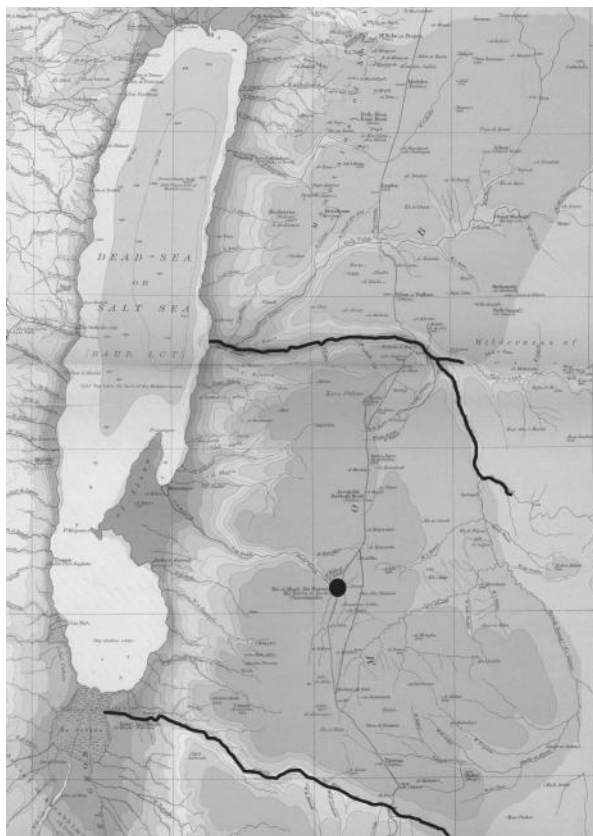
The Maachathites were descendants of the son of Nahor, and therefore were a tribe closely related to the Israelites, but they lived among the Canaanites and were allied with them. So it is not surprising that the people of Maacah did not resist Israelite occupation, and lived among the Israelites after Joshua occupied the land. (Joshua 13:13)

Given time however, the people of Maacah turned against Israel and joined her enemies. During the time of King David of Israel, the king of Maacah is listed as allied with the Ammonites, along with Aram and Zobah and others. (I Chronicles 19:7)

## Moabites

The Moabites and the Ammonites were descended from Lot, the son of Haran, another brother of the patriarch Abraham. Moab, the father of the Moabite nation was a son of Lot. This nation was also known as Mu'abu to the Akkaians, and as M-'b to the Egyptians. The relations of Moab with Judah and Israel are continually mentioned in the Bible. As a political entity Moab came to an end after the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria about 733 BC.

Its people were later absorbed by the Nabataeans.



The Moabite religion was much like that of Canaan. Archaeological exploration in Moab has shown that settlements first occurred in the 13th century BC.

Before the invasion of the Amorites, Moab occupied a large territory. This area included two distinct geographical locations: First, the land between the two rivers, south of the Arnon River and north of Wadi Hassa. (see map above) This was Moab proper, and was known as the "fields of Moab." (Ruth 1:1, 2, 6) Second, the more open rolling country north of the Arnon, around the present day city of Madaba and up into the hills of Gilead (north of the present day city of Salt) was known as the "land of Moab." (Deuteronomy

1:5; 32:) The Moabites lost this northern land to Israel when, under Moses' leadership, the Israelites occupied the east bank of the Jordan River.

The Moab Stone (previous page, bottom) is one of the most extraordinary ancient documents ever found. Mesha was a ruler of Moab and a contemporary of King Jehoshaphat of the southern kingdom of Judah (870 - 848 BC) and King Joram of the northern kingdom of Israel (852 - 841 BC). Originally everything we knew about Mesha came from the Bible (2 Kings 3), but through this inscription we know more about him. (This stone inscription is referred to as the Mesha Stele or Moabite Stone. It was discovered in Dhiban, Jordan in 1868 by a French Anglican medical missionary by the name of F. A. Klein. It broke when Klein tried to purchase it from the Arabs but most of the fragments were recovered.)

The second inscription (pictured below) is in a language called Moabite. The alphabet used is like the one the Israelites used from the 6th to the 4th centuries BC. This El-Kerak inscription was either written by Mesha, king of Moab, or his father in the 9th century BC. It was found in 1958 in Jordan while a trench for a new building was being cut. It is of gray-black basalt and probably was part of a longer piece, perhaps a statue.

The city of Ar is named in an ancient song in Numbers 21:15, literally "the site of Ar." It seems to be identical with "Ar of Moab." (Numbers 21:28, Isaiah 15:1) This is probably the place called the "City of Moab" in Numbers 22:36, where the Hebrew is 'ir mo'abh. It is probably also intended by "the city that is in the middle of the valley." (Deuteronomy 2:36 Joshua 13:9, 16 2, Samuel 24:5) It lay "on the border of the Arnon, which is in the utmost part of the border." (Numbers 22:36) A possible identification might be the ruins noted by Burckhardt, in the floor of the valley, on a piece of pasture-land below the confluence of the Lejjun and the Mojib. Buhl however believes that a Moabite district somewhere in the region south of the Arnon may be intended (GAP, 269) and not a city.

The city of Kir appears only once in the Bible in Isaiah 15:1 as a city in Moab. It is named along side of Ar of Moab, with which it may be identical since 'ar or 'ir is the Hebrew equivalent of the Moabite Qir. The Targum therefore reads "Kerak in Moab." There can be no doubt that the Kerak here is the ancient site at the modern town of that



*Photograph by Bruce and Kenneth  
Zuckerman, West Semitic Research.  
Courtesy Department of Antiquities, Jordan*

name with which, consequently, Kir Moab is almost universally identified. It must always have been a place of importance. It is mentioned as Charakmoba (Karakmoba) in the Acts of the Council of Jerusalem (536 AD) and by the early geographers. It dominated the great caravan road connecting Syria with Egypt and Arabia known today as the King's Highway.

### **Ammonites**

Ammon was another son of Lot, and brother to Moab. The Ammonites occupied the land north of Moab. This land was east of the Jordan River and included the hills of Gilead and the Dead Sea valley. Their chief city was known as Rabbah or Rabbath Ammon, the modern city of Amman, Jordan.

The Ammonites managed to survive through history, even through the Persian and early Hellenistic periods. Their name appears during the time of the Maccabees when the Ammonites, along with some of the neighboring tribes, did their utmost to resist and check the revival of the Jewish power under Judas Maccabaeus. (1 Maccabees 5:6; and Josephus Jewish Antiquities 12:8.1)

### **Conclusion**

The reason for going through these tribes is to point out that all of them were related. We might use the word "cousin tribes" to describe them. All of them had their common ancestry in Terah, the father of Abraham. Therefore, originally each of these tribes spoke exactly the same language and had the same common cultural background and worldview. However, over the centuries as they grew apart their languages evolved, and sometimes enmity came between them. However, in their early days, they must have felt some kind of affinity for each other, even as the Bedouin tribes of Arabia today feel affinity for their cousin tribes.

This affinity would help create future alliances when the tribes of northern Arabia would unite under Edomite leadership to become a formidable force, raiding and even conquering the great nations outside of Arabia. This is important background information as we begin our study of the kingdoms of 'Ad, Thamud and Midian in the following chapters.

# **SECTION II**

## **THE PEOPLE OF 'AD**

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PEOPLE OF 'AD

When revealing Allāh's message to the people of Mecca, Muḥammad spoke about the people of 'Ad and their prophet Hud. The subject of 'Ad is only dealt with in Mecca, and is not mentioned when later giving revelations in Medina. The Qur'ān makes no attempt to explain where or who the people of 'Ad were, and assumes that the readers (or the Meccans addressed by Muḥammad when he uttered these verses) knew exactly where and what he was talking about. Today the struggle we have in identifying 'Ad is that we do not understand the mindset or thinking of the Arabian people at that time. What was obvious to them is not obvious to us. Because of this, many people have searched for the empire of 'Ad, and as we will see later in this chapter, some think they have located it in southern Arabia in the country of Oman. But first we need to examine what the Qur'ān actually says about the land of 'Ad. Remember as you read that the Qur'ān is chiefly a book of poetry, not a book of prose about history.

#### Prophet Hud and the People of 'Ad

*And unto Ad (we sent) their brother, Hud. He said : O my people! serve Allāh. you have no other God save him. Will ye not ward off (evil)? the chieftains of his people, who were disbelieving, said: Lo! we surely see thee in foolishness, and lo! we deem thee of the liars. He said : O my people; There is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey unto you the messages of my Lord and am for you a true adviser. Marvel ye that there should come unto you a reminder from your Lord by means of a man among you, that he may warn you? Remember how he made you viceroys after Noah's folk, and gave you growth of stature. Remember (all) the bounties of your Lord, that haply ye may be successful. They said: hast come unto us that we should serve Allāh alone, and forsake what*

*our fathers worshipped? Then bring upon us that wherewith thou threatenest us if thou art of the truth. He said: Terror and wrath from your Lord have already fallen on you. Would ye wrangle with me over names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which no warrant from Allāh hath been revealed? Then await (the consequence), lo! I (also) am of those awaiting (it). And we saved him and those with him by a mercy from us, and we cut the root of those who denied our revelations and were not believers. Qur'ān 7:65 - 72 (Pickthall)*

There is not much we can learn here of 'Ad's identity or location. So we must read on in other passages:

*And unto (the tribe of) Ad (we sent) their brother, Hud. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh! Ye have no other God save him. Lo! ye do but invent! O my people! I ask of you no reward for it. Lo! my reward is the concern only of him who made me. Have ye then no sense? And, O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto him repentant; He will cause the sky to rain abundance on you and will add unto you strength to your strength. Turn not away, guilty! They said: O Hud! Thou hast brought us no clear proof and we are not going to forsake our gods on thy (mere) saying, and we are not believers in thee. We say naught save that one of our gods hath possessed thee in an evil way. He said: I call Allāh to witness, and do ye (too) bear witness, that I am innocent of (all) that ye ascribe as partners (to Allāh) beside him. So (try to) circumvent me, all of you, give me no respite Lo! I have put my trust in Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. Not an animal but he doth grasp it by the forelock! Lo! my Lord is on a straight path. And if ye turn away, still I have conveyed unto you that wherewith I was sent unto you, and my Lord will set in place of you a folk other than you. Ye cannot injure him at all. Lo! my Lord is guardian over all things. And when our commandment came to pass we saved Hud and those who believed with him by a mercy from us; we saved them from a harsh doom. And such were Ad. They denied the revelations of their Lord and flouted His messengers and followed the command of every froward potentate. And a curse was made to follow them in the world and on the day of resurrection. Lo! Ad disbelieved in their Lord. A far removal for Ad, the folk of Hud! Qur'ān 11:50 – 60 (Pickthall)*

Again, there is little in this passage to help us locate 'Ad or understand who they were. So we read on.

*The tribe of Ad denied the messengers (of Allāh), When their brother Hud said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, So keep your duty to Allāh and obey me. And I ask of you no wage therefor; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the worlds. Build ye on every high place a monument for vain delight? And seek ye out strongholds, that haply ye may last forever? And if ye seize by force, seize ye as tyrants? Rather keep your duty to Allāh, and obey me. Keep your duty toward him who hath aided you with (the good things) that*



*ye know, hath aided you with cattle and sons. And gardens and water springs. Lo! I fear for you the retribution of an awful day. They said: It is all one to us whether thou preachest or art not of those who preach; This is but a fable of the men of old, and we shall not be doomed. And they denied him; therefor we destroyed them. Lo! herein is indeed a portent, yet most of them are not believers. And lo! thy Lord, he is indeed the mighty, the merciful. Qur'ân 26:123-140 (Pickthall)*

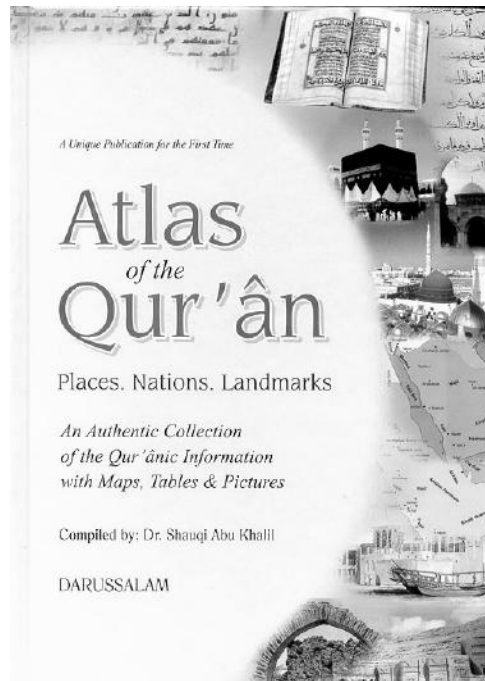
In this passage there are a couple of items that can help us in our search for 'Ad: they built high places (altars) and monuments. They sought out strongholds (in the rocks) and they have cattle as well as gardens and springs. It is not much, but they seem to live in a mountainous country with lush valleys and make altars on the mountains.

*Dost thou not consider how thy Lord dealt with (the tribe of) Ad, with many-columned Iram, the like of which was not created in the lands; and with (the tribe of) Thamud, who clove the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, firm of right, who (all) were rebellious (to Allāh) these lands, and multiplied inquiry therein? Therefore thy Lord poured on them the disaster of his punishment. Lo! thy Lord is ever watchful. Qur'ân 89:6-14 (Pickthall)*

Now we can add the city of Iram to our information, with its many columns which are described as spectacular. The people of Thamud are also mentioned as living nearby or with them. The mountainous location is enforced with what would appear to be towering rocks and valleys. Also, there is some connection between 'Ad and Pharaoh.

Dr. Shauqi Abu Khalil, in his book *The Atlas of the Qur'ân* (page 154) says this: (Abu Khalil, 2003)

*"The structures of this place are described in the Qur'ân as being very tall like lofty pillars, the like of which were not created in the land. Some say that this place is Alexandria; others maintain that it is Damascus; and yet others, whose opinion is strongest by dint of stronger proofs, say that it is a city near 'Adan, between Ṣan'a and Hadramawt.*





*The following is an entry from Mo'jam Al-Buldan (1/55): "Some say that it is a land that has been blotted out, and so its exact whereabouts remains unknown. Others say that it is Alexandria, yet most say that it is Damascus. Others have related that Iram Dhatul-'Imad is in Yemen between Hadramawt and Ṣan'a built by Shaddad bin 'Ad."*

Dr. Shauqi Abu Khalil then provides us with a map on page 55 which places a large red fuzzy circle over the Dhofar province of Oman. This mark is directly over Wadi Shis'r, which many claim is the original location of Iram, the supposed lost city of the people of 'Ad.

### **Wadi Shis'r**

Shis'r is the modern name of an old well, fortified caravansary, and the remains of an ancient structure that some feel may be the ancient city of Ubar which the Arabs call Iram. The ancient structure was partially excavated by Dr. Juris Zarins of Missouri State University starting in 1992.

Unfortunately, in February 1992 an article by John Noble was splashed across the front page of the New York Times, declaring that the lost city of Ubar had been discovered. This article was then relayed all around the world and excitement grew. "Guided by ancient maps and sharp-eyed surveys from space" the article claimed "archaeologists and explorers have discovered a lost city deep in the sand of Arabia."

The article claimed that a geologist and specialist in space remote-sensing technology from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California by the name of Dr. Ronald G. Blom, compared maps made by Ptolemy, the Roman historian, with photographs from Landsat space satellites. He hoped that he could identify sites that archaeologists could later investigate on the ground. From the Landsat pictures, however, he discovered that there were no ruins of any ancient cities visible. However, because so little changes in the deserts of Oman and Yemen, he could see what he thought were ancient paths and tracks in the desert. These tracks, he claimed, had persisted for a very long period, and after careful computer processing, the scientists were able to make them out on the Landsat pictures. The tracks acted like a road map. The scientists assumed that where many tracks merged, an ancient city must exist. When the archaeologists arrived at the spot that Dr. Blom had pointed out, they indeed discovered ruins in the deserts of Arabia. It was assumed that these ruins were the remains of ancient Ubar.

The truth is that the expedition was headed up by a group of people, one of them Nicolas Clapp, a world explorer better known as Sir Ranulph

Fiennes, and the archaeologist Dr. Juris Zarins. (You can read a copy of an interview with him at :<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ubar/zarins/>). In his book *“Atlantis of the Sands”* Fiennes notes that Dr. Zarins commented to him: “The truth is, it was found by hard work and excavation. The satellite imagery allowed us to eliminate sites so we could concentrate on the most probable areas.” Ranulph Fiennes later published his account *“Atlantis of the Sands”* (Bloomsberry 1992) in an effort to correct this misrepresentation. The Landsat photos were helpful, but the camel caravan routes through the desert had been noted many years before. They merged at a place known as Wadi Shis’r. When they started digging at Shis’r, they began to uncover a large ancient structure. No one was sure what it was, until the article appeared in the New York Times. Suddenly the world was convinced that Shis’r was Ubar, even though the archeologists had yet to announce anything! Is the academic world today convinced that Shis’r is Ubar? To date, no one has published any proof that links the structure at Shis’r with Ubar.

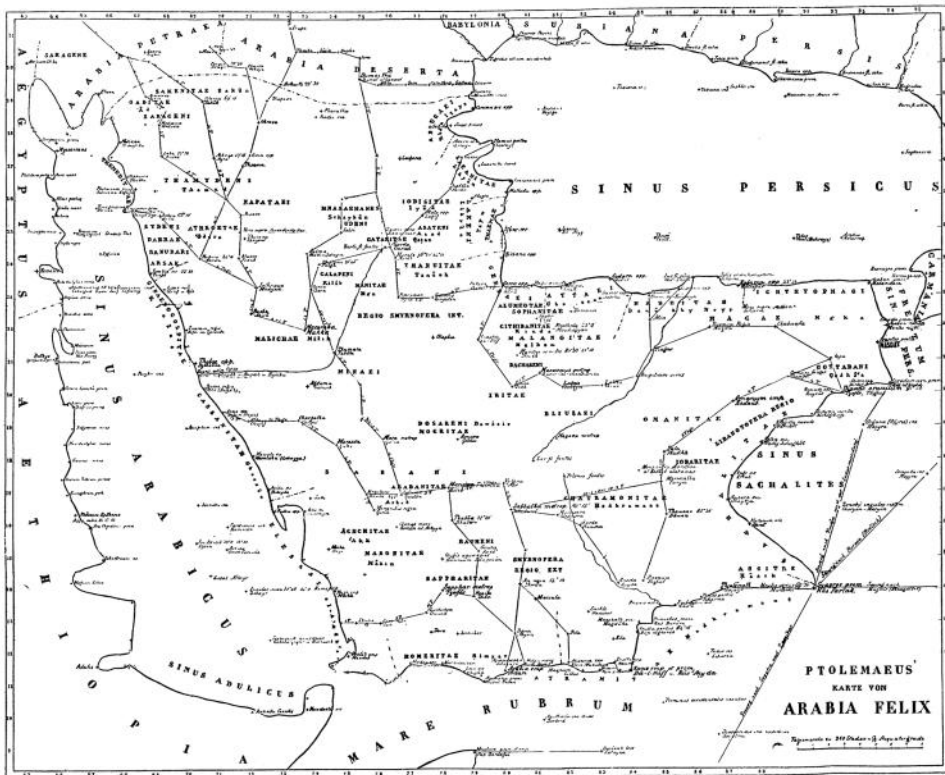
Clapp, the author of *The Road to Ubar; Finding The Atlantis of the Sands*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1998) seems to indicate that he did most of the historical research. He notes on page 41 of his book that Ubar was located on Ptolemy’s map of the world. Claudius Ptolemy was born in Greece and lived in Egypt around 110-170 AD, and acted as the overseer of the Bibliotheca in Alexandria (Great Library, which had some 750,000 manuscripts). Among them were several “Peripluses” or “round trips” recording coastlines, ports, and something about the lives of people at each stop. (See [www.ptolomaeus.html](http://www.ptolomaeus.html)) Ptolemy knew the world was round, as did the entire educated world at the time, so Ptolemy constructed a globe of the world, with lines of latitude and longitude. It is unclear whether Ptolemy was the originator of this idea, or if he obtained his information from the Arab merchants that plied the world during that time. In any case, on this globe Alexandria was the center of the world and lines of latitude and longitude were constructed. For example, Medina (known then as Yathrib) was at 71 x 23 degrees on his map. Saba Regio, the royal city of Sheba was at 73 x 16 degrees. Ptolemy’s globe was a standard for geographers at that time.

In 391 AD the Roman Emperor Theodosius I looted the Alexandrian library and burned many of the manuscripts. Later the Muslim conquerors burned more manuscripts. However, fragments of Ptolomy’s map survived, and in the late 1400’s several printing houses in Europe published maps that were based on Ptolemy’s work (known as Cosmographias and illustrated to the right). A similar task was undertaken several centuries earlier when Piri

Ibn Ḥajj Memmed otherwise known as Piri Reis, an Ottoman admiral, attempted the same thing. Much of the Piri Reis map was destroyed, especially the eastern part of Asia, but the part with Africa, Europe and North and South America survived.

Rather than finding a lost city in the sand, Clapp's expedition discovered a well known watering spot. In 1931 Bertram Thomas writes of visiting the ruins of Shis'r (Thomas, 1932) as does Thesiger in 1950. (Thesiger, 1960) The site was visited in 1953 by Wendell Phillips, (Phillips, 1955 pg 41-47) and in 1959 it was photographed from the air by a British RAF pilot (photo on the next page). When the team of archeologists showed up in 1992 the local people housed them in three new buildings; so much for lost cities under the sands. Today there is a small village at Shis'r with a good road connecting it to Salalah, Oman, some 150 kilometers away.

The ruins at Shis'r were not very big; the size of many smaller villages or towns in the ancient world. Therefore the team did not believe it was Ubar. But once they started digging they began to wonder. It had what Ubar was supposed to have: towers, ruins and a well! However, most of the center of the



fortification had been destroyed by a large sinkhole, apparently formed when an underground cave collapsed.

As was mentioned earlier, the article in the New York Times seemed to indicate that this was a sensational discovery even though the site had been explored earlier by Thomas, Thesiger, and the British army in the 1950's. However, the size and the extent of the ruins were not understood until the excavations began in 1992.

Because of the size of the sinkhole, much of the interior of Shis'r caravansary was destroyed. The drawing on the next page is based on a drawing made by Dr. Juris Zarins, and demonstrates how the sink-hole destroyed much of the center of the fortification.

The ancient city of Ubar is the stuff of legends. When Philby was searching for the lost city of Ubar in the sands of Arabia, one of his Bedouin guides sang an old ballad of the lost city (Philby, H., 1933: 157) that went something like this:



*Above you can see a small two room modern building beside the sinkhole. Taken in the 1950s.*



*Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe*

*Above: Shis'r as seen on modern satellite photos. Note the sinkhole in the center of the large walled area. The entire site is located within these walls. The buildings at the top are used for storage for the excavation. Note the various other houses and buildings to the left to get an idea of the size of the site. The outline of the fort can be seen faintly around the sinkhole. It is obvious that the Shis'r site is very small indeed.*



Above: A drawing of the Shis'r site. It is basically a fortified area, probably a camel caravan loading or holding station. The date has yet to be established.

*From Qariya strike the sun upon the town,  
Blame not the guide that vainly seeks it now  
Since the Destroying Power laid it low  
Sparing not cotton smock or silken gown  
Hear the words of Ad, Kin'ad his son,  
Behold my castled town Auhar y'clept,  
Full ninety studs within its stalls I kept  
To hunt the quarry, small and great, upon..."*

The lost city of Ubar has long been associated with the lost people of 'Ad. Islamic historians have written about it and guessed at its location for centuries.

*'Ubar is the name of the land which belonged to Ad in the eastern part of Yemen. Today it is an untrodden desert, owing to the drying up of its water. There are to be found in it great buildings which the wind has smothered in sand. (Nashwān bin Sa'īd Ḥimyari, eleventh century).*

Unfortunately, the Islamic historians did not know where this lost land was, as is illustrated by the quotes below:

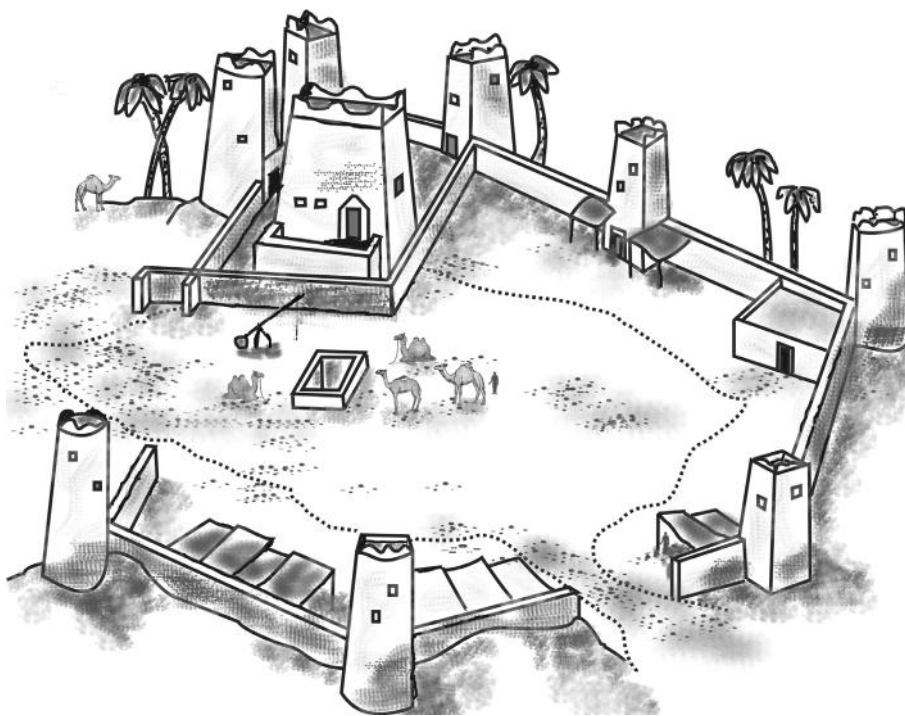
*Ubar is between the land of the Beni Sa'ad, El Shahr and Mohra* (Yāqūt)

*The land of the 'Ad is "from the sands of Alaj to the trees of Oman"* (Al Baydawī)

*Al Akaf (of 'Ad) is sand between Oman and Hadhramout* (Ibn Ishāq, cited in Yāqūt)

*Al Akaf (of 'Ad) is a valley between Oman and Mahra land* (Ibn Abbās, cited in Yāqūt)

*Irem dhat al hmad (Irem of the towers) is in the wilderness of Abyan* (Al Ḥamdānī)



*Above: Artist's rendition of how the Shis'r caravansary may have appeared.*



When the fortification at Shis'r was uncovered and proclaimed by John Noble to be the lost city of Ubar, joyful Muslims proclaimed that it was just as the Qur'ān described it. But is it? A few fortified walls seem to fall very short of the description in the Qur'ān where it tells us: *Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with Ad, Aram, possessors of lofty buildings, (pillars) The like of which were not created in the (other) cities.* (Qur'ān 89:6-8) Is this an accurate description of the ancient Shis'r caravansary? Why is it associated with Aram or ancient Syria as we noted in the previous chapter? Perhaps there is more to the puzzle than many imagine.

The illustration on the previous page is based on a similar drawing in Clapp's book showing how the caravansary may have appeared. The dotted circle in the center illustrates how large the current sinkhole is. As you can see, Shis'r was a small place with a few huts, some defensive towers, and a well in the center. If this was Ubar, then the legends certainly made it much greater than it actually was.

### Winds of Destruction

Consider how the people of 'Ad and their city of Ubar were destroyed. The Qur'ān clearly states:

*And the 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down! Then seest thou any of them left surviving?* (Qur'ān 89: 6-8)

One Muslim scholar has commented: *The wind that destroyed Ubar came from the Wadi alMughith* (Al Kisa'i)

But the Shis'r caravansary was destroyed differently. First of all, the caravansary was not a full-sized city, but rather a fortified area capable of protecting a small camel caravan. Second, it was destroyed by a sinkhole when the land caved downward due to a collapsing underground cave that was hollowed out by water action. The Qur'ān clearly tells us that the people of 'Ad were destroyed by a great wind. According to this evidence, I find it hard to believe that Shis'r is indeed the famed city of Ubar. The people of 'Ad, I believe, were in another place, as we will see in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 'AD AND THE BIBLE

One of the problems we have in locating the land of 'Ad is in the name itself. The word 'Ad does not come from an Arabic root, and it is not known in other ancient sources outside of Islam. However, I believe that if we look at the etymology behind 'Ad and discover how it could be written in other scripts, we will be able to find more references to 'Ad in other ancient sources.

In Arabic the word 'Ad is written ayn, alif daal. **آد** I believe this word may be an Arabic rendition of a much earlier word taken from the language of Eber from which all of the Semitic languages evolved. In the chart on the next page we can see some of the ancient Semitic alphabets. All of these are compared to the 28 letters of the Arabic script. Many of the ancient alphabets had fewer letters. This is because most of the earlier languages used fewer sounds than Arabic uses today.

So it is that the original language of Eber is lost to us today, and all we have are the languages that evolved from the one common root language. As Eber's offspring became more distant and their languages evolved over the centuries, individual pronunciations morphed into local dialects. Without a written alphabet, language can shift radically and vary from tribe to tribe, as is common with modern Arabic, especially in places like rural Yemen where illiterate people easily interchange sounds such as the ayn, alif, and hamzi. It is also possible to interchange consonants that are similar: ja ya, and ga are easily interchanged in modern Arabic, and some Yemeni dialects interchange za, ḍa, da, and tha. Therefore the name 'ad could be written 'aḍ, 'ath, or 'az.

In the same way, the vowel could also be changed with a wow sound replacing the aa sound. Therefore, I propose that the land of 'Ad and the biblical land of 'Uz could be considered the same place.



Nabataean	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖	𐤗	𐤘	𐤙	𐤚	𐤛	𐤜	𐤝	𐤞	𐤟	𐤠	𐤡	𐤢	𐤣	𐤤	𐤥	𐤦	𐤧	𐤨	𐤩	𐤪	𐤫	𐤬	𐤭	𐤮	𐤯	𐤰	𐤱	𐤲	𐤳	𐤴	𐤵	𐤶	𐤷	𐤸	𐤹	𐤺	𐤻	𐤼	𐤽	𐤾	𐤿	𐥀	𐥁	𐥂	𐥃	𐥄	𐥅	𐥆	𐥇	𐥈	𐥉	𐥊	𐥋	𐥌	𐥍	𐥎	𐥏	𐥐	𐥑	𐥒	𐥓	𐥔	𐥕	𐥖	𐥗	𐥘	𐥙	𐥚	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺	𐥻	𐥼	𐥽	𐥾	𐥿	𐦀	𐦁	𐦂	𐦃	𐦄	𐦅	𐦆	𐦇	𐦈	𐦉	𐦊	𐦋	𐦌	𐦍	𐦎	𐦏	𐦐	𐦑	𐦒	𐦓	𐦔	𐦕	𐦖	𐦗	𐦘	𐦙	𐦚	𐦛	𐦜	𐦝	𐦞	𐦟	𐦠	𐦡	𐦢	𐦣	𐦤	𐦥	𐦦	𐦧	𐦨	𐦩	𐦪	𐦫	𐦬	𐦭	𐦮	𐦯	𐦰	𐦱	𐦲	𐦳	𐦴	𐦵	𐦶	𐦷	𐦸	𐦹	𐦺	𐦻	𐦼	𐦽	𐦾	𐦿	𐧀	𐧁	𐧂	𐧃	𐧄	𐧅	𐧆	𐧇	𐧈	𐧉	𐧊	𐧋	𐧌	𐧍	𐧎	𐧏	𐧐	𐧑	𐧒	𐧓	𐧔	𐧕	𐧖	𐧗	𐧘	𐧙	𐧚	𐧛	𐧜	𐧝	𐧞	𐧟	𐧠	𐧡	𐧢	𐧣	𐧤	𐧥	𐧦	𐧧	𐧨	𐧩	𐧪	𐧫	𐧬	𐧭	𐧮	𐧯	𐧰	𐧱	𐧲	𐧳	𐧴	𐧵	𐧶	𐧷	𐧸	𐧹	𐧺	𐧻	𐧼	𐧽	𐧾	𐧿	𐨀	𐨁	𐨂	𐨃	𐨄	𐨅	𐨆	𐨇	𐨈	𐨉	𐨊	𐨋	𐨌	𐨍	𐨎	𐨏	𐨐	𐨑	𐨒	𐨓	𐨔	𐨕	𐨖	𐨗	𐨘	𐨙	𐨚	𐨛	𐨜	𐨝	𐨞	𐨟	𐨠	𐨡	𐨢	𐨣	𐨤	𐨥	𐨦	𐨧	𐨨	𐨩	𐨪	𐨫	𐨬	𐨭	𐨮	𐨯	𐨰	𐨱	𐨲	𐨳	𐨴	𐨵	𐨶	𐨷	𐨸	𐨹	𐨺	𐨻	𐨼	𐨽	𐨾	𐨿	𐩀	𐩁	𐩂	𐩃	𐩄	𐩅	𐩆	𐩇	𐩈	𐩉	𐩊	𐩋	𐩌	𐩍	𐩎	𐩏	𐩐	𐩑	𐩒	𐩓	𐩔	𐩕	𐩖	𐩗	𐩘	𐩙	𐩚	𐩛	𐩜	𐩝	𐩞	𐩟	𐩠	𐩡	𐩢	𐩣	𐩤	𐩥	𐩦	𐩧	𐩨	𐩩	𐩪	𐩫	𐩬	𐩭	𐩮	𐩯	𐩰	𐩱	𐩲	𐩳	𐩴	𐩵	𐩶	𐩷	𐩸	𐩹	𐩺	𐩻	𐩼	𐩽	𐩾	𐩿	𐪀	𐪁	𐪂	𐪃	𐪄	𐪅	𐪆	𐪇	𐪈	𐪉	𐪊	𐪋	𐪌	𐪍	𐪎	𐪏	𐪐	𐪑	𐪒	𐪓	𐪔	𐪕	𐪖	𐪗	𐪘	𐪙	𐪚	𐪛	𐪜	𐪝	𐪞	𐪟	𐪠	𐪡	𐪢	𐪣	𐪤	𐪥	𐪦	𐪧	𐪨	𐪩	𐪪	𐪫	𐪬	𐪭	𐪮	𐪯	𐪰	𐪱	𐪲	𐪳	𐪴	𐪵	𐪶	𐪷	𐪸	𐪹	𐪺	𐪻	𐪼	𐪽	𐪾	𐪿	𐫀	𐫁	𐫂	𐫃	𐫄	𐫅	𐫆	𐫇	𐫈	𐫉	𐫊	𐫋	𐫌	𐫍	𐫎	𐫏	𐫐	𐫑	𐫒	𐫓	𐫔	𐫕	𐫖	𐫗	𐫘	𐫙	𐫚	𐫛	𐫜	𐫝	𐫞	𐫟	𐫠	𐫡	𐫢	𐫣	𐫤	𐫥	𐫦	𐫧	𐫨	𐫩	𐫪	𐫫	𐫬	𐫭	𐫮	𐫯	𐫰	𐫱	𐫲	𐫳	𐫴	𐫵	𐫶	𐫷	𐫸	𐫹	𐫺	𐫻	𐫼	𐫽	𐫾	𐫿	𐬀	𐬁	𐬂	𐬃	𐬄	𐬅	𐬆	𐬇	𐬈	𐬉	𐬊	𐬋	𐬌	𐬍	𐬎	𐬏	𐬐	𐬑	𐬒	𐬓	𐬔	𐬕	𐬖	𐬗	𐬘	𐬙	𐬚	𐬛	𐬜	𐬝	𐬞	𐬟	𐬠	𐬡	𐬢	𐬣	𐬤	𐬥	𐬦	𐬧	𐬨	𐬩	𐬪	𐬫	𐬬	𐬭	𐬮	𐬯	𐬰	𐬱	𐬲	𐬳	𐬴	𐬵	𐬶	𐬷	𐬸	𐬹	𐬺	𐬻	𐬼	𐬽	𐬾	𐬿	𐭀	𐭁	𐭂	𐭃	𐭄	𐭅	𐭆	𐭇	𐭈	𐭉	𐭊	𐭋	𐭌	𐭍	𐭎	𐭏	𐭐	𐭑	𐭒	𐭓	𐭔	𐭕	𐭖	𐭗	𐭘	𐭙	𐭚	𐭛	𐭜	𐭝	𐭞	𐭟	𐭠	𐭡	𐭢	𐭣	𐭤	𐭥	𐭦	𐭧	𐭨	𐭩	𐭪	𐭫	𐭬	𐭭	𐭮	𐭯	𐭰	𐭱	𐭲	𐭳	𐭴	𐭵	𐭶	𐭷	𐭸	𐭹	𐭺	𐭻	𐭼	𐭽	𐭾	𐭿	𐮀	𐮁	𐮂	𐮃	𐮄	𐮅	𐮆	𐮇	𐮈	𐮉	𐮊	𐮋	𐮌	𐮍	𐮎	𐮏	𐮐	𐮑	𐮒	𐮓	𐮔	𐮕	𐮖	𐮗	𐮘	𐮙	𐮚	𐮛	𐮜	𐮝	𐮞	𐮟	𐮠	𐮡	𐮢	𐮣	𐮤	𐮥	𐮦	𐮧	𐮨	𐮩	𐮪	𐮫	𐮬	𐮭	𐮮	𐮯	𐮰	𐮱	𐮲	𐮳	𐮴	𐮵	𐮶	𐮷	𐮸	𐮹	𐮺	𐮻	𐮼	𐮽	𐮾	𐮿	𐯀	𐯁	𐯂	𐯃	𐯄	𐯅	𐯆	𐯇	𐯈	𐯉	𐯊	𐯋	𐯌	𐯍	𐯎	𐯏	𐯐	𐯑	𐯒	𐯓	𐯔	𐯕	𐯖	𐯗	𐯘	𐯙	𐯚	𐯛	𐯜	𐯝	𐯞	𐯟	𐯠	𐯡	𐯢	𐯣	𐯤	𐯥	𐯦	𐯧	𐯨	𐯩	𐯪	𐯫	𐯬	𐯭	𐯮	𐯯	𐯰	𐯱	𐯲	𐯳	𐯴	𐯵	𐯶	𐯷	𐯸	𐯹	𐯺	𐯻	𐯼	𐯽	𐯾	𐯿	𐰀	𐰁	𐰂	𐰃	𐰄	𐰅	𐰆	𐰇	𐰈	𐰉	𐰊	𐰋	𐰌	𐰍	𐰎	𐰏	𐰐	𐰑	𐰒	𐰓	𐰔	𐰕	𐰖	𐰗	𐰘	𐰙	𐰚	𐰛	𐰜	𐰝	𐰞	𐰟	𐰠	𐰡	𐰢	𐰣	𐰤	𐰥	𐰦	𐰧	𐰨	𐰩	𐰪	𐰫	𐰬	𐰭	𐰮	𐰯	𐰰	𐰱	𐰲	𐰳	𐰴	𐰵	𐰶	𐰷	𐰸	𐰹	𐰺	𐰻	𐰼	𐰽	𐰾	𐰿	𐱀	𐱁	𐱂	𐱃	𐱄	𐱅	𐱆	𐱇	𐱈	𐱉	𐱊	𐱋	𐱌	𐱍	𐱎	𐱏	𐱐	𐱑	𐱒	𐱓	𐱔	𐱕	𐱖	𐱗	𐱘	𐱙	𐱚	𐱛	𐱜	𐱝	𐱞	𐱟	𐱠	𐱡	𐱢	𐱣	𐱤	𐱥	𐱦	𐱧	𐱨	𐱩	𐱪	𐱫	𐱬	𐱭	𐱮	𐱯	𐱰	𐱱	𐱲	𐱳	𐱴	𐱵	𐱶	𐱷	𐱸	𐱹	𐱺	𐱻	𐱼	𐱽	𐱾	𐱿	𐲀	𐲁	𐲂	𐲃	𐲄	𐲅	𐲆	𐲇	𐲈	𐲉	𐲊	𐲋	𐲌	𐲍	𐲎	𐲏	𐲐	𐲑	𐲒	𐲓	𐲔	𐲕	𐲖	𐲗	𐲘	𐲙	𐲚	𐲛	𐲜	𐲝	𐲞	𐲟	𐲠	𐲡	𐲢	𐲣	𐲤	𐲥	𐲦	𐲧	𐲨	𐲩	𐲪	𐲫	𐲬	𐲭	𐲮	𐲯	𐲰	𐲱	𐲲	𐲳	𐲴	𐲵	𐲶	𐲷	𐲸	𐲹	𐲺	𐲻	𐲼	𐲽	𐲾	𐲿	𐳀	𐳁	𐳂	𐳃	𐳄	𐳅	𐳆	𐳇	𐳈	𐳉	𐳊	𐳋	𐳌	𐳍	𐳎	𐳏	𐳐	𐳑	𐳒	𐳓	𐳔	𐳕	𐳖	𐳗	𐳘	𐳙	𐳚	𐳛	𐳜	𐳝	𐳞	𐳟	𐳠	𐳡	𐳢	𐳣	𐳤	𐳥	𐳦	𐳧	𐳨	𐳩	𐳪	𐳫	𐳬	𐳭	𐳮	𐳯	𐳰	𐳱	𐳲	𐳳	𐳴	𐳵	𐳶	𐳷	𐳸	𐳹	𐳺	𐳻	𐳼	𐳽	𐳾	𐳿	𐴀	𐴁	𐴂	𐴃	𐴄	𐴅	𐴆	𐴇	𐴈	𐴉	𐴊	𐴋	𐴌	𐴍	𐴎	𐴏	𐴐	𐴑	𐴒	𐴓	𐴔	𐴕	𐴖	𐴗	𐴘	𐴙	𐴚	𐴛	𐴜	𐴝	𐴞	𐴟	𐴠	𐴡	𐴢	𐴣	𐴤	𐴥	𐴦	𐴧	𐴨	𐴩	𐴪	𐴫	𐴬	𐴭	𐴮	𐴯	𐴰	𐴱	𐴲	𐴳	𐴴	𐴵	𐴶	𐴷	𐴸	𐴹	𐴺	𐴻	𐴼	𐴽	𐴾	𐴿	𐵀	𐵁	𐵂	𐵃	𐵄	𐵅	𐵆	𐵇	𐵈	𐵉	𐵊	𐵋	𐵌	𐵍	𐵎	𐵏	𐵐	𐵑	𐵒	𐵓	𐵔	𐵕	𐵖	𐵗	𐵘	𐵙	𐵚	𐵛	𐵜	𐵝	𐵞	𐵟	𐵠	𐵡	𐵢	𐵣	𐵤	𐵥	𐵦	𐵧	𐵨	𐵩	𐵪	𐵫	𐵬	𐵭	𐵮	𐵯	𐵰	𐵱	𐵲	𐵳	𐵴	𐵵	𐵶	𐵷	𐵸	𐵹	𐵺	𐵻	𐵼	𐵽	𐵾	𐵿	𐶀	𐶁	𐶂	𐶃	𐶄	𐶅	𐶆	𐶇	𐶈	𐶉	𐶊	𐶋	𐶌	𐶍	𐶎	𐶏	𐶐	𐶑	𐶒	𐶓	𐶔	𐶕	𐶖	𐶗	𐶘	𐶙	𐶚	𐶛	𐶜	𐶝	𐶞	𐶟	𐶠	𐶡	𐶢	𐶣	𐶤	𐶥	𐶦	𐶧	𐶨	𐶩	𐶪	𐶫	𐶬	𐶭	𐶮	𐶯	𐶰	𐶱	𐶲	𐶳	𐶴	𐶵	𐶶	𐶷	𐶸	𐶹	𐶺	𐶻	𐶼	𐶽	𐶾	𐶿	𐷀	𐷁	𐷂	𐷃	𐷄	𐷅	𐷆	𐷇	𐷈	𐷉	𐷊	𐷋	𐷌	𐷍	𐷎	𐷏	𐷐	𐷑	𐷒	𐷓	𐷔	𐷕	𐷖	𐷗	𐷘	𐷙	𐷚	𐷛	𐷜	𐷝	𐷞	𐷟	𐷠	𐷡	𐷢	𐷣	𐷤	𐷥	𐷦	𐷧	𐷨	𐷩	𐷪	𐷫	𐷬	𐷭	𐷮	𐷯	𐷰	𐷱	𐷲	𐷳	𐷴	𐷵	𐷶	𐷷	𐷸	𐷹	𐷺	𐷻	𐷼	𐷽	𐷾	𐷿	𐸀	𐸁	𐸂	𐸃	𐸄	𐸅	𐸆	𐸇	𐸈	𐸉	𐸊	𐸋	𐸌	𐸍	𐸎	𐸏	𐸐	𐸑	𐸒	𐸓	𐸔	𐸕	𐸖	𐸗	𐸘	𐸙	𐸚	𐸛	𐸜	𐸝	𐸞	𐸟	𐸠	𐸡	𐸢	𐸣	𐸤	𐸥	𐸦	𐸧	𐸨	𐸩	𐸪	𐸫	𐸬	𐸭	𐸮	𐸯	𐸰	𐸱	𐸲	𐸳	𐸴	𐸵	𐸶	𐸷	𐸸	𐸹	𐸺	𐸻	𐸼	𐸽	𐸾	𐸿	𐹀	𐹁	𐹂	𐹃	𐹄	𐹅	𐹆	𐹇	𐹈	𐹉	𐹊	𐹋	𐹌	𐹍	𐹎	𐹏	𐹐	𐹑	𐹒	𐹓	𐹔	𐹕	𐹖	𐹗
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Since we now have a possible location for 'Ad, we need to compare the descriptions of 'Ad in the Qur'ān with Edom in the Bible. If these are close, then we can begin to look for more historical links between the two.

**'Ad in the Qur'ān**

mountainous  
 high places  
 strongholds in rocks  
 cattle  
 gardens  
 springs  
 many columns  
 associated with Thamud  
 towering rocks  
 deep valleys  
 connected with Pharaoh

**Uz in the land of Edom**

mountainous  
 high places  
 strongholds in rocks  
 cattle  
 gardens  
 mountains have springs  
 Edomite temples had columns  
 associated with Thamud  
 towering rocks  
 deep valleys  
 connected to Pharaoh (see chapter 7)

Having established a strong link between the 'Ad and Edom, we will spend the rest of this chapter examining the Edomite's origins.

**The mixed origin of the Edomites**

Much more space is given to the origins of the Edomites in the book of Genesis than to any other non-Israelite nation. There must be a reason for this. Ishmael's descendants for instance, are dismissed in just seven verses (Genesis 25:12-18); all the nations of the Canaanites, so familiar to the Israelites, are disposed of in only six verses (Genesis 10:15-20); but a whole chapter of no less than forty-three verses is devoted entirely to the origins of Edom. (Genesis 36)

Moses, who is commonly believed to be the author or compiler, is constrained to turn from his main subject and give quite a lengthy, though most compact digression, covering the details of Esau's descendents, to tell of the people they intermingled with and overwhelmed, to catalogue the early sheiks of this nation, and to list the first eight leaders. This is a most striking fact, from an author who otherwise wrote right to the point, and who does not diverge from his main theme.

The obvious reason for this lengthy digression is that Esau's descendents the Edomites were looked upon, at that time, as of great national or international importance, a people not to be passed over lightly. The subject was something not to be quickly missed and forgotten, but needed to be recorded and preserved for future reference. The statement is repeatedly made in Genesis 36, "*Esau is Edom.*" Edom was therefore an important name in the day when the book of Genesis was written. It is pointedly stressed that this Esau, the brother of Jacob, was the progenitor of this important nation. Edom is therefore accorded a very unusual place of distinction and significance.

If Edom once ruled the Arabian Peninsula, as we shall soon suggest, then

the origin of the Edomites would indeed call for more than usual attention by the hand of the ancient historian.

The theory is, in short, that the Edomite Empire was actually an Edomite led alliance of related tribes, all of whom were descendants of Abraham or his father Terah. I believe we can demonstrate from history that this Edomite Empire bloomed and blossomed early, but then quickly faded, withered and perished from sight. It was remembered in Arabia however, because it was the first time that the Arabian Peninsula was united under one banner. Therefore the Arabs in Muḥammad's time would look back and remember a time when Arabia was a formidable force in the world.

### Esau's parentage

Esau is said to be the founder of the nation Edom. He was a twin brother of Jacob, the son of the Patriarch Isaac, and grandson of Abraham "the Hebrew." (Genesis 14: 13) All of these men were "shepherds." Racially Esau was a "Hebrew," a Semitic person.

Esau's mother was Rebecca. She was an industrious woman who in her youth undertook the watering of a camel caravan, and camels can be quite thirsty! She readily forsook her father's home in the city of Nahor in northern Mesopotamia (Genesis 24:10) to marry a man she had never met, but whom she knew to be a worshipper of one God and a "one and only God" to the entire exclusion of all other gods. This man was the inheritor of certain peculiar promises and covenants of that God; whose name was *Jehovah*. Her father was Bethuel, the "Syrian" (Genesis 24:15; 28:5), son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. Bethuel lived in or near the city of Haran (Genesis 29:4), the same city that Abraham himself had also resided in for a number of years after leaving the city of Ur. (Genesis 11: 27-32)

I would think it to be a major error to imagine that the Semitic Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were mere wandering nomads of little or no significance in the world of their day. Such views are sometimes expressed. In the Biblical account they are definitely pictured as men of high social standing, men of influence, importance, and of considerable wealth and power. They are set forth more in the nature of princes who had renounced their former national connections with the great, powerful cities of Ur and Haran, and as a consequence had no country or people to which they owed allegiance any longer. Forsaking city life they deliberately chose a nomadic way of living, "*looking for a future city*" which their God would give them.

Abraham's brother Nahor appears to be the progenitor of a people occupying the general region around Haran. The name Nahor appears upon ancient

cuneiform tablets referring to this district. The cuneiform text reads *Nahūr*. This was an important dependency controlled by governors from Mari, one of whom was “Itur-asdu at Nahor.” (Jewish Virtual Library, 2008) Egyptian monuments not many generations after the times of the Patriarchs refer to the “Naharain” in the region of Northern Mesopotamia. (Sacred Texts, 1890)

Jacob’s uncle Laban seems to be a man of wealth and of power. Indications are he was of unusual importance, as his name seems to be remembered throughout a wide area in Syria. It may be that it is preserved in the name of the mountain range and the national name of “*Lebanon*” to this day. Unimportant people do not usually have the distinction of having districts and mountains named after them.

The peoples of Mesopotamia had their own written records and their traditions regarding their ancestors. If these early Hebrew stories regarding their ancestors in Mesopotamia had been pure fiction, or if they had no genuine relationship to the men of Nahor and to Laban, surely the Hebrew accounts would have been “*laughed out of court*” by the men of those days. The fact that the Biblical accounts survived as sober history seems to indicate that these accounts were accepted then and received no serious challenge. The claims of the Hebrews must have been accepted as common knowledge at the time. Therefore, we are confronted by evidence that the families from which the Hebrews of the Bible originated were prominent and of no small standing. It follows that Abraham would be well educated and not an insignificant nomad.

Those who hold that the names in the Biblical record such as “Terah” and “Nahor” refer only to tribes or clans of those names, and not to genuine persons, still must concede that such tribes or clans must have been important and powerful, because their names stand out on clay tablets and became attached to places and mountains. Therefore, even if we were to view these Hebrew stories as personifying tribes and clans, we are still forced to reach the same conclusions. The Hebrews originated from persons (or tribes) of importance and power.

Let’s look at Abraham himself. His retinue and followers when he first came into the Land of Canaan constituted an element of such military significance that the Amorites of Mamre (a place later called Hebron) found it to their advantage to become his confederates. (Genesis 14:13-14) Abraham called them to the war against Chedorlaomer, a mighty king of Elam. No little nomad would undertake such a war.

Melchizedek, King of Salem, highly honored Abraham. (Gen. 14:18-19) We have to notice too that Lot, Abraham’s nephew, very quickly rose to a seat of authority and recognition in the city of Sodom, a place of such wealth and

prosperity that Chedorlaomer traveled many miles with his army to secure it. The very early Philistine settlement at Gerar (the great Philistine immigration came generations later) feared the military strength of both Abraham and Isaac. (Genesis 21:22-32; 26:16, 23-33) To the Hittites, Abraham was a prince (Genesis 23.6) which points to a man of distinction and power. Esau, the father of the Edomites, came from such an illustrious Semitic family as this.

### **Esau's great mistake**

Early in life Esau manifested a materialistic tendency. He showed low esteem for the spiritual values wrapped up in the religion of his grandfather Abraham who claimed he had a covenant involving blessing to the whole earth. This blessing was to come through a promised "Seed," as well as numerous "seed" or posterity, and the ultimate possession of all the Land of Canaan. Esau was more concerned with the immediate and the present, not with promises which were "afar off" and on which Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebecca set so much store. (Hebrews 11:13) This trait of character showed itself in the famous "mess of pottage" incident. Esau despised his birthright by selling it to his twin brother Jacob for food when he was hungry and famished. The food was material and the birthright was "spiritual."

Later the wily Jacob, through lies and deception, stole the prophetic blessing which the aged and blind Isaac still purposed to give to his favorite son Esau. For this theft Jacob indeed paid dear in later life, reaping a terrible harvest through his sons who, in turn, lied and deceived him for a number of years concerning his favorite son Joseph. How well the sons learned from their father!

Esau was outraged at the loss of his father's blessing, as it included certain promises of material gain such as he craved. However, he found no way of repentance (Hebrews 12:16-17), and became an everlasting example of the tragedy of a fatal, wrong choice which cannot be remedied.

So extreme was Esau's anger that he began to plot the murder of his twin brother. Jacob then fled and was absent from the land of Canaan for twenty years, becoming a stranger living at Haran in Mesopotamia.

During this twenty year period, Esau and Jacob each amassed additional great wealth in cattle and lesser livestock. Then Jacob returned to Palestine. When the brothers met, Esau was pacified; the two were happily reconciled, and the old hatred was put away. We hear of no further trouble between them after this.

## Esau's marriages

At the age of forty, before Jacob stole the blessing, Esau had married two wives, both Hittites of the Canaanite nations. This was a direct flouting of the family's sacred traditions. It was another clear demonstration of a basic despising of the religion of his father and grandfather which forbade such ties with the Canaanites. Isaac especially loved Esau, but Esau did not care for his father's wishes and did not fully return that love. Esau was obviously seeking immediate material and social advantages for himself alone by joining affinity with prominent Hittite families. As we will see later, he was quite successful in gaining material and social advantage, but the price was the utter and final loss of the spiritual birthright, for later it is written "*Esau have I hated.*" (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2)

Some people are sorely puzzled over the account of Esau's wives and have even questioned the accuracy of the text. The follow paragraphs help our study and may clear up some seeming contradictions.

### Esau's first wife, Judith-Aholibamah

Esau's first wife was Judith. She was the daughter of Beeri, a Hittite. In Genesis 36:2 this woman is also called "Aholibamah." It was very common in those days for persons to bear more than one name. Almost endless examples could be cited, such as Abram=Abraham; Sarai=Sarah; Jacob=Israel; Esau=Edom; Ben-oni=Benjamin; Zaphnath paneah=Joseph; and so on. So also this woman is known by two names, Judith=Aholibamah. For the sake of our study, we will use the first name, Judith. Judith's mother was Anah, and Anah was the daughter of Zibeon, a Hivite. (Genesis 36:2) This woman Anah is not to be confused with a man named Anah, of whom we shall speak later. Therefore Judith, while Hittite on her father's side (Genesis 26:34), was Hivite through her mother. By marrying her, Esau cleverly obtained family connections with both the Hittites (the children of Heth) and the Hivites, two prominent early Canaanite nations.

From Esau's point of view in looking for material and social advantage, he had made a brilliant move. This was Esau's fall. Apparently Abraham's God turned from him, and from then on God's hand was directed toward Jacob in protection, guidance, and discipline, to make him the grand character he became in later life. Three children were born in the land of Canaan through his first wife: Jeush, Jaelam, and Korah. All three became sheiks in the later Edomite government (Genesis 36:5, 18), but they do not appear to rank as high or to have been as prominent as the children of Esau's other wives. In fact, in listing the sheiks



descended from Esau in Genesis 36:15-19, this wife and her children are given last place, as being in honor of a lower rank than the others.

### **Esau's second wife, Bashemath-Adah**

Esau's second wife, (though he appears to have married both women at about the same time (Genesis 26:34) was Bashemath or Adah. (Another instance of dual names) She was the daughter of Elon, a Hittite. In Genesis 36:10 this woman is named first and so evidently became Esau's chief wife.

Her only named son is Eliphaz. He is called Esau's "firstborn" (Genesis 36:16), so was evidently older than Esau's other children. This name "Eliphaz" should be kept in mind, as we will speak of this son in a later chapter. This marriage also linked Esau with the Hittites of Canaan.

### **Esau's third wife, Mahalath-Bathshemath**

Esau's third wife was taken much later than the other two. After Jacob had fled to Haran, Esau came to a better realization of how displeasing his Canaanite wives were to his father and mother, and that his marriages, made for personal advantage, were largely the root cause of losing his father's blessing which he now coveted. In a desperate effort to remedy an already hopeless and lost case, he stayed true to form and again resorted to scheming a marriage to get what he wanted.

According to the religion of his family, the Canaanites lay under the curse of utter destruction. (Genesis 16:16) Therefore, Esau now sought a woman linked racially and religiously with his father's people. Evidently he hoped that both he and the children from such a marriage could yet inherit the blessing of Abraham. He may have thought that he could force Isaac to let him inherit the blessing, if he could succeed in his plan to murder Jacob. Jacob was unmarried as yet. If Jacob died childless, the blessing would have to revert to himself. Esau foresaw, however, that even with Jacob dead and out of the way, he would still have trouble because of his Hittite wives whose children could not come into this distinctively Hebrew blessing. To overcome this obstacle he negotiated a third marriage, this time taking a Hebrew wife. He would create a Hebraic line of descent which could inherit the blessing of Abraham!

So this time he went eastward into the Arabian Desert to the young, growing tribe of Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, and married Mahalath or Bathshemath, Ishmael's daughter. (Genesis 28:6-9) She was, in fact, his half-cousin.

However Bathshemath, this third wife, although a Hebrewess was not pure Hebrew. It is true, she had no Canaanite blood in her, but in actuality she was half Egyptian, since both her mother and her grandmother Hagar were



Egyptian women. (Genesis 21:21) The important point for Esau was her Hebrew connections, and that she was not Canaanite. This woman had only one son named Ruel. (Genesis 36:4, 10) We will refer to Ruel again.

### **The racial mixture of the Edomites**

From what we have covered so far we can see that in their origin the Edomites (the descendents of Esau) were a mixture of Hebrew, Hittite, Hivite, Ishmaelite (that is, Arabian) and Egyptian people. But that is not all. As we shall see later, the Edomites had intermingled with the Horites at an early date. The Horites were a settled people of the northeast part of the Sinai Peninsula, lying easterly from Lower Egypt.

### **The birth of the Kingdom of Edom**

After Jacob returned from Haran in Padan-Aram at which time he and Esau were reconciled, events began to move rapidly. (Genesis 32-33) Jacob sojourned for a short while near the city of Shechem. (Genesis 33 18-20) Esau had part of his extensive herds and flocks in “Seir” that is, in the land we know today as Edom, while the rest of his herds and flocks were with his father Isaac at Beersheba in southern Canaan.

A quarrel soon arose between Jacob’s family and the Hivites in the city of Shechem which ended with Simeon and Levi, two of Jacob’s sons, leading a furious, surprise attack on the city and slaying all the adult men. The wealth of the city was seized, and the women and children carried captive. (Genesis 34: 25-29) Jacob was very disturbed over this, fearing all the surrounding Canaanite tribes or nations would unite to attack him with overwhelming odds. (Genesis 34:30)

This particular incident gives us an insight into the large number of “servants” held by Jacob, and the military strength of his followers and of the patriarchs generally. Jacob had enough men at his bidding to have no particular fear of any single Canaanite tribe, but this military act of his angry sons might be expected to incite a united attack of such force that he could not withstand.

The attack never came. One element that might have had a bearing on this might be fear the Canaanites felt of reprisals from Jacob’s powerful relatives, his father Isaac, his brother Esau, and even the more distant relatives in Haran. In any event, “the terror of God” fell upon the Canaanite cities and they left Jacob and his followers alone. (Genesis 35:5)

Jacob hurriedly began moving his whole retinue, his flocks and herds southward to be nearer Isaac and Esau. He paused at Beth-el and then moved on southwards. Finding he was not pursued, he established his headquarters

near Edar for a while. Then he continued on southward and finally came to Beersheba where Isaac lived. He found Isaac physically feeble, advanced in age and blind, yet evidently mentally alert, controlling, and directing the business affairs of his own great cattle herds.

A new problem now arose. Jacob and Esau each had great herds. The combined consumption of pasture was more than the area could provide. There was not enough grass. However, there is no record of strife or quarrel between the reconciled brothers. A satisfactory solution was arrived at.

### **Esau does what is right**

Mellowed, Jacob seems to now take over the leadership of the family. Isaac, greatly handicapped by loss of sight and evidently weak and frail in body, hands over the family authority and priesthood to Jacob, as well as his own possessions and wealth. Jacob now holds the religious title to the promised possession of the Land of Canaan, handed down from its first recipient Abraham. Esau then moved his servants and his herds out of the Land of Canaan, a territory he now recognized as assigned to his twin brother, and transferred everything south into the land of "Seir." (Genesis 36:6-7) As we will see throughout the latter part of this book, the land of Seir will become central to the whole background of the Qur'ān. This area is located in present day Jordan, in the mountains between Aqaba and the Dead Sea.

### **The Horites**

A people called "Horites" or "Horims" lived in the country of Seir, and Esau's family, the Edomites, began to intermarry with them. For many centuries the Horites were entirely unknown to scholars outside of the few references in the Bible. The Horites were thought to be just an insignificant and rather unimportant little desert tribe. After the rise of the higher critical views, some suggested that they were nothing more than a fable, a product of the imagination of the Biblical writer's mind. This was so until the archaeologist's spade began to unearth information about them. Today we view them in an very different light. The Horites were an important and far reaching factor in early times, but were later completely forgotten except for what the Bible preserved. This point alone demonstrates both the great importance and real value of the Biblical records, and that the Biblical record does indeed reach back an exceedingly long way into forgotten history. What the Bible has done in preserving the memory of the Horites illustrates how it may have preserved still earlier records which some modern scholars think are only myths and vague uncertain traditions.

Thanks to the diligent activities of archaeologists and scholars, the Horites have been brought to light. We now find frequent mention of them on ancient monuments and on clay tablets. The Egyptians called one district south of Canaan by the name, “Khar” or “Hor.” It reminds us of Mount Hor in the region of Seir where the Horites lived. The references to these people in the clay tablets was formerly translated “Harri,” but is now more correctly given as “Hurri,” a phonetically close equivalent of “Hori.” (Genesis 36:22)

The Horites who were living south of Canaan, as we learn from the Biblical account, were under the leadership of a family descended from a man named “Seir the Horite.” (Genesis 36:20) The district later became known as “Seir” after his name. They were the inhabitants of this area in Abraham’s time, and were looked upon as such important allies of the king of Sodom that Chedorlaomer the king of Elam felt he needed to defeat them first before he could safely attack Sodom itself. (Genesis 14:1-7) The region called “Mount Seir” at that time apparently extended westward as far as El-paran (possibly “Nakl” near the center of the Sinai Peninsula) beyond which lay the Wilderness of Shur, stretching to the borders of Egypt (Genesis 14:6), although most ancient writers refer to Mount Seir as the mountains of Edom.

Later the term is used of both sides of the Arabah Valley, and more recently many have confined it to the east side only. This helps explain how it is that the names “Paran” “Seir” and “Sinai” are synonymous with “Horeb,” the Mount of the Law. (Deuteronomy 33: 2; Habakkuk. 3: 3) The statement that there are eleven days journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea “by way of Mount Seir” (Deuteronomy 1:2) is seen to be quite natural, if “Mount Seir” included the ring of mountains along the southern edge of the desert plateau of the Sinai, known to the Arabs as Jebel el Tih. These mountains have to be crossed when going from Sinai to southern Canaan where Kadesh-barnea was located.

## A Horite Kingdom

Archaeology has revealed that there was a Hurrian (Horite) Kingdom in Mesopotamia. (Silverman, 1995) It was east of the Kingdom of Mitanni. Mitanni occupied land on both sides of the Euphrates River north of Carchemish as seen from the archives of Nuzi in Yorgan Tepe. (Lion, 1998) The Hurri and the Mitanni, we learn, were closely related peoples, and these in turn were related to the Hittites of Asia Minor. (Barton, 1937, pg 74-93) The language of the Hurri is said to be non Indo-European. Ancient Muslim and Jewish people would have said “not Japhetic”; that is, not of the nations descending from Japheth the elder son of Noah.

Neither, it seems, is the Hurri language to be classed as Semitic. It appears it would be Hamitic, using the word “Hamitic” in its broadest sense as including all languages which are neither Indo-European nor Semitic. The Bible does not state where the Horites came from, but the inference from the language of the Hurri is that they came from Ham, Noah’s younger son.

Archaeologists have found to their surprise that the Horites were not confined to the above mentioned kingdom. The Bible itself tells of the one group of these people south of Canaan. But mention of the Hurri or Horites has cropped up in unexpected places in Assyria and Babylonia. In the city Nuzu near modern Kirkuk in Iraq, the Hurrians became a very strong element soon after 1800 BC. In fact, they seemed to dominate much of the Near East at that time. Some 131 Hurrian clay tablets were also found under the ruins of a temple at Shimshara in the Dokan Plain. (For further information see *Studies in the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians*, vol. 7: Edith Porada Memorial Volume and also vol. 8: Richard F. S. Starr Memorial Volume)

These two peoples, Esau’s family the Edomites and the leading Horite family of Seir, began to intermarry. Eliphaz, Esau’s eldest son, married Timna the sister of Lotan and the daughter of Seir (Genesis 36: 12, 20, 22). From this marriage to a Horitess, Amalek was born. He grew up to become a sheik of Edom and is considered to be the progenitor of the Amalekites. According to this view, the Amalekites would have originally been a sub-tribe of Edom. (Some people have suggested that the Amalekites might have been the Hyksos, but, as we shall show later, the Amalekites were simply a sub-tribe of the larger Edomite led alliance during the time that is in question) (For more information on the parallels between the Hyksos and the Amalekites see <http://www.specialtyinterests.net/hyksos.html#amada>)

The Amalekites later inhabited some parts of the desert plateau of Sinai that had previously been occupied by the Horites. In Genesis 14:7 we read that Chedorlaomer smote the country of the Amalekites when it would appear that the Amalekites were not yet in existence at the time. The simple explanation is that the account refers to the country occupied by the Amalekites at the time Genesis was written. In just the same way we might say the American Indians were roaming across Canada before Columbus set sail, when in fact there was no such country as Canada in existence then. We mean, of course, what is Canada now. In the same way the author of Genesis meant that Chedorlaomer smote the county to which the Amalekites later gave their name: he did not state that the Amalekites were smitten, which would have been an error. Horites most likely occupied the territory at that time.

## The Egyptians had no “L”

The Egyptians had no letter “L” in their language (Barton, 4th edition, pg 335, footnote) and so they substituted “R” for “L” in foreign names.

The Horite name Lotan was difficult for the Egyptian scribes. Dr. Barton tells us they substituted “R” for “L” and called it “Rutenu.” This name is found in records of the time of the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt (2000 BC to 1788 BC), demonstrating that the name “Lotan” was in use at that time. Indeed, the name “Upper Rutenu” seems to indicate highlands in Syria, while “Lower Rutenu” appears to apply to some district in the general region which is assigned in the Bible to the Horites, where Lotan was a leader. Therefore there can be little doubt that “Lower Rutenu” in the Egyptian records refers to the district of the “Lotan” of Genesis 36: 12, 20, 22 and may be a source for the later name Rekem which was attributed to Mt. Seir by the Nabataeans.

This name Rutenu or Lotan is used in the Tale of Sinuhe during the reign of Sesostri I of the XII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, about 1950 BC This demonstrates that the name was in use at that time.

During the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty we meet with a new name for the Bedouin from Asia, the “Shasu.” The Department of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City informed the Americana Institute of Canada, in response to our inquiry some years ago that it did not know of earlier references to “Shasu” other than those of the first half of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. We inquired because several authorities in their works on Egypt had used the term “Shasu” in reference to earlier periods. However this appears to have been a mistake created when reading a name back into an earlier period that belonged strictly to a later period of time. The Shasu or Bedouin first appear in Egyptian history about 1500 BC despite some modern writers who mention them earlier. There is no earlier record of them and it may be presumed they were not present in the deserts east of Lower Egypt very much earlier than this date. Evidently the Shasu were newcomers to the area.

If one takes the time to examine maps covering the region of Edom, as put out by various Egyptologists, it will be found that the names for Edom (“Seir,” “Aduma” etc) are very curiously pushed from one place to another to make room for the name “Shasu,” which is frequently splashed generously around the whole region from the Isthmus of Suez to the Arabian Desert east of Moab, including all the northerly part of the Sinai Peninsula to the southern parts of Palestine. Yet with all this crowding of the one name over top of the other, it does not appear to have occurred to anyone that the two might refer to the same peoples! While we do not claim positive identification, it appears feasible that the Shasu are either the Edomites or a name inclusive of Edomites,

Amalekites, Ishmaelites, and possibly Midianites, or an alliance of all of these. The word “Shasu” means “plunderers” and “robbers,” an epithet befitting their characteristic of exacting heavy tolls on all who passed through those regions. In any case, it is striking to note that “Rutanu” (Lotan) was replaced by “Shasu” somewhere between the XII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, just as the Bible states the Horites were replaced by the Edomites about that time.

Once the Hurri (or Horites) of Seir and the Edomites unified they budded into a small, new kingdom. Next we will look into their king-list as it contains hints and implications of rapid growth and expansion.

## The Language of 'Ad

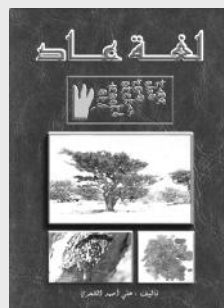
by 'Ali Ahmed al-Shahri

Published in Abu Dhabi, 2000 AD

This book contains over 400 pages in Arabic and an additional 160 pages in English. It contains no footnotes, references, or bibliography. Despite this, it does contain some good information, especially photos and illustrations of petroglyphs from the Dhofar province of Oman.

One can understand 'Ali's unquestioning opinion that Arabic was the first language, as it is considered the language of Allāh and therefore would have to be the language of Adam and Eve. However, 'Ali considers all ancient documents to be confused, and only the Qur'ān and Arabic tradition to be correct. (Page A & C; English translation) Rather than basing his book on years of research, 'Ali admits on page C that “What we are writing here comes to us spontaneously, while we are thinking about this Arabian Peninsula making its contribution to the world.”

'Ali notes that “many Arabs consider the lands of southern Arabia, and the Dhofar province in particular to be associated with the people of 'Ad and interestingly enough with the land of Uz and the person of Job.” While we also agree that the land of 'Ad may be the land of 'Uz (which was the homeland to the person of Job) Yemen makes an equal claim, and also has a tomb for the prophet Job. Job is also associated with north Arabia, Jordan, and also Iraq. So even though local traditions may go far back into history, actually locating the people of 'Ad is much more difficult than just finding Job or 'Ad in those local traditions.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE KINGS OF 'AD

#### **The early date of the king list**

The Kingdom of Edom ('Ad) was formed soon after Esau moved all his possessions into Seir, as is evidenced by the genealogy of Jobab the second king in the kinglist in Genesis 36. We will have much to say of this king in the next chapter.

Ruel, one of Esau's later sons, was born before Esau finally left Canaan. (Genesis 36:4) Ruel's mother, as we mentioned before, was Mahalath or Bathshemath, a daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael was the progenitor of a number of tribes inhabiting Northern Arabia. (Genesis 25:13-16) Therefore Ruel was part Arabian; that is, part Ishmaelite.

Ruel had four sons. All became sheiks of Edom, the name of the second being Zerah. (Genesis 36:13, 17) A little further on Zerah is named as the father of Jobab who is the second king of Edom. (Genesis 36:33) Linking these together we find that Jobab, the second king, was a great-grandson to Esau.

On this basis, the Edomite kinglist given in Genesis belongs to a very early period of Edomite history. The first king Bela would be a contemporary of Zerah the grandson of Esau. In other words, if Esau enjoyed a life about as long as his twin brother Jacob, he could possibly have seen the first king reigning, or it may be that the first king was chosen when Esau the leader died.

#### **"Before any king over Israel"**

The Edomite kinglist opens with the words: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." (Genesis 36:31) This statement is not necessarily a reference to the

setting up of the Israelite monarchy under King Saul many centuries later. These two events are probably separated too far in history to have any bearing upon one another. The events are recorded in different books and by different writers. Such an understanding and application of these words entirely missed the whole significance that was in the writer's mind when he wrote them, overlooking the very point which made Israel, even before the conquest of Canaan, such a "peculiar people" in the eyes of all other nations.

Everyone can see that the writer of the stories of Jacob and Joseph in the book of Genesis was passionately monotheistic, one who believed with all his heart and soul in "One Lord God" and in the worship of that one God alone. His words must absolutely not be viewed apart from that primary and deep-seated conviction. Early Israel, after the Exodus, considered itself to be a kingdom, yet without an earthly or human king. In many countries and nations even down to Japan in recent times, the people viewed their king as their god. It was not so in ancient Israel: their God was also their king, their ruler. (Deuteronomy 33:5; Judges 8:22-2:3; I. Samuel 8:7) In their worldview, the God of Israel had not merely created the heaven and the earth, a far-off dim event of the past, (and an act more or less claimed by a multiplicity of other deities) but this God had delivered them from Egypt and had defeated and brought low all the power and pride of a Pharaoh of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of Egypt. The Pharaohs of that Dynasty were recognized everywhere as the greatest and most powerful monarchs on earth in their day, and they claimed to be gods.

No wonder this deliverance from Egypt was Israel's glory, the event more often spoken of than any other in all their history! This God of gods, this Supreme "Being" dwelling in their midst in a cloudy pillar was Israel's unique King from the day they marched victoriously out of Egypt. For centuries thereafter Israel, although known as a kingdom, could not tolerate the idea of a human king.

With this in mind, one can see that the statement "the Edomite kings reigned before any king reigned over Israel" would, in the worldview of the Israelites of that time, mean that the Edomite kings reigned before the Exodus, that is before Israel came under her glorious king, the God of their fathers, and before Israel entered into the blood-covenant with that same God at the mountain of God, so central to their religion; for it was through the Mosaic covenant that this God became the actual ruler of the nation. (Numbers 23:21, Psalm 10:16)



## The first king, Bela

*“And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah.”* Genesis 36:32

We have seen that Edom was formed into a kingdom at a very early date, possibly even within Esau’s lifetime. Bela could easily have been a contemporary of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph’s sons in Egypt. By the time Joseph’s sons were grown to manhood, Bela may well have already begun his reign as King of Edom with a number of sheiks under him.

This king Bela, we are told, was the son of Beor. Beor is a name we do not find among Esau’s descendents, nor in the family of Seir the Horite who occupied the country prior to the coming of Esau’s family and followers. It is therefore quite possible that Bela was not an Edomite nor a local Horite by descent, but someone raised to the position of kingship by the united consent of the sheiks of the Edomites and the Horites.

About five hundred years later Balaam the soothsayer is also called “the son of Beor.” (Numbers 22:5) Of course, if that Beor was the immediate father of Balaam, then we have no indication of any connection with the father of King Bela. However, if Beor was an ancestral father of Balaam (just as Jesus is called “son of David” though 1,000 years intervened) then it is possible that both references are to the same person. In that case, this Beor would be a person of great and unusual importance, whom Balaam would especially claim as an illustrious ancestor, thereby adding to his own reputation and influence. He strives to do this very thing in his last two prophetic utterances to Balak King of Moab, opening his parabolic speeches with emphasis on this ancestral connection, using the words, “Balaam the son of Beor hath said...” (Numbers 24:3, 15).

Therefore it is possible that Beor, the father of Edom’s first king, was some great and widely honored figure of those far off days. If this is true, then the location of Dinhabah, the city of King Bela might be near the River Euphrates, as was the home of Balaam, and possibly Balaam’s ancestral father, Beor. (Numbers 22: 5; 23:7)

## The destruction of the Horites

A difficult problem is the question as to just where we are to place the destruction of the Horites or Hurrians in relation to the history of Edom. The event is recorded in Deuteronomy 2:12 where the Horites are called Horims.

*“The Horims also dwelt in Seir before time; but the children of Esau succeeded*

*them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them."*

The conquest by Israel referred to here was, of course, the Israelite conquest described in the context; the conquest of the lands east of the Jordan River where Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan ruled. These Amorite kings were slain by Moses and the children of Israel who possessed and divided the land between the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh. This conquest is spoken of shortly before and is fully described immediately after the verse we have quoted. (Deuteronomy 1:4; 2:24 to 3:2) Notice especially the following words; "begin to possess it" and "Sihon's land" 2:24; "Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee, begin to possess that thou mayest inherit his land" (2:31) "This land which we possessed at that time" 3:13; "The Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it" (3:18). It therefore follows that the land of Israel's possession referred to in 2:12 is not the Land of Canaan taken by Joshua, but the lands east of Jordan taken by Moses.

In a somewhat similar way, the Edomites had previously destroyed the Hurri or Horites. But just when did they do so? Did the Edomites destroy them before their first king Bela the son of Beor was crowned? Would they crown a king before possessing a country for his kingdom?

Or did the Horites and Edomites unite to crown the first king, and the destruction of the Horites follow at a later time? We simply do not know because the record does not say. Striking, confirmatory and helpful as the archaeological evidence is, it does not settle the matter. Nevertheless, let us consider what the archaeologists have to tell us.

Somewhere about the twenty-third century BC large, bronze-age cities were established along the great north-south highway which ran through the Jordanian plateau on the east side of the Jordan Valley and of the Dead Sea. This flourishing Bronze Age civilization ended very suddenly. Various authorities appear to differ as to the date. M. E. Kirk (*Outline of Ancient Cultural History of Transjordan*," in the Palestine Exploration Quarterly, July-Oct. 1944, pg. 181) gives it as "about the end of the twentieth century BC," others have suggested later dates, down to about 1700 BC. (Kirk, 1944)

Then follows a long period of about 400 to 600 years of nomadic occupation. Of this Kirk continues: "The land was derelict. No sherds of that dark age appear, because nomadic people do not use much else beside skin vessels and gourds. Of city life there was none."

About the beginning of the thirteenth century BC city life in these regions

begins to re-appear, and we meet the Iron Age kingdoms familiar to us from Biblical record; Edom, Moab and Ammon of the time of the kings of Israel.

We feel that this evidence parallels the Bible record. What follows may fly in the face of the interpretations of the archaeological evidence as given by a number of authorities, but we believe our view is not only in full harmony with the discovered facts, but will commend itself as reasonable, and as fitting the sequence of events handed down to us by the Hebrews in their records and stories.

It seems evident that the Bronze Age civilizations are that of the Zamzum-mims, Emims, and Horites. (Deuteronomy 2:20, 10, 12) The Zamzum-mims and the Emims were destroyed by the Ammonites and Moabites respectively, and the Horites by the Edomites. (Deuteronomy 2:9, 12, 21-22) (The Zamzum-mims will become important to us much later, as we seek for the well of Zamzam.) These new possessors were all nomadic descendants of Abraham. They lived in tents and kept large herds of cattle and sheep. This is especially evident from the story of Esau with his flocks and herds that moved into Seir, as we have recounted.

The suggestion by some that the pre-Edomite Horites were some of these nomads seems a contradiction to what we know of the Hurri or Horites elsewhere. (Lion, 1998) The archaeological evidence is that the Hurri were not nomads but citydwellers. They belonged to the Bronze Age culture preceding the nomadic occupation we are dealing with.

It has been suggested that the disappearance of the Bronze Age civilization in Jordan and the sudden nomadic occupation is likely connected in some way with the Hyksos invasion of Egypt. (Levy, Adams, & Muniz, 2004) If this is true then this nomadic occupation was a powerful one, that is, these nomads were strong warriors. They were a military factor of importance just as we have discerned from the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This Bedouin occupation in Kirk's opinion "must have been strong enough to frustrate the attempts of any settled communities to enter the country." (Kirk, 1944)

It is our belief that this strong nomadic occupation was when the Edomite nomads rose to power, establishing a wide desert empire. They then burst in upon Egypt as the "Hyksos" and years later when expelled fell back to Edom where very little "city" life existed. They were therefore forced back into a nomadic existence again. We will explore this further in chapter seven.

By 1400 BC the Edomites were beginning to settle down, and soon thereafter turned more and more to agriculture and mining, thus setting up the Iron Age kingdoms the archaeologists have noted.

However it is to be noted that the Horites had sheiks “among” the Edomite sheiks at the beginning. (Genesis 36:29-30) This seems to indicate a large measure of friendliness and union between the two peoples at that time. It must have been a little later that quarrels arose and descendants of Esau replaced them, “when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead.” (Deuteronomy 2:12)

After this the Edomites dominated the kingdom, and all remaining Horites in the territory would have been absorbed into the general population of the new kingdom, adding one more blood strain, a very definite Hurri element into the already racial mixture comprising the “Edomites.” This blood strain was related to the Hittites, making the link between Edomites and Hittites very strong.

And so the new kingdom of Edom was born, known in the Qur'ān as the people of 'Ad and in the Bible as the land of 'Uz. Bela the first king occupied the throne as the head of the government, supported by sheiks and chiefs, or heads of various tribes and territories. This kingdom lay south of the Land of Canaan, in an area which we said before was known then as Seir. Esau, the founder of the nation, had recognized Canaan as promised to his brother Jacob (Israel) and to his descendants. This important point would pass into the young nation's traditions. The wording of Genesis 36:6-8 indicates that an agreement had been reached by which Esau withdrew with his family and all his possessions of flocks and herds from the Land of Canaan, because the land could not bear up to pasturing both of their herds. By this agreement each would respect the territory assigned to the other as “homeland,” and pass the obligation on to the succeeding generations. It is certain that Israel under Moses felt obligated not to violate the territory of Edom. (Deuteronomy 2:4-7)

## CHAPTER SIX

### 'AD AND THE BOOK OF JOB

In this chapter we will examine the land of Uz ('Ad) as mentioned in the book of Job. We will compare this with the Qur'ān, especially the winds mentioned in the Qur'ān with the winds that killed Job's children. The description of Uz in the Bible will help us identify how widespread Job's influence was, and ultimately how widespread the people of 'Ad were. We will also examine some of the other kings in the Edomite kinglist.

The second king of Edom was Jobab. He was not the son of the first king Bela, but as mentioned previously, was the son of Zerah, the son of Ruel, a son of Esau. His reign is briefly recorded as follows:

*"And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead."*  
Gen. 36: 33.

The ancient city of Bozrah is located on the eastern side of Wadi Arabah, north of Petra. The site of Sela is very near to it but farther north. (See the photo on the next page) With the identification of Bozrah we can see that the Edomites now controlled the country on the east side of the Arabah Valley. It appears as though Esau first lived on the west side of the Arabah Valley. The eastward expansion of the territory of Edom will be referred to again later. We will be noting a very great extension of Edomite dominion eastward from time to time.

The reference to King Jobab is short and sparse but there is enough to open up a very lengthy investigation as to his identity. We cannot cover this in fullest detail here, but we will set out a number of points which seem to indicate that this king was none other than the illustrious and patient Job. The links between the two, Jobab and Job, are numerous and indicate that Job, the



*Above: Bozrah occupied the flat hilltop in the center of the photo above. It was surrounded by steep cliffs on all sides and was attached to the hills behind by a narrow corridor. (Gibson, 2004)*

great example of suffering and patience, was elevated to the kingship at some time after his trying experience.

A careful reading of the Book of Job shows that even before his great testing (with which alone the book is concerned) Job was a person of very high rank amongst his contemporaries. The opening chapter tells of his great wealth and piety, and significantly adds:

*“This man was the greatest of all the men of the east.”* (Job 1:1-3) His high rank, then, cannot be doubted; but this is not all.

Further on in the Book of Job we find that Job occupied and held the leading position in the National Council with the sheiks of his people. (Job 29:2, 7-9, 21-24) As we have shown, this would be the people of “Uz” or ‘Ad, which was in the land of Edom. He sat “chief” and “dwelt as a king in the army.” (verse 25) If he laughed at anyone’s counsel, thereby showing that he considered it poor advice, then others at once rejected it too, and “believed it not.” (verse 24) They all recognized that Job’s intellectual ability, keen insight and wide knowledge far exceeded that of all other members of the council, and they relied heavily upon him.

After his distressing trial was over, we are told that Job was greater than even before. (Job 42:12) That being so, it would be no surprise that upon the death of Bela, the first king of Edom, the National Council composed of sheiks and other wise men, would elevate Job to the kingship.

## Points aiding in matching Job and Jobab

Here is a brief summary of some of the factors pointing to the identity of Job and Jobab.

1. **Personal Name.** The similarity of names is most obvious. *Iyowb* (Job) יוֹב versus *Iyowbab* (Jobab) יוֹבָב. The difference is basically the addition of Ab, which designates “father” in Hebrew. Note that the book of Job is considered the oldest of the books of the Bible, and its original language may easily have been close to the language of Eber (or Edom). In this case the Book of Genesis and the Book of Job could possibly have taken the names from different sources, one being transcribed earlier than the other.
2. **Same Country.** It seems clear they lived in the same country. Job lived in the Land of Uz. (Job 1:1) (Schaff, 1880, Article - Uz) Jobab was King of Edom, living at the city of Bozrah but Edom itself, we read elsewhere in the Bible, was located in the land of Uz. (Lamentations 4:21) Evidently “Uz” was the name of a large area that included the Land of Edom. Therefore, if Jobab lived in Edom, he also would have lived in Uz; and by this we find both Job and Jobab lived in the same country, the Land of Uz.
3. **Local Geographical Features.** Jobab lived in Bozrah just south of the Dead Sea which receives most of its water from the Jordan River. The Jordan River was the largest river in that vicinity. Job, too, was acquainted with the Jordan River, and it is referred to symbolically as a very large flow of water. (Job 40:23)
4. **Lived About Same Time.** Both lived after Ishmael was sent away by Abraham, and the establishing of the Ishmaelite tribes in the Northern Arabian Desert. Esau’s descendant’s lived later in time than did Ishmael’s. Jobab belonged to the fourth generation from Esau. Job speaks of “the troops of Tema.” (Job 6:19) Assuming that Tema is one of the tribes descended from Ishmael (Genesis 25:15), we would then have positive proof that Job also lived shortly after the time of Ishmael. Job also speaks of “the companies of Sheba” who would be descendants of Sheba, a half-brother to Ishmael. (Genesis 25:3) None of these were full fledged tribes at this time. (see *Founding of the Nations chart* in chapter two) The orthodox view has been that the Book of Job belongs to the era before the Exodus. (Schaff, 1880, Article - Job) This puts the story of Job right into the same general period of history as the time of the early kings of Edom when Jobab reigned.
5. **Occupation.** Jobab belonged to and reigned over a pastoral people

who laid much stress upon possessions of flocks and herds. Job, too, was a pastoral person possessing flocks and herds.

- 6. Contemporary Persons.** If we grant to Esau's eldest son Eliphaz a normal life-span as was common in the family and descendants of Abraham, we find that this Eliphaz would be an old man, about 100 years of age or more, before Jobab would begin to reign. Job's chief friend was a man named Eliphaz the Temanite. He was evidently an old man, much older than Job's father. Eliphaz speaks of himself and his two companions as "aged men," saying, "With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father." (Job 15:10)

From this it would seem that Job's father was still living. Also, Elihu, a young man listening to Job and his three comforters, waited until these three had exhausted their arguments, "because they were older than he." He then commences his discourse with the words, "I am young, and you are very old." (Job 32:4, 6)

This aged and very old friend of Job's named Eliphaz is called "a Temanite." This description of him as a Temanite greatly assists the identifying of Jobab with Job, for Eliphaz, Esau's son, was actually the progenitor of the Temanites through Teman his son, as we have noted before. (Genesis 36: 11, 15) Probably living with the family or tribe of sheik Teman, he would naturally come to be called "a Temanite." As a man of great age and distantly related to Job, he would be expected to visit Job in his calamity. This is likely the same Eliphaz who, through his father Esau and his grandfather Isaac, would possess much knowledge of Jehovah God, such as is displayed in his discourses with Job.

Again, if the young man Elihu the Buzite of the kindred of Ram in Job 32:2 is to be linked with Abraham's relatives "Buz" and "Aram" in Genesis 22: 21, then the ties linking king Job with Jobab, a descendant from Abraham, are strengthened.

There is, therefore, abundant reason for thinking that Jobab, King of Edom, and Job, the Patient One, may well have been one and the same person.

## Winds of Destruction

Further linking Job with the "*People of 'Ad*" in the Qur'ān is the mention of destruction in the land of 'Ad by terrible winds.

*And the 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down! Then seest thou any of them left surviving?* (Qur'ān 89: 6-8)



Compare this to the verses in the Book of Job:

*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Job 1:18-1*

In both of these accounts, the story line is similar: strong winds destroyed buildings and killed people. Years later as Muḥammad communicated to the people of Mecca about the history of Arabia, the people of 'Ad were an important part of their memory. Not only did they remember that 'Ad was once a great kingdom, they also remembered the great windstorm that destroyed buildings and killed many people. Later we will also note that the early Muslims remembered how the people of 'Ad turned from monotheism to polytheism.

### Further indications of expansion

If we accept the identification of Jobab with Job then several very important factors to our contention follow. The power and influence of the new Kingdom of Edom was still spreading and becoming more firmly established. From the original starting point on the west side of the Arabah (a deep valley stretching from the Dead Sea southward to the Gulf of Aqaba) the Edomites had expanded eastward into and across this valley. The city of Bozrah is on the east side of the valley and was held by them, and they were overrunning and occupying the Arabian Desert to the east of that.

There is evidence that the Arabian Desert used to be better watered and was much more habitable than it is now. With slightly higher moisture levels it would have been very suitable for grazing sheep. As it is, Bedouin shepherds still take their flocks of sheep deep into the deserts covering all the area from the mountains of Petra to as far as Wadi Sirhān.

Job (or Jobab), during the reign of Bela his predecessor, was the greatest of the men of the east. (Job 1:3, *Bene-Kedem*) There were clashes with the ancient Chaldeans who belonged to the region nearer the Euphrates River on the opposite or eastern side of the desert. (Job 1:17) Indeed, there is a tradition that Job drank of the waters of "Job's Well" at the Haran Gate of the city of Orfah, situated on the south bank of the Euphrates River. (Schaff, 1880, Article - Uz) It seems that Job who only became the tribal ruler in his old age (making him "Job-ab") must have made his power felt far to the east, punishing the Chaldeans who had slaughtered his servants and stolen his camels years before. (Job 1:17)

The Assyriologist and Sumerologist Samuel Noah Kramer in his 1959 book *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine "Firsts" in Recorded History* (Kramer, 1988), provides us with a translation of a Sumerian text which he argues is a parallel of the Biblical story of Job. Clearly the story of Job and his suffering was known throughout the Middle East, even in very ancient times.

There were clashes, too, with the Sabeans who raided the land and stole Job's oxen and donkeys. (Job 1:14-15) Archaeological research has shown that the Sabeans migrated southward through Arabia about 1200 BC. In Southern Arabia they established a very powerful kingdom centered at Saba. (See chapter fourteen, Southern Arabia) Prior to this migration the Sabeans (people of Sheba, Genesis 10:28) evidently lived somewhere in Central or Northern Arabia. A moment's reflection will give us reason to suspect that the Kingdom of Saba lay too far south (over 1,000 miles away) to harmonize readily with raids on cattle and donkey herds near Edom. Therefore we have the strongest type of evidence here that the story of Job antedates the Sabeian migration southward. It would be perfectly natural, if the Edomites were expanding eastward into Northern Arabia prior to 1200 BC, that they would come into conflict with the Sabeans. Here the story of Job fits the earlier picture.

On the other hand, if Saba had already migrated into Southern Arabia, the Edomite kingdom might have been very large indeed. While living in Yemen I had opportunity to visit what is known as Job's grave in Yemen. It is located several miles outside of the city of Ṣan'ā. Later in this book we will examine a mosque located at another site known as Job's Tomb near Salalah in Oman. It seems the memory of Job is imprinted all over the Middle East.

Job's enormous wealth is a factor of evidence not to be overlooked. It indicates an era of prosperity among the Edomites. Later, when he became king of Edom, Job would be a very wealthy ruler.

Putting all this information together we begin to catch a glimpse through the haze of the years of a young, flourishing, nomadic kingdom, spreading and pushing outward and extending its sway. By the time of its second king the Edomites already held control over a more or less wide strip of the Arabian desert east of Edom.

### **The reign of Husham**

In Genesis 36:34 the Edomite kinglist continues: "*And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Teman reigned in his stead.*"

We are not informed as to who Husham's father was, and in the absence of contrary information, we could assume that he was the son of the preceding king, that is, of Jobab. We note that Husham was of the Land of Teman, which

was the home of Eliphaz the Temanite, Job's chief friend. (Job 2:11) It would be no surprise for a ruler of Uz to make his home in the land of Teman, which was a part of Edom, when Eliphaz the chief friend of the family lived there. The link seems very natural, and serves as one more tie in connecting Job with the Edomites in the land of Uz.

We are told nothing further about King Husham, nor do we glean any information here concerning expansion of Edom during his reign. King Husham then passes from view.

### **The reign of Hadad I**

*"And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith."* (Genesis 36: 35)

This king whom we shall call Hadad I was not the son of the former king Husham, but was the son of Bedad. Therefore a new dynasty commences with Hadad I.

As the most significant event and exploit of this king's reign, it is recorded that he defeated Midian, doing so within the borders of Moab. The Midianites lived on the edge of the Arabian Desert on the eastern border of Moab. Quite a few important facts can be gathered from this record of war and victory.

First, it becomes apparent that Moab had, at some time prior to this, conquered and displaced the Emmims, the first inhabitants of the land, as recorded in Deuteronomy 2:9-11, 17. It seems altogether probable that the three conquests referred to there, the conquest of the Horites by the Edomites, the conquest of the Emmims by the Moabites, and the conquest of the Zam-zummims by the Ammonites, all occurred at about the same date; indeed, they could have been closely related events. This was an early Semitic conquest of the fringe lands around Canaan.

Second, we observe the Edomite tribesmen occupying and waging a victorious war on Moabite soil. Since this took place on Moabite soil, either Moab was friendly and cooperative with Edom, or had been conquered by or was dominated over by Edom. In either case, Edom emerges as the more powerful nation, emphasizing once more that Edom was coming more to the forefront.

Third, we see Midian defeated by Hadad I. Midian is therefore added to the territory controlled by Edom in addition to the areas mentioned before under the previous kings.

Fourth, we get a hint of the northerly limit at this time, at least on the east side of Canaan.

From this time on Edom exercised dominion over Moab and Midian.

The ancient northern border of Moab (before the rise of Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon) was the River Jabbok, which empties into the Jordan River. (Numbers 21:24-26) This would likely be the northern limit of Edom's Kingdom at that time.

We can assume that under Hadad I, Edom still maintained sway over the Arabian Desert as it did under Jobab. Therefore a large Arabian Desert Empire was now in existence. The evidences all support the idea of the Empire of 'Uz ('Ad) continuing under Hadad I and succeeding kings, as we shall see later.

The record clearly emphasizes that the capital city of Hadad I was Avith. The site of this city is unknown. There are two possibilities that have been suggested.

First, the name Avith has been linked with a people known as "Avim" or "Avites" mentioned in Deuteronomy 2:23. These people lived somewhere around the southwest border of Palestine. Their northern limit was at or near Azzah or Gaza. Some of the Avites (= citizens of Avith?) were still there in Joshua's day. (Joshua 13:3) In that very region Sir Flinders Petrie discovered a number of Hyksos graves which we will later show were connected to 'Ad. However, this solution is doubtful, as this king's capital would then have been located outside of Edom proper.

The second possibility is that the Biblical Avith is the ancient city of Avaris located on the eastern edge of the Nile River delta. Although this area was firmly held by Egypt, we will discover in the next chapter that right about this time, nomads from Arabia invaded Egypt and settled in the very city of Avaris. This will help us link the Hyksos people with Edom.

### **The reign of Samlah**

*"And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead."* Genesis 36:36

Hadad I was succeeded by Samlah, who was possibly Hadad's son. Aside from this brief reference we know nothing of this king's reign, nor do we know the location of his capital city Masrekah. He was followed by a king named Saul, possibly his son.

### **The reign of Saul**

*"And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead."* Genesis 36:37

It is startling to read that King Saul's capital city was "Rehoboth by the river." This city was very far from Edom proper. It lay roughly 400 miles to the

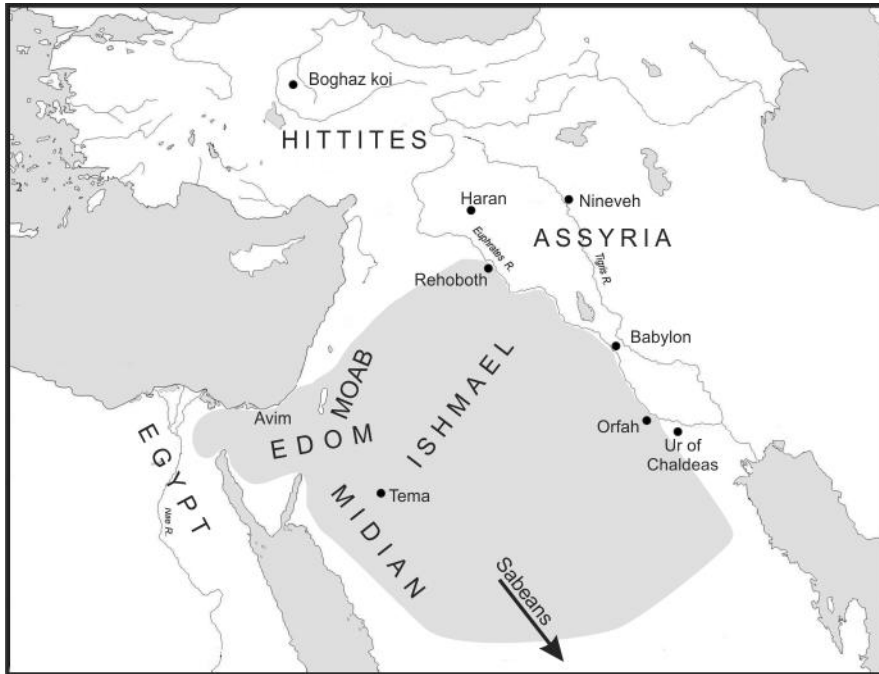
northeast, near the banks of the great River Euphrates, and for years has been identified with Rahabah, situated twenty-eight miles below the juncture of the Khabour River with the Euphrates. (Schaff, 1880, Article - Rehoboth) Since the discovery and excavation of Mari, a very important city only about 30 miles southeast of Rahabah, it has become common among scholars to ignore Rahabah altogether. I am currently unaware of any detailed investigation of Rahabah and its immediate vicinity and so cannot claim that there was a “city” there in the second millennium B.C.

Several factors remain that suggest the Rehoboth of Genesis 36:37 lay somewhere near this region.

1. It was “by the river,” a term otherwise understood to mean by the Euphrates. In the Bible the Euphrates is often just called “the river” as reference through a concordance will amply prove.
2. As to the suggestion by some that this Rehoboth is er-Ruheibah in the Negev, south-westerly from Beer-sheba, we seem to have no evidence whatever that there was a “city” at that place in early times (Early or Middle Bronze Age); moreover, that place is not ever said to be “by the river.”
3. A very important factor is that the Mari tablets actually mention a place called “Rehoboth.” It is a far cry from Mari to the northwestern Negev. It therefore seems most doubtful that the Mari tablets refer to er-Ruheibah which is so tiny a spot and so far away. It is far more likely to refer to a place relatively close to Mari where the tablets were actually unearthed.
4. It is fairly certain that Mari was only a little south of the Hurrian boundary. This indicates that Rahabah near the Euphrates, lying north-westerly from Mari, was probably within Hurrian territory. If the Edomites were destroying or had destroyed the Hurrians, then Rahabah could have fallen into Edomite hands. This may be giving too wide a meaning to the Biblical statement that the Edomites destroyed and supplanted the Horites (Hurrians), but the idea should not be too readily discounted as sometimes the Biblical statements have been found to have a wider scope than at first supposed.

As already stated, it is truly startling to learn that a king of Edom should establish his capital 400 miles away from his own country! Clearly the Edomite kingdom had now spread out enormously north-eastwards to the Euphrates River (perhaps doing so under Samlah’s reign, bringing Edom close to Assyria.)

The story of the Hyksos preserved in “*Josephus Against Apion*” states that



Salatis their king feared the Assyrians, upon which Breasted the author comments: "If we eliminate the absurd reference to the Assyrians, the story may be reasonable." (*A History of the Ancient Egyptians* Section 172) But here we wish to point out that if the Edomites were the Hyksos, as we will suggest in the next chapter, and if the Edomite capital city had been established at Rahabah prior to the conquest of Egypt, then a reference to war with Assyria might indeed be quite historically correct.

Possibly the business of further conquests in this direction, or beyond the river, made it advisable for King Saul (called Shaul in I Chronicles 1:48) to set up the seat of his government so far from Edom proper.

It is important to observe that these nomad kings of Edom did not hesitate to establish their capitals away from their homeland, just as we know the Hyksos kings did when they invaded Egypt, for they established their capital right in Egypt.

### Extent of the Edomite Empire

Let's review now, for a moment, the widest extent of this Edomite Empire, as hinted at in the Bible and by tradition. The empire takes in a wide sweep of 500 miles across Northern Arabia, from Avim at the southwest corner of Palestine near Egypt to Orfah on the lower Euphrates River; from Rahabah

or Rehoboth on the north side; then 600 miles southward to Teyma or Tema southeast of Edom, (Rogers, 1926, page 374) or perhaps as far south as Sheba in Southern Yemen. In effect, the Edomites may have controlled much of the Arabian Peninsula during this time.

This very extensive area includes all the range of country inhabited by the Ishmaelites or Northern Arabians (Genesis 25:18) described as “from Havilah.” (Hal’il in Central Arabia) (Barton in *Archaeology and the Bible*, page 541 treats “Havalah” as meaning Arabia in general; but George Adam Smith in a much older work, “*Historical Atlas of the Holy Land*,” identifies it with Ha’il or Hayil in Central Arabia) So from Havilah to “Shur, that is before Egypt” (the region of the Isthmus of Suez) “as thou goest toward Assyria” (which would be in the general direction of Rahabah or Rehoboth). From this it can be inferred that the Ishmaelites (North Arabians) were included in this great Edomite Empire, either by conquest or by voluntary cooperation; more likely by cooperation in view of Esau’s family ties with Ishmael. It is possible that Hadad’s defeat of the Midianites involved the Ishmaelites also, since the Midianites and Ishmaelites often worked jointly. (Genesis 37:25-28, 36; 39:1; Judges 8:21-24)

That an empire of this size should exist upon the very border of Egypt and the two not come into vital conflict seems impossible, human nature being what it is. I believe the two did clash and that the Edomite semi-nomadic hordes (including Ishmaelites, Hittites, and Hivite bands, with the remnant of the Horites) caught Egypt in an unprepared condition, simply walked through Egypt’s light defences and poured into the Nile Delta and Lower Egypt, so taking the country without any real battle at all.

Now what would the Egyptians call this mixed nomadic horde breaking into and sweeping over the Delta Region? Obviously they would refer to them as:

- “Arabian” They came from Northern Arabia (Ishmaelites)
- “Asiatics” They had Hittite and Hebrew blood in them (Edomites) and quite likely Hittites from Canaan assisted them
- “Barbarians” They were nomadic
- “Phoenicians” They were of mixed Canaanite and Hebrew origin
- “Rulers of Countries” They already ruled over a number of other countries, as we have seen. (Barton, “*Archaeology and the Bible*,” P. 35, mentions the Hyksos ruled other countries previously. Breasted, “*A History of the Ancient Egyptians*,” Section 19, also states the Hyksos evidently ruled over a number of countries before invading Egypt)

And that is exactly what the Egyptians called the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings who attacked them from Arabia at this very time period.

Turning back to the Egyptian references of the Hyksos people we find an astonishing parallel and similarity between the Hyksos and the Edomites ('Ad).

1. Both are Semites (Semitic language and names).
2. Both have Hebrew characteristics.
3. Both have Hittite traits.
4. Both appear to have been shepherds (after Manetho).
5. Both are Arabians (Ishmael = Northern Arabia.)
6. Both lived easterly from Lower Egypt.

The resemblance is close if not exact, and certainly is most remarkable. Where else can we find so complete a similarity? None of the strictly Canaanite entities seem to fit points 2 and 5. The Moabites and the Ammonites do not, as far as we know, fit with points 3 and 5; Arabian tribes beyond Edom do not seem to fit point 3. Only Edom seems to fit at all points with what we know of the Hyksos.

One wonders how two separate peoples could be so racially and linguistically alike! The thought can scarcely be resisted that instead of two peoples, we are viewing one entity whose description has come down to us through three separate channels and under different names. One channel is the Egyptian sources under the name "Hyksos," the second channel is the Hebrew sources under the name "Edom," and finally, as found in Islamic literature, the "people of 'Ad."

But as yet we still do not have proof; only the suggestion. Most striking as the foregoing similarity surely is, we have next to set forth indications of the tremendous growth of this alliance of tribes led by the Edomites and point out how it appears to dovetail into the Hyksos story.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 'AD AND THE PHARAOHS

It is interesting to note that the Qur'ān distinctly ties Pharaoh with the kingdom of 'Ad. (We will address Thamud's connection with 'Ad in a later chapter)

*Dost thou not consider how thy Lord dealt with Ad, with many-columned Iram, the like of which was not created in the lands; and with Thamud, who carved the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, firm of right, who were rebellious in these lands, and multiplied inquiry therein? Therefore thy Lord poured on them the disaster of his punishment. Lo! thy Lord is ever watchful.*

Qur'an 89:6-14 (Pickthall)

#### The Hyksos

The mysterious Hyksos or "Shepherd Kings" of ancient Egypt have long presented scholars with one of the more puzzling questions of history. These people were foreigners, not Egyptians. They invaded the country and then reigned in the land of the Nile as Pharaohs. Prof J. H. Breasted (1919, Section 170) gives the invasion date as 1657 B.C., but remarks it could be earlier. Encyclopaedia Americana, Canadian Edition 1963, Article *Egypt* under "Chronology" dates the Hyksos Dynasties XV and XVI as 1730 - 1580, after the dates given by William Stevenson Smith. The Hyksos invasion could have been as early as 1849 B.C. *Brill's New Pauly* (Supplements I) gives 1700-1648 BC (BNP) as the dates. So, seemingly out of nowhere, a Hyksos king called Salatis, with his people, suddenly swarmed in on horseback across the eastern border of Lower Egypt.

For a few generations these Hyksos people, as the Egyptians called them, ruled vigorously from the Delta of the Nile, part of which time they dominated all of Egypt. During this time they took on all the titles of native Pharaohs. They even adopted Egyptian ways, yet they were never absorbed by or loved by the Egyptians. Indeed the Egyptians seemed to have hated them intensely. The Hyksos seemed to hold sway over an enormous ancient empire of which

luxurious Egypt was just a part, until finally the Egyptians rose up against their masters. Then, as suddenly as they had mysteriously come, they passed away equally mysteriously, dropping out of sight completely. Driven back out of Egypt, possibly not very long before the birth of Moses, the Hyksos kings with their great empire promptly faded and disappeared never to rise again. To date, no other trace of these people has ever been identified again.



*The name Hyksos is derived from the Egyptian Hequ Shaqsu, i.e., "princes of the Shasu," or nomad tribes of northeast Egypt*

Where did these people go when they vanished in retreat? When Ahmose I (the Egyptian king who founded the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) drove the Hyksos armies from his country soon after 1550 BC (BNP), the Hyksos retreated not only to southern Palestine, but they appear to have retreated out of history itself!

The great Hyksos Empire became a forgotten empire, unrecorded in preserved history until the science of archaeology began piecing together the exciting bits of evidence dug up here and there. No one has yet succeeded in tracing their retreat any farther, or in discovering their home towards which they seemed to be returning. Who were these people? Many speculations and suggestions have been made. Some researchers have suggested they came from Kadesh and others suggest other cities in Syria. Some historians have looked toward Palestine itself. Still others try to link them with the Hittites of Asia Minor, and for a little while it was speculated that they might have been Hurrians. Some have gone as far as suggesting that their original home was beyond the Caucasus, while others have tried to connect them with the early Hebrews, relatives of the Israelites. Breasted argues for the city of Kadesh in Syria as the center of the Hyksos power. (Breasted, 1919, page 175) George A. Barton in *Archeology and the Bible*, 1952 notes the drift of opinion toward the Hittites as being either the Hyksos or the leading faction in the Hyksos hordes. (Barton, 1952, pages 28-29) On the other hand the Encyclopedia Americana, Canadian Edition, Article *Egypt*, says "The Hyksos.... in addition to unidentifiable people, included a fair proportion of those speaking Hurrian and Semitic." The mention of "Hurrian" (Horite) is important. (See also Prof. J. H. Breasted in *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus*, Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. III, Chicago, 1930)... it is all very uncertain. The Hyksos remain an enigma and an unsolved riddle due to the scantiness of Hyksos records.

It is unfortunate that many of the monuments of the Hyksos kings of Egypt have been lost. Such monuments would no doubt have supplied the key to the information we now seek. The Delta region of Egypt where the Hyksos appear to have established their capital after entering Egypt is not as favorable

to the preservation of records as Upper Egypt is. It is also possible that later Egyptian kings may have sought to destroy every trace of the hated invaders by throwing down and demolishing all their monuments. (Breasted, 1919, page 173-9) While archaeologists have discovered only a few traces of the Hyksos, a few records have been preserved, outside of occasional references in later Egyptian writings. The following is a brief summary giving the main points of our knowledge of these mysterious kings.

### **No. 1. The extent of the Hyksos Empire**

The Egyptian historian Manetho (who lived before Christ, yet fifteen long centuries after the Hyksos) believed the name “Hyksos” to mean “Shepherd Kings.” Many writers still refer to them under this name. As the Hyksos were Semites and are also called “Arabians,” there may be an element of truth to this idea.

The early Arabians were commonly shepherds, and Manetho may have been familiar with traditions current in his day that gave him reason to believe they actually had been shepherds. This may have influenced his deduction in the meaning of the obscure word, “Hyksos.”

Modern scholars however are inclined to believe Manetho was mistaken in his derivation of the word. They think it means, “Rulers of Countries.” Breasted refers to the name as “Rulers of Countries” on page 172. Barton, on page 35 states that the equivalent to the term “Ruler of Countries” was in use prior to this in Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities, and it would have been perfectly natural for Semitic Hyksos to use it.

Encyclopedia Americana, Canadian Edition, in the article “Egypt” under Hyksos Period equates the name Hyksos with the Egyptian “Hikau Khasut” or “rulers of foreign lands.” Nevertheless, the idea of “shepherd” is strangely persistent. The Hyksos are constantly referred to by writers as “nomads” and “bedouin.” (Mackensie, 1907, page 257)

Breasted, after arguing for Kadesh in Syria as being the Hyksos’ home, speaks on page 175 of the possibility that the Hebrew tribes were in Egypt as “a part of the Bedouin allies of the Kadesh or Hyksos Empire, whose presence there brought into the tradition the partially correct impression that the Hyksos were shepherds.” Were the men of Kadesh Bedouins? Our theory allows that the Hyksos were actually mainly a shepherd people when they invaded Egypt, a point the Egyptians would have felt keenly and would never have forgotten, as they despised shepherds.

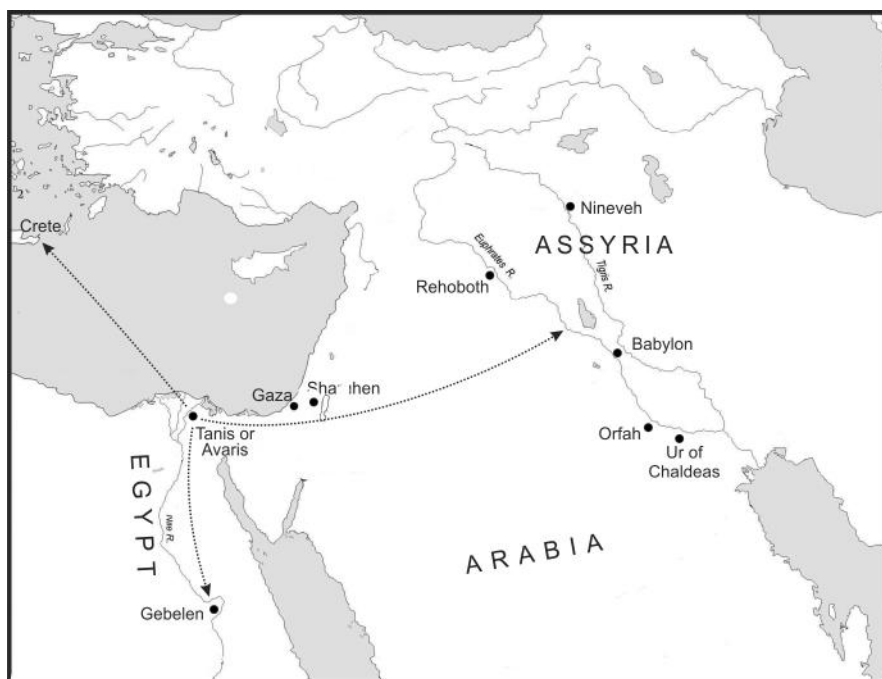
Certainly, what we now learn of them bears out that meaning very well. According to Sir Charles Marston in “*The Bible Comes Alive*,” (Marston,

1937, pg 42) the word means “Royal Bedouin.” He draws attention to the Ras Shamra or Ugarit tablets which mention the existence of Arabs in Southern Palestine in Patriarchal times who spoke an archaic Hebrew. Adam Zertal notes that there is evidence of Hyksos having lived near Dothan in Israel from 1750-1550 B.C. (Zertal, 2005)

Prof. Breasted states on pages 170-173 that monuments of Khian (or “John”), one of the Hyksos rulers, have been found not only in Lower Egypt (the Delta region where they resided) but also 350 miles away to the south at Gebelen in Upper Egypt. His royal cartouches are also found in Southern Palestine and his name turns up 450 miles off across the sea to the northwest on the Island of Crete! It is also found 750 miles away to the northeast, in the distance lands beyond Palestine, Syria and the Arabian Desert where a granite lion bearing his cartouche upon its breast was found near Baghdad! Consider the far reach of these points on the map below.

No wonder Prof. Breasted, when viewing the great wide sweep of this astonishing evidence, was moved to say that a person cannot behold it without entertaining the suggestion of, “... a vision of an empire which once stretched from the Euphrates to the first cataract of the Nile.”

Were the Hyksos kings really “Rulers of Countries”? Yes, indeed! As heads of an empire which embraced such an extensive area as indicated by the loca-



tions of these monuments, they truly ruled over many countries and varied peoples. They must have dominated the world of their day.

This, then, is our first point. There was a great Hyksos Empire which was centered in or not far from Lower Egypt, its general area as indicated on the previous page. The Hyksos entered Egypt from the east, and strangely, instead of dominating Egypt from without; that is, from their own capital, they moved into Egypt and made that their center. These facts will be quite important to our later studies.

## **No. 2. Race and language of the Hyksos**

As to the race and language of the Hyksos, scholars were at first fully agreed they were Semites. They spoke a language closely akin to Hebrew. Then further research also detected a strong Hurrian element in their language, and suggestions were made that the Hyksos were Hittites. One researcher proposed a possible Amorite connection. Barton, *"Archeology and the Bible"* pages 28-29 states that most scholars have thought the Hyksos were Semites, but now some think they were Hittites or led by Hittites. On page 35 he suggests that they could have been Amorites. Dr. Merrill F. Unger in *"Archaeology and the Old Testament,"* (Unger, 1959, page 14) states: "Eventually there arose a new king over Egypt, who ... knew not Joseph.(Exodus 1:8) Therefore the long years of oppression began. This new king seems to have been the founder or an early king of the powerful 18th dynasty (1546...1319)."

Since the Hyksos invasion of Egypt was led by Semites as studies have shown, and not by Hurrians or Indo-Aryans, it appears that the expulsion of the Hyksos around the middle of the 16th century B.C. was the important event that resulted in the oppression of the Israelites. Therefore we conclude that scholars now again consider the puzzling Hyksos to be mainly a Semitic people, but with a Hurrian element, which we must not overlook.

On their monuments the Egyptians called the Hyksos "Asiatics" and "Barbarians." Manetho calls them "Arabians" and "Phoenicians." The Jewish writer Josephus, who lived in the time of the early Christians and was a contemporary to the events in the later chapters of the Book of Acts, found the facts concerning the Hyksos that were known at that time to be very similar to those of his own nation. He jumped to the conclusion that the Hyksos tradition was but a garbled account of the children of Israel in Egypt before the Exodus. This we know is not correct, as the Israelites were slaves, not kings of a great empire, but it does reveal that those traditions concerning the Hyksos made them appear racially to be very similar to the Israelites who were Hebrews.

Sir Charles Marston in *"The Bible Comes Alive"* argues that the Hyksos

were a Hebrew people, though not Israelites. That is, they were of the same racial line as Abraham, who was a Hebrew. Marston also links the Hyksos with Arabs in part. We believe that in this he was very near to the solution.

Of course, we must recognize that there were other Hebrews aside from Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites. As Dr. Arthur Custance very keenly observed in a personal communication to my father, *“Joseph when talking to Pharaoh’s butler says he was “stolen out of the land of the Hebrews.” (Genesis 40:15) Dr. Custance continues, “But the mere presence of Jacob and his family in Palestine would hardly warrant it being called Hebrew-land. Evidently a much wider Hebrew domination was in fact existing, a domination by others than Israelites, who were, nevertheless, termed Hebrews.”* (<http://www.custance.org>)

Even at the time of Joseph, those Hebrews descended from Terah and Abraham were becoming numerous in some areas. Both the Ishmaelites and the Midianites who purchased Joseph from his brothers were Hebrew entities, descended from Abraham. No doubt other Hebrew groups had sprung up from the families of Abraham’s father Terah, and the general area where these groups existed from Edom up into Mesopotamia might thereby be termed Hebrew-Land. (See the chart: The Founding of the Nations, page 30)

To sum this matter up, it seems clear that the Hyksos were definitely a Semitic people, or led by those who were predominantly Semitic, and that there was a Hurri element as well. Racially, they were very like the Israelites and could be Hebrews of some sort, or were similar to Hebrews.

This racial data is so important to our study that we will summarize it here. To discover the origins of the Hyksos, we find we must look for a people who can rightly be called any and all of the following:

1. Asiatic From an Egyptian point of view this meant that they were racially not Egyptians but foreigners and strangers from the east.
2. Barbarians The Egyptians considered the Hyksos as a people to be on a lower cultural plane than themselves.
3. Arabians This would be a people linked with the deserts of Arabia, as shepherds, Bedouin, nomads, etc.
4. Phoenicians Referring to Canaanites, either directly from the Land of Canaan or a related people.
5. Semites A people speaking a Semitic tongue, but with a Hurrian element.
6. Hebrew A people so like the Israelites that the two could be confused by a later Hebrew writer. Each of these factors will be referred to later in our search for the Hyksos homeland. Each will be accounted for.

### No. 3 The Hyksos city “Avaris”

The first Hyksos king is said by Manetho to have been Salatis. The account runs that Salatis built himself a capital city named Avaris, somewhere east of Bubastis. It is described as being located east of the eastern arm of the Nile as it fans out in the Delta. For several years my father David J. Gibson and other historians have suggested that the city Avaris would be close to or in the desert area, either in or not too far from the east side of the Delta towards the southwestern corner of Palestine. Some historians have identified Avaris with Tanis which is called Zoan in the Bible.

Philip Schaff's *Bible Dictionary' Eleventh Edition* (first published somewhere about 1885) Article, “*Zoan*,” identifies Zoan with Tanis and Avaris. This city has now been tentatively identified as Tell el-Dab'a in the Nile Delta. Breasted, “*A History of the Ancient Egyptians*,” in Section 171 states the exact site of Avaris is still “undetermined.” However, Holladay has now clearly identified it with Tell-el-Dab'a, in the northeastern region of the Nile. (Holladay, 1997, pages 183-252 ) It was a well-developed center of trade with a busy harbour catering to over 300 ships during a trading season. (Booth 2005, page 40) Artifacts excavated at a temple erected in the Hyksos period have produced goods from all over the Aegean world. The temple even had Minoan-like wall paintings that are similar to those found on Crete at the Palace of Knossos. A large mud-brick tomb has also been excavated to the west of the temple.

The site of Tell el-Dab'a began to be excavated in the mid 1960's by Dr. Manfred Bietak of the Austrian Institute in Cairo. He found evidence of an extensive occupation by an intrusive non-Egyptian population which led him to identify the cultural objects he found as being almost identical to Middle Bronze Age artifacts from Syria-Palestine. This in turn led to the belief that Tell el-Dab'a was the lost town-site of the Asiatic Hyksos peoples of Egyptian texts. Years later the city was later called Pi-Ramesses. Excavations are continuing under the Institute of Egyptology at the University of Vienna.

It is of interest to observe that the eastern border of Egypt has been considered by the majority of scholars to extend across the desert to beyond the Isthmus of Suez as far as Wadi el 'Arish. They have maintained that this wadi, though dry most of the year, is called “the river of Egypt” in many Bible passages, and therefore name it as the real boundary between Egypt and Canaan. On the other hand, H. Bar- Deroma in an article, “*The River of Egypt*” (Nahal Mizraim, Palestine Exploration Quarterly, Jan.-June 1960, page 37), studies the passages and gives sound reason to believe “the river of Egypt” is the Nile and/or the eastern or Pelusiac arm thereof in the Delta in particular.



The Avim or Avites lived somewhere in this vicinity in the times of Moses and Joshua. (Deuteronomy 2:23; Joshua 13:3) The name is phonetically similar to “Avaris,” the Hyksos capital, but no connection has yet been shown.

When the Egyptians finally began to regain power, the Hyksos were besieged in this city of Avaris for an unknown length of time; it may have been a long, hard siege. When the city ultimately fell before the growing power of Pharaoh Ahmose I, the Hyksos lost all control of Egypt and had to retreat to the city of Sharuhin in Southern Palestine.

#### **No. 4. The Hyksos had horses and bowmen**

It is well known that the Hyksos kings owned and used horses. Indeed, it is quite generally believed that it was the Hyksos who introduced the horse into Egypt, since pre-Hyksos monuments do not mention these animals while later monuments do. Breasted, Section 20, speaks of the “importation of the horse by the Hyksos.” The Encyclopaedia Americana, Canadian Edition, article, “History, Ancient,” says, “The Hyksos” contribution was the introduction of the horse and the war chariot.” Again, in the article “Egypt,” under Hyksos Period, it states, “Barbarians though they were, the Hyksos were aided in their conquest not only by internal weaknesses of the Egyptian state, but also by their technologically superior war material, the horse and chariots, body armor, and the composite bow.” It is important to notice that Ishmael was “an archer” par excellence. (Genesis 21:20) Therefore the composite bow may have been introduced by the Ishmaelites. Certainly the combination of numbers, bowmen and horses gave the Hyksos a technological advantage.

Sir Flinders Petrie, when excavating Hyksos graves in Southern Palestine at Tell el Ajjul near Gaza, found that horses had been buried with their owners. Certainly the horses must have been loved and held in highest esteem by these men to merit burial with their masters. (See, “*A Pompeii of Southern Palestine*” in “The Illustrated London News,” June 20, 1931, page 1050, also articles in the same journal under dates of May 14, 1932, page 814, and July 9, 1932, page 57)

Archaeologists have also discerned several cemeteries in Tell el-Dab’a belonging to the Second Intermediate Period during their excavations. These burial sites date from late Dynasty XIII to the end of the Hyksos period. One of the more remarkable finds was a mud-brick vaulted tomb to the west of the main temple enclosure which apparently belonged to a Hyksos warrior. He was buried with his weapons; a well-preserved copper sword (the earliest of its type found in Egypt), a dagger, as well as other gravegoods and offer-



ings. The skeleton of his horse was found in the entrance to the tomb, and next to the northeastern wall the body of a young girl - thought to have been a servant, perhaps a sacrifice, who was interred at the time of her master's burial. A number of other horse-burials have recently been uncovered. (See Egyptian Monuments: <http://www.egyptsites.co.uk/lower/delta/eastern/daba/daba.html>.) Whatever people we seek to identify as the Hyksos, they will be a people having horses.

### **No. 5. The religion of the Hyksos**

In the matter of religion it seems most evident that the later Hyksos kings worshipped "Sutekh" or "Seth." Breasted, page 178 states, "Their patron god Sutekh is of course the Egyptianized form of some Syrian Baal." This Egyptian name may be identified as the god "Baal" of the Phoenicians or Canaanites, or shall we say, one of the many "Baals" as local districts had their own "Baal-gods."

Breasted translates a folk-tale circulating in Egypt four hundred years later, which includes this statement concerning Apophis, one of the Hyksos Kings: "Now King Apophis made Sutekh his Lord serving no other god, who was in the whole land, save Sutekh. He built the temple in beautiful and everlasting work." One might think from this that some of the earlier Hyksos kings worshipped some other god either solely or as well as Sutekh, until King Apophis "made Sutekh his Lord."

Nevertheless, it is certain Sutekh (or Baal) was one of their chief gods, and at times possibly their only god. What other god or gods they may have had before, the Egyptian records do not reveal. Therefore, in our identification, we must look for a people who worshipped "Baal" in one form or another.

### **No. 6. The date of the Hyksos Empire**

The time frame when the Hyksos kings ruled in Egypt and the date of their great empire is well established in relation to Egyptian history of that period. It fills or nearly fills the time between the Middle Kingdom and the New Empire commencing with the Eighteenth Dynasty. We may say it occupies the gap between the XII<sup>th</sup> and the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.

The chronology of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is relatively good, and links up well with Palestinian and Babylonian events both through written records (as monuments and the Amarna Letters) and by archaeological evidences.

Ahmose I, the first king of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of Egypt, is the king who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. The Pharaoh that ruled during the time of the

Exodus in Bible history was either Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV (of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), or Merneptah (of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), by the most popular theories. This gives us a rough method of linking the time of the Hyksos Empire with Biblical history.

The collapse of the Hyksos Empire was about 160 years before Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV, and about 350 years before Merneptah; so we may say the fall of the Hyksos Empire was about 160 to 350 years before the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Using the long chronology of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, that is, that they were in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41), I believe this indicates that the Hyksos Empire existed while Israel sojourned in Egypt. More will be said on this later.

From a theological point of view, there is no conflict between Exodus 12:40-41 and Paul's statement in Galatians 3:17 if emphasis is put on the word "confirmed" in Paul's statement. Then this verse would mean that the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed 430 years before the giving of the law, which confirmation would naturally be the last confirmation given to the Patriarchs. The last time the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed to the Patriarchs through a vision was just before Jacob entered Egypt (Genesis 46:1-4), from which confirmation we should measure 430 years to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

The existence and history of this great Hyksos Empire would not have been forgotten by the time of Moses. Therefore, some reference to the Hyksos people and their kings would be quite natural in Moses' writings. Of course, such reference would be under a name known to the Hebrews, rather than under the foreign Egyptian name "*Hyksos*."

In writing his great book of origins which is the The Book of Genesis, it does seem that Moses pauses in his main account long enough to outline quickly and briefly what his readers of that day would readily recognize as the origin of an elusive yet great empire which existed under the Hyksos kings.

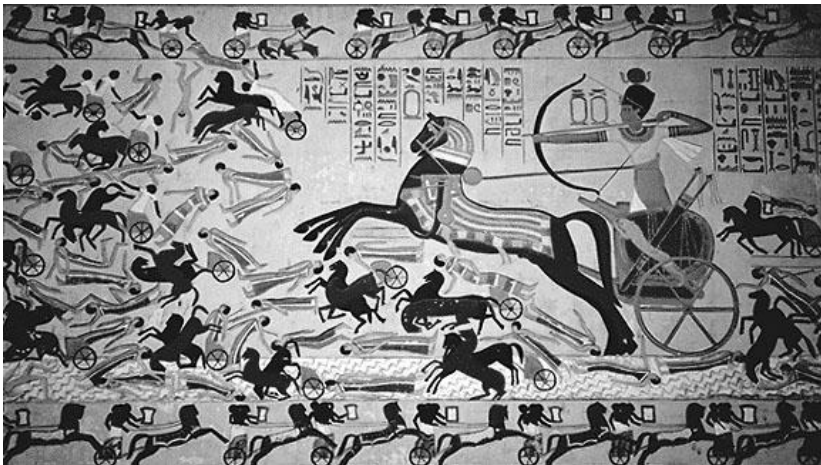
### Summary of evidence to be matched

Here then is a summary of the information that we know about the Hyksos people which we have discovered from sources available to us, taken from tradition, and gleaned from monuments and archaeological findings. It presents us with a fairly definite picture, which we will see paralleled and reflected in the Biblical people known to us as the Edomites.

The Hyksos were:

1. Rulers of an empire which started before the invasion of Egypt and which, at its greatest, seemed to have included Egypt, the southern portions of Palestine, the North Sinai desert, and extended its influence, if not directly controlled, Northern Arabia and up to the regions around the Euphrates River.
2. A Semitic people, closely related to Hebrews and Arabians; allied or akin to the Canaanites (Phoenicians), yet possessing quite a noticeable Hurrian element.
3. A people who likely had a capital city before entering Egypt, yet preferred to set up a capital city, Avaris, upon entering Egypt (to them a conquered land) thus forsaking, as a seat of government whatever capital they had previously.
4. A people who had horses very early, and used them extensively in warfare.
5. A people who worshipped Baal (Sutekh).
6. A people who attained the height of their power about 200 to 300 years before the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt.

Our problem now is to discover whether the Edomite people and also the people known in the Qur'an as the people of 'Ad can match these points, and whether there are any unresolvable differences or difficulties which might confute, nullify or weaken our proposed identification.



*Above: Depiction of Pharaoh Ahmose I evicting the Hyksos from Egypt.*

## Where did they go?

We have seen from the beginning the startling suddenness with which the Hyksos people burst in upon Egyptian history, coming from the east, out of that general area which embraces the northern portion of the Sinai Peninsula and the south fringe of Palestine where the Land of Edom lay. Outside of the various theories put forth, and what we have proposed in the preceding chapters concerning Edom, we know absolutely nothing of where these people came from. This has been a baffling problem to scholars for a long time.

It is, however, quite reasonable to suppose that when the Hyksos kings were finally forced to retreat from Egypt, they would retreat to the land they had come from. Let us consider, then, the path of their retreat.

As we would expect after a siege of Avaris, the Hyksos kings first went from the Delta Region across the Isthmus of Suez. They were going back the way they had come. Ahmose I, the Egyptian king credited with expelling these foreigners, then pursued them eastward into southern Palestine. There the Hyksos power held out against the Egyptian forces for three years at the siege of Sharuhén. (Some authorities following Breasted's older translation still give six years for the siege; but Breasted later corrected his earlier translation to three years) Finally Sharuhén fell, and with that event the Hyksos power was not only broken, but vanished completely from history.

Sharuhén is therefore of key importance in tracing the Hyksos retreat. As mysteriously and as suddenly as they had come into history, the Hyksos kings and armies disappeared again.

The location of this city, the last known stronghold of the Hyksos kings, is believed to be Tell el-Far'ah. Unger's Bible Dictionary, article "*Sharuhén*" states, "This site reveals impressive evidence of Hyksos fortifications." Schaff, Bible Dictionary under articles "*Sansannah, Hazar-susah, and Hazar-susim*" recognizes another city seemingly near to Sharuhén. The latter two names mean "Horse court" or "depot of horses." Being in the same group of places as Shilhim or Sharuhén (Joshua 15:31-32; 19:5-6; I Chronicles 4:31 where "Shaaraim" is Sharuhén), it is possible that this is a Hyksos horse depot. If so, excavation of Hazar-susim might turn up more light on the Hyksos peoples. It lies well to the southwest in the Land of Canaan, in the territory later assigned to the tribe of Simeon. In the Bible it is referred to under the following names:

- Shilhim (or "armed men") Joshua 15:32.
- Sharuhén (or "Pleasant Dwelling"), Joshua 19:6
- Shaaraim (or "The Gates") I Chronicles 4:31

As we said before, after their defeat at Sharuhem, the Hyksos kings and armies vanished from sight and the trail is lost. Historians and scholars think they then retreated to their own country - wherever that was! And scholars have looked northward and have searched in that direction for such a place, but have not found it.

### **Which way from Sharuhem?**

Obviously, further retreat from Sharuhem could be either northward, eastward or southward. Directly eastward may be discounted as it leads towards the wastes of the southern end of the Dead Sea. If the Hyksos kings retreated northward through Palestine, the inference would be that their homeland lay north of Palestine. I have heard proposals that the Hyksos were Hittites from Asia Minor under another name, or that they came from some part of Syria. All very vague and unsatisfactory suggestions, but granting that it was so, it then follows that there must have been a southward conquering sweep through Palestine before the Hyksos first reached Egypt. But where has any evidence of such a southward march been found? The Hyksos graves found in 1931 at Old Gaza (Tell el Ajjul) are no indication of a southward conquest through Canaan; rather they appear as a northerly limit of Hyksos occupation. Our suggestion is that the Hyksos influence spread from south to north. Sharuhem seems to be a dead-end trail. However, southward and southeastward lie the Land of Seir and the regions of the ancient Kingdom of Edom. The home of the Hyksos kings, we suggest, was not northward from Old Gaza or from Sharuhem, but was located south-easterly in a land where the use of the Arabian horse in warfare was likely first developed. Once they were defeated it seems the great empire (known as *Hyksos* to the Egyptians, *Edom* to the Israelites and *'Ad* to the Arabians) crumbled and dissolved, with each tribe of the alliance moving back to their traditional homelands.

### **Why the Edomite kings avoided overrunning Canaan**

Some have asked, if the horse gave the Hyksos/Edom/'Ad desert kingdom such an advantage in battle so that they could conquer Egypt, why did the Edomite kings not push northward into the rich land of Canaan before conquering Egypt? Surely horses would have given them an advantage in Canaan as well.

The answer to this is found in understanding two factors that influenced the Hyksos/Edom/'Ad kings to avoid Canaan and leave it relatively untouched.

1. As was mentioned earlier, if the Edomites were the head of an association of peoples descended from Abraham, they would possess the traditions handed down from Esau that the Land of Canaan was promised to Jacob (Israel) and was not to be touched by them. The inclusion of Ishmaelites in the association of tribes would do nothing to weaken this tradition. Tradition is a powerful force in any peoples, and especially so in the Near East. So Hyksos/Edom/'Ad spread its empire northward, not through Canaan, but up through the Arabian Desert east from Palestine. Canaan would be taboo to early Edom, sacredly set apart for a brother-nation, inviolate by a solemn pact between two brothers.

2. Another reason why a Hyksos/Edom/'Ad power would refrain from pressing into Canaan is that Esau had married Canaanite wives from southern Palestine, and the Canaanites in that region would be in affinity with Edom and on friendly terms. Indeed, it is quite possible that Hittites and Hivites from Canaan would be assisting Edomite allies.

### **Breakup of the empire**

When Ahmose I defeated the Hyksos at Sharuhén, he had forced a wedge deep between the Canaanite allies to the north, and the Edomite home in the desert in the south. Indeed, his soldiers probably overran the Sinai Peninsula as Ahmose I would not wish to leave his right flank wide open, nor run the risk of having his retreat cut off should he not succeed in defeating the Hyksos at Sharuhén. And so it is that in later history we find Edom holding very little territory west of the Arabah Valley. Edom thereafter seems to center on the east side of the valley. In conquering the south fringe of Canaan and the North Sinai Desert, Ahmose I was actually subduing the original home of Edom as that home is depicted in the Bible, and so crushing the Hyksos in their own homeland. There, in that very area, he brought the foe into final, vital combat, hunted him out, overthrew him, and broke the Hyksos Empire forever.

No wonder the Hyksos hung on so long at the siege of Sharuhén, fighting for three desperate years! It was their "last ditch" stand. They either had to defeat Ahmose I right there, or go down to extinction. Oh, yes; the Hyksos had some Canaanite allies to the north in the Hittites and the Hivites, but as we said before, Canaan itself does not appear to have been a conquered part of the Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad Empire, only a friendly ally; otherwise the Hyksos might have fled northward from Sharuhén to one fortified city after another throughout Palestine and worn out Ahmose I and his army. But no, Sharuhén was final: The Hyksos conglomerate did not win, and so it meant extinction. The candle had burned out. Therefore we see why the Egyptians had no more

wars with the Hyksos after that; why the story ends at Sharuhén. It was the end: Hyksos/Edom/'Ad had collapsed.

With this collapse and defeat of the Edomite faction the very leaders of this tribal alliance, the whole empire, would naturally go to pieces. While history does not record it, the following scenario seems most likely.

We may suppose that any Hittite and Hivite elements assisting Hyksos/Edom/'Ad would return to their Canaanite cities to the north. The Hittite soldiers would go back to Hebron (where the Bible places the Hittites, Genesis 49: 29-32) or some such Hittite settlement; the Hivites to a Hivite home such as Gibeon (Joshua 9:3-7; 11:19); or they may have fled even further than that with Ahmose's soldiers so close at their heels, to return later when things settled down. With Sharuhén fallen, Canaan seems to have offered little resistance to Ahmose I.

Amalek, originally an Edomite tribe, seems to break away now to become an independent nation. The Amalekites may have been forced away from the rest of Edom by being held under Egyptian rule during the rest of the reign of Ahmose I and his successors. At any rate not very long after, at the time of the Exodus, we find the Amalekites to be an independent people. They attacked the Israelites in the wilderness even before the latter reached Mount Sinai. (Exodus 17:8-16) Amalek was the first of the nations to wage war with Israel, as a result falling under the order for extermination. (Numbers 24:20)

Moab, which likely collaborated with Edom, appears to be free of Edomite control when we next meet this nation in history toward the end of the forty years of wandering.

The Midianites who were close to the eastern border of Moab had been defeated by Hadad I King of Edom, and probably remained subservient to Edom from then until the collapse at Sharuhén. They probably regained complete independence, only to succumb later to the Amorite King Sihon, for in the latter days of Moses the chiefs of Midian are sheiks of Sihon king of Heshbon. (Joshua 13:21) However, upon Sihon the Amorite being destroyed by Moses and the children of Israel, the five Midianite sheiks of Sihon immediately became independent, collaborated with Balak, King of Moab in hiring the prophet Balaam (Numbers 22:4,7), and very soon after, when Moses sent an expedition against them, these same five chiefs assumed the title of "kings." (Numbers 31:8) But in all this, after the siege of Sharuhén, the Midianites no longer appear to be under Edom's thumb.

The Ishmaelite segment in the Hyksos/Edom/'Ad composition, upon the fall of Sharuhén, would flee towards their own country, the North Arabian Desert. Most likely this group would flee northward from Sharuhén to escape



pursuing Egyptian troops, and would cross the Jordan River and Gilead to reach Arabia.

The knowledge we possess of the siege of Sharuhén is given to us in the record of an Egyptian army officer who served in the Hyksos wars. His account indicates there was a chasing of Hyksos' remnants up into Canaan and parts of CoeleSyria. But there is no account of any further sieges of cities held by Hyksos kings: that ended at Sharuhén.

In later history the Ishmaelites appear as being free of any Edomite control or leadership (Judges 8:24). The Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad king, if he survived the siege, and any Edomite and Horite soldiers who happened to escape, would have turned southward toward the Land of Seir. We may surmise they would have crossed the Arabah Valley to the east side to get away from the Egyptian armies overrunning Sinai and southern Canaan.

Therefore we suggest that the whole Hyksos/Edom/'Ad Empire fell to pieces, never to rise again. After the fall of Sharuhén, the Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad kings no longer had any strongly fortified cities into which retreat could be made, for these were lacking in the land of Edom at that time. After destroying the Horites, the Hyksos/Edom/'Ad had not built large, fortified cities in Edom because they were a nomadic empire. Archaeology has confirmed this nomadic period as stretching from about 1700 BC to 1300 BC. So the Hyksos lacked fortified home cities into which to retreat.

### **Further support**

The scattering of the Hyksos forces from Sharuhén as depicted above is speculation and surmise. Yet, the picture is not entirely without justification for we do know that the fall of Sharuhén marked the disappearance of the last organized resistance of the Hyksos that we can find in history. The last vestiges of the Hyksos armies must have been scattered from there somewhat as we have outlined.

The very fact that the Egyptian records follow the Hyksos kings only as far as Sharuhén, and at that point the whole Hyksos Empire suddenly fades forever, is very strong evidence that the Hyksos homeland was not some far away place in Syria or Asia Minor where the empire could still have carried on in strength for years outside of Egypt. No, that homeland must have been either at Sharuhén or at some very nearby place, so that the fall of Sharuhén ruined their entire empire forever. Therefore our argument receives strong support by the sudden disappearance of the Hyksos kings at Sharuhén. We suggest that the place that was close by was Edom/Arabia.

We submit that in taking the North Sinai Desert, reaching Sharuhén,



and levying tribute upon the Canaanite cities to the north, Ahmose I had done all that was necessary to break up the Hyksos confederation or conglomeration, whichever it was. In doing so, he had driven the Hyksos kings right back into their own homeland, had subdued parts of it, had left them no fortified cities, and had been able to levy tribute on the Canaanite allies. His objective fully accomplished, he desisted from further effort in that direction, and returned home in triumph, there to bring Nubia into his kingdom and to consolidate his position at home.

### **Some important considerations**

Although the Hyksos kings vanished from sight, they have left us an important legacy. Their rule was not in vain. They introduced the use of horses for both cavalry and for chariots. (Cotterell, 2005, page 66) Chariotry later made Egypt the mightiest nation on earth. The Hyksos also introduced the composite bow. One wonders if the Ishmaelite allies of Hyksos/Edom/Ad had a hand in that, for their progenitor Ishmael, according to the Bible, was noted as being “an archer.” (Genesis 21:20) This notation indicates that archery was an outstanding ability with him. He or his children may possibly have originated the composite bow, or have taken it up from some earlier people and introduced it into Egypt. But it is likely that the Hyksos have made one still greater contribution to world progress, before which war horses and composite bows seem relatively unimportant. This is the alphabet.

The founder of the Horite colony which occupied part of the Sinai Peninsula, the Arabah and neighboring regions, was “Seir the Horite.” (Genesis 36:20) From him the area received the name of “the land of Seir,” and this branch of the Hurrians are correctly called “Seirites.” The term “Seirites” is used in later history of the the Edomites who had inter-mingled with and intermarried with these Horites, and finally supplanted them.

Now the Egyptians had valuable turquoise mines at Serabit in the Sinai Peninsula. The people round about, evidently the Horites or Seirites, labored in these mines for the Egyptians. The Egyptians had long had their hieroglyphic writing where each sign or picture, as a rule, stood for a whole Egyptian word. This was not suitable for the language of the Seirite workmen and their overseers. Evidently someone hit upon the idea of using some of the Egyptian signs to represent sounds in the Seirite language, and so an early alphabet was born.

In 1906 the great archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie found alphabetic inscriptions at these mines which must have been written at least as early as 1500 BC, and the study of these inscriptions has given rise to the belief an alphabet

arose as described above. "Compton's Encyclopedia," 1958 ed., Vol. I, page 186; (published by F. E. Compton & Co., Chicago) summarizes the story regarding the origin of the alphabet. "Just how this invention was made, we do not know in detail. Some scholars believe it came when a Semitic people called the Seirites were working in turquoise mines in the Sinai Peninsula, and the Egyptian masters of the mines taught them how to write. The Egyptians did not teach their full, elaborate method of writing with pictures; they taught a simpler method which they used for writing names. In this method, each picture stood for the first sound in the name of the object shown in the picture."

The Seirites, using this method could put signs together to spell out the sequence of sounds in any word in their own language.

This would soon be found to be a simple and easy method of writing. The new method of using a sign for a sound instead of a sign for a word would be in use for some considerable time, we surmise, before it would begin to spread into more general use amongst the upper, learned classes. Therefore the origin of the idea must go back a long time before the writing of the Serabit inscriptions of 1500 BC. The invention therefore seems to belong to the Horite period.

Later the Edomites, mingling with these Seirites (Horites) around 1800 BC, would learn these alphabetical signs. Under the Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad Empire the new idea would naturally pass on to their Canaanite allies. The Canaanites may have improved the alphabet. Then the Canaanites of Tyre and Sidon (the Phoenicians), sailing over the Mediterranean Sea, spread their alphabet far and wide. Through the Greeks and the Romans it has passed down to us.

### **Further considerations**

Having now surveyed an array of evidences for the identification of the Hyksos kings with the Biblical Edomites, it is hoped we may confidently speak of them as one people, the Hyksos/Edomites/'Ad. At every point the references to each so coincide and tally that we feel justified in doing so.

But someone may object, "Not one of the points cited in the foregoing chapters in itself constitutes absolute proof." That may be true, but we feel that it is the large accumulation of very striking similarities which is so convincing.

Still, without giving absolute proof some may yet insist, so that the argument for the theory is unconvincing. We believe that this may be very difficult.

Nomadic people leave little behind them in the way of buildings, monuments, and written records. If the entire early Edomite Kingdom was based on

nomadic tribes raiding around the Arabian Peninsula, then there may be little physical evidence of their existence.

However there are some interesting comments made by the Israelites of the time. Consider the words of Moses' triumphant song when Israel came through the Red Sea and the Egyptians were drowned.

*The people shall hear, and be afraid;  
Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.  
Then the sheiks of Edom shall be amazed;  
The mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them  
All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.* (Exodus 15: 14-15)

One cannot but wonder if the grouping of names in Exodus 15:14-15 is not a reference to the Hyksos peoples which would still be well known to the Israelites. The name Edom would include the "Hurrians" or Horites who had amalgamated with them; "Palestina" would take in the Philistines at Gaza (near which Petrie found Hyksos graves) and the Avim; "Moab" comes in as an ally of Hyksos-Edom; "Canaan" would take in the Hittite and Hivite helpers from that land, which we have referred to. Only the Ishmaelites appear to be missing. This grouping of names must be significant of some connection uniting these people in thought or purpose, and aside from the explanation offered in this book, I know of no reason why these names should be grouped in this way in the Song of Moses.

If one remembers that not too long before the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the sheiks of Edom were chased out of Egypt by Ahmose I, one can see why they would be simply amazed beyond measure to learn that the slave nation Israel had actually been able to march out of Egypt as victors. The sheiks, comparing the report with their own humbling expulsion from Egypt, would be filled with wonder and astonishment.

They, *Rulers of Countries*, dominating Egypt and reigning as Pharaohs in it were expelled, but Israel, crushed into helpless slavery, makes a triumphant exodus. What a contrast! The sheiks of Edom were amazed.

"The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (Exodus 15:1,21; Job 39:18) The very thing which once had given the Hyksos/Edomites/Ad such advantage in battle, and which the Egyptians had now taken up and copied, assisting in building up the great Eighteenth Dynasty Empire, was utterly defeated. Yes, the sheiks of Edom had cause for amazement indeed!

Now we can see the true, deeper meaning in the words of Moses' song. The words take on real life. How exactly appropriate they were. Thus the identification of Hyksos/Edom/Ad assists us to better understand what we read, and gives reality to the passage.

### Did they reign in Egypt?

Another point of interest, which seems to have received very scant attention, is, “Why did the Hyksos kings, after conquering Egypt, move their capital into Egypt?” The Assyrians later also conquered Egypt, but the Assyrian capital remained at Nineveh. Is it not quite unusual for conquerors, already having a settled home-capital, to move their seat of government into a subjugated country? If the Hyksos kings came from Syria or Asia Minor or Canaan, then why did their capital not remain in Syria or Asia Minor or Canaan, as the case might be? There must be some good reason behind the move.

If our theory is right, one needs only to compare Edom and Egypt to see one very good reason. Egypt was so much more attractive to live in than the deserts of Arabia or Edom that such a move is seen to be the obvious, most natural and logical thing to do. (Genesis 13:10) *The Palestine Exploration Fund Annual III*, (1915) London, describes the desert region on pages 15 and those following. The desert appears to be most “inhospitable” as stated there. However, this general survey of the area seemed to indicate there had been some activity in that region near the middle of the second millennium BC or a little earlier, judging from the pottery sherds, etc.

Barton in “*Archaeology and the Bible*” pages 35-36, mentions that Sir Flinders Petrie found two remarkable campsites in Egypt, one about 20 miles north of Cairo, the other at On (Heliopolis) which he believed were original Hyksos camps before they began to assume Egyptian ways and civilization. The relatively crude, black pottery of these people is just what one would expect of a nomadic people who had just come from the inhospitable deserts of Arabia, Sinai and Edom, and of Horites coming from the same regions.

We have already noted from the Biblical record that King Saul of Edom did not hesitate to set up his first capital at Rehoboth by the Euphrates, a long, long way off from Edom itself. This trait gives away the similarity if not the identity of Edom and Hyksos.

The only reason we can suggest for Saul making this move is to have a place where he could graze the thousands of horses and camels that he must have had at his disposal. If the horse had given the Edomites the edge in battle, then the various sub-tribes and surrounding tribes of Edom must have joined in on the raids. Thus it became physically impossible for these raiders to camp in any large numbers except in well-watered plains where there was plenty of forage for their horses.

This argument would apply equally as well to the Hyksos/Edomites/’Ad setting up their capital at Tell el-Dab’a in the heart of the Nile delta.

## What the Hyksos kings took with them

When the Hyksos kings were expelled from Egypt, they could not help but take the memory of life in Egypt with them. That memory would bear some fruit in later life. These Hyksos kings had appreciated Egyptian art in stone, especially the magnificent temples and palaces in which they had worshipped and lived. They, too, had built beautiful temples in Egypt. The Horite element in the Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad mix, if there is any truth at all in the thought that they used caves in Seir, would have worked in stone previously, and admired Egyptian stone-art. In any case, the Hyksos/Edomites/'Ad must have learned vastly from the Egyptians. When they retreated into the Arabian Desert where they had come from, they took with them a greatly enhanced knowledge in stone-art, with an enlarged appreciation of what could be done. As we will see in the following chapter, beginning at this time, the Arabs of Arabia and the Edomites of Sier began to create rock-cut tombs and dining halls in the mountains of Sier.

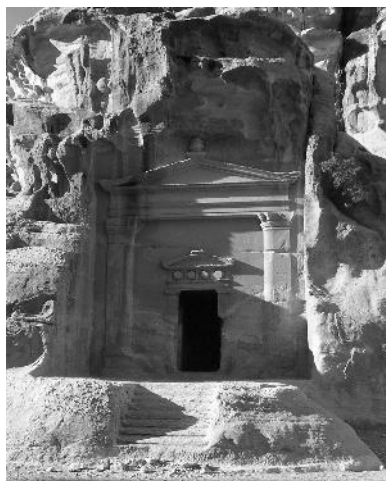
As we said before, the Edomites in their retreat seem to have fallen right back to the east side of the Arabah Valley. All the extensions of the empire fell away; only the Edomite core was left. This would bring the Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad leaders who remained right to Bozrah which had been the capital under King Jobab. While the hilltop town of Bozrah was a natural defensive position, it was unlikely that Bozrah was fortified at this time. The Edomites had originally occupied the country as nomads, and as M. E. Kirk puts it, the majority seem simply to have pitched their tents there amid the ruins of the conquered cities. (*Outline of Ancient Cultural History of Transjordan* Palestine Exploration Quarterly, July-October 1944, page 180)

The Israelites later did the same when they overran Canaan. It was not until well over three hundred years had passed that the Israelites began to really build cities. (Those who argue for a late invasion of Canaan by Israel, around 1200 BC, have perhaps overlooked the fact that too little time is left for nomadic Israel, fresh out of the wilderness wanderings, to switch over to a city-dwelling state)

City dwelling seems to have begun even before the time of Samuel. The Hyksos/Edomites/'Ad had occupied cities outside of their homeland, but appear to have utterly neglected building cities in Edom. At least archaeologists have not yet found traces of any cities in Edom at this period. Thus, thrown back to the region of Bozrah, the Hyksos/Edomites/'Ad would have little or no defence against Egyptian pursuit.

## The City Petra and Beidha

Petra and el-Beidha (Little Petra) are about fifty kilometers south of Bozrah. Both of these centers are located in the heart of very rugged country. Such locations would have offered the defeated Hyksos/Edom/'Ad a natural defence and a safe retreat. Even if this site had been occupied in a small way previously, it could still have offered a haven for the crushed Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad remnant at this time, a place to lick their wounds while recovering from the terrific shock of defeat.



*Above: A tomb in El Beidha (Little Petra)*

Tossed back out of Egypt into nomadism, perhaps the Hyksos line of kings collapsed altogether and a new line took over. Perhaps the line continued in a weakened state. We do not know. However some of the people had tasted life in Egypt. It would take a while to become adjusted. Not so very long after the Hyksos expulsion which was about 1580 B.C., a great change began to come over the land of Edom. The people began agricultural activities. They started to settle down. City life appeared. By about 1300 B.C. a line of fortified sites marked much of the boundary of Edom. Was it not the return of the Hyksos peoples from Egypt which gave the impetus to accomplish this in less than 300 years?

Somewhere about this time Mount Seir was most likely settled. Most scholars speak of the monuments in Petra as being of Nabataean skill (around 300 BC to 100 AD) which is no doubt true for the most part. But excavations demonstrate that the valley and surrounding mountains were occupied at earlier times as well.

The Hyksos/Edomite/'Ad peoples, having brought back with them some of the marvellous stone-art techniques learned in Egypt, in process of time began to carve out rock dwellings and temples in the rock or the faces of the mountains around the site of Petra. Although the city has passed through a brilliant Nabataean stage since, let us, when looking upon these huge, rock temples, think back upon the Hyksos kings. Expelled out of Egypt, yet handing down stories of the greatness which had once been theirs and longing for greatness still; they set about carving great and beautiful temples of their own in that dry land. And they became very proficient at this. Perhaps this is why

archeologists today see so many parallels between Egyptian and Nabataean architecture.

Oddly, one of these immense rock temples facing a narrow entrance passage into Petra bears the Arabic name “Khaznet Fir’aun” or “Treasury of Pharaoh.” Another structure is called “Qaşr bint Fir’aun” or “Palace of Pharaoh’s daughter.” It is a puzzle as to why the title “Pharaoh,” so emphatically Egyptian, should crop up seemingly without reason at Petra. It is as if the names are trying to whisper something to us of a connection with the land of the Nile; as if saying softly, “Our ancestry harks back into a dim past when the early kings of our line were once real Pharaohs.”

### **Edom, “A famous nation”**

As we stated before, the moment we link the Hyksos, ’Ad, and Edom as one, many puzzling bits of history begin to fit together. We gain an altogether new appreciation and respect for the little-known Edomites. Now we can understand why Biblical writers viewed Edom as being of such importance. They give it a prominence of position that, up until now, has seemed all out of proportion. To those writers, the Edomites carried with them the memory of once being a great, dominating empire.



*Above: Qaşr el-Bint in Petra is named after Pharaoh’s daughter*



Identifying Edom and the Hyksos as one entity helps us understand various other ancient writers such as Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 32:17-32 the prophet sings a sorrowful, picturesque dirge over the fall of great and powerful Egypt before Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He cries that the multitude of Egypt will go down in death into the abyss; she (that is, Egypt) with the daughters of “the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth” (verse 18). “The strong among the mighty shall speak to fallen Pharaoh out of the midst of hell.” (verse 21)

Now let us ask, who are these “famous nations” and the “strong among the mighty?” The Prophet Ezekiel proceeds to list the famous nations as known in his day. Most naturally the first is “Asshur” or Assyria, in verse 22, “which caused terror in the land of the living.” Next is “Elam” in verse 24, which also caused its terror in the land of the living. Then “Meshech” (and) “Tubal”, which are the Mashki and Tabal known to us from Assyrian inscriptions, and likewise “caused their terror in the land of the living.” Then follows, to the surprise of thoughtful readers, in verse 29, “Edom, her kings, and all her princes.” The parade ends with “the princes of the north” (the Scythians were pushing in from the north at that time) and the “Zidonians” in verse 30. But we ask, how does little Edom march in this parade of what are described as the famous nations? Why did Ezekiel include Edom in this array of “the strong among the mighty?” Regardless of how much of this chapter is figurative, and how much literal, we are forced to admit that even down to this prophet’s day, Edom was viewed as a “famous nation” with something in its past to elevate it to the position of one of “the strong among the mighty.”

Little toddlers do not march in a parade restricted, let us say, to accomplished scientists such as Isaac Newton, Michael Farady, Lord Kelvin, and Einstein! If Edom was the little kinglet we have thought it was until now, then would it not have been barred from being mentioned with Assyria, Elam, Mashki, and Tubal in such a listing? But the inclusion of Edom is proof positive that it was considered an unusually powerful country at one time. Unless our theory is correct, there is absolutely nothing in Edom’s past to warrant it being called a famous nation. The theory we have set forth, is, so far as we are aware, the only explanation which satisfies Ezekiel’s listing of “famous” “strong” and “mighty” nations recognized in his day. Evidently the memory of the enormous and powerful Hyksos/Edomite/’Ad Empire had not yet faded away.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 'AD, EDOM, AND THE HYKSOS

#### Identifying kings by name

The thought now arises as to the possibility of identifying the names of any Edomite kings with the names of Hyksos kings preserved to us through Egyptian records. This is a matter which linguists and historians may look into at some length, so no positive assertions will be ventured here; only a few tentative suggestions will be given. It could of course be that the names of Hyksos kings in Egypt belong to a period after the close of the list of Edomite kings in the Bible, so that the two lists would not overlap anywhere. However it does seem just feasible that the last three Edomite kings are the same as the first three Hyksos kings.

Thus King Saul of Edom could be Salatis, the first named Hyksos king. Josephus states that Salatis reigned thirteen years. King Saul, after completing his conquests around the Euphrates River, might have turned his attention to Egypt next and, basing his operations from the region of Avim in southwest Palestine, pushed into the Delta. The names Saul and Salatis are similar.

On the border of the Delta nearest this base, Salatis founded his capital city of Avaris (Biblical Tanis or Zoan).

#### The reign of Baal-hanan

The Bible continues the Edomite record: *"And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead."* Genesis 36:38

The name Baal-hanan could conceivably be shortened to Beon, the next Hyksos king. The Semitic name had to be written in Egyptian hieroglyphics and then over a millennium later was transliterated into Greek by an Egyptian priest, Manetho; in that length of time a name could undergo a shortening

process. It seems plausible, anyway, to put forth this suggestion, pending further investigation. Josephus, quoting from Manetho, gives Beon a reign of 44 years.

### **The reign of Hadad II**

We now come to the last name in the Biblical kinglist for early Edom. This is Hadar in Genesis, named Hadad in I Chronicles 1:50.

*“And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: the name of his city was Pau, and his wife’s name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.”* Genesis 36: 39

As this king is named Hadad in the Chronicles account, we will call him Hadad II. His city of Pau (or Pai in Chronicles) has been thought to possibly be Phauara in Edom (Schaff), but this is very uncertain. In view of our theory of identifying the Hyksos kings with the Edomites and that they were at this time establishing capitals outside of their homeland, we venture to suggest that this city should be looked for in the Nile Delta region rather than in Edom. For instance, Pau might be Pe, a suburb of Buto in Lower Egypt, a royal residence of early Egyptian kings. (Breasted, pg. 34)

The special naming of queen Mehetabel, wife of Hadad II, and the listing of her ancestry indicates that she was a person of quite unusual importance. Some have suggested that the names sound Egyptian in origin. However, history has lost the links which would make such a reference a source of real significance and enlightenment to us. We can only hope that some fortunate discovery will give us the clue some day.

### **The importance of the Edomite kinglist**

It is quite obvious that the writer of the Book of Genesis was listing a line of kings which he considered to be of unusual importance to his readers; so important, indeed, as to draw the author aside from his main theme for a little while. He was giving his readers references to persons, cities and events which he knew they would readily recognize, understand and appreciate. Today, after three and a half millennia have passed, it is difficult for us to pick up the threads. If Edom was only a tiny, insignificant kinglet, as some scholars seem to think, all this detailed, compact listing and referencing was both unnecessary and without point. On the other hand, if the writer was recording the origin of the great Hyksos Empire which also ruled over his own people while they resided in Egypt, and on account of which his people were reduced to abject slavery (as we shall see later on), then we begin to grasp the vital impor-

tance of what this writer was recording, and the parts of the picture fall into place. We realize he was not wasting his own or his readers' time on trivialities to no purpose.

### **The Hyksos king Apachnias**

If the suggestion that the Edomite King Saul and Baal-hanan were the Hyksos kings Salatis and Beon, then Hadar or Hadad II could be Apachnias, the Hyksos king who succeeded Beon. Josephus, quoting from Manetho, states Apachnias reigned thirty six years and seven months.

It is difficult to see any similarity between the names Hadar and Apachnias, though it is known that names undergo great alterations with the passage of centuries, and may become so altered and corrupted as to be almost unrecognizable. For instance, the great King Ashurbanipal of Assyria, even amongst Semitic tongued people, comes to be called "Asnapper" after a few generations. (Ezra 4:10) Fifteen hundred years elapsed from the dates of the Hyksos kings to the time of Manetho who copied the names in Greek, and may have translated their meaning rather than the pronunciation. Eg. For example, a Hadad is a metal smith.

There is also a possibility that the order of the Hyksos kings' names have become confused, so we cannot cling too tenaciously to the sequence of names which has come down to us second or third hand, or possibly much more remotely removed through Manetho and Josephus.

### **Other Hyksos kings**

With the death of Hadad II the Biblical list of Edomite kings stops. Evidently the author of Genesis felt he had carried the list as far as was necessary since he carried the list just that far, far enough to provide the reader with the origin of the Hyksos in Egypt and to connect them with the first few Hyksos kings. The rest of the Hyksos kings' history would already be sufficiently known to his readers, and was beyond the scope of the writer's subject in the book of Genesis, so he naturally closed his list. We can be very thankful to the writer of Genesis for carrying the kinglist as far as he did, just far enough to enable us to discover the link between the Edomites and the Hyksos kings. After Apachnias, Josephus lists three more Hyksos Kings, as follows:

- Apophia (I) reigned 61 years
- Jonias (John or Khian) reigned 50 years, 1 month.
- Aseis reigned 49 years, 2 months. (Josephus "Against Apion" 1:13)

Jonias (or Khian) is the one whose monuments have been found in such wide-

ly scattered points, as we mentioned in Chapter 7 (pg 76) from Gebelen in Southern Egypt, to Crete, and across to Baghdad. Perhaps in his reign the Hyksos Empire attained its maximum dimensions.

Reviewing the points so far, there is evidence that the Edomites and the Hyksos kings are one and the same. The Bible indicates that the Edomite Empire stretched outward over an area which the Hyksos Empire must also have embraced. Therefore the Hyksos Empire must have extended into Mesopotamia towards Baghdad. The Biblical account pictures for us a growing kingdom or empire before it invaded Egypt, a point absolutely essential to linking the Edomite and Hyksos stories, since both the Egyptian sources and Josephus seem to indicate this.

## Horses

It has been suggested by some that one important reason for the astonishing success of the Hyksos' invasion of Egypt was the use of horses in warfare by the invaders. (Cotterell, 2005, page 65) It is also generally conceded that horses were either unknown, or practically unknown, in Egypt before that period in which the Hyksos invasion took place. Many believe it was the Hyksos who introduced the horse into Egypt.

The assumption that horses were unknown in Egypt prior to the Hyksos invasion rests upon wholly negative evidence. The evidence is the stark absence of any reference to horses in the monuments and records of Egypt as we know them from the times before the Hyksos dynasties.

While the foregoing is probably very close to the truth, we are going to suggest that horses were introduced into Egypt a good while before the Hyksos invasion. However, the Egyptians were very conservative and did not take to the use of horses much until, as they learned the hard way through the Hyksos invasion, the war-horse gave great military advantages in battle. Horses give rapid transportation, manoeuvrability and elevation above soldiers on foot.

The excavations of Fort Buhen in the Sudan have demonstrated that there was a large Egyptian fortress from the times of the XII<sup>th</sup> and of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, that is, before and after the Hyksos period.

Professor Walter B. Emery, Edwards Professor of Egyptology in the University of London, while carrying out the excavations for the Egypt Exploration Society, discovered the burial of a horse definitely pre-Hyksos. He states that "on sound archaeological evidence" it antedated the Hyksos by 200 years. (See "Illustrated London News," September 12, 1959, page 250) This single find muzzles the argument based solely on the silence of the monuments that there "were no horses in Egypt prior to the Hyksos invasion." It

confirms the theory that some horses had been brought into the country earlier than the times of the Hyksos.

One thing we are very sure of: the Hyksos had horses in abundance and used them extensively in warfare. Tradition states this. The monuments of Egypt record the use of horses after the Hyksos age. Hyksos graves in Tell el-Dab'a as well as those in southwest Palestine are found to contain the skeletons of horses which were buried with their fond masters. Everything points to the Hyksos being great horsemen.

### **No horses in Edom?**

Let us turn now to the Bible again. If the Edomite kinglist in Genesis chapter 36 gives us the origin of the Hyksos kings, it will be wholly in order to find some reference to horses and to their use in warfare. Indeed, it might almost seem to be necessary.

In the genealogy of the Horites who preceded the Edomites and were subdued and absorbed by them, we read of one man named Anah: "This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses (donkeys) of Zibeon his father." Genesis 36:24

(Note. Some authorities would translate this passage, "that found the warm springs." However, Hebrew scholars for generations appear to universally hold to "mules" as the correct meaning. We see no reason to question the historically accepted meaning. "Warm springs" is from a similar word that has been substituted by those who have difficulty accepting the accuracy of the word "mule" as it seems trivial. However, accepting the words "warm springs" would make Anah and Zibeon to be ignorant of the natural, geographical features of their own homeland- certainly not very likely.)

As mules are a cross between donkey and horse, our argument for the presence of horses is complete. You cannot have mules without horses being around. Thus a group of stubborn mules entirely blocks the contention of "no horses" in chapter 36 of Genesis. From this first identification in the Bible of horses in the near east, we may conclude some important points.

First, the Horites of Sier were commonly users of asses or donkeys, as were both the Egyptians and the Babylonians at that early date; for Anah was feeding "the asses of Zibeon his father." This Zibeon, a Horite, is not to be confused with Zibeon, a Hivite, mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Second, horses must have been running wild in Arabia at this time. These wild horses evidently mingled with asses (perhaps wild asses) and some cross-breeding had occurred, resulting in the mules which Anah discovered. The presence of these mules, strange and utterly new creatures to Anah, greatly

astonished him as well as the others to whom he showed the mules. This was such a unique and exciting event that after this, Anah became known as the one who “found the mules.” The event was so noteworthy that it was especially referred to in the genealogies.

Third, we can surmise that horses were relatively new in this part of the world. Probably herds of wild horses were wandering into Northern Arabia from the north and east and were beginning to become numerous in Arabia. It is interesting to note at this point that the Bedouin have a long-held tradition that Ishamel tamed and rode the first horses. (Burton, 1878, page 120) Archeologist Marsha Levine has suggested that horses were first domesticated in the Ukraine (Telegin, 1986) but she provides no written, archaeological or pictorial evidence. Needless to say, if horses were being ridden in the Ukraine, it wouldn't take long for the idea to catch on in nearby areas. If horses had been known for very long in the territory of these Horites, it seems unlikely that mules would be unknown altogether. The Horites had evidently seen horses, but not mules; so the advent of horses in that region can be pushed back at least a generation or two before the time of Anah.

It does seem significant that the very first indication of horses in the Biblical record should be with the Horites who, amalgamating with the descendants of Esau became, as we believe, the Hyksos people who loved and used horses so much, and who also used them in warfare.

### **The horse domesticated**

In his book, *“Archaeology and the Bible,”* George A. Barton states, “The Hittites were the first of the peoples of western Asia to use the horse.” (IV<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 79) This is further substantiated by small representations of horses being ridden as portrayed on clay plaques dating to the first quarter of the second millennium (from northern Iraq) (Moorey, 1970, page 36) Ann Hyland, in her book *“The Horse in the Ancient World”* (Hyland, 2003, page 3) notes that while many of the plaques are unclear as to whether they are horses or donkeys, one is most certainly a horse. “It has a full tail and a very full mane, which other equids lack, and a horse's ears pricked forward.” She notes that the plaque is now in a private collection, but provides a photograph taken for the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The Hittites and the Horites or “Hurri” as we noted before, were related peoples. Through this reference to “mules” it indicates the presence of horses for the very first time in connection with the Horites, long before other peoples in the area had domestic horses. The Bible and the clay tablets unite in testifying that the Hittites/Horites were the first, or nearly the first, to domesticate the horse in western Asia.

Again, the clay tablets speak of a people called “Manda” who came from Mitanni-land by the River Euphrates north of Carchemish. Barton tells us the Manda were “horse trainers and dealers.” While these tablets come from a period several generations later than Anah who found the mules, yet this statement helps to confirm the fact that the Hittites, the Horites, the Mitanni and the Manda, all closely related or intermingled peoples, were noted for early use of the horse. Some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the Hyksos people were the Hittites of Asia Minor or were led by Hittites, largely on the basis that both had horses.

However, we believe that it was the Horites of Seir who developed the use of the horse along with the Edomites, and that while the Hyksos peoples had many Horites in their composition, the Edomites rather than the Hittites were the leading faction.

As we pointed out before, the family of Esau was already related to the Hittites even before the move into Seir, and after the move intermingled with the Horites. Thus through both the Hittites and the Horites, the Edomites would soon become familiar with horses, horse raising and training. But before going on to study the use of horses by the Edomites, let us look at another reference to horses.

## Horses in Egypt

The next reference to horses in the Bible is in Genesis 47:17 where we find Joseph, the ruler of Egypt, accepting horses from certain people in exchange for bread during the great famine. This would be a good while before the Hyksos invasion. The wording of the story seems quite significant: “Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.” (Genesis 47:13)

The people finally ran out of money in both lands with which to purchase grain. Then the people of Egypt (it does not say of Canaan) besought Joseph for food. (verses 14-15) He was their ruler, and they sought a solution to their need because they had used up all their funds for purchasing food in the past. Joseph then instituted a different system of exchange.

Joseph then commenced the exchange of livestock for food. *“And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give food for your cattle if money fails.”* (Genesis 47:16)

All countries at this time were seeking Egypt for food (Genesis 41:57) and foreigners coming into Egypt in their dire need would want to take advantage of the new exchange system. The Egyptians exchanged their cattle, but the exchanging did not stop there. Next we read: “And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for their

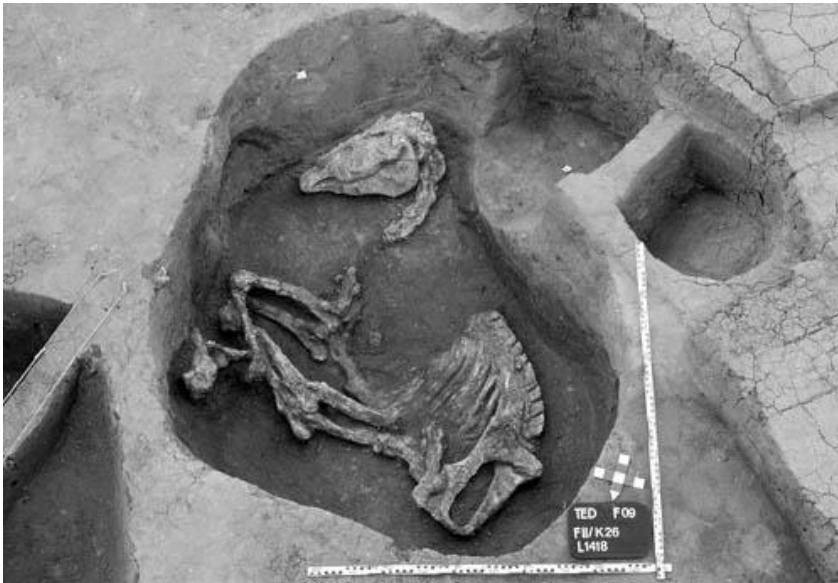
flocks, and for their cattle of the herds, and for their asses, and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.” (Genesis 47:17)

Now, if horses were just coming into use amongst the Horites, it would be natural enough for these Horites to bring their horses into Egypt to exchange them for food. This seems to be the very first appearance of horses in Egypt, introduced by trade before the Hyksos invasion. Horses seem to be listed quite high in this reference, as if of great value.

### Horses for riding and for chariots

Jacob later mentions horses used for riding while blessing his sons: *“Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.”* (Genesis 49:17)

Years later we find “horsemen” under Joseph at Jacob’s very great funeral procession. (Genesis 50:9) This reference is in sharpest contrast to an earlier passage when Joseph, second ruler in Egypt to the Pharaoh, responds in tender respect for his aging father and sends wagons and heavily loaded donkeys for bringing his father into Egypt. (Genesis 45:9 - 46:6) Horses and horsemen are not mentioned in this earlier event; indeed, we might say they are conspicuous by their complete absence on such an important occasion. At the time of Jacob’s entry into Egypt, donkeys and donkeys only are referred to as for riding on, and evidently for drawing the wagons too. But later when we come



Above: A horse skeleton in a grave at Tell el-Dab'a demonstrates the Hyksos' love for horses.



to Jacob's funeral, horses leap to the forefront and the lowly donkey is entirely eclipsed. The very obvious inference is that the horse had been introduced in the interval, brought in by exchange. Joseph, a man acquainted with nomadic life in the east, saw the tremendous possibilities in the horse, and quickly developed corps of horsemen and chariots.

### Horses in warfare

Next, let us look at a very early reference that has superb, picturesque, and dramatic descriptions of the horse's use in battle. God speaks to Job saying:

*"What time she (the ostrich) lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.*

*"Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?*

*"Can't thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible.*

*"He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.*

*"He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.*

*"The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.*

*"He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.*

*"He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting." (Job 39:18-25)*

These stirring words vividly describe the horse, evidently only slightly removed from its fearless wild state, being used by mounted men in fierce and headlong battle. We can sense how the first use of horses in warfare gave the riders great courage and advantage so that the tide of battle swung in favor of the horsemen and the best horses.

If we are right in identifying Job with Jobab, king of Edom, then the earliest kings of Edom were already making successful use of horses in warfare. The war-horse at that time gave the nation with horses a superb advantage over nations which had no horses. Not only could the army move with great speed, but the mounted riders towered over foot soldiers. The nation which was first in raising, training, and using war-horses in great number would have been a formidable force, capable of quickly overrunning their enemies. No wonder "the Edomite/Hyksos/'Ad Empire" grew so greatly!

## Egypt's defeat

Even though Joseph appears to have introduced the horse into Egypt under his exchange policy, and then quickly developed corps of horsemen and chariots, Egypt was a conservative country. It had never suffered invasion; Joseph was a foreigner who had to eat at a separate table from the Egyptians. (Genesis 43:32) He was only accepted because of his astute wisdom and favor with the reigning Pharaoh, but was looked upon as a foreigner non-the-less. After Joseph was gone, his policies and his forward-looking and realistic preparation for war with horses would hardly be carried on by the native Egyptians. The development and training in the horse industry, introduced by a stranger, lagged or was entirely discarded and dropped. Egypt relapsed back into her old ways and methods. Meanwhile, not far to the east, by its use of trained and beloved horses, the new Edomite/Hyksos/'Ad power expanded and grew under Jobab and the kings which followed after him. More and more tribes were added to the alliance, and slowly the areas surrounding the Arabian desert fell to these nomadic tribesmen.

Presently, Egypt paid the price for lack of vigilance. Without horses and horsemen she found herself unable to hold back the mounted Arabian hordes swarming over her eastern frontier. She yielded to the inevitable, and as Josephus says quoting from Manetho, the strangers overran the country of Lower Egypt without a battle. For the first time in her history, Egypt lay prostrate under a foreign power.

Did the Edomites have horses? After reading the description of horses in warfare in the Book of Job who lived in the land of Edom (Uz) we can be quite certain that they did. All this information seems to fit together.

## Religion and date of the Edomite empire

We come now to the topic of the religious identity of the Edomites and the Hyksos. The Hyksos kings worshipped Sutekh or Baal. What, then, did the Edomites worship?

Esau himself was a nominal worshipper of Jehovah, the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac. We have already gone over Esau's relatively light esteem for the demands of the worship of Jehovah (Yahweh); how he sold his Abrahamic birthright for a mess of pottage, and completely broke with the sacred traditions of the family by marrying two Canaanite women. Baal worship was widespread in Canaan. Esau sought material advantage and success, and largely gained what he sought. In Esau's life we miss those deep, inward climaxes resulting in conversion of character, redemption of soul, and rebirth of spirit,

visible in the life-story of his twin brother Jacob. Nevertheless, the worship of Jehovah was not abandoned by Esau, nor by his earlier descendants.

We can see this by the names he gave his children. Esau's eldest son was named Eliphaz meaning, "God his strength." The name of his second son Ruel means, "Friend of God." The third son was Jeush, "To whom God hastens." His fourth son Jaalam, "Whom God hides." An early sheik of Edom is Magdiel, "The praise of God" (Genesis 36:5, 43, etc.)

In the Book of Job we discover that in his old age Eliphaz possessed a most profound monotheistic knowledge of God and of righteousness. Like his father Esau, Eliphaz gave too great attention to outward, material prosperity, holding such to be the ultimate proof of divine approval. Thus Job's calamities and material losses were, in his eyes, an absolute and unquestionable demonstration of God's anger for some terrible personal offense or sins. Eliphaz had drunk deep of the cup of his father's philosophy. But it is clear that Eliphaz still followed the worship of Jehovah and of him alone.

Job (or Jobab) was also a worshipper of Jehovah only. But it is significant that Job speaks of idolatry as being secretly practiced by some (Job 31:21-28) though in general condemned by the populace of Edom at that time.

### **The drift to Baal worship**

Up to the reign of Jobab, the second king of Edom, the worship of Jehovah was continued in general by the Edomites, either truly and sincerely or just nominally by individuals. But by the time we reach the seventh king, Baal seems to step to the front. That king's name was Baal-hanan, meaning, "To whom Baal is merciful," or, "Whom Baal loves." The name "Jehovah," or "El," compounded into personal names appears less and less frequently; "Baal" appears instead. This name "Baal-hanan," if compounded with "Jehovah" instead of with "Baal," would mean, "Whom Jehovah loves." We know this name as Johanan or John. One of the Hyksos kings actually bore this name. He is Jonias, otherwise known as "John" or "Khian." This shows that the name of God had not been forgotten even as late as that, but with him the last vestige of Jehovah-honoring seems to have disappeared. With King John, the zenith of the Hyksos power passes also. Baal (Sutekh or Seth to the Egyptians) became their god. Finally, we learn from Egyptian records that, "King Apophis made Sutekh (Seth) his Lord, serving no other god who was in the whole land, save Sutekh." Breasted, page 173, reports that King Apophis made an altar to Sutekh, "lord of Avaris, when he (Sutekh) set all lands under his (the king's) feet."

From all that we know of the later Edomites it seems that Baal, in one form or another, became their principal god.

The whole picture seems to indicate a slow change from the worship of one God, Jehovah as originally derived from Abraham and Isaac, through a declining interest in Jehovah exhibited in Esau and Eliphaz, to an exaltation of other gods such as Baal, exhibited in the name of Baal-hanan, and the final exclusion of all other gods under King Apophis. This same drift is also traceable among the people of Israel, who continually drifted towards worshipping other gods. The Biblical record tells us of many prophets who arose among the people who opposed this drift. The prophets brought about revivals in which the people returned to the worship of the one true God. While there is no record of prophets speaking out to the Edomites/Hyksos/'Ad in the Bible, the Qur'ān speaks of a man named Hud who rose, calling the people back to monotheism and the worship of the one true God. (Qur'ān 7:65-72, 11:50-60, 26:123-140)

Unger's Bible Dictionary under "Hyksos," states: *"The Hyksos erected large earthen enclosures for their horses. This type of construction can be seen at Jericho, Shechem, Lachish, and Tell el-Ajjul. They also erected many temples to Baal. There are also evidences of worship of the mother goddess. Common in Hyksos levels are cultic objects such as nude figurines, serpents, and doves, showing their complete devotion to this type of worship. Hyksos burial customs are distinctive as is their chariotry."*

When we consider the religious origins of the Edomite/Hyksos/'Ad peoples, the same origin which Israel had, we can recognize the same pattern of struggle. The people around them worshiped many gods and ridiculed their worship of one God. So over time the worship of many gods crept into their civilization. One can only imagine the impact that they felt when seeing the temples and religious practices of Egypt, as compared to their own simple practice of quietly worshipping one God.

The Israelites had many prophets who called them back to the worship of one God and who condemned all Ba'al worship. *"Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah, (local Baals); and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.... Therefore pray not thou for this people..."* (Jeremiah 11:11, 13, 14)

In much the same way, Hud spoke to the people of 'Ad/Uz. Over a thousand years later, the prophet Muḥammad reminded the people in Mecca of the Kingdom of 'Ad, telling them of God's message to 'Ad.

*"And unto Ad (we sent) their brother, Hud. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh! Ye have no other God save Him. Lo! ye do but invent! O my people! I ask of you*

*no reward for it. Lo! my reward is the concern only of Him who made me. Have ye then no sense? And, O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant; He will cause the sky to rain abundance on you and will add unto you strength to your strength. Turn not away, guilty! They said: O Hud! Thou hast brought us no clear proof and we are not going to forsake our gods on thy (mere) saying, and we are not believers in thee. We say naught save that one of our gods hath possessed thee in an evil way. He said: I call Allāh to witness, and do ye (too) bear witness, that I am innocent of (all) that ye ascribe as partners (to Allāh). Qur'an 11:50-54 (Pickthal)*

The main message that the people of Arabia remembered centuries upon centuries later was that the people of 'Ad departed from their belief in one God and turned to worshipping many gods (partners to Allāh). This is foundational to understanding the message of the Qur'an to the people of Arabia. Muḥammad is telling them of ancient people who had abandoned the worship of one God, and then refused to come back to worshipping one God. In the end, the people of 'Ad who once ruled the entire Middle East and even conquered the great Pharaohs of Egypt perished and disappeared. Not because they were defeated in battle, but because they refused to accept the messenger that was sent to them.

### **The comparison of dates**

Let us now take up the most difficult yet most important parallel, the question of the dates of the respective Edomite and Hyksos Empires. If we find that both existed as nearly as we can tell at the same time, then the identity of the two could hardly be questioned. Two separate and unrelated empires cannot be occupying the same areas at one and the same time.

May we say immediately that merely attaching a certain date BC to the one and the other from some popular (or other) chronological systems will in no way assist us in this important phase of our investigation. One man's set of dates for Biblical history may put the Edomite kings at about 1400 BC or later; another set may put them at 2200 BC or earlier. One Egyptologist will date the Hyksos kings at about 1800 BC and another at an altogether different date. Each Egyptologist is able to defend their position with myriads of arguments, so this will not help us, nor prove similarity of time.

What we need is to relate the time of the Edomite kings recorded in the Bible to some Biblical event which ties into Egyptian history. Then computing from that event, we can discover if the times of the Edomite kings and of the Hyksos kings link together. For instance, if we knew with absolute certainty which Pharaoh was reigning at the time of Joseph, the computation would

be simple; unfortunately we do not know who that Pharaoh is, in spite of guesses and surmises we may say by the dozen! The next nearest event linking Egyptian and Biblical history is the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and Joshua's conquest of Canaan. This has been discussed and argued by Egyptologists for years. What we hope to do here is to show that it is possible to demonstrate a possible link in dates.

The date of the Exodus is itself a very vexed question. But it seems to be generally agreed now that the Exodus was either during the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty or the XIX<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. We strongly favour the time of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, feeling that the date of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Dynasty does not tally with the chronological note given in I Kings 6:1 which places the Exodus nearly 500 years before Solomon's reign, nor with the lengthy period for the Judges in Israel as mentioned by Jephthah. (Judges 11:28) We will therefore consider the earlier dating, that is that the Exodus was during the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

### **The fall of Jericho**

The Biblical record gives the destruction of Jericho under Joshua as being very soon after the death of Moses at the end of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Prof. J. Garstang's excavations at Jericho not only demonstrated that the city's walls had fallen as with an earthquake shock, but make it fairly certain by the presence of Egyptian scarabs that Jericho was destroyed during the reign of the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III, dated by Breasted as 1411 - 1375 BC. Using this traditional interpretation as a link between Egyptian and Biblical histories, let us proceed to compare for confirmations of the link, and then compute back to the times of the Edomite kings and of the Hyksos kings.

### **The Amarna letters**

A number of years ago a remarkable discovery was made at Tell el Amarna in Egypt. Inscribed tablets were found giving official correspondence between government officials in Palestine and the reigning Pharaoh in Egypt. These tablets are a very valuable source of information and are known as, "The Amarna Letters."

Some of these letters tell of a people called "Khabirit" (that is "Hebrews") who were invading Canaan from the east during the reign of Amenhotep III, just as the Israelites did under Joshua in the Biblical record. Breasted, page 278, declares, "*the advance of the Khabiri, among whom we must recognize bands of Hebrews and Aramaeans.*" Barton, "Archaeology and the Bible," gives some helpful translations.

This invasion continued on into the reign of the next Pharaoh Akhenaton, or Amenhotep IV. If these Khabiri are the Children of Israel (Hebrews) under Joshua, and we believe they are, then the Amarna Letters confirm the archaeological data as to the fall of Jericho being during the reign of Amenhotep III. Thus we have two very good archaeological evidences linking Biblical and Egyptian histories at this point.

(Note. The excavations at Hazor in Northern Palestine are said to strongly favour the later date for the Hebrew invasion of Canaan, more in line with Merneptah as being the Pharaoh of the Exodus. However, Hazor does not seem to have been wiped out by Joshua as was Jericho, for early in the Book of Judges Hazor is again the capital city of Jabin (II), king of the Canaanites (Judges 4:2). When Joshua burned the city (Joshua 11:10-13) and destroyed the people found in it, the damage must have been repaired, and either at that time or later, been reoccupied by Canaanites. For all we know, there may have been a greater destruction of Hazor after Deborah and Barak than under Joshua; the record does not say; that later destruction would certainly fall in the time of the XIX Dynasty by our chronology. Further research at other points occupied by Israel at the time of the invasion is needed. The reference to a Canaanite Hazor in Judges 4:2 makes it impossible to say that the final destruction of Canaanite Hazor was carried out by Joshua. Joshua must therefore belong to an earlier period, which would place him in the Amarna period.)



*Above: One of 13 cuneiform tablets found in El-Amarna, from Tushratta King of the Mitanni to Pharaoh Amenhotep III. This letter contains a negotiation of marriage between the pharaoh and Tushratta's daughter.*

### **The oppression and exodus of Israel**

The Bible places the Exodus of Israel from Egypt forty years before the death of Moses and the fall of Jericho. Forty years before the invasion of Canaan by the Khabiri (Hebrews) and before the fall of Jericho, from the archaeological evidence, brings us approximately to the time of the death of



Amenhotep II, 1420 BC by Breasted's chronology. It therefore follows that this Pharaoh Amenhotep II was most likely the Pharaoh during the Exodus. We will use this as our working hypothesis.

The Bible says that at the Exodus Moses was 80 years old, and his brother Aaron 83 years old. (Exodus 7:7) Using Breasted's Egyptian chronology, 80 years before the death of Amenhotep II would place the birth of Moses at 1500 BC, and 83 years before would place the birth of Aaron at 1503 BC. The date for the birth of Moses would be the second year of Thutmose III, whom some have suggested as possibly being the Pharaoh of the oppression, and by the same reckoning the birth of Aaron comes two years before this Pharaoh began to reign. (His reign by Breasted's chronology began in 1501 BC) This arrangement of dates fits the Biblical account well.

We know that the severest stage of oppression was taking place right at the time when Moses was born. The Pharaoh had just commanded that Hebrew boy infants be thrown into the Nile, but Moses was hidden. On the other hand, there is no hint of any need for hiding Aaron who was born only three years before Moses. Evidently, the cruel command to destroy the Hebrew baby boys was not yet given at the date of Aaron's birth (Exodus 1:22) but it certainly was in effect at the date of Moses' birth. Clearly then, the command was issued in the interval. It would seem that this new command came from the new Pharaoh Thutmose III shortly after he ascended to the throne, approximately two years after Aaron was born, and about one year before Moses' birth. The persecution was then at its maximum.

Nevertheless, the Biblical account indicates it was a considerable time before the birth of Moses that persecution of the Hebrews and enslavement of the nation first began. It began when the reigning Pharaoh feared lest these Hebrews ally themselves with Egypt's foes (Exodus 1:8-11). We are not told how long a time elapsed from the beginning of this enslavement to the more severe stage when the boy infants were to be destroyed, but the inference is that quite a few years passed during which the Hebrews built store-cities for the king. The persecution of the Hebrews was evidently intensified from time to time, finally culminating in the new command to kill the baby boys, a command which most likely was issued by Thutmose III, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. It doesn't take many years, only 79, to carry us back from the accession of Thutmose III (1501 BC) to the founding of the XVII<sup>th</sup> Dynasty under Ahmose I who is coupled directly with the expulsion of the Hyksos kings from Egypt (1580 BC). The founding of this Dynasty fits well with the wording of Exodus 1:8 "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt." The Hebrew word **חדש** here implies a fresh new thing, or another of a different



kind as opposed to a similar kind. Ahmose I was definitely a “new king” and the circumstances of that king’s reign might well have led to the enslavement of the Israelites as we shall see in a moment.

The Chronology Table on the next page is based upon Breasted’s arrangement and demonstrates how the expulsion of the Hyksos kings dovetailed with the beginning of persecutions of the Hebrews.

### **The Edom-Israel quarrel**

If the Hyksos people were an association of tribes led by the Edomites as we have proposed, then Ahmose I who expelled the Hyksos, would truly fear that the Hebrew children of Israel would join with the Hyksos, since the Edomites and Israelites were related tribes. As we demonstrated, they had pledged to respect one another’s territories. So, while Ahmose I warred with the Hyksos kings, chasing them out of Egypt toward Southern Palestine, he apparently decided to subject Israel to slavery to prevent any possible cooperation between Israel and the Hyksos/Edom/’Ad people. Obviously Pharaoh was expecting Israel to side with Egypt’s enemies.

How would the Hyksos/Edom/’Ad people view this situation? Did they feel that their brethren the Israel-Hebrews failed them in their hour of need? Would they not blame Israel for not rising up en masse against Ahmose I to contend on their behalf? This view would explain why Edom later so blatantly refused Israel passage through their land; why they came out against them with the sword (Numbers 20:14-21), and why such a bitter, unending and age-long quarrel arose between Edom and Israel.

The Amalekites, an independent tribe which had branched off from Edom (Gen. 36:12,16), probably branching off when the Hyksos/Edomite/’Ad Empire collapsed, also exhibited a very bitter spirit by surprising Israel in the wilderness with a sneak attack. This was followed by a perpetual quarrel for all time. (Exodus 11:8-16)

### **Date of Hyksos kings and Edomite kings**

Prof. Breasted believed that 100 years would be ample to cover the length of time the Hyksos ruled in Egypt, but it may have been less. (Breasted, pg 117) Our chronology gives the expulsion of the Hyksos as 160 years before the Exodus, and so 100 years more would place the Hyksos invasion of Egypt around 260 years before the Exodus.

The Children of Israel were in Egypt 430 years from the day Jacob entered Egypt to the Exodus. (Exodus 12:40-41) On the basis of this data, the Hyksos

Chronology Table I			
Egypt	B.C. Breasted	Periods	Biblical Account
	1850		Jacob enters Egypt
		170	Bela, King in Edom Jobab, king in Edom, Edomites push eastwards Husham, King in Edom Hadad I, King in Edom, Midian smitten Samlah, King in Edom
Hyksos Invade Egypt	1680		Saul, King of Edom, Kingdom reaches Rehoboth Baal-hanan, King in Edom Hadad II (Hadar)
Salatis Beon Apachnias Apophis I Khian or John Assis Several other Hyksos kings follow		100	
Dynasty XVIII Ahmose I Hyksos Expelled	1580	430	A new king over Egypt (Exodus 1:8) Israelites enslaved (Exodus 1:9-12)
Amenhotep I	1557		
Thutmosis I	1526		
	1503		Birth of Aaron
Thutmosis II and Thutmoses III and Hatshepsut Queen	1501 1500		Pharaoh command boy babies drowned Birth of Moses
Hatshepsut dies	1480	80	
Amenhotep II	1460		Moses flees to Midian
Death of Amenhotep II	1447	40	Exodus 2:23
Thutmosis IV	1420		Exodus of Israel from Egypt
Amenhotep III	1420 1411	40	
	1380		Death of Moses, Joshua is leader City of Jericho taken
Amenhotep IV "Amarra Letters"	1380 1375		
	1374		Most of Canaan taken by Joshua. Caleb (Joshua 14:10)

invasion of Egypt would be about 170 years after Jacob and his family moved from Canaan into Egypt.

As we stated earlier it appears that Bela, Edom’s first king, may well have started his reign not very long after Jacob entered Egypt. This 170 years would therefore extend over the formation of Edom into a kingdom, and also the reign of the first five kings, Bela, Jobab, Husham, Hadad I, and Samlah. The

average reign for these five would accordingly be approximately 30 years each. Clearly, from the viewpoint of time or chronology, we find that the Edomite and Hyksos Empires merge into one full picture. Here Biblical history and the Egyptian history supplement each other.

### Summary

For years historians have searched for a civilization in the Middle East known as 'Ad. To date, nothing concrete has emerged, even though archeologists now have a much more complete picture of the history of the Arabian Peninsula. In this section we have proposed that 'Ad is not unknown to historians, but simply unrecognized because of the name, which over centuries has evolved from its original form to various pronunciations, differing from the Hebrew עֵדֹם to the Arabic عاد. On the other hand, the Egyptians gave them the name Hyksos, which further complicated the picture.

When combined, we can recognize a huge area controlled by horse-riding nomads at a time when the horse was just beginning to be domesticated. Using the horse to gain superiority, these nomadic hordes poured out of Arabia, raiding all around the Arabian peninsula. In Arabia they were vaguely yet fondly remembered as the people of 'Ad who once made Arabia great.

Hyksos	Edomites	'Ad
Named by the Egyptians	Named by the Hebrews Edom in the land of 'Uz.	Named after the land of 'Ad. Remembered two thousand years later by the nomads in Arabia.
Empire existed about 300 to 200 years before the Exodus.	Formed a great kingdom about 300 - 200 years be- fore the Exodus.	Existed in long-forgotten Arabian history.
Empire encompassed the southern fringe of Can- aan and likely reached the Euphrates.	Edomite kingdom took in southern fringes of Canaan and reached the Euphrates at Rehoboth.	Brought about a union of the Arabian Peninsula.
Were mainly Semites	Were mainly Semites	Were Semites
Included a strong Hurri element.	Included a strong Hurri element.	Not mentioned.

<b>Hyksos</b>	<b>Edomites</b>	<b>'Ad</b>
May have been connected with the Hittites.	Connected with Hittites	Not mentioned.
Had horses and used horses in warfare.	Had horses and describe use of horse in battle.	Had horses.
Were possibly shepherds and nomads.	Edomites were shepherds and nomadic in origin.	Were shepherd nomads.
Linked with Arabians.	Inter-related with Arabians.	Linked with Arabians.
Linked with Canaanites.	Inter-related with Canaanites.	Not mentioned.
Called Barbarians, i.e. were a lower standard to the Egyptians.	Did not possess a settled, cultural life like the Egyptians.	Pharaoh mentioned in the Qur'ān in relation to them.
Adopted Egyptian lifestyle.	Cut temples from the rock.	Cut out great temples.
Not mentioned	Suffered destruction from a great wind. (Job 1:19)	Suffered destruction from a great wind. (Qur'ān 89: 6-8)
Capital city (Avaris) not in their own country.	Capital cities often not in their own country.	No cities of 'Ad have been found.
Worshiped Sutekh (Seth) or Baal.	Drifted from monotheism to Baal worship.	Were called from polytheism to monotheism by Hud.

## **SECTION III**

# **THE PEOPLE OF MIDIAN**

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE PEOPLE OF MIDIAN

The Qur'ān speaks several times of the people of Midian, assuming that the listeners in Medina were acquainted with at least the background of these people who roamed the Arabian deserts one thousand eight hundred years earlier. Today, after fourteen hundred more years, the memory of Midian has been almost forgotten. But Muḥammad's audience still remembered the people of Midian because they had once been a great people. Under their leadership Arabia was again united and the Arabian tribes poured out of the desert to challenge the surrounding civilizations. So, just as with the people of 'Ad, we must turn to history to try and understand who the Midianites were, and how large their influence was at its greatest extent.

During the centuries since Muḥammad, the whereabouts of Midian became lost or at least unknown. For years students of the Bible were aware of the Midianites as a people who opposed the nation of Israel in some of the Old Testament narratives, but little was known of them as a civilization. Then in 1878 Sir Richard Burton published an account of his excursion into north-west Arabia titled: *The Gold-Mines of Midian and The Ruined Midianite Cities*. Suddenly the name Midian was thrust onto the stage of European thought. However, on page 176 of *The Gold-Mines of Midian*, Burton noted "it is difficult to lay down the precise frontiers of Midian." He then notes various references to Midian that are spread from Edom to Gaza and into Arabia. Burton's expedition was notable because it excited Europeans about the unknown deserts of Arabia and the possibility of the discovery of gold. However when no gold was forthcoming, the interior of Arabia was forgotten except in the accounts of explorers like Doughty, Philby, Thomas and Burckhardt.

In 1883 Charles Huber (later together with Julius Euting) discovered the Tayma Stele which raised some interest in the ancient city of Tayma in north



*The Tayma Stone*

west Saudi Arabia. (Healey, 2004) Seventy years later, John Philby started archaeological and environmental observations at the site (1951). Later the publication by Winnett and Read (1970) of their survey of northwest Arabian archaeological sites finally began to shed light on this area of Arabia that had been neglected in Middle Eastern studies for so long. Today the archeological excavations at Tayma continue under the joint project of the General Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, and the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin. More can be discovered about this fascinating place from the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut website <http://www.dainst.org>.

### **The origins of the Midianites**

We will turn, once again, to the Founding of the Nations chart on page 20 to learn about Midianite origins. This chart uses information taken from Genesis chapters 10, 25 and I Chronicles 1 where we can see that Midian was a son of Abraham. This means that Ishmael and his descendants, Isaac and his descendants, and Midian and his descendants were all brother-tribes who originally spoke the same language and had the same culture and religion, including the worship of one God.

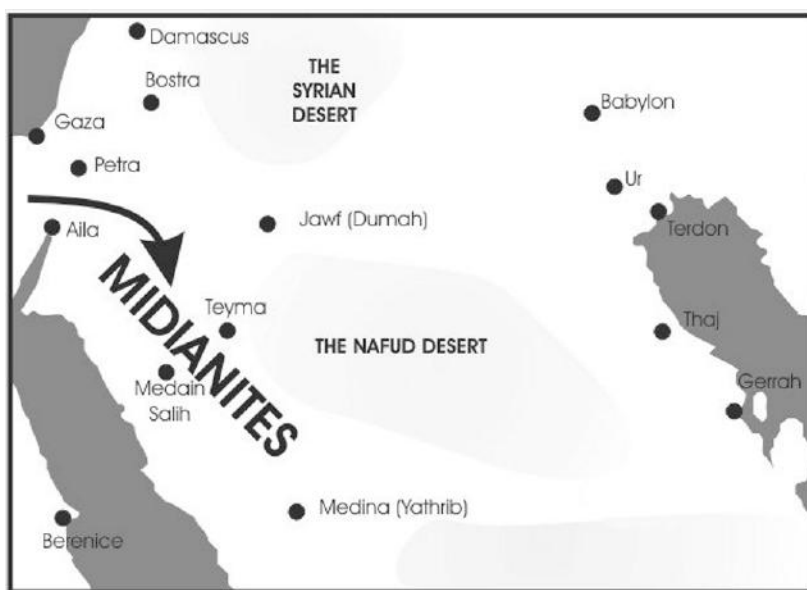
While Midian had five sons, Isaac had only two. Isaac's grandsons through Jacob all moved to Egypt and were shepherds there in the land of Goshen for several hundred years. They did not play a role in Arabian politics until Moses led them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan. As we outlined in the previous section, during this time the Edomites (descendants of Esau) led the family alliance and united their brother tribes (plus others) into a tribal alliance that burst out of Arabia and raided from Yemen to the Euphrates and finally into Egypt. After Pharaoh Ahmose I crushed these shepherd kings, the tribal alliance under the Edomites broke up (1750 BC), and the tribes returned to their various homeland areas to graze sheep or conduct trade across the desert. It wasn't until four hundred years later (1350 BC) that the Midianites once again united the tribes of Arabia.

### **Midian in the Bible**

The people of Midian appear in the Bible on several occasions. First, their founding is mentioned in Genesis 25 and I Chronicles 1:32-46. Later we read of some Midianite merchants in Genesis 37 who take young Joseph as a slave

into Egypt. Much later Moses flees to the land of Midian (Exodus 2-4) and after forty years returns to Egypt where he leads the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the desert. They go into the land of Midian to the place where God first spoke to Moses, at Mount Horeb.

The location of the Midianites and Mount Horeb has become a contested issue in the last few years. Many early scholars placed the Midianites in the Sinai Peninsula. Hitti notes that based solely on the Biblical record and traditional understanding, the Children of Israel wandered exclusively in the Sinai and the Negev. So Hitti places the Midianites in the southern part of the Sinai. (Hitti, 1964, pg 40) However, with Winnett and Read's survey in northwest Arabia (1970) it has become increasingly obvious that the Midianites ranged over a much wider area, and in recent years some researchers have suggested that Mount Hor (or Horeb) was in Saudi Arabia.



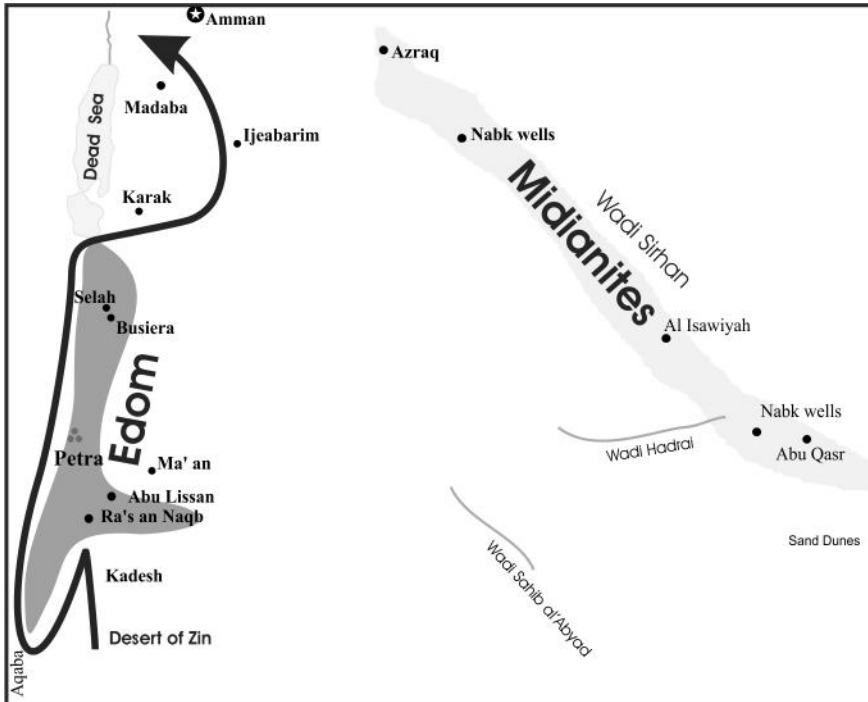
*Above: During the Exodus, did Moses bring the Children of Israel into Midianite territory in the Sinai or in northern Arabia?*

In the map on the next page we note the Exodus route where the Children of Israel tried to enter Edom and travel up the King's Highway. They were refused and traveled back to the Red Sea (via 'Aqaba) in order to enter Wadi Arabah. From there they moved north to the south end of the Dead Sea where they crossed into the land of Moab near the city of Ar (Kerak). (Numbers 20:1-21:20) They ended up camping on the eastern side of Moab at a place called Ijeabarim. (Numbers 21:11) *"And they journeyed from Oboth,*



and pitched at Ijeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sun rising.” From here they skirted Moab and entered the land of the Ammonites, defeating the kings of Bashan and Heshbon.

At this point they are poised, ready to cross the Jordan River into the promised land. However, first they decide to attack to the east and defeat the Midianites. This would have to be Wadi Sirhān which was directly to their east.



Trouble begins when a Midianite woman publicly flaunted the Jewish religion and the leadership of Moses. As a result of this she is executed. Since she was a daughter of a Midianite chieftain (Numbers 25:15), strife began between the Midianites and Israel. Eventually a war broke out and five of the Midianite sheiks were killed. (Numbers 31:8)

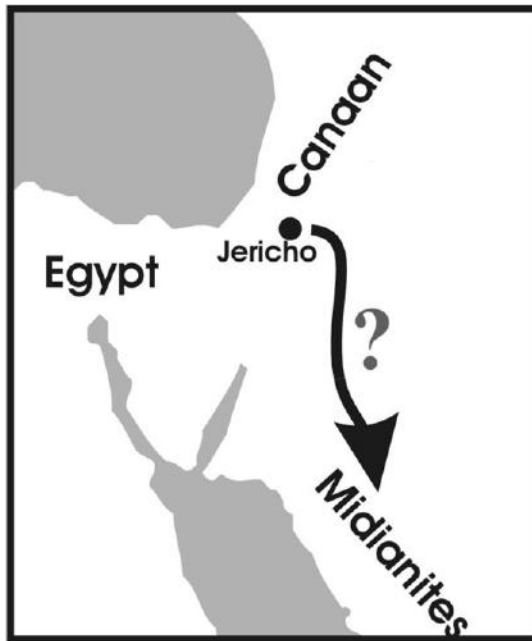
There are two interesting points to this story. First, notice the location. At this time the Children of Israel have conquered the kings of Og (Bashan) and Sihon (Heshbon), and are camped at the Jordan River (Numbers 21) ready to cross it and fight against Jericho. They are alerted to the threat of Midian which is at their rear, and so they turn around to fight against Midian first. The question that begs itself here is: where did Moses go to fight the Midianites? Did he return once again to Sinai or Arabia?

This would have required a long and arduous journey back into the deserts that they had just come through. Rather, I believe that the Midianites were living in Wadi Sirhān at this time, which is directly east of Jericho. This low-land collects water from the surrounding desert run-off and is green enough to support large numbers of sheep and cattle. Once the Midianites are soundly defeated we do not hear from them again for several hundred years.

Second, consider the amount of plunder that the Israelites took. The Bible lists of both men and beasts. “And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho...” (verses 32 - 25) The plunder from the spoils that the soldiers took was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys and 32,000 women who had never slept with a man. Even if you allow for exaggeration, this description leads us to believe that the Midianites and those allied with them were truly a large group of people. After this defeat it would be several hundred years before the Midianites could rebuild to a large enough size that they could challenge Israel again.

The next time we hear of the Midianites growing in large numbers is in Judges 6 when the Midianites and her allies vex Israel for seven years.

During this time they are allied with the Amalekites and the “children of the east.” The number of people in this alliance was so large that they managed to penetrate as far as Gaza, raiding crops and livestock. This raiding of settled people by desert Bedouin has long been practiced and was common up until the 1930’s. While living in the Bedouin villages in the south of Jordan, the old Bedouin men would tell stories of historic raiding and taking goods from settled people. They would wait until the harvests were ripe and then ride



*Above: Did Moses return to northern Arabia or the Sinai to attack the Midianites that were to the east?*

in on their horses and camels, demanding a share. If they were refused they would simply take what they liked. If the owners of the fields resisted, they were killed. The Bedouin would shrug and say that they never killed anyone unless they met with resistance. Bedouin viewed themselves as superior to the settled people and simply came to take what was their due. It was part of the age-long struggle between the nomads of Arabia and the settled people at the edge of the desert. Glueck notes this in his book *The River Jordan*:

*"The Midianites and other Bedouins were wont at harvest time to make rapid raids across the Jordan, carry off the crops of Israel from the very threshing floors, and drive off whatever livestock they could lay their hands on. The struggle between the Desert and the Sown is continuous. Hungry nomads have ever pressed into plowed lands, content to take by swift violence what others have gained by hard toil."* (Glueck, 1946, page 110)

Eventually the Israelites grew tired of this oppression and fought back. This resistance was organized by Jerubbaal, also known as Gideon. (Judges 7:1) In the end, over 120,000 Midianites and their allies were killed in the fighting and Midian returned to its former state of being a small tribe in Arabia.

It is interesting to note that the Bible tells us when Gideon killed Zebah and Zalmunna, two Midianite leaders, he took away crescent shaped ornaments that were on their camels' necks. (Judges 8:21) As far as I know this is the earliest reference we have to the crescent shape in Arabia.

### Midian in the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān speaks of the Midianites in two different settings. First it tells us the story of Moses seeking refuge the land of Midian. The story starts in Egypt.

*And a man came from the uttermost part of the city, running. He said: O Moses! Lo! the chiefs take counsel against thee to slay thee; therefor escape. Lo! I am of those who give thee good advice. So he (Moses) escaped from thence, fearing, vigilant. He said: My Lord ! Deliver me from the wrongdoing folk. And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said: Peradventure my Lord will guide me in the right road. And when he came unto the water of Midian he found there a whole tribe of men, watering. And he found apart from them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What aileth you? The two said: We cannot give (our flocks) to drink till the shepherds return from the water; and our father is a very old man. So he watered (their flock) for them. Then he turned aside into the shade, and said: My Lord! I am needy of whatever good thou sendest down for*

*me. Then there came unto him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said: Lo, my father biddeth thee, that he may reward thee with a payment for that thou didst water (the flock) for us. Then, when he came unto him and told him the (whole) story, he said: Fear not! Thou hast escaped from the wrongdoing folk. One of the two women said: O my father! Hire him! For the best (man) that thou canst hire is the strong, the trustworthy. He said: Lo! I fain would marry thee to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that thou hirest thyself to me for (the term of) eight pilgrimages. Then if thou completest ten it will be of thine own accord, for I would not make it hard for thee. Allāh willing, thou wilt find me of the righteous. He said: That (is settled) between thee and me. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me, and Allāh is surety over what we say. Qur'ān 28:20-8 (Pickthall)*

There is little to learn here of the Midianites, other than seeing them as one would see Bedouin in the desert today. Second, the Qur'ān relates to us stories of the Midianites and the prophet Shueyb who was sent to them in order to turn them away from idolatry back to their original worship of one god. This story gives no hint of when it occurred in history, nor where, other than it involves Midianite people.

*And unto Midian (We sent) their brother, Shueyb. He said: O my people! serve Allāh. Ye have no other God save him. Lo! a clear proof hath come unto you from your Lord; so give full measure and full weight and wrong not mankind in their goods, and work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering thereof. That will be better for you, if ye are believers. Lurk not on every road to threaten (way-farers), and to turn away from Allāh's path him who believeth in him, and to seek to make it crooked. And remember, when ye were but few, how he did multiply you. And see the nature of the consequence for the corrupters. And if there is a party of you which believeth in that wherewith I have been sent, and there is a party which believeth not, then have patience until Allāh judge between us. He is the best of all who deal in judgment. The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said: Surely we will drive thee out, O Shueyb, and those who believe with thee, from our township, unless ye return to our religion. He said: Even though we hate it? We should have invented a lie against Allāh if we returned to your religion after Allāh hath rescued us from it. It is not for us to return to it unless Allāh should (so) will. Our Lord comprehendeth all things in knowledge. In Allāh do we put our trust. Our Lord, decide with truth between us and our folk, for thou art the best of those who make decision. But the chieftains of his people, who were disbelieving, said: If ye follow Shueyb, then truly we shall be the losers. So*

*the earthquake seized them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. Those who denied Shueyb became as though they had not dwelt there. Those who denied Shueyb, they were the losers. So he turned from them and said: O my people! I delivered my Lord's messages unto you and gave you good advice; then how can I sorrow for a people that rejected (truth)? Qur'an 7:85 -93 (Pickthall)*

*Hath not the fame of those before them reached them the folk of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, the folk of Abraham, the dwellers of Midian and the disasters (which befell them)? Their messengers (from Allāh) came unto them with proofs (of Allāh's sovereignty). So Allāh surely wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves. And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they pay the poor-due, and they obey Allāh and his messenger. As for these, Allāh will have mercy on them. Lo! Allāh is mighty, wise. Qur'an 9:70-71 (Pickthall)*

*And unto Midian (we sent) their brother Shueyb. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh. Ye have no other God save him! And give not short measure and short weight. Lo! I see you well to do, and lo! I fear for you the doom of a besetting day. O my people! Give full measure and full weight in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods. And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption. That which Allāh leaveth with you is better for you if ye are believers; and I am not a keeper over you. They said: O Shueyb! Doth thy way of prayer command thee that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we (should leave off) doing what we will with our own property? Lo! thou are the mild, the guide to right behavior. He said: O my people, bethink you: if I am (acting) on a clear proof from my Lord and he sustaineth me with fair sustenance from him (how can I concede ought to you)? I desire not to do behind your backs that which I ask you not to do. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My welfare is only in Allāh. In him I trust and unto him I turn (repentant). And, O my people! Let not the schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that which befell the folk of Noah and the folk of Hud, and the folk of Šālih; and the folk of Lot are not far off from you. Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto him (repentant). Lo! my Lord is merciful and loving. They said: O Shueyb! We understand not much of that thou tellest, and lo! we do behold thee weak among us. But for thy family, we should have stoned thee, for thou art not strong against us. He said: O my people! Is my family more to be honored by you than Allāh? And ye put him behind you, neglected! Lo! my Lord surroundeth what ye do. And, O my people, act according to your power, lo, I (too) am acting. You will soon know on whom there cometh a doom that will abase him, and who it is that lieth.*

*And watch! Lo! I am watcher with you. And when our commandment came to pass we saved Shueyb and those who believed with him by a mercy from us; and the (awful) cry seized those who did injustice, and morning found them prostrate in their dwellings. As though they had not dwelt there. A far removal for Midian, even as Thamud had been removed afar! Qur'an 11:84 – 95 (Pickthall)*

*If they deny thee (Muhammad), even so the folk of Noah, and (the tribes of) Aad and Thamud, before thee, denied (our messengers); And the folk of Abraham and the folk of Lot; (and) the dwellers in Midian. And Moses was denied; but I indulged the disbelievers a long while, then I seized them, and how (terrible) was my abhorrence! How many a township have we destroyed while it was sinful, so that it lieth (to this day) in, and (how many) a deserted well and lofty tower! Qur'an 22:42-45 (Pickthall)*

*He said: That (is settled) between thee and me. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me, and Allāh is surety over what we say. And thou (Muhammad) wast not on the western side (of the mount) when we expounded unto Moses the commandment, and thou wast not among those present; But we brought forth generations, and their lives dragged on for them. And thou wast not a dweller in Midian, reciting unto them our revelations, but we kept sending (messengers to men). And thou wast not beside the mount when we did call; but (the knowledge of it is) a mercy from thy Lord that thou mayest warn a folk unto whom no warner came before thee, that haply they may give heed. Otherwise, if disaster should afflict them because of that which their own hands have sent before (them), they might say: Our Lord! Why sentest thou no messenger unto us, that we might have followed thy revelations and been of the believers? Qur'an 28:43-47 (Pickthall)*

*And unto Midian we sent Shueyb, their brother. He said O my people! Serve Allāh, and look forward to the Last Day, and do not evil, making mischief, in the earth. But they denied him, and the dreadful earthquake took them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. Qur'an 29:36 (Pickthall)*

The Qur'an also speaks of the *People of Tubba* in 50:14 who should not be confused with a king of Ḥimyar by the same name (see Qur'an 44:37 and the corresponding note in Al 'Alim: The "Dwellers of the Wooded Dales" are the people of Madyan (Midian) as is evident from 26:176. The story is found in the Qur'an in several places, for the most detailed version see 11:84-95.)

Some Muslim scholars believe that Shueyb lived around 1600 BC - 1500

BC and was Abraham's great-grandson. Others have identified him with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. However, there is nothing to substantiate either of these guesses. 'Abdullāh Yūsuf Alī in his commentary on chapter 7:85 said:

*Shu'aib belongs to the Arab rather than Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties. If, as the commentators tell us, Shu'aib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great-grandson of Madyan (son of Abraham), he would be only a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew Bible would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jethro was a Midianite and that another name, Reuel, is mentioned for a father-in-law of Moses in Num.x.29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly a nomad tribe, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. ('Alī, 1946, Pg 365, n. 1054)*

He further argues that since Shu'eyb (Shu'aib) was involved in preaching in the settled towns of the Midianites, this was a later period of the Midianites when they had settled after nomadic life. The Qur'ān tells us that later an earthquake destroyed their settlements. (see Qur'ān 7:91)

The tomb of Shu'eyb (Shoaib) is well preserved in central Jordan. It is located 2 kilometers west of Mahis in an area called Wadi Shoaib near the city of Salt in Jordan. If this is the true location, then this places the Midianites even farther north than we have identified them in our study.

### **Archeology and the Midianites**

One of the challenges in tracing the Midianites using archeological data is that for much of their history the Midianites were nomads. For centuries they lived in the deserts and left little evidence of their existence. Most everything they used was from the desert, and when discarded returned to the desert. In later years they seem to have settled, but there is scant evidence of this. The only exceptions were stoneware and ceramic pottery. Garth Bawden notes that Midianite pottery has been found in the northern Hejaz as far east as Tayma to the Jordanian frontier. (Bawden, 1983)



## Summary

The Qur'ān speaks of the Midianites as if the listeners knew of them and their history. However when we look at the ḥadīths, Midian is not mentioned. 'Ad is seldom mentioned in the ḥadīths and Thamud is mentioned only a few times.

The people of Midian appear to have lived between Tayma (their southern most point) to the northern tip of Wadi Sirḥān. While they were nomads and ventured out into the Sinai and eastern Arabia, they were a firmly established entity in northern Arabian which means that the writer of the Qur'ān was speaking to an audience that was familiar with the history of northern Arabia.



*Above: Tomb of Shu'eyb*



# **SECTION IV**

## **THE PEOPLE OF THAMUD**



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE KINGDOM OF THAMUD

In this section we will look at the people of Thamud who are mentioned in the Qur'ān and the ḥadīths. Once we identify who the Thamudic people were, we will examine their kingdom to learn more about them and their influence on Arabian history and ultimately the message in the Qur'ān.

#### The meaning of Thamud

In the Qur'ān the word 'Thamud' is written **ثَمُود**. It is not an Arabic word, and has no meaning in Arabic. However, the word *Thamud* can be broken down into two parts: “tham” and “'ud.”

The Arabic prefix *thum* or *thuma* has many meanings today, among them then, thereupon, furthermore, moreover, there is, and thereafter. (Wehr & Cowan, 1994, page 127) Since early semetic languages were written without vowels, it seems that *th-m* is a prefix which would make the meaning of Thamud to be “after 'ud.” In chapter four we demonstrated that the people of 'Ad **أَد** could have been known as the people of 'Ud. If this is the case, then this word tells us that Thamudic people were those who came “after 'Ad.” In order to know for certain who the Thamudic people were, we need to understand where their territory was, and if there was any correlation to those who later occupied the area where the people of 'Ad lived.

While the ancient writers of the ḥadīth and the Qur'ān speak of a people known as Thamud, or “*after 'ud*,” modern archeologists are hard pressed to define any specific people group as Thamudic people. The modern term applies to all of the ancient texts of North Arabia which have not yet been classified as something specific, such as Taymanitic, Dedanitic, Hasaitic, Hismaic, etc. (EL2, Thamudic) The graffiti, informal inscriptions, and drawings of nomads from as early as the 8th century BC until the mid-3rd century AD are found

throughout North Arabia. Originally the term Thamudic was applied to them all, but in recent years archeologists are identifying and classifying them into various styles. As a result, what was originally known as Thamudic texts are slowly being reduced, and perhaps that classification will disappear altogether as we finally discover all of the various tribes that made up the original Thamudic classification. From the Qur'ān it seems evident that the Thamudic people were a real people, but from the ancient writings and drawings it seems that they were an alliance or collection of tribal peoples in Arabia. This should not surprise us, as we have seen this pattern with both the people of 'Ad and Midian. Now again the tribes of northern Arabia unite, this time known as 'the people of Tham'ud' or "the people after 'Ad."

The ḥadīths gives us some clues as to where Muḥammad and his audience believed the Thamudic people lived. All of the major ḥadīth references point to al-Ḥijr or Meda'in Ṣāliḥ as it is called today. This is a city in northern Arabia, and it is a good starting point in identifying who the people of Thamud were.

*"Since the purpose of visiting graves is admonition and remembrance of death, it is permissible to visit the graves of disbelievers. Weeping when passing by the graves of the wrongdoers who were seized and punished by Allāh for their evil deeds, and to express ones humility and ones need for forgiveness of Allāh is desirable. This is obvious from a ḥadīth, reported by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said to his Companions, when they passed through Al-Hijr, the dwellings of the people of Thamud, "Do not go without weeping to the places of burial of those who are undergoing torment. But if you cannot weep, then do not enter these places lest what befell them should befall you."* Fiqh us-Sunnah Ḥadīth 4.83

*The people arrived at the land of Thamud called Al-Ḥijr along with Allāh's Apostle and they took water from its well for drinking and kneading the dough with it as well.* Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī 4.562

The city of Al Ḥijr is known to us today as Meda'in Ṣāliḥ in Saudi Arabia. It is located on the incense route between southern Arabia and the northern nations. For many centuries the people of Meda'in Ṣāliḥ were known as Nabataeans to the outside world. The name Thamud was only given to them years later in pre-Islamic Arabian times.

These people transported incense from the south of Arabia to the civilizations in the north. Originally the Nabataeans were a nomadic people who preferred to live in tents. In time however their wealth grew, and with it grew their ritual practice of burying the dead in great tombs. Eventually the Nabataeans settled and lived in cities. When one visits the city of Meda'in Ṣāliḥ, the most striking features are the ancient tombs. In fact the city of Meda'in

Şālih, much like Petra, leaves the impression of being a city of tombs. There are a total of 131 large rock-cut tombs spread out over 13.4 square kilometers demonstrating the wealth of the people and the importance of burial tombs, not only for individuals but also for whole families. It was obviously these Nabataean tombs that caught the attention of those riding with Muḥammad. So here we have a very clear connection between the people of Thamud and the Nabataeans.

The tombs in Meda'in Şālih look very much like the tombs in Petra, the later Nabataean capital city, but with some small differences. In al-Hijr or Meda'in Şālih there are several tomb inscriptions and decorative items that are unknown in Petra. As the large tombs became more and more popular among the Nabataeans, they spread to farther off locations in order to create their rock tombs with impressive facades. When the valley did not have enough room for tomb expansion, the people of Meda'in Şālih may have taken advantage of changes in Middle Eastern politics to move into the land of Edom.

The origin of the Nabataeans goes back to their life as shepherds in the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula. Diodorus gives an account of Nabataean life in the Sinai Peninsula in his book *Bibliotheca Historica* (II.42.1-5) where he describes the oasis of Feiran. (Biblical Paran as mentioned in Numbers 10:12, 12:16, 13:26, Deuteronomy 1:1, 33:2) This oasis is near the Red Sea, and has a palm grove and a large Egyptian shrine. The Nabataeans were preceded in this area by the Lihyanites who later became one of their allies. In the Negev at the Nabataean city of Egra there is an inscription written in Nabataean stating "Mas'udu king of Lihyan." (Edens & Bawden, 1989, pages 48-103) The oasis of Feiran and accompanying gulf were probably known as the Laeanites Gulf during the time that the Nabataeans lived there. Diodorus tells us:

*"After one has sailed past this country, the Laeanites Gulf comes next, about which are many inhabited villages of Arabs who are known as Nabataeans. This tribe occupies a large part of the coast and not a little of the country which stretches inland, and it has a people beyond telling and flocks and herds in multitude beyond belief. Now in ancient times these men observed justice and were content with the food which they received from their flocks, but later, after the kings of Alexandria had made the ways of the sea navigable for their merchants, these Arabs not only attacked the shipwrecked, but fitting out pirate ships preyed upon the voyagers, imitating in their practice the savage and lawless ways of the Tauri of the Pontus. Some time afterwards, however, they were caught on the high seas by some quadriremes and punished as they deserved."* (III.43.4)

In order to understand the time frame of this account, we should note that quadriremes (galleys with four banks of oars) were ships powered by both

oars and a sail. They were originally built by the Greeks and used for hundreds of years. Quinqueremes or *galleys of five* replaced the quadriremes during the Punic Wars 264-146 BC. (Tarn, 1907, pages 48-60)

Diodorus also mentions that this took place during the time that the kings of Alexandria made the sea navigable for their merchants. Since the Nabataeans conducted themselves as pirates on the Red Sea, this most likely refers to the Egyptians building seaports along the western coast of the Red Sea. So this quote can also be dated to a time after 300 BC when the Greek generals set up the Ptolemaic kingdom in Alexandria.

For example, the seaport of Berenike (Berenice) was the southernmost and most active Egyptian Red Sea port during Hellenistic and Roman times. It was founded by Ptolemy II Philadelphos early in his reign (around 283 BC), who named it after his mother. (Sidebotham & Wendrich, 1998) It seems that during the time this port was built and functioning, the Nabataeans were conducting piracy by preying on ships sailing the Red Sea.

Later, around 250 BC, as the Nabataeans started to become the principle power in the lands left empty by the Edomites, they established Sela as their capital and Aila (modern day 'Aqaba) as their sea port. They also expanded to the Mediterranean coast where they set themselves up in the port city of Gaza. From these two ports they could effectively pirate both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The first century BC Greek historian, Diodorus of Sicily, tells us that the Nabataeans:

*"(The Nabataeans) lead a life of brigandage and overrunning a large part of the neighboring territory they pillaged it. Some had penetrated to the Mediterranean coast where they indulged in piracy, profitably attacking the merchant ships of Ptolemaic Egypt."* (Diodorus, Book II 48.2)

From this account we can conclude that the Nabataeans overran a large



Above: Tombs at al-Hijr (Meda'in Salih)



*Above: Even isolated rocks were used for tomb creation in al-Hijr.*

part of their neighboring territory which was the land of Edom, or 'Ad as we previously concluded. Diodorus notes that the Nabataean alliance then occupied the Sinai and Negev right from the Mediterranean eastward to the desert. As the ancient prophet Obadiah of Israel declared: "People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Edom." (Obadiah 1:19)

### **Forced Migrations**

Around 586 BC there was tremendous political upset in the Middle East. Josephus the Jewish historian of the first century AD refers to Berossus, a Babylonian priest of the third century BC. He tells us that when Nabopolassar king of Babylon had heard that the governor he had appointed over the west had revolted against him, he sent his young son Nebuchadnezzar against the rebel who then conquered him, and brought the country back under the dominion of Babylon. During this campaign, Nebuchadnezzar received news of his father's death. Committing the Jewish, Syrian and other captives to his officers, he hurried back to Babylon to assume the kingship.

Babylonian clay tablets support this date. The last two tablets of Nabopolassar are dated May and August 605 BC, while the first two of Nebuchadnezzar are inscribed August and September of the same year. In the siege of 597 BC King Jehoiachin of Israel surrendered, and the Babylonian king carried

him, the princes, the warriors, ten thousand additional captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths to Babylon. (2 Kings 24:10-17) At the same time he stripped the temple of its remaining treasures (2 Kings 24:13), part of which had been carried away in the first deportation (Daniel 1:2), took other booty, and placed Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah on the throne of Judah as a vassal king, changing his name to Zedekiah.

The Bible tells us that between 605 BC and 587 BC the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar made systematic deportations from the land of Israel to Babylon. In effect, he carried off thousands of Jewish slaves to work in his empire. (Daniel 1:1-4, and 2 Kings 24:14-16)

King Zedekiah revolted in the ninth year of his reign (586 BC) which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of the guard named Nebuzaradan to Jerusalem. He burned the Jewish temple, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25:8-9)

Nebu-zar-adan, captain of the guard, was the Babylonian Nabu-zer-idinna, (meaning the chief baker, a title which had come to have no functional significance). Everything of value in the city was carried off, including all of the utensils of Solomon's temple. The chief priests were put to death and King Zedekiah was blinded and carried in fetters to Babylon. (2 Kings 25:1-21) Nebuchadnezzar placed a governor named Gedaliah in charge, who appears to be the high official "who was over the house," as written on a seal of this period found at Lachish. (Torczyner, Harding, Lewis, & Starkey, 1938)

Excavations at Jerusalem and in Palestine in general show how thorough the damage and destruction was during the Babylonian invasions. Not a trace of Solomon's temple nor of the king's palace have remained. Excavations at Azeka, Beth-Shemesh and Kiriath-Sepher and surface examinations elsewhere furnish evidence of the destruction. At Lachish, two destructions occurring near the same time are doubtless connected with Nebuchadnezzar's invasions of 597 and 586 BC. The Lachish letters were recovered from the ruins associated with the 586 destruction. (Torczyner, Harding, Lewis, & Starkey, 1938)

### **Voluntary Migrations**

With the desolation of the Jewish lands, the people of Edom (ancient 'Ad) began to filter north. The mountains of Seir were harsh and barren compared to the lush land of Palestine, and so with Israel depopulated, the people of Edom began to migrate northward to the more desirable land. (Ezekiel 36:5)



About this time, the people of the Negev and Meda'in Šālīḥ (Thamud) also began to migrate north, moving into the lands that the Edomites were abandoning. (Hammond, 1973, pg 13) (Obadiah 1:19)

For centuries the Nabataeans (Thamudic people) had used a small mountain known as Sela near Bozrah (modern Bisheira), the Edomite capital city, as a trading center and store house. As there was less and less room to carve tombs at Meda'in Saleh, they chose a new valley south of Bozrah for their new burial city. Here there were literally miles of canyon walls into which they could carve their funeral facades. In a short time the people of Thamud, led by the Ishmaelite tribe of Nabiaoth, claimed the old territory of Edom, and entered into the history books of the European civilizations. This would clearly identify the Nabataeans as being Thamudic, or the people that came after 'Ad. The western civilizations knew them as Arabs or Nabataeans, the Arabians knew them as the people of Thamud, and therefore during Muḥammad's lifetime, the popular term for them was Thamud rather than Nabataean.

In ancient times the tribe that lived at Meda'in Šālīḥ was not known as the 'Thamud tribe' (a later name) but rather as the Nabataean people. Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, claimed that their roots went back to Nabiaoth, the oldest son of Ishmael. (Jewish Antiquities I.22.1) (Hammond, 1973, pg 9) Since Josephus lived during the time when the Nabataean Kingdom was at its height, we must take his information seriously. Second, some of the original Nabataean kings are thought to have been buried in Meda'in Šālīḥ. Strabo XVI.iv.25 mentions that:

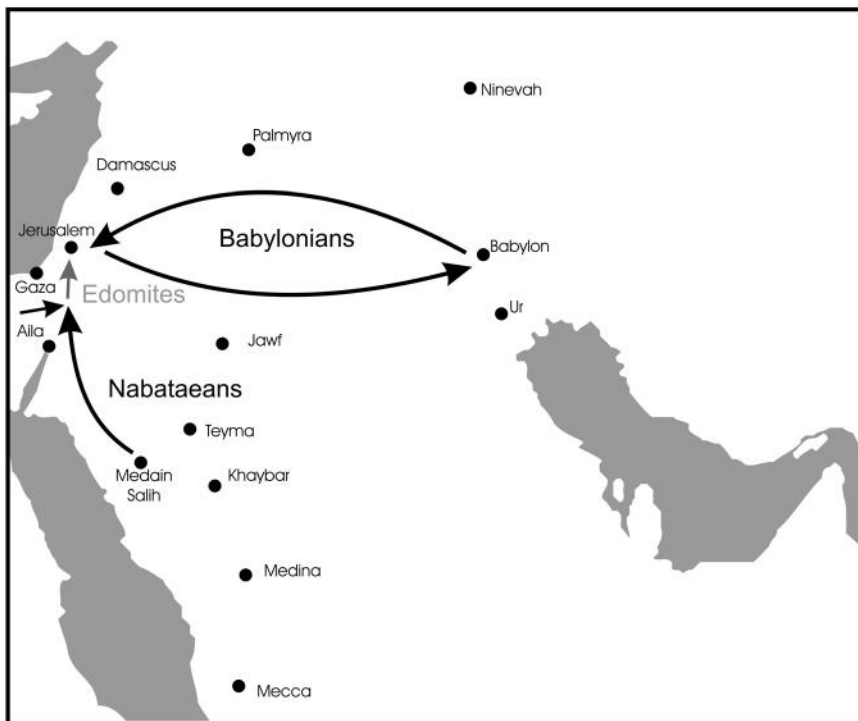
*Gallus, setting out again from Leuce-Kome (modern 'Aqaba, see chapter 23) on his return with his army, and through the treachery of his guide, traversed such tracts of country, that the army was obliged to carry water with them upon camels. After a march of many days, therefore, he came to the territory of Aretas (Meda'in Šālīḥ), who was related to Obodas. Aretas received him in a friendly manner, and offered presents. But by the treachery of Syllaeus, Gallus was conducted by a difficult road through the country; for he occupied thirty days in passing through it. It afforded barley, a few palm trees, and butter instead of oil.*

Historians have two different opinions about this passage. It is unclear to them if the names Aretas and Obodas were only individuals, or if they were also tribal names. If the names of Aretas, Malichus, Obodas, and Rabbel were Nabataean tribal names as well as king names, then the traditional understanding of Nabataean kings is open for new interpretations.

From the above quote we can see that Aretas was associated with Meda'in

Šāliḥ. An inscription was also found in the city of Oboda in the Negev mentioning Obodas as "*Obodas the god*". The inscription further mentions: "*Garm'alahi son of Taym'alahi dedicates the setting up of a statue to him,*" and then the Nabataean script is augmented with an inscription in early Arabic script. It reads as follows: "*For Obodas works without rewards or favour, and when death tried to claim us, when a wound of ours festered, he did not let us perish.*" The origins of Malichus and Rabbel are still unknown, but we can assume that they were associated with Petra. Once Rekem (Petra) was declared the central city of the Nabataeans, each of these tribal groups built tombs, feasting halls, and memorials in the city.

While attending the Second Conference on Nabataean Studies in Petra, Jordan in 2002 I had a chance to privately talk with Dr. John Healey about the early Nabataeans. In our conversation, Dr. Healey expressed his personal opinion that after having examined Thamudic and Nabataean inscriptions and remains, he was convinced that these were one and the same people. They had the same names, the same gods, the same practices, and yet they wrote with



*Above: The Babylonians conquer the Israelites, destroy Jerusalem, and transport large numbers of prisoners back to Babylon as slave labour. After this event the Edomites move north, allowing the Arabs from the Sinai and Meda'in Šāliḥ to move into the Edomite territory.*

different scripts. In the chapters that follow we will discover how some archeologists believe this came to be.

### Thamud in the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān calls the Nabataeans the “people of Thamud” or as we have translated it, “the people after 'Ad.” It tells us about a prophet known as Ṣāliḥ who was sent to them to turn them from idolatry to monotheism.

*And to (the people of) Thamud (we sent) their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh. Ye have no other God save him. A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo! this is the camel of Allāh, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allāh's earth, and touch her not with hurt lest painful torment seize you. And remember how he made you viceroys after 'Ad and gave you station in the earth. Ye choose castles in the plains and hew the mountains into dwellings. So remember (all) the bounties of Allāh and do not evil, making mischief in the earth. The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said unto those whom they despised, unto such of them as believed: Know ye that Ṣāliḥ is one sent from his Lord? They said : Lo! In that wherewith he hath been sent we are believers. Those who were scornful said : Lo! in that which ye believe we are disbelievers. So they hamstrung the she-camel, and they flouted the commandment of their Lord, and they said: O Ṣāliḥ, bring upon us that thou threatenest if thou art indeed of those sent (from Allāh). So the earthquake seized them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. And Ṣāliḥ turned on them and said : O my people! I delivered my Lord's message unto you and gave you good advice, but ye love not good advisers. Qur'an 7:73-79 (Pickthall)*

*And unto (the people of) Thamud (we sent) their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh, Ye have no other God save him. He brought you forth from the earth and hath made you husband it. So ask forgiveness of him and turn unto him repentant. Lo, my Lord is nigh, responsive. They said: O Ṣāliḥ! Thou hast been among us hitherto as that wherein our hope was placed. Dost thou ask us not to worship what our fathers worshipped? Lo! we verily are in grave doubt concerning that to which thou callest us. He said: O my people, bethink you: if I am (acting) on clear proof from my Lord and there hath come unto me a mercy from him, who will save me from Allāh if I disobey him? Ye would add to me naught save perdition. O my people! This is the camel of Allāh, a token unto you, so suffer her to feed in Allāh's earth, and touch her not with harm lest a near torment seize you. But they hamstrung her, and then he said: Enjoy life in your dwelling place three days! This is a threat that will not be belied. So, when our commandment came to pass, We saved Ṣāliḥ, and those who believed with him, by a mercy from us, from the*



*ignominy of that day. Lo, thy Lord, he is the strong, the mighty, and the (awful) cry overtook those who did wrong, so that morning found them prostrate in their dwellings, As though they had not dwelt there. Lo! Thamud is believed in their Lord. A far removal for Thamud! Qur'ān 11:61-68 (Pickthall)*

*(The tribe of) Thamud denied the messengers (of Allāh) when their brother Ṣāliḥ said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, So keep your duty to Allāh and obey me. And I ask of you no wage therefore; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds. Will ye be left secure in that which is here before us, in gardens and water-springs and tilled fields and heavy sheathed palm trees, though you hew out dwellings in the mountains, being skilful? Therefore keep your duty to Allāh and obey me, And obey not the command of the prodigal, who spread corruption in the earth, and reform not. They said: Thou art but one of the bewitched; Thou art but a mortal like us. So bring some token*

*if thou art of the truthful. He said: (Behold) this she-camel. She hath the right to drink (at the well), and ye have the right to drink, (each) on an appointed day. And touch her not with ill lest there come on you the retribution of an awful day. But they hamstrung her, and then were penitent. So the retribution came on them. Lo! herein is indeed a portent, yet most of them are not believers. And lo! thy Lord! he is indeed the mighty, the merciful.* Qur'ān 26:141- 159 (Pickthall)

*And we verily sent until Thamud their brother Ṣāliḥ, saying: Worship Allāh and lo they (then) became two parties quarrelling. He said: O my people, why will you hasten on the evil rather than the good? Why will you not ask pardon of Allāh, that you may receive mercy. They said: We augur evil of thee and those with thee. He said: Your evil augury is with Allāh. Nay, but you are folk that are being tested. And there were in the city nine persons who made mischief in the land and reformed not. They said: Swear one to another by Allāh that we verily will attack him and his household by night, and afterward we will surely say unto his friend: We witnessed not the destruction of his household. And lo, we are truth-tellers. So they plotted a plot: and we plotted a plot, while they perceived not. Then see the nature of the consequence of their plotting, for lo, we destroyed them and their people, every one. See, yonder are their dwellings empty and in ruins because they did wrong. Lo, herein is indeed a portent for a people who have knowledge. And we saved those who believed and used to ward off (evil). Qur'ān 27:25 (Pickthall)*

### Thamud in the Ḥadīths

Below are a few more quotes from the ḥadīth that address Thamud. *The people landed at the land of Thamud called Al-Ḥijr along with Allāh's Apostle and they took water from its well for drinking and kneading the dough with it as well.* Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī 4.562

*"... If I should be present at their time I would kill them as the nations of Thamud were killed."* Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī 5.638

The Qur'ān and the ḥadīths focus on the religious aspects of Thamud, and



*Above: Tombs at Meda'in Ṣāliḥ (Al-Ḥijr)*

how the people should obey the messenger sent to them. History tells us much more about these people who came after 'Ad. In the following three chapters we will examine the Nabataean people and discover how their history deeply impacted Muḥammad and the coming of Islam.

### **Nabataean burial practices**

Some have wondered if the majestically carved Nabataean facades were really tombs, or if they had some other function. One inscription found at Egra on a tomb clearly states:

*"This is the tomb made by Wshuh daughter of Bagrat, and by Qayamu and Mashkuya her daughters, of Teima, for each of them, and for Amirat and Usra-nat, and Elanat their sisters, daughters of Wshuh and for their clients."*

Bagrat and Teima were located quite some distance from Egra. From this, it appears that the dead were transported to these central burial places and not buried in their home villages. There are over one thousand burial monuments in Petra and hundreds of others in the other Nabataean burial cities. If these were for family and tribal units, then the tombs in total could have contained tens of thousands of people. Added to this, there are extensive common graveyards located near Petra and the other cities where the more common people were buried. This adds up to a lot of graves.

It seems that the Nabataean wealthy were buried in the five Nabataean burial cities. There were three cities in the Sinai/Negev, one in Edom known as the Nabataean city of Rekem (the Romans later called it Petra), and one in Meda'in Šālīḥ in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hijr). These cities were also important in that they were located at the junctions of major trade routes. As we have shown, the Nabataean dead were transported to these cities for proper burial. Most likely there was something in Nabataean culture or religion that encouraged people to think of them spending eternity alongside of their family and relatives.

The city of Petra (Rekem) functioned as a religious center for twice-yearly festivals, and it also functioned as a burial city. It was complete with several temples, a festival theater, a nymphaeum, a bathhouse, a sacred way, a monumental gate, many pools, and several other public buildings. The temples and other public buildings occupied the central valley where massive tombs were situated.

Along with this, the people who maintained Petra (Rekem) had to live there. This included priests, sculptors, grave builders, temple attendants, administrative staff for the many public buildings, merchants who sold temple

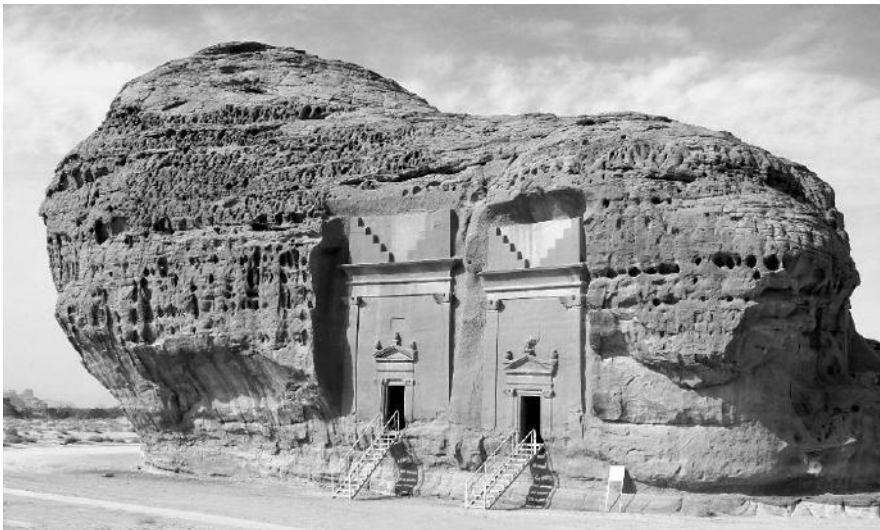


and burial paraphernalia, and other support people who ran services that provided things like food, water and pottery. If there was a royal court in Petra (Rekem), then this would have entailed another whole group of people. These people alone may have numbered several thousand, along with their spouses and families.

If the Nabataeans traveled so widely, what would have happened to them if they had died while they were in a distant county or somewhere in the deserts of Arabia? This is a key question in understanding the Nabataean burial rites. Some historians and archeologists believe that the Nabataeans practiced bone collection and buried the bones of their dead rather than complete bodies. This system of burial was used by the Persians and also by some Jewish groups during the Second Temple period. (Patrich, 1997) The bodies were placed on a high location on a rack so that once the flesh and organs had been stripped away by vultures or decomposed, the bones would fall through the rack into the carved-out space below. After the bones had dried, they would be collected and placed in a tomb.

Around the city of Petra there are a number of high platforms that seem to be exposure platforms. If a Nabataean died while on a caravan journey his body would have been exposed to the elements, the bones dried, and then transported back to one of the sacred burial sites. Those who died near the burial cities would have been exposed to the elements on a high ledge in the city itself. There are a number of things that support this theory.

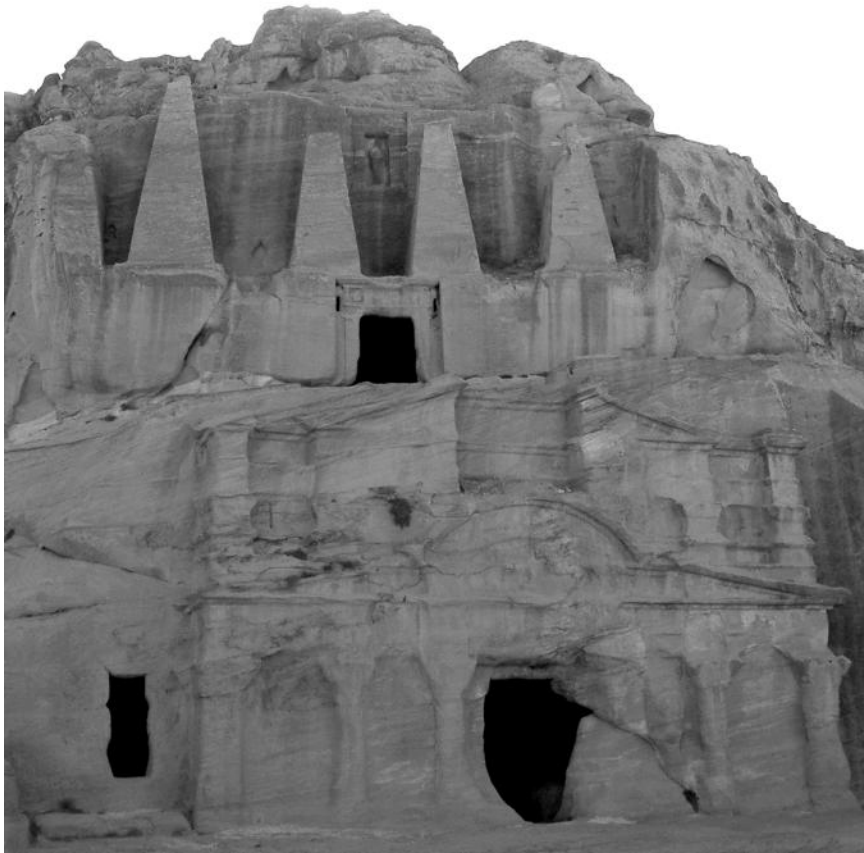
All around Petra are steps to the tops of hills with very little on top for



*Above: al-Hijra (Meda'in Sālih) "And ye (Thamud) carve places out of mountains with great skill". Qur'ān 26:149 (Yūsuf 'Alī)*

markings except a rectangular, cut hole. Some of these are 1.5-2 meters long and .5 meters wide. A good example of one of these exposure platforms can be found across from the Obelisk Tomb on the way into Petra. Every person going into Petra walks past a large square rock which has steps cut into it on two sides leading to the top. On the top of the rock, a rectangular hole has been cut, and around the edges of the hole is a groove where the rack would have been placed. As the vultures stripped off the flesh, the bones would have fallen into the hole underneath, and would have been retrieved later for burial in one of the nearby tombs.

It is also important to notice how close the exposure platforms are to the giant stone blocks that surround Petra. Today these are often referred to as djinn blocks by the Bedouin and block-gods by others. One wonders if the exposure platforms were located close to these rocks to protect the dead bodies from evil spirits until the bones were clean and ready for proper burial. An-



*Above: The Obelisk Tomb outside of Petra*



other giant block is located beside the stairs that lead to the high place in Petra and is also located very close to several exposure platforms.

Why did the Nabataeans use this form of burial? First, the use of communal graves for families and tribes makes sociological sense, as the Nabataean culture was structured on a tribal basis. As larger families would have established their own particular tomb, members of that family would have wanted their bodies buried in their family tomb, even if they died many miles away. The practice of transporting bones rather than bodies would have been a practical way to deal with people who died while on journeys to distant places. (Genesis 50:25 & Exodus 13:19) This would explain the tombs that are present at Egra, Petra and Meda'in Şālih in Saudi Arabia. Each of these centers was a stopping place along the caravan routes, and the bones of the dead could be buried there in style. This explains why inscriptions in Egra indicate that people living in Teyma were buried in Egra. It also explains why there are so many tombs in the Petra valley compared to the amount of space for the living.

The practice of bone collection would explain why the Nabataeans made pilgrimages to Petra. People would gather at the burial city to worship in the temples, participate in burial ceremonies, and eat memorial feasts for the dead at the family tomb. However, with the coming of Christianity in the fourth century, the custom of bone collection and meals celebrating the dead declined.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THAMUDIC TRADE ROUTES

I studied Arabian history for years without realizing that the real story focused not on civilizations like Egypt, Babylon, Israel, Syria or Persia, but rather on the desert. The civilizations of the Middle East all huddle around the vast expanse of the three great deserts known as the Syrian Desert, the Nafud Desert and the Empty Quarter. These sandy deserts, barren stoney plains and jagged rocky mountains create a unique setting. For the civilizations of the Middle East, the desert was a great barrier. Few could cross the desert, and so the desert provided protection from neighboring states, allowing these civilizations to grow powerful without the constant struggle with neighbors. Once these civilizations became powerful enough, they would march around the edge of the deserts making war on their neighbors, while the great deserts remained a barrier to their armies.

From time immemorial the Arabs have used the deserts to their advantage. Since these deserts separated the great civilizations, the Arabs provided a much needed link between these civilizations. Using the camel as their principle means of transport, they moved goods and ideas between the great civilizations. As early as 2000 BC we have record of Arab merchantmen conducting trade across the desert. (Genesis 37:28) Since they occupied the northern deserts of Arabia, it was only natural that the sons of Ishmael would excel in this trade and eventually become known as the great merchant empire of Arabia, the Nabataeans.

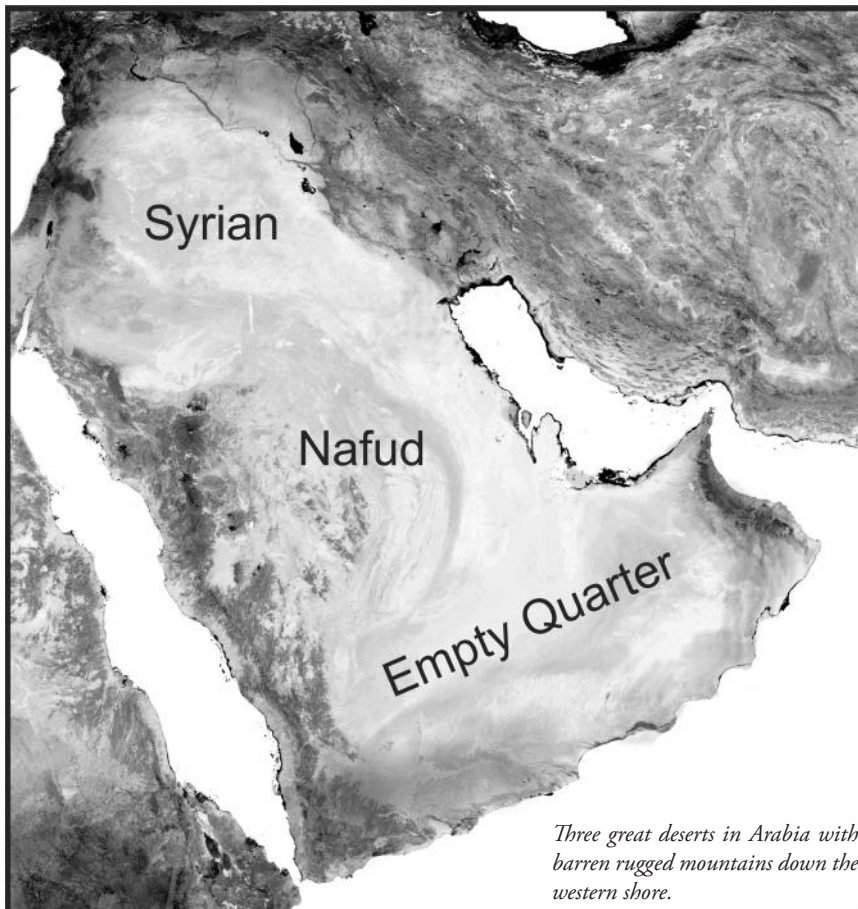
There were several things that helped the Nabataeans rise to great prominence in the desert trade business. Originally many of the tribes dabbled in trade. We have record of Midianites, (Genesis 37:28), Sabeans (Strabo, Geography, XVI.iv.2), Minaeans (Strabo, Geography, XSVI.iv.3) and Hagarites (I Chronicles. 5:10; Potts, 1991) all conducting trade, but by the time that Josephus wrote his histories, the Nabataeans had monopolized almost all of the desert trade. (Jewish Antiquities I.22.1)

## The Nabataean advantage

What was it that allowed the Nabataeans to rise above the others? First and foremost it must have been their ability to innovate. In the following pages we will examine a number of these innovations that allowed them to succeed and eventually monopolize the lucrative trade the deserts of the Middle East afforded anyone who might bring goods from one civilization to another.

### 1. The use of “local” merchantmen

Most of the early Arabian tribes that engaged in the merchant trade simply took local goods to markets in the big cities. Coming from rural localities, they brought sheep, cattle, skins, and local plant products to the larger markets. After a time they may have added other items as they became available such as slaves or products from neighboring tribes. This kind of trade had several difficulties. First, the merchants wanted to sell all of their goods





*Sela (above) was built on a flat-topped mountain several miles north of Bozrah.*

quickly in order to return home, so they had to accept whatever the current market would bear. These rural people had to know when and where markets were available and try and dispose of their products in the best way possible, and then buy needed supplies before returning home.

The Nabataeans went several steps farther. First, they did more than produce their own goods. They were engaged in buying and selling their products from each of the civilizations they visited. For instance, they would travel from Egypt to Babylon, buying goods from each place and then selling them in the other. The problem of needing to sell relatively quickly still remained until they came up with a brilliant idea. Nabataean families began to move into all of the surrounding civilizations. Often they would live together in a small community near a major center. They usually chose places where they could have warehouse or storage space. These families would then buy up local goods when they were at a low price and store them. When the caravan arrived, foreign goods were unloaded into storage and the local goods were picked up. The caravans did not need to stay for long, and the local families could ensure that top price was obtained for foreign goods, and the bottom price for the local goods they purchased.

This can be clearly seen at the Edomite city of Bozrah, (modern Busaira) where the Nabataeans occupied a small rocky mountain known as Sela a couple of miles to the north. This mountain seems to have been taboo to the Edomites because it was here that King Amaziah of Judah took 10,000

Edomites as prisoners and threw them from the summit of Sela. (II Kings 14:7)

Sela (previous page) was a small, very rough, flat-topped mountain located a few miles north of Bozrah. This mountain has caves, high-place altars, wide stairs to the top and also water cisterns. A Seleucid attack on this storage location is recorded in Diodorus 19.24.1.

By locating their storehouses close to the city of Bozrah, the Nabataeans could visit the city daily with goods to sell, and also buy up Edomite goods when they were cheap and hold them for the caravans which would export the Edomite goods to other places. Eventually the Nabataeans built up a network of communities all over the Middle East, and as far away as Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli) near Rome, Blackhia (El-Mashtal or Maiomas) near Gaza and Meda'in Šālīḥ near Dedan, the Lihyanite capital. (Lacerenza, 2005)(Glucker, 1987, pages 23, 82, 97)

The Nabataean network of “local or resident merchants” gave them an advantage over other merchants, allowing their caravans and ships to load and unload goods quickly before moving on to the next location. The map on the next page shows the various towns where there is evidence that Nabataeans had small communities of merchants.



*The Edomite city of Bozrah (above) occupied the flat-topped mountain in the center of the photo. This photo was taken from several miles away to the west.*

## 2. The use of “hidden water supplies”

The second innovation that gave the Nabataeans advantage in desert trade was the invention of hidden water collection systems. As their camel caravans moved through the desert they required water and food. These could be found at various oases throughout the desert, but the Nabataeans were not the only ones using these watering spots. Usually Bedouin tribes camped near oases and used them for watering their sheep, goats and camels. Eventually all of the watering spots in the Arabian deserts were claimed by local people who loved nothing more than charging the caravans for food and fodder. This continual drain on their finances forced the Nabataeans to find new ways to pass through the deserts. Their ingenious invention was based on water cisterns they had seen in southern Yemen which were covered in order to slow the process of evaporation.

The Nabataeans then built hidden cisterns and added water collection systems. All across the desert, great rocky mountains and stone outcroppings dotted the desert. The Nabataeans carefully selected those which had enough surface area to collect rainwater. Using small trenches and rocky ridges they

directed rainwater towards their hidden cisterns and dams. Some of their cisterns were large bell-shaped chambers carved out of the rock with only a very small opening at the top. The small trenches directed water to these openings, and a large rock was placed over the opening to slow evaporation. People passing by on the desert floor often failed to recognize hidden sources of water only a few meters above them on the rocks and mountains. By keeping these locations a secret, the Nabataeans had access to water where others only saw a waterless desert.

### 3. The use of desert navigation

As the Nabataeans developed water collection systems that were off the main trade routes they faced a new problem. Their new routes through the desert gave them many options for avoiding attacks or the taxing of their caravans. However, once they were off the beaten track, their caravans could become lost in the desert. The answer to this dilemma was the development of navigation using the stars rather than geographical points of reference. In the



*Above: Some places in the Nabataean trade network*

ever-changing desert where sand dunes shift back and forth and every rocky outcropping looks much like the others, the only fixed reference points are the stars above. Fortunately, these deserts of Arabia are renowned for their clear skies and fantastic view of the stars.

The Nabataean system of using the stars for navigation is explained in detail in chapter twenty-one where it is studied in reference to the later Muslims' ability to fix the qibla direction in their mosques. So here we will mention it only in passing, noting that they named 360 stars, and measured them using their fingers held at arm's length. In this way the Nabataeans could navigate across the trackless deserts where other nomads had to stay close to their oases and known desert tracks. (See chapter 21 for a fuller explanation of this system of navigation)

#### 4. The use of "hidden writing systems"

There has been some debate over Nabataean writing systems, but archeologists are beginning to recognize that two writing systems, Nabataean Monumental and Safaitic, are the same language written with different scripts. In his book *Nabataean Archaeology Today* Avraham Negev of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey first suggested that the Nabataeans might have written in two different languages. He felt that the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions were all religious in nature, engraved by pilgrims visiting religious centers. Detailed funerary texts do not express grief but are legal documents. For example, the inscription we mentioned earlier near the city of Oboda in the Negev mentions Obodas as "Obodas the god." Garm'alahi son of Taym'alahi dedicates the setting up of a statue to him and then, added to the Nabataean Monumental text, he gives an explanation in the Arabic language of why he made the dedication. It reads as follows: *"For Obodas works without rewards or favor, and when death tried to claim us, when a wound of ours festered, he did not let us perish."* Why did the writer change the script of the inscription? The dedication is in Nabataean Monumental; the explanation in another script. Was the Nabataean Monumental script reserved for religious and legal purposes only?



*Right: A metal lid now covers the top of an old Nabataean cistern, still in use today.*



Many warnings are written on tombs and these are all in Nabataean Monumental script. For example, one inscription dated 11 AD lists who can be buried in the tomb. It then ends: *"Whosoever acts otherwise than is written above, let him be liable, in view of the sanctity of what is written above, to pay a sum total of 1,000 sl'in of Aretas to Dushara the god and to our lord Aretas the king similarly. In the month of Shebat, year 13 of Aretas king of the Nabataeans who loves his people."*

Dr. Negev observed that none of the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions, of which there are many, refer to love, hate, war or any other human activity. From these, we learn nothing of Nabataean life; only about royalty, the military and temple administration. (Negev, 1991)

There are some 15,000 records in Safaitic, an Arabic dialect and script derived from one of the sophisticated south-Arabian alphabets, in the same geographical region as the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions. These contain more than 5,000 personal names as opposed to 1,263 personal names recorded in the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions. Unlike the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions, few are of a religious nature; most allude to daily life. Many speak of love, grief, war; some even refer to wars of the Nabataeans, events never mentioned in the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions. They speak of digging wells, the disappointment of not finding water, the looking after animals, the hunt and other aspects of daily life. There are also references to tribes and clans. In the Nabataean Monumental inscriptions, there are generally no such references.

It is interesting that only a few "Safaitic" inscriptions are found in the Negev and the Southern Sinai. There seems to be a correlation between the decline of the Nabataean Monumental script and the rise of the "Safaitic" script. On one hand in areas where, by the end of the first century AD, the Nabataean Monumental script dwindles, the Safaitic inscriptions increase. On the other hand in the Negev, and especially the Sinai where Nabataean Monumental was in use until the very end of the third century, the "Safaitic" inscriptions are rare. This parallels the spread of Christianity in the Nabataean area, as Petra had a Christian church during the first century AD, while Christianity did not penetrate the Negev until the 3rd century AD. If Nabataean Monumental was linked with the Nabataean religion, this would explain its declining use in the Petra region first. (Gibson, 2003, pg 250-252)

Looking at these facts, Dr. Negev suggests that the so called "Safaitic" inscriptions are not the product of anonymous Arab tribes, but rather are the records of the Nabataeans themselves. The discovery of the Nabataean/Arabic bilingual inscription at Oboda only confirms the well known fact that the Nabataeans did indeed speak an early form of Arabic.



Would it not be strange that a people who knew how to write from early times would not make records in their own language? Dr. Negev suggests that the Nabataean Monumental and Safaitic inscriptions should be treated as two components of the same human phenomenon, and fitted together as two unequal parts of the same history that shed light on the Nabataean culture as a whole.

The two-script theory would explain what Diodorus Siculus wrote in the first century BC in his book *Bibliotheca Historica* about the Nabataeans whom, like all historians of his day, he simply calls 'Arabs':

*"Here it is worthwhile to recount the institutions of these Arabs, by the practice of which they seem to protect their liberty. Their country has neither rivers nor copious springs from which it is possible for a hostile army to get water. They have a law neither to sow corn nor to plant any fruit-bearing plant, nor to use wine, nor to build a house. This law they hold because they judge that those who possess these things will be easily compelled by powerful men to do what is ordered them because of their enjoyment of these things. Some of them keep camels, others sheep, pasturing them over the desert. Of the Arabian tribes there are not a few who graze the desert and these are much superior to the others in the amenities of life, being in number not much more than 10,000. For not a few of them are wont to bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most costly of spices, receiving them from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Felix. They are conspicuously lovers of freedom, and flee into the desert, using this as a stronghold. They fill cisterns and caves with rainwater, making them flush with the rest of the land, they leave signals there, which are known to themselves, but not understood by anyone else. They water their herds every third day so that they do not constantly need water in waterless regions if they have to flee."* The above illustrates how the Nabataeans wrote in a secret code known only to themselves. Today archeologists have discovered that it was their own language written in a script from southern Arabia.

## 5. The use of "hidden sources" and marketing propaganda

Never to miss a trick, the Nabataeans also made great efforts to hide their supplies from their buyers. In other words, as middlemen they were quick to tell their customers how difficult it was to get their products and to justify the high prices they were asking. Roman and Greek historians wrote down these things as if they were really true. A good example is the story below, which is almost laughable if you can imagine a Nabataean merchant telling you why his products are so expensive. More Nabataean tall tales can be found at the website: <http://nabataea.net>

*“Arabia is the last of inhabited lands towards the south, and it is the only country which produces frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and laudanum. The Arabians do not get any of these, except the myrrh, without trouble. The frankincense they procure by means of the gum styrax, which the Greeks obtain from the Phoenicians; this they burn, and thereby obtain the spice. For the trees which bear the frankincense are guarded by winged serpents, small in size, and of varied colors, whereof vast numbers hang about every tree. They are of the same kind as the serpents that invade Egypt; and there is nothing but the smoke of the styrax which will drive them from the trees. The Arabians say that the whole world would swarm with these serpents, if they were not kept in check in the way in which I know that vipers are. Such, then, is the way in which the Arabians obtain their frankincense; their manner of collecting the cassia is the following: They cover all their body and their face with the hides of oxen and other skins, leaving only holes for the eyes, and thus protected go in search of the cassia, which grows in a lake of no great depth. All round the shores and in the lake itself there dwell a number of winged animals, much resembling bats, which screech horribly, and are very valiant. These creatures they must keep from their eyes all the while that they gather the cassia. Still more wonderful is the mode in which they collect the cinnamon. Where the wood grows, and what country produces it, they cannot tell---only some, following probability, relate that it comes from the country in which Bacchus was brought up. Great birds, they say, bring the sticks which we Greeks, taking the word from the Phoenicians, call cinnamon, and carry them up into the air to make their nests. These are fastened with a sort of mud to a sheer face of rock, where no foot of man is able to climb. So the Arabians, to get the cinnamon, use the following artifice. They cut all the oxen and asses and beasts of burden that die in their land into large pieces, which they carry with them into those regions, and place near the nests: then they withdraw to a distance, and the old birds, swooping down, seize the pieces of meat and fly with them up to their nests; which, not being able to support the weight, break off and fall to the ground. Hereupon the Arabians return and collect the cinnamon, which is afterwards carried from Arabia into other countries. Concerning the spices of Arabia let no more be said. The whole country is scented with them, and exhales an odour marvellously sweet.” (Herodotus, The Histories, Book III: 430 BC)*

### Trade Routes

Three great trade routes passed through the Middle East. The Nabataeans were quick to monopolize the incense route from southern Yemen to the northern ports of Alexandria and Gaza. Initially they moved incense once a

year after the incense harvest, but when demand and prices skyrocketed with the rise of the Roman Empire the harvest was conducted twice a year. Each time, the Nabataean camel caravans would travel south across the Saudi Arabian Peninsula, arriving out of the desert into the south Arabian kingdoms of Ma'an, Hadramaut and Saba. Upon loading their camels they would transport the incense north to the markets in Egypt and Europe. (Schippmann, 2001)

A second major trade route existed from ancient times that brought goods from the orient over the mountains of Central Asia and across northern Mesopotamia. It then passed through Damascus before it reached the coast and traveled north through Turkey. After Marco Polo's time this route became known as the Silk Road, even though we have evidence that it had been in existence since the early Roman Empire. (Hill, 2009, page 690)

A third trade route, much less known and studied, was the maritime route that began at the north end of the Red Sea. By 24 BC Nabataean boats were actively collecting incense from an island off the coast of Yemen and delivering it to the northern Red Sea ports. According to Agatharchides (130 BC), the Sabaeans of southern Arabia (Yemen) made use of rafts and leather boats to transport goods from Ethiopia to Arabia. (Photius, *Bibliothèque VII*) Agatharchides also tells us that the Minaeans, Gerrheans and others would unload their cargoes at an island off the coast so that Nabataean boats could collect it. In other words, he suggests that although the Sabaeans themselves may have confined their maritime activities to crossing the Red Sea, the Nabataeans in the north had already taken to maritime transport by the second century BC. (Agatharchides 87, and cited by Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca III* 42:5 and by Artemidorus in Strabo *Geography xvi*, 4:18, as well as Patricia Crone in her book *Meccan trade and the rise of Islam*, Crone, 2004, page 23) The island in question was probably Tiran. (Woelk, Agatharchides page 212) The Nabataeans would have transferred the goods from the Sabaean rafts and leather boats to their own wooden, sewn dhows. There is evidence of Arabian boats traveling farther afield and eventually trading with India. Although there are several books dating from this time period such as *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, it is very difficult to know what nationality the sailors and ships were, since the process of Hellenization had affected the Nabataeans to the extent where they had Greek names. Many historians have mistakenly thought that all of the sailors were Greeks, rather than realizing that Arab merchants also used Greek names at this time and used Alexandria as their center for maritime trade. (Casson, 1989, page 26)

Towards the middle of the 2nd century BC, the ensuing rising demand for oriental and south Arabian goods in the Mediterranean markets whetted

the appetite of Arab merchants based in Alexandria to increase their share in the north-south trade. They realized that they needed to sail directly across the Indian Ocean to the rich Indian market and bring goods back to Egypt without the involvement of Indian merchants. Ptolemy VIII, friend of Rome, as was his wife after him, demonstrated personal interest and involvement in the project which indicated the great hopes of all parties in Alexandria attached to the success of the venture. While it is not known who made the first direct voyage to India, a new important office was created very soon in the Egyptian administration. It was known as the “*commander of the Red and Indian Seas*,” and came into being under Ptolemy XII, nicknamed Auletes (80-51 BC). (Sammelbuch, 8036, Coptos, variously dated 110/109 BC or 74/3 BC; and no. 2264, 78 BC; Inscriptions Philae, 52, 62 BC) The creation of such an office implies that there was perhaps a marked increase in the regular commercial transactions with India at this time.

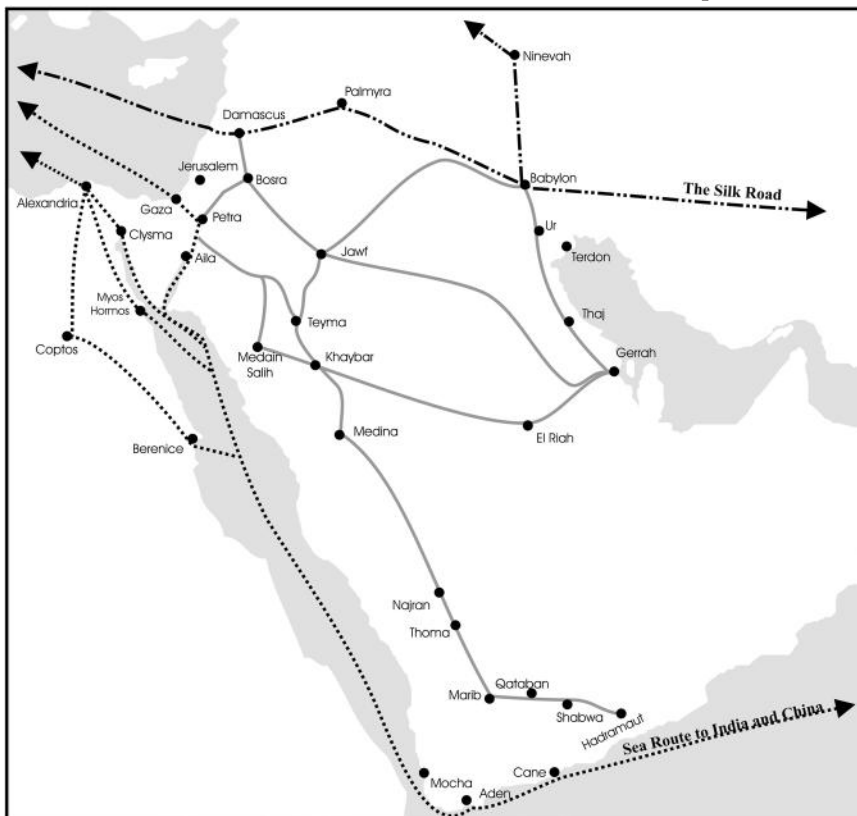
It is also perhaps quite relevant that in 55 BC, the Roman Senate decided to send Gabinius at the head of a Roman army to restore Auletes (Ptolemy XII) to his throne and to remain in Alexandria for the protection of the king against possible future revolts. (Caesar, BC. 3. 110). We can easily detect considerable Roman assets at risk in the case of sudden undesirable internal changes in Alexandria behind this drastic step.

This should warn us against accepting at face value Strabo's often quoted remark that it was only under “*the diligent Roman administration that Egypt's commerce with India and Troglodyte was increased to so great an extent. In earlier times, not so many as twenty vessels would have dared to traverse the Red Sea far enough to get a peep outside the straits (Bab-el-Mandab), but at the present time, even large fleets are dispatched as far as India and the extremities of Aethiopia, from which the most valuable cargoes are brought to Egypt and thence sent forth again to other regions.*” (Strabo, 17.1.13.) This is clearly an overstatement intended as a compliment to the new Roman administration, considering that Aelius Gallus, the prefect of Egypt, was Strabo's personal friend at whose house he stayed as a guest for five years (25-20 BC). Strabo's statement stands in sharp contrast to the earlier data of the above mentioned inscriptions and to the more matter-of-fact statement of the later author of the Periplus (40 AD) who correctly perceived that great changes in modes of navigation and the vast expansion of trade were the direct result of the discovery of the monsoon winds at least half a century before Augustus conquered Egypt. Strabo himself witnessed the flourishing state of Alexandria only five years after the Roman conquest, and very shrewdly observed the active trade that went through its several harbors. He says, “*Among the happy advantages of the city, the greatest is*

*the fact that this is the only place in all Egypt which is by nature well situated with reference to both things, both to commerce by sea, on account of the good harbors, and to commerce by land, because the river easily conveys and brings together everything into a place so situated, the greatest emporium in the inhabited world."*

Soon after the annexation of Egypt (26 BC), Emperor Augustus commissioned his prefect in Egypt Aelius Gallus, who was a friend of Strabo, to invade southern Arabia by land. (Strabo, 16.4.23-4) This land invasion caused considerable damage to the Sabaeans as far as Ma'rib, and it allowed the Himyarites who were close friends of the Nabataeans to take control of most of Southern Arabia. Some writers have thought that around 1 AD Augustus launched another devastating attack, this time by sea which, in the words of the Periplus, resulted in "sacking Eudaemon Arabia" which then declined into "a mere village after having been a fully fledged city (polis)." (Periplus, 26; Pliny, H.N. 6.32, 160 & 12.30,55; Also cf. H. MacAdam "Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy of Alexandria" in *Arabie Pre-Islamique*, Strasbourg 1989, 289-320)

In 85 BC as the Seleucid power was crumbling in Syria, the distraught residents of the Damascus turned to the rich merchants for protection. The



*Above: A map of major trade routes during the Nabataean Empire*

merchants, who seemed to be mostly Nabataeans, responded and took action, annexing Damascus into the Nabataean kingdom to the south. (Hammond, 1973, page 18) Now the Nabataeans controlled both the Incense Route and the Silk Road. A few years later when Nabataean boats began plying the Red Sea, the Nabataeans managed to monopolize all three trade routes, bringing them incredible riches and the power to manipulate prices in Rome. Soon after this, Roman historians began to comment on how costly their taste for exotic goods had become, as can be seen in Pliny's History of Nature, Book 6. (Holland, 1849, page 135)

### **Trade and economy**

A detailed study of any nation's economics could fill volumes. Needless to say, there are several simple rules of economics that have governed nations since the beginning. Fundamentally, a nation's economic strength can come from two sources: outside or inside income. By carefully studying these sources, economists can determine the strength of the nation's economy.

1. Inside Income. In order for an ancient nation's economy to grow, it needed cash from outside sources. One method of obtaining new cash was to export local resources or services that the nation could produce. The easiest form of this was mining. Ore could simply be extracted from the ground and sold abroad for easy cash, or manufactured into goods that could be sold. Another form was exporting agricultural products such as grain, sheep, horses and cattle. A third was to export people, either as craftsmen or as slaves.

2. Outside Income. In the ancient world there were two ways to stimulate a nation's economy from the outside. The first was military conquest. Many ancient kings used this basic rule: Attack the enemy and take his resources. And so great civilizations swept back and forth across the pages of ancient history, each swallowing up smaller nations and absorbing their resources. As they expanded, their economy grew flush with gold and silver taken from the nations they conquered as well as from the slaves they had captured. Since so much of ancient industry was extremely labour intensive, a constant supply of new slaves was needed in order to build and maintain a great civilization. Frequent plagues reduced the available labour pool, and kings needed to conquer new nations to replenish their labor pool. Sometimes nations were conquered for their material resources and were made serf nations. Other times the conquering nation simply rounded up all the healthy males and females and hauled them off to their own land to replenish their labour pool. So, whether they forced the defeated nations to provide them with resources or simply enslaved them, the civilizations that conquered their neighbors grew rich and powerful.

The second source of outside income was that of trade. If you had something to sell, or if you could purchase goods cheaply from a neighbor on one side of your civilization and sell it to a neighbor on the other side of your civilization, you could profit handsomely. If you managed to gain a monopoly on a certain item, you could raise the price of your goods to whatever your neighbor was willing to pay. While trade sounds great to us, it was fraught with all sorts of dangers. Thieves and pirates would attempt to steal your goods while en route. Your customer might find out where your source was and exclude you as the middleman. Then if you pushed the price too high, your customer might attack you and simply take the goods. Finally, you might start using the goods yourself and end up only importing and not exporting, thus ruining your trade business.

When examining the economy of the Nabataean Empire, we must consider both the inside and outside sources of income as these were important to who and what the Nabataeans were.

### **Nabataean inside income**

**Bitumen:** The Nabataeans controlled the entire production of bitumen that was mined from the Dead Sea. They sold this to Egypt for use in embalming. (Diodorus II, 48 and XIX 98-99, 100) (Hammond, 1959, pages 40 - 48) More can be learned about the Nabataean bitumen trade from *The Nabataeans, Builders of Petra*. (Gibson, 2003, pages 102-108)

The bitumen industry declined rapidly after the Egyptians and Romans stopped practicing mummification. Several mummies of Roman citizens who adopted Egyptian lifestyles have survived. Christianity's spread eventually brought an end to the practice of mummification. Christianity teaches that God will give believers new bodies when they are resurrected, so there was no need to keep the old body around anymore. During the time when mummification was practiced, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians were embalmed, all with bitumen from Nabataea.

**Horses:** The Arabs have always loved their horses and treated them with the utmost care. This was distinct from the relationship Greeks and Romans had with their horses where they were viewed more as brute animals for work or war. (Morgan, 1893, pg 99) The Nabataeans not only raised horses but also bred them, and they may have been involved in the development of the Arabian horse. While Nabataean horses were not used in the Roman army, they were popular in the circuses and racetracks around the Roman Empire, as well as for individual use. The Nabataean city of Mamshit in the Negev was known for its stables and horse raising. (Rubin, 1991, pages 197-205)



Sheep: Diodorus tells us that the Nabataeans had vast herds of sheep. (Diodorus Book XIX.94)

Mining: Copper was mined from the eastern side of Wadi Arabah, and was exported. (Barker & Mattingly, 2008, Pg 110)

Prostitution: The Zenon Papyri tell us of Nabataean merchants traveling around the Middle East with their collections of prostitutes. (Edgar, 1931)

### **Nabataean outside income**

Trade from Arabia, Africa, India, and China included incense, spices and luxury goods. Many ancient lists exist, such as are found in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, an ancient manual for merchants traveling to India during the Roman Empire. As we mentioned earlier, the Nabataeans seemed to have gained a monopoly on many of these trade items, and as a result accumulated great wealth. (Hammond, 1973, pg 22)

Frankincense: This incense was obtained from several types of oriental evergreen trees or shrubs. These trees were native to Oman, Yemen, and Somalia. A cut was made in the bark of these trees and the gum resin was collected. This resin was then dried and broken up into spoon-sized pieces. The odor in the gum was produced by volatile oils that diffused a strong fragrance when burned. The hardened, semi-transparent yellowish material is still used widely as incense today. In Medieval Europe frankincense oil was thought of as a drug and was used to cleanse wounds. A refinement of frankincense was made into a gummy substance that was used to dress wounds. (van Beek, 1958, pages 141-152) Incense was used in religious worship, especially in Roman, Greek and Egyptian temples. While burning incense was accepted as a practice in the later Roman Catholic Church, the early church during Roman times forbade the use of incense in services resulting in a rapid decline in the incense trade. (Smit, 2004)

Myrrh: From ancient times an aromatic gum resin called myrrh was extracted from a tree in Africa and Arabia, much the same way that frankincense was extracted. Then the resin, gum and the essential oil myrrhol were mixed to produce what was commonly known as myrrh. It had a bitter, pungent taste and ranged in color from yellowish brown to reddish brown. It was highly valued in ancient times as an ingredient in perfume and incense and was also used as an ointment. A similar product known as Balm of Gilead was obtained from a specific type of myrrh tree. Myrrh is mentioned in the Bible (Psalm 45:8; Song of Solomon 4:14) and is one of the three gifts the Magi brought to the child Jesus. (Matthew 2:11) Myrrh gum resin was also used as a stimulant tonic, and is even used today as an antiseptic in mouthwashes as well as to treat



sore gums and teeth. The Greek physician Hippocrates prescribed myrrh for sores, and the Romans used it to treat worm infestations, coughs and certain infections. Up to 3000 tons of frankincense and myrrh were transported across the Arabian deserts each year during the height of Nabataean trade. (van Beek, 1958, pages 141-152)

**Aloes:** The drug bitter aloes is obtained from the sap of the Aloe tree or shrub. There are more than 150 known species, most of them native to South Africa. Several species grow in Yemen and Oman, and these are thought to be the source of ancient aloes. The bush has sword-shaped leaves which are tough, fleshy, and often waxy and toothed. Today several species of aloes are commercially important as the source of the bitter-tasting aloes used in medicine. Aloes are mentioned in several places in the Bible, and as far back as the 10th century BC when King Solomon began trade with the south Arabian Sabaeen kingdom. Not all scholars agree, but some believe that the aloes mentioned in the Bible are really 'ud, one of the lesser known incenses. (Easton, 1897, Aloes) (Pliny, Natural History, Vol. 5, page 3)

**'Ud** (Pronounced 'ood, possibly the root of the English word "wood") is an aromatic resin deposit found in certain species of *Aquilaria* trees. These trees are found only in the jungles of the Far East such as Borneo, Vietnam and Cambodia. 'Ud resin is produced by the tree as an immune response to a fungus that invades the tree, and over many years, spreads through it. For thousands of years 'ud has made its way from the jungles of the east to the deserts of Arabia and beyond. (Chang, Ng, & Kadir, 1997) When the fungus takes over much of the tree, it can then be harvested. Often the tree simply has patches of dark fungus which are called *gaharu* by the jungle tribes. It smells like cedar and sandalwood with subtle tones of roses and balsam. Once 'ud reaches the markets of the Middle East it is sold as incense. Today the price can vary from \$5 a gram to as high as \$20 a gram. Oil can also be extracted from 'ud that retails for at least \$25 per gram and sometimes higher, depending on its quality. (Hanson, 2000, pg 2-13)

In the Middle East today, 'ud is sometimes added to tobacco and smoked in a water pipe. 'Ud is also burned in the Great Mosque in Saudi Arabia, and pilgrims to Mecca often take packages of 'ud home with them as souvenirs. 'Ud is usually considered a man's scent, but women sometimes use it at special get-togethers like weddings or the birth of a child. They pass around a smoldering incense burner so the guests can perfume themselves with 'ud incense. If you walk past a woman on the street and you smell 'ud, you know that she is from a good family. It is a sign of wealth, good breeding, refinement and status. The historians of China, Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, claim

that the aloe mentioned in the Bible was really 'ud, and that as far back as the 10th century BC it was being traded with the Middle East. (Hirth & Rockhill, 1966) Since large volume trade was unknown at this early stage, the price of 'ud must have been astronomical. It wasn't until the coming of the Nabataean, and later the Arab traders, that larger volumes of 'ud reached the markets of Alexandria and Rome. Today there are shops in the Middle East that specialize in selling 'ud. One dealer has a chain of 22 shops throughout the Middle East that sell 'ud oils called Dahn al-Oudh al-Moattaq. The price is around \$900 for a 30 gram bottle. (AJMAL Perfume)

The Spice Trade: No one knows when Arab traders first arrived in China, or when Chinese explorers first traveled directly to Arabia. (See chart page 366) There are several events in history that indicate trade was established either during the time of the Nabataeans, or a little earlier when Chinese and Arab traders met in Palk Bay on the northern tip of Ceylon. It is known, however, that by 300 AD, Arab and Persian traders had established settlements on the outskirts of Canton, China. One would assume that Arabs and Persians would only establish colonies after many years of trading. One would not move women and children off to China without having first established firm relations and without a long history of stable trade. If this is true, then it helps point to active direct trade with China taking place during the Nabataean era.

It is also interesting to note that an early Chinese traveler named Fa-Hien (399-412 AD) noted the riches of the Arab traders who dealt in 'ud. These Arab merchants had set up their base in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where they lived very comfortably. (Legge, 1886)

The Greek geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes, writing much later in the 6th century AD, mentions the China-Ceylon-Middle East trade routes which he noted included large shipments of 'ud. (McCrindle, 1897) Several centuries later, Zayd ibn Ḥassān of Siraf, Iran, records the experiences of two ninth-century traders in his book *Sikilat al-Tawārikh* (Chain of Chronicles), the one named Ibn Wahab of Baṣra, and the other Suleiman. (Hansen, 2000, pg 2-13) Although they traveled at slightly different times, both reported that the price and availability of 'ud in both Baṣra and Baghdad was much affected by frequent shipwrecks and pirate attacks on trading ships. A round trip would take two years, as ships had to wait for the right winds so they could sail, plus they had to deal with the customs, formalities and complexities of doing business in China.

Did the Nabataeans reach China? One indication that this may be so is that in the Silk City of Tseng in China, there is mention of Rekem in ancient records. As mentioned earlier, Rekem was the name the Nabataeans gave to

their capital city. It was only when the Romans annexed the Nabataean kingdom that they began calling the city by the Latin name of Petra. This indicates that the Nabataeans were in direct contact with the Chinese well before 106 AD, and most likely a century before the birth of Christ. (Hill, 2004, Section 19)

The Chinese were active in outside exploration and trade at various times in their history, as is illustrated by the chart on page 366. During the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD), imperial Chinese perfume blenders used 'ud along with cloves, musk, costus-root oil and camphor to make Chinese perfume. Since 'ud originated in the jungles of Borneo, the Chinese must have been active in trade with these islands.

It is also interesting to note the linguistic tie between China and India. Both the Chinese and Indian words for 'ud means "the incense that sinks in water." This is because a "water test" is used to determine the quality of the incense. High quality incense is heavy and sinks; low quality floats. (Hansen, 2000, pg 2-13)

From very early times, great value was put on spices. This is best reflected by the lucrative trade in cinnamon, cassia (senna), and black pepper that began before 1000 BC in the Middle East. (McCormick Science Institute, 2010)

For many centuries coastal trade with India was based from Arab ports along the coasts of Oman and Bahrain. From these ports, spices were taken overland across Arabia to Egypt and Syria. With the arrival of the Nabataeans, sea routes from Egypt were established, and much of this trade moved to southern Arabian ports and the port of Aila (present day 'Aqaba).

From Aila, goods were carried overland to Alexandria in Egypt, which soon became a commercial center. At its height the city of Alexandria handled almost all of the spices going to Rome. The chart on page 165 is taken from *The Justinian Digest of Roman Law, The Civil Law*. It provides us with a list of eastern trade articles subject to import duty. (Miller, 1969, pg 279)

From this list it is possible to get an idea of what sort of goods the merchants were bringing into Alexandria to be shipped to Rome. Since the Nabataeans monopolized so much of the trade through and around Arabia, we get an idea of what the Nabataeans carried in their caravans and on their boats.

Later from the 13th to the 15th century, Venice monopolized the spice trade with the Middle East. Venice demanded such exorbitant prices however, that Portugal and Spain looked eastward for routes to the Spice Islands around the Cape of Good Hope, and then, with the voyages of Christopher Columbus, searched westward. Although many of the early explorers set out to find

gold, these expeditions gained much of their financial backing from trade in spices. (Hart & Channing, 1992)

Another source of information on shipping from India to Rome comes to us from a book known as *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. This book lists the ports of call and the goods that were traded in each port found along the Red Sea, the east coast of Africa, the south Arabian coast and the western ports of India. The Periplus mentions that the king in Petra was Malichus, and thus the book can be dated to around 40 - 70 AD. Along with this, from ancient cook books such as the *Marcus Gavius Apicius: De Re Coquinaria*, it is possible to discover what some of the more popular Roman cooking spices were and how they were used. Pliny the Elder mentions literally hundreds of exotic goods that came from India and China in his *Natural History*.

Since trade ships and caravans carried many valuables they had to be protected. As the Nabataeans had started out their sailing days as pirates, they seemed to have become masters of the seas and may not have had too much trouble with other pirates. On land however, the Nabataeans had need of developing a series of forts and stopping points all along the caravan routes. At many of these spots, archaeologists have discovered the remains of barracks where soldiers were stationed to protect the wealthy merchants and their priceless cargos and loads of gold and jewelry.

## Return trade

The Nabataeans were skilled businessmen and so they picked up cargoes which they could carry on their return journey. Some items, such as silk, they managed to move in both directions, bringing raw silk from China to the Middle East, and then returning with the finished product, either in the form of gauze or damask silk. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* also mentions many items that the cargo boats carried to the East including coral, olive oil, grain, wine, rice, sesame oil, ghee, cane sugar, dates, clothing, tools, metal implements and even slaves.

## Summary

By listing all of these trade items, one can see how powerful the Nabataean merchants had become, and why Petra their capital city was considered one of the great metropolises of the ancient world and a great cultural center.

*Below: Articles subject to Import Duty at Alexandria, taken from Justinian's Digest of Roman Law, The Civil Law, tr. and ed. by S. P. Scott, (Cincinnati, 1932) 17 vols: vol 9, xxxix, iv. 16 (7) Latin text p. 651; English translation p. 23. (Miller, 1969, pg279)*

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cinnamon (incl. Cassia) | 28. Indian iron             |
| 2. Long pepper             | 29. Raw cotton              |
| 3. White pepper            | 30. Lapis universus         |
| 4. Folium pentasphaerum    | 31. Pearls                  |
| 5. Barbary leaf            | 32. Sardonyx                |
| 6. Putchuk (Costum)        | 33. Bloodstones             |
| 7. Putchuck (Costamomum)   | 34. Hyacinthus, blue stone  |
| 8. Spikenard               | 35. Emeralds                |
| 9. Turian cassia           | 36. Diamonds                |
| 10. Cassia bark            | 37. Lapis Lazuli            |
| 11. Myrrh                  | 38. Turquoise               |
| 12. Amomum                 | 39. Beryls                  |
| 13. Ginger                 | 40. Tortoise-stone          |
| 14. Cinnamon leaf          | 41. Indian or Chinese drugs |
| 15. Aroma Indicum,         | 42. Raw silk                |
| 16. Galbanum               | 43. Painted hangings        |
| 17. Asafoetida             | 44. Fine linen fabrics      |
| 18. Aloe-wood              | 45. Silk yarn               |
| 19. Barberry (Lycium)      | 46. Indian Eunuchs          |
| 20. Astragalus             | 47. Lions and lionesses     |
| 21. Onycha                 | 48. Leopards                |
| 22. Cardamom               | 49. Panthers                |
| 23. Cinnamon bark          | 50. Purple cloth            |
| 24. Fine linen             | 51. Cloth woven from wool   |
| 25. Babylonian furs        | 52. Orchil, rouge           |
| 26. Parthian furs          | 53. Indian hair             |
| 27. Ivory                  |                             |

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE THAMUDIC GOLDEN AGE

With money pouring into the Nabataean coffers, the Nabataean culture began to change. Camels were no longer good enough. Suddenly Arabian horses were preferred by the upper class. Arab personal names were replaced with Greek names, Greek and Roman togas became popular, and the Nabataeans began construction of public monuments in their new capital city that would do justice to their riches. Other Nabataean cities also began to build public buildings, and eventually the homes of the Nabataean wealthy grew to amazing proportions. During this time, the backbone of the Nabataean economy continued to be trade-based with the common people driving camels and a few sailing dhows, but this trade was kept separate from the daily lives of the rich. This can be perceived in the way that Petra was kept separate from the caravan trade, and how caravansaries were located at the outskirts of Nabataean towns in the Negev.

#### Construction

Since the Nabataeans traveled widely, they borrowed architectural ideas from the nations around them. (McKenzie, 1990) So it is not uncommon to see Mesopotamian ideas mixed with Greek, Roman and Egyptian. Their masons seemed to prefer large facades quickly cut from mountains rather than the intricate engineering that was required for huge stand-alone buildings. For the archeologists, this has been most beneficial because earthquakes topple large monuments, but many of the rock-cut facades remain in near pristine condition. While the city of Petra is the most well known, other Nabataean cities exist, such as Avdat and Shivta in the Negev, Boşra in Syria and Meda'in Şālih in Saudi Arabia. Photos of these can be seen on <http://nabataea.net>.

In this chapter you will see photographs of several of the major monuments at Petra. Notice that these are all carved out of solid rock. Many have

weathered over time, especially the theater which was openly exposed to rain. Flash floods in the valleys have also destroyed the lower sections of some monuments and tombs.

It is thought that originally the Nabataeans used Petra as a burial city, and that most of the city proper was a place for tents. Eventually the number of people living in Petra grew, houses were constructed, and the tents gave way to larger and larger mansions. (Kolb, 1988, pg 444) This can be seen in the Negev as well as in the large mansion excavated at Petra. (Kolb, 2002)



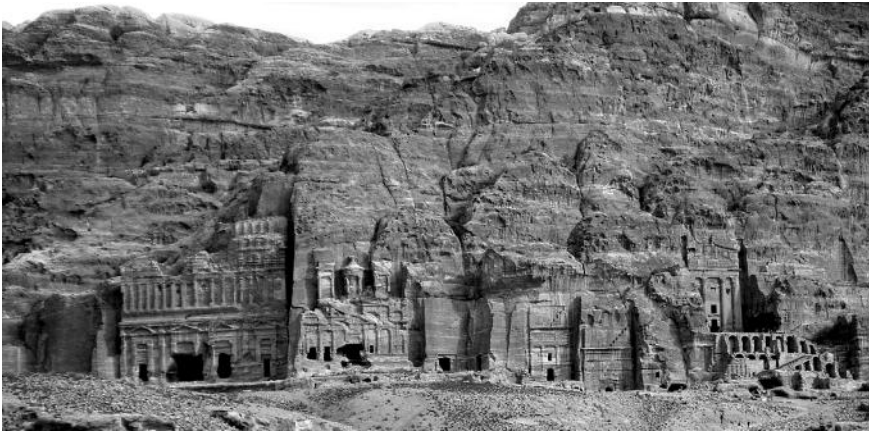
*Above: The Deir. Its purpose, original role and name are all unknown as it bears no inscriptions. Some have guessed that it was associated with Obodas, based on a nearby inscription that mentions this king's name.*

### **Maritime trade routes to China and India**

There are few links that directly connect the Nabataeans with India and China by maritime routes. From early sources we know that the Nabataeans were pirates, and that they later engaged in extensive trade on the Red Sea. At this time, there were no other sea-going Arabs except perhaps the Gerrheans. These people used small coastal vessels, and eventually faded from view when the Nabataeans completely dominated the frankincense trade. (100 BC - 200 AD)

The next solid piece of information comes from Arab and western history





*Above: A row of monuments that has become known as the "Royal Tombs." There is evidence that the Urn Tomb (on the right) was actually used as a tomb at one time and later converted into a church as attested by an inscription in the main hall. Most of the other monuments have no inscriptions and therefore no one knows when or why they were built.*

where we discover Arab traders trading with places as far away as China. Six hundred years after the Nabataean dominated the maritime trade routes, over 100,000 Arabs and Persians were living in Canton, China. These Arabs were engaged in sea trade with Arabia. What happened in between? This has been one of the subjects I have been researching for several years now and will hopefully be the subject of a future publication. In the meantime, there are some interesting facts that should be considered.

### **Dhow shipwrecked in Indonesia**

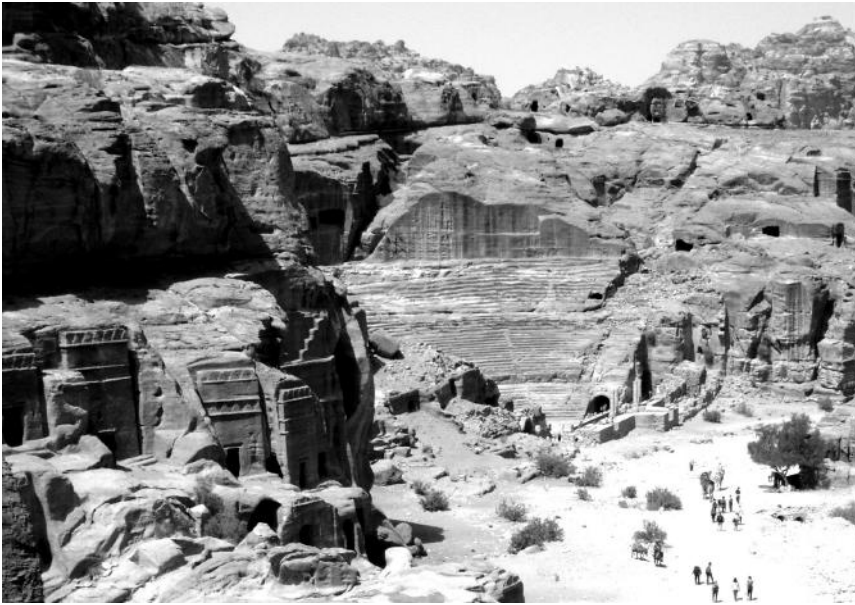
In 1997 fishermen just north of the port of Tanjung Pandan on the Indonesian island of Belitung (between Sumatra and Borneo) discovered an ancient shipwrecked dhow. From their fishing nets they recovered a number of distinctly colored bowls and ewers which could easily be identified as originating from the Changsha kilns of Hunan province in China. Changsha pottery was only produced during the later years of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 - 878).<sup>\*</sup> This allowed archaeologists to determine the approximate date when the ship might have sailed. The ship contained many other goods, including star anise (*Illicium anisatum*), a distinctly Chinese export at the time. (Flecker, 2001)

Excavations in the Tang city area of Tangzhou have yielded a significant quantity of Tang ceramics. The fact that this pottery was located at an ancient

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<sup>\*</sup> The later date is derived from when Huang-Chao burned and pillaged Guangzhou (Canton) and murdered the foreign merchants along with many Chinese civilians. As a result Arab trade from Guangzhou stopped for a period of time.





*Above: Tourists walk past the theater which is carved out of solid rock and is surrounded by many smaller tombs. The stage area has been destroyed by flash floods.*

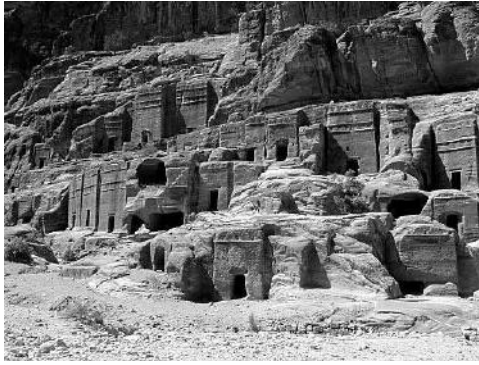
Chinese port known to have housed a large contingent of foreign merchants demonstrates that the pottery may have been produced for export. It seems that nearly all of the ceramic types recovered from the Belitung shipwreck were loaded at Tangzhou during Tang times, and the fact that they all occur together in one wreck shows that these wares were exported simultaneously.

Tang ceramics have been found all over southeast Asia, the Indian sub-continent, Sri Lanka, the Indus Valley, the Persian Gulf, around the Red Sea, as far inland as Samarra the Abbāsid capital, as far west as old Cairo in Egypt and Antioch on the Syrian coast, (Carswell 1999, page 2) and as far south as the Comoros Island and Zanzibar. (Rougeulle 1996, page 161)

Although Tang ceramics have been found in India, the quantities are very small. (Carswell 1999, page 21) Subbarayalu (1996, page 113) asserts that the earliest Chinese ceramics to be found in southern India date to the eleventh century AD and are therefore much too late for our interest. The archaeological evidence points to the ship found at Belitung as traveling to Arabia. (Flecker, 2001 page 348)

There were three possible maritime trade routes between the western Indian Ocean and China:

1. Since the Malay Peninsula separates the China Sea from the Indian ocean, Arab and Indian merchants could have traveled to the western shores



Left: Known as the Street of Facades, this mountain-side is filled with smaller tombs, many of them decorated with motif designs that seem to have come from Mesopotamia.



Sancai-ware consisted of three colors, commonly green, yellow, and white. Sancai-ware often had animal forms (especially camels, horses, and dogs). They were often created as funerary pieces.

on the Isthmus of Kra, part way down the Malay Peninsula. There they could have either trans-shipped their Chinese cargo up the Strait of Malacca from the South China Sea, or brought it overland from ports on the eastern side of the isthmus. (Flecker 2001, page 350)

2. Alternatively, they could have loaded their cargoes at a mid-point such as Palembang before recrossing the Indian Ocean back to their home ports.

3. A third possibility is that they traded directly with China, perhaps via a southeast Asian port. All of these routes could have been used simultaneously.

Bronson (1996, page 181) argues that there must have been a land route that connected Paem Pho and Ko Kho Khao on opposite sides of the Isthmus of Kra. He points to the great quantity and variety of Chinese wares, Middle Eastern glass and glazed pottery found at both ports, and concludes that these must have been the main commercial centers where goods were received for distribution, trans-shipment or repackaging on the most frequently used trade route between China and the Middle East.

An Arab source, the Muruj al-Dhahab written by Mas'udi in AD 956 states: (Guy, 1990, page 13)

*"The ships from Basra, Siraf, Oman, India, the islands of Zabaj and Sanf came to the mouth of the river of Khanfu (Guangzhou, old Canton China) with their merchandise and their cargo (before AD 877-878). Then the trader went by sea to the land of Killah (Kedah) which is approximately half way to China. Today this town is the terminus for Muslim ships from Siraf to Oman, where they meet the ships which come down from China, but it was not so once... This trader then embarked at the city of Killah on a Chinese ship in order to go to the port of Khanfu."*

According to Chinese records, the Persians (Po'ssi) and the Arabs (Ta'shish) seem to have dominated maritime trade with China at the height of the Tang Dynasty. (Guy, 1990, page 7) They established settlements at Canton (Guangzhou) where they were sufficiently strong enough to sack the city in AD 758, and then evacuate as an act of retaliation against corrupt port officials. Chinese rebels then sacked Tangzhou in AD 760, reputedly killing thousands of Persians and Arab merchants. (Wang, 1998, page 76)

In AD 878 Huang-Chao burned and pillaged Guangzhou and murdered the foreign merchants along with many Chinese civilians. (Wang, 1998, page 78) The Arab geographer Abū Zaid recorded that "no less than 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Parsees perished." (Hourani, 1995, page 76).

After this tragic event, it seems that the Arab merchants abandoned the South China Sea and relied on the ports on the Isthmus of Kra. These ports could have been operating for centuries, and the Arabs could have cut out the middle men by sailing directly to China; they did this until they were forced to leave in 760 AD.

The Chinese traveler I-Ching voyaged from China to Sumatra in AD 671 and wrote: *"In the beginning of the autumn ... I came to the island of Kwangtung, where I fixed the date of meeting with the owner of a Po-see (Arab) ship to embark for the south... at last I embarked from the coast of Kwang-chou (Guangzhou)."* (Hourani, 1995 page 46)

Thus we can conclude that 400 years after the Nabataeans started Arab maritime trade, Arabs from around the peninsula were engaged in major trade with Asia. As the Roman Empire was waning, foreign trade continued its pace, with more and more Arab groups entering into maritime trade between the Europeans and the East. Larger and larger ships were involved. Fa Hsien boarded an Indian ship that could carry 200 passengers for his voyage from Sri Lanka back to China in AD 413. (Guy, 1990, page 2)

A later Tang Dynasty text stated that the ships of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) were the largest of the foreign vessels. (Wang, 1998, page 99) In AD 748 the Chinese monk Jianzhen noted that on his way from Hainan to Guangzhou he saw countless seagoing vessels from India, Persia, Kunlun (south-east Asia) and other countries. (Lam, 1990, page 151)

Details of the Indonesian dhow wreck can be learned from Flecker's article (Flecker, 2001), but what is important is that Arab merchants were pursuing active trade with China for many centuries. The wreck has helped us understand that direct trade was taking place in 600 AD, and that thousands of Arab and Persian merchants were already located in China. This indicated

that there were many years of trade and contact between Arabia and China. But what is meant by the word “Arabia” and “Arab?”

### **Meanings of “Arab” and “Arabia”**

A more detailed study of the use of the words “Arab” and “Arabia” can be found at the website: <http://nabataea.net/arabia.html>. Research concludes that the word “Arab” has had a wide variety of uses over the centuries. Despite this wide use, the majority of ancient historians who wrote or gleaned their material from the centuries during which time the Nabataeans were the main merchants of the Middle East, freely interchanged the word Nabataeans with Arabs. After 200 AD, the Nabataeans were absorbed into the Roman Empire and the word “Arabs” was more generally adopted. After 600 AD, the term had changed meanings as Muḥammad and Islam rose to prominence, and the term came to refer to all Islamic people of the Arabian Peninsula who had adopted “Arabic,” the language of the Quraysh tribe. From this we can conclude that most of the early Arab maritime traders were of Nabataean origin, as the other Arab maritime powers did not come into being until about the time of the coming of Islam.

### **Conclusion**

The Nabataean/Thamudic golden age existed from around 100 BC to 100 AD when Nabataean foreign trade was at its greatest. Gleaning from Roman writings as well as the study of numismatics, we learn of the incredible wealth attained by the Nabataean merchants. However, in 70 AD Roman armies arrived in the Middle East to put down a Jewish rebellion. The armies were slow to leave, and pressure was put on the Nabataeans who neighbored the Jewish state to join the Romans.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE THAMUDIC KINGDOM CRUMBLES

It may be helpful to see how the Nabataean kingdom passed through a number of phases in order to gain a better understanding of how it passed out of existence. During its early history before 600 BC, the various tribes of Arabia participated in trade. The majority of Arabian trade involved goods being transported from Southern Arabia through the Arabian Peninsula to the land of Edom where they went either west to Gaza and Egypt, or north to Damascus. In 12th century BC, Pharaoh Ramses II had a special building constructed for storing incense for the god Amon. (Phillips, 1955, page 22) The temple in Jerusalem contained a special altar for incense. (Exodus 30:27) Baal worship involved offering incense on high places, on hills, on mountains, and in every grove of trees. (II Kings 16:4) Thus, incense was highly valued.

During this time the Nabataeans were mostly shepherds in the Sinai and the Negev, and there are only passing references to their involvement in the frankincense trade. There is some mention of Minaeans and Sabeans trading in incense during this time. The Gerrheans were involved in trade on another more easterly route from Yemen, traveling by coastal boats along the eastern coast to ports in Mesopotamia. From here goods made their way to Babylon. In the records of king Darius I of Persia (550–486 BC), the altar of the god Bel received nearly 60,000 pounds of frankincense each year. (Phillips, 1955, page 23)

Early in the period from 600 BC - 250 BC, the Nabataeans began using boats to pirate goods on the Red Sea, and later on the Mediterranean Sea, from

their port just outside of Gaza. As we mentioned before, this story is recorded for us by Diodorus:

*“After one has sailed past this country, the Laeanites Gulf comes next, about which are many inhabited villages of Arabs who are known as Nabataeans. This tribe occupies a large part of the coast and not a little of the country which stretches inland, and it has a people beyond telling and flocks and herds in multitude beyond belief. Now in ancient times these men observed justice and were content with the food which they received from their flocks, but later, after the kings of Alexandria had made the ways of the sea navigable for their merchants, these Arabs not only attacked the shipwrecked, but fitting out pirate ships and preyed upon the voyagers, imitating in their practice the savage and lawless ways of the Tauri of the Pontus. Some time afterwards, however, they were caught on the high seas by some quadriremes and punished as they deserved.” (III.43.4)*

Here we can see that early in their history the Nabataeans had an affinity toward using boats rather than camels. The major kingdoms of South Arabia that controlled the incense trade through the interior did not want incense to be moved by boats where they could not tax the trade. So the Nabataean caravans traveled overland and approached South Arabia coming out of the desert waste land. According to the Zenon Papyri, the Nabataeans were competing with the Minaeans and Gerrheans for the incense trade at this early time. All of these traders were using these overland routes. (Hoyland, 2001, page 41) (Pliny 12:54)

Things began to change around 100 BC. In southern Arabia the Himyarite people who lived closer to the southern shore secretly started using small rafts to carry their frankincense harvest to an island where Nabataean boats would pick it up and bring it north to Aila, and then inland through the newly developing Nabataean Empire to Egypt, Damascus, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. (Photius, Bibliotheca VII)

During this period, the Ptolemy rulers in Egypt built a series of ports down the African coast to facilitate the importing of elephants from around the African Horn. These elephants were used to help them in their war efforts. Nabataean boats then added the Egyptian port of Berenice to their route. From Berenice, goods were sent straight across an overland route to the Nile, and then down river to Alexandria. During this time Indian and Chinese goods also started arriving at Arabian ports. These were transported across land and down river to the Mediterranean port of Alexandria from where ships carried them to the various civilizations around the Mediterranean Sea. This foreign trade became so intense that China and India sent trade ambassadors to the Middle East during this time.



For example, trade embassies were exchanged between Philadelphos of Alexandria and Asoka of India. This clearly testifies to direct relations between the Ptolemy rulers of Egypt and India. (Kortenbeutel, 1931 page 29) (Casson, 1993, page 247-260) An envoy of Chinese Emperor Wu-ti of the Chinese Han dynasty made a visit to the Middle East in 138 - 122 BC. This envoy, Chang Ch'ien, mentions that the Arab king sent gifts including Arab jugglers to the Chinese emperor. (Ball, 2000, page 135)

During this time the Himyarite kingdom in south Arabia began to grow significantly as the Nabataeans increased their maritime trade with them. It appears that eventually the Nabataeans allied themselves with the Himyarites against the other kingdoms of South Arabia. (We will cover this in more detail in the next chapter)

After 100 BC the Nabataean port city of Gaza seemed to lose its importance. Most Arabian and Asian trade began to pass through Alexandria. Gaza was eventually lost to Jewish control. (Glucker, 1987) The Nabataeans continued their expansion northward at the expense of losing Gaza. They gained control of the ancient city of Damascus in 85 BC. (Bowersock, 1971, pages 219-242) This allowed them to completely dominate the land and sea routes from the east. The Nabataeans now controlled the Silk Road, the Frankincense Road, the King's Highway, and the maritime trade routes with India and Sri Lanka. The Nabataeans suddenly emerged as a world class economic power. At this point they began to work very hard on projecting an image of wealth, opulence and honor. One of their projects was the construction of a world-class capital city, Rekem, known to us today by its Roman name: Petra.

Around 20 BC the Romans began showing serious interest in the Arabian Peninsula. They realized the importance of frankincense as it was used in all of their temples as well as at funerals. (Pliny's History of Nature, Book 6, and Holland, 1849, page 135) Pliny mentions that a few dozen million sesterces went to Rome from the Himyarite Kingdom. Then, at the funeral of Nero's wife (65 AD), Pliny the Elder tells us that an entire year's harvest of frankincense was burned. This created massive shortages of frankincense throughout the entire Roman world.

Following this the Romans launched a campaign to southern Arabia in order to discover the source of frankincense. The Nabataeans not only managed to destroy the invading Roman army through deception, but they also used the remnant of the Roman army against the Sabeen and Minaean Kingdoms. While they did not defeat these kingdoms, they severely weakened them so that the following year the Himyarites began to conquer them. Eventually the Himyarites took control of all of the frankincense production, and all

frankincense trade was thereafter conducted by ships to Nabataea, causing the Gerrhean civilization to crumble. (Gibson, 2003, page 120)

As we noted before, the Nabataean hold on Damascus allowed them to have temporary control of the Silk Road trade route as well. Damascus, however, was lost to the Nabataeans in 64 BC. This setback did not stop them as they continued to influence the caravan city of Tadmor in the desert, which later became the city of Palmyra. The Nabataeans made several alliances against the Romans, but each time these proved unwise. Eventually under the Nabataean king Malichus II (AD 40-70 AD) son of Aretas IV, the Nabataeans sided with Rome against Israel. Little is known of Malichus II, but according to Josephus (3.6.1 110) he sent Emperor Titus 1000 cavalry and 5000 infantry which participated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

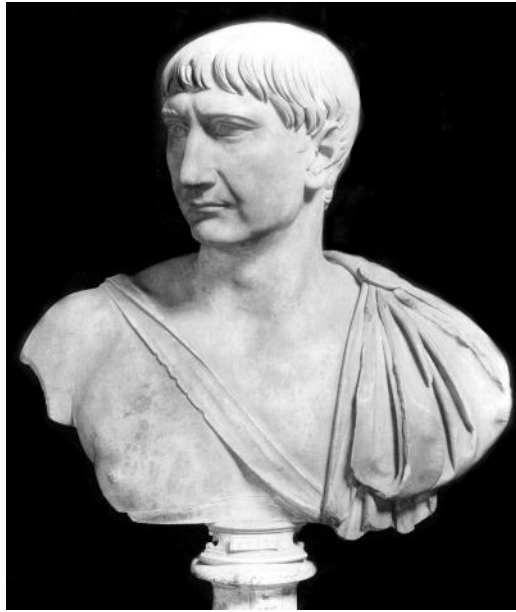
In that same year Rabbel II, the last of the Nabataean rulers, came to the throne. Rabbel II was a minor, and his mother Shaqilath acted as his regent for six years. Rabbel, who seems to have preferred the city of Boşra in the north of his kingdom, was known as *"hyy wyszb 'mh"* or *"he who brings life and deliverance to his people."* Some feel this refers to his putting down a rebellion in Saudi Arabia. (Winnett, 1973, page 54-57) During Rabbel's reign, the kingdom enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity. However, it was at the end of his reign that Rome acquired Arabia.

At the height of its power, Nabataea stretched from Damascus southward into northern Arabia. It was bordered on the west by the Roman-held lands comprised of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Paraea, the Decapolis and by Egypt. The Nabataeans' eastern border, being in the desert, was undefined but could be said to stretch to the borders of Parthia. Thanks to the extraordinary Nabataean ingenuity for water management, their agriculture flourished in the desert. Their trading empire which dealt in luxury goods linked the Mediterranean world with China, India, and Parthia.

The story of the Nabataeans would not be complete without reference to a Roman known as Marcus Ulpius Traianus. In later history he would be referred to as Trajan. However, during Rabbel's reign he served as a military tribune in the Roman province of Syria whose capital was Damascus. (Kearsley, 2003, page 242-244) During this time he learned much of the wealthy Nabataean merchants and even earned their trust. He enjoyed a thriving career, gaining the office of praetorship in 85 AD. In Rome, Emperor Nerva made Trajan governor of Upper Germany in 96 AD. Then, late in the year 97 AD, Trajan received a handwritten note from the emperor informing him of his adoption as his son. Whether Trajan had any form of advance knowledge of his impending adoption is not known. His supporters in Rome may well have been lobbying on his behalf.



Trajan's adoption was naturally pure politics. Emperor Nerva required a powerful and popular heir in order to prop up his severely shaken imperial authority. Trajan was highly respected within the army, and his adoption was the best possible remedy against the resentment much of the army felt against Nerva. But Trajan didn't hurry back to Rome in order to help restore Nerva's authority. Rather than going to Rome, he summoned the praetorian leaders of an earlier attempted mutiny to Upper Germany. Instead of receiving the promised promotions, they were executed on arrival. Such ruthless actions made it quite clear that with Trajan involved, Rome's government was not to be messed with.



*Above: Emperor Trajan*

Nerva died on 28 January 98 AD, but Trajan still did not rush back to Rome. Instead he went on a tour of inspection to see the legions along the Rhine and Danube frontiers. It wasn't until 99 AD that he returned to Rome. Jubilant crowds rejoiced at his arrival. As the new emperor entered the city on foot, he embraced each of the senators and even walked among the ordinary people. This was unlike what any other Roman emperor had done before, and perhaps allows us a glimpse of Trajan's true greatness. Such modesty and openness was an easy way for the new emperor to gain even more support during the first years of his reign.

His humility and respect for the senate as well as for the simple people was evident when Trajan promised he would always keep the senate informed about the affairs of government, and also when he declared that the emperor's right to rule was to be compatible with the freedom of the people he ruled.

Trajan was an educated but not an especially learned man who no doubt was a powerful, very masculine figure. He loved hunting, ranging through forests and even climbing mountains. Further, he possessed a true sense of dignity and humility, which in the eyes of the Romans made him an emperor of true virtue.

In 106 AD Trajan was involved in a war against Dacia, a powerful kingdom north of the Danube in modern Romania. Two wars were fought against it, resulting in its destruction and annexation as a Roman province. That very same year, apparently without any war, the Nabataean Empire was also annexed as the Roman province of Arabia. How Trajan did it, no one knows, except that he must have cultivated connections and earned the trust of the Nabataeans during his days in Damascus. The Roman Third Cyrenaica quietly moved northeast from Egypt into Petra while the Sixth Ferrata, a Syrian garrison unit, moved south to occupy Bosra.

While Trajan wasn't personally present at this time, the Roman legate Cornelius Palma annexed the Nabataean kingdom on behalf of the Emperor Trajan and incorporated it as the new Province of Arabia, renaming the city of Tadmur after himself: Palmyra. (Syme, 1957, pages 131-135) While historical records have not yet been discovered that describe this takeover, it is of interest to note that after 106 AD the Nabataeans continued as a distinct people within the Empire, and even enjoyed a period of economic prosperity in the later Byzantine era. It is interesting that the Roman coins pictured below were minted as referring to "*Arabia adquisita*" or the *acquired*, not *captured*, Arabia.



Left: Trajan Drachm, 98 -117 AD. Note the picture of Trajan with a camel behind him and the inscription: *Arabia Adquista*

### North Arabia under Rome

Once Roman rule was established, Claudius Severus built a new paved road which eventually linked the northern city of Boşra with the Red Sea port of Aila ('Aqaba) in the south. This road was some 500 kilometers in length and was known as the *Via Nova Traiana*. It was completed in 114 AD and followed much the same path as the ancient caravan routes and the King's Highway. Now troops as well as items of trade could be moved speedily from one place to another. (Young, 2001)

It is unclear if Rekem (Petra) was the capital of the Province of Arabia in its early years. This role was certainly given to Boşra, which Trajan rebuilt and named after himself, *Nea Traiane Bostra*. Rekem (later Petra) certainly was

still of great eminence and was an important administrative center, being the only city in the province to which Trajan gave the title *metropolis*. However, it was Hadrian, who visited Rekem in 130 AD on his grand tour of the eastern Roman Empire, who gave the city his name *Petra Hadriane*. Many years later (260 AD), the Sassanid Persians attacked the province of Syria and captured Antioch, taking the Emperor Galerian prisoner. The now rich and powerful Arab kingdom of Palmyra came to Rome's help and repelled the Persian invasion. This move placed the Palmyrans in the role as Rome's ally and buffer against the east, just as the Nabataeans had once been in the south.

The city of Petra flourished for at least a century more, thanks to her citizens who continued trade and agriculture. However, by the mid 3rd century AD with the economy of the whole region under pressure, the city began a slow and irrecoverable decline. Emperor Diocletian briefly checked the downward slide of the Roman provinces at the end of the third century through political reorganization, enlargement of the army and re-fortifying of the provinces. The northern half of the Province of Arabia retained its old name, but the south including Petra and the lands below Wadi Hasa became part of the Province of Palestine, *Palestina Tertia*.

### Byzantine Petra

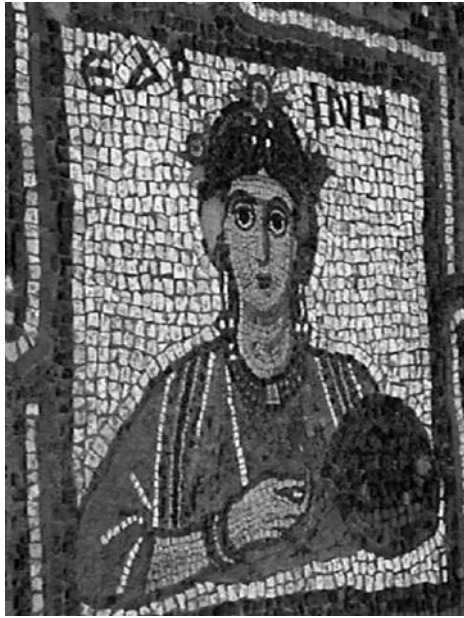
In 313 AD, Christianity was proclaimed the official religion of the Roman empire. In 330 AD, Emperor Constantine the Great transferred the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to the Greek city of Byzantium, rebuilt it, gloriously embellished it, and renamed it New Rome (Constantinople).

The Nabataeans, and Petra in particular, had already had its Christian martyrs during the persecution of Diocletian. These thought-provoking examples must have had the de-Christianizing effect Diocletian desired, for very soon afterwards the Christian chronicler Eusebius thundered against Petra for being filled with superstitious men who had sunk in diabolical error. (Schaff & Wace, 1994, Ch. VI, 70)

In the mid-4th century, Bishop Asterius of Petra was named as a participant in the Arian controversy, a long and bitter dispute over whether Christ was of one nature with the Father, or merely shared a similar nature. Asterius started as an Arian but ended up on the orthodox side. For this he was banished by the pro-Arian Emperor Constantius, but later recalled by the more tolerant Julian the Apostate. However, pagan worship continued as the norm in the Nabataean areas. Then a monk named Mar Sauma, together with forty brother-monks, began traveling around the Empire, destroying pagan temples.

They arrived at Petra in 423 AD to find the gates shut fast against them. Their demands to be let in, accompanied by threats of attack if they were not, coincided with a rainstorm of such intensity that part of the city wall was broken, and the monks managed to enter. The whole episode was deemed to be of truly miraculous significance as there had been an unbroken drought for four years. This impressed some of the pagan priests who converted to Christianity.

Over the following century or so, bishops from Petra took part in the various councils of the church, convening to discuss a series of doctrinal disagreements which followed the Arian controversy with increasing frequency.



*Above: A mosaic pattern from the floor of the Byzantine church in Petra (around 450 AD)*

Petra also seems to have become a place of exile for troublesome or heretical priests, prelates, or prominent laymen who failed to agree with the emperor or with the decisions of these councils. According to one contemporary document, one of the most well-known of these men was Nestorius, one of the promoters of the Nestorian heresy which was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

A fourth century Syriac letter attributed to Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem discusses major earthquake destruction at Petra on May 19, 363 AD. Some parts of the city continued in use afterwards, but it seems that many of the civic buildings ceased to function for a while. (Brock, 1977) It was during this time (4th Century AD) that the Urn Tomb in Petra was transformed into a church.

In the early 1990s, archeologists uncovered the remnants of a Byzantine-era church in Petra with mosaics and 50 letters written in Greek. The last reference to a resident bishop is to Athenogenus, a nephew of Emperor Maurice. (582-602) Coin evidence from around the Colonnade Street shows that shops there were still much in use during the fourth and fifth centuries.

During the fifth and sixth centuries, many of the forts that formed the Roman-Byzantine security belt east of Petra were abandoned. On July 9, 551 AD, another devastating earthquake reduced more of the city to rubble. It ap-

pears the bishops departed, bringing to an end all historical records as far as have been discovered to date. (Darawcheh, Sbeinati, Margottini, & Paolini, 2000; Russell, 1985) The final destruction came from an earthquake in 713 AD. Petra was never rebuilt after this and it passed from history. (Hinds, 1990, 1256, page 204)

What happened to the Nabataean people? Most likely many of the wealthy Nabataean merchants moved to Alexandria and Rome, becoming powerful merchant families within the Roman Empire. As they changed their names to Greek and Latin names, it became impossible to identify them, although it is interesting to note that burial customs similar to those of the Nabataeans were begun around this time in Alexandria and Rome, and were conducted for many centuries afterwards.

The Nabataeans who remained in the Roman province of Arabia seemed to have been mostly the poor and low class. They raised livestock and participated in local trade. Most of the Nabataeans would have left the city after the earthquake of 363 AD, but some people still occupied the city during the earthquake of 551 AD, only 19 years before the birth of Muḥammad. By the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the people remembered the former occupants of these cities simply as “the people of Thamud” or those who came after ‘Ad, but were destroyed by an earthquake.



*Above: The Blue Chapel is one of three Byzantine-era churches on a ridge north of Petra's colonnaded street. Petra hosted a surprisingly strong Christian community well past the 363 AD earthquake.*

During the time of the founding of Islam, Muslims would visit the graves of those who had died. Muḥammad said that it was permissible to visit the graves of disbelievers, if one realized they were weeping at the graves of the wrongdoers who had been seized and punished by Allāh for their evil deeds, and so in their weeping they expressed their humility and their need for forgiveness from Allāh. This is obvious from a ḥadīth, reported by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, that the Prophet said to his companions when they passed through Al-Ḥijr, the dwellings of the people of Thamud, *“Do not go without weeping to the places of burial of those who are undergoing torment. But if you cannot weep, then do not enter these places lest what befell them should befall you.”*

Muḥammad used the people of Thamud as an example of a people who rejected the worship of one god and chose polytheism. He told the Arabs of a man named Ṣāliḥ who was sent to them as a prophet. No one knows when Ṣāliḥ lived, or who he was, although some have tried to link him with Ṣāliḥ the father of Eber, the great grandson of Noah. (See Founding of the Nations chart, page 20). This, however, would have placed him too early in history to have been associated with the people of Thamud.

*And to (the people of) Thamud (we sent) their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: O my people! Serve Allāh. Ye have no other God save him. A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo! this is the camel of Allāh, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allāh's earth, and touch her not with hurt lest painful torment seize you. And remember how he made you viceroys after 'Ad and gave you station in the earth. Ye choose castles in the plains and hew the mountains into dwellings. So remember (all) the bounties of Allāh and do not evil, making mischief in the earth. The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said unto those whom they despised, unto such of them as believed: Know ye that Ṣāliḥ is one sent from his Lord? They said : Lo! In that wherewith he hath been sent we are believers. Those who were scornful said : Lo! in that which ye believe we are disbelievers. So they hamstrung the she-camel, and they flouted the commandment of their Lord, and they said: O Ṣāliḥ! Bring upon us that thou threatenest if thou art indeed of those sent (from Allāh). So the earthquake seized them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. And Ṣāliḥ turned on them and said : O my people! I delivered my Lord's message unto you and gave you good advice, but ye love not good advisers. Qur'ān 7:73-79 (Pickthall) See also Qur'ān 26:141- 159*

The sign of the camel is explained to us by the Islamic historian Al Ṭabarī who writes in 300 AH (920 AD). He tells us that the miracle of the camel



was that the camel was given by God, and that it came out of the side of the mountain.

*What happened then regarding them and Ṣāliḥ was told by al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥyā- 'Abd al-Razzaq- Isrā'il- 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Rufay'- Abū al-Ṭufayl: Thamud said to Ṣāliḥ, "Bring us a sign if you are indeed truthful." Ṣāliḥ said to them, "Go to an elevation on the land," and it shook violently as a woman in labor shakes, and it opened up, and from its midst a camel came forth. Ṣāliḥ said, "This is God's camel, a token unto you. Let her feed in God's land, and do not hurt her, lest a painful torment seize you..."* (The History of Al-Ṭabarī: Prophets and Patriarchs, translated by William M. Brinner, Volume II, page 41)

We will mention the camel of Thamud again in chapter nineteen. However, for the present we should note that the people of Muḥammad's time knew



this story. They were very aware that Ṣāliḥ gave the people of Thamud a sign in the form of a camel, and also that the people of Thamud were destroyed by earthquakes. Even though the people of Thamud had passed from the scene, the stories lived on and were remembered by the Arabs.

### **Why are Thamud, 'Ad and Midian mentioned?**

Why does the Qur'ān single out the people of 'Ad, the people of Midian and the people of Thamud? From our studies we have shown that they all occupied the same area, namely northern Arabia. As we have shown, 'Ad came first, followed by Midian, and lastly Thamud. What made them notable? Each of these people united the tribes of northern Arabia. Each of these had influence on the kingdoms outside of Arabia. In the eyes of the average Arab during the time of Muḥammad, the people of 'Ad, Midian and Thamud were seen as having been great. As Muḥammad preached to the people around him, he specifically drew their attention to these great kingdoms, and instilled the idea in them that Arabia could be great again.



# **SECTION V**

## **PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA**



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE TRIBES OF ARABIA

From ancient times until today, northern and central Arabia has been occupied by nomadic Bedouin tribes while southern Arabia is occupied by village dwellers. To the urban dweller, Bedouin seem like simple folk, living on the fringes of society. To the Bedouin, urban dwellers are strange folk living on the edge of their desert. For years I lived in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula without knowing much of Bedouin life. However, in the year 2000 my family and I moved to the south of Jordan and began living among the Howietat tribe of Bedouin. While my attention was focused on writing and studying the Nabataean ruins in the area, I did have time to interact with my neighbors, and eventually was captivated by their lifestyle and the wisdom of desert life they possessed.

As I studied the history of Arabia, I became aware of problems in connecting the present day tribes of northern Arabia with those of antiquity. From initial observance, the modern tribal names did not appear at all related to ancient tribal names. As I listened to Arab poets recite the histories of their tribes, I realized that there was a disconnect between a) the modern names for tribes, b) tribal names during the early years of Islam and c) tribal names in antiquity. The poets could recite their tribal lines back many generations, but few of them could go farther than a thousand years, and none of them could connect with ancient groups like the Amalekites, the Midianites, or the Nabataeans, other than those directly related to the prophet Muḥammad.

So when dealing with Qur'ānic Geography, the location of cities and geographical features is further complicated by nomadic tribes and tribal evolution. This can create an absolute quagmire when trying to reconstruct the location of nomadic people groups at certain times in history.

Few people today know what happened to the descendants of Ishmael. It is often assumed that they simply became the Arabs of the Middle East, but for most of us our knowledge of them stops there. The Bible gives us the following record:

*“But as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.”* Genesis 17:20

*“Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s handmaid, bore unto Abraham: And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations:*

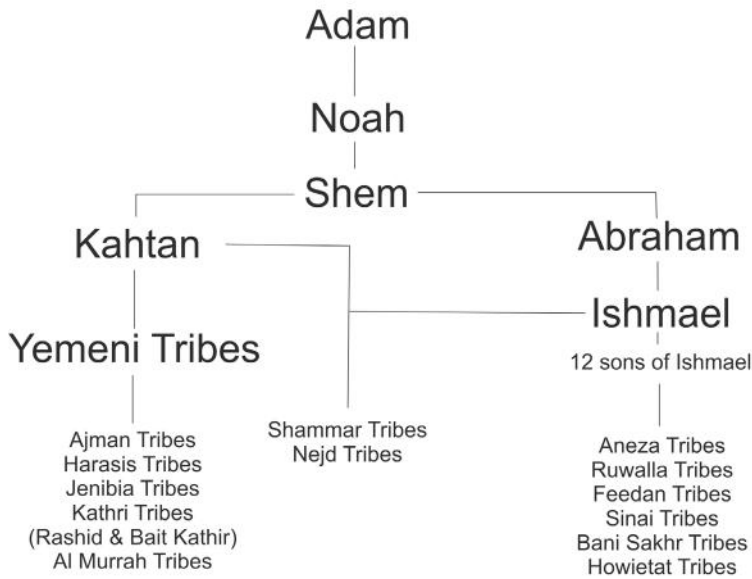
1. *The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth, (Nebajoth)*
2. *Kedar,*
3. *Adbeel,*
4. *Mibsam*
5. *Mishma*
6. *Dumah*
7. *Massa*
8. *Haadad*
9. *Tema*
10. *Jetur*
11. *Naphish*
12. *Kedmah*

*These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their nations.”* Genesis 25:12-16

The Muslim understanding of how the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula originated is outlined in the chart on the next page. (We have reproduced it here from earlier in the book in order to examine it again.) Note that the twelve sons of Ishmael are distinct from the tribes of southern Arabia (Oman and Yemen).

According to Muslim thinking, the descendants of Kahtan (Biblical Johtan) became the southern Arabs (which we will examine later in this chapter), and the descendants of Ishmael became the Arabian tribes in northern Arabia. As we look at the early history of north Arabia, the names of some Ishmaelite tribes will occasionally come up.

According to archeologists, no evidence of civilization has been found in Arabia during the early years of the first millennium BC. Michael C. A. MacDonald in his book *North Arabia in the First Millennium BCE* notes that there is no evidence of pottery being used in the Arabian Peninsula before the 6th



century BC. (Macdonald, 1995) Suggestions have been made that either the oases were not yet populated, or that the Arabians were totally nomadic and did not use pottery or leave implements behind that would reveal evidence of their presence to us today. This is supported by Job 6:19 and 20 which tells us that Job (in the land of Uz) laments his fall from wealth, and comments that the troops of Tema and the armies of Sheba had hoped for plunder, but now Job had nothing for these nomads to plunder.

Dr. Peter Parr notes that there is no evidence of sedentary life at any of the oases centers in Arabia such as at Jawf, Tayma, Dedan, etc, prior to the beginning of the 6th century BC, which he remarks is in agreement with Assyrian texts that refer consistently to Arabs as nomads. (Parr, 1989) This is consistent with our studies in the second section of this book concerning 'Ad, Edom, and the Hyksos. At this time the Arab people were totally nomadic, and their main center moved from place to place. The oases of Jawf, Tayma and Dedan would only have been stopping places for passing merchants and nomads rather than places of continual settlement. The history of northern Arabia that I outline next is presented better in other publications, but it is reviewed here again to help the reader understand the wider implications of tribal history and geography.

When **Tiglath Pileser II** (745 - 727 BC) began to expand the Assyrian Empire into Syria and Arabia, the names of Arabian tribes began to appear. (Irvine, 1973, pg 290) The Ishmaelite tribe of Adbeel has been identified with the people of Idibi'ilu of the land of Arubu, who became subjects to Tiglath Pileser II (744 - 727 BC). Idibi'ilu was apparently head of his tribe and was given the duty of being the Assyrian king's agent on the Egyptian border. His tribe was said to have dwelt far away, towards the west. From this reference, some historians have thought that the tribe of Adbeel lived in the Sinai. (Eph'al, 1982, page 91)(Martinez, 2006, page 9)

The Ishmaelite tribe of Qedar is mentioned on a stele of **Tiglath-Pileser III** (737 BC) in a list of leaders that pay him tribute. (Gallagher, 1999, page 52, note 120) Tiglath Pileser III is mentioned in the Biblical record: Isaiah 7; 2 Kings 15-16 and 2 Chronicles 27-28.

A short time later, queen Samsi (Shams meaning sun in Arabic) also called the *queen of Arabia* rebelled against Tiglath Pileser, making herself an ally with the Damascus/Israel/Tyre coalition. When these nations were defeated the queen fled to the land of Bazu. Bazu is described as a waterless region, recognized by scholars as located somewhere in North Arabia. (Musil, 1927, page 428-485)(Eph'al, 1982, page 130-137) The biblical writer Jeremiah includes Buz along with Dedan and Tayma as being in the uttermost corners of Arabia. (Jeremiah 25:23 & 24) Later on, Queen Samsi returned and was permitted to stay in power, possibly because the Assyrians knew there was no substitute for the Arabs' cooperation in maintaining the north/south trade route. It is thought that she functioned under the authority of an Assyrian overseer 'qwpu' (Eph'al, 1982, 86)

Queen Samsi was forced to bring tribute to the Assyrians, and her defeat prompted seven other kingdoms involved in Arabian trade to bring tribute in



*Tiglath Pileser III*

order to secure the safety of their incense trade. (Macdonald, 1995) These nations were Massaa, Tayma, Saba, Haiapa (Ephah), Badana, Hattia, and Idi-bi'ili. Their tribute consisted of gold, silver, male and female camels, and a wide variety of spices. Of these tribes, Massaa, Tayma and Adbeel are listed among the descendants of Ishmael (Genesis 25:12-18, I Chronicles 1:29-30). Ephah was a Midianite tribe

listed among the children of Keturah (Genesis 25:4) and was located east of Tayma. Grohmann identifies Badana as located southeast of the oasis El Ula, which is biblical Dedan. Hattia has not yet been identified. Saba is normally associated with the kingdom of Sheba in South Arabia. Several scholars have trouble with identifying Sheba this far north, but Job 1:15 mentions the people of Saba among the descendants of Qeturah (Genesis 26:1-6) who lived in the Hijaz area and were heavily involved in the incense trade, possibly as agents to the Sabaeans of the southern kingdom of Sheba. (Genesis 10:28). (Groom, 1981)

The records of Tiglath Pileser III also mention the inhabitants of Massaa and Tayma who paid him tribute. On the summit of Jebal Ghunaym, located about fourteen kilometers south of Tayma, archeologists Winnett and Reed discovered some graffiti texts mentioning the tribe Massaa in connection with Dedan and Nebayat (Nabataeans). These texts refer to the war against Dedan, the war against Nabayat and the war against Massaa. Therefore, these tribes appear to have been in close proximity to each other at this time. The tribe of Massaa is possibly connected with the Masanoi of North Arabia as mentioned by Ptolemy. (Geography 18.2)

It is interesting to note that **Sargon II** (722 - 705 BC) claims to have crushed the tribes of Thamud, Ibadidi, Marsimanu and Haiapa, "*the Arabs who live far away in the desert and who know neither overseers or officials, and who had not yet brought tribute to any king.*" He goes on to say that he deported them and settled them in Samaria. II Kings 17:24 reports that the people who were settled in Samaria were from Babylon, Cuthah east of the Euphrates, and Hamath and Sepharvaim in Aram west of the Euphrates. The Bible may not have stated all the people who settled in Samaria, and Sargon may have moved people first to one area and then on to another. It might be assumed that having settled Arabs in Babylon or close to the Euphrates, he may have thought better of the idea and moved them farther away to more isolated Samaria.

The inclusion of Thamud in this list is important, for as we have seen the Thamudic people eventually become a major factor in north Arabia. From graffiti and inscriptions we know that they were located in the upper Hijaz area. The Qur'ān assumes the prominence of the Thamud before Muḥammad's time, and the tribe is portrayed in the Qur'ān as having been annihilated by God through a major earthquake because they became extremely rich and indulged in sinful living. (Sūra 7:76; 41:12, 16) The tribe of Thamud also appears in classical writings as inhabiting the eastern coast of the Red Sea (Diodorus II 44, 6; Pliny XVI 32.15).

It is important to note that the thousands of so-called Thamudic inscriptions are not necessarily related to one tribe by this name. Rather, the inscriptions were written by a variety of nomadic tribes in northern Arabia, apparently with a south Arabian alphabet, and are found all over the Arabian Peninsula. (A Van den Branden, *Les inscriptions thamoudeennes*, Louvain, 1950)

Later on Sargon II received gifts from the Pharaoh of Egypt, from Samsi the queen of the Arabs, and "It'amra, king of Saba." This is significant because it demonstrates that Samsi was more or less independent at this time.

It appears that there was no way for the Assyrians to hold control over the nomads. Their Bedouin lifestyle allowed them to move freely to remote parts of the desert. This made military attempts to conquer them expensive and temporary, and it also jeopardized the profits to be made through taxing the incense trade. We have no record of Sargon II having any more troubles with the Arab nomads during the remaining years of his reign.

During the reign of the Assyrian king **Sennacherib** (704-681 BC), the desert nomads who were led by Haza'el, king of Qedar, and the queen priestess Te'elhunu were subdued. These had assisted Haza'el and other rebels in Babylon. Both Haza'el and Te'elhunu took refuge in Adummatu which was an Arab fortress at Dumah. Sennacherib followed them and besieged the city. Eventually the city fell, and Sennacherib captured Te'elhunu and took a great deal of spoil including divine images from the Arabs.

From a geographical standpoint, Adummatu is associated with the medieval Arab Dumat el-Jandal, which in ancient times was a very important and strategic junction on the trade route between Syria, Babylon, the Najd and the Hijaz areas. Dumat el Jandal is at the southeastern end of Al Jawf which is a desert basin, and the name often denotes the whole lower region of Wadi Sirhān. This area has water and was a stopping place for caravan traders coming from Tayma before proceeding on to Syria or Babylonia. This strategic location effectively made Dumah the entrance to north Arabia. According to Assyrian records, this oasis was the center of rule for many early north-Arabian kings and queens, and it was also an important place for the Midianites as we saw in chapter nine.

It seems that during all of this military activity in northern Arabia the incense trade did not suffer. Those involved did their best to maintain good relations with Assyria. There are records of gifts being sent from the people of Tayma to Nineveh, and after the destruction of Babylon, Karib'il the king of Saba sent gifts of precious stones and aromatics to be placed in the foundations of a new temple at Asshur. (Macdonald, 1995)

In the middle of the fourth century BC, the Qedarites seem to have faded



from history when the Nabataeans, their brother tribe, came to the forefront. It is unclear when the Qedarites ceased to exist as a separately defined confederation or people. Allied with the Nabataeans, it is likely that they were absorbed into the Nabataean identity around the 1st century BC. Arab genealogical scholars consider Ishmael to be the ancestral forefather of the northern Arab people, and so they assign great importance in their accounts to his first two sons Nebaioth and Qedar. The genealogy of Muḥammad, the founder of Islam, is assigned to either Nebaioth or Qedar, depending on the scholar.

Charles Forster identifies the Arab tribe of the Beni Harb as the modern descendants of Qedar. He proposes that the Beni Harb (sons of war) have a name that was adopted by the tribe at least 2,000 years ago, replacing Qedar as the known name. (Forster, 1844, pages 255-259) Crichton tells us that the sub-tribes of the Beni Harb are the Mezeyne, the Beni Safar, Beni Ammer, el Hamed, Beni Salem, Sobn, El Owf and Dwy Daher tribes. (Crichton, 1833, page 161) Having searched for some tangible link between the Beni Harb and the Qedarites, I can only surmise that Forster based his conclusion on the Qedarite reputation as “archers” and the Beni Harb as fighters. Forester presents us with no other link.

**Ashurbanipal** (668-627 BC) became involved in an internal conflict with his brother Shamash-shumukin, who was then the king of Babylon. Iata, king of Arabia joined forces with the Babylonians in revolt. He lent his forces to a certain Abiate' (Abyatha') and his brother Aamu, sons of Tē'ri in order to assist Babylon in their revolt against Assyria. Ashurbanipal crushed his brother and set fire to Arab tents. Abiate' boldly went to Nineveh and implored Ashurbanipal to have mercy on him. The Assyrian king appointed him “king of Arabia” instead of Iata' the son of Haza'el. At the same time, the defeated Iata' fled to king Natnu of the Nabaiati (or Nebayot, Nabajoth or Nabataeans as we know them today), but someone betrayed him and sent him back to Nineveh where Ashurbanipal severely punished him. (Dumbrell, 1970, page 207)

This is an interesting story, for it seems to demonstrate that while all this fighting was going on, the incense trade continued in peace. When Iata fled to the king of the Nabataeans, they sent him back to Nineveh, presumably to appease their trade partners the Assyrians. This seems to indicate that the Nabataeans were already deeply involved in the incense trade at this time.

Ammuladi succeeded Iata' as King of Qedar, possibly with an endorsement from Iata's wife, Adia. (Eph'al, 1982, and Dumbrell, 1970, pages 206-207). Ammuladi then rebelled against Assyria and attacked some of her vassal states in the west. The Qedarites were defeated by the king of Moab, and Ammuladi along with the wife of Iata', son of Haza'el, were taken to Nineveh.

At this point, the Qedarite leadership passed to Uate', son of Birdada, a nephew of Iata'. This Uate' managed to gather all the Arabs together, including Abiate' who forsook his allegiance to Ashurbanipal, and also Natnu, king of the Nebayot (Nabataeans). These joint Arab forces camped somewhere in the Palmyra (Tadmor) area. The Assyrian army crossed the Tigris and Euphrates rivers at highest flood, and occupied all the areas that had water, including the local wells. In doing this they cut off the Arabs, their camels and their cattle from water supplies. The Assyrians then fought against the Arabs in the Hauran area south of Damascus. They captured first Abiate' and then Uate' punishing them harshly. The only one who escaped was Natnu, the king of the Nebayot. Later on, however, Natnu was deposed by the Assyrians, and his son Nuhuru was set on his throne in his place. After this decisive battle, the Qedarites who led the Arab confederation in the north are not mentioned

### THE TRIBE OF QEDAR

The Qedarite tribe seems to have been the main military power of the sons of Ishmael. Isaiah speaks of Qedar's "glory and her gifted archers." (Isaiah 21:16-17) Ezekiel 27:21 associates Arabia with all of the princes of Qedar suggesting a confederation under their leadership.

The Qedarites are also found in the records of the annals of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and his son Ashurbanipal. (681-627 BC) (Gallagher, 1999, page 53, note 118, pg 56). Spanning the 8th and 7th centuries BC, there are lists of Qedarite queens and kings who paid Assyrian monarchs tributes, as well as those who revolted and were defeated in battle. The name Qedar is found in Assyrian in 8th century BC and later in Aramaic in 6th century BC as well as in the Mareshah Onomasticon. (Eshel, 2007, pages 148-149)

The Qedarites also appear briefly in the writings of classical Greek and Roman historians such as Herodotus, Pliny the Elder, and Diodorus. It is interesting to observe that Herodotus (485-425 BC) notes their presence in northern Sinai near the Egyptian border where they may have been engaged by the Persians to keep that border secure as well as help control the city of Gaza. (Eshel, 2007, pages 148-149) This would have placed them in the same general area as the Nabataeans at that time.

Nehemiah's opponent "Geshem the Arab" has been identified as one of the kings of Qedar from the mid-fifth century BC based on a number of north Arabian inscriptions. (Kitchen, 1994, page 169)

Regarding their religion, Assyrian inscriptions tell us that Sennacherib captured several Arabian deities in the Qedarite city of Dumah. The chief

again in Assyrian records. However, they do appear during the beginning of the Babylonian period.

This period of history is paralleled in Isaiah 21:11-21. Qedar's glory is fading (verse 16), the caravans of the Dedanites have to leave the main trade routes and flee to the thickets of the wilderness because the invading army is using the incense road, (verse 13) and the inhabitants of Tayma are called to meet the wandering Dedanites with water and food since they are fleeing from "the sword and bended bows." (verses 14-15) In this oracle, the Lord decrees that the glory of Qedar will be soon reduced. (It seems that Qedar extended to the region of Dedan and Tayma.) (Isaiah 21:13-17) This likely refers to Sargon's conquest against north Arabia.

As we mentioned, the Assyrian records tell us that King Ashurbanipal (668-663 BC) was fighting with the "Nabaeateans of Arabia." Then in 703 BC

deity was Atarsamain, or the morning star of heaven (the counterpart of Mesopotamian Ishtar). (Hoyland, 2001, page 68) The tribal group led by the Qedarites was known as "the confederation of Atarsamain, and as already mentioned, their cult was led by a series of queen-priestesses in Dumah. The rest of their pantheon of gods consisted of Dai, Nuhai (Nuhay), Ruldai (Ruda), Abirillu, and Atarquruma. Rock graffiti in northern Arabia reveals that Ruda was known as the evening star. Nuhay was the sun-god which they worshiped in addition to Atarsamain "the morning star." In the fifth century BC, Herodotus identified two deities worshiped among the Arabs as a fertility god called Orotalt (perhaps Ruda, as identified by Macdonald (Macdonald, 1995, page 1360), and a sky goddess known as Allat. (Herodotus III, 3)

The Qedarites are mentioned in a number of places in the Bible, and are always referred to as nomads:

Psalm 120:5 This psalm is a cry of distress, as the writer has fled and lives in a place called Meshech in the tents of the Qedarites.

Isaiah 42:11 Qedar is mentioned in a song of praise.

Jeremiah 2:10 The children of Israel are advised to check with Qedar and see if it is an ordinary thing for a people to forsake their gods and turn to others.

Jeremiah 49:28 This passage presents us with a prophecy against Arabia (Hazor and Qedar) foretelling that Nebuchadnezzar, a king of Babylon, will destroy them.

Ezekiel 27:21 In this lament over the city of Tyre, it is mentioned that Arabia and the princes of Qedar traded lambs, rams, and goats with Tyre.

a group of Chaldeans and neighboring tribes rebelled against Sennacherib the Assyrian ruler. The ancient records of Tiglath Pileser III list the Hagaranu among the rebels (possibly the descendants of Hagar, the mother of Ishmael), the Nabatu (very possibly the descendants of Nebayoth) and the Qedarites (descendants of Ishmael's second son). According to the records, these tribes fled from Assyria into the Arabian Desert and could not be conquered.

The Assyrian kingdom eventually divided into two as two brothers began to rule, one being the King of Babylonia and the other the King of Assyria. In 652 BC conflict broke out between these two brothers, and in support of the Babylonian king the Qedarites invaded western Assyria, were defeated, and fled to Natnu the leader of the Nabayat for safety (As described in the records of Esarhaddon). Later the Qedarites and the Nabayat attacked the western borders of Assyria but were defeated. After their defeat, Natnu's son Nuhuru was declared the leader of the Nabatu.

As the Assyrian Empire declined, the Babylonians rose to power. With **Nebuchadnezzar** in power, Syria and Palestine were under a new military threat. Having failed in a military attempt against Egypt in 601 BC, Nebuchadnezzar retreated to his land and focused on rebuilding his power. (Wiseman, 1956)

Nebuchadnezzar's attack on the Qedarites is described in two sources. First it appears in the Chaldaean chronicles, and second it is described in Jeremiah's prophecies against the nations. (49:28-33) The Chaldaean chronicles note:

*"In the sixth year in the month of Kislev, the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to the Hatti-land (this term usually encompasses all of Syria and Palestine). From the Hatti-land he sent out his companies and scouring the desert they took much plunder from the Arabs, their possessions, animals and gods. In the month of Adar, the king returned to his own land."*

This places the attacks in December 599 BC. It is interesting to notice that King Nebuchadnezzar himself led the battle. (Eph'al, 1982 page 172)

Jeremiah puts it this way: *"Concerning Qedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon smote. Thus saith the Lord. Rise, come up against Qedar, destroy the sons of the east. Their tents and their flocks shall be taken. Their tent curtains and all their goods and their camels shall be borne away from them. They shall proclaim unto them: Terror on every side. Flee, wander far away. Dwell in the depths of caves. O inhabitants of Hazor, declares the Lord, for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon has plotted against you. He has devised a purpose against you. Rise up, advance against a nation at the east that dwells securely, declares the Lord, that has not gates, that has no bars, that dwells alone. Their camels shall become plunder, their herds of cattle a spoil. I will scatter to the wind*

*those who crop their hair and I will bring their disaster from every side. Hazor will become a haunt of jackals, a desolate place forever. No one will live there, no man will sojourn there.*" (Jeremiah 49:28-33)

This attack is also predicted in Jeremiah 25:15-38. In this oracle, the cup of wrath is first given to Judah, then it is extended to "all the kings of the land of Uz, Dedan, Tema, Buz and all who have shaven temples, all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed peoples that live in the desert." It is understood by historians that Nebuchadnezzar physically took the defeated nations into captivity and moved them from place to place. Because of this, many nations ceased to exist and the locations of others became lost or confused after this time.

Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, King **Nabonidus** (555-539 BC) continued the same campaign against the Arabs of northern Arabia. (Josephus Antiquities 10.9.7, Ezekiel 25:1-11) He also annihilated both the kingdoms of Ammon and Moab, and probably deported their inhabitants. (Dumbrell, 1971, page 40)

Around 552 BC, King Nabonidus marched towards the city of Tayma. (Gadd, 1958, page 79-89) (Winnett, Reed, Milik, & Starcky, 1970, page 88) (Dougherty, 1932) It is thought by some historians that he had a desire to rebuild the famous temple of the moon-god Din in Harran, a desire that was greatly opposed by his subjects and priests in Babylon. Eventually the king was forced to withdraw to the Hijaz after appointing his son Belshazzar as vice-regent in Babylon.

Nabonidus then conquered Tayma, destroyed the city, killed the king, and slaughtered all the flocks. Many inhabitants starved and others were killed. Then, according to the Harran inscriptions, Nabonidus rebuilt the city, repopulated it and built a palace for himself, declaring Tayma as his royal residence. Winnett says that somewhere beneath the sands which now cover the site of Tayma lies the palace of Nabonidus, the father of biblical Belshazzar. (Daniel 7:1) (Winnett, Reed, Milik, & Starcky, 1970, page 89)

According to the History of al Ṭabarī (Ṭabarī, Vol. 4, pg 128-137, sections 745 – 756, who quotes Ḥishām ibn Muḥammad) Nebuchadnezzar settled many northern Arabs in a city in Iraq known as al-Ḥīra, and also in Anbār, another city farther north. Ṭabarī tells of the rebellion of Ḥīra and Anbār against the Babylonians, specifically mentioning the children of Ishmael and also those of Ma'āḍ ibn Adnān. These tribes eventually settled in the low lying areas of the Arabian Gulf. This area is called al-Tihāmah and likely refers to the marshy Euphrates delta and the coast extending as far as al-Baḥrain.

It should be noted here that there has been some debate whether Ma'ad ibn Adnān should be included in Ishmael's descendants or if his is a separate line.

It seems that Nabonidus established colonies in the major trade stations which were located on the incense road in the district of the Hijaz. One of his inscriptions reads "*I hired myself afar from my city Babylon on the road to Tema', Dedan, Fadak, Khaybar, Yadi', as far as Yathrib (Medina). Ten years I went about amongst them and to my city of Babylon I went not in.*" (Gadd, 1958, page 59)

After Nabonidus completely conquered the incense trade route, the kings of Egypt, the city of the Medes, the land of the Arabs and all the kings who were hostile, he sent messengers for peace and good relationships to Arabia. It seems that incense was so important to these nations at this time that Nabonidus' control of the incense trade placed many of these nations at his mercy.

Eventually and for unknown reasons (possibly linked to the dangerous movements of Cyrus' army in the region) Nabonidus left Tayma in the thirteenth year of his reign (542). Babylon fell to the Persian leader **Cyrus** in the year 539 BC, and the Babylonian rule was replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire.

The Greek historian Herodotus gives us information from the middle of the fifth century BC. He claims that the Arabians' western boundary was the Nile River and that they were on good terms with the Persian Empire. (Herodotus II, 8, 12, 15, 19; III 4-9)

Herodotus tells how **Cambyases**, while on his way to invade Egypt (525 BC) approached a king of the Arabs asking for safe conduct and water supply. These Arabs are the ones that inhabited the area from Cadytis (Gaza) to the city of Ienysus (al-'Arish). (Herodotus III 4-9) The Arabian king then filled camel skins with water and loaded them onto his camels. He drove them into the desert and waited for Cambyases' army to arrive. (Graf, 1990) It seems that this Arabian gesture was helpful in making the Persian king pledge peaceful relationships with the Arabs.

As a result of this privileged situation, the Arabs were listed among the very few people on whom tribute was not laid. (Herodotus III 91) Instead they rendered gifts as a pledge of loyalty to the Persian king. The yearly gift brought by the Arabs amounted to a thousand talents (around 30 tons) weight of frankincense.

Some Achaemenid royal inscriptions refer to the subjection of the Arabs (see Graf) and **Xenophon** speaks about the only known conquest against the Arabs in which Cyrus the Great defeated king Aragodus. (Xenophon, Cyrop, I,1.4;II 1:5, IV 2.31; VII 4.16 and 5:14) Eph'al suggests that the Persians

appointed “the king of the Arabs” in the Sinai coastal region as a customs officer, responsible for collecting customs duties from the trans-Mediterranean Arabian incense trade, and paying a huge amount of frankincense in return, around 30 tons per year as we mentioned earlier. (Eph’al, 1982, page 209) This view was then challenged by Graf, who pointed out that Herodotus makes it plain that the Arabs enjoyed a special relationship without any allusion to the Persians using them as overseers, and secondly, the recently discovered statue of Darius from the temple of Atum in Heliopolis yields a list of subject people.

There is some evidence that the Arabians of Herodotus are to be associated with the Qedarites. An Aramaic inscription discovered on a silver bowl at Tell el-Maskuta in Egypt and dated at the end of the fifth century BC refers to Qaynu son of Gashmu, king of Qedar, as making an offering to the deity Han-’Ilāt. (Dumbrell, 1971, page 33-44) “Han” stands as the determinative prefix of ’Ilāt, which is the feminine form of “il”. This makes Han’Illāt into ’Al, ’Ilahat in Arabic which is contracted into “Allāt” meaning “the goddess.” (Milik, 1982, pages 261-265)

Drumbell identified Gashmu father of Qaynu with biblical Geshem that opposed Nehemiah’s rebuilding work. (Nehemiah 2:19. 4:7) Albright identified Nehemiah’s opponent as the Gashem ben Shahr of the Lihyantie inscription JS 349, found in Dedan. (Albright, 1953, pg 6) In view of the fact that the name g-sh-m was common in Arabia, some scholars are hesitant to identify Geshem the Arab with anyone. If Geshem was the Lihyanite and was in Egypt and Judeah, then the Qedarite influence was indeed very extensive.

In the Bible, the tribes of Qedar and Nebayot were renowned for sheep raising. (Isaiah 60:7) Their names are frequently found together in Assyrian records. After Xenophon (around 400 BC), there is no mention of north Arabians in recorded history until the year 312 BC when Diodorus makes the first known reference to the Nabataean Arabs as a distinctive people. (Diodorus XIX 94.5) From then on, the Nabataeans manage to become the name used to describe anyone of north Arabian stock in classical literature. Nabajoth is specifically mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus, who identified the Nabataeans of his time with Ishmael’s eldest son. He claimed that the Nabataeans lived through the whole country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, and referred to this area as “Nabatene” or the area that the Nabataeans ranged in. Josephus goes on to say that it was the Nabataeans who conferred their names on the Arabian nations. (Jewish Antiquities I.22,1) Josephus lived and wrote during the time that the Nabataeans were neighbors to the Jews, and supposedly, he obtained his information directly from the Nabataeans themselves.



Some historians believe that the Nabataeans were simply a north Arabian tribe heavily influenced by Aramaic culture. (Graf, 1990, pages 45-75) Nabataean inscriptions, discovered mostly by Jaussen and Savignac, reveal that Aramaic was the language used by the Nabataeans, but only for commercial and official purposes. (Graf, 1992)

Since most Near Eastern people spoke more than one language, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Nabataeans were fluent in several languages. It seems that their own language was an early form of Arabic. Graf calls it Aramaic-Arabic. In fact, J. Cantineau (Cantineau, 1934-1935) has established the prominence of Arabic influence on Nabataean names with a study of forty Nabataean names. Twenty-one of these names were definitely Arabic, and of the remaining nineteen, only two had a possibility of being from Aramaic origin, seven having doubtful readings and ten having a high likelihood of being Arabic as well. Cantineau therefore doubted that Aramaic had ever been a daily spoken language among the Nabataeans.

Diodorus himself, relying on the eyewitness account of Hieronymus of Cardia, assumed that the Nabataeans were Arabs uninfluenced by the nations around them. (Diodorus II.48.4-5) He says that *"they never at any time accept a man of another country as their over-lord and continue to maintain their liberty unimpaired. Consequently, neither the Assyrians of old, nor the kings of the Medes and the Persians, nor yet those of the Macedonians have been able to enslave them and although they led many great forces against them they never brought their attempts to a successful conclusion."*

On the religious side, the Nabataeans worshiped many of the north and central Arabian deities with the exception of Ba'l Shamin, lord of the heavens. This was an Aramaic god, normally associated with the temple Si, situated north of Jebal el-Druz in southern Syria.

The 2nd Century Book of Jubilee tells us: *"And he (Abraham) gave to Ishmael and to his sons and to the sons of Keturah, gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, and he gave everything to Isaac his son. And Ishmael and his sons, and the sons of Keturah and their sons went together and dwelt in Paran to the entering of Babylon in all the land which is towards the East, facing the desert. And these mingled with each other, and their name was called Arabs and Ishmaelite."*

Josephus lists the names of different Ishmaelite tribes and concludes that *"these inhabit all the country from Euphrates to the Red Sea and call it Nabatene. They are an Arabian nation and name their tribes from these, because of their own virtue and because of the dignity of Abraham their father."* (Josephus, Antiquities I 12.4)



The Nabataeans surface again, this time as “Nabatu” in the Zenon Papyri which date from 259 BC. They mention that the Nabatu were trading Gerrhean and Minaean frankincense and transporting these to Gaza and Syria at that time. They transported their goods through the Kedarite centers of northern Arabia, namely Jawf and Tayma. Early Nabataean pottery has also been found in locations on the Persian Gulf, along the coasts of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. (Tuwayr, Zubayda, Thaj, and Ayn Jawan) There are also ancient references to the Nabatu living along the western edges of the Arabian Peninsula and in the Sinai. These Nabatu were also pirates who sailed the Red Sea plundering trading vessels. (Diodorus III 43.4) Later they established bases in a number of seaports, including the port city of Aila (modern day 'Aqaba), which is only some 120 km from present day Petra.

It seems that by the end of the first millennium BC the Nabataeans were representative of the Children of Ishmael. They moved into the land of Edom, after the Edomites moved into the land of Judah. Later, Antigonous the One-Eyed launched two attacks against the Nabataeans in 312 BC, but failed. Soon after this time, the Nabataeans came into their own and established their kingdom.

It is interesting to note that many of the early tribes in northern Arabia did not survive the upheaval that the Babylonians created as they conquered, divided, exiled and enslaved whole populations. The only tribe in Northern Arabia that seems to emerge unscathed is that of the Nabataeans whose name was eventually applied to all of the Arabs of North Arabia. (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities I.22, 1)

## Southern Arabia

For most of the world, southern Arabia is an unknown. For centuries it was closed to the outside world. When it started to open up in the 1970's the whole area was rife with internal strife. Now, more than forty years later, southern Arabia is still a troubled land.

Few outsiders understand the problems that have afflicted Yemen and the mountain people in neighboring Oman. This is because for many of us, our worldview has been conditioned by centuries of history where we think in terms of “nations and states” rather than tribes, bloodlines and blood feuds.

When I first visited North Yemen as it was called in 1984, it was an opportunity to see feudal society in operation. At that time the northern city of Sa'ada was almost completely contained behind city walls. The gates were opened in the morning and closed for the night. The tribes of the north were

always in contention with one another, vying for position before the national council. When we left Yemen in 1987 after several years of exploring the country, I was beginning to come to grips with the forces that have molded the history of this remote part of Arabia for centuries.

When we think of southern Arabia in antiquity, I believe it is helpful to consider the same tribal mindset as being the background and driving force behind its history. Southern Arabia, or Yemen as it is known today (this area would also have included the very south-western part of Oman) has always been the home of a variety of distinct tribal groups. In antiquity these tribes competed for resources, trade, and control.

The topography of southern Arabia has a lot to do with the formation of its history. Southern Arabia is mountainous. The coastal plains are narrow and unbearably hot and humid. The mountain ranges of the interior offer a cooler, greener environment, but water resources must be carefully managed, for just beyond the mountain range is the Empty Quarter of Arabia, a vast uncharted area of shifting sand dunes where only the hardest of nomads might venture.

In the 1980's, there were few roads through Yemen's mountains. Many of the valleys were remote and could only be accessed by foot. Lone houses were rare for they were exposed to attack. Usually people lived in villages with the houses joined together around a common courtyard, their backs only having a few windows on the very top floors. Often the toilets were on the second or third floor in a curtained balcony that allowed a breeze to blow through, and refuse to drop onto a hill behind the house. Many of these dung hills were also planted with prickly pear and other cacti to discourage anyone from approaching the village from any direction except the front entrance.

Larger cities were walled, offering protection to those who lived inside. Rugged mountain ranges provided natural borders and barriers between the various tribal groupings. Despite the appearance of continual war, (most Yemenis went around fully armed with knives and guns) there was a surprising lack of war. The knives and guns were a show of force and usually only used for inter-tribal disputes. To my amazement, located among the Yemeni tribes were small groups of Jewish and even Christian Yemenis. While they looked like Yemenis, talked like Yemenis and lived like Yemenis, these groups had no mosques in their villages but quietly held to their ancient faiths. Strife, when it reared its head, was usually not about religion, or even control of more land and resources. Rather, it was inter-tribal and related to the honor of the tribe, or a perceived shame or dishonor done to them. Each tribe also had issues with the central government, feeling that they were not receiving their fair share of the benefits that were coming from the capital city. In many ways, the most

pertinent cause for strife was a feeling of jealousy or injustice. (Injustice here used more in terms of honor and shame rather than right and wrong)

So what does this have to do with Southern Arabia in antiquity? I believe that the people's worldview in southern Arabia hasn't changed much over the last several millennia. All through its history, various tribal grouping have vied with each other. This struggle wasn't always expressed in the form of readily invading others and using military might to subdue them. Rather, it was a struggle for trade, finances and status.

The history of Southern Arabia is filled with names of various groups. From the outside, we attach western ideas of kingdoms, kings and empires. Since so much of what we know about ancient Arabia comes from Greek and Roman writings, it is inevitable that Greek and Roman worldview has affected the perception of Arabia that has come down to us.

From the very earliest of time, southern Arabia has been known as the land of incense. Frankincense and myrrh, the main components of the incense trade, were obtained from trees located on the dry mountain slopes that faced the Empty Quarter. This unique environment was home to a variety of aromatic trees and plants. (Later, incense was also obtained from East Africa) The people in these regions tapped the incense trees for their sap. This sap was then dried in the hot sun and the resulting hard resin was broken up and prepared for sale. Originally, the tribes of southern Arabia transported this incense to the northern kingdoms in Mesopotamia, the Levant and Egypt.

As we have already seen in this chapter, for many centuries the ancient records of the northern kingdoms speak of Minean, Gerrean and Sabea merchants selling their wares. There are also some scattered references to the tribes of northern Arabia being involved in this trade. These references begin



to fade from the historical record around 400 BC, and eventually by 200 BC the tribes of northern Arabia and specifically the Nabataeans appear to have dominated the incense trade routes. The kingdoms of southern Arabia still produced incense, but they seemed content to sell it in the local markets to Nabataean merchants who then did all of the transporting.

There are several things that may have contributed to this change in the incense business. First, the kingdoms of Minea and Saba had a reputation for being wealthy. This means they would have had an increasingly more difficult time getting a top price for their goods. Second, as wealthy merchants, every local ruler who controlled a watering spot or grazing spot would have wanted to tax the rich merchants from southern Arabia as they passed through. Lastly, the merchants of South Arabia would have had to sell their goods at whatever the market would pay at the time they arrived in Mesopotamia or Egypt. They did not have the means to store their goods and later sell when demand was high.

By Roman times the incense market had grown to 3000 tons each year. (van Beek, 1958, pages 141-152) This massive amount of incense would be dumped on the market all at one time. Warehouses would have been full of incense, and the local merchants buying the incense could have squeezed the foreign camel caravans to accept lower prices. These caravans would have had little recourse but to sell, as they wanted to return home to their families.

The Nabataeans (the people of Thamud as we have previously established) were in a position to dominate the incense trade. As we have already mentioned, they developed several innovations that gave them a considerable edge. First, they had a network of local Nabataean merchants who could buy and store goods and slowly release them onto the market. Second, they developed desert water collection systems that allowed them to by-pass wells and oases where local tribesmen demanded taxes. Because they were traveling across the barren deserts, they also developed navigation by stars to help them go where others would become hopelessly lost. (See chapter 21)

And so it seems that the Nabataeans managed to take over the incense trade and totally monopolize it for several centuries. It was only with the rapid spread of Christianity that the use of incense declined to the place where it was almost unwanted.

In order for the Nabataeans to maintain premium profits, they had to keep their customers, Egypt, Greece, and Rome from contacting their sources, the Minaeans, Sabaeans and the Himyarites in southern Arabia, as well as the suppliers of spices and other exotic goods from India, Ceylon and China. As long as they kept their sources a secret, or at least shrouded by stories and leg-

ends, they could incur maximum profits. If they paid the kingdoms of southern Arabia too much, then these kingdoms would grow in size and power, and would eventually start selling directly to the kingdoms on the Mediterranean again. If they paid too little, these same kingdoms might one day hear of the exorbitant prices that the Nabataeans were obtaining for their products in Europe, and cut them out of their role as middlemen. As a result, the Nabataeans played a very careful role, taking in tremendous profits while being very secretive about their trade and trade practices.

The famed frankincense route was one of the most ancient international trade routes leading from Southern Arabia to Gaza in Palestine. It ran along an inland trail roughly parallel to the Red Sea and covered a total distance of almost 3,400 km. There was not a temple or wealthy home in Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Jerusalem, or Rome which did not require these precious resins to please their gods. It seemed everyone was prepared to pay whatever it took in order to obtain this precious commodity. Thus, it was vital that the Nabataeans not only have good relationships with these south Arabian kingdoms; it was vital that they discreetly guide and influence these kingdoms without seeming to meddle directly in their politics.

Today, archaeologists are just beginning to fit the pieces of history together that give us an understanding of the people of southern Arabia. This is a very difficult task, for although they can read the writings of these people, few things link them to events mentioned in other civilizations due to their isolation. For several centuries the Nabataeans were their principle link to the outside world, and the Nabataeans did an excellent job in keeping them as isolated as possible.



*Right: (Yemen)  
Walking around  
Sa'ada's city walls.*

## The Sabaeans

The earliest major kingdom we know of in south Arabia is that of Saba (Sheba) with its capital city, Ma'rib. This city was built on the edge of the desert in the dry delta of Wadi Adana. There is little rainfall in this area, but twice a year the wadi fills with water from the biannual rains that occur higher up in the mountains. The water in the wadi was used to irrigate the rainless, arid area around the wadi making cultivation possible. Examination of the sediments found around Ma'rib has shown that irrigation in this region goes back to the third millennium BC. (Kuhna, 2010, pages 1305-1310)

Agriculture in this dry area was difficult and costly to say the least. It required the power to control and exploit the seasonal rain-floods with the aid of complex irrigation systems. Again and again these installations were threatened by unusually strong floods. Canals and dams had to be maintained in good working order or the whole thing would fail. Finally, one had to reckon with periods of drought when rain would not come for several years at a time.

Ma'rib's position, however, had less to do with access to water, and more to do with incense. The city held a commanding position on the inland caravan route that ran from the incense producing areas along the desert side of the mountains to the Mediterranean. This route wound its way along a chain of watering places that followed a long, thin line with the harsh mountains on one side and the even harsher desert on the other.

The caravan route was as much dependant on geography as it was on political situations and trade connections. In order to make their way from the main centers of production in eastern Yemen to the Mediterranean Sea far to the north, camel caravans had to avoid the mountains with their difficult passes and warring tribesmen who liked nothing better than to demand taxes from passing caravans. At the same time, they had to find enough water and food for the men and beasts in the caravan. There was really only one trail in South Arabia which fulfilled all these requirements. It passed from Shawl, the capital of the Hadramaut, through the desert following the Yemenite mountain ridge to Timna, the capital of Qataban. From there, it passed via Ma'rib, the capital of Saba, to Baraqish, and on past Jebal al-Lawdh to distant Najrān, and from there north to Petra and finally Gaza on the Mediterranean Sea.

Being completely level, the track on the edge of the desert offered no natural obstacles. Artificial water collection systems safeguarded water and food supplies for the caravans. It is therefore not surprising that the ancient capitals along this trail were situated at the points where the most important valleys entered the desert plains on the interior.

Pliny the Elder recorded the distance between Timna (the capital of Qa-

taban) and Gaza at the northern end of the frankincense route as 2,437,500 steps, or 62 days by camel. He was particularly impressed by the prices of south Arabian goods and complained bitterly about Greece's trade deficit (100 million sesterces). Consequently, the Romans looked upon the riches of southern Arabia with envy. (Pliny XII, chapter XIII and Pliny XII.84)

As money became available through the sale of incense, the Sabaeans began to erect large temples and fortified towns. At the same time (6th century BC) inscriptions appeared, the oldest of these referring to religious rites or construction projects. These inscriptions are in Sabaean characters which later became widespread, extending even to Ethiopia. Some experts feel that the Sabaean characters may have been derived from alphabets existing in Southern Mesopotamia. (Audouin, Berton, & Robin, 2001) The first mention of a caravan on the so called frankincense route is found in the Old Testament. The story in I Kings 10:1-13 tells us of a visit of the legendary Queen of Sheba to King Solomon (about 970 - 930 BC). This report suggests that trade relations were being established or expanded between these two kingdoms. It is generally assumed that Sheba was Saba in Southern Yemen, although some have argued that it could have existed in Ethiopia. Three Assyrian texts from the 8th and 7th centuries BC mention tributes or presents from Saba. These lists of goods include incense and precious stones.

The texts also mention the names of two rulers, pointing to this being a reference to the south Arabian Sabaeans; not, as some have suggested, to a north Arabian tribe by the same name. Saba lay outside the reach of the Assyrian armies; therefore the tributes cannot have been an expression of political submission. It is much more likely that they were trade tariffs or gifts which were intended to facilitate smooth trading. Thus the passage constitutes the first, if indirect, reference to Sabaean trade with the north. Later, a Sabaean named Itamra, who is identified as a representative of the Sabaean ruler Yitea Amar, is mentioned in the inscriptions of the Assyrian king Sargon II dating from 715 BC as one of those who brought tribute. This is most probably due to the fact that during this time the Assyrians had gained control of the port of Gaza, the point where the frankincense route reached the Mediterranean. Thirty years later around 685 BC, the Sabaean ruler Karibilu sent gifts to the Assyrian king Sennacherib when the foundation stone for the Bit Akitu temple was laid outside of the ancient Sumerian city of Uruk (Biblical Erech). (Muller, 2001)

### **The Ma'rib Dam**

As the Sabaean kingdom developed, they built a huge earth-filled dam in the second half of the 6th century BC to retain some of the water that



came down the wadi from seasonal rains in the mountains. From the lake that was created behind the dam, they developed a splendid irrigation system that watered about 25,000 acres. With this agricultural base established, Saba extended its territory to the coast of the Red Sea, and then moved on by establishing colonies across the sea in Abyssinia, East Africa. This is evidenced by the Sabeen inscriptions found there. (Muller, 2001)

During the years that I lived in Yemen, I had the opportunity to visit the ruins of the quarter mile-long Ma'rib Dam. I also viewed the new modern dam as it was being built, and the huge water reservoir that filled up behind the dam. As the ancient reservoir filled with water, hundreds of old dry wells and water canals scattered through the desert below the dam filled with water once again. The ancient farmlands that had lain deserted for centuries were again usable.

### **The Minaean Kingdom**

Over time, various groups splintered off from the Sabeen Kingdom. Ma'in was originally a Sabeen territory, but towards the end of the 5th century BC it gradually began to sever its ties with Saba, becoming the Minean Kingdom. For more than a century it enjoyed a period of tremendous economic prosperity. During this period, the Minaean Kingdom controlled most of the incense trade routes in southern Arabia. In order to control and protect this route, the Minaeans established a colony far out in the northwest of Arabia in the oasis of Dedan. (Muller, 2001) The confrontation between Saba and Ma'in for control of the frankincense route is illustrated by an inscription that describes a battle



*Above: Remains of the Ma'rib Dam*



between the Medes and Egypt which is probably a reference to the subjugation of Egypt by Artaxerxes III Okhos in 343 BC. In this inscription, the two leaders of the Minaean community of Dedan express their gratitude for the fact that their property had been saved from Sabeian attacks on the caravan route between Ma'in and Najrān. Further proof of the extent of the Minaean influence is reflected in their inscriptions which refer to Gaza, Egypt, Ionia, Sidon in Phoenicia, Ammon, Moab, Yathrib (later known as al-Medina) and other places. Along with this, an epitaph on a sarcophagus found in Egypt recounts that a Minaean delivered perfumes to an Egyptian temple. Also, on the Greek island of Delos with its temples dedicated to Apollo and Artemis, two Minaeans erected an altar to their native god Wadd, and in the early Greek and Roman world historians spoke of "Minaean frankincense" because it was mainly the Minaeans who produced and marketed incense at this early time.

Around 400 BC, Ma'in and Qataban broke free of the Sabeian yoke and expanded their territories considerably. At the height of their power in the third and second centuries BC, Qataban extended its power as far as the Indian Ocean in the south and to within a day's journey of the Sabeian capital of Ma'rib in the north. (Muller, 2001) As the other ancient kingdoms of Southern Arabia grew in strength, it became urgent for the Sabeians, seeing themselves hemmed in, to fortify Ma'rib, their eastern-most base. They also managed to bring the routes leading into the Yemenite highlands more and more under their control. Some South Arabian inscriptions mention the incense trade as is illustrated in an inscription (about 4th/3rd century BC) found on a straight section of the city wall of Baraqish. (Audouin, Berton, & Robin, 2001) It runs something like this: "

*Amṣiḍāṭiq ... and the leaders of caravans, and the Minaean caravans who had set off in order to trade with Egypt, Syria and beyond the river... at the time when (the gods) Athtar, Dhū-Q'abd, Wadd and Nakrah protected them from the attacks which Saba and Khawlan had planned against them, their property and their animals, when they were on their way between Ma'in and Najrān. And in the war which was raging between north and south. And at the time when (the gods) Athtar Dhū-Q'abd, Wadd and Nakrah protected them and their property when they found themselves in the heart of Egypt during the war between the Medes and the Egyptians. Athtar Dhū-Q'abd guaranteed to them and their property peace and indemnity until they returned to their town Qarnaw."*

## The Hadramaut

Sabeian inscriptions suggest that the Hadramaut was an ally or vassal of the mighty Sabeian Empire up to the 4th century BC, when it became an in-

dependent kingdom and acquired tremendous economic significance because of its possession of Dhofar, the area in the east where much frankincense grew. A rock inscription at al-Uqla near Shabwa, where the kings of Hadramaut annually re-enacted the coronation ritual, tells of delegations from Palmyra, Chaldea, and India about 235 AD, whom the ruler apparently invited to attend this important event. (Clapp, 2002, pg 157)

It is hard to imagine that starting well before the birth of Christ, the inhabitants of southern Arabia erected buildings, some of which reached eight stories high. When built side by side, ancient towns like that of Shibam, Yishbum, and Ṣan'ā had streets of high-rise buildings. A four-line inscription in the Museum of Ṣan'ā, tells of the buildings in the Sabean Himyaritic region that were made of stone.

*"Muhabayyih Atkan, son of Manakhum, and Akhal and Bahil and Halilum, of the Musawwilum (clan) have built and founded and improved and completed their stone house Ahdathan from the floor up to a level of six ceilings with six stories, and they have added two (further) stories and all the store rooms and its terrace and the stone structure of Dhū-kahnal."* For "story" the Sabean text uses the word "saqf", which is the term still used in Ṣan'ā today.

For centuries, these four kingdoms, Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, and Hadramaut, were of more or less equal strength. They rivalled one another for control of Southern Arabia, but in the last quarter of the 2nd century BC, a shift of power took place. Around 250 BC, the Minaean Empire and parts of western Qataban were conquered by Saba while Radman, formerly a province of Qataban, managed to gain independence and to rob Qataban of some of its southern territories. (Simpson, Barrett, & 'Abdullah, 2002)

## The Himyarites

The Himyarite Empire was founded in 115 BC in the corner of the Arabian Peninsula at a place known as Bab-el-Mandeb. Gradually it expanded its control and slowly annexed all the surrounding Southern Arabian states. Saba was conquered in 25 BC after the Roman army, guided by Nabataeans, attacked and weakened Saba. (Gibson, 2003, page 42) Qataban fell to the Himyarites in 50 AD, and Hadramaut followed in 100 AD. From that time on, the Himyarite Empire was Arabia's dominant state until the sixth century AD. Like other early Arab states, the Himyarites made a living by selling frankincense and myrrh to the rest of the civilized world. This was such a lucrative business that the Romans called the Himyarite Kingdom "Arabia Felix" meaning Happy Arabia.

To date, the first mention of Himyar in Southern Arabia occurs in a Hadr-



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*Above: One of the outstanding features of the Hadramaut was the ability of their builders to construct high-rise buildings from mud. Even today, many mud houses in Hadramaut villages reach a height of eight to nine stories.*

amite inscription dating from the beginning of the 1st century AD which reports the building of the wall at Qalat, the later Libna, to protect Hadramaut from the Himyars in the south who had apparently already occupied large stretches of the coast. (Muller, 2001) The Himyar city of Zafar was mentioned for the first time as Sapphar in the sixth book of Pliny's Natural History, written during the reign of Emperor Nero (AD 54 - 68). Henceforth Zafar challenged Ma'rib for supremacy, and the Himyar rulers even claimed Saba by designating themselves "Kings of Saba (Sheba) and Du-Raidan," a title which the Sabeian kings residing in Ma'rib also adopted from that time on to stress their own claim of being the sole rulers of Yemen.

In the end, the Nabataean merchants allied themselves with the new Himyarite Empire that lay along the southern coast. The other South Arabian kingdoms did not touch the sea but all had capitals and cities that faced inland towards the incense trail. These kingdoms refused to export incense by boat, and relied totally on camel caravans to carry their goods north. The Himyarites on the other hand, floated their frankincense out to an island where the Nabataean boats collected it and transported it to the markets in the north. According to Agatharchides (130 BC), (Photius, Bibliotheca VII) the Minaeans, Gerrheans, and others would unload their cargoes at an island off the coast so that Nabataean boats could collect it. In other words, he suggests that although the Sabaeans themselves may have confined their maritime activities to crossing the Red Sea, the Nabataeans in the north had already taken to maritime transport by the second century BC. (Agatharchides 87, and cited by Diodorus Siculus Bibliotheca III 42:5 and by Artemidorus in Strabo Geog-

raphy xvi, 4:18, as well as Patricia Crone in her book *Meccan Trade*, page 23) The island in question was probably Tiran. (Woelk, Agatharchedes page 212) The Nabataeans would have transferred the goods from the Sabaeen rafts and leather boats to their own sewn wooden dhows.

As we mentioned earlier, within a few years the Himyarite Empire grew in strength and power, while the other kingdoms struggled and eventually caved in to Himyarite domination. By transporting incense with boats, the Nabataeans gained almost exclusive control of the frankincense trade between Arabia Felix and the Mediterranean. Over the next several centuries the Nabataeans capitalized on this monopoly, raking in incredible profits.

Eventually the Himyarite Kingdom suffered a permanent economic slump because of Christianity's success in the Roman Empire and the resulting decline in the demand for incense. For centuries the Egyptians had embalmed mummies with myrrh, and Greeks & Romans used frankincense for worship in temples and to cover the odor of burning flesh at cremations. Since Christians buried their dead instead of burning or embalming them, the demand for frankincense and myrrh dropped dramatically as Christianity spread in Europe.

### **The final end**

The first record of a breach in the Ma'rib dam is found in an inscription stemming from the reign of Ta'ran Yuhanim and his son Mālikkarib Yuha'min in the second half of the fourth century AD. (Retso, 2003, pg 572) Then in 542 AD, just nine years before an earthquake wreaked destruction in the city of Petra, the Ma'rib dam was breached again.

Around 570 AD, possibly the same year that the prophet Muḥammad was born, the dam finally broke for the last time. This disastrous event, referred to in the 34<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur'ān as "the Flood," caused the desolation of the Ma'rib oasis, and a mass migration took place with people migrating outward. Some of them traveled to Egypt and then eventually settled all across North Africa. At first they were treated as refugees, but later when the Muslim armies rode across North Africa, these immigrants were quick to adopt the new Arab religion, and moved from being refugees to becoming regional rulers, allowing the Islamic armies to move quickly from region to region establishing not only Islam, but also a new form of government.

In the year 570 AD a Yemeni migration led by Abraha, marched north out of Yemen. They brought an elephant with them which later refused to attack the Ka'ba. This year is important in Islamic history and is known as "The Year of the Elephant." (Guillaume, 2006, page 22 - 28)

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE CITY OF MEDINA

The Qur'an mentions the city of Medina in Sūra 9 in a way that is slightly derogatory. In verse 101 Allāh speaks to Muḥammad:

*Among those around you of the wandering Arabs there are hypocrites, and among the towns-people of Al-Madinah (there are some who) persist in hypocrisy whom thou (O Muḥammad) knowest not. We know them, and we shall chastise them twice; then they will be relegated to a painful doom.* (Pickthall)

In verse 120 Allāh continues to speak against Medina, because they and some of the nomads of the area were refusing to work with Muḥammad:

*It is not for the townsfolk of Al-Madinah and for those around them of the wandering Arabs to stay behind the messenger of Allāh and prefer their lives to his life. That is because neither thirst nor toil nor hunger afflicteth them in the way of Allāh, nor step they any step that angereth the disbelievers, nor gain they from the enemy again, but a good deed is recorded for them therefor. Lo! Allāh loseth not the wages of the good.* (Pickthall)

In the ḥadīths, Medina receives little praise, as the Meccans who emigrated there struggled with disease and epidemics. 'Ā'isha, the young wife of Muḥammad relates the following:

*When Allāh's apostle reached Medina, Abū Bakr and Bilal became ill. When Abū Bakr's fever got worse, he would recite (this poetic verse): "Everybody is staying alive with his people, yet death is nearer to him than his shoe laces." And Bilal, when his fever deserted him, would recite: "Would that I could stay overnight in a valley wherein I would be surrounded by Idhkhir and Jalil (kinds of good-smelling grass). Would that one day I could drink the water of the Majanna, and would that*

*(the two mountains) Shama and Tafil would appear to me!" The Prophet said, "O Allāh! Curse Shaiba bin Rabī'a and 'Utba bin Rabī'a and Umaiya bin Khalaf as they turned us out of our land to the land of epidemics." Allāh's apostle then said, "O Allāh! Make us love Medina as we love Mecca or even more than that. O Allāh! Give blessings in our Sa and our Mudd (measures symbolizing food) and make the climate of Medina suitable for us, and divert its fever towards Aljuhfa." 'Ā'isha added: When we reached Medina, it was the most unhealthy of Allāh's lands, and the valley of Bathan (the valley of Medina) used to flow with impure colored water.*  
 Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 3:113

Part of this description of Medina came from its physical attributes. From the outside it looked like a lush green valley. However, its wetlands were a source of sickness as well as livelihood. To the outsider, Medina was a long valley with fields, trees and fortified houses. These houses were designed in such





a way that the workers in the fields around them would be protected by mud walls. In the case of attack, the people could run into the houses and fortify themselves in its tall tower.

In southern Saudi Arabia and northern Yemen, these same types of houses exist to this day. The photo below shows two men mixing mud with their feet. It is then passed to the man on the left who is forming the wall. As can be seen in the background, the houses are built of mud with each layer being about 40 centimeters thick. The new layer will be allowed to dry in the sun for several weeks or even months before another layer is mixed and added on top. Each of the buildings slope inward to allow the walls to support each other.

The photo on the previous page shows an ancient house outside of Medina. These large houses were actually fortresses that provided refuge to the extended family if the area was attacked. Rather than being a large urban city, the area of Medina was actually a valley filled with these fortified houses and surrounded by walled fields and gardens. It was only with the coming of Islam that the city of Medina grew into a city proper.

The original name for Medina was Yathrib. It was an oasis dating as far back as the 6th century BC and is mentioned in the Chronicle of Nabonidus.



*Right: Buildings were constructed of packed mud. Men mix mud and straw with their feet and the master builder forms it into walls. Left: A fortified house near Medina.*

(Grayson, 1975) Although it has a long history, Islamic historians believe that the area was primarily settled by Yemenis trying to escape the Ma'rib Dam Flood. (Ḥafiz, 1987, pg 3) Alī Ḥafiz notes in his book on the history of Medina that down through history Medina has had ninety-five names, among them: Taba, Taiba, al-'Asima, Al-Anṣār, al-Mumina, Dar Al-Sunna, Dar Al-Salām, Dar Al-Faṭḥ, Al-Dira, Al-Ḥasina, That al-Ḥarar, That Al-Nakhil, Akītat Al-Bildan, Al-Barra, Al-Jabira, Dar Al-Īmān, and of course Medinat al-Rasūl. This last name (The City of the Prophet) has been shortened over time to become simply *The City* or *Al-Medina*.

Over time two main groups of people settled in the city of Medina. With the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, many Jewish refugees spread out from the land of Israel to flee Roman domination. These Jewish refugees spread throughout the entire Arabian Peninsula, including many areas of Yemen. Among the areas they settled in was Yathrib. At the time of the Hijra, the Jewish tribal groups in Medina numbered more than twenty. (Ḥafiz, 1987, pg 5) By this we can assume that there were more than 20 distinct Jewish families or large clans.

The second group of refugees were the Yemenis who began arriving in the 2nd century AD when the Ma'rib dam broke the first time. The final and probably largest migration of Yemenis was between 542 and 570 AD, when the Ma'rib dam failed for the final time. The Aus and Khazraj tribes from Yemen settled in the Medina valley and farmed the land. Eventually they united to become one tribe known as the Anṣār, who allied themselves with the Jews to defend the area. Later when trouble broke out between the Jews and the Anṣār, some of the Anṣār who were enamored with Muḥammad's teachings invited him and his followers to come to their city, Medina, to aid them in their struggles against the Jews.

After the Hijra, Medina became the center of Islam. It was here that much of the Qur'ān was revealed, and it was here that Muḥammad and his followers not only subjugated the Jews, but also began to build their fortunes by banditry and plunder. At first they were careful to only attack passing caravans, but eventually they ranged wider and wider until much of central Arabia was under their influence.

Following the death of Muḥammad, the next two caliphs ruled from Medina. Abū Bakr did much to spread Islam within the Arabian Peninsula. His armies marched as far as Iraq and Syria. Omar was the next caliph, and during his reign Islam spread over the entire peninsula, his armies defeating the Persians and Romans and marching into Egypt.

As Medina was the capital of the newly born Islamic state, it was here



that administrative and financial rules were laid down. It was in Medina that Islamic principles and teachings were discussed and taught. Military buildings were built and centers of learning were constructed. The third caliph 'Uthmān continued the spread of Islam by armed force, taking it to Cyprus. 'Uthmān was assassinated, and eventually Mu'āwiyah took the caliphate and moved the capital city to Damascus in order to better control the growing empire.

Later in 63 AH Medina and Mecca became involved in a rebellion against Damascus. During this time a number of civil wars took place, and eventually the holy places of Mecca were totally destroyed. When the Abbāsids took control of the Islamic Empire in 132 AH, Medina continued its state of unrest and rebellion until the Abbāsids destroyed all of their opponents in Medina. (Hafiz 1987, pg 11)

In 1258 AD (654 AH) a volcano erupted in a place called Habs and continued for three months. The lava flowed towards Medina, stopping some 22 kilometers from the city proper. (Hafiz 1987, pg 15) In the years that followed, Medina was considered as one of several Islamic centers of learning and of Islamic jurisprudence. Today the city has a population of more than a million people.



# **SECTION VI**

## **ISLAM'S HOLY CITY**



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### MECCA & THE HOLY CITY

In our task of examining geographical references in the Qur'ān, we finally come to the city of Mecca which is mentioned once in Sūra 48. Qur'ānic commentators have traditionally linked the Valley of Bekka (or “valley of the one who weeps much”) in Sūra 3:96 with Mecca as well. (Pickthal 3:96, note) Added to this, there are numerous references in the Qur'ān to the *sacred place*, the *Ka'ba*, and *the house*; terms which are universally associated with Mecca today. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān itself does not tell us in so many words that the Ka'ba was located in Mecca. In this section we will see to what extent historical documents support this commonly held view.

وهو الذى كف ايديهم عنكم وايدىكم عنهم بطن مكة من بعد ان اظفركم عليهم وكان الله بما تعملون بصيرا

*And he it is who hath withheld men's hands from you, and hath withheld your hands from them, in the valley of Mecca, after he had made you victors over them. Allāh is Seer of what ye do.* Sūra 48:24 (Pickthall)

ان اول بيت وضع للناس للذى ببكة مباركا وهدى للعالمين

*Behold, the first temple (house) ever set up for mankind was indeed the one at Bakkah: rich in blessing, and a [source of] guidance unto all the worlds.* Qur'ān 3:96 (Asad)

Muslim scholars have seen no reason to doubt what is commonly believed about Mecca's location, but in recent years, some historians have raised questions. For example, Dr. Patricia Crone in *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* noted that the descriptions of Mecca in Islamic literature don't seem to match the present day location of Mecca. Dr. Crone first authored a book with Michael Cook called *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, in which they proposed a theory that “Islam, as represented by contemporary, Non-Muslim sources, was in essence a tribal rebellion against the Byzantine and Persian empires

*with deep roots in Judaism, and that Arabs and Jews were allies in these conquering communities.*" (Sean Gannon 2008-12-04, "The gospel truth?" The Jerusalem Post) This theory received much attention and eventually strong opposition, so much so that Crone's later arguments about Mecca were obscured and eventually lost to the wider Muslim audience. I have found when discussing early Islamic history with Muslim scholars that as soon as one mentions Dr. Crone, the conversation immediately focuses on the "Hagarism" theory, often with bitter comments and angry reactions, and it becomes impossible for them to address the thoughts presented in her later works.

In this chapter I will raise some of the same objections that Dr. Crone proposes, but I want to make it clear that I do not hold to the Hagarism theory that she and Cook presented earlier.

So in this chapter we will examine several problems which exist with the location of the city of Mecca, and will explore the possibility that Mecca was originally located elsewhere and later moved to its present location.

## Early descriptions of the Holy City

I first became aware that this was an issue when talking to devout Muslims who had returned from their first ḥaj (pilgrimage). Some voiced their surprise at the smallness of Mecca's mountains, the distance they were from the city, and expressed a vague dissatisfaction with Mecca in general. Somehow they were disappointed that it wasn't what they had imagined from the picture that formed in their minds when reading the Qur'ān and the ḥadīths. This caused me to wonder if they had wrong expectations because they had misinterpreted the passages, or if the passages themselves said something that did not match the location. In the following section we will look at some of the concepts people have gained from reading early Islamic literature, and note how the present location of Mecca doesn't seem to match these descriptions.

### 1. Described as the "mother of all cities"

This is a term which brings to mind either a large and impressive city or a city of great antiquity.

*And this is a book which we have revealed bringing blessings and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that thou mayest warn the Mother of Cities (Mecca) and all around her. Those who believe in the hereafter believe in this (book) and they are constant in guarding their prayers.* Sūra 6:92 (Yūsuf Alī)

The term *mother of all cities* (Umm al-Qura) is still used for Mecca. (Serageldin, I. Shluger, E. and Martin-Brown, J., 2001, pg 8) and Muslim schol-

ars try to point out that it is worthy of this description. *Additionally, some modern scientists say that the city of Makkah is the center of earth in terms of gravity. Makkah also falls at the ratio of phi (the mathematical golden ratio) between the north and south poles. The above are scientific theories that are not mentioned in the Islamic scripts. However, what is mentioned is that Makkah is the mother of all cities.* ([http://www.readingislam.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1256909707756&pagename=IslamOnline-English-AAAbout\\_Islam%2FAskAboutIslamE%2FAskAboutIslamE](http://www.readingislam.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1256909707756&pagename=IslamOnline-English-AAAbout_Islam%2FAskAboutIslamE%2FAskAboutIslamE))

In 2002 I had the opportunity to visit the Second Conference on Nabataean Studies held in Petra, Jordan, and organized by the Al Hussein Bin Talal University. During the conference I had occasion to speak with several leading Jordanian and Saudi archeologists. I asked them specifically about the archeological record in and around Mecca. While not wishing to be quoted or named publicly, they admitted that the archeological record at Mecca was basically non-existent before 900 AD. I had expected them to defend the opinion that ancient Mecca was a walled city with houses, gardens, public buildings and temples. They shook their heads and said, “There was nothing like that there.”

## 2. Described as the “center of the trade route”

There are numerous occasions where caravans are mentioned as coming and going from the Holy City, and indeed Muḥammad’s uncle Abū Ṭālib was a merchant who regularly sent caravans on trading missions. (Ishāq, page 79) Later, Muḥammad married Khadīja who also managed caravans of camels. (Ishāq 119, page 82) Still later when living in Medina, Muḥammad would raid Meccan caravans, some which consisted of as many as three thousand men. (Al Ṭabarī, VII, page 110) While Muslims are adamant that Mecca was the center of the trade route, modern historians give us a different picture. Dr. Patricia Crone tells us:

*“Mecca was a barren place, and barren places do not make natural halts, and least of all when they are found at a short distance from famously green environments. Why should caravans have made a steep descent to the barren lands of Mecca when they could have stopped at Tā’if? Mecca did, of course, have both a well and a sanctuary, but so did Tā’if, which had food supplies, too”.* (Crone, 1987 page 6-7; Crone-Cook, 1977, page 22)

Furthermore, Dr. Crone asks, *“What commodity was available in Arabia that could be transported such a distance, through such an inhospitable environment, and still be sold at a profit large enough to support the growth of a city in a peripheral site bereft of natural resources?”* (Crone, 1987, page 7) Muslims and some western scholars have imagined that the caravans carried incense, spices,

and other exotic goods, but according to research by Kister and Sprenger, the age of frankincense was over and the Arabs now engaged in a trade of leather and clothing; hardly items which could have founded a commercial empire of international dimensions. (Kister 1965, page 116; Sprenger, 1869, page 94)

In seminars on pre-Islamic Arabia, I have often traced the various trade routes on a map of Arabia. Then I ask the audience to indicate where all the trade routes intersect. This would naturally seem to be the “center of the trade route.” Inevitably, everyone responds that they intersect in northern Arabia, not at Mecca which was not even a stopping place on the caravan routes. Check the map on page 157 to see for yourself.

### 3. Mecca missing on early maps

One would expect that a major merchant city in Arabia would be mentioned on early maps. Such maps never claimed to show every village and settlement, but certainly sought to place significant and famous cities. Surprising as it may seem, not one map before 900 AD even mentions Mecca. This is 300 years after Muḥammad’s death.

Over the years I have gathered copies of many ancient maps of Arabia and have diligently had them translated and transcribed, but never once did I find Mecca mentioned on an early map. An often quoted example of this is Ptolemy’s map of Arabia. Some of the locations are transcribed on the map on the next page. Mecca is never shown, and indeed the mention of Mecca does not appear in any literature prior to 740 AD (approximately 122 years after the Hijra) when it first appears in the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica*. (See page 267 and Appendix A, page 396)

### 4. The Meccan valley

The Qur’ān and the ḥadīths clearly speak of Mecca being in a valley, and as having another valley next to the Ka’ba (possibly a stream bed).

*While they were in this state Abū-Jandal bin Suhail bin ‘Amr came from the valley of Mecca staggering with his fetters and fell down amongst the Muslims. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 3:891)*

*And he it is who hath withheld men’s hands from you, and hath withheld your hands from them, in the valley of Mecca, after He had made you victors over them. Allāh is Seer of what ye do. (Sūra 48:24, Pickthall)*

Al Bukhārī 4.583 tells us that when Abraham cast out Hagar, he took her to a valley beside the Ka’ba.

*Abraham brought her and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka’ba under a tree on the spot of Zam-zam, at the highest place in*





Above: Some of the locations mentioned by Ptolemy. A similar and more complete map can be found in Hitti's "History of the Arabs," Eighth Edition, p 47.

the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Mecca, nor was there any water. So he made them sit over there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, "Has Allāh ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then he will not neglect us," and returned while Abraham proceeded

*onwards, and on reaching the Thaniya (a crack in the rock) where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'ba, and raising both hands, invoked Allāh saying the following prayers. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:583)*

*When the Prophet performed the ṭawāf of the Ka'ba, he did Ramal during the first three rounds and in the last four rounds he used to walk and while doing ṭawāf between Ṣafa and Marwa, he used to run in the midst of the rain water passage. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:685)*

In essence the Holy City was in a valley which contained a water passage. In other words, it was located in a large valley, and beside the Ka'ba was a small valley with a stream in it. This is quite different from modern day Mecca.

## 5. Mecca's mountains don't seem quite right

Later the Holy City is described as surrounded by mountains where people could look down into the city to see the Yemeni elephant attacking the Ka'ba. (Ibn Ishāq 939, page 25) In other words, the mountains were close enough to Mecca and the Ka'ba that the people of Mecca could watch from the mountaintops and see details of what was happening.

In Mecca today the nearest small outcropping of rocks is half a kilometer away from the Ka'ba with a gradual slope to the top. There are no recorded fortifications on this mountain. The rest of the mountains are three or more kilometers away. Would an elephant even be visible at a distance of 3 km? How much could you actually see?

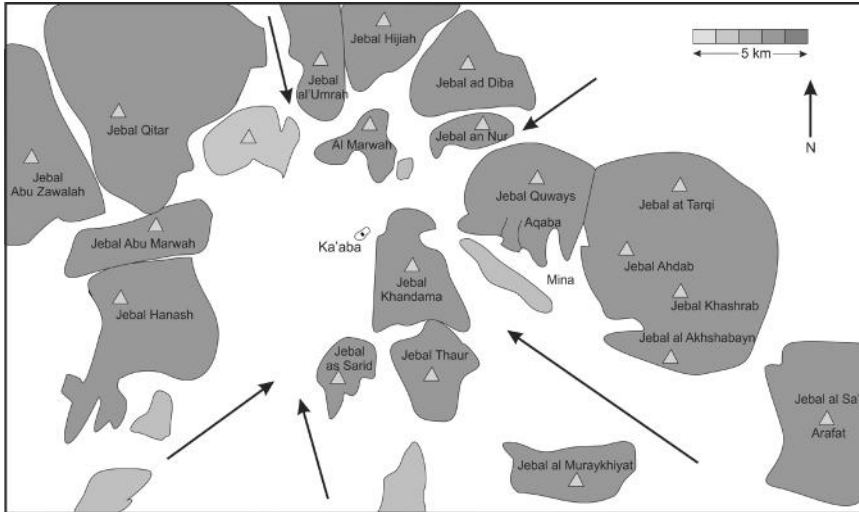
Mecca is situated at an elevation of 277 meters above sea level in the wide dry river beds of the Wadi Ibrāhīm and several of its short tributaries. It is surrounded by low mountains. Over the years there have been conflicting reports of the names of these mountains.

- a) Jebal Ajyad rises to 129 meters above the desert.
- b) Jebal Abū Qubays as a long low mountain in the east rises 95 meters above the city.
- c) Jebal Qu'ayq'an rises to 427 feet to the west.
- d) Jebal Nour also known as Mount Hira' rises 357 meters on the north-east. It stands behind Jebal Marwān and Khandima and contains a cave in which it is reported that Muḥammad received the first verse (ayah) of the Qur'an.
- e) Jebal Thaur rises 482 meters to the south of the city. It contains the cave in which it is said the prophet hid himself from the Meccans.
- f) North of Jabal Nour is a chain of bigger mountains. In the past these have had names such as: Thubair Gheyne'a or Thubair Al Athbirah. The summit is called Zat Al Gitadah, and its eastern side is known as

Thuqbah. Today the whole mountain range is known as Al Rakham Mountain.

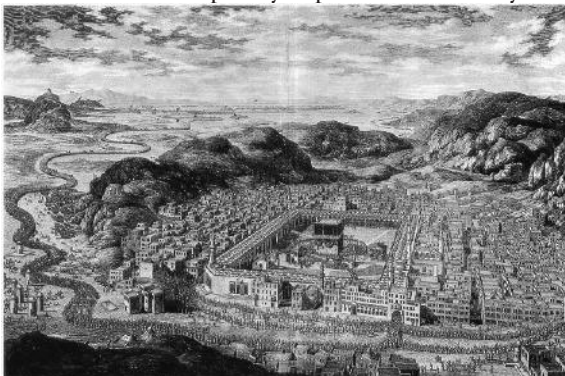
- g) On the northwest side is Jebal Zāhir.
- h) West of the Ka'ba is Jebal al-Shubaikah.

While the mountains are impressive, the photos and drawings below and later in this chapter demonstrate how far away the mountains are.



The main wadi (valley) lies some 10 - 15 km to the left of this map, meaning that Mecca is not in the actual wadi. (See the drawings below) Throughout the year this wadi is dry and only flows during seasonal rains in the mountains. In ancient times there was no natural flow of water through the village of Mecca.

Entrance to the area is gained through five wide passes in the surrounding mountains. These passes lead from the northeast to Jebal Minā & Jebal 'Arafat; from the northwest to a coastal road to Medina; from the west to Jeddah on the coast; and from the south to Yemen. The gaps have also defined the direction of the contemporary expansion of the city. Note in the drawing how wide



*Left: A drawing of Mecca in 1850 before the current modern sprawl.*

the desert is to the left of Mecca. As we examine the events that take place in Mecca in the following chapters, try to picture the Ka'ba in a deep valley, or in one that is surrounded by steep mountains and decide for yourself which one better fits the description.

Many pilgrims have been disappointed with the two mountains called Şafa and Marwah. They are so small that today they are totally enclosed inside of the mosque building complex. See the photo below.

Note the Ka'ba in the center of the mosque complex. To the right is a long straight walkway that leads to Jebal Şafa on one side and Jebal Marwah on the other (top to bottom of the photo below.) The two mountains are so small that they are totally enclosed inside the building, allowing pilgrims to walk between them.



Now note these verses that describe the mountains of Şafa and Marwah: *The Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) came and entered Mecca, and after the Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) had gone forward to the stone, and touched it, he went round the house (the Ka'ba). He then went to as-Şafa and climbed it so that he could look down at the house. Then he raised his hands began to make mention of Allāh as much as he wished and make supplication. The narrator said: The Anşār were beneath him. The narrator Hashim said: He prayed and praised Allāh and asked him for what he wished to ask.* (Sunan of Abū Dawood 750)

*Ar-Rabi' ibn Saburah said on the authority of his father (Saburah): We went out along with the Apostle of Allāh (peace be upon him) till we reached Uşfan, Suraqah ibn Mālik al-Mudlaji said to him: Apostle of Allāh, explain to us like the people as if they were born today. He said: Allāh, the exalted, has included this umrah in your ḥajj. When you come (to Mecca), and he who goes round the house (the Ka'bah), and runs between as-Şafa and al-Marwah, is allowed to take off Ihrām except he who has brought the sacrificial animals with him.* (Sunan of Abū Dawood 727)

*And when he (Muḥammad) reached Mecca on the 4th of Dhū-al-Ḥijja he performed the ṭawāf round the Ka'ba and performed ṭawaf between Şafa and Marwa.* (Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:617)

*When the Prophet performed the ṭawāf of the Ka'ba, he did Ramal during the first three rounds and in the last four rounds he used to walk and while doing ṭawāf*

between Şafa and Marwa, he used to run in the midst of the rain water passage. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:685) (See page 285)

The ritual of passing between the two mountains is supposedly based on Hagar, the wife of Abraham looking for water for baby Ishmael. Note how Şafa and Marwa seem to be mountains on either side of a large valley, not two little hillocks within a shallow valley.

*When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she (Hagar) became thirsty and her child also became thirsty. She started looking at him (i.e. Ishmael) tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain of Şafa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from Şafa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble, till she crossed the valley and reached the Marwa mountain where she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated that (running between Şafa and Marwa) seven times. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:583,4)*

This is repeated in the Fiqh us-Sunnah, but here it is added that Hagar struggled to cross the valley between the two mountains.

*Hagar sat under the tree with her baby next to her. She drank from her water container hanging nearby, and nursed her baby, until all the water she had was gone, her milk dried out. Her son grew hungrier and hungrier. She could hardly bear to look at him. She went and stood at Şafa - the mountain nearest to her. She looked down the valley to see if there was someone around to help. She could see no one. So, she climbed down Şafa and reached the valley. She struggled hard, crossed the valley and reached Marwah. She stood on Marwah, and looked around. Still she could see no one around. She repeated this seven times. Ibn 'Abbās added, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'It is (to commemorate this walk) that pilgrims walk between Şafa and Marwah.'" (Fiqh us-Sunnah 5:85)*

Şafa Mountain was also high enough to be a lookout position for defense of Mecca as noted in the following ḥadīth: *When the verse: "And warn your tribe of near kindred." (26.214) was revealed, Allāh's Apostle went out, and when he had ascended al-Şafa mountain, he shouted, "O Sabahah!" The people said, "Who is that?" "Then they gathered around him, whereupon he said, "Do you see? If I inform you that cavalrymen are proceeding up the side of this mountain, will you believe me?" They said, "We have never heard you telling a lie." Then he said, "I am a plain warner to you of a coming severe punishment." Abū Lahab said, "May you perish! You gathered us only for this reason?" Then Abū Lahab went away. So the Sūrat: "Perish the hands of Abū Lahab!" was revealed. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 6:495)*

Note that in the times before Islam two idols or places of worship existed: one on top of Mount Şafa and the other on top of Mount Marwah. Today there is no evidence of these idols, neither idol bases nor inscriptions.

*Şafa and Marwah as they used to do in the days of Jahiliyya while two idols were set on top of Şafa and Marwah.* (Fiqh us-Sunnah 5:86)

*'Amr set up an image on al-Şafa called Nahlik Mujawid al-Rih and one on al-Marwa called Mu'im al-Tayr.* (Ishāq 56, pg 30)

The trip between the two mountains was so strenuous that some people could not do the seven crossings in one day:

*The author of Al-Mughni observes: "Ahmad says there is no harm in delaying the Sa'i after performing ṭawāf until one is rested, or postponing it until evening. 'Aṭa' and Al-Hasan also see no harm in someone making ṭawāf early in the day and postponing the Sa'i between Şafa and Marwah until evening. Al-Qāsim and Sa'd bin Jubair followed this, because the continuity of Sa'i is, as such, not a condition, much less the continuity of ṭawāf and Sa'i. Sa'd bin Manşūr reported that Saudah, the wife of 'Urwah bin al-Zubair performed Sa' in between Şafa and Marwah and because she was a big and heavy woman, she completed it in three days.* (Fiqh us-Sunnah 5:88a)

*Climbing Şafa and Marwah and making supplications for one's material and spiritual well being and welfare is encouraged. During the supplications one should face the Ka'ba. It is well known that the Prophet (peace be upon him) went through the Şafa Gate, and on approaching Şafa he recited the Qur'ānic verse 2.158 "Verily, Şafa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh" and then saying "I begin with what Allāh himself began" he climbed Şafa until he could see the Ka'ba from where he stood. He faced the Ka'ba, thrice proclaimed Allāh's oneness, glorified him, praised him, and then said, "There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh. He has no partners. To him belongs the kingdom and all praise. He alone grants life and causes death, he has power over all things. There is no God but he. He has fulfilled his promise, given victory to his servant, and he alone defeated the confederates." Thrice he made similar supplications. Then he walked toward Marwah and climbed it, until he could see the Ka'ba. There he made supplications as he had at Şafa.* (Fiqh us-Sunnah 5:90)

Today there is no evidence of an ancient gate at Sufa, nor walls, nor stairs to climb the mountain.

## **6. Mecca is described as having a high and low side, and a road from either side.**

*Allāh's Apostle used to enter Mecca from the high thaniya and used to leave Mecca from the low thaniya.* (Şaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:645) A thaniya is a



narrow mountain pass. eg: *The Prophet went on advancing till he reached the thaniya (i.e. a mountainous way) through which one would go to them (i.e. people of Quraish).* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 3:891)

*When the Prophet came to Mecca he entered from its higher side and left from its lower side.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:647) This is mentioned many more times 2:645 and 2:657.

*We (Ā'isha speaking) set out with the Prophet with the intention of performing ḥajj only. The Prophet reached Mecca and performed ṭawāf of the Ka'ba and between Ṣafa and Marwah and did not finish the Ihrām, because he had the Hādi with him. His companions and his wives performed ṭawāf (of the Ka'ba and between Ṣafa and Marwah), and those who had no Hādi with them finished their Ihrām. I got the menses and performed all the ceremonies of ḥajj. So, when the Night of Hasba (night of departure) came, I said, "O Allāh's Apostle! All your companions are returning with ḥajj and 'umra except me." He asked me, "Didn't you perform ṭawāf of the Ka'ba ('umra) when you reached Mecca?" I said, "No." He said, "Go to Tan'im with your brother 'Abd Raḥmān, and assume Ihrām for 'umra and I will wait for you at such and such a place." So I went with 'Abdur-Raḥmān to Tan'im and assumed Ihrām for 'umra. Then Ṣafiya bint Huyay got menses. The Prophet said, " 'Aqra Ḥalqa! You will detain us! Didn't you perform ṭawāf-al-īfāda on the Day of Nahr (slaughtering)?" She said, "Yes, I did." He said, "Then there is no harm, depart." So I met the Prophet when he was ascending the heights towards Mecca and I was descending, or vice-versa. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:815)*

*Ibn 'Umar used to spend the night at Dhi-Tuwa in between the two thaniyas and then he would enter Mecca through the thaniya which is at the higher region of Mecca, and whenever he came to Mecca for ḥajj or 'umra, he never made his she-camel kneel down except near the gate of the Masjid (Sacred Mosque) and then he would enter (it) and go to the Black (stone) corner and start from there circum-ambulating the Ka'ba seven times: hastening in the first three rounds (Ramal) and walking in the last four. On finishing, he would offer two Rakat prayer and set out to perform ṭawāf between Ṣafa and Marwa before returning to his dwelling place. On returning (to Medina) from ḥajj or 'umra, he used to make his camel kneel down at Al-Batha which is at Dhū-al-Ḥulīfa, the place where the Prophet used to make his camel kneel down. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:820)*

*During the year of the conquest (of Mecca), the Prophet entered Mecca through its upper part through Kada. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 5:586)*

*That she said, “O Allāh’s Apostle! Your companions are returning with the reward of both ḥajj and ‘umra, while I am returning with (the reward of) ḥajj only.” He said to her, “Go, and let ‘Abdur-Raḥmān (i.e. your brother) make you sit behind him (on the animal).” So, he ordered ‘Abdur-Raḥmān to let her perform ‘umra from Al-Tan’im. Then the Prophet waited for her at the higher region of Mecca till she returned. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:227)*

*Allāh’s Apostle came to Mecca through its higher region on the day of the conquest (of Mecca) riding his she-camel on which Usāma was riding behind him. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:231)*

*Now al-Khaṭṭāb had so harassed Zayd that he forced him to withdraw to the upper part of Mecca, and he stopped in the mountain of Hira, facing the town. (Ishāq 148, pg 102) It is interesting to note that Mount Ḥira was located in the “upper part of Mecca.” However, today Mount Ḥira is a considerable distance from the Ka’ba. (see page 226)*

Today Mecca is located in a large open area, with low rocky mountains rising from the sand. Thus it is my belief that the early descriptions of Mecca and its mountains do not fit the Mecca of today.



*Left: Note how far away the mountains are from the Ka’ba. Photo taken before 1950, from the east.*

## 7. Grass grew in the original Holy City valley

(Muḥammad) ... *would go forth for his affairs and journey far afield until he reached the glens of Mecca and the beds of its valleys where no house was in site.* (Ishāq 151, pg 105)

*One night the Prophet was unable to sleep and said, “Would that a righteous man from my companions guarded me tonight.” Suddenly we heard the clatter of arms, whereupon the Prophet said, “Who is it?” It was said, “I am Sa’d, O Allāh’s*



*Apostle! I have come to guard you.” The Prophet then slept so soundly that we heard him snoring. Abū ‘Abdullāh said: ‘Ā’isha said: Bilal said, “Would that I but stayed overnight in a valley with Idhkhir and Jalil (two kinds of grass) around me (i.e., in Mecca).” Then I told that to the Prophet. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 9:337)*

It is hard to believe that this was written about the Mecca we know today, as the area around Mecca is completely desert sand where no grass grows naturally, nor is there any evidence that the area was ever irrigated and able to support grass and fields in the past.

## 8. The original Holy City had clay and loam

Al Ṭabarī relates the story (The History of Al-Ṭabarī, Volume VI, 1079, pg 6) of how ‘Abdallāh, the father of Muḥammad visited a wife whom he had in addition to Aminah bint Wahb ibn ‘Abd Manaf ibn Zuhrah. He had been working in the soil and traces of soil were still on him when he invited her to lie with him. She made him wait because of this. He went out, performed his ablutions, washed off the clay which was on him and went to Aminah’s quarters instead. And so Muḥammad was conceived. R. B. Serjeant in his comments on Alfred Guillaume’s translation of the same story in the Sirah (Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, xxi, 1958, pages1-14) is puzzled by this discrepancy as the Arabic word used here specifically means a cultivated plot or field, and refers to clay and loam. He then notes that there was no cultivable land near Mecca. (See Ishāq, page 69) Once again, the ancient description doesn’t match what archeologists have found.

## 9. The original Holy City had trees

*Once when I was with the Prophet in Mecca and we went out into one of its districts in the neighbourhood, not a mountain or tree which confronted him failed to say, “Peace be upon you, Messenger of Allāh.” Tirmidhi and Darimi transmitted it. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhi Ḥadīth 1535)*

This is an interesting reference to both ‘districts of Mecca’ and ‘trees.’ The ancient village of Mecca left a very small archeological footprint and didn’t have much for districts, let alone trees. This is reinforced by Sirat Rasūl Allāh, 72 (Guillaume, 2006, pg 46) *When they came to Mecca they saw a town blessed with water and trees and delighted with it, they settled there.* Ibn Ishāq mentions trees again a little later when he tells us that the people of Mecca were reluctant to cut down trees in the sacred area. (Guillaume, 2006, pg 53) The presence of trees and plants in ancient times can be easily tested by the presence of spores and pollens in undisturbed ancient soil. To date there is no record of trees having ever existed in ancient Mecca.

**10. The original Holy City had grapes growing in it**

*By Allāh, I never saw a prisoner better than Khubaib. By Allāh, one day I saw him eating of a bunch of grapes in his hand while he was chained in irons, and this was not the time of fruit in Mecca.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:281)*

Here we have reference to the ancient Holy City having trees and fruit growing in and around it. Once again, it is hard to imagine this happening where Mecca is located today.

**11. The Holy City produced large armies**

Apparently Mecca had no trouble in raising large numbers of men to work large caravans and march in their armies. The following chart is information gleaned from Al Ṭabarī’s History.

Source	Year AH & Event	Size of Meccan Army
Al Ṭabarī VII, pg 13	Year 1 Expedition to Al Abwa	300 Meccan horsemen
Al Ṭabarī VII, pg 15-16	Year 2 Raid on Meccan caravan	100 Meccan men, 2,500 camels in the caravan.
Al Ṭabarī VII, pg 33	Year 2 Battle of Badr	1000 Meccan soldiers
Al Ṭabarī VII, pg 90	Year 2 Expedition of al-Sawiq	200 Meccan soldiers
Al vabarī VII, pg 98	Year 3 Expedition to al-Qaradah, Meccan caravan	20,000 dirham captured from the caravan.
Al Ṭabarī, VII, pg 110	Year 3 Expedition to Uḥud	3000 Meccan soldiers, 200 cavalry
Al Ṭabarī VIII, pg 13	Year 5 Battle of the Trench, associated tribes	10,000 Quraysh soldiers

When one considers the number of soldiers and camels that the Meccans could raise despite their losses in battles year after year, one would expect the Holy City to be a large city. However, archeological evidence points to Mecca being a small place in a harsh environment. How then could it have produced such armies?

**12. There is scarce rainfall in Mecca**

Mecca averages 4.3 inches of rain per year (11 cm). With its high desert temperatures and barren conditions, this is scarcely enough to grow any vegetation at all, let alone grow enough food to support a large population.

### 13. Questions concerning Abraham & Ishmael

The Jews have always been great keepers and guardians of their ancient documents. Their records clearly trace in detail the travels of Abraham who is considered the father of the Jewish people. There is no evidence that this history was ever contested before Islam came on the scene, so there is no reason to suppose that the record had been intentionally falsified. Why then do the biblical records not include Abraham's trips into Arabia that are referenced by Islamic scholars? Admittedly, there are periods of Abraham's life for which the biblical documents give no detail, but if there were important journeys undertaken it would be surprising if they were not mentioned. The Bible recognizes no polemic against Ishmael in ancient times. Of course, it may be argued that no evidence is needed. If God has revealed that Abraham went to Mecca, then he did so, no questions asked. That still leaves us with the question as to why it is stated in the Qur'an as though it was a known fact.

*And when we made the house (at Mecca) a resort for mankind and a sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to pray). And we imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ishmael, (saying): Purify my house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship). And when Abraham prayed: My Lord! Make this a region of security and bestow upon its people fruits, such of them as believe in Allāh and the Last Day, he answered: As for him who disbelieveth, I shall leave him in contentment for a while, then I shall compel him to the doom of fire--a hapless journey's end! And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the house, (Abraham prayed): Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only thou, art the hearer, the knower. (Sūra 2:125-127 Pickthall)*

*Allāh speaketh truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolaters. Lo! the first sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Mecca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; Wherein are plain memorials (of Allāh's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the house is a duty unto Allāh for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) Lo! Allāh is independent of (all) creatures. (Sūra 3: 95 & 96 Pickthall)*

If Islamic sources are correct in saying that Abraham journeyed to Mecca, it is surprising that there is no reference to this event in the biblical history. It would have required many months of difficult travel. If the Bible is correct,

then it is surprising that Islam gives such a different view. Is there a possibility that the divergence is narrower than it appears?

As we mentioned earlier, Al Bukhārī 4.583 tells us that when Abraham cast out Hagar, that he took her to a valley beside the Ka'ba. Because it is important we will repeat it again here.

*Abraham brought her and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka'ba under a tree on the spot of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Mecca, nor was there any water. So he made them sit over there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, "Has Allāh ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then he will not neglect us," and returned while Abraham proceeded onwards, and on reaching the thaniya where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'ba, and raising both hands, invoked Allāh saying the following prayers...*

The Biblical account places this event near Beersheba. Genesis 20:1 tells us that Abraham moved into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar. It is here that the story of Sarah and Hagar takes place. Abraham then takes Hagar away. It is hard to believe that Abraham would take her a thousand kilometers to the south.

*Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in*

*the desert and became an archer. While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.* (Genesis 21:14-21, NIV)

According to the Biblical record Ishmael grew up in Paran, the traditional home of the Thamudic or Nabataean people in northern Arabia (see page 133) and was not anywhere close to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. It is my belief that if we can discover the original location of the Holy City of Islam and the location of the first Ka'ba, that it might also answer the questions and objections that historians have raised for years about associating Abraham with the Holy City of Islam.

### **Conclusion**

So what have we learned in this chapter? While I have presented no conclusive evidence, I have tried to demonstrate that there are some discrepancies between the ancient descriptions of Mecca and what archeology and historians have learned about the current location of Mecca. Keep these things in the back of your mind as we move on to discuss the pilgrimages in Arabia in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE QIBLA

Commonly accepted Islamic history states that the Ka'ba was a major shrine, and Mecca was a major city and the focus of pilgrimage in Arabia. As we have already seen, the archaeology of Mecca casts some doubt on it being Islam's original Holy City. But what can we learn about pilgrimages from other sources in Arabia?

#### **The importance of holy places in ancient Arabia**

From ancient times, Middle Eastern religions have equated gods with locations rather than peoples. Modern readers of history have long been influenced by monotheistic ideas and have often failed to realize the significance that the ancient people applied to "regional gods." In other words, rather than thinking in terms of tribes or clans who had their own gods, many gods were recognized as having regional significance and were respected by visitors passing through their area. Thus the Mesopotamians had their gods, the Egyptians had their gods, the Greeks and Romans respectively had their gods, and so the Arabs also had their own gods. Arab gods were understood as having sacred locations, and so often a particular god was mainly worshiped in a particular place, not universally throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

As great nations and empires rose to power, they sometimes tried to export the worship of their local gods to other places. This can be seen in the story of the invasion of Sennacherib's army into Judah. The Assyrian king sent his representative (rabsheqeh) to Jerusalem to challenge the Jews into submission. He refers to several local gods during his speech in which he shouts his message to the Jewish people on the city walls:

*"Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, 'Jehovah will deliver us.' Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim?*

*Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can Jehovah deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"* (Isaiah 36:18-20)

When considering pre-Islamic Arabia, it is important to recognize that the Nabataeans did not so much universally worship a pantheon of gods as much as multiple gods each attached to a specific location. Therefore the gods worshiped in Petra were not necessarily the same gods worshiped in Hijra or Tā'if. For instance, worship of the God Hubal was mostly restricted to Hijra (Healy, 2001, page 37) Likewise al-Kutba is distinctively North Arabian, and al-Uzza of the Hijaz. Originally each deity had its own temple and religious practices attached to it. In time however, the worship of some of the Arabian deities spread to nearby areas. The Nabataeans seemed content with their practice of worshiping local gods, and never attempted to actively export the worship of any of their deities to other peoples.

There was a good reason for this particular view of the sacred. The Nabataeans were merchants. They traveled widely, and one would assume that to please their hosts in foreign lands, they would leave a token of respect at the foreigner's temples. Thus, when in Edom, one would leave an offering at the temple of Dushara, the god of the Edomite mountains. When in Egypt, they might leave an offering at the temple of Isis. Respecting local gods would go a long ways towards building trust which would lead to business relations. Thus, early in Nabataean history, gods were considered local gods and one must respect them when passing through their territory.

Such a view of religion naturally leads to accepting territories and locations as being sacred to specific gods. Thus, the area around a temple, a specific valley or remote desert location, could be considered as sacred. When modern tourists enter the majestic beauty of Wadi Rum in southern Jordan, they marvel at the unique splendor of that remote location. Many tourists are so taken in by the wild desert scenery as it stands in stark contrast to the rugged rocks and mountains, that they miss the Nabataean temple dedicated to the goddess Lat (Allat). When viewing Arabia as a whole, it is possible to deduce that throughout the Arabian peninsula the gods of Arabia each had particular places where they resided. These were sacred precincts, and were places of refuge and security where regular activities ceased and violence was forbidden.

### **Haram places in Arabia**

The Qur'an, Ḥadīths and Islamic histories often refer to the mosque in the original Islamic Holy City as *masjid al ḥaram* (the forbidden gathering place).

An example of this is found in Sūra 17:1: “*Glory be to him who took his devotee one night from Masjid-al-Haram to Masjid-al-Aqsa, whose vicinity we have blessed, so that we may show him some of our signs: surely he is the one who is the hearer, the observer.*” (Qur’ān 17:1, Mālik)

Indeed the entire area around the Holy City was seen as ḥaram (forbidden). This had several implications. First, killing was forbidden within this area. “*Ibn al-Hanafyyah said to them “I do not deem it lawful to fight in God’s sacred precinct.”* (Al Ṭabarī XXI, 654, page 61).

This ban extended even to the killing of animals: “*The horse of one of them began to drop dung and the pigeons of the sanctuary (al-haram) area started to scavenge in the droppings. Al-Ḥuṣayn reigned back his horse from them and Ibn al-Zubayr said ‘What is the matter with you?’ He replied “I am afraid lest my horse kill the pigeons of the sanctuary area.” Ibn al-Zubayr said, “You would refrain from this sin, and yet you wish to kill Muslims?” Al-Ḥuṣayn answered “I will not fight you, allow us to perform the ritual circumambulation of the sanctuary (al-bayt) and then we will leave you.” He did so, and they departed.*” (Al Ṭabarī Volume XX, 430, pg 2)

Abū Shuraih said, “*When ‘Amr bin Sa’id was sending the troops to Mecca (to fight ‘Abdullāh bin Az-Zubair) I said to him, ‘O chief! Allow me to tell you what the prophet said on the day following the conquests of Mecca. My ears heard and my heart comprehended, and I saw him with my own eyes, when he said it. He glorified and praised Allāh and then said, “Allāh and not the people has made Mecca a sanctuary. So anybody who has belief in Allāh and the Last Day (i.e. a Muslim) should neither shed blood in it nor cut down its trees. If anybody argues that fighting is allowed in Mecca as Allāh’s Apostle did fight (in Mecca), tell him that Allāh gave permission to his apostle, but he did not give it to you. The prophet added: Allāh allowed me only for a few hours on that day (of the conquest) and today (now) its sanctity is the same (valid) as it was before. So it is incumbent upon those who are present to convey it (this information) to those who are absent.” Abū-Shuraih was asked, “What did ‘Amr reply?” He said ‘Amr said, “O Abū Shuraih! I know better than you (in this respect). Mecca does not give protection to one who disobeys (Allāh) or runs after committing murder, or theft (and takes refuge in Mecca).”* Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī Ḥadīth 1.104

*The prophet said, “Allāh has made Mecca a sanctuary (sacred place) and it was a sanctuary before me and will be so after me. It was made legal for me (to fight in it) for a few hours of the day. None is allowed to uproot its thorny shrubs or to cut its trees or to chase its game or to pick up its fallen things except by a person who announces it publicly.” On that Al-Abbās said (to the Prophet), “Except Al-Idhkhīr for our goldsmiths and for our graves.” And so the Prophet added, “Except*



*Al-Idhkhbir. "And Abū Huraira narrated that the Prophet said, "Except Al-Idhkhbir for our graves and houses." And Ibn Abbās said, "For their goldsmiths and houses." (Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2.432)*

Prof. Michal Gawlikowski, who spent 40 years excavating and researching the ancient city of Palmyra, writes the following in his paper "*The Sacred Space in Ancient Arab Religions*" (Gawlikowski, 1982): "*The notion of ḥaram (forbidden) was, in the Arabic traditions, attached to both sanctuaries and burials. In both cases, these places could serve as an asylum and were considered sacred; the same name was also used to describe their character.*" He later notes: *Several foundation inscriptions from Hijra put it quite clearly that the family rock-cut tombs there were considered ḥaram.... There is every reason to believe that the rock-cut tombs of Petra did not differ in character from those of Hijra....*

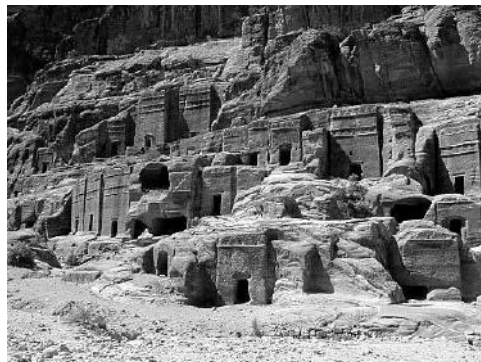
*Besides the foundation inscription of the Qabr et-Turkman in Petra which is the only one on this site except the late epigraph of Sextius Florentinus, irrelevant for our purpose, is written in exactly the same terms as the Hijra inscriptions, with one notable difference: there are no names except for the divine... "*

*I have expressed the supposition that there was an interdiction of religious character barring the founders of tombs in Petra from putting their names on their monuments. The fact that the only inscription engraved on a façade there carefully omits these names, but not the mention of consecration to Dushara and other gods seems to prove the point."*

Gawlikowski goes on to point out that from the Greek historian Diodorus (History XIX, 94, 2-5) we learn that the Nabataeans were forbidden under penalty of death to build houses. He suggests that this was limited to the site of Petra alone, the original ḥaram or "forbidden" area of Arabia. (Gawlikowski, 1982, page 301-303)

So while there were several sacred places in Arabia, two of them, Hijra and Petra, stand out as sacred places where burials also took place. But which of these was the more important of the two? First, Petra is many times larger than Hijra with over 1000 funerary monuments.

Second, pilgrimages were made to Petra, thus denoting the importance of Petra as the primary holy place or "forbidden sanctuary" in ancient Arabia.



*Above: Funerary monuments in Petra*



*Left: Hijra is in a wide open area with only a few monuments.*

## Pilgrimages

In his book on Nabataean names, Doctor Avraham Negev of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey suggested that much of the Nabataean graffiti found

throughout the Negev and southern Jordan was written by people on pilgrimages to Petra. In his detailed study he notes the variety of names that occur in Thamudic, Safaitic, and other early Arabian dialects. (Negev, 1991)

The discovery of a zodiac dated to the second century AD leads us to believe that there were two Nabataean pilgrimages. Zodiacs were well known throughout the ancient world. They expressed a belief in the cyclical passage of time and the power of the stars and planets to affect earthly events.

The Nabataean zodiac has many images similar to Roman zodiacs of the time. However, one of the symbols portrays Allat, the female goddess of fertility, with a lance or sword which can faintly be seen above her left shoulder. This may have symbolized an ancient festival which was celebrated by the Nabataeans and their nomadic neighbors when the birthing of lambs marked the spring season. It was a time when grazing was good and the earth was green from the spring rains. The Nabataean equivalent of Sagittarius is rendered as the bust of a jovial youth, possibly al-Kutbay, the god of learning and commerce. Capricorn is shown in the Nabataean panel as the damaged bust of a human figure rather than the traditional Roman fish/goat that was common throughout the Roman Empire. The remaining symbols of the Nabataean zodiac conform to their Roman counterparts, but they are enlivened with original touches of artistic creativity. However, by far the most significant difference in the Nabataean zodiac is the arrangement of the order of the houses within the zodiacal circle.

The Roman version follows the traditional order known today. Beginning at the top and going counter-clockwise, the Roman zodiac runs as follows: (1) Aries, (2) Taurus, (3) Gemini, (4) Cancer, (5) Leo, and (6) Virgo. Then there is a break at the bottom after which the succession resumes with (7) Libra, (8) Scorpio, (9) Sagittarius, (10) Capricorn, (11) Aquarius, and finally (12) Pisces.

The Nabataean zodiac found at Khirbet Tannur is different in that it begins counter-clockwise with (1) Aries, (2) Taurus, (3) Gemini, (4) Cancer, (5)

Leo, and (6) Virgo. Then there is a break by the *nikés* head. So far, this is like the Roman version. Following the traditional order, one would expect (7) *Libra* to be next in the counter-clockwise progression. But this is not so! This space is occupied by (12) *Pisces*! Instead, the Nabataean *Libra* appears at the top, beside *Aries*. This begins a clockwise progression around the zodiacal circle's opposite (left) side; beginning clockwise from (7) *Libra* at the top, the progression follows in order from (7) to (12) to end at the left side of the *niké* caryatid's head.

Thus, the Nabataean zodiac is extraordinary in its two opposite and completely separate halves. Some archeologists think that this denotes the existence of two New Year celebrations, one in the spring and the other in the fall, and this might help explain why there were two great festivals at Petra each year.

Al Ṭabarī, the great Islamic historian of 900 AD, notes in volume VI of *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (page 12) that during the days before Islam, there were two pilgrimages. The lesser was known as 'umrah. He notes that 'Abd al-Muttalib (Muḥammad's grandfather) performed 'umrah on one occasion. This was at a time when the forbidden sanctuary held many pagan idols, among them Hubal (Ṭabarī VI, 1075 page 3) and Isaf and Na'ilah (pg 4). The Qur'ān tells us that these pre-Islamic pagan pilgrimages were known respectively as ḥajj (Qur'ān 2:158, 196) and 'umrah, commonly called the greater and lesser pilgrimage.

From ancient time the Arabian pilgrimage was always to the religious center of Arabia, the forbidden sanctuary, the holy burial city of Petra. It was in this city that the Nabataean dead were buried, and it was in this city that the living gathered to eat a ritual meal with their extended family in the presence of the long departed ancestors. This custom was part of the cultural and ethnic make-up of the Nabataeans, and was the glue that held them, a nomadic merchant people, together as a society. In Petra today visitors can see the gath-



*Above: Nabataean zodiac*

ering halls that are attached to many of the tombs where family gatherings celebrated the living and the dead.

### **The importance of the direction of prayer (qibla)**

Today all mosques are not only aligned to face the direction of prayer, but they all have an architectural feature built in to emphasise it. The direction of prayer is called *qibla* and every mosque today has a niche (*mīhrab*) built in the qibla wall to provide clear indication of the direction of Mecca. The very earliest mosques however did not have the *mīhrab niche*, but were simply aligned in such a way that when the faithful faced the qibla wall they automatically faced the Holy City of Islam.

Christians today take little notice of the direction they might face when praying. For them, God is present everywhere, and they are free to pray in any direction. Jews also have no prescribed direction of prayer, although some choose to face towards the temple site in Jerusalem based on the words of King Solomon's prayer when he dedicated the temple to Jehovah. (I Kings 8:38-48)

In Islam, it is universally understood that the qibla was changed and this change is referred to in the Qur'ān. The text of the Qur'ān itself does not give the name of the place to which prayer was originally made, nor to which it was switched, nor when the switch occurred. According to Al Ṭabarī, (Volume VI, 1218, page 132) when the subject of qibla came up during pre-Hijra days, Muḥammad directed them to pray towards Syria. The Qur'ān, early ḥadīths and early Islamic histories never say that the qibla was towards Jerusalem. Mention of Jerusalem as the qibla doesn't appear in Islamic literature until over 300 years after Muḥammad died. All of the early records simply state that Muḥammad prayed towards Syria. If he did pray towards Jerusalem, it would seem strange that the records would not state Jerusalem, since it was a known and important center at the time. Muḥammad continued with his original qibla until February 624 when Islamic sources note that Muḥammad changed the qibla towards Mecca. (Al Ṭabarī Volume 6, page 131 footnote 209) and (Al Ṭabarī Volume VII, page 25) Al Ṭabarī's record mentioning Jerusalem being the focus of prayer was written around the year 920, almost 300 years after the qibla had been changed. By this time the idea of Jerusalem was being circulated, but the Qur'ān and the early histories all say that it was towards Syria that Muḥammad prayed.

### **The changing of the Muslim qibla**

The Qur'ān clearly tells us that the qibla was changed during Muḥammad's lifetime.

*Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the apostle a witness over yourselves; and we appointed the qibla to which thou wast used only to test those who followed the apostle from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous except to those guided by Allāh. And never would Allāh make your faith of no effect. For Allāh is to all people most surely full of kindness most merciful. We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens; now shall we turn thee to a qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the sacred mosque; wherever ye are turn your faces in that direction. The people of the book know well that that is the truth from their Lord nor is Allāh unmindful of what they do. Even if thou wert to bring to the people of the book all the signs (together) they would not follow thy qibla; nor art thou going to follow their qibla; nor indeed will they follow each other's qibla. If thou after the knowledge hath reached thee wert to follow their (vain) desires then wert thou indeed (clearly) in the wrong. (Sūra 2.143-145, Yusif Ali)*

Since Muḥammad revealed the Qur'ān, then this text from the Qur'ān indicates that the qibla was changed during Muḥammad's lifetime. However, no place names are given, and it seems to be assumed that all religions have qiblas.

Archeology backs up the changing of the qibla. There are many early mosques that faced a direction other than where Mecca is today. In the next chapter these early mosques are individually examined, photographed, and dates assigned to their construction.

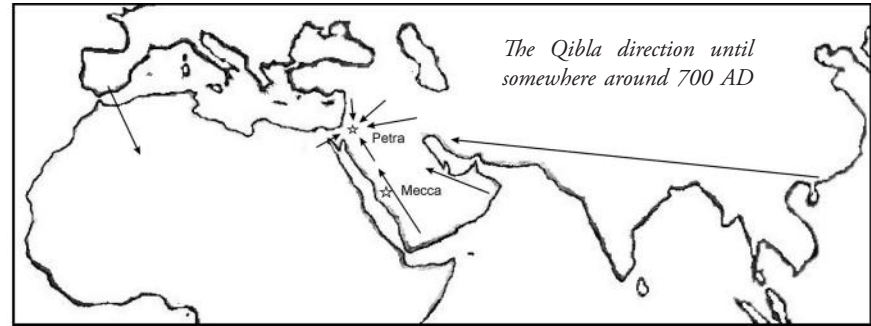
## Surprising Results

I began my study of early mosques thinking that I would be able to use the first handful of mosques built during Muḥammad's lifetime to determine the original focus of Muḥammad's prayers. As I studied early mosques I was shocked to discover that for over a hundred years after Muḥammad's death, many new mosques pointed to Syria. Using these mosques I was able to draw lines on a map to discover where they intersected. We will examine each of the mosques in question in the next chapter.

By examining the dates of the construction of these mosques, I also realized that the Islamic date of February 624, during Muḥammad's lifetime, seemed incorrect as archeology showed the qibla was changed much later. My mind was filled with questions such as when and how the qibla could have changed at such a late date.

I then began to carefully examine Islamic history from around the time of the qibla change to determine if there was any historical evidence that pointed to any change in the qibla at this late time. The information in the timeline

below has been extracted from the full timeline in Appendix A. In the section given below and on the next pages the Ka’ba was destroyed during a civil war and then rebuilt. Remember as you go through this timeline that at this point in history, many Muslim cities were rebelling against the Umayyad rulers in Damascus and setting up their own rulers. The Holy City is also one of those that rebelled. An army was then sent to defeat them but the Umayyad caliph died and the army was recalled. Several more men were pronounced caliph, but each were killed or died mysteriously. I believe that during this time the Ka’ba in Mecca was destroyed and the Black Stone changed locations. Following this is a hundred year period when mosques pointed in several directions, some towards Petra, some toward present day Mecca and a few others in Spain and North Africa towards South Africa.



**Events During the Time the Qibla Changed**

Date	Events	Comments
683	'Abdallah ibn Zubayr declares himself as the caliph in the Holy City. Ḥusayn ibn Numayr blockades the Holy City. Death of Yazīd, Syrians withdraw. Mu'āwiyah II becomes caliph.	The Ka'ba damaged by ballista stones, the veil and roof burned with fire. Walls are then demolished and Zubayr places the Black Stone on silk in a temporary stand.
684	Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ. Baṣra and Kūfa become centers of rebellion.	Marwān I becomes the caliph in Damascus. Death of Marwān I. 'Abd al Mālik becomes caliph in Damascus. Gathering at Ḥusayn's tomb.
685	The Azraqī revolt, Kūfa rebels. Al Mukhtār revenges against the murderers of Ḥusayn bin 'Alī. Al Mukhtār declares himself as the caliph at Kūfa. Al Mukhtār sends an army to the Holy City.	'Abdallah ibn Zubayr claims he finds the foundation stones that Abraham laid of the real Ka'ba (no location mentioned). No pilgrimage this year. Did Zubayr build a new Ka'ba in Mecca this year?
686	Battle of Kūfa between the forces of Mukhtār and ibn Zubayr. Mukhtār killed.	First mention of the "people who turn to the same qibla as you." (Tabarī XXI, pg 107, 112) No official pilgrimage this year.



Date	Events	Comments
687	Severe drought in the Middle East, no large campaigns.	No official pilgrimage this year.
688	Revolt in Damascus.	Four separate banners at the pilgrimage because of the civil wars. Was this to different locations?
689	Byzantines attack and are paid off. No other history recorded for this year, other than the people in the Holy City bought many horses and camels and much baggage for moving.	'Abdallāh ibn Zubayr himself leads the new pilgrimage. Was this to the new location?
690	Battle of Dayr al-Jāthaliq, Kūfa falls to 'Abdul Malik.	Zubayr leads the new pilgrimage again.
691	War at Sūlāf.	Ḥajjāj sent to the Holy City to take it. Ḥajjāj leads the pilgrimage because of the siege.
692	Siege of Mecca.  The fall of the Holy City and the death of Zubayr. 'Abdul Malik becomes the sole Caliph in Damascus.	Rebels in the Holy City defeated, but further revolts by others fully occupy the Caliph's attention. Najdah ibn 'Āmir established a break-away Kharijite state in al-Yamāmah and captures Tā'if. They are dissuaded from taking the Holy City and Medina. Najdah assassinated.
693	Al-Ḥajjāj with the approval of Caliph 'Abdul Malik bin Marwān, demolished what Ibn al-Zubayr had changed in the Holy City.	Apparently the Ka'ba and other holy sites in the Holy city are restored to the way the Quraysh had it.
694	Başran troops revolt against Ḥajjāj	
695	Khārijites revolt in Jazīrah and Ahwāz. Battle of Karun.	Campaigns in North Africa. Muslims once again withdraw to Barqa. Advance in Transoxiana and occupy Kish.
698		Mosque in Fuṣṭāt, Egypt is completely rebuilt, doubling in size, again. Direction is uncertain. (See 642, 698, & 827 AD)
699	The Azraqī leader is killed by 'Abd al Mālik's armies.	'Alī, a grandson of 'Abbās, a paternal uncle of the prophet Muhammad builds a large house at Humeima, 27 miles south of Petra. This building is oriented towards Petra. Years later, an outside mosque is oriented towards Mecca.
700	Campaigns against the Berbers in North Africa. Ḥajjāj at Başra.	Great Mosque of Ba'albek built, orientation closer to Petra than to Mecca. Governor of Mecca not listed.
701	Ibn al-Ash'ath battles Ḥajjāj.	Umayyad buildings in Amman Jordan built facing Petra. They had to be rebuilt after a later earthquake. Governor of Mecca not listed.

Date	Events	Comments
702	Battle of Dayr al-Jamājim.	Battle of Maskin. Ibn al-Ash'ath is defeated. Ḥajjāj begins to build Wasīṭ mosque facing Petra.
703	Ja'far al-Ṣadīq, sixth Imām of Shi'ite is born.	The fortress of Nīzak is conquered by the Ḥajjāj.
705	Death of 'Abd al Malik, Al-Walid I becomes Umayyad caliph (for ten years). Governor of Mecca not listed.	Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā built, orientation towards both Petra and Mecca.
706	New governor of Medina. Governor of Mecca not mentioned. Pilgrimage this year.	Khirbat al Mīnya built orientation towards Petra. The Wasīṭ mosque in Iraq is constructed, with a qibla pointing directly at Petra
707	Reconstruction of the mosque of the prophet in Medina. Foundations relaid. The qibla wall is changed. Ṭabarī XXIII pg 141	Ibn Ishāq is born (author of <i>Sīrat Rasūl Allāh</i> ). Governor of Mecca not mentioned
708	Conquest of Sūriyah. New governor of Mecca. Al-Wāqidi records that in his day the location of the well of Zamzam is lost. Ṭabarī XXIII:148	The niche or miḥrab is introduced to re-orient mosques towards Mecca.
709	Bukhāra conquered.	Al Aqṣa Mosque in Jerusalem built facing Petra. The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is built facing Petra.
710	Khālīd al-Qaṣri appointed as governor of Mecca. He is very strict and enforces unpopular views.	Khālīd insists only the caliph's interpretation of history and religion are correct.
711	Spain conquered by Ṭāriq bin Ziyād. Transoxiana falls into Muslim hands.	Mosque in Fustāt, Egypt is renovated with a concave prayer niche. (See 642, 673, 698 & 827 AD) P. Crone & M. Cook, Hagarism, 1977 point out that there is literary evidence the orientation of the mosque had to be changed to point further south.
713	'Alī Ibn Ḥusayn poisoned. Muḥammad al-Bāqir becomes Imām. Conquest of Multān.	Al-Ṭabarī notes that there was a massive earthquake this year in Syria. (XXIII, pg 204) Mecca is a refuge for outcasts and political refugees.
714	Khirbat al Maḥjar mosque and palace structure built near Jericho facing Petra.	Al Anjar Mosque near Beirut built facing Petra.
720	Death of 'Umar II. Yazīd II becomes Umayyad Caliph (4 years).	Mosque of 'Umar in Bosra built, facing Petra.
724	Death of Yazīd I, Ḥishām becomes Umayyad Caliph (19 years).	<b>TIME OF CONFUSION BEGINS</b>



Date	Events	Comments
725	Muslims enter in France.	Qaṣr al Ḥayr al Gharbī built 37 miles west of Palmyra. Orientation between Mecca and Petra.
727		Banghore Mosque in Pakistan built without a miḥrab, the whole complex faces Mecca.
728		Qaṣr al Ḥayr al Sharqī built in Syria, mosque oriented between Petra and Mecca.
730	John of Damascus (during the time of Leo III) mentions the compositions of Muḥammad (Woman, Camel, Table, and Cow) as separate writings.	The Umayyad palace and mosque on Amman citadel are built facing Mecca.
739	Yazīd II declares all images & pictures be removed from churches.	Petra section of map in Madaba church destroyed.
740	Shī'a Zaydi Revolt under Zayd bin 'Alī. Berber revolt in North Africa. Battle of the Nobles.	The earliest mention of Mecca is found in the text: Continuatio Byzantia Arabica dating to this year.
742	Muslims engage Leo in battle and take plunder. Muslim rule restored in Qaiawān.	Abbāsīd supporters go on pilgrimage. Plague in the Middle East for several years.
743	Muḥammad al-Bāqir poisoned. Ja'far al-Ṣadīq becomes Imām. Death of Ḥishām. Al-Walid II becomes Umayyad Caliph. ( 1 year) Shī'a revolt in Khurāsān under Yaḥyā ibn Zayd.	Mushatta Palace and Mosque near Amman Airport built, whole complex faces Petra.
744	Himṣ, Palestine and Jordan rebel. Battle of 'Ain al Jurr.	Marwān II becomes Umayyad Caliph Walid II disposed. Yazīd III becomes Umayyad Caliph. for several months. After his death Ibrāhīm becomes Umayyad Caliph and is overthrown.
746	Battle of Rupaṯ Thutha. Kūfa and Moṣul occupied by Marwān II.	A strong earthquake destroys cities in Syria and Jordan.
747	Revolt of Abū Muslim in Khurāsān.	
749	Battle of Iṣfahān and Battle of Nahāwand.	Kūfa captured by the Abbāsīds. As-Saffāh becomes Abbāsīd Caliph at Kūfa.
750	Battle of Zāb. Fall of Damascus. End of Umayyads. Abbāsīds begin to rule from Baghdad.	<b>Abbāsīd Rule Begins</b>
753	Death of al-Saffāh. Accession of al-Manṣūr as caliph. Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad bin Umar al-Wāqidi al-Madani is born.	The Great Mosque of Shibām built original direction unknown.
756	'Abd al-Raḥmān I founds Umayyad state in Spain.	Byzantines and Muslims retire from battle for several years.

Date	Events	Comments
759		People of Baṣra change their qibla. Ṭabarī XXVIII pg 80
761	Descendants of 'Alī transported from Medina to Iraq.	Ibn Ishāq writes <i>Sīrat Rasūl Allāh</i> , 130 years after the death of Muḥammad.
762	Muḥammad 'Abdallāh in Medina revolts.	The Mosque of Manṣūr in newly constructed Baghdad points to Mecca.
765	Ja'far al-Ṣadiq, sixth Imām of Shi'ia is poisoned for creating Shari'ah Law.	Fighting continues in Armenia. Mūsā al-Kāzim becomes Imām. 'Alī al-Ridā, 8th Imām is born.
770	Navel expedition against the Kurk.	Ribat Fortress in Tunisia: Its foundations were laid this year, and its final construction was in 822 AD. The second floor mosque pointed south.
771	Construction begins in Rāfiqah.	Lightning kills faithful in a mosque in Ḥarām.
772	Battle of Janbi in North Africa. Rustamid state set up in Morocco.	The Great Mosque of Raqqa in Syria built, the whole building complex faces Petra not Mecca.
777	Siege of Saragossa in Spain	Khurāsān rebels.
778		Continued trouble in Khurāsān.
780		Al Mahdī builds Qaṣr al Salamah.
784	Byzantines break the truce.	The Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain built; the direction parallels Mecca & Petra but does not point at either.

## Conclusion

In the following chapters we will examine archeological, historical and literary evidence to support the theory that Islam's Holy City was originally in the region of modern day Petra. We will then look at how the qibla change might have happened and why it may have been forgotten and misunderstood over the years. Finally we will look at some of the issues and controversy that surface when assigning such a late date to the changing of the qibla.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

In this chapter we will examine a number of mosques built during early Islamic history. We will do this in chronological order, starting with the very earliest mosques built during Muḥammad's lifetime and make our way through the Umayyad years and into the Abbāsīd dynasty. I have included all of the mosques that I am currently aware of, that are still in existence. I am sure that I have missed some, and these will be included either on the website or in future editions of this book.

#### The early mosques

According to the Dictionary of Islamic Architecture (Petersen, 1999, page 32) the first concave mihrab niche was introduced at Medina between 707 and 709 AD. (See year 708 on the time-line in Appendix A) Before this (for 89 years) mosques did not have a distinct niche in a wall that indicated which direction the faithful should pray. Rather, early mosques simply had a qibla wall that the faithful faced during prayer. In essence, the entire building faced the qibla direction.

In the following pages I have listed as many early mosques as I could find according to the date they were built, and have indicated the direction of their qibla. In some cases I have provided aerial photographs. The dates for most of these mosques have been provided by ArchNet which is an international online community for architects, planners, urban designers, landscape architects, conservationists, and scholars. (<http://archnet.org>) The dates given are all approximate, especially since it is sometimes hard to know when an Islamic year starts or ends as compared to Christian years. In many cases the very earliest mosques have been rebuilt so many times that it is now impossible to determine the direction of their original qibla. In the satellite photos I have tried to illustrate the direction of Mecca and also the direction of the Petra region where I believe the first Holy City existed.

## 1 AH 622 AD

The Quba Mosque just outside of Medina is the first and oldest mosque ever built in Saudi Arabia, and the oldest existing mosque in Saudi Arabia today. Its first stones were positioned by the prophet Muḥammad on his emigration from the city of Mecca to Medina, and the mosque was completed by his companions. Muḥammad spent more than 20 nights in this mosque (after migrating) praying qasr (a short prayer) while waiting for Alī whose house was behind this mosque. The mosque was originally built around 622 AD, but subsequent renovations and rebuilding have so changed it that it is not possible to examine the original foundations and determine the direction of the original qibla.

## 1 AH 622 AD

The Mosque of the Prophet which would later be called al-Madina al-Munawara, was also built in 622 by the Muslim community after they reached the city of Yathrib. This mosque was situated next to the prophet's house, and it consisted of a square enclosure of thirty by thirty-five meters, built with palm trunks and mud walls. It was accessed through three doors, Bab Rahmah to the south, Bab Jibril to the west and Bab al-Nisa' to the east. Within this enclosure, the prophet created a shaded area to the south called the *suffrah* and aligned the prayer space facing north towards Syria. Seven years later, the mosque was doubled in size to accommodate the increasing number of Muslims. After the death of the prophet, the mosque was again enlarged to twice its size. In 707 AD, Umayyad Caliph al-Walid (705-715) tore down the old structure in order to build a larger mosque measuring eighty-four by one hundred meters. This structure had a stone foundation and a teak roof supported on stone columns. The new mosque included the house of the Prophet under which he was buried. Because the mosque has undergone such extensive renovations at multiple times, it is impossible to make out the original floor plan and the original direction of prayer.

## 5 AH 626 AD

Masjid al-Qiblatain (Mosque of the two qiblas) is a mosque in Medina that is historically important for Muslims, as it is remembered as the place where a companion leading the prayer was told of the change of qibla. He did a 180 degree turn and he is said to have been commanded to change the direction of prayer (qibla) from Jerusalem to Mecca. Thus this mosque uniquely contained two prayer niches (mihrabs). This is an important mosque for our

study as the original structure was built around 626 AD and further renovations maintained the original two qiblas. In 1987 the mosque was completely renovated, removing the old prayer niche that faced north, but maintaining the one facing Mecca. The mosque has undergone several major reconstructions, the latest being in 1987. Nothing remains of the original mosque, but 'Abdel Wahed el Wakil, an architect, made excellent drawings of the earlier structures before the mosque was torn down and replaced with the new building. A report of his work can be found on the internet at: [http://www.arch-net.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=946](http://www.arch-net.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=946). When the old mosque was torn down, the foundation stones of the earlier mosque revealed that the original building faced north towards both Petra and Jerusalem which were in almost exactly the same direction.

## 6 AH 627 AD

The Great Mosque of Guangzhou, known also as Huaisheng Mosque (Memorial of the Holy Prophet) or the Guangta Mosque (Light Tower Mosque) is thought to be the earliest surviving mosque in China, and has the earliest freestanding minaret in China. Manuscripts from 1206 claim that the mosque was originally built by an uncle of the Prophet, Abū Waqqās, on the first Muslim mission to China in the 630's, during Muḥammad's lifetime.\* The mosque was then rebuilt in 1350 during the Yuan dynasty under the rule of Zhizheng (1341-1368), and rebuilt again in 1695 under Emperor Kangzi of the Qing dynasty after it was destroyed in a fire. The Huaisheng Light Tower,



*Above: The author at the GuangZhou Mosque complex door.*

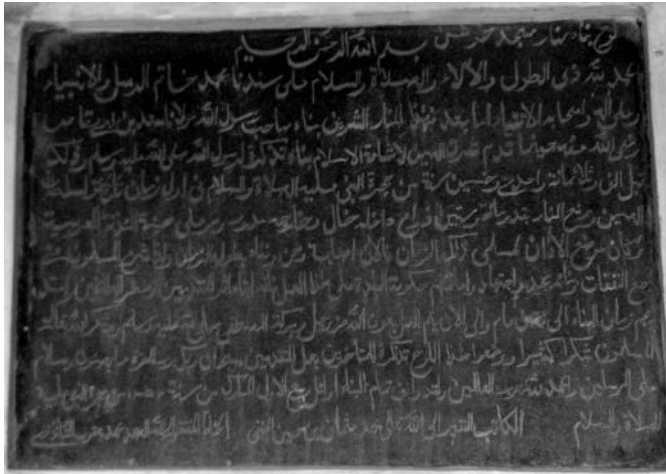


*Right: The author at the GuangZhou Mosque Lighthouse*

\* See pages 190-198, and 387 for China-Arabia contact.



Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe, © 2010 Kingway Ltd. © 2010 Mapabc.com  
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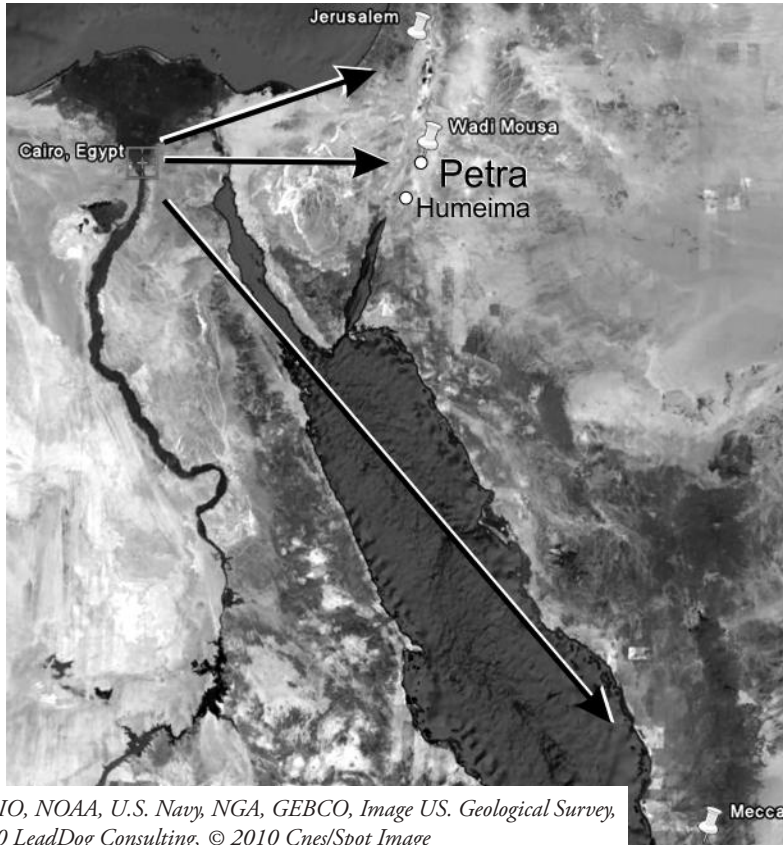
Left: Plaque outside of the Ghuan-Zhou Mosque

the mosque's unique namesake minaret, was built at an earlier period. Like its contemporaries at Quanzhou, Hangzhou and Yangzhou, the Great Mosque of Guangzhou is notable for its integration of the local Han building tradition with imported Arab styles. I examined this mosque and found it very difficult to determine if the builders rebuilt on the original foundations. This mosque faces 12 degrees north of where the qibla should be, meaning that it directly faces Petra. Because of its great distance from Arabia, local Muslims feel that it is close enough to Mecca.



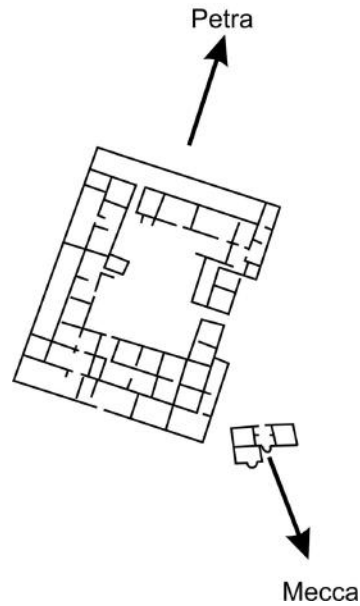
## 20 AH 641 AD

The Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As was founded by the Muslim conqueror of Egypt in 641 near his house in the town of Fustāt, outside of Cairo. This mosque was rebuilt and enlarged in 673 during the reign of Mu'āwiya, who is said to have added a minaret to each of its four corners. Today the mosque does not exist in its original form, having undergone numerous restorations so that the original foundation is no longer evident. However, the original ground-plan of the mosque shows that the qibla pointed too far north and had to be corrected later under the governorship of Qurra ibn Sharīk. (Creswell 1969, pages 37,150) Interestingly this agrees with the later Islamic tradition compiled by Aḥmad ibn al-Maqrizi that 'Amr ibn al-'As prayed facing east, and not more towards the south. (al-Maqrizi 1326 page 6; Crone-Cook 1977 pages 24,173)



## 80 AH 700 AD

The Umayyad Palace (qaṣr) at Humeima was built during the early Islamic era by Alī, a grandson of 'Abbās, a paternal uncle of the prophet Muḥammad. It would have either included a prayer room or the central court would have been used for prayer, therefore the alignment of the entire building should have been according to the qibla. The building is oriented northeast. Mecca is not in this direction, nor is Jerusalem, but it does correspond with Petra, only 27 miles to the north. Later a smaller outside mosque was built with a qibla pointing closer to Mecca.



## 81 AH 700 AD

The Great Mosque of Ba'albek in Lebanon is an Umayyad mosque dating back to 81 AH. It has suffered from deterioration due to dampness, salt, and structural degradation. The last renovation was conducted with special attention to archaeological remains, as it is believed that the mosque may have been built upon several older structures dating back to antiquity. Lime mortar and traditional materials were used to preserve the building's character. As you can see in the photo below, the Ba'albek Mosque (to the right of the main Ba'albek ruins) has an orientation closer to Petra than to Mecca.



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## 82 AH 710 AD

The first Islamic buildings on the Amman, Jordan citadel were built around 700 AD. They are the lower buildings in the photo on the previous page. So far, it has not been possible to absolutely date the time of construction of these buildings, but they were built early during Umayyad rule. However if



*Above, The Umayyad Qasr in Amman served as the regional administrative center.*

you examine the photo you can clearly see that the first set of buildings (lower left) pointed south. The later buildings were built around 740 AD (above the earlier buildings) and clearly demonstrate a new focus and direction. The original buildings faced Petra, but the newer buildings (built some 40 years later) faced Mecca. As we pointed out in the previous chapter, during the period between these two constructions 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr completely destroyed the Ka'ba and rebuilt it, possibly in a new location. (See the satellite photo on the bottom of page 259)

## 86 AH 705 AD

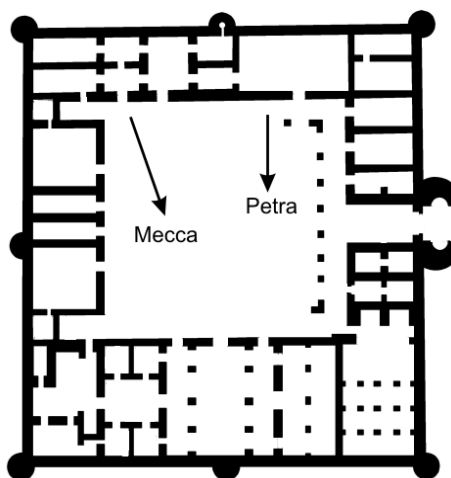
The Great Mosque of San'ā is in the capital city of Yemen. According to early sources, the Prophet Muḥammad commanded the construction of this mosque, including its location and dimensions, sometime around 630 AD. While the validity of this claim lacks certainty, the mosque remains one of the early architectural projects in Islam. Sometime between 705 and 715 AD, the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid I rebuilt and enlarged the mosque. Like the previous examples, this mosque points towards Petra, but since it is south of Mecca it could be argued that it also points in the general direction of Mecca. In 1972 and 2010, caches of early versions of the Qur'ān were discovered in this mosque that will impact our study.



*Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2010 LeadDog Consulting, © 2009 Google*

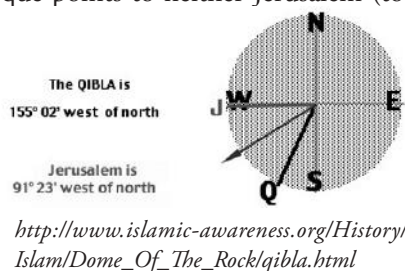
## 87 AH 706 AD

Qasr Khirbat al Minya is in Khirbat al-Minya, Israel (also known as 'Ayn Minyat Hishām). This is an Umayyad-built palace located in the eastern Galilee region about 200 meters (660 ft) west of the northern end of Lake Tiberias. It was erected as an Umayyad palace complex with a palace, mosque and bath built by al Walīd. (The date of construction is based on an inscription set into a gateway) The palace contained a room that was constructed for the purpose of being a mosque. It was the room with pillars in the bottom right corner. Because it is almost directly north of Petra, the mosque and the entire building points directly at Petra, not Mecca which is southeast. We were unable to obtain satellite photos of this site, but the original plans can be obtained from [www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org) showing the layout of the building.



## 87 AH 707 AD

The Wasit Mosque in Iraq has been the center of much discussion. Originally, Creswell and Fehervari studied the ground plans of this mosque and claimed that this mosque pointed to Jerusalem. (Creswell, 1969 pg 137 & 1989, pg 40; Fehervari, 1961, pg 89; Crone-Cook 1977, pgs 23 & 173) However, further research has shown that this mosque does not point to Mecca or Jerusalem, but somewhere in between. In their Internet article *Islamic Awareness, The Qibla of Early Mosques, Jerusalem or Makkah?* M S M Saifullah, Muḥammad Ghoniem, 'Abd al Raḥmān, Robert Squires and Maṣṣūr Ahmed clearly demonstrate that the qibla of the Wasit mosque points to neither Jerusalem (too far north) or Mecca (too far south). Instead they discovered that the qibla pointed 155°02' of north (which is directly towards the Petra region.) The illustration to the right was taken from their internet article, and demonstrates the direction of the Wasit Mosque qibla.

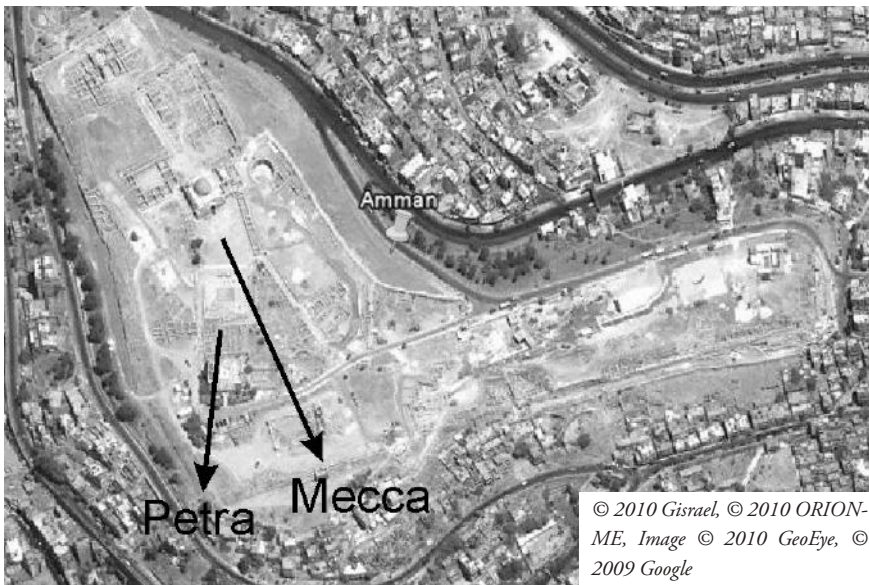


## 89 AH 708 AD

Immediately after Zubayr's rebellion and consequent rebuilding of the Ka'ba, the Mihrab mark or niche was introduced. It is said that during the reign of the 'Uthmān ibn Affan (644-656), the caliph ordered a sign to be posted on the wall of the mosques at Medina so that pilgrims could now easily identify the direction in which to address their prayers. This seems to be a strange development, since up until this time there was no question as to which direction the faithful should pray. The entire building faced the qibla. Now, however, a sign was provided in the older mosques, seeming to indicate that a new qibla had been introduced.

During the reign of Al-Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Mālik (Al-Walīd I, 705-715), the Mosque of the Prophet (the Masjid al Nabawi) was renovated and the governor (wali) of Medina, 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul Azīz, ordered that a niche be made to designate the qibla. 'Uthmān's sign was then placed inside this niche. Eventually, the niche came to be universally understood as identifying the qibla direction, and so came to be adopted as a feature in other mosques. A sign was no longer necessary.

It is most interesting to notice that the mihrab niche was developed right after the time we are suggesting the qibla changed. Evidently since there was confusion over which way to pray, older mosques began to adopt the mihrab so that the faithful could pray in the new direction.



*Amman: The lower buildings were built around 700 AD and the upper buildings around 740 AD. This helps us in determining the time period when the qibla began changing towards Mecca.*

## 90 AH 709 AD

The Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem has undergone multiple stages of construction and renovations over the years. It is generally agreed that 'Abd al-Mālik, (685-705) the Umayyad Caliph who was the patron of the Dome of the Rock, started the construction of al-Aqsa Mosque at the end of the 7th century. A major building phase took place during the time of the caliphate of his son, al-Walīd (709-715). The building suffered from several major earthquakes and was renovated and reconstructed during the Abbāsīd period by Caliph al-Mahdī (775-785), and possibly by Caliph al-Manṣūr (754-775). This mosque in Jerusalem does not point to Mecca but rather points 169.23° which is towards Petra, only 160 miles away.

*The Al Aqsa mosque is located on the bottom center of the photo just below the arrow indicating the direction of Petra. None of the buildings on the Jerusalem citadel point towards Mecca.*



Image © 2010 Digital Globe

John Moschus was born in the mid-sixth century. He wrote "*Pratum spirituale*" or *Spiritual Meadow* which contained 304 short chapters on the feats and achievements of holy men, plus anecdotes about suffering, temptation, evil and piety, as well as an appendix of thirty additional stories. Story 19 tells of the Muslims who began to build a mosque on a place called the Capital in Jerusalem. If this account is true, then construction of the Temple Mount began soon after its capture around 637 AD. (16 AH) (Hoyland, 1997, pages 63-65)

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Caetani, Chron. 200-201 AD, The Arabic accounts of 'Umar's visit to Jerusalem are discussed by Bussee, "*Omar in Jerusalem*." The monk Anastasius of Sinai informs us that after an earthquake he witnessed clearing work being undertaken on the Temple Mount around 660 AD. (Anastasias of Sinai, Narrat., C3. and Blair, *What is the date of the Dome of the Rock?*)

Al Ṭabarī records (Volume XII, translated by Yohanan Friedmann, 2408, page 193) a description of the founding of the mosque in Jerusalem, and setting the qibla.

*He (ʿUmar) then went on and entered the masjid (congregational) area. Then he went on towards the miḥrab of David, while we were with him; he entered it, recited the prostration of David and prostrated himself and we prostrated ourselves with him. .... then he said "Bring Ka'b to me." Ka'b was brought to him. ʿUmar said "Where do you think we should establish the place of prayer?" Ka'b said "Towards the Rock." ʿUmar said "O Ka'b, you are imitating the Jewish religion! I have seen you taking off your shoes." Ka'b said "I only wanted to touch this ground with my feet." Umar said "I have seen you. No, we shall place the qibla in the front of it; the Messenger of God likewise made the front part of our mosques the qibla. Take care of your own affairs, we were not commanded to venerate the Rock, but we were commanded to venerate the Ka'ba."*

And so the new mosque was built in front of the temple mount (south end) with a qibla facing the Holy City and the holy Ka'ba. But the direction of this mosque clearly shows that it pointed towards Petra.

## 90 AH 709 AD

Umayyad Damascus Mosque. This mosque holds a shrine which is said to contain the head of John the Baptist. The head was supposedly found during the excavations for the building of the mosque. There are also many important landmarks within the mosque for the Shi'a. Among them is the place where the head of Ḥusain (the grandson of Muḥammad) was kept on display by Yazīd I. There is also the tomb of Ṣalādīn, (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) which stands in a small garden adjoining the north wall of the mosque.

Construction of the mosque was based on the house of Muḥammad in Medina. This mosque had many functions: it was a place for personal and collective prayer, religious education, political meetings, administration of justice and relief for the ill and homeless. The new mosque was the most impressive in the Islamic world at the time. The interior walls were covered with fine mosaics considered to depict paradise or possibly the Ghouta, which tradition holds, so impressed Muḥammad that he declined to enter it, preferring to taste paradise in the afterlife. The Damascus Mosque was considered one of the marvels of the world because it was one of the largest in its time. The exterior walls were based on the walls of the temple of Jupiter and measured 100 meters by 157.5 meters.

This mosque was one of the first mosques (the other being al-Aqṣa Mosque in Jerusalem) to be shaped in such a way so that visitors could easily see the



miḥrab and each other. The interior of the mosque is mainly plain white, although it contains some fragmentary mosaics and other geometric patterns. It is thought that the mosque used to have the largest golden mosaic in the world at over 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The mosque has been rebuilt several times due to fires in 1069, 1401, and 1893 AD. Many of the early mosaics were lost, although some have been restored since.

The minaret in the southeast corner is called the Minaret of Jesus, as many Muslims believe that this is where Jesus will appear at the end of the world. The mosque does not face Mecca.



*Above: The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus*

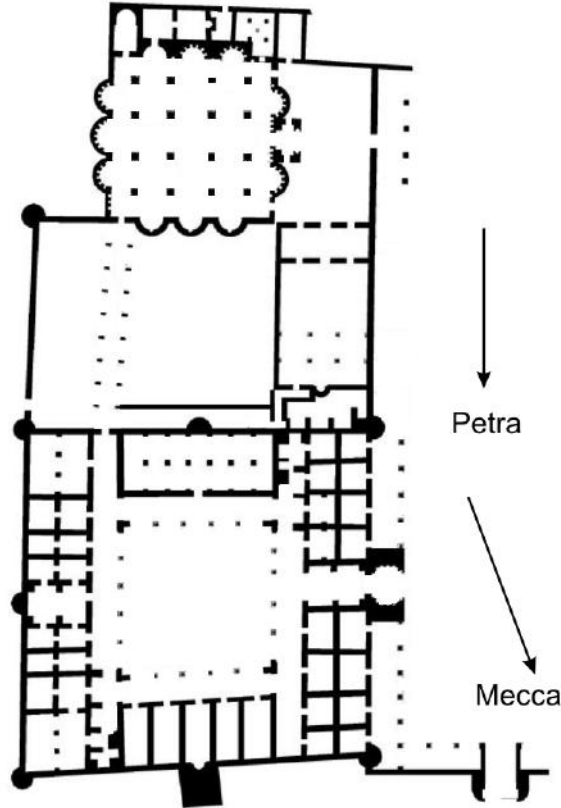
*Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2009 Google*

## Important Historical Event

Al Ṭabarī (Volume XXIII, pg 204) tells us that in the year 94 AH 713 AD, there was a massive earthquake in Syria, and many buildings were destroyed. We will revisit this earthquake later and note the possible impact it would have had on influencing Muslims to understand God's favor was now on the new unaffected Mecca location, and his disfavor on the now destroyed Petra location.

## 95 AH 724 AD

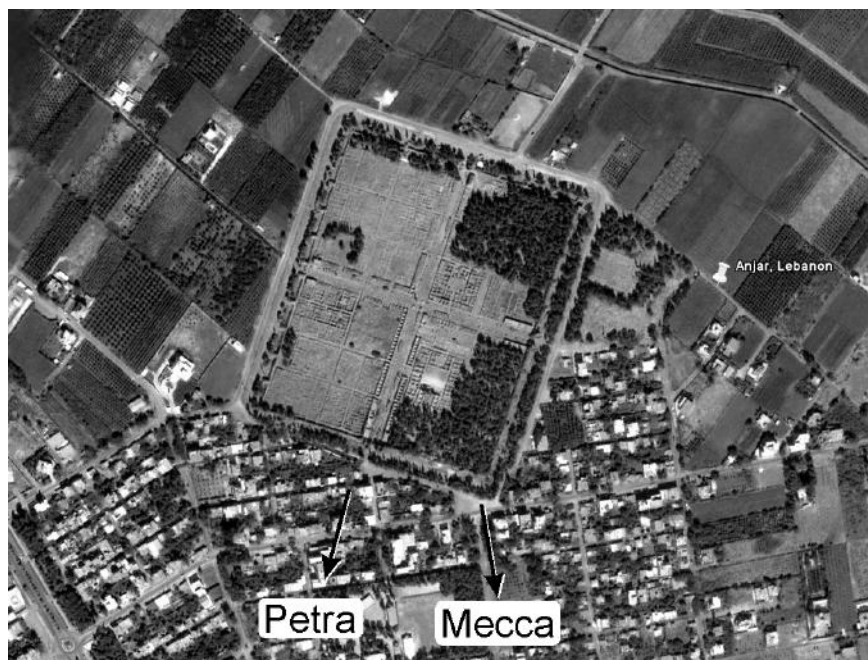
The Khirbat al Mafjar Mosque is located near Jericho in the Jordan Valley. (31°52'41.07N, 35°27'29.97 E) Khirbat al-Mafjar (see the plan below) remains one of the most highly sophisticated Umayyad palaces known for its elaborate mosaics, stucco carvings and overall sculptural magnificence. Khirbat al-Mafjar was built during the reign of Ḥishām Ibn 'Abd al-Mālī, and it was abandoned around 744 AD when the Umayyads dynasty collapsed and the Abbāsids rose to power. The Abbāsids never rebuilt the palace. Once again this is a palace that contained a mosque. It was located almost directly north of Petra, so the mosque (bottom center room) faces south as shown in the floor plan, rather than towards Mecca.



*The above drawing was made by Saeed Arida and is copyrighted by Nasser Rabbat, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, MIT 2003. Obtained from [www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org). The original drawings did not show the qibla directions.*

## 95 AH 714 AD

The Anjar Mosque is located 58 kilometers from Beirut, just a short distance from the Litani River. Anjar is the only exclusively Umayyad site in Lebanon. Its name originates from the term “Ayn Gerrah” which means “the source of Gerrah” in Arabic, referring to an ancient fortress in the region. Commissioned by the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd, son of 'Abd al-Mālīk ibn Marwān in the early 8th century, it prospered as a trading city, situated strategically at the crossroad of the north-south and east-west trade routes. However, by the



*Above: Anjar Mosque*

*Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe, © 2009 Google*

conclusion of Umayyad political domination, no more than thirty years later, Anjar fell rapidly into disrepair and eventually was abandoned. Historically, it remains unique as the only inland commercial center in Lebanon. The entire complex including the palace and mosque are built with an orientation pointing towards Petra.

### 102 AH 720 AD

The Mosque of 'Umar (next page) is located in the ancient Nabataean city of Bosra, about 140 km south of Damascus. Although Bosra is known for its famous, still-intact theatre, the city also displays strong Islamic (especially Ayyūbid) architectural influences. Some of its Islamic monuments include: Hammam Majak, Mosque of al-Khiḍr, Mabarak Mosque, Fāṭima Mosque and the Mosque of 'Umar. Caliph 'Umar, who led the Muslim conquest of Syria in 636, founded the mosque. It was completed in 720 AD by the Caliph Yazid II, and renovated and expanded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the Ayyūbid dynasties who also fortified the theatre and baths. As you can see from the photo on the next page, the mosque's orientation does not point towards Mecca.





Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe, © 2009 Google

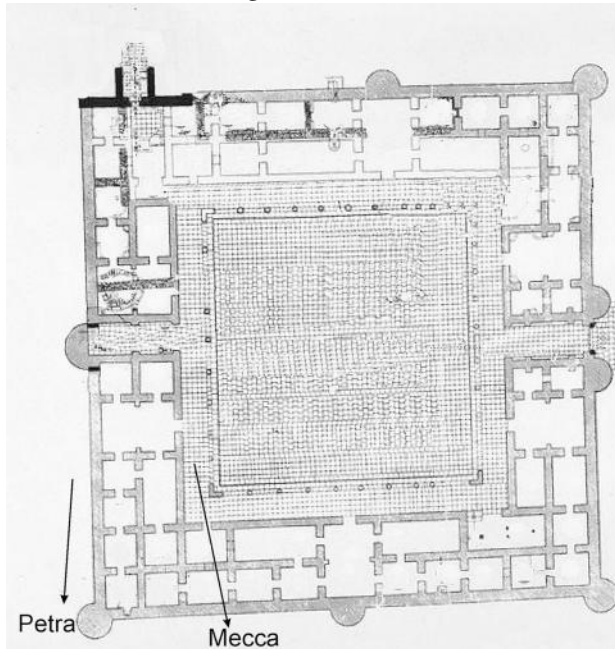
Above: Mosque of 'Umar

## The Time of Confusion

Now begins the period when mosques began to point in different directions. Perhaps the qibla was less important, or perhaps there is some confusion as to which direction the qibla should be.

### 107 AH 724 AD

Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbī (below) is 37 miles west of Palmyra. The mosque is in the lower left corner of this palace. It played a very small part of the overall plan of the building, and was accessed through several other rooms. Unfortunately, the building is in such a state of ruin that it is almost impossible to accurately determine the direction of the qibla, but the whole complex seems to face somewhere between Petra and Mecca.



*The drawing to the right is based on Oleg Grabar's drawing of the building, (Plan of Palace, after Schlumberger), Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library.*

## 109 AH 727 AD

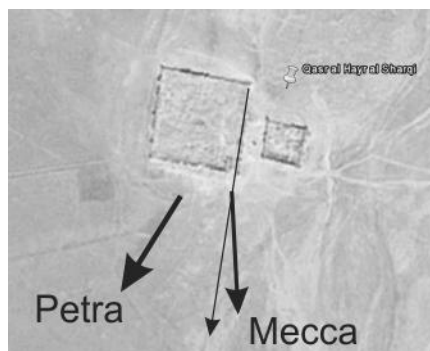
The Mosque in Banbhore, Pakistan is in an area conquered by the Arab general Muḥammad ibn Qāsim in 711 AD. This mosque has a qibla wall, but no miḥrab. The building is oriented east to west, but did not have a miḥrab niche. This mosque appears to face Mecca not Petra.



Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe, © 2009 Google

## 110 AH 728 AD

Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqī in Syria is approximately 97 km northeast of Palmyra and 64 km to the south of Ruṣafa. It was originally constructed in 728-9 under Caliph Ḥishām to be used as a retreat for the Umayyad caliphs. After Umayyad decline in regional authority, the site was absorbed and embellished by the Abbāsids under caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and remained functional until the 14th century. The buildings and mosque don't seem to align to either Mecca or Petra. The small arrow illustrates the qibla.

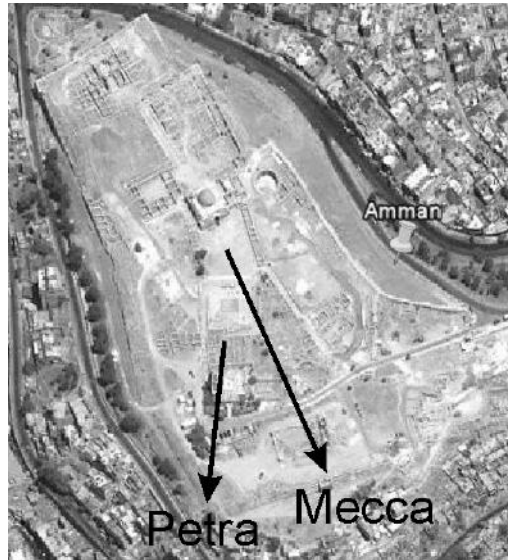


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## 122 AH 740 AD

The second set of Umayyad buildings on the Amman Jordan citadel were built around 740 AD. So far, it has not been possible to absolutely date the time of construction of these buildings. The original Umayyad buildings faced Petra (lower left), but the newer buildings faced Mecca. Clearly the qibla changed direction sometime during this period.

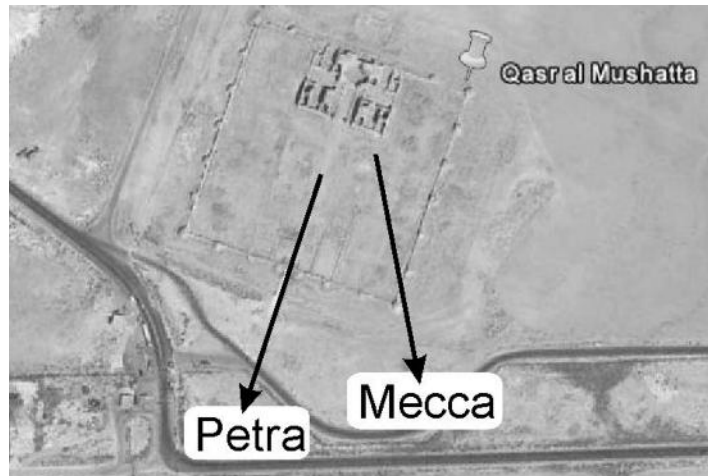
Also, the very first mention of the word Mecca appears this year in the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica* (Crone-Cook 1977 page 22,171)



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## 125 AH 743 AD

Mushatta Mosque, 32 km south of Amman Airport. This palace was one of the largest and most impressive of the Umayyad palaces, built of limestone and brick. The mosque is in the southern part of the structure, facing Petra. Indeed the entire complex faces Petra. Qasr al-Mushatta became a World Heritage site in 2001.



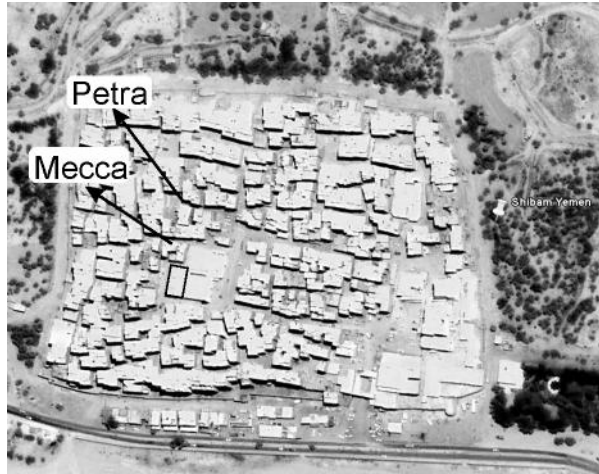
Mushatta Mosque,  
near the Amman  
airport.

Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe,  
© 2009 Google

### 136 AH 753 AD

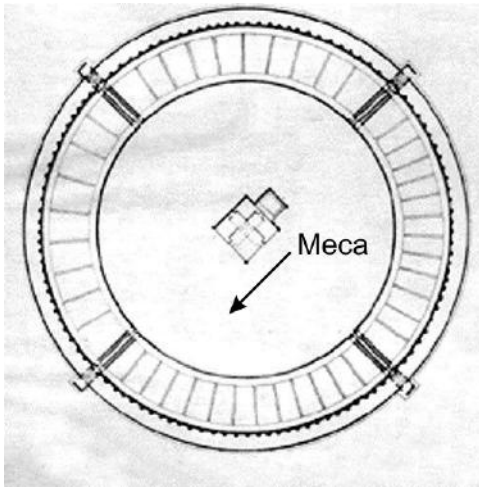
The Great Mosque of Shibām in Yemen. Located at the heart of the old city and surrounded by towering mud brick houses, the Great Mosque of Shibām was originally built in 753 AD. Much of the mosque as it is today is thought to have been built in the fourteenth century. The presence of red baked bricks, typical of ninth century Abbāsid construction, point to reconstruction efforts during the reign of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd; this is the only site in Shibām where baked bricks are found. Little remains of the original structure and so it is useless to our study other than to note that it was built during the time of confusion.

Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2009 Google



### 145 AH 762 AD

The Mosque of al Mansūr. In 754, al-Manşūr became the Abbāsid Caliph, succeeding his brother Saffāh as ruler. By 762 he commissioned the construction of a new eastern capital, choosing Baghdad as his site. The new



circular city was designed with ash drawings onto the ground for al-Manşūr to view prior to construction, which began that same year. By its completion in 767 the Round City measured 2000 meters in diameter. It featured four main gates equally distant from each other: the southwest gate was the Kūfa Gate; the southeast was Başra; the Khurāsān Gate extended to the northeast and the Damascus



Gate to the northwest. The walls were constructed out of mud brick with reed supports, while the domes and vaults were composed of baked brick. The main mosque of the city (see diagram below left) was about 100 meters by 200 meters with columns used to support the ceiling around the edges of the mosque. There was no miḥrab, so one wall was used as the qibla wall. This mosque clearly pointed to Mecca.

### 152 AH 770 AD

The Ribat Fortress in Susa, Tunisia is at the top of the photo below. The Ribat's foundations were laid in 770 AD, and its last stage of construction was in 822 AD. It is attributed to the Aghlabid Ziyādat Allāh. The building consists of a fortified enclosure with one entrance, and attached towers in the corners and in the middle of the walls. The courtyard is surrounded by vaulted porticoes on two levels with cells behind. The southern side of the second floor is occupied by a mosque with a miḥrab in its center, pointing south rather than towards Mecca or Petra.



*Above: Susa mosque was built late in 850 AD. Its orientation points south rather than towards Petra or Mecca.*

*Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2009 Google*

## 155 AH 772 AD

The Great Mosque of Raqqah in Raqqah, Syria is located in the northern section of the city's heart. Its plan is rectangular (108 meters x 92 meters) with 1.7 meter thick mud brick walls fortified with semi-circular towers at the corners. All that remains today are the baked-brick minaret and prayer hall (ḥaram) facade with eleven arches that were added by Nur al-Din al-Zanki during the 1165 renovation of the mosque. The whole building and complex do not face Mecca.



*Great Mosque of Raqqah*

© 2010 Ones/Spot Image, © 2009 Google

## 168 AH 784 AD

The Great Mosque of Córdoba, Spain was built starting in 784 AD. (See the satellite photo below.) The qibla of this mosque has puzzled researchers for many years as, like the Susa mosque, it points to neither Mecca nor Petra. Some suspect that since the Umayyad rulers were at odds with the Abbāsīd



*Image © 2010 Instituto de Cartografía de Andalucía, Image © 2010 Digital Globe, © 2009 Google*

rulers, they refused to use the same qibla (Mecca), and yet felt that they could not point to the original Holy City as the Black Stone was no longer there. In the end, they pointed the mosque south (60 degrees south of east) which was more towards South Africa, just as the Susa mosque was oriented. The last major renovation of this mosque was in 987 AD. For many years this mosque was the second largest in the world.

## 202 AH 817 AD

The Great Mosque of Kairouān, Tunisia. As it stands today, this mosque was built by the Aghlabid governor of Kairouān, Ziyādat Allāh, between 817 and 838 AD. He erected the building on the site of an older mosque, originally constructed by 'Uqba ibn Nāfi at the time of the 670 AD Arab conquest of North Africa. Although the current mosque retains virtually no trace of the original seventh-century building, it is still often referred to as “Mosque of Sidi 'Uqba,” or “Mosque of 'Uqba Ibn Nāfi.” Historically, it has been accorded great significance as the first mosque in the first town of Islam in the West. This mosque also points 60 degrees south of East.



*Great Mosque of Kairouān, Tunisia*

*Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2009 Google*

## 236 AH 850 AD

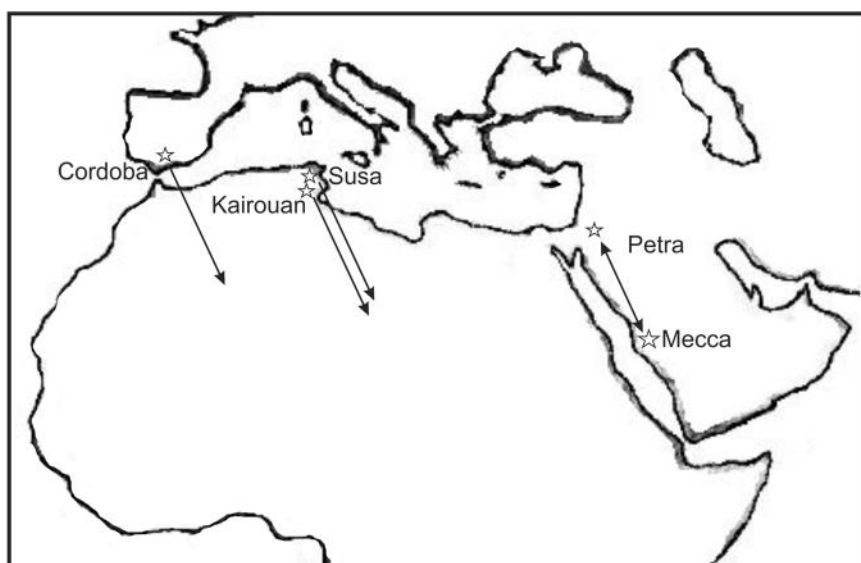
The Great Mosque of Susa, Tunisia was built in 850 AD. As we mentioned on the previous page, (satellite photo on page 269) the Ribat Fort was built to the north and its mosque was oriented towards the south, so when the city mosque was built it was also oriented in the same direction.

## The mosques of Spain and North Africa

As we have noticed, the mosques of Spain and North Africa all had a different qibla during this time period. These mosques include: the Ribat Fortress mosque in Susa, the main Susa mosque in Tunisia, the Kairouān mosque in Tunisia, and the Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain. Each of these mosques pointed south (60 degrees south of East) but since they were in different locations they pointed to different places in the south. This has long been a puzzle to historians.

In order to understand this, we must consider what was taking place in the Middle East at this time. After 133 AH (750 AD) the Abbāsids defeated the Umayyads and established a new center of Islamic rule in the city of Baghdad. From this point on, all the Middle Eastern (Abbāsīd) mosques pointed to Mecca. In Spain and North Africa, the Umayyads continued to rule, and the Muslim world was split into two, with Abbāsids in the east, and Umayyads in the west. While the east was still struggling with dissension and strife, the Umayyads in the west were experiencing a golden age with an expansion of learning, culture and architecture.

With the exception of a couple of mosques which were probably constructed on the foundations of previous mosques, all new Abbāsīd mosques faced Mecca from this point on, while the Umayyads in the west chose a different qibla. From the map below it appears that their qibla ran parallel to a line drawn between Petra and Mecca.





## OTHER MOSQUES

### Unknown date

Job's Tomb, Salalah, Oman. This mosque is 1500 miles away from Petra. The original mosque faced Petra, (the locals say it was Jerusalem) and was located under the current memorial tomb for the prophet Job. When the newer mosque was built, the foundations of the older mosque were covered. When I visited this location, I could not accurately determine the direction of the original mosque.



Image © 2010 GeoEye, © 2009 Google

### 802 AH 1399 AD

Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Only four large fragments and a minaret survive from this large mosque. Even though it is now in a ruinous state, we can still determine that the qibla did not face Mecca. The locals acknowledge this anomaly and have a quaint legend stating that the Hanafi who used the mosque prayed due west, and the Shafi'i who used the



Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe, © 2009 Google

same mosque prayed due south. In the end they agreed on a qibla between the two. Since the mosque’s qibla points to Petra it is more plausible that the mosque was built on the site of an earlier mosque whose qibla already faced Petra.

Summary

*Right: A photograph taken sometime between 1905 and 1915 by photographer Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii showing the mosque’s appearance after its collapse in the earthquake of 1897.*



The diagram below illustrates the time line in which the qibla changed from Petra to Mecca. During the first 107 Islamic years, the qibla clearly pointed to the Petra region. Then confusion broke out and the qibla direction seemed to be in question with some pointing to Petra, some to Mecca and some along a line that was parallel to a line drawn between the two. After the Abbāsids took control of the empire, all mosques pointed to Mecca. In every case, there are mosques from which we can no longer determine the original qibla because of destruction or changes to the old foundations. But enough mosques survive to adequately map the change of the qibla from Petra to Mecca.

The Changing of the Qibla		
100% point to Petra (of those mosques we could determine)	12 % point to Petra 50 % point to Mecca 38 % point parallel	100 % point to Mecca
Petra	Confusion	Mecca
1 AH - 107 AH 622 AD - 725 AD	107 AH - 207 AH 725 AD - 822 AD	207 AH - Present 822AD - Present
2nd Civil War		Abbasid rule begins

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### LITERARY EVIDENCE

In the material to follow we will examine some of the issues presented in chapter sixteen, as well as several additional ones that appear in early Islamic literature. In chapter sixteen I discussed some of the difficulties that have arisen with the current Meccan position of the original Holy City of Islam. Now in this chapter we will add to this various evidences that support the northern (Petra region) position. The research is taken from a variety of early Islamic literature. If you are unfamiliar with a source, please check it in Appendix B which provides a list of these sources, along with some additional comments. The points below are not arranged in any particular order, and some of them are repeated from chapter sixteen with further information added here.

#### 1. The original Holy City had clay and loam

Al Ṭabarī relates the story (*The History of Al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VI, 1079, pg 6) of how 'Abdallāh, the father of Muḥammad visited a wife whom he had in addition to Aminah. He had been working in the field and traces of soil were still on him. When he invited her to lie with him she made him wait because of this, so he went out, performed his ablutions, washed off the clay and went to Aminah's quarters instead. In this way the prophet Muḥammad was conceived. R.B. Serjeant, in his comments on Alfred Guillaume's translation of the same story in the *Sirah* (Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, xxi, 1958, pages 1-14) explains that the Arabic word used here for soil means a cultivated plot or field, and notes that there is little cultivatable land near Mecca. (See Ishāq, pg 69 for the parallel account)

While there is only sand and rock at the current Mecca site with no evidence of ancient cultivation, the city of Petra had fields and soil in the various places. There were private and public gardens, as well as running water brought to the city through aqueducts and clay pipes. Archeologists have described fruit trees, grapes and gardens existing in ancient Petra. Even today there are cultivated plots of land between Petra and el-Beidha or Little Petra which is 5 km away. Researchers have discovered that only one hundred years ago the hills around Petra were covered with several indigenous tree species including Kermes oak, Phoenician juniper, Mt. Atlas pistachio, and carob trees. (<http://www.petrationaltrust.org/UI/ShowContent.aspx?ContentId=57>)

*Right: A pistachio tree in the center of Petra beside the Nymphaeum is claimed to be over 450 years old. (Petra Archeological Park, <http://www.petrainpark.com>)*



In addition to this, a mere five kilometers from Petra is a Neolithic village where archeologist Diana Kirkbride-Helbaek excavated from 1958 to 1967 and again in 1983. (Byrd, 2007) During her excavation Dr. Kirkbride-Helbaek discovered old granaries and hypothesized that it was at el-Beidha or nearby villages like this where grains were first domesticated, demonstrating that plots of cultivation existed in the Petra area many centuries before the time of Muḥammad. When reading the descriptions of trees, grasses, glens, fields and soil near the Holy City, would Petra not be a better fit than the barren wadi bed of present day Mecca?

## 2. The Holy City is called Bacca in Qur'ān (Sūra 48.24)

The word “*bacca*” appears in the Bible, and is used many times. It is an ancient Semitic word that means to *weep* or *lament*. If a location was assigned the title “Bacca” it would mean the place of bacca. For example *The Valley of Bacca* means the *Valley of Weeping* or the *Valley of Tears*. This is usually because

some calamity happened there that caused people to weep. There are a number of Bacca or Baka valleys in the Middle East today, each named because of some tragedy that occurred there in the past. By associating Mecca with Bacca, the Qur'an tells us that the original location of the Holy City was a place of calamity. Something terrible happened there at some point so that people remembered it as a place of weeping. While there is no evidence for any substantial tragedies occurring at the Mecca site in Saudi Arabia before 800 AD, there are a number of tragic events that took place at Petra including the following major earthquakes:

363 AD – Recorded by Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem (Brock, 1977)

551 AD – (Darawcheh, Sbeinati, Margottini, & Paolini, 2000)  
(Russell, 1985)

713 AD – Recorded by Al Ṭabarī XXIII (Hinds, 1990, 1256, page 204)

There is archeological evidence that these earthquakes caused a great deal of damage. The greatest damage was probably inflicted in 713 AD when not only was Petra affected, but the entire Mediterranean seacoast. Even the mosque in Jericho was destroyed, so much so that it was never rebuilt. (Nur & Burgess, 2008) It may have been that in 713 AD, Petra was finally abandoned since no records of Petra exist after this date.

The only evidence that we have of a calamity happening at Mecca is an old legend related to us by Ibn Ishāq (Guillaume, 2006, page 47) *“Any king who came to profane its sanctity died on the spot. It is said that it was called Bakka because it used to break the necks of tyrants when they introduced innovations therein.”* Ibn Hishām adds to this: *“Abū 'Ubayda told me that Bakka is the name of the valley of Mecca because it is thickly populated and quoted to me the verse: When great heat overtakes him who waters his camels with yours, leave him alone until his camels are rounded up.”* The word populated here is “tabakku” or crowded. The problem with this concept is that Mecca was very scarcely populated until 800 AD.

Since ancient cities were built of stacked rocks and timbers, earthquakes brought massive destruction and the deaths of many people. We will look more at the destruction left by earthquakes when we discuss the introduction of the Ka'ba later in this chapter.





*Above left: Petra is littered with fallen columns.  
Left and above: In 1962 archeologists began reconstruction work in Petra, lifting columns and walls back into place. In many cases they could easily tell how to do the reconstruction as the columns and walls lay completely on their sides. (The Illustrated London News, March 31, 1962, Page 502/503, Archeological Section no 2085, Used by permission.)*

### 3. The well of Zamzam

Every Muslim accepts it as fact that the Well of ZamZam is located beside the Ka'ba, and that this well is located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. During my research I was struck with the name z-m-z-m. I searched through my electronic database of ancient manuscripts and writings and was surprised to have only one result. It was from the Bible. (Deuteronomy 2:20) The Zamzummims were renowned in ancient times as giants who lived in the land of Seir, Edom and Ammon. The Edomites ('Ud) "overthrew them, and dwelt in their stead." It would seem to me that if one was looking for the well of Zamzam they would need to look in the land of Seir or Edom in the mountains near Petra. Other than this, I found no other reference to z-m-z-m.

The sacred well in Mecca is situated a few meters to the east of the Ka'ba. The Zamzam well is also called the Well of Ishmael. It is 35 meters deep and is marked by an elegant dome. The water is considered health-giving, and pilgrims collect it in bottles to bring back home to their own countries. Sometimes a pilgrim tries to dip his or her future burial clothes in the waters of Zamzam. Muslim tradition holds that the well of Zamzam was opened by the

*Right: The well of zamzam is now inside the masjid complex.*

*Below right: This illustration was taken from: "The Saracens, from the earliest times to the fall of Bagdad" by Arthur Gilman. 1877, pg 23. Caption: Modern Pilgrims bathing in Zamzam*



angel Gabriel to save Hagar and her son Ishmael from dying of thirst when they were out in the desert.

It is interesting to note that the Arabic word for *well* and *cistern* are the same. Sunan Abū Daoud 2507 records how the Arabs swept out Zamzam and removed the snakes, which makes it sound more like a cistern than a well. Interestingly enough, Petra is known as a city of cisterns.

#### 4. The cave of Ḥira

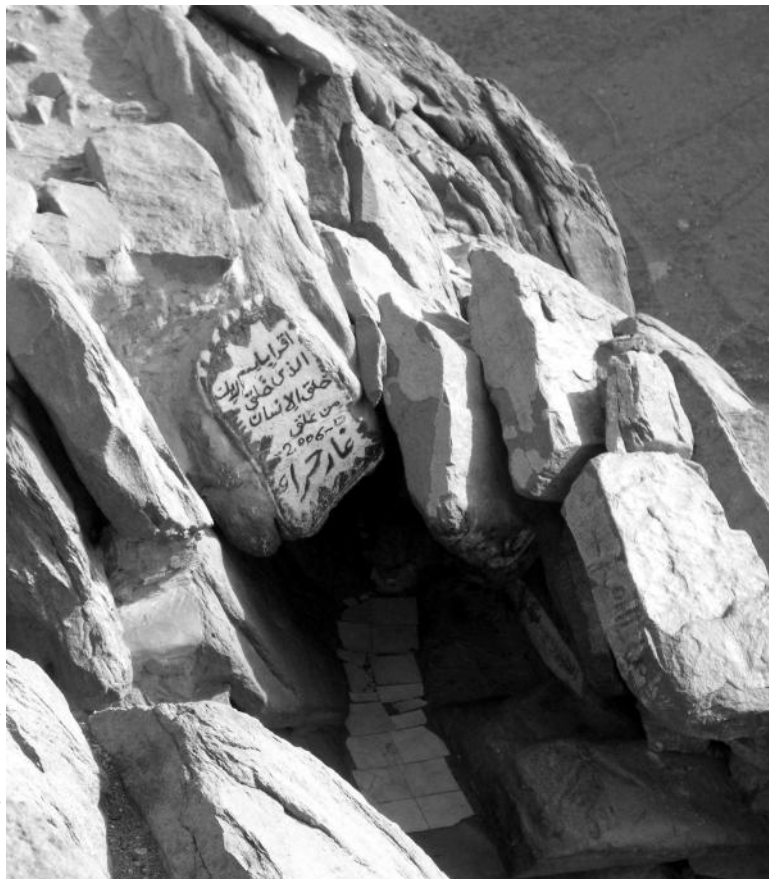
Muḥammad received his revelation in the cave of Ḥira. (Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī ḥadīth 1.3) In his book *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Ibn Ishāq tells us exactly where the mountain of Ḥira is located:

*Now al-Khaṭṭāb had so harassed Zayd that he forced him to withdraw to the upper part of Mecca, and he stopped in the mountain of Ḥira, facing the town.* (Ishāq 148, page 102)

If you look at the map on page 227 you will see that today people only call the cave Ḥira, and that it is located on Jebal Nour. Ibn Ishāq clearly calls Ḥira a mountain, located in the upper region of Mecca. Since Mecca is built on a flat surface, it is impossible to tell if the present cave is actually the cave where



Muḥammad received his vision. The cave on Mount Nour is more or less a slab of rock that has fallen over, creating a hollow space underneath it about 4 meters in length and 1.7 meters wide.



*The cave of Hira under some fallen slabs of rock.*

After receiving the revelation, Muḥammad decided to climb the mountain above the cave to throw himself off. (Ibn Ishāq 1150 page 106) Midway up Jebal Hira the angel confronted him again. Even though the messengers of Khadija were searching for him below (on the high ground of Mecca) they did not see him. While it is difficult to imagine this scenario being playing out in Mecca's geography, there are a number of caves in Petra facing the valley that fit this description. One of these is a cave that received considerable veneration and worship in ancient times.

## 5. The Qur'ān's attention on northern Arabia

As we have studied the geography of the Qur'ān, including the people of

'Ad, Thamud and Midian, we can see that these are all north Arabian civilizations. The people of 'Ad (Edomites) and the people of Thamud (Nabataeans) all dwelt in northern Arabia in the Petra region. The tribes that descended from Ishmael also all settled in northern Arabia. Since all of the geographical references are from northern Arabia, it is natural to conclude that the Qur'ān was written to people who had a north Arabian perspective. In other words, when the prophet spoke to the Meccans about 'Ad, he simply had to point to the remains that they left behind. In much the same way, the people Muḥammad was speaking to lived in the shadow of the great Thamudic monuments. These references were not incidental.

In the minds of Muḥammad's audience, there had been three times in the past when Arabia was great. The first time was when it was united under the tribal confederacy led by Edom and was known as 'Ad. Muḥammad speaks of 'Ad only when he addresses the people in the Holy City. The second time Arabia rose to prominence was when the tribes of Arabia united under the leadership of the Midianites who oppressed and raided the settled peoples to the north. Muḥammad speaks of Midian when he addresses the people in Medina in the heartland of Midian. The third and most significant time the Arabian Peninsula united was under the leadership of the Thamudic people who established what we know today as the Nabataean empire. This empire controlled not only all of Arabia, but also lands all the way to Damascus in the north, and the entire Negev to the west. It was not by chance that Muḥammad referred to these people. They were significant people in the minds of his listeners. This leads us to believe that Muḥammad was addressing an audience in North Arabia, the homeland of Ishmael, 'Ad, Thamud, and Midian.

## 6. The Holy City's high and low side

*When the Prophet came to Mecca he entered from its higher side and left from its lower side.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:647) There are many mentions of this between 2:645 and 2:657.

*We (Ā'isha speaking) set out with the Prophet with the intention of performing ḥajj only. The Prophet reached Mecca and performed ṭawāf of the Ka'ba and between Ṣafa and Marwa and did not finish the Ihṛām, because he had the Hādi with him. His companions and his wives performed ṭawāf (of the Ka'ba and between Ṣafa and Marwa), and those who had no Hādi with them finished their Ihṛām. I got the menses and performed all the ceremonies of ḥajj. So, when the Night of Ḥasba (night of departure) came, I said, "O Allāh's Apostle! All your*

companions are returning with ḥajj and 'umra except me." He asked me, "Didn't you perform ṭawāf of the Ka'ba ('umra) when you reached Mecca?" I said, "No." He said, "Go to Tan'im with your brother 'Abdur-Raḥmān, and assume Ihṛām for 'umra and I will wait for you at such and such a place." So I went with 'Abdur-Raḥmān to Tan'im and assumed Ihṛām for 'umra. Then Ṣafiya bint Huyay got menses. The Prophet said, "'Aqra Halqa! You will detain us! Didn't you perform ṭawāf-al-ifāda on the day of nahr (slaughtering)?" She said, "Yes, I did." He said, "Then there is no harm, depart." So I met the Prophet when he was ascending the heights towards Mecca and I was descending, or vice-versa. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:815)

When considering the topography around Mecca, the phrase "ascending the heights towards Mecca" does not make sense. This term however could apply to several places in the Petra region as there is clearly a higher and lower side to the city.

*During the year of the conquest (of Mecca), the Prophet entered Mecca through its upper part through Kada.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 5:586)

*That she said, "O Allāh's Apostle! Your companions are returning with the reward of both ḥajj and 'umra, while I am returning with (the reward of) ḥajj only." He said to her, "Go, and let 'Abdur-Raḥmān (i.e. your brother) make you sit behind him (on the animal)." So, he ordered 'Abdur-Raḥmān to let her perform 'umra from Al-Tan'im. Then the Prophet waited for her at the higher region of Mecca till she returned.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:227)

*Allāh's apostle came to Mecca through its higher region on the day of the conquest (of Mecca) riding his she-camel on which Usāma was riding behind him.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:231)

*Now al-Khaṭṭāb had so harassed Zayd that he forced him to withdraw to the upper part of Mecca, and he stopped in the mountain of Hira, facing the town.* (Ishāq 148, pg 102) It is interesting to note that Mount Hira was located in the "upper part of Mecca." However, today Mount Hira (Nour) is located behind Jebal Marwān and Khandima.

Today people sometimes call the area around Mecca a valley, but in actuality it is a large open area, with low rocky mountains rising out of the sand. (See illustrations on page 263-4) It is my belief that the early description of Mecca and its mountains do not fit Mecca today, which is flat and surrounded by barren rocks rising from the desert floor. The terms higher and lower part of the Holy City could easily be applied to Petra, which was split apart by a colonnaded road in the middle. The higher part of the city was to the north and the lower part of the city to the south. In the north is a large mountain with an impressive cave filled with baetyls that could easily fit the description of Hira.

## 7. The Holy City could be entered and exited by a crack in the rock or a narrow mountain path.

*Allāh's Apostle used to enter Mecca from the high thaniya and used to leave Mecca from the low thaniya.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:645) The thaniya is a narrow mountain pass. *The Prophet went on advancing till he reached the thaniya (i.e. a mountainous way) through which one would go to them (i.e. people of Quraish).* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 3:891)

*Ibn 'Umar used to spend the night at Dhū-Tiwa in between the two thaniyas and then he would enter Mecca through the thaniya which is at the higher region of Mecca, and whenever he came to Mecca for ḥajj or 'umra, he never made his she-camel kneel down except near the gate of the Masjid (Sacred Mosque) and then he would enter (it) and go to the Black (stone) Corner and start from there circum-ambulating the Ka'ba seven times: hastening in the first three rounds (Ramal) and walking in the last four. On finishing, he would offer two Rakat prayer and set out to perform ṭawāf between Ṣafa and Marwa before returning to his dwelling place. On returning (to Medina) from ḥajj or 'umra, he used to make his camel kneel down at Al-Batha which is at Dhū-al-Ḥulīfa, the place where the Prophet used to make his camel kneel down.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:820)

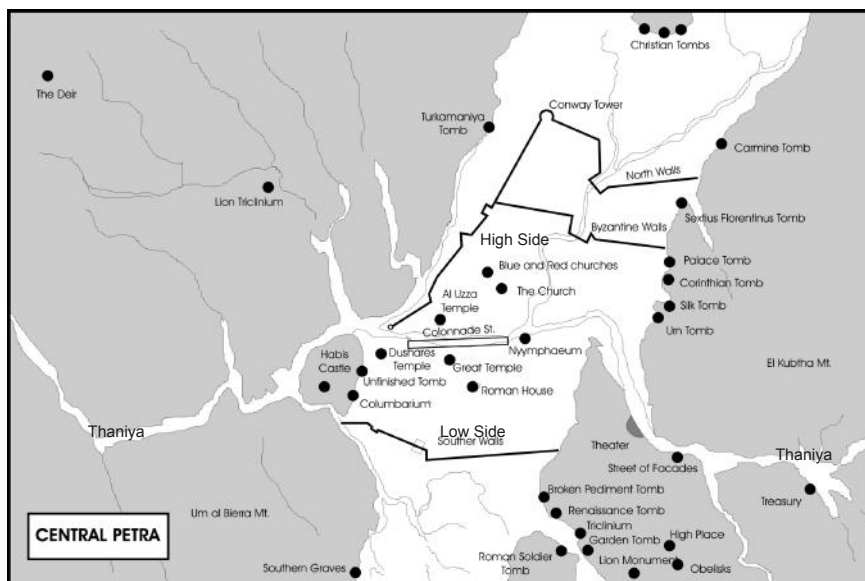


*Right: The author admires the thaniya walls in Petra, now called the Siq. Note the water channel to the left of the path. The mountain here towers 400 feet above the thaniya floor.*

There are four ways into the Petra basin. Since Petra is in a valley, one could enter from either end of the valley. One end is considerably higher than the other, hence the higher and lower side of Petra. However, there are two *thaniya* entrances that could be used. One of these is the famous siq that tourists pass through to enter the city. The other is on the far side of the colonnaded street and leads into the maze of canyons that eventually empty out into Wadi Araba. (See the city map below)

## 8. The Holy City had walls and a stream

Ibn Ishāq records (Ishāq, 823, Pg 554) “...they surrounded him as he was at the side of one of the walls of Mecca...” There is no archeological evidence that the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia ever had city walls. Yet here the Holy City is described as having walls. The city of Petra had two walls which crossed the valley protecting the high and low side of the city.



Above: The Petra valley showing walls and two *thaniyas* with a stream running across the valley from one *thaniya* to the other. The north side of the Colonnade Street is higher than the south side of the street. Between the *thaniyas* there is a stream bed.

The ḥadīths tell us: *When the Prophet performed the ṭawāf of the Ka'ba, he did Ramal during the first three rounds and in the last four rounds he used to walk, and while doing ṭawāf between Ṣafa and Marwa, he used to run in the midst of the rain water passage.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:685)



There is no natural water flow in Mecca today, but in Petra a stream ran directly from the mountain on one side of the valley to the mountain on the other, through the thaniyas. Could these mountains have been Şafa and Marwa with a stream bed running between them?



*Right: One of the towers on the walls of Petra*

## 9. The Zumurrud

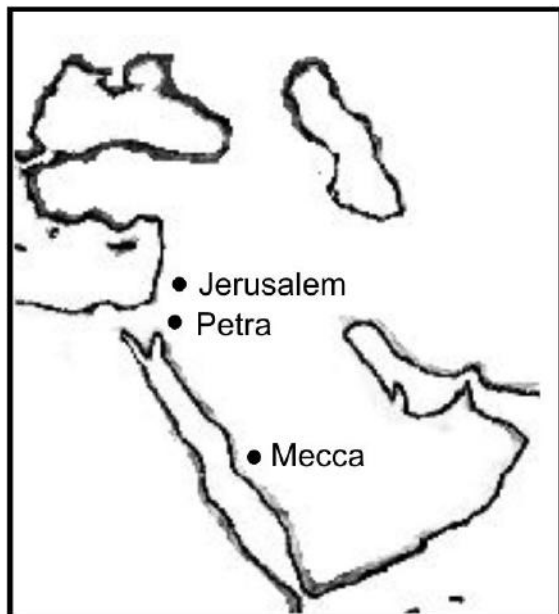
Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ishāq al-Rawandī was born in Marwarrudh Iraq, about the year 815 AD. As a young man he joined the Mutazila of Baghdad and gained prominence among them. Around the age of forty he became estranged from this group and formed close alliances with more traditional Muslims as well as non-Muslims such as Manichaeans, Jews and also Christians. He wrote against the Mutazila, and they reciprocated in kind. While most Muslim theologians described him as an outspoken and dangerous heretic, some appear to present him in a neutral or even positive light. One of his more controversial books is known as Kitāb al-Zumurrud in which he mentions the miracles of the prophets such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. The text of the Zumurrud has not survived to our times, but we can surmise his arguments from the writings of various later scholars who quoted him and argued against him.

The Zumurrud contained arguments both for and against the existence of prophets. This is stated explicitly in the Majalis Muayyadiyya of the Ismāʿīlī al-Muayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi (1077 AD). The Majalis Muayyadiyya is the only source that contains relatively long citations of arguments against prophecy which are identified explicitly as belonging to the Zumurrud. (Kraus, 1994)

While this is not a place to argue Muslim theology, it is important to notice that al-Rawandī argues that Muḥammad's night journey to Jerusalem was not a miracle because these two cities are close enough together so that a per-

son could go from one to the other and back in one night. (Stroumsa, 1994)

Muslim scholars have rejected the authenticity of the Zumurrud because of statements like this. Since they believed he was obviously wrong on this point, all of the materials in the Zumurrud are considered wrong. However, if the original Holy City of Islam was located at Petra, this description would be absolutely correct. The distance from Petra to Jerusalem is only 100 miles. While it would be a strenuous trip on a horse, one could indeed travel from one to the other and back in one day. Thus al-Rawandi's argument does support



the idea that Islam's Holy City was in Petra, not in Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Years later when the Muslims only remembered Mecca, al-Rawandi's arguments seemed totally absurd. Everyone knew that Mecca was more than 760 miles from Jerusalem, and that the passage crossed some of the most barren and challenging deserts in the world.

*Map: Jerusalem is much closer to Petra than present day Mecca.*

## 10. The Arabic language

Dr. Robert Hoyland, who studied under Cook and Crone, contends that Arabic script developed from Nabataean Aramaic script (a northern Arabian phenomena). He argues for the existence of the Arabic language even if it was not written down in Arabic script. He gives an example of an inscription in Arabic that even predates the coming of the Nabataeans to Dedan. (Hoyland, 2008, pg 51-69) This supports the idea that Islam rose in the north of Arabia.

## 11. Petra missing in all early Islamic literature.

As we have shown in Section IV, for centuries Petra was the center of the trade-route and the focus of the twice-yearly pilgrimage in Arabia. While the earthquakes of 363 AD and 551 AD damaged the city, life continued on there for several more decades.



Until recently, it was thought that Petra was largely destroyed by the earthquake in 551 AD. However, since the discovery of the Petra scrolls, the existence of Byzantine Petra has come to light. In 1993, Hamoudi al-Bedoul, a local Bedouin, discovered the first remains of carbonized papyrus scrolls while excavating at a Byzantine Church in Petra. The 152 “Petra Scrolls” represent the largest collection of ancient texts yet discovered in Jordan. They contain a variety of personal records including sermons, wills and contracts from the 5th and 6th centuries. It would seem logical to believe that the scrolls were preserved by the 551 earthquake; however, the scrolls contain documents from 528, and others from the reign of Tiberius Mauricius 582-602 AD, meaning that some are dated more than fifty years after the earthquake. None of the documents that have been deciphered refer to damages or lost property that could be attributed to an earthquake. In fact, according to leading papyrologist Ludwig Koenen who is in charge of deciphering half of the Petra Scrolls, “indications create the overwhelming picture of Petra as a viable city with a functioning hinterland throughout the sixth century.” (Koenen 530)

If this is the case, then why is there no mention of Petra in any of the early Islamic literature? There are records of people passing through the region and armies marching through this area, but Petra is never mentioned. At the very same time, non-Islamic literature mentions Petra, but never Mecca. There is no mention of Mecca in any literature until 740 AD when it first appears in the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica*. (Crone-Cook 1977, page 22,171)

If Petra is the first Islamic Holy City before the Black Stone was moved to Mecca, then would it not make sense that later writers would eliminate every mention of Petra? Is it possible that the descriptions of Petra were transferred to Mecca in Arabia, and thus every mention of Petra was removed from Islamic literature?



*Above: A mosaic floor from a Byzantine church in Petra.*

## 12. Issues involving the Ka'ba

The Ka'ba is the focal point of Islamic worship. It is a small cube shaped building in Mecca that is usually draped with a black ornate cloth. Around this cube is the mosque, known as *Masjid al-haram*. The Arabic root for *masjad* is *sjd*. This word mean to bow down or to prostrate. Thus, the noun of place for *sjd* is the place of bowing down or the place of prostration (masjad). (Wehr, page 463) The idea of *haram*, or *forbidden* is discussed in the next few pages.

All Muslims face the Ka'ba during their prayer time, no matter where they are located in the world. Muslims are also required to perform a pilgrimage, (hajj) at least once in their lifetime. During the hajj, pilgrims are required in the rituals to walk around the Ka'ba several times in a counter-clockwise direction known as circumambulation or *tawāf*. Many non-Muslims are confused about the matter of the Ka'ba, as they consider the black ornate cloth-covered building to be the stone itself, when the stone is actually quite small, around 12 inches in diameter. (al-Butanuni, page 12) The stone is housed in a silver container so that pilgrims can touch only one end of it.



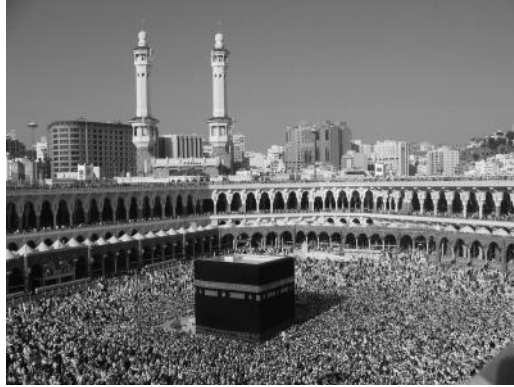
*Right: A pilgrim beside the Black Stone housed in a round silver container.*

The Qur'ān has several names that it uses when speaking of the Ka'ba. These include: The House, The Sacred House, The Ancient House, The City of Security, The Holy House, the Forbidden Masjid, and the Ka'ba. We will examine these terms below to get a better understanding of the actual place of worship in the original Holy City, how it came into existence, and what was meant by these terms in ancient times.

### The "House" (Bayt)

The Qur'ān refers to a *house* in various places. Most Muslims believe this is the Ka'ba in Mecca, but tying the *house* to Mecca in a concrete fashion in ancient literature is difficult.

*And when we made the house a resort for mankind and a sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood. And we imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ishmael, (saying): Purify my house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves. And when*



*Abraham prayed: My Lord! Make this a region of security and bestow upon its people fruits, such of them as believe in Allāh and the Last Day, He answered: As for him who disbelieveth, I shall leave him in contentment for a while, then I shall compel him to the doom of fire--a hapless journey's end! And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the house, (Abraham prayed): Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only thou, art the hearer, the knower. Sūra 2:125-127 (Pickthal)*

*The first house appointed for men was that at Bakka full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings: In it are signs manifest; (for example) the station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allāh those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith Allāh stands not in need of any of his creatures. Sūra 3:96-97 (Yūsuf Ali)*

*Let them adore the lord of this house who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear. Sūra 106.3-4*

In Sūra 11:73 Abraham and Lot are called “the people of the house.” Sūra 22 also emphasizes that Abraham was the founder of the house:

*Behold! We gave the site to Abraham of the house (saying): “Associate not anything (in worship) with me; and sanctify my house for those who compass it round or stand up or bow or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). Sūra 22:26 (Yūsuf Ali)*

### **The Ancient House**

The Qur'an also uses the term “Ancient House” in Sūra 22:29 & 33:

*Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them perform their vows and circumambulate the ancient house .(29)*

*In them ye have benefits for a term appointed: in the end their place of sacrifice is near the ancient house. (33)*

## The City of Security

This term is used about the Holy City, placing it in Northern Arabia near Mount Sinai where figs and olives grow:

*By the fig and the olive, and the Mount of Sinai, this city of security, we have indeed created man in the best of molds. Sūra 95:1-4 (Yusif Alī)*

## The Sacred House

The Qur'ān also refers to this house as a 'sacred house.' Abraham prays in Sūra 14:37 (Yusif Alī):

*Oh our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation by thy sacred house; (forbidden house) (Baytak Muharam) in order oh our Lord that they may establish regular prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.*

The sacred house was in a valley between two mountains known as Şafa and Marwa. Sūra 2:158 makes it plain:

*Behold! Şafa and Marwa are among the symbols of Allāh. So if those who visit the house in the season or at other times should compass them round it is no sin in them. And if anyone obeyeth his own impulse to good be sure that Allāh is he who recogniseth and knoweth. (Yūsuf Alī)*

*O ye who believe! violate not the sanctity of the symbols of Allāh nor of the sacred month nor of the animals brought for sacrifice nor the garlands that mark out such animals nor the people resorting to the sacred house seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord. But when ye are clear of the sacred precincts and of pilgrim garb ye may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the sacred mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye not one another in sin and rancor: fear Allāh: for Allāh is strict in punishment. (Yusif Alī) Note Sūra 2:2*

## The "Holy House" (Bayt al-Maqdas) is different from the Ka'ba

If the term 'house' refers to the Ka'ba, then it is interesting to note how the Qur'ān and ḥadīths may also refer to 'Bayt Maqdis' or the Holy House as being separate from the Ka'ba.

Al Bukhārī, writing 250 years after the Hijra, records a very interesting ḥadīth where he says the original direction of prayer was towards the Bayt al Maqdis (Holy House), and later it turned towards the Ka'ba.

*Allāh's Apostle prayed facing Baitul-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months but he loved to face the Ka'ba (at Mecca) so Allāh revealed: "Verily, We have seen*

*the turning of your face to the heaven!" (2.144) So the Prophet faced the Ka'ba and the fools amongst the people namely 'the Jews' said, "What has turned them from their qibla (Bait-ul-Maqdis) which they formerly observed?" (Allāh revealed): "Say: 'To Allāh belongs the east and the west. He guides whom he will to a straight path'." (2.142) A man prayed with the prophet (facing the Ka'ba) and went out. He saw some of the Anṣār praying the 'Asr prayer with their faces towards Bait-ul-Maqdis, he said, "I bear witness that I prayed with Allāh's apostle facing the Ka'ba." So all the people turned their faces towards the Ka'ba. Bukhārī 1.392*

In the ḥadīth above, Muslims claim the "holy house" was Jerusalem, not the house mentioned in Sūra 3.96

*Yahyā related to me from Mālik from Yahyā ibn Sa'īd that Sa'īd ibn al-Muṣayyab said, "The Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, prayed towards the holy house for sixteen months after arriving in Medina. Then the qibla was moved, two months before the battle of Badr. Al Mūwaṭṭa 14:7*

*The prophet prayed facing the holy house for sixteen or seventeen months but he wished that his qibla would be the Ka'ba. So he offered 'Asr prayers and some people prayed with him. A man from among those who had prayed with him, went out and passed by some people offering prayer in another mosque, and they were in the state of bowing. He said, "I, (swearing by Allāh,) testify that I have prayed with the prophet facing Mecca." Hearing that, they turned their faces to the Ka'ba while they were still bowing. Some men had died before the qibla was changed towards the Ka'ba. They had been killed and we did not know what to say about them. So Allāh revealed: "And Allāh would never make your faith to be lost. Truly Allāh is full of pity, most merciful towards mankind." (Bukhārī 6:13)*

Interestingly enough, the terms for Holy (*maqdis* and *muqadas*) only appears in the Qur'ān in the form of Holy Spirit, (Sūra 2:87,253, Sūra 5:110, Sūra 16:102) the Holy Land (Sūra 5:21) and finally God as Holy (Sūra 59:23, Sūra 62:1). All in all there are references to only three things that are holy.

However, by the time of Bukhārī, 250 years after the Hijra, the word holy appears many times in the ḥadīths. For example there are Holy Verses, Holy Battles, Holy Books, Holy Spirit, Holy Qur'ān, Holy Day, Holy Land, Holy Military Expedition, Holy Fighting, Holy War, and Holy Months.

From the above ḥadīths it appears that Muḥammad first faced the holy house for prayer, and that later the qibla was changed towards the Ka'ba. The Qur'ān never refers to the holy house nor the first qibla as being towards Jerusalem. The idea of Jerusalem was only introduced by later writers. Muslim scholars believe that in the Qur'ān Jerusalem is referred to as: The Farthest Mosque.

### من المسجد الحرام الى المسجد الأقصى

*Glory to (Allāh) who did take his servant for journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose precincts we did bless in order that we might show him some of our signs: for he is the one who heareth and seeth (all things).* (Sūra 17:1)

### Does the Ka'ba later replace the Holy House?

To complicate matters further, the Qur'ān seems to imply in Sūra 5:97 that God changed the Ka'ba into the Sacred House depending on how you translate the Arabic phrase:

جعل الله الكعبة البيت الحرام

*Allāh made the Ka'ba the Sacred House as an asylum of security for men as also the sacred months the animals for offerings and the garlands that mark them: that ye may know that Allāh hath knowledge of what is in the heavens and on earth and that Allāh is well acquainted with all things.* (Yūsuf Alī)

### The creation of the first holy house

How did the first holy house come into existence? Perhaps we should call it the first Ka'ba? Surely it was unique among places of worship, for in the original holy house there were 360 idols. (Bukhārī 3.658, 6.244) Several idols are mentioned by name, among them are Hubal, Isaf, Na'ilah, and the Black Stone. (Al Ṭabarī VI, 1075 page 3-4, Ishāq 54, page 37) The original Ka'ba must have been quite large. How much space would 360 idols take? If one idol took up a space of a minimum of two thirds of a meter in width, then the length of all of the walls of the Ka'ba would have been 240 meters. The current structure is only 10 x 12 meters providing only 44 meters in length. At this size each idol could not have averaged more than 12 centimeters wide. (4.8 inches) How could this be the original Ka'ba? The original building must have been a much larger structure.

Some have claimed that there were other Ka'bas in Arabia. At present I am unaware of the existence of any other Ka'ba which housed multiple idols. As far as I know, the Ka'ba in the Islamic Holy City with its multiple gods was a unique structure in Arabia.

Consider how the Ka'ba might have come into existence. Is it natural to place sacred objects of multiple religions together in one building? Imagine the uproar if someone wanted to place an idol in a church or mosque today! How about three hundred idols? But this is what we find in the original Ka'ba. There



were pictures from the church, along with idols of every kind. How could this have happened?

I would like to suggest that this was the outcome of people struggling with the devastation after an earthquake. As people recovered their personal possessions from the rubble and buried the dead, they would also have removed any holy relics they found. These could have been collected in the open plaza in the center of the city where they would be safe from falling objects in any further aftershocks. It would be a natural thing to place the idols and pictures around the outer walls of an open area where people could still gather for worship, each area being used by different people. I believe that this may have been the origin of the first Ka'ba. After some weeks people might have begun to walk around the courtyard pausing to pray in front of different holy objects. Eventually this would have become known as *circumambulation*, and this is still practiced by pilgrims today, except all of the idols with the exception of the Black Stone have been removed.

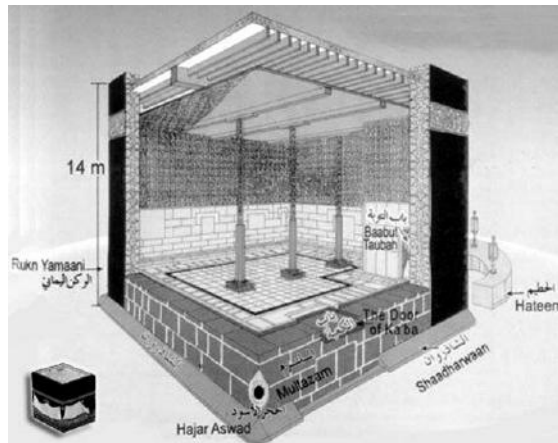
While there are no recorded earthquakes in Mecca's history, Petra has been rocked by earthquakes many times. As we have already mentioned, a significant earthquake took place in 551 AD, about 19 years before Muḥammad was born. (See Appendix B) Thus the city was recovering from a devastating earthquake during Muḥammad's youth.

### The cleansing of the Ka'ba

After the Muslim armies occupied the Islamic Holy City near the end of Muḥammad's life, the prophet set about cleansing the Ka'ba of all of the idols that had been there.

*The Prophet entered Mecca and (at that time) there were three hundred and sixty idols around the Ka'ba. He started stabbing the idols with a stick he had in his hand and reciting: "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished." Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 3.658*

*When Allāh's apostle came to Mecca, he refused to enter the Ka'ba with idols in it. He ordered (idols to be taken out). So they were taken out. The people took out the pictures of Abraham and Ishmael holding*





*Azlams in their hands. Allāh's Apostle said, "May Allāh curse these people. By Allāh, both Abraham and Ishmael never did the game of chance with Azlams." Then he entered the Ka'ba and said Takbir at its corners but did not offer the prayer in it. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2.671*

*"On the day of the conquest of Mecca the prophet entered the house and sent al-Faql ibn al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd-al-Muṭallab to get water from the well of Zemzem. He ordered to bring pieces of cloth and to imbue them with water and then he commanded to wash off these pictures, as it was done. He stretched his arms, however, over the picture of Jesus, the son of Mary, and of his mother and said: 'Wash off all except what is under my hands!' But eventually he took away his hands away from Jesus, the son of Mary, and his mother." (al-Azraqi page 111)*

Today, none of the pictures exist in the Ka'ba, and there is no indication that they were ever there. Every year the kiswa (or cover) of the Ka'ba is replaced on the 10<sup>th</sup> of month Dhū al-Ḥijja (the Islamic calendar uses lunar months) during the ḥajj (pilgrimage). The old kiswa is removed, cut into pieces and gifted to certain individuals, dignitaries and organizations as souvenirs or holy relics. When the cover is removed, the public has an opportunity to see the outside of the Ka'ba, and on some occasions have been able to catch a glimpse and even photograph the interior of the Ka'ba. There is no evidence of pictures having ever been painted on the walls of the Ka'ba, neither outside nor inside. Nothing today remains of what the original Ka'ba was like.

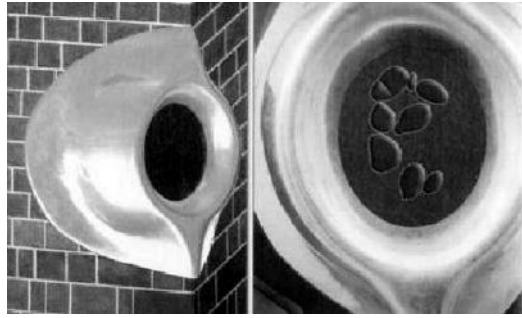
### **The origins of the Black Stone**

Grunebaum, in his book *Classical Islam*, (Grunebaum pg 24) says that the Ka'ba was a place of pilgrimage even in pre-Islamic times, and was probably the only sanctuary of its kind built of stone. He claimed he had sources which indicated that there were other Ka'ba structures in other parts of Arabia. He said a "red stone" was the deity of the south Arabian city of Ghaiman, and that there was a "white stone" in the Ka'ba of al-Abalat (near the city of Tabala, south of Mecca). He seems to equate the Ka'ba with an ordinary shrine.

The physical properties of the Black Stone were described in the 19th and early 20th centuries by European travelers in Arabia who visited the Ka'ba in the guise of pilgrims. The Swiss traveler Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, who visited Mecca around 1815 in the guise of a pilgrim, provided a detailed description in his 1829 book *Travels in Arabia*. (Burckhardt, page 137):

*It is an irregular oval, about seven inches in diameter, with an undulating surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quantity of cement, and perfectly well smoothed; it looks as if the whole had been broken into as many pieces by a violent blow, and*

*Right: During its history the black stone was broken into eight parts. Today pilgrims may touch or kiss the pieces, which are held together in mortar surrounded by a silver casing.*



*then united again. It is very difficult to determine accurately the quality of this stone which has been worn to its present surface by the millions of touches and kisses it has received. It appeared to me like a lava, containing several small extraneous particles of a whitish and of a yellow substance. Its colour is now a deep reddish brown approaching to black. It is surrounded on all sides by a border composed of a substance which I took to be a close cement of pitch and gravel of a similar, but not quite the same, brownish colour. This border serves to support its detached pieces; it is two or three inches in breadth, and rises a little above the surface of the stone. Both the border and the stone itself are encircled by a silver band, broader below than above, and on the two sides, with a considerable swelling below, as if a part of the stone were hidden under it. The lower part of the border is studded with silver nails.*

The Black Stone has also been described as an agate, a piece of natural glass or most popularly, as a stony meteorite. It is evidently a hard rock, having survived so much handling over the years. A significant clue to its nature is provided by an account of the stone's recovery in 951 AD after it had been stolen 21 years earlier; according to a chronicler, the rock was identified by its ability to float in water. If this account is accurate, it would rule out the Black Stone being an



*Above: A photo of the Ka'ba with the cover removed and repair work being carried out.*

agate, basalt lava or stony meteorite, though it would be compatible with it being glass or pumice.

It has been suggested that the Black Stone may be a glass fragment from the impact of a fragmented meteorite some 6,000 years ago at Wabar crater in the Rub' al Khali Desert (Empty Quarter) some 1,000 km east of Mecca. The craters there are noted for their blocks of silica glass, fused by the heat of the impact and impregnated by beads of nickel-iron alloy from the meteorite (most of which was destroyed in the impact). Some of the glass blocks consist of shiny black glass with light colored interiors and gas-filled hollows, which allows them to float on water. However, recent dating of meteorite remains from the Wabar crater date the event at less than 260 years ago. (Prescott, page 109)

### Rebellion in the Holy City

In 683 AD (64 AH) 'Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr declared himself caliph in the Holy City. This was in opposition to the Umayyad rulers in Damascus, who reacted strongly and sent an army against the Holy City. Al Ṭabarī tells us:



Above: Saudi Royal family visits the interior of the Ka'ba

*According to Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidi - Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā - Ikrimah ibn Khālid: Ibn al-Zubayr demolished the sanctuary until he had leveled it to the ground, and he dug out its foundation .... He placed the Black Cornerstone by it in an ark [tabut] in a strip of silk. (Al Ṭabarī XX 537 page 123)*

The Syrians fought against Ibn al-Zubayr and his companions in Mecca (according to Ḥishām's report from Awanah) for forty days. The Syrians had strenuously besieged Ibn al-Zubayr and his men and blockaded them. Then one day Ibn Zubayr shouted to the Syrians that he had heard that the caliph in Damascus had died. It seems that the armies were close enough to one another to shout to each other. (Al Ṭabarī Vol. XX 430, page 2)

This passage leads us to believe that the Syrians managed to blockade all of Mecca. This would have been a huge task, as Mecca lies open to the outside desert on so many fronts. It is unclear how this blockade would have worked, especially if the two armies were within shouting distance from each other. Petra, on the other hand was a walled city within a canyon, with the walls stretching from one side of the canyon to the other. The two *thaniyas*, or *mountain ways*, were the only other two ways in or out of the city.

Later in section Al Ṭabarī Vol. XX 431, page 3 Al Ḥusayn ibn Numayr (of the Syrians) sent to 'Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr (of the Meccans) saying "Let us meet tonight in *al-Abṭah* to discuss what concerns us." G.R. Hawting writing in footnote 9 tells us that this word means a *hollow*, but Hans Wehr dictionary, pg 77 also gives the meaning as *a level or basin shaped area*. The term *Abṭah* has been applied to several places in and around Mecca, especially its central part. In the present location of Mecca the application makes sense, since Mecca itself is set in a sort of *hollow*. However, people have had trouble knowing exactly where this *hollow* is, other than implying it is the entire central part of the town. Archeology of the area indicates that there were very few structures outside of the inner area. Therefore it is difficult to know where *al-Abṭah* (the hollow) would have been located. Petra on the other hand has several locations which could be described as *al-Abṭah*, especially the wide area of the siq.

### The return journey to Damascus

*The members of the Umayyad family said to them "Do not leave without taking us with you to Syria." So they did that and the army continued until it reached Syria. There Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah had willed that the oath of allegiance be given to his son Mu'āwiyah ibn Yazīd, .... According to Awanah, Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah designated his son Mu'āwiyah ibn Yazīd as Caliph, but the latter only survived forty days."* page 5, Al Ṭabarī Vol XX.

The problem with this passage is the time it would take taken to travel between Damsacus and Mecca. First, the message of the caliph's death would need to have been taken from Damascus to Mecca, a trip of at least fourteen days using a fast messenger. However, there is no indication that a fast mounted messenger was sent, quickly changing horses at stations along the way. (The number fourteen is based on the most direct route from Damascus to Mecca, via Wadi Sirhān with stops at the regular watering points. One must remember that most of this route is blistering hot desert.) After the messenger would have arrived in Mecca there would have been several days of confusion as the message was whispered around. Not everyone would have heard the message immediately. Al Ṭabarī gives us several pages of accounts of how the message slowly filtered into the Syrian camp. Then there was the meeting of the Syrian and Meccan leaders. Finally the Syrian leaders decided to return to Damascus and then everyone, especially the Umayyad families, decided to return to Syria with them. This return journey required taking large groups of people across several huge deserts. A slow moving army would have taken many days to cover the 860 miles or 1385 kilometers from Mecca in Saudi Arabia to Damascus. If the army could move 20 miles a day, it would still take

them 43 days to return to Damascus. Al Ṭabarī notes that later historians say the new caliph lived three months, not forty days, but then he adds: “*Umar told me on the authority of Alī ibn Muḥammad: When Mu’āwiyah ibn Yazīd had been designated caliph, gathered together the officials of his father and the oath of allegiance given to him in Damascus, he perished there after forty days of his rule. He died when he was thirteen years and eighteen days old.*” (The History of Al Ṭabarī, Volume XX, page 5, section 432) It seems obvious that Al Ṭabarī was arguing against the later writers who stretched the forty days to three months to provide enough time for the army to return from Mecca in Arabia, whereas 40 days would have been sufficient if the Holy City was Petra.

### The destruction of the Ka’ba

As we noted earlier the Ka’ba was destroyed by ‘Abdallāh ibn-Zubayr. Everything was destroyed and even the foundations were removed. This account is paralleled with the account of the battle of year 73 AH (692 AD) when the Syrians returned and conquered the Holy City.

Al Ṭabarī XXI 844 page 224 and forward records some of the events:

*The war between Ibn al Zubayr and al-Ḥajjāj took place for six months and seventeen nights in the hollow of Mecca.* Here the word *baṭn* or stomach is used to describe the hollow. This term would justifiably mean the center of the city or the center of the canyon. (page 224)

*According to al-Ḥārith [ibn Muḥammad] – Muḥammad ibn Sa’d – Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar [al-Wāqidī] – Ishāq ibn Yahyā – Yūsuf ibn Mahak, who said: I saw the manjaniq (trebuchet) with which [stones] were being hurled. The sky was thundering and lightening and the sound of thunder and lightning rose above that of the stones, so that it masked it.* (page 225) (For a photo of trebuchet stones see page 332)

The Ka’ba was so damaged that it looked “like the torn bosoms of mourning women.” (Gibb, Ka’ba, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, pg 193) Later ‘Abd Allāh took refuge beside the sanctuary and this began another battle which completed the destruction of the Ka’ba.

### Rebuilding of the Ka’ba

*According to Ishāq ibn Abi Israeīl – ‘Abd al-Azīz ibn Khālīd ibn Rustam al-Sanani Abū Muḥammad: Ziyād ibn Jiyāl told me he was in Mecca on the day when Ibn al-Zubayr was overcome and heard him say, “My mother Asma bint Abi Bakr told me that the Messenger of God said to ‘Ā’isha: “If it were not that your people had only recently been in a state of unbelief, I would restore the Ka’ba on*

*the foundations of Abraham and I would add to the Ka'ba part of the Hijr (stone). Ibn al-Zubayr gave the order for it and it was excavated, and they found rocks as big as a camel. They moved a boulder of them and a bright light flashed out. They re-established it on its foundation and Ibn al Zubayr rebuilt it, giving it two doors, from one of which it was entered and from the other vacated.* (Al Ṭabarī XX, 592, page 176) See also Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah*, 143, and 'Abd al-Razzaq Muṣannaf V. 9157

This passage does not tell us where the new Ka'ba was constructed. Was it in Petra or in a new safer location in far away Mecca?

### **How could it happen?**

If the changing of the qibla is dated from archeology rather than Islamic literature, it appears that the moving of the qibla took place between 64 AH (the first destruction of the sanctuary in the Holy City) and 94 AH (the great earthquake). During these years a number of important events took place which seem to fit the Petra location rather than Mecca. Here is my proposal of what may have happened.

1. Before 64 AH all mosques faced the Holy City in Petra.
2. In 64 AH Ibn Zubayr destroyed the first Ka'ba and placed the stone on silk on a temporary stand. (Al Ṭabarī XX 537 page 123)
3. Al Ṭabarī tells us that the next year Ibn Zubayr claimed he discovered the foundation stones that Abraham laid. It would seem that this was at Mecca in Saudi Arabia, not Petra. He may have chosen a place in Arabia to distance himself from the Umayyad powers in Damascus and built a new Ka'ba sanctuary there.
4. In 68 AH there were four groups at the pilgrimage, each under different banners because of four factions fighting in the civil war.
5. In 69 AH there was a revolt in Damascus itself, further diverting attention from the problems in the Holy City.
6. In 70 AH Ibn Zubayr purchased large numbers of horses, camels and baggage, leading us to assume that some of his people escaped to Mecca where they placed the stone in the new Ka'ba sanctuary.
7. In 71 AH there were further rebellions in parts of Arabia. Kūfa rebelled and joined Ibn Zubayr in promoting the new qibla. "The people who turn to the same qibla as us." (Ṭabarī 21: 107, 112)
8. In 73-74 AH the Syrian armies surrounded the Holy City of Petra and destroyed the sanctuary using a trebuchet. (Ṭabarī 19: 22-224) It would



seem strange that they would bombard the Ka'ba if it contained the Black Stone. However, if the Black Stone was not there, they may have felt freedom to use a trebuchet which they knew would destroy the Ka'ba building. Apparently the Black Stone was not damaged during this time, which would indicate it was moved to safety in Mecca.

9. It seems as though pilgrims now began to visit both sites. This was perhaps instigated by Ibn Zubayr, and allowed by the Umayyads who never wanted the Holy City to revolt again.
10. Around 82 AH the Umayyad buildings in Amman were built facing Mecca. This is the earliest record of the new qibla being used in architecture.
11. There are no recorded pilgrimages between 83 and 87 AH.
12. Around this time mosques started hanging a sign on the wall to indicate the new qibla direction. During this period the qibla wall was changed in the mosque in Medina, under the authority of 'Abd al-Mālik who said it must be changed even if people argue against it. (Ṭabarī 23, pg 141)
13. In 89 AH the *mihrab niche* was instituted in new mosques to denote the new direction of prayer.
14. In 94 AH an earthquake destroyed much of the Holy City (Petra) and the city was abandoned. Mecca in Arabia became the focal point of worship, deemed approved by God, due to the divine action seen in the earthquake.
15. New mosques in Umayyad Spain now pointed their qibla in a line parallel to a line drawn between Petra and Mecca.
16. In 122 AH the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica* mentioned Mecca. (The first instance of the name Mecca appearing in ancient literature.)
17. In 128 AH another earthquake destroyed buildings in Syria and Jordan. All hope of returning the Black Stone to the Holy City was lost.
18. In 132 the Abbāsids began to rule from Iraq. Since Kūfa had adopted the Mecca qibla very early on, all mosques after this time faced Mecca in Saudi Arabia and all Qur'āns written in the Kūfic script contain verses in sūra 2 referring to the change of the qibla.

### 13. Reference to the changing of the qibla is absent in many early Qur'āns.

In 1972, workers renovating a wall in the top floor of the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā in Yemen came across large quantities of old manuscripts and parchments. They didn't realize what they had found, and so they stuffed them into twenty potato sacks and left them on a staircase of one of the mosque's minarets. (Dreibholz, 1999)

The president of the Yemeni Antiquities Authority realized the potential importance of the find, and sought international assistance in examining and



preserving the fragments. In 1979 a visiting German scholar became interested, and then persuaded the West German government to organize and fund a restoration project. They discovered that the parchment pages date back to the seventh and eighth centuries AD. Dr. Gerd-R Puin at the University of Saarland is currently researching these Qur'āns. Carbon-14 tests date some of the parchments to 645-690 AD. Their real age may be somewhat different since C-14 estimates the year of the death of an organism, and the process from that to the final writing on the parchment involves an unknown amount of time. Calligraphic dating has pointed to 710-715 AD.

The discovery of the Yemeni Qur'āns brought the interest in old Qur'āns to the forefront. The only other major study of old Qur'āns was done before WWII. A survey of old Qur'āns around the world had been done, and photos of them were being studied by Anton Spitaler in Germany who was compiling a study of the development of the Qur'ān. During WWII the British air force bombed the Bavarian Academy of Science. According to Spitaler, the 450 rolls of film were destroyed. The cache of photos however, survived, but the project was buried for 60 years. After Spitaler's death in 2003 the photos were rediscovered, but with the attitude of the Islamic world, such a project was deemed out of the question. It was not until 2008 that studies of the photo archive slowly got underway by Prof. Dr. Angelike Neuwirth at the University of Berlin.

Then in 2010 another startling discovery occurred. During a heavy rainfall in Ṣan'ā, the Great Mosque was damaged. When restoration workers removed an old plaster wall they discovered even more ancient manuscripts as well as other objects. The Yemen government currently has this material, and scholars are again showing great interest, although nothing has been published to date.

What is interesting is that the early (non-Kūfa) Qur'āns do not contain Sūra 2 which speaks of the changing of the qibla. A list of early Qur'āns can be found in Appendix C. If the qibla did not change until 70 years after the Hijra, then it comes as no surprise that the very early Qur'āns did not include these references.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

The previous chapter examined literary evidence that supports a northern location for the Holy City of Islam, rather than the present position in Saudi Arabia. In this chapter we will continue by looking at various types of historical evidence that seems to support the northern position.

#### 1. The sacred area was marked out by large stones

We read in *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* by Ibn Ishāq, (Guillaume, 2006, pg 540) about killings and revenge killings between the Khaza'a and the Hadrami tribes. The sons of a prominent sheik were attacked beside Mount 'Arafat at the boundary stones of the sacred area.

This is a very interesting statement, as it shows to us two things. First, the sacred area was quite large, extending all the way to 'Arafat mountain. In today's Mecca the distance between the Ka'ba and the base of Mount 'Arafat is around 18 kilometers. Second, it speaks of boundary stones that mark the sacred area. In the minds of many readers, this might mean small stones laid out to show the boundary. Small stones however, could be moved, and they would be lost or buried in the desert plains that surround Mecca and Minā. Much larger stones would have been more appropriate, but alas, there are no large boundary stones around Mecca to show travelers where the sacred precinct began and ended.

All around the city of Petra, however, there are large stone blocks carved out of the mountain. Each stone is about 20 feet tall. The stone shown on the next page is one of several that tourists pass as they enter Petra via the siq path. All together there are about 25 of these giant square blocks surrounding the greater city area. (Browning, 1994, page 110) Is it possible that these stones mark out the sacred precinct of the Holy City?

*Right: Large square rocks guard the entrances to Petra*



## 2. Dushara worshiped at Mecca

Ibn Ishāq records the story of Al-Ṭufayl bin 'Amr of Mecca accepting Islam. (Guillaume, 2006, 176) When he returned home to Mecca, his wife also decided to accept Islam. Al-Ṭufayl then tells his wife to go to the *hima* (temenos) of Dhū-al-Shara (the Nabataean god Dushara) and *cleanse herself from it*. *Now Dhū al-Shara was an image belonging to Daus and the hima was the area which they had made sacred to him; in it was a trickle of water from a rivulet from the mountains. She asked, "Have you any fear from Dhū-al-Shara on my account" He replied "no" so she went and washed and returned and learned about Islam.*

What is interesting about this passage is that as far as we know Dushara



was only worshiped by the Edomites and Nabataeans, and the main center of Dushara worship was in Petra. The god Dushara was the god of the Edomite mountains. So when Al-Ṭufayl bin 'Amr who lived in the Holy City tells his wife to go to the sacred area of Dushara, it would have meant that he sent her on a thousand kilometer trip. But if Petra was the Holy City, then she would have only gone down to the temple of Dushara.

*Left: Some archeologists have wondered if this bust in Petra is an image of Dushara.*

### 3. Games of chance

In the ḥadīths it is recorded that games of chance and the use of azlams were common in the original Holy City. Azlams refer to any method of obtaining a result by chance. In some instances they were arrows, sometimes they were dice, or they could simply be sticks thrown down as used by Bedouin today. In the account where Muḥammad removed the idols from the Holy Sanctuary, Bukhārī records the following:

*When Allāh's Apostle came to Mecca, he refused to enter the Ka'ba with idols in it. He ordered (idols to be taken out). So they were taken out. The people took out the pictures of Abraham and Ishmael holding azlams in their hands. Allāh's Apostle said, "May Allāh curse these people. By Allāh, both Abraham and Ishmael never did the game of chance with azlams." Then he entered the Ka'ba and said Takbir at its corners but did not offer the prayer in it. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Hadith 2.671*

As far as I know there are no records of games of chance recorded as being used in or around the modern city of Mecca. However, in Petra there are many ancient game boards carved in the rocks all around the city.

At the Second Conference on Nabataean Studies held in Petra, Jordan, October 2002, Dr. Bilāl Khrīsat and Ṭalāl 'Akasheh presented a paper called *Gaming Boards from the Nabataean Capital City of Petra: Documentation and Study*. It was at this conference that I first took interest in these ancient gaming boards, and soon afterwards a group of us catalogued our own findings at the Nabataea.net website: <http://nabataea.net/games1.html>



*Left: The remains of a game board in Petra, one of dozens of games of chance found around the city.*

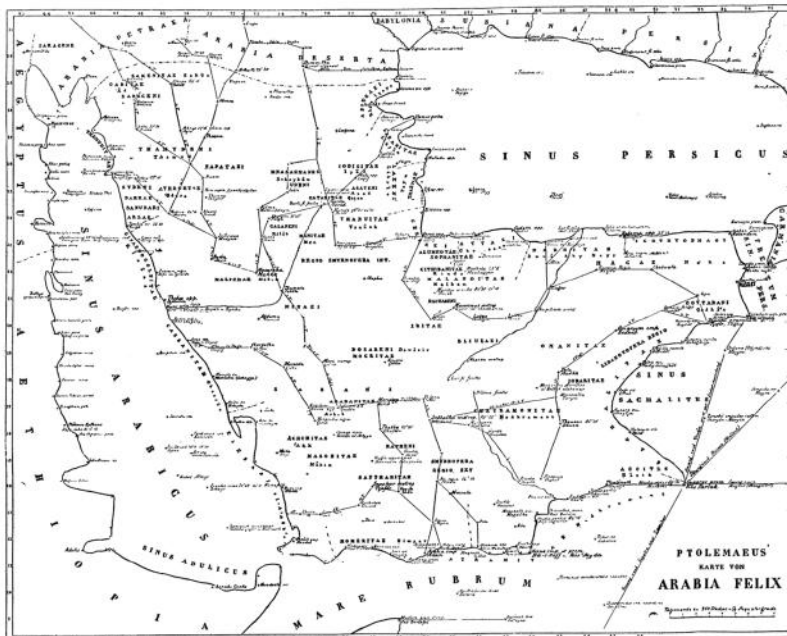
Regarding azlams, these were often “arrows that the Arabs used, and dice that the Persians and Romans used in gambling.” (*The Meaning and Explanation of the Glorious Qur’ān*, Volume 2, Muḥammad Saed ’Abdul-Raḥmān, MSA Publication Ltd., 2007 page 362) (Also see Sūra 5:90-92)

#### 4. Cartographic evidence

The science of mapmaking goes far back into history, farther back than the time of Muḥammad. Thus, by 550 AD maps of the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea had become more and more useful. To the modern reader however, some of these maps are hard to make out. First, many maps were not oriented with the top of the map being north. Many early Christian maps were oriented towards the east, where Christ would return. Thus the English word ‘orientation’ came from ‘eastern oriented’ maps, or ‘towards the orient.” (Wilford, 1982, page 9) The Nuzi map from the age of Sargon of Akkad (2300 BC) in northern Iraq uses the north, south, east and west winds as coordinates, with east at the top and north on the left.

#### Ptolemy’s map

As mentioned earlier on page 224, Ptolemy’s description of Arabia contains no reference to Mecca. It is as if it never existed. Indeed, in his day, it probably didn’t exist. If you examine the map below, Mecca does not exist, but Arabia Petraea is clearly written across the top of Arabia.

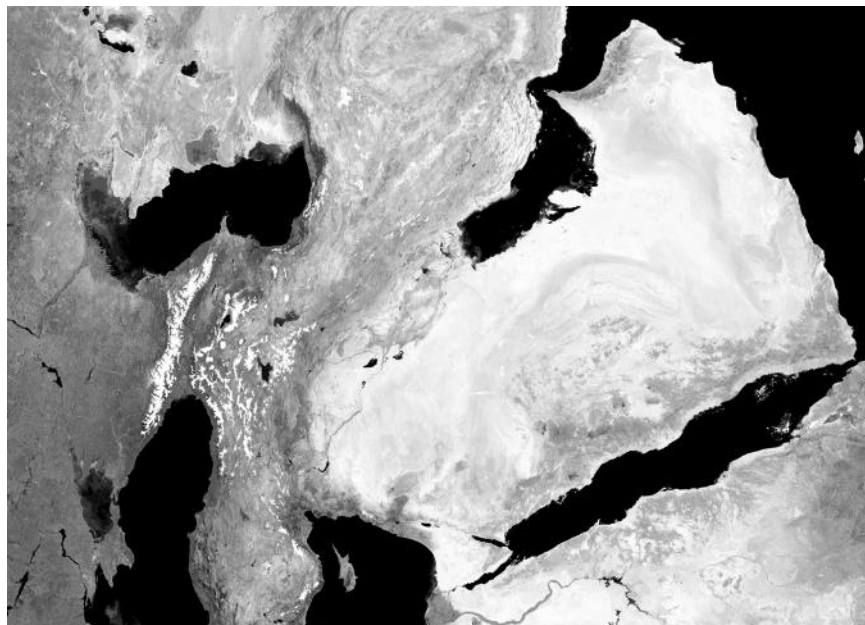


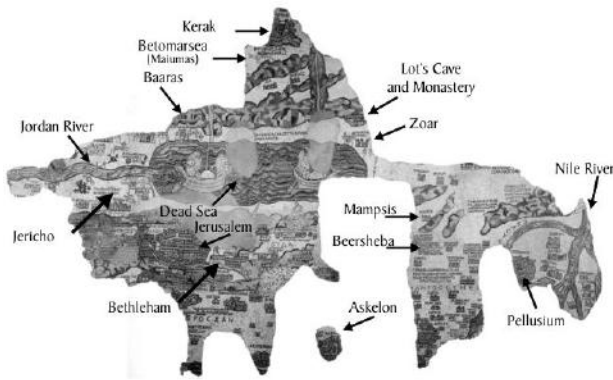


## The Madaba map

Another early map (see the [nabataea.net](http://nabataea.net) website for photos and descriptions of many of the early maps of Arabia) is the famous Madaba map found under the floor of the early Byzantine church of Saint George in the city of Madaba, Jordan. Only 25 square meters of the original map are preserved. The map contains a total of 156 locations or memoirs, and is comparable with the well known treatise on biblical places written in Greek about 395 AD by Eusebius of Caesarea, and translated into Latin by Jerome around 490 AD. The map is dated between 542 and 570 AD (by dating the buildings depicted in Jerusalem). Under Umayyad ruler Yazīd II, Muslim zealots removed many of the pictures in the church and damaged the map. The church was abandoned in 746 AD (128 AH) when an earthquake brought down the building, preserving the remains of the map under rubble. The map was rediscovered in 1894 during the construction of a new church on the site. The preservation of this map under rubble since 128 AH provides us with a clue about which parts of the map the zealots destroyed. The map faces east, so imagine you are in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea looking east as in the satellite photo below.

On the next page you can see the remains of the Madaba map. Notice that Lot's cave in Zoar is present and the mountains up to Kerak are present, but Petra which would have been right above this is demolished. Damascus is removed, which would have been on the far left. The Negev, homeland to





the Nabataeans, is also erased. Was this just random vandalism or were the Muslims offended or trying to obliterate something when they removed parts of the map?

Yazid II made an edict against images (Hoyland, page 414 footnote 88 and page 596, footnote 14) around 740 AD, during the time of confusion when mosques pointed to both Petra and Mecca. It may be that angry Muslims entered churches and demanded the ancient mosaics be either covered over or removed. Many churches chose to overlay their floors with new patterned mosaics rather than destroy the beautiful images of people and animals. This action preserved the original floors of many churches for us today. Some of these floor mosaics are on display in the ancient town of Madaba. However, it appears that the Madaba map was destined for destruction, particularly the area that showed the location of Petra.

## 5. Abraham and the Ka'ba

According to Islamic teaching, the foundation stones of the Ka'ba were said to have been laid by Abraham and Ishmael. (al-Baqarah 2:127) However, non-Islamic history has no record of either Abraham or Ishmael ever having journeyed into Arabia.

Guillaume points out the difficulties with Abraham and Ishmael, "... *there is no historical evidence for the assertion that Abraham or Ishmael was ever in Mecca, and if there had been such a tradition it would have to be explained how all memory of the Old Semitic name Ishmael (which was not in its true Arabian form in Arabian inscriptions and written correctly with an initial consonant Y) came to be lost. The form in the Qur'ān is taken either from Greek or Syriac sources.*" (Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, Penguin Books Inc., Baltimore, 1956, pages 61-62)

The proposal of Petra as the original Holy City of Islam changes the claims about Abraham. The Bible clearly places Abraham and Ishmael on the mountains above the Dead Sea. Traditionally Sodom and Gomorrah were situated at the south end of the Dead Sea. If Abraham grazed his sheep on the mountains,



he could easily have been on both the east and west banks of Wadi 'Araba. After Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire, Lot and his daughters fled to Zoar on the east bank. Today there is a monastery in Zoar to commemorate the spot and cave where Lot fled to. When considering the claim that Abraham and Lot laid the foundation stones of the original house in the Holy City, Petra seems a much better fit than Mecca in Arabia.

The Bible tells us in Genesis 21 that Abraham pitched his tent in the vicinity of Gerar, and it was from near this location that Hagar was sent away. The Qur'ān identifies this area with the Ka'ba, saying that Hagar stopped near the Ka'ba and that she refreshed herself from the well of Zamzam.

In this section we want to examine the evidence to see if any historical ties can be made between Gerar, Beersheba and the Petra Mountains.

On the Madaba map, Gerar is located south of Beersheba, making it 100 kilometers northeast of Petra. However, historians are not absolutely certain as to the location of Gerar. Some suggest that the Septuagint reading of "Gerar" is Mount Gedor. (I Chronicles 4:39)(Columbia Encyclopedia) This passage describes the expansion of the tribe of Simeon out of their traditional lands into the rich pastures of the land of Gerar.

It is interesting to notice that Gerar is also attached to Mount Sier.

*"... and they went to the outskirts of Gedor (Gerar) to the east of the valley in search of pasture for their flocks. They found rich, good pasture, and the land was spacious, peaceful and quiet. Some Hamites had lived there formerly. ... And five hundred of these Simeonites, led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, invaded the hill country of Seir. They killed the remaining Amalekites who had escaped, and they have lived there to this day. (1 Chronicles 4:39-43)*

The only way to understand this is to locate Gerar quite south and east



of Beersheba. From there, five hundred men crossed the 'Araba and invaded Mount Seir (or the Petra mountains) and then settled there.

The only other mention of Gerar in the Old Testament is in II Chronicles 14:13-14. Zerah the Ethiopian who was defeated near Mareshah is pursued by Asa as far as Gerar.

Gerar is usually identified as Tell Abū Haseirah (Tell Haror), about 12 miles (20 km) west of Beersheba. Excavations have uncovered remains from the Chalcolithic period, Bronze and Iron Ages and the Persian period, but nothing has surfaced that ties the tell with Gerar. There are, however, some strong links that can be made between identifying the ancient Kadish Barnea and nearby Gerar with Mount Seir itself.

Since 1905 modern 'Ain el-Qudeirat in Wadi el-'Ain in northern Sinai has been widely accepted as the location of the biblical Kadesh Barnea. Several Iron Age fortresses have been excavated there. The oldest, a small elliptical structure, dates to the tenth century BC, but was evidently abandoned for some time after the first fort's destruction. A second fort constructed during the eighth century BC (probably during the reign of Uzziah) was destroyed during the seventh century BC, most likely during Manasseh's reign. Significantly, two ostraca engraved in Hebrew have been recovered there, suggesting the Israelites did indeed occupy this site. ( "Kadesh Barnea" page 214 in the *NIV Archaeological Study Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005)

However, if we set aside modern ideas and listen to what is written in the second book of Moses (Numbers 20) we gain a better understanding of exactly where Kadesh Barnea is:

*v 1 In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. ...*

*v 11 Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. ...*

*v 14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: "This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. v 15 Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, v 16 but when we cried out to the LORD, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. "Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. v 17 Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory." v 18 But Edom answered: "You may not pass through here; ....*

*v 21 Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned*

*away from them. v 22 The whole Israelite community set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. v 23 At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, v 24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribat. v 25 Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor. v 26 Remove Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there." v 27 Moses did as the LORD commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. v 28 Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, v 29 and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned for him thirty days. (Numbers 20:1, NIV)*

From this account we learn several things. First, the Children of Israel are at the south end of the Land of Edom, for the King's Highway runs north and south through Edom and Moab. They are in the wilderness at the south end, known as the wilderness of Zin. They are in a location in the wilderness of Zin known as Kadesh. They ask if they can go north along the King's Highway through Edom and Moab. They are refused, so they travel toward the 'Araba valley until they arrive at the foot of Mount Hor. Aaron dies on this mountain.

If one visits what is known today as Mount Hor you can find a long established monument to Aaron's tomb on the top of this mountain.

If we use this passage to identify Kadesh as SOUTH of Edom, then we can read the passages in Genesis in a much different light.

Genesis 20:1 (NIV) tells us that "*Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar.*" This is the setting for the Sarah and Hagar confrontation. This places us a mere 38 kilometers from Petra where, we are suggesting, the original Islamic Holy City was located. If this is the case, we can well believe the story in the Qur'an that Abraham took Hagar away from his encampment to the well of Zamzam. (Sūra 2:125-127, Sūra 3:95-96, Al Bukhairi 4.583)

There is a spring of water near this location that has a long tradition of being the place where Moses struck the rock. Eusebius also wrote in 325 AD about "Mount Hor, or the mountain on which Aaron died near the city of Petra." (Freeman-Grenville, Chapman, Taylor, 2003)

Genesis 20:5 describes Kadesh as a place with "no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!" (NIV) This adequately describes the land south of the Edomite ridge. I lived along this ridge for three years, and explored this region in great detail. The land we are describing is

commonly known as the region of Wadi Rum. There is no water there today, so one must assume that the miraculous water that was provided by Moses dried up after the Children of Israel moved on.

In summary, this section demonstrates that it is reasonable to associate Abraham and Hagar with the Ka'ba, provided that the Ka'ba was located somewhere in the Petra Mountains.



*Above: The land south of the Edomite territory, seen from the most southerly line of Edomite fortresses. This photo was taken at Ras al Naqab, Jordan.*

## **6. Battle for Medina (The Battle of the Trench)**

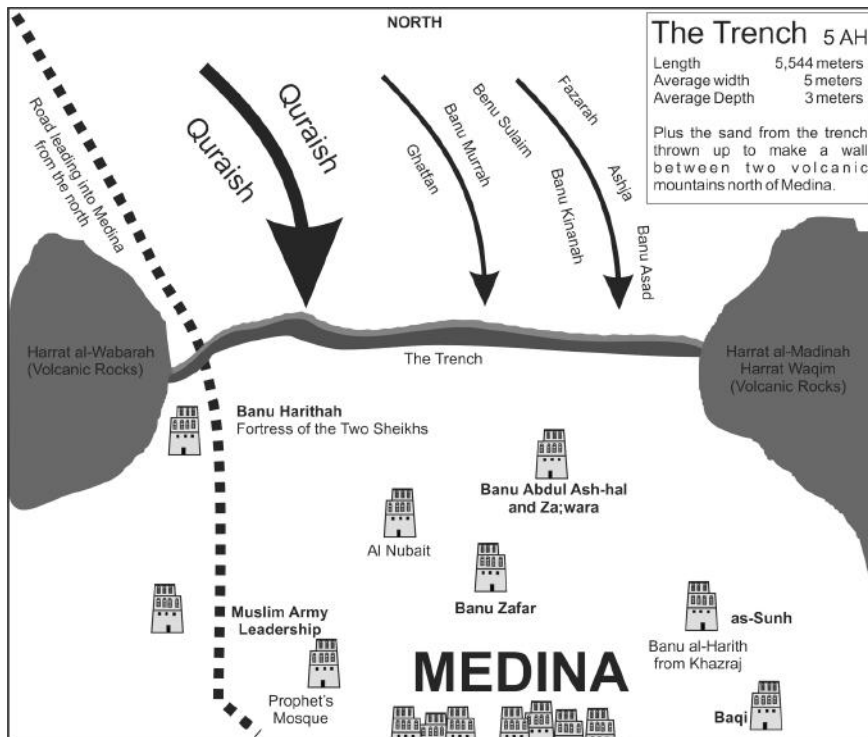
In year 5 AH, the Quraysh tribe assembled several tribes to attack the new Muslim sect in Medina. (Al Ṭabarī VIII 1464 page 7) Muḥammad heard they were coming, so he laid out a trench to protect Medina. (page 8)

It is noteworthy that whenever the Quraysh tribe attacked Medina it was always from the north. This is very peculiar because Mecca where the Quraysh lived is south of Medina. However, as the map on the next page illustrates, the battles were always on the north side of Medina.

The two armies faced each other for twenty two days and nights. It seems strange that the Quraysh wouldn't also have attacked from the south if they were marching up from Mecca, which was in the south. However, the record says that they approached Medina coming from the Holy City from the north.

## **7. Battle with the Banu Lihyān**

The following year in 6 AH the Muslims marched out of Medina to attack the Banu Lihyān. The Lihyānites had traditionally occupied an area quite far north of Medina, up to and including the areas south of Petra in what is today Wadi Rum. Lihyānite inscriptions can be found all through this part of the



The map has been styled after a similar map in the "Atlas of the Qur'an" by Dr. Shauqi Abu Khalil, (Darussalam, 2003).

desert, but never south of Medina. Al Ṭabarī records the journey and battle on page 42-43 Vol. VIII. He notes how the armies marched north out of Medina, and traveled past Makhid to the region of al Batra. Then they took the left road and went to the Holy City (Mecca in the text) where the Benu Lihyān lived. These people had been alerted and were fortified in secure positions on the mountain tops, so Muḥammad's plans were thwarted. This paragraph would make perfect sense if they were attacking Petra, but Al Ṭabarī claims they were attacking Mecca. He writes in 1501 "To take the enemy by surprise he pretended to be taking out for the north." With this insertion, Al Ṭabarī tries to make sense of the geography that otherwise didn't make sense to him, since by his day Mecca was considered south of Medina.

However, for those who believe that Petra was the Holy City, the paragraph makes perfect sense without the insertion. They went north from Medina into the region south of Ma'an and east of Ras al Naqab to the area known to the Bedouin as Al Batra even to this day, and then veered left to Petra. The Benu Lihyān had fortified themselves in the mountains, so the Muslims returned home.



## 8. The back way into the Holy City

The descriptions of the Mecca district are puzzling. (Al Ṭabarī VIII, 1531, page 71) *When approaching Minā: he met Ikrimah in a canyon and routed him so that he drove Ikrimah back into the walled gardens of Mecca....*

There are numerous references to the Holy City being surrounded by canyons and rough terrain. This is not true of the Mecca region today, which can be approached from various different angles.

Page 72: The prophet then asks: *Who is a man who will lead us forth on a way other than the one on which they are?*” According to Ibn Ḥumayd – Salamah-Ibn Ishāq-’Abdallāh ibn Abū Bakr: *A man from Aslam said “I will, Messenger of God.” He took them on a rough and rugged path among canyons. When they emerged from it, it was exhausting for the Muslims – they reached level ground at the end of the valley, the Messenger of God said to the people:...*”

It is interesting to note that Muḥammad who was born and raised in the Holy City, and who roamed the mountains in his youth needed a guide. Historians have not been able to trace this route into Mecca as the description of mazes of canyons does not fit any landscape around Mecca.

Page 73: *Turn right amid the salt-bushes on a path that will bring [the army] out over al-Murar Pass to the descent of al-Hudaybiyah below Mecca.*

The Murar Pass with a descent of al-Hudaybiyah has never been identified and historians are unsure what is meant by “below Mecca.”

*The Messenger of God set out, but when he entered al-Murar Pass, his camel kneeled down....*

The Ṭhaniyyat al-Murar (Bitter Bush Pass) has also never been identified in Mecca, although Yāqūt (Mu’jam al-buldan, VIII, 3) mentions it.

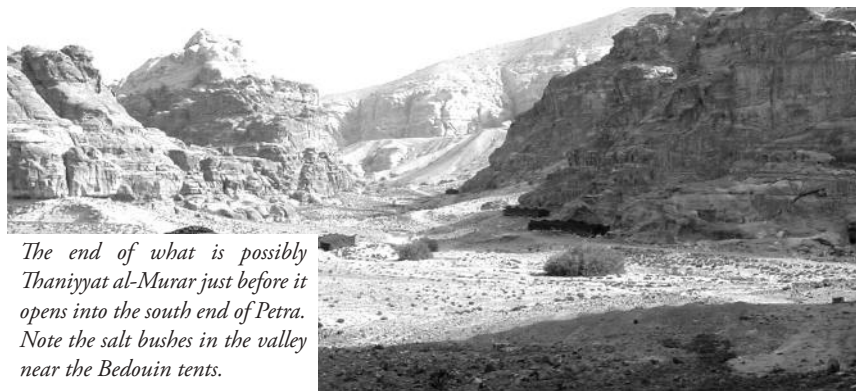
If this section was applied to Petra, then the army approached from the south. There is a mountain pass that goes through a maze of canyons south of Petra. It is unused today except by the local Bedouin. In 2002, a group of adventurous enthusiasts traveled this route into Petra. The undertaking was difficult, but it proved that it was possible to travel through the maze of canyons into the very south end of the city,

*Right: Is this Ṭhaniyyat al-Murar?*





*Above: The narrow gorges open into rough canyons.*



*The end of what is possibly Thaniyyat al-Murar just before it opens into the south end of Petra. Note the salt bushes in the valley near the Bedouin tents.*

just as al Ṭabarī describes the armies coming into the Holy City. The photos above are from this expedition.

## 9. Al-Hajjāj and Khaybar

In 7 AH the Muslim armies from Medina marched north again. Their first target was Khaybar, a city 150 kilometers north of Medina that had often opposed the Muslims. After the Muslim army defeated Khaybar, Ḥajjāj decided to go on to the Holy City because he had a wife, son and property there. Al Ṭabarī describes his arrival in the Holy City. (Ṭabarī Vol. VIII pg 126)

*I departed and arrived in the Holy City (Mecca). On the mountain trail at al-Baydā I met some men from Quraysh who were eager to hear news and were asking*



*about what happened to the Messenger of God. They had heard that he had gone to Khaybar and knew that it was the leading town in the Hijaz in fertility, defenses and men, so they were seeking news.*

There are two striking things about this paragraph. First, Ḥajjāj arrived on the mountain trail by al-Bayḍā. We have already seen that al-Bayḍā is a town close to Petra (5 km) on the northern route into the city. I'm sure Ḥajjāj circled around so that it wouldn't appear he was coming directly from Khaybar, for the Quraysh were at war with the prophet. There is no al-Bayḍā near Mecca, so Yāqūt, writing 600 years AH (Mu'jam al-Buldan, II, 335) tells us that Al-Bayḍā is another name for Tan'im which would have been outside the sacred territory encircling Mecca. He gives no sources for his conclusion.

The second striking thing about this paragraph is that the Quraysh are so concerned. If the Holy City was indeed south of Medina, they should not have been too concerned. After all, they were the leading city, the mother-of-all-cities in the south. Khaybar lay far to the north of Medina. However, if the Holy City was Petra, then the fall of Khaybar would have been of great concern to them, as it was the only major center between Medina and Petra.

The men insist on hearing news, so Ḥajjāj then tells them lies. He says that Khaybar defeated the Muslim army and that Muḥammad was made a prisoner and was being sent to Mecca. The people rejoice and are happy, so Ḥajjāj goes about his business collecting his property. This is indeed an interesting story, for if the people of Khaybar had captured Muḥammad, the last place they would have taken him was Mecca, for it would mean a journey through Medina! They might have tried to slip around the coast, or cross the vast deserts to the east, but however they might have wanted to try it, a trip from Khaybar to Mecca without passing Medina would have been difficult, especially with such a prisoner as Muḥammad! However, if the Holy City was north of Khaybar, then the people of Khaybar could easily have taken Muḥammad north to the Holy City (Petra) so he could stand trial there.

Ḥajjāj makes good his escape from the Holy City before the news reaches them that Khaybar was actually defeated and Muḥammad is on his way at the head of the army to fight them.

## **10. The order of the Battle for Mecca (The Victory of Islam)**

After defeating Khaybar, the Muslims raided a number of locations in northern Arabia, and then they prepared to march further north to meet the Roman (Byzantine) armies. Al Ṭabarī records this in Volume VIII 1611, page 152 and onward. The armies marched north into the land of Syria.

*They journeyed on and encamped at Mu'tan (Ma'an) in the land of Syria. The*

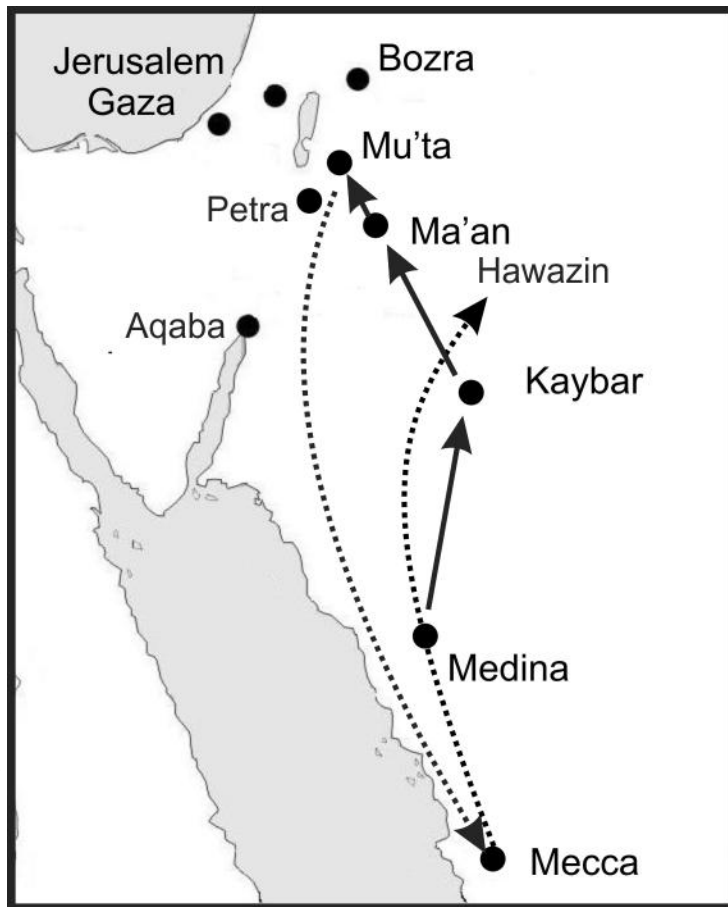
men learned that Heraclius had encamped with 100,000 Byzantines at Ma'ab. (Rabbah Moab, 10 kilometers north of Kerak). ... (page 152)

... The men journeyed on. When they were within the boundaries of al-Balqa, they were met by Heraclius' armies of Romans and Arabs at a village of al-Balqa called Masharif. ... the Muslims withdrew to a village called Mu'ta. (page 156)

The battle of Mu'ta was a stalemate, but the Muslims were in a bad way, and many were killed. It is important to note here that the Anṣār fought in this battle. (Al Ṭabarī VIII page 156) The two armies retired from each other for a time. What happens next is puzzling, especially if you accept the traditional geography of the Holy City being Mecca in southern Arabia. After a short campaign into Syria, (Dhat al Salasil) Muḥammad decides to attack Mecca next. (Al Ṭabarī VIII, 1619, page 160) This is a very strange occurrence.

The armies of Muḥammad, the Emigrants and the Anṣār apparently all march to Mecca. (Ṭabarī VIII page 168) Anyone familiar with the geography

The map right, shows the traditional order of battle: They leave from Medina, and march north to Khaybar, Ma'an, Mu'ta, Mecca, and finally north to battle the Hawazīn.





The answer that Muslim writers 300 years after the fact give us, is that despite the Anṣār warriors being mentioned as present in all locations, they claim there were three Muslim armies. Otherwise, it seems impossible if one believes that Mecca is truly the Holy City of Islam.

## 11. The location of the Great Stone Camel of Thamud

The Qur'ān records an interesting story of how the prophet Ṣāliḥ was sent to the people of Thamud to turn them to Allāh and warn them of disaster to come. The prophet Ṣāliḥ provides them with a sign, that of a female camel, which they are to leave alone. However, they strike it with a sword, and as a result an earthquake destroys them. While we do not know the details of the prophet Ṣāliḥ and the sign of the camel from any other sources, the Qur'ān confirms that the Thamudic people lived in the same place as the people of 'Ad, and that the Thamudic people were destroyed by an earthquake in the years preceding the prophet Muḥammad. All of these events seem to take place in northern Arabia, not southern Arabia. Below are the passages from the Qur'ān that mention the Camel of Thamud.

*To the Thamud people (we sent) Ṣāliḥ one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people, worship Allāh; ye have no other god but him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! This she-camel of Allāh is a sign unto you: so leave her to graze in Allāh's earth and let her come to no harm or ye shall be seized with a grievous punishment." And remember how he made you inheritors after the Ad people and gave you habitations in the land: ye build for yourselves palaces and castles in (open) plains and carve out homes in the mountains; so bring to remembrance the benefits (ye have received) from Allāh and refrain from evil and mischief on the earth." The leaders of the arrogant party among his people said to those who were reckoned powerless those among them who believe: "know ye indeed that Ṣāliḥ is an apostle from his Lord?" They said: "We do indeed believe in the revelation which hath been sent through him." The arrogant party said: "for our part we reject what ye believe in." Then they ham-strung the she-camel and insolently defied the order of their Lord saying: "O Ṣāliḥ, bring about thy threats if thou art an apostle (of Allāh)!" So the earthquake took them unawares and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning! So Ṣāliḥ left them saying: "O my people, I did indeed convey to you the message for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel but ye love not good counsellors!" Sūra 7:73-79*

The very same story is repeated in a slightly different way in Sūra eleven *To the Thamud people (we sent) Ṣāliḥ one of their own brethren. He said: "O my people, worship Allāh: ye have no other god but him. It is he who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein: then ask forgiveness of him and turn*

to him (in repentance): for my Lord is (always) near ready to answer.” They said: “O Ṣāliḥ, thou hast been of us! A center of our hopes hitherto! Dost thou (now) forbid us the worship of what our fathers worshipped? But we are really in suspicious (disquieting) doubt as to that to which thou invitest us.” He said: “O my people! Do ye see? If I have a clear (sign) from my Lord and he hath sent mercy unto me from himself who then can help me against Allāh if I were to disobey him? What then would ye add to my (portion) but perdition? “And O my people, this she-camel of Allāh is a symbol to you: leave her to feed on Allāh’s (free) earth and inflict no harm on her or a swift Penalty will seize you. But they did hamstring her. So he said: “Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days: (then will be your ruin): there is a promise not to be belied!” When our decree issued we saved Ṣāliḥ and those who believed with him by (special) grace from ourselves and from the ignominy of that day. For thy Lord he is the strong one and able to enforce his will. The (mighty) blast overtook the wrongdoers and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning as if they had never dwelt and flourished there. Ah, behold, for the Thamud rejected their Lord and cherisher! Ah, behold, removed (from sight) were the Thamud! Sūra 11:61-68

In case we didn’t know how important this story was, it is repeated again in Sūra twenty six ..... *The Thamud (people) rejected the apostles. Behold their brother Ṣāliḥ said to them: “Will you fear (Allāh)? “I am to you an apostle worthy of all trust. “So fear Allāh and obey me. “No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the lord of the worlds. “Will ye be left secure in (the enjoyment of) all that ye have here?-- “Gardens and springs and corn-fields and date-palms with spathes near breaking (with the weight of fruit)? “And ye carve house out of (rocky) mountains with great skill. “But fear Allāh and obey me; “and follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant “Who make mischief in the land and mend not (their ways).” They said: “Thou art only they of those bewitched! Thou art no more than a mortal like us: then bring us a sign if thou tellest the truth!” He said: “Here is a she-camel: she has a right of watering and ye have a right of watering (severally) on a day appointed. “Touch her not with harm lest the penalty of a great day seize you.” But they hamstrung her: then did they become full of regrets. But the penalty seized them. Verily in this is a sign: but most of them do not believe. And verily thy Lord is he the exalted in might most merciful. Qur’ān 26: 141 - 159*

And it is repeated again in Sūra fifty four ... *The Thamud (also) rejected (their) warners. For they said: “what, a man, a solitary one from among ourselves, shall we follow such a one? Truly should we then be straying in mind and mad! “Is it that the message is sent to him of all people amongst us? Nay he is a liar an insolent one!” Ah, they will know on the morrow which is the liar the insolent one.*

*For we will send the she camel by way of trial for them. So watch them (O Ṣāliḥ ) and possess thyself in patience! And tell them that the water is to be divided between them: each one's right to drink being brought forward (by suitable turns). But they called to their companion and he took a sword in hand and hamstrung (her) Ah, how (terrible) was my penalty and my warning! For we sent against them a single mighty blast and they became like the dry stubble used by one who pens cattle. And we have indeed made the Qur'ān easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition? Sūra 54:27-32*

The she-camel event is also addressed in Sūra 17:59: *And we refrain from sending the signs only because the men of former generations treated them as false: We sent the she-camel: to the Thamud to open their eyes but they treated her wrongfully: We only send the signs by way of terror (and warning from evil).*

The she-camel event is explained to us by Ibn Kathīr (Tafsir Ibn Kathīr, 7. Al-A'raf) "Indeed there has come to you a clear sign from your Lord. This she-camel of Allāh is a sign unto you;" meaning, a miracle has come to you from Allāh testifying to the truth of what I came to you with. Ṣāliḥ's people asked him to produce a miracle and suggested a certain solid rock that they chose, which stood lonely in the area of Ḥijr, and which was called Al-Katibah. They asked him to bring a pregnant camel out of that stone. Ṣāliḥ took their covenant and promises that if Allāh answers their challenge, they would believe and follow him. When they gave him their oaths and promises to that, Ṣāliḥ started praying and invoked Allāh (to produce that miracle). All of a sudden, the stone moved and broke apart, producing a she-camel with thick wool. It was pregnant and its fetus was visibly moving in its belly, exactly as Ṣāliḥ's people asked. This is when their chief, Jundu' bin 'Amr, and several who followed him believed. The rest of the noblemen of Thamud wanted to believe as well, but Dhū'ab bin 'Amr bin Labid, Al-Habbab, who tended their idols, and Rabbab bin Sum'ar bin Jilhis stopped them. One of the cousins of Jundu' bin 'Amr, whose name was Shihab bin Khalifah bin Mikhlal bin Labid bin Jawwas, was one of the leaders of Thamud, and he also wanted to accept the message. However, the chiefs whom we mentioned prevented him, and he conceded to their promptings. The camel remained in Thamud, as well as, its offspring after she delivered it before them. The camel used to drink from its well on one day and leave the well for Thamud the next day. They also used to drink its milk, for on the days she drank water, they used to milk her and fill their containers from its milk. Allāh said in other Ayat.

Al Ṭabarī adds to this: *What happened then regarding them and Ṣāliḥ was told by al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥyā- 'Abd al-Razzaq- Isrā'il- 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Rufay'- Abū al-Ṭufayl: Thamud said to Ṣāliḥ, "Bring us a sign if you are indeed truthful." Ṣāliḥ said to them, "Go to an elevation on the land," and it shook violently as a woman*



*Right: Is this  
the Great-  
Stone Camel  
of Thamud?*



*in labor shakes, and it opened up, and from its midst a camel came forth. Ṣālih said, "This is God's camel, a token unto you. Let her feed in God's land, and do not hurt her, lest a painful torment seize you..."* (Al Ṭabarī, Volume II, page 41)

So it is no surprise to discover what looks like the Great Stone Camel of Thamud carved on a mountain side. However, it is found some 50 kilometers south of Petra, about 15 kilometers north of Wadi Rum. This top of this camel drawing stretches up some 16 feet above the canyon floor (almost two stories). The valleys around Wadi Rum have many examples of Thamudic writing. While Muḥammad's message about the Thamudic people and the camel had great meaning to them and took up many pages of the Qur'ān, today we have only the Great Stone Camel carving to remind us of the region where this event took place. Strangely enough this is a thousand kilometers north of Mecca.

## **12. The current location of the Quraysh tribe**

As Islam spread, the Quraysh tribe spread with them. Today it is possible to find people who claim to be descended from the Quraysh tribe all across the Middle East. Almost all of the Muslim Quraysh are Sunni, but there are also some who are Christians, belonging to the Orthodox Church (Antioch), the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Ancient Church of the East, and a few in the



Aḥmadiyya community. This wide dispersion of people from a Quraysh background would be expected, as the Quraysh were among the leaders of Islam as it spread west to Spain and east to Afghanistan. An internet search of Quraysh or Qureshi will produce an interesting list of people with this last name.

When living in southern Jordan doing survey work of ancient Nabataean sites, I became aware of many Quraysh tribesmen living around (especially south and west) of the city of Ma'an. I asked a local clinic if I could survey the names in their registry and found an amazing number of Quraysh names. Ma'an is only 30 kilometers east of Petra. These tribesmen living in the Ma'an vicinity claimed they were descendants of the original Quraysh tribe.

### 13. The Abbāsids and Ḥumeima

The city of Ḥumeima was a Nabataean town on the incense route, some 40 kilometers south of Petra. It flourished during the Nabataean Empire (100 BC – 300 AD) and was not abandoned until 746 AD when a large earthquake destroyed much of Ḥumeima and also Petra. (Oleson, 1995) The Ḥumeima site has five Byzantine churches, two Umayyad-Abbāsīd farmhouses, a large early Abbāsīd fortified house and a mosque that served as the residence of the famous Abbāsīd family. (Oleson, 2005)

The Abbāsīd families left Ḥumeima for Kūfa in Iraq in AH 132 / AD 749 where they would later become rulers. Among them were two of the first Abbāsīd caliphs: Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāh and Abū Ja'far al-Manšūr, both of whom were born and grew up at Ḥumeima. Excavations have uncovered



*Above: A photo of the foundations of the Abbāsīd Qaṣr or fortified house in Ḥumeima.*

three buildings associated with the Abbāsid family including the qaṣr (fortified house) and the small mosque.

Why is Ḥumeima important? When the Muslims of Baghdad wished to find a member of Muḥammad's family to support their revolt against the Umayyad rulers in Damascus, they went to the region of Petra. It is interesting that they did not find members of Muḥammad's family at Mecca in southern Arabia, but rather looked to northern Arabia, to a town only 27 miles south of Petra. (Kennedy, 2004)

#### 14. The Black Stone was originally in the Negev

From ancient time, the Nabataeans have worshiped rocks. It is thought that the worship of rocks has to do with Dushara the god of mountains, or specifically the Edomite mountains around Petra. Throughout these mountains it is possible to view god-rocks. Usually they are in the form of a square block, although there are also triangles. The Nabataeans and Edomites were both descendants of Abraham, and so they had a monotheistic background and were reluctant to put human characteristics onto gods, although in later years they did add faces to some of their god-blocks. (See photos on the next page) Usually the god-rocks were simply large square blocks of stone or square block shapes carved in a niche. It is possible to see many of these around the city of Petra.

Maximus of Tyre in his book *Philosophoumena* in the 2nd century AD recorded: "The Arabs serve I know not whom, but I saw this statue which was a square stone."

The Suda Lexicon, which was compiled at the end of the tenth century, refers to older sources which have since been lost. It states:

*Namely the god [theos] Ares, is in Petra in Arabia. The god Ares is revered amongst them; for this one they especially honor. The statue is a black stone, square in shape, unchiseled, four feet ποδῶν tall, two wide: it is mounted on a plinth of beaten gold. To this [deity] they pour forth the blood of the sacrificial animals on this; and this is their libation. And the whole house is rich in gold, and [contains] many votive offerings.*

#### Greek Original:

Θεὸς Ἄρης· τουτέστι θεὸς Ἄρης, ἐν Πέτρᾳ τῆς Ἀραβίας, σέβεται δὲ θεὸς Ἄρης παρ' αὐτοῖς· τόνδε γὰρ μάλιστα τιμῶσι. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα λίθος ἐστὶ μέλας, τετράγωνος, ἀτύπωτος, ὕψος ποδῶν τεσσάρων, εὗρος δύο· ἀνάκειται δὲ ἐπὶ βάσεως χρυσηλάτου. τούτῳ θύουσι καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῶν ἱερῶν προχέουσι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἡ σπονδή. (δὲ οἶκος ἅπας ἐστὶ πολύχρυσος, καὶ ἀναθήματα πολλά. (Ball, 2004, bottom of page)



*Above left: A block god with a face found at the Temple of the Winged Lions in Petra. Above right: A triangle shape near Petra also represents a god.*

## 15. The lack of evidence from north and south of Mecca

Muslims commonly believe that ancient Mecca was a major city on the caravan routes between the kingdoms of Arabia. However, history does not prove this to be so. One would think that kingdoms like Yemen, which is immediately south of present day Mecca, and those north of Mecca would substantiate Mecca's existence, but this is not the case. The ancient kingdoms of Yemen utilized the skill of writing since the 10th century BC (Kitchen, 1994, page 135) and yet, with the thousands of inscriptions, graffiti and other writings that have survived to this day, there is not a single mention of the city of Mecca. Looking north from Mecca to the cities of Dedan, Teyma and Khaybar, thousands of inscriptions, graffiti and other writings have survived to this day, and once again we have not a single mention of the city of Mecca in any literature prior to 900 AD.

Farther north are the Nabataean cities of Meda'in Šāliḥ, Petra and many Nabataean cities in the Negev. In the inscriptions, graffiti and other records, once again, there is not a single mention of the city of Mecca.

If Mecca was indeed a major center that had existed since the days of Abraham, it should have appeared somewhere in the ancient and classical records. In contrast, many of the small kingdoms that existed in Yemen are well documented. The Kingdom of Haram was founded in 600 BC by King Yaharil (Kitchen, 1994, page 239) and ended with King Maadikarib Raydan.

(190-175 BC) (Kitchen, page 181, 239) There was also the Kingdom of Inabba, whose most prominent ruler was King Waqahil Yafush. (550-530 BC) (Kitchen, page 181, 239) Another kingdom, Kaminahu, was founded by King Ammiyitha (585-570 BC) (Kitchen, page 182) and ruled by a number of kings until Ilisami II Nabat, 495–475 BC. Then there was the kingdom of Nashan, whose first documented ruler was King Ab'amar Saqid. He reigned in 760 BC. (Kitchen, page 183) Later a king named Yadi'ab Āmir ruled from 500-480 BC. (Kitchen, page 240) If historians and archeologists can date so many small kingdoms north and south of Mecca, why can they not find any reference to the city of Mecca supposedly existed in this region for thousands of years?

Dr. Michael Macdonald at the Faculty of Oriental Studies in Oxford University has been working on a database of Safaitic inscriptions found in Arabia. So far he and his colleagues have recorded over 28,000 inscriptions. You can read about the database at <http://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/staff/iw/mmacdonald.html>. To date, not a single reference to the city of Mecca has been discovered, despite thousands of pieces of graffiti written by people going on the pilgrimage. While there is much evidence of people going on pilgrimages to Petra, one wonders why Mecca is never mentioned. It is as if it never existed.



*Above: The author with one of his sons examining Safaitic and Thamudic graffiti left by ancient shepherds near Ras al Naqab, Jordan*

## 16. Khālīd's pilgrimage

In the massive collections of writing produced by Abbāsīd authors between 750 - 950 AD (132 - 340 AH) the writers seldom mention the city of Mecca and never once mention the city of Petra. Occasionally when early Abbāsīd writers did mention Mecca, they went out of their way to demonstrate just where Mecca was located as illustrated by Al Ṭabarī's comments below.

*Abū Ja'far:* (Al Ṭabarī notes this, with no isnād or line of succession to give proofs of where this information came from) *Khālīd set out as a pilgrim from al-Firād (Iraq) on 25 Dhū al-Qāḍah (31 January 634) but kept his pilgrimage secret. He had with him a number of his companions. He wandered through the land randomly until he arrived at Mecca by dead reckoning. That came to him easily, in a way that it would not come to either guide or ribāl. He traveled on one of the roads of the people of al-Jazīrah, no stranger way nor one more appropriate than it despite its difficulty has been seen. Therefore his absence from his troops was short, so that the last of them had not arrived in al- Hīraīrah before he came to them in the company of the commander of the rear who he had appointed, and the two of them arrived together. Khālīd and his companions had shaven their heads. His pilgrimage was unknown except to those in the rear whom he had told about that. AbūBakr did not learn of that until later, when he reproached him for it. His punishment was that he was sent to Syria.*

*Khālīd's journey from al-Firād crossed the width of the land randomly by his own reckoning. The road from al-Firād passed through Ma'al-Ambari, then Mithqab, then ended at Dhat al'Irq. The road then headed east from there, bringing him from 'Arafat to al-Firād. That road is named al-Sudd.* (Al Ṭabarī XI, 1993, page 68 2075)

There are several things that one can note from this passage. First is the fact that Khālīd calculated he could make a quick pilgrimage to Mecca while his troops marched from al-Firād to Hīra. This would be a distance of 475 kms on a direct route, or around 700 kms if he followed the meandering river. The overland trip to Mecca however was over 1500 kms in one direction, and the return journey would make the total distance well over 3000 kilometers.

Second, after the account is finished, al-Ṭabarī seems to insert a short section to describe Khālīd's route to Mecca, in case anyone objects to this rather long and tedious journey being made in such a short time. The paragraph: (*Khālīd's journey from al-Farād crossed the width of the land randomly by his own reckoning. The road from al-Firād passed through Ma'al-Ambari, then Mithqab, then ended at Dhat al'Irq. The road then headed east from there, bringing him from 'Arafat to al-Firād. That road is named al-Sudd.*) reads more as an intru-

sion into the text than a part that flows from it. Al-Ṭabarī gives no source other than himself for this section.

The question then faces us: which is more probable, a quick trip to Petra, or a quick trip to Mecca in southern Arabia? If one assumed that Khālīd's pilgrimage was to the religious center of Petra, the journey would have been much shorter. (475 kms to Petra versus 1500 kms to Mecca in the south) On the road to Petra, dead reckoning would have been necessary to find the ancient water cistern that connected Wadi Sirḥān to Jafr. This cistern was used by ancient camel caravans enabling camels to cross directly from Wadi Sirḥān to Jafr and then on to Ma'an and finally to Petra. This route was first suggested to me by John Hill, when preparing his translation of the *Xiyu juan*, or "*Chapter on the Western Regions*" from the *Hou Han shu*, as the Chinese described traveling to Petra arriving directly from the east.

John Hill proposed in his notes (12.21 and 12.24) that a trade route used to exist between Petra and Wadi Sirḥān to the east. Such a trade route would cross the desert to link Petra directly with Jawf, and subsequently to the trade routes that ran east from there to Gerrha and the ports at the head of the Persian Gulf. This proposed trade route would have provided a direct link between Gerrha and the more northern ports such as Charax Spasinu on the Persian Gulf, and Gaza and Rhinocorura (modern al-'Arish) on the Mediterranean Sea. This route would have been known as the "Mesopotamia Route" or "Northwest Route" to Petra. It is interesting to note that the term al Ṭabarī gives it means exactly that: "*al Jazīrah*." (Also see note 658, *Al Jazīrah*, page 180 *Al Ṭabarī Volume XII*, page 180)

Hill's reason for proposing this new route was based on his interpretation of an ancient Chinese manuscript. Throughout Chinese history, Chinese explorers, ambassadors, and merchants made occasional trips to the western world. Many of their reports were written down and preserved. (see pg 334)

The Chinese text that John Hill was referring to is one known as the *Wei lue* (or "Short Account of the Wei Dynasty") composed by Yu Huan between 239 and 265 AD. It provides much additional material on Parthia and Da Qin or the Roman Empire than was included in the earlier account of these regions in the *Hou Han shu*, which were based on the reports of the Chinese envoy Gan Ying who reached the Persian Gulf in 97 AD, and presented in an address to the Chinese Emperor circa 125 AD. The new material in the *Wei lue* appears to date from the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD and seems to be based on accounts from Arab sources.

According to John Hill, the ancient Chinese text claims that "from Qiellan



(Wadi Sirhān) one can travel due west 600 li (250 km) to the kingdom of Sifu (Petra).” (Hill, 2004)

The basic units of measurement employed in the Hou Han shu (the *li* and the *chi*) have varied considerably through the ages and, at times, from district to district. Fortunately, however, they remained stable over the Qin and Han periods and a bronze standard measure, dated 9 AD, has been preserved at the Imperial Palace in Beijing. This has allowed accurate conversions to modern measurements, and the li is calculated to be 415.8 meters in length. Other ancient measurements were the Greek stadium (201.5 meters), the Roman stadium (185 meters), and the Roman mile (1,482 meters). (Hill, 2004)

There were several problems with the trade route that John Hill suggested. First, this route does not appear on any maps of ancient trade routes in the Arabian Desert. Such a route would cross a wide desert expanse between Jafr in Jordan and Wadi Sirhān in Saudi Arabia. Second, the Chinese text suggested that there was a wang or “king” of Wadi Sirhān, and as far as we know, Wadi Sirhān never was a kingdom, although it appears to have been a major part of the Midianite kingdom as we demonstrated in chapter nine.

Wadi Sirhān is the name of a wadi (valley) that runs southeast from the ancient site of Al-Azrak in eastern Jordan, eventually crosses the border into Saudi Arabia and ends at the wells of Maybu. It is about 140 kilometers (87 miles) in length, and 5-18 kilometers (3-11 miles) wide. (Encyclopedia of Islam). Musil called it: “a sandy, marshy lowland, surrounded by low hillocks.” As far as I could tell, any reference to a “king” of this area by the Chinese explorer must have referred to a local sheik. Hill explains it this way: “The Chinese word, ‘wang’, usually translated as “king,” is employed for everyone ranging from tribal chiefs to emperors - so there is no difficulty assuming it is used here for “sheik.”

Now, trade routes can be funny things. Most Westerners think in terms of major nations trading with other major nations through established and well-known routes. The Arab mind set is different. The Bedouin think in terms of being middlemen, conducting trade between two centers. This is significantly different. Camel caravans were making profit by bringing goods from one center to another, but they were not the official representatives of either center. The governments of these centers made money by taxing the caravans. The caravan owners made better profits by avoiding taxes. So trade routes were in constant flux. There were, and are, many ways to cross the desert. Each route has its positive and negative points.

So any caravan passing through a settled area would have to pay something to the sheik who controlled that area. Settled areas, however, were usu-



ally located around water spots, and caravans needed water. As we mentioned in chapter eleven, the Nabataeans grew in wealth and power because they developed secret water collection systems in the desert, enabling their caravans to pass through areas that others could not travel, thus avoiding some of these taxation centers. Thus a cat and mouse game developed between caravan owners and those with the power to tax caravans passing through their region. This constant flux makes it difficult for historians to accurately plot ancient trade routes. While major routes did occur, other routes that bypassed certain centers were used whenever it was profitable.

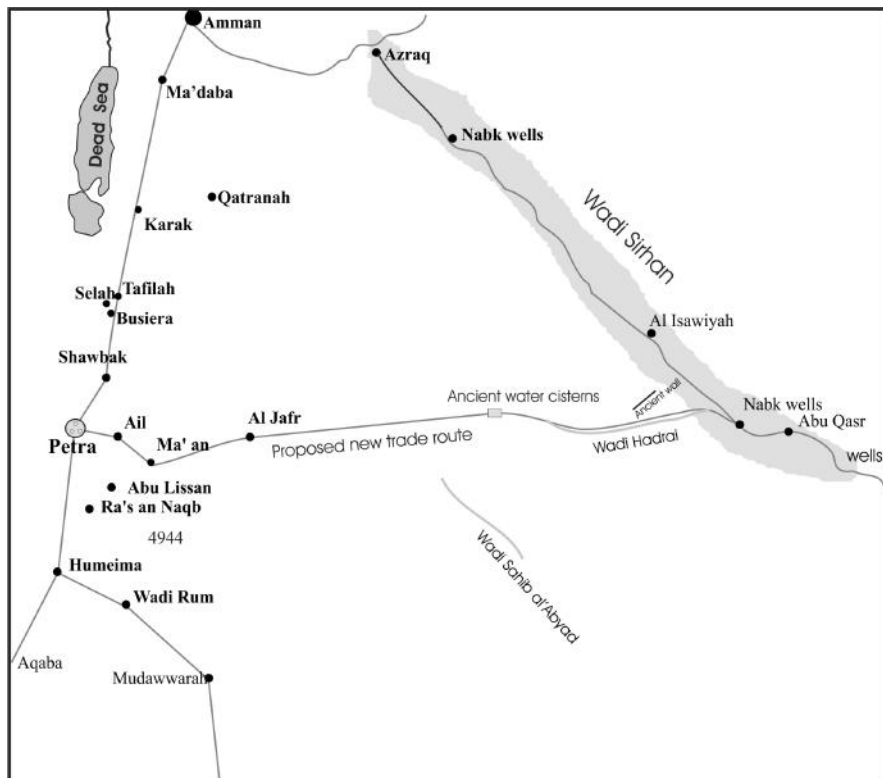
As mentioned before, based on Chinese records, John Hill suggested that a trade route existed between Petra in the west and Gerrha in the east. The part of the route that ran east from Petra to Ail, then to Ma'an and finally to Jafr is quite acceptable, and follows a natural course of travel between these centers. There is also enough water along this route for major camel caravans to pass. The problem with Hill's suggested route was getting a caravan from Jafr to a spot with water in Wadi Sirhān. Since camels require about 80 - 100 liters of water each, a small caravan of 100 camels would require 8000 - 10,000 liters of water. Thus there had to be a major watering point between Jafr and Wadi Sirhān with a minimum of 10,000 liters and, preferably, much more.

A well would not usually provide this kind of water, unless it was located in an area with close surface water. Such an area would have been an oasis, such as is found in Ma'an. If there was no oasis or active well, then a water collection system that fed into a large cistern was required. If camel caravans used this route, then there must have been a major source of water about half way between Jafr and Wadi Sirhān.

I began my search in the Jordanian village of Abū Lissan where the Darawsha tribe of Bedouin live. They originally herded camels south and east of the Jafr area, before being settled by the Jordanian government around the well at Abū Lissan. After much discussion regarding the area and possible routes, the old men of the village told me of a large, ancient water cistern located in the desert east of Jafr. However, as it is hard to gain government permission to visit this area, we couldn't just drive on out to look for it. Then a few days later, while digging around in the basement of ACOR (American Center for Oriental Research) in Amman, I came across an old map that actually showed the location of this large cistern. (Transcribed on the map on the next page)

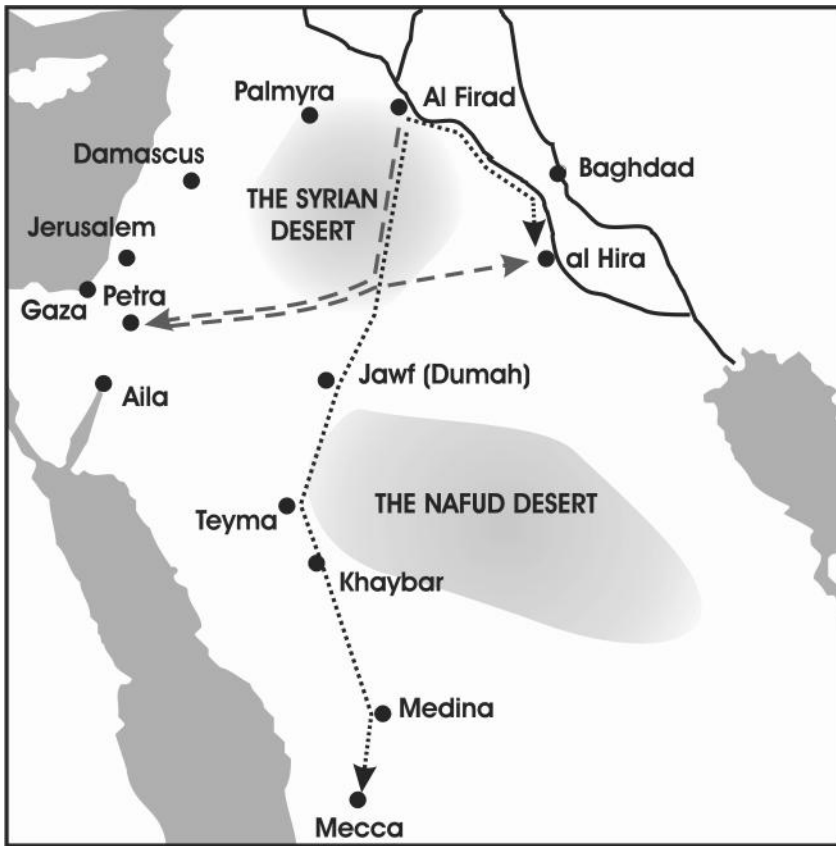
Is it possible that Khālid's men remembered the ancient Nabataean trade route and tried a daring quick trip to the Holy City while their army marched back to Hira? Rather than taking the longer trip around the top of Syria, they made a dash through the desert and approached Petra directly from the east.

While their army marched along the winding river bank on foot for nearly 700 kms, their camels raced across the desert covering 800 to 900 kilometers, depending on which desert track they took. The men quickly performed the pilgrimage and then rushed back to their troops before the rear guard made it to Hīra. It is just the kind of dashing bravery that young Bedouin men often demonstrate or aspire to. It must have been a shock to them when Abū Bakr disciplined them for their act of devotion to Islam.



From the map above you can see that the water source is located almost exactly half way between Jafr and Al Isawiyah at a place where Wadi Hadrai and Wadi el 'Abyad meet. This would enable camels to travel directly to Petra from Wadi Sirhān and would have provided a way for Khālīd to perform the pilgrimage to Petra and quickly return to al-Firād or al- Hīra on the Euphrates River.

A journey to Mecca located a thousand kilometers south of Petra would have been impossible for Khālīd to undertake in the same time period. Therefore, I would like to propose that despite Al-Ṭabarī's association of this story with Mecca, that Khālīd and his men actually traveled to Petra and not Mecca.



*Above: Two possible routes that Khālid could have taken starting at Al Firād in Iraq. Did he travel to Petra or Mecca? The trip to Mecca would have involved a 3000 km round trip through very harsh desert.*

## 17. Trebuchet Stones

During the civil war with Ibn Zubayr (64 AH, 683 AD) the Syrian army attacked the Holy City, and during the month of October destroyed the Ka'ba in the center of the city with a trebuchet which hurled large stones into the Ka'ba area. (Cosman, 2008, pg 305) (Ṭabarī XIX: 223-224) In the city of Mecca there is no evidence of trebuchet stones ever being used against the city, or even city walls over which a trebuchet would have thrown stones. In Petra, archeologists have uncovered hundreds of trebuchet stones which were hurled into the central courtyard in front of the Temple of Dushara. Using the fallen roof tiles from the nearby Great Temple, it is possible to date the fortified area and stones to sometime after the earthquake of 551 AD. The area was covered in rubble from the later earthquake of 713 AD. Is it not an amazing coincidence that a trebuchet was used against Petra at exactly the same time as

the one mentioned by al-Ṭabarī as being used against Mecca? Or is Petra actually the original Holy City of Islam?



*Right: Trebuchet stones uncovered by Dr. Martha Sharp Joukowsky at the Brown University Excavation in Petra.*

## Conclusion

In the previous three chapters we have tried to demonstrate that there are ample situations that seem to be best answered if the Holy City of Islam was located in Petra in northern Arabia. From the archeological evidence left by early mosques, it would seem that the ancient qiblas all converged on the central court area of the ancient city of Petra. When we examine Petra in light of literary and historical evidence, this location seems to hold up. There are, however, several more questions that need to be addressed before all the evidence is in, and these will be examined in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

### NAVIGATION AND PRE-ISLAMIC POETRY

When confronted with the archeological evidence supporting the changed qibla, several people have argued with me that the Arabs of 7th and 8th century AD would not have had the technology needed to accurately determine the qibla direction. This argument is often based on reasoning that goes like this: “*Today we are much more advanced than the Arabs, and since I could never determine the direction of the qibla without a GPS then I doubt that they could do it accurately.*” Another argument goes: “*The Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were land-bound, using camel caravans. Using the stars as a method of finding direction was something sailors did. So how could the Arabs of Arabia know with accuracy how to determine the qibla?*” If one of these is your thoughts, then carefully consider several things you may not have known about the ancient Nabataeans and Arabs of Arabia.

#### Arab and Chinese astronomy

Joseph Needham argues in his three volume series *Science and Civilisation in China* (Needham, 1959) that celestial navigation was developed simultaneously by the Chinese and the Arabs. The Chinese had very rudimentary calendars in 1st century AD as seen by *Ta Tai Li Chi*. (Record of Rites of Tai the Elder) (Needham, 1959, vol. 3, pg 194) However he notes that in the 3rd century BC, there is a story of a Chinese ruler collecting a set of observations about the stars (of more than 200,000 characters) entitled “*Master Lu’s Spring and Summer Annals*” that was supposed to contain observations pertaining to the heavens, earth and the myriad objects in the universe. No record of this has survived to this day. Needham then points out that the astronomical writings of the Chinese start about 3rd century BC in the form of two books known as *Thien Wen* (Astronomy of Sish Shen) and the *Thien Wen Hsing Chan*. (Astronomical Star Prognostication) (Needham, 1959, page 196-197) These books

disappear from the bibliographies of the dynastic histories in the 6th century AD and are replaced by *Ku Chin Thung Chan* (Compendium of Astrology, New and Old) of Wu Mi. These are then lost in the Mongol period and portions are contained in later writings.

Interestingly enough, there was contact between the Nabataean Arabs and the Chinese during the first centuries AD and BC. The chart below demonstrates multiple contacts between the Chinese and the Roman / Arab empires.

Source	Date Written	Referring to events
Shih Chi, ch. 123	90 BC	100 BC
Chhien Hans Shu, ch. 96a	100 BC	100 BC
Hou Han Shu, chs. 116,118	450 AD	97 AD
Wei Lueh in San Kuo Chih, ch. 30	Before 429 AD	220 - 264 AD
Chin Shu, ch. 97	635 AD	265 - 419 AD
Sung Shu, ch. 97	500 AD	420 - 478 AD
Liang Shu, ch. 54	629 AD	502 - 556 AD
Wei Shu, ch. 102 and Pei Shih, ch. 97	572 AD	386 - 556 AD
Thang Shu, Chiu ch. 198	950 AD	618 - 906 AD
Thang Shu, Hsin, ch 221, a,b	1061 AD	618 - 906 AD
Nestorian Stone	781 AD	719 AD
Sung Shih, ch. 490	1345 AD	960 - 1279 AD
Chu Fan Chih	1225 AD	1225 AD
Ming Shih, ch. 326	1739 AD	1368 - 1643 AD

*This chart is adapted from material presented in "Science and Civilisation in China" by Joseph Needham, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1954, pages 192-193*

The Chinese text, however, that is of real importance to us in understanding the contact between the Nabataeans and the Chinese is known as *Xiyu chuan* (Chapter on the Western Regions) taken from *Hou Han shu* 88. The *Hou Han shu*, the official history of the Later (or 'Eastern') Han Dynasty (25-221 AD), was compiled by Fan Ye, who died in 445 AD. Fan Ye used a number of earlier histories including the *Shi ji* by *Sima Qian* and the *Han shu* by *Ban Gu*, plus many others (including some that were also entitled *Hou Han shu*) most of which have not survived intact. The particular chapter of interest to us is in his *History of China* which covers 25 - 55 AD. John Hill recently completed a translation of this text and has made it available over the Internet, complete with his notes. As I understand it, once the book is published the internet site will be taken down. (Hill, 2003) In the appendices of his book in section B titled *The territories of Haixi, Haibei and Haidong*, Hill tells us that the Chinese envoys from Arabia brought "some musicians and some skilful jugglers who performed transformations, belched fire, changed the head of an ox to that of a horse,

*amputated limbs, and then replaced them. They also know how to play with little balls and can keep as many as ten in the air at a time.*" This passage demonstrates that not only were the Chinese exploring the western world, but Arabs had traveled to China during the height of the Nabataean merchant empire. Since there was early communication between the Arabs and the Chinese, the question of who first developed astronomy and the science of celestial navigation will probably never be sorted out.

It would seem however, from the Chinese records, that astronomy and astrology were very much connected in their minds, and that the Chinese study of astronomy was very much focused on astrological projections rather than celestial navigation. The Arabs on the other had good reason to develop celestial navigation.

### **Navigation by the stars likely developed on land, not on the seas**

This may come as a surprise, as few people have researched the development of celestial navigation in Arabia. Many of the early works on astronomy, be they Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian or Chinese, were actually works on astrology. (Pines, 1964) People during the civilizations before the 1st century AD had little need for developing celestial navigation, as they could easily tell their location based on the things they observed around them. The Nabataean Arabs on the other hand had a need for navigating by the stars. In order to avoid taxes and confrontation with people, they deliberately took their camel caravans into the vast deserts of Arabia. As we saw in chapter eleven, the Nabataeans developed rain-water collection systems to provide them with water for their camels, but to find these hidden water systems they needed a system to guide them across the trackless desert plains.

During the time I spent in the Arabian deserts, I noticed that the stars were much brighter than what I had observed in other places. There are several reasons for this. First, I was outdoors much more than I was in Europe or North America. The weather also had something to do with this. In Arabia there are many months of the year when the skies are clear of clouds. Also, the air is much clearer in the desert, where there is little humidity and little air pollution. Added to this, the Arabian deserts have nearly twelve hours of darkness. Since people only sleep an average of eight hours, this means that once the caravans stopped traveling during daylight hours, the Arab merchants had several hours of darkness before they needed to go to sleep. When camping in the desert, we would spend several hours around the campfire, as there was little we could do in the darkness. For the Bedouins, this is their principle



time of socializing, telling stories and exchanging knowledge. One could easily imagine the caravan leaders taking the youth away from the fire and turning their focus to the stars. Using parts of their body and simple mathematics, they could easily determine their location in the desert.

After years of using this system of navigation across the desert, they adapted it for use aboard ships. Thus it is no surprise to discover that it was the Arabs who took to the high seas first, and not the Chinese. It was Arab ships that plied the ports of India and China, and not the other way around. When Ferdinand Magellan made his famous journey around the world, he relied on an Arab navigator and Arab charts to guide him.

### How it was done

Celestial navigation is really quite simple when one puts their mind to it. It includes three aspects: 1) finding latitude 2) using a constant measurement of either distance or time, 3) determining longitude. Using these, the Arab merchants could accurately navigate across the featureless landscapes of the Arabian deserts and find their hidden water supplies. They could also accurately determine exactly where cities lay over the horizon, and ultimately they could accurately determine the qibla direction for their mosques.

### Using *qiyās* to find latitude

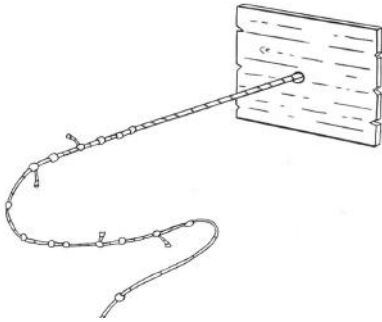
Before the invention of the compass, watch and sextant, the Arab's main guide was latitude. To obtain their latitude, Nabataean merchants measured the height of a known star above the horizon. Often this was the Pole star (North Star), since the Pole Star was the one star that did not move in the sky. They simply had to identify this star, and then directly measure its height above the horizon. This was the simplest method, and was known as the science of *qiyās* (measurement). This involved holding the fingers out at arm's length and using them to measure the height of the Pole Star. The width of four fingers was considered to measure 4 *isba'*. In a circle there were 224 *isba'*. It was considered that a day's travel due north would raise the Pole Star 1 *isba'* from the horizon. The *isba'* was further divided into 8 *zam*. Thus distances were often measured in zams. (Facey, 1991, page 99)

Over the years I have tried various experiments measuring zams by hand and I've discovered that this seems to work for the average human being, no matter how tall he or she is, or how young. When holding the hand out at arm's length, it is possible to measure the height of the North Star or other stars by simply placing one hand over the other. The final calculation was

made by deciding where on the final finger the star was located, thus measuring the *isba'* (number of fingers) and the *zams* (1/8th of a finger.)

### Using a *kamāl* to measure latitude

A more accurate but still simple instrument was known as a *kamāl*. This was a small parallelogram made of horn or wood measuring about one by two inches, with a string inserted in the center. On the string were nine knots at measured intervals.



The end of the string was held in the teeth. The lower edge of the horn was placed on the horizon, while the horn was moved along the string until the upper edge touched the required star. The knot at which the horn covered the exact distance signified a certain number of *isba'* of altitude of the star. The altitude of the Pole Star could then be deduced.

An alternative way of using a *kamāl* was to move the knots through the teeth until the piece of horn or wood covered the required star altitude. Vasco da Gama's pilot from Malindi used a *kamāl*, and the Portuguese adopted it and eventually modified the spacing of the knots to measure degrees. Sometimes Arab and Indian seamen added extra knots marking the latitudes of particular ports of call, or they simply used a *kamāl* on which all the knots indicated particular cities in the desert or ports of call on the ocean. This worked well on the flat desert plains, and allowed the merchants to accurately determine their latitude. Measuring longitude was a bit more work.



## The longitude problem

In order to accurately determine longitude, some simple math had to be done. A starting point needed to be established. In the western world this was known as the 'prime meridian' or 0° longitude. This line, along with the opposite meridian at 180° longitude, forms a great circle that divides the Earth into the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

In western thought this line runs through Greenwich, England, the site of the Royal Observatory which is where the English people happened to be who came up with this great idea centuries after the Arabs. The English however, were thinking in terms of sea travel, so they wanted to use time as a constant measurement. The Earth spins around (west to east) at a very even pace; moving 15° each hour. Using the sun as a marker and a clock to give a constant measure, they could use the earth's rotation to calculate their position in relation to their starting point at 0°. The English set their chronometers to noon when the sun was at its highest point. Later, when they were at 3:00 PM, it meant that three hours ago the sun was overhead at 0° longitude. In those three hours, the sun moved 15° each hour for a total of 45°, so they were at 45° west longitude. This worked well once the clock had been invented. But without the clock, the western world could not measure longitude. Accurate clocks only began to appear in the 16th century. It was not until 1760 that an Englishman named John Harrison invented an exact chronometer, making possible the measurement of longitude at sea. So how did the Arabs do it?

## Distance, not time

The Arab secret was to use distance, not time when measuring longitude. Using the stars, they could accurately determine if they were traveling north or south. However, since they could not measure time accurately, they turned to distance. In order to do this, they used nothing more complicated than their own bodies. If'isba (fingers) could be used to determine latitude, then distance could be used to determine longitude, using the rhythm or beat (*darba*) which was measured in *tafīla*. (feet or metres of verse) (Moreh, 1976, page 208).

The secret was to count the number of steps they traveled from their source. By using the number of steps and a bit of math, they could accurately determine how far they had traveled east or west. Now, contrary to popular opinion, the Arab merchants of antiquity did not usually ride camels when traveling in the desert. Usually the camel drivers walked and the camels carried heavy loads. Thus, distance in the desert was measured by the steps of an average human being.

Pliny the Elder, a Roman historian, is probably the earliest record we have

that observes that the Arabs measured with steps. The Arabs told Pliny that the trip from Timna, the capital of Qataban in Yemen, to Gaza on the Mediterranean Sea was 2,437,500 steps, or 62 days by camel. (Pliny XII, Chap. XIII) This is correct, as the distance is around 2,500 kilometers. Since there are around 1000 steps in a kilometer, there were around 2.5 million steps between Yemen and Gaza. In order to travel this distance in 62 days, the camel caravans would have had to travel around 40,000 steps, or 40 kilometers per day. This distance would have been around 24 miles. This meant that the camel caravan moved around 24 miles in 12 hours, or 2 miles an hour. Pliny found it surprising that the Arab merchants knew the exact number of steps. However, when calculating latitude and longitude, this measurement became extremely important, as it was the only accurate measurement they could use outside of clocks which were not yet invented.

The problem that you and I would have in doing this kind of measurement is not mixing up our numbers while walking. Many times my sons and I would try counting our steps as we walked and thus measure the distance we had traveled. The first several thousand steps usually went well, but after that keeping track of our counting became a problem.

### **The importance of poetry**

The Arabs developed a fascinating way of measuring their steps. Rather than count, they would recite poetry. Each poem had rhythm of a known length. By walking in rhythm and chanting the poem out loud, the Arabs could enjoy the trip and know the exact distance they had traveled down to the exact number of steps without counting. Thus poems and poetry became extremely important to the Arabs in pre-Islamic times. People who could create and memorize long poems were highly valued.

Albert Hourani, one of the great modern Arab scholars, has said that his people are more conscious of their language and the place of poetry than any other people in the world. (Hourani, 1991, pages 12-14) This consciousness was obsessive. Language was everything to the Arab. It was a divine expression and stemmed from the pre-Islamic era where Al-Kutbi was the god of writing. Today, Qur'anic Arabic is considered the language that God speaks, and those who speak it well are more honored than those who do not. Language in the form of local dialects also separates those who are near and far (blood lines). It separates the educated from the uneducated. It is an art form, and for centuries was the sole medium of artistic expression in the Arabian deserts. Every Arab tribe had its poets, and their unwritten words "flew across the desert faster than arrows." As Hourani observes, poetry was not meant to be written; it

was designed to be memorized. In the midst of outward strife and disintegration, these poems provided a unifying principle. Poetry gave expression and contained the idea of Arabian virtue. Based on the tribal community of blood lines and insisting that only ties of blood were sacred, poetry became an invisible bond between diverse clans, and formed the basis of a larger sentiment. It was poetry, the ultimate Arab art form, which bound Arabs together as a people rather than a collection of warring tribes.

When it becomes apparent that a young person is gifted as a poet, neighboring clans gather together to wish the family joy. There are feasts and music. Men and boys congratulate one another, for a poet is a defense to the honor of the entire tribe and “a weapon to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame forever.” (Nicholson, 1993, page 71)

It is interesting to note that traditionally Arabs only wish one another joy on three occasions: The birth of a boy, the coming to light of a poet, and the foaling of a noble mare. (McDonald, 1978)

The Arabic language is so powerful that Arabs will listen intently to someone speaking well, whether he speaks the truth or not. “I lift my voice to utter lies absurd, for when I speak the truth my hushed tones scarce are heard.” Abū ‘Alā’ Al-Ma’arī, Syrian poet, 973-1057 AD. (Nicholson, 1993, page 319)

Anyone wanting to understand Arab culture must be a student of Arab poetry. Arab poetry is full of glory. The poets glorified themselves, their brilliant feats, their courage and resolution, and their contempt for death. The Arab hero is defiant and boastful, and when there is little to lose he will ride off unashamed, but he will fight to the death for his women.

An example of the ideal Arab hero is Shanfara of Azd. He was an outlaw, swift runner, and excellent poet. As a child, Shanfara was captured by the Bani Salmān tribe and brought up among them. He did not learn of his origin until he was a grown man. He then vowed vengeance against his captors and returned to his own tribe. He swore that he would slay a hundred men of the Beni Salmān, and he had slain ninety-eight when he was caught in an enemy ambush. In the struggle, one of his hands was hewn off by a sword stroke, but taking the weapon in the other, he flung it in the face of a Salmān tribesman and killed him, making his score ninety-nine. He was then overpowered and slain. Much later as his skull lay bleaching on the ground, a man of his enemies passed by and kicked it. A splinter of bone entered his foot; the wound festered and he died, thus completing Shanfara’s hundred. All of this is told in wonderful poetic language, skillfully blending the use of poetry with the honor of the hero. (Aḥmad, 2004, pg 16)

Anyone wishing to be a student of Arab history must realize the importance of poetry, not only in its message, but also in its form, rhythm and measure. It is used today to give rhythm to all sorts of labour, from building construction to baking bread. To the Arab merchants of long ago, poetry was the backbone of their secret skill of navigation. It not only helped them pass the long hours as they walked through the desert; it provided them with a tool to accurately measure the distance they traveled.

### Arabic poetry

Most of our knowledge of early Arabic poetry comes from Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al Farāhīdī (More commonly known as Al Farāhīdī) (718 AD– 791 AD) Al Farāhīdī, as he is commonly known, wrote *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, the first dictionary of the Arabic language (in 8 volumes). He also collected samples of fifteen scales of poetry and compared them with the Qur'ān. Because the day of desert caravans and navigation by the stars had long passed, Al Farāhīdī called the meter of the poem the *wazn* (weight or scale) rather than the *taf'ila*. He also called each line the bayt or house (verse), which could be divided into sections called *shaṭr* (halves) or *hemistich* (a half-line). (Al Faruqi, 1975)

Al Farāhīdī classified poetry into fifteen types based on their *wazn*. The most common of these are: *Ṭawīl*, *Kāmil*, *Wāfir*, *Rajaz*, *Hazaj*, *Basīṭ*, *Khafīf*, and *Ṣāri'*. These more modern forms overshadowed the importance of the ancient beat (*darba* measured in *taf'ila*) which was so important to the early navigators. (Moreh, 1976, pg 208) Unfortunately for us, Al Farāhīdī's treatise on poetry came 180 years after the revelation of the Qur'ān, and by this time poetry was an art form and no longer a part of navigation. In Farāhīdī's time armies, not camel caravans, marched across the world from city to city along well marked roads, many of them designed to move Roman armies quickly to the edge of the empire. By this time the enemies of Rome were marching from the Roman frontier to deep within their empire.

### The development of algebra and geometry

Once the caravan drivers knew their north-south position (measured in *qiyās*) and the distance they had traveled (measured in *taf'ila*), they could perform a bit of simple geometry to determine their exact position. Combined with knowledge of the terrain, these Arabs could navigate anywhere in the world. Is it any wonder that once Arabs had travelled by land to China that a few years later Arab boats set out straight across the Indian Ocean for the

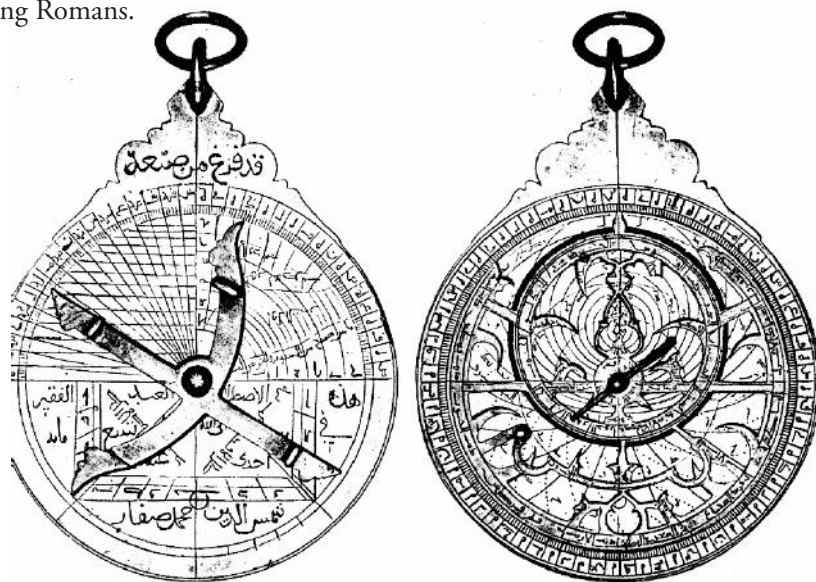


other side? Is it any wonder that when Marco Polo visited China the harbors were jammed full of Arab boats? Is it any wonder that a mosque was built in Canton China (modern Guangzhou) while Muḥammad was still alive? And lastly, is it any wonder that algebra and geometry were significantly developed in the Muslim world?

### Later methods used for navigation

The concept behind the astrolabe goes back to classical Greece. Hipparchus was born in Nicaea in Asia Minor (now Iznik in Turkey) about 180 BC, but studied and worked on the island of Rhodes. Hipparchus wrote about the precession of the equinoxes and was influential in the development of trigonometry. He redefined and formalized the projection as a method for solving complex problems of astronomy without spherical trigonometry and probably proved its main characteristics. Hipparchus did not invent the astrolabe, but he did refine the projection theory.

The earliest evidence of use of the stereographic projection in a machine is in the writing of the Roman author and architect Vitruvius (26 BC – 88 AD), who in *De architectura* describes an anaphoric clock (probably a water clock) in Alexandria. The clock had a rotating field of stars behind a wire frame indicating the hours of the day. The wire framework (the spider) and the star locations were constructed using stereographic projection. Similar constructions dating from the first to third century have been found in Salzburg and north-eastern France, so such mechanisms were apparently fairly widespread among Romans.





The earliest major writer whose writings on projection were presevered was the famous Claudius Ptolemy. (AD 150) He wrote extensively on this subject in his work known as the *Planisphaerium*. There are tantalizing hints in Ptolemy's writing that he may have had an instrument that could justifiably be called an astrolabe. Ptolemy also refined the fundamental geometry of the Earth-Sun system that is used to design astrolabes. (Morrison, 1996)

No one knows exactly when the first astrolabe was constructed. Theon of Alexandria (390 AD) wrote a treatise on the astrolabe that was the basis for much that was written on the subject in the Middle Ages. Synesius of Cyrene (378-430 AD), Theon's son-in-law, apparently had a constructed instrument that was arguably a form of an astrolabe. The earliest descriptions of actual instruments were written by John Philoponos of Alexandria (a.k.a. Joannes Grammaticus) in the sixth century and a century later by Severus Sebokht, Bishop of Kenneserin, Syria, although it is likely that Sebokht's work was a derivative of Theon's. It is certain that true astrolabes existed by the seventh century.

### The astrolabe in Islam

The astrolabe was introduced early on in the Islamic world. Some historians believe that this might have been later in the eighth and ninth centuries according to translations of Greek texts. Whenever it was, we do know that the astrolabe was fully developed during the early centuries of Islam. Arab treatises on the astrolabe were published in the ninth century and indicate a long familiarity with the instrument. (The oldest existing instruments are Arabian from the tenth century, and there are nearly 40 instruments from the 11th and 12th centuries) The astrolabe gave Muslims the ability to determine the time of day, and therefore prayer times and the qibla direction.

Early astrolabes were based on a chart that used the rising and setting of fifteen fixed stars. Later astrolabes also included the addition of north and south. This method probably pre-dated the introduction of the magnetic compass. However, when used on the compass, each star name division came to signify one *rhumb* or a 1/32 division of the compass.

The astrolabe was also known as a windrose, and traditionally it had many Persian names for stars. (eg. *qutb al-gāh*, *mutla' al-silbār*, *khān* (rhumb) etc.) However, other names are in Arabic, and in some cases the older Arabic names were displaced by later Persian ones, i.e. the Ursa Minor constellation (Ursa Minor and Major) was *banāt nāsh* before it became *qutb al-gāh*.

On the astrolabe, latitude was determined by the height of the sun or the

pole star, which was still measured by the qiyās finger system. Astrolabes were quite difficult to use at sea because of the rolling of the ships, which made it hard to determine the vertical line accurately. However, they could be used on shore, and the latitude of every port and headland were recorded in books of nautical instruction or *rahmānis*.

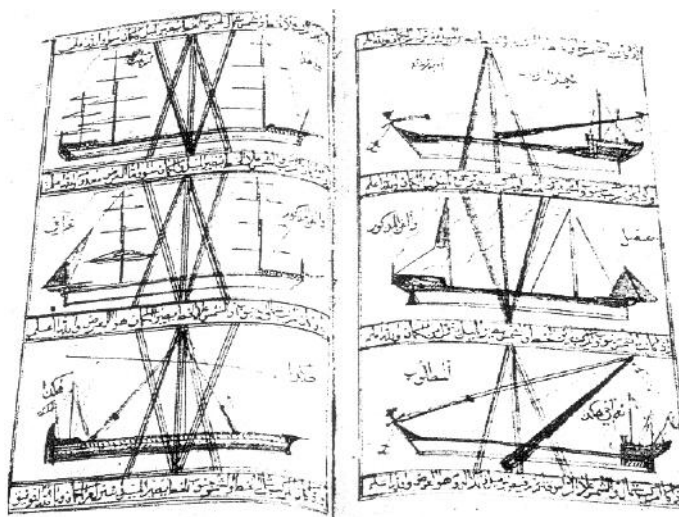
### Sun location

Another very simple navigation method that was used by many early dhow captains was simply the position of the sun or North Star above the boat. By standing on various locations on the boat, they could place the sun or North Star above, right, left or behind the dhow. As long as they kept the stars at a correct position above the rigging, they were assured that they would arrive at their destination.

### Nautical manuals

In addition to astronomical tables, charts and latitudes, the rahmaani or nautical manuals contained information about winds, coasts, reefs and everything that a captain would need to know. Some of these manuals became very popular, such as *Kitāb ma'din al-asrār fi 'ilm al-bihār* (The Mine of Secrets in the Science of the Seas) by Shaikh Naṣr bin 'Alī al Haḍuri. This book contains latitude and longitude tables as well as drawings of the position of the sun above the dhow.

A page from: *Kitāb ma'din al-asrār fi 'ilm al-bihār*. This book was being hand-copied as late as the 1940's in Oman.



## Compass

The magnetic needle was known in China from ancient times, but there is little mention of it being used as a nautical instrument before the tenth century. It is likely that the compass was not considered very important in the east, as the skies over the Indian Ocean were usually very clear, especially during the times that the Arab sailors traveled with the monsoons. It was only under the clouds of the north that it was eagerly made use of.



*Left: A Chinese spoon compass. A spoon shaped piece of magnetic stone, called a loadstone, was placed on a polished bronze board. The spoon turned until it pointed to the North Pole.*

## The qibla

From the materials presented in this chapter it should be obvious to the reader that the Arabs would have no trouble accurately determining the direction of the qibla for their mosques. Since there were Arab navigators who were intricately familiar with the stars and celestial navigation, determining the qibla would have been quite a simple thing for them. Thus the qiblas of early mosques all over the ancient world are accurate to within a degree or two. As we demonstrated in chapter eighteen, the first qiblas all clearly pointed to Petra. Then in 708 AD (75 years after the death of Muḥammad) the *miḥrab mark* was introduced so that people could pray towards the Black Stone in Mecca rather than the Holy City of Petra. Finally, after the Abbāsid rulers solidified their control over the Muslim empire, all mosques and qiblas pointed towards Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

## CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

### THE ABBASID WRITERS

After the Hijra, Muḥammad and his followers began to use Medina as their capital city. In many ways, Islam did not exist until it came into being in Medina. Before that, Islam was simply a series of revelations given to Muḥammad. In Medina, Islam became a reality as the new Islamic customs and laws were implemented. Islam is more than a personal faith; it is a way of life for a Muslim community. This is why Muslims around the world rightly refer to the year of the Hijra as Year One of the Islamic calendar. For western people this is sometimes hard to comprehend, for they consider faith to be an individual thing, while Muslims see faith as a corporate thing. Medina then became the center of the Muslim empire until the Umayyad caliphs established their rule from Damascus. This rule continued until the Abbāsids wrestled control from the Umayyad caliphs, and the center of power was transferred to Iraq. As a result, early Muslim historians frequently mention the cities of Medina and Damascus, while the city of Mecca is hardly mentioned at all.

Once the Abbāsids were firmly entrenched and their rule secure, they set about unifying their empire by solidifying the various conflicting political, military and religious elements, bringing them all firmly under their control. Since almost all Islamic history is written after this time of Abbāsīd solidification, one has to read carefully to understand what took place earlier, and why it happened. There is no argument that under Abbāsīd rule massive religious, scientific and academic projects were undertaken. The Abbāsīd rulers encouraged scholarly development that would not only present the early years of Islam in a good light, but would also confirm their own right to ruling the empire.

It is during this period of time that the great Islamic historians wrote their treatises on Islamic history. Today we can categorize these writers into various groups including those that gathered ḥadīths, those that wrote histories, those that compiled works of literature and others who wrote scientific

treatises. It is interesting that 200 years after the Hijra, Islamic scholars were classified into two groups; the Traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) and the reformers or Jurists. (*fuqahā*). Ibn Ḥishām, who was a very active early reformer, refers to traditionists twenty four times in his notes attached to Ibn Ishāq's biography of Muḥammad, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. Unfortunately we do not have Ibn Ishāq's original book, as Ibn Ḥishām unabashedly edited and corrected what he called "grievous errors" in the earlier book. It is also interesting to note that when editing the first 130 pages of *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* which cover the events before Muḥammad's life, Ibn Ḥishām never mentions the traditionists. It is only when dealing with the actual life of Muḥammad that Ibn Ḥishām begins to refer to the views of the traditionists.

Sixty-five years after Ibn Ḥishām, Abū Ḥanīfa presented a more modern understanding of Traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) and the Jurists (*fuqahā*) in his book *al-fiqh al-akbar* around 896 AD (283 AH). (Maghnisawi, 2007) This was a very tumultuous time as the Qarmatian rebellion was at its height. This revolt happened when the people of the central Arabian Peninsula rose up and protested that Mecca was not the correct Holy City, forcibly keeping pilgrims from worshipping at Mecca. We will write more on this in a later chapter. In modern times the term traditionalist most often describes orthodox Sunni Islam as distinguished from Salafism and Islamism.

After Ibn Ḥishām, the rest of the great Islamic historians present us with an Islamic history that was tailored to suit the political and religious worldview of the Abbāsid rulers of their day. While Ibn Ḥishām used the authority of Ibn Ishāq for his writings, later writers relied on a list of people who passed on the knowledge to others, who passed it on to others. This chain of narrators became known as the *isnād* (supporters). Thus *isnād* consisted of a chronological list of the narrators, each mentioning the one from whom they heard the ḥadīth, until mentioning the originator of the report along with the report (*matn*) itself. All of the reports and sayings of early Islam were then judged by their *isnād* and classified as being strong or weak, depending on the completeness of the chain of narrators and the presence of Islamic authorities among the chain.

Some of these historians gathered many traditions or reports. Al Bukhārī is said to have collected over 300,000 ḥadīth, but then he eliminated all but 2,602 which he claimed were the only true and trustworthy ones. It is unfortunate that these historians, including Bukhārī, collected their reports 250 years after the fact, and much of their choosing was based on the religious teachings of their day. Because so many of the earlier reports were then destroyed, we have no way of studying the earlier ones for ourselves.

Today, this would be similar to trying to write the history of the American War of Independence (1775-1783) based solely on the hearsay of people alive today, who heard something from their father or grandfather, who heard it from their father or grandfather and so on, back to the actual event. Imagine writing a history with few early references, and using as your major authority the stories that have been passed down from one generation to the other. At least Ibn Hishām admits that there were traditionists who viewed things differently than the popular opinions of the day. However, I doubt that we will ever be able to understand the conflicting opinions that existed in Ibn Hishām's day.

### Literary vacuum

It is my belief that there was also a literary vacuum in the early Muslim empire created by zealous Muslims who destroyed books and manuscripts, erased inscriptions, burned libraries and destroyed all literature except Islamic writings, most of which were bits and pieces of what people remembered of the revelations that Muḥammad gave. The destruction of written materials by the Islamic forces has been well documented over the last two centuries, but western historians have been reluctant to attribute the Muslim armies with such actions. Edward Gibbon comments in his book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that if indeed the Muslim caliphs ordered the burning of libraries "the fact indeed is marvelous." (Gibbon, 1838, page 452) Gibbon's source was the *Specimen Historiae Arubum* of Gregory Abulpharagius, a thirteenth-century Jewish doctor known as Bar Hebraeus, translated in a seventeenth-century Latin book (1649) by Edward Pococke. Gibbon protested that "*the solitary report of a stranger who wrote at the end of six hundred years on the confines of Media is overbalanced by the silence of two annalists of a more early date, both Christians, both natives of Egypt, and the more ancient of whome, the patriarch Eutychius [AD 876-940] has amply described the conquest of Alexandria.*" (Gibbon, 1838)

Gibbon's comments concerned an alleged letter from Caliph 'Umar to Amrou, the leader of the Muslim armies in Alexandria, who had asked the caliph what to do with the thousands of manuscripts that he found in warehouses in Egypt. Here is the caliph's reply:

*"As for the books you mention, here is my reply. If their content is in accordance with the book of Allāh, we may do without them, for in that case the book of Allāh more than suffices. If, on the other hand, they contain matter not in accordance with the book of Allāh, there can be no need to preserve them. Proceed then and destroy them."*

The Muslim writer Ibn al-Qifti (1172-1248) tells us that the books were distributed to the public baths of Alexandria where they were used to feed the stoves which kept the baths comfortably warm. Ibn al-Qifti writes that “*the number of baths was well known but I have forgotten it. They say, that it took six months to burn all that mass of material.*” (*Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā* (Chronicle of Wise Men) ’*Alī ibn Yusaf al-Qifti, Ikhbar al-’Ulama bi Akhbar al Ḥukamā*, Edited by Julius Lippert, Leipzig, 1903) (Mones & Parsons, pages 389-392) Eutychius tells us that there were four thousand baths that received books from the Alexandrian library. (Alter, 1658, Arabic/Latin) (Pococke & Selden, 1654, page 316)

Another record of the exchange between the Muslim General Amrou and the Egyptian patriarch can be found in *Patrologia Orientalis*. (Volume I, 1903, pages 494 – 498) A further Syriac manuscript (Add. MS 17193) also attests to this, and was published with commentary in the *Journal Asiatique*, March-April 1915. (series XI, Volume V, pages 225-279)

An excellent compilation on the destruction of the books in Alexandria can be found in Luciano Canfora’s book “*The Vanished Library, A wonder of the Ancient world*” translated by Martin Ryle, University of California Press, Berkley, 1989. (Canfora, 1990)

This burning of books, however, did not start in Egypt, but was begun in Persia. Caliph ’Umar’s armies met with the Persian armies in the battle of Qadisiyyah in 14 AD. When the battle was finished, thousands lay dead on each side. The Muslims however, leapt upon the riches that had been left behind. Al Ṭabarī (Ṭabarī, Vol 12, page 125) tells us, “The spoils and the wealth were gathered; a quantity such as this had never been gathered, neither before al-Qadisiyyah nor after it.”

From Qadisiyyah the Muslim armies, numbering 15,000 and led by Saad, marched against the city of Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sassanian Empire. In early January 637 AD the Muslim advance guard reached the outskirts of Ctesiphon and laid siege to the city for two months. Eventually the city fell, and the Muslims occupied it. During the fighting, the palaces and the Zoroastrian library at Ctesiphon were burned. (Kroger, 1993)

Another example of book burning can be seen when the Muslim invaders reached India some years later. The library of Nalanda was the most renowned repository of Buddhist knowledge in the world at the time. Its collection was said to comprise hundreds of thousands of volumes, so extensive that it burned for months when set aflame by Muslim invaders. The library had three main buildings as high as nine stories tall. The story of this destruction (1198 AD) was told in 1243 by an eye-witness to the Persian historian Minhaz. In his



book *Tabaquat-I-Nāsiri* he reported that most of the inhabitants of the place were Brahmans with shaven heads. They were put to death. Large numbers of books were found there, and when the Muslims saw them, they called for some person to explain the contents. But all of the learned men had been killed. When it was discovered that the whole fort and city was a place for study (Nalanda University) the remaining monks were burned alive or beheaded, and the burning of the library of Nalanda continued for several months. (Dutt, 1996, Part V, 3)

Even Christian churches were to suffer damage. The “Edict of Yazīd,” issued by the Umayyad caliph Yazīd II in 722-723 AD ordered the destruction of crosses and Christian images within the territory of the caliphate. In present-day Jordan there is ample archaeological evidence that images from the mosaic floors of some, although not all, of the churches that stood at this time were removed. (Grabar, 1984, page 155-156) One can only surmise that the city of Petra is today bereft of all inscriptions because of the actions of zealous Muslims during Yazīd’s reign.

In the end, the only book to survive in Arabia was the Glorious Qur’ān. However, even here historians have struggled. It seems that most of the Qur’ān was retained in oral fashion rather than written form. While the Arabs were great memorizers and had the ability to retain the entirety of the Qur’ān, the retention of materials in an oral tradition suffers from two difficulties. First, the accuracy of the memories of the individuals involved must be perfect. In the case of the Qur’ān, arguments arose over various verses, how they should be rendered, and if they should or should not be included in the whole.

Second, the problem of transferring knowledge from the learned to the novice is often a difficult step. In the case of the Qur’ān, most of the men who had memorized the sayings of Muḥammad were also warriors. As is often the case, warriors die in battle, and their knowledge of the Qur’ān perished with them. This is amply illustrated in the Battle of Yamama when an estimated 450 men who had memorized the Qur’ān were killed. (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī ḥadīth 6.201 & 9.301)

Bukhārī’s Volume 6, Book 61, Number 510: tells us: *Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to ‘Uthmān at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur’ān, so he said to ‘Uthmān, “O chief of the believers! Save this nation before they differ about the book (Qur’ān) as Jews and the Christians did before.” So ‘Uthmān sent a message to Ḥaḍḥa saying, “Send us the manuscripts of the Qur’ān so that we may compile the Qur’ānic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to*

you.” Ḥaḥṣa sent it to ‘Uthmān. ‘Uthmān then ordered Zaid bin Thābit, ‘Abdullāh bin Az-Zubair, Sa‘īd bin al-Āṣ and ‘Abdu-r-Rahmān bin Ḥārith bin Ḥishām to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. ‘Uthmān said to the three Quraishi men, “In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thābit on any point in the Qur’ān, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur’ān was revealed in their tongue.” They did so, and when they had written many copies, ‘Uthmān returned the original manuscripts to Ḥaḥṣa. ‘Uthmān sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur’ānic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt. Sa‘īd bin Thābit added, “A verse from Sūrat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur’ān and I used to hear Allāh’s apostle reciting it.” So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thābit Al-Anṣarī. (That verse was): “Among the believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allāh.” 33.23)

Eventually a more or less complete copy of the Qur’ān was assembled. But there were some who felt that more verses should have been included.

Bukhārī reports to us that these few copies were not duplicated, but remained with the caliphs.

*The manuscript on which the Qur’ān was collected, remained with Abū Bakr till Allāh took him unto him, and then with ‘Umar till Allāh took him unto him, and finally it remained with Ḥaḥṣa, ‘Umar’s daughter.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 201)

This means that during the life of Caliph ‘Umar, only five or six copies of the complete Qur’ān existed in all of Arabia.

The problem that resulted was a dearth of copies of the Qur’ān in the Umayyad period. On the next page is a chart that illustrates the number of known copies of the early Qur’ān that survived to this date. These are then compared with the early surviving copies of the New Testament, simply so we can compare with copies of other early religious writings that were in existence over a period of time. Please cross reference this with Appendix C which provides us with an accounting of many early Qur’āns.

The transmission of the New Testament is then compared with the transmission of the Qur’ān. The evidence of early Biblical manuscripts and the low degree of error between them is significant, but missing in regards to the Qur’ān. While the Qur’ān is a truly ancient manuscript, the question has to be asked, is it what Muslim clerics claim: an unadulterated copy of the original given to Muḥammad? Or was it changed or molded in some way by the political forces that followed Muḥammad?

As this chart demonstrates, there was a literary vacuum in Arabia during the first 200 years of Islam. Very few copies of the Qur’ān were in existence, in

Comparison of era	Islamic period	The Qur'ān	New Testament equivalent
First 70 years	Four Rightly Guided Caliphs	Five or six reported copies (Abū Bakr's) which did not survive, plus some scattered fragments survive.	A handful of fragments in the first 70 years.
70 – 150 years	The Umayyads	Approximately 30 manuscripts, none of them complete.	More than 630 copies after 150 years.
150 – 300 years	The first Abbāsīd rulers	Many fragments and some manuscripts including some from the Ṣan'ā manuscripts, none of them complete.	More than 5,600 copies after 300 years.
300 -- 500 years	The Abbāsīd writers.	Dozens of copies, a few of them complete.	More than 13,000 copies after 500 years.

*For more study see: <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/hijazi.html>, which provides detailed information about which verses appear in which Qur'āns. None of the early Qur'āns were as complete at present day copies.*

fact Crone and Cook state, “There is no hard evidence for the existence of the Koran in any form before the last decade of the seventh century, ...” (Crone, 1977, page 3) Furthermore they suggest that in the 2nd century of hijra the textual state of the Qur'ān, “... may have differed considerably in content from the Koran we now know.” This is also the view of Wansbrough who thought the “canonization” of the Qur'ān was not completed until the 2nd / 3rd of hijra at the earliest. (Wansbrough, 2004, page 49-52)

The Abbāsīd writers had few if any documents to oppose them. Most of the Quraysh tribe who were knowledgeable about the early days had long since died, or now lived on the fringes of the empire. Any old Qur'āns in existence could be fully accepted, and the owners convinced that what they had was only a partial Qur'ān. The Abbāsīds could publish "full" versions of the Qur'ān that contained all of the verses, including the ones about the change of qibla. In this way, older versions of the Qur'ān would still be revered, but the newer versions would have the added verses, such as Sūra 2.143-145 which tells us that the qibla was changed.

## The Abbāsīd writers of history

The timeline in Appendix A includes some of the major Islamic historians and their dates, demonstrating how many years lay between them and the events that they wrote about. While it is difficult to tell who the creative writers of history were (apart from the Traditionists) I have selected four Islamic writers who I believe typify the progression of Islamic thought from 200 AD onward. They were chosen because they are responsible for the bulk of Islamic history that has come down to us today.

### 1. Ibn Ḥishām – begins the practice of editing past writings

Ḥishām ibn 'Abd al Malik was born in Baṣra, Iraq and died in Fuṣṭāṭ, Egypt, either in 218 AH or some time later. Known as Ibn Ḥishām, he became an Arabic philologist combining linguistics and literary skills in his work. Unfortunately for us, it appears that he meddled with previously written Arabian histories, editing them so that they fit into the political and religious views of his time. Since all copies of the earlier works have been destroyed, we now only have Ibn Ḥishām's editions of the earlier works. This is unfortunate, as it means that the very earliest Islamic writings now date nearly 200 years after the death of Muḥammad and are known to be edited by a later writer. This is documented by his list of notes at the end of *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* in which he lists some of the changes that he made to the original document.

### 2. Al Bukhārī – choosing accounts appropriate to current worldview

Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (810 AD - 870 AD) is the author of the best known of the six canonical ḥadīth collections of Islam (Sunni). These traditions, or ḥadīth, were called Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and most Sunni Muslims view this as their most trusted collection of ḥadīth, and it is considered the most authentic book after the Qur'ān.

Early on in Bukhārī's life his teacher, Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Hanthālī, better known as Ibn Rahoyah, said to him: "If only you would compile a book of only authentic narrations of the prophet." This suggestion remained in his heart, so he began compiling the Ṣaḥīḥ." Bukhārī also said, "I saw the prophet in a dream and it was as if I was standing in front of him. In my hand was a fan with which I was protecting him. I asked some dream interpreters, who said to me, 'You will protect him from lies.' This is what compelled me to produce the Ṣaḥīḥ."

Al-Bukhārī then traveled widely throughout the Abbāsīd Empire for sixteen years, collecting those traditions he thought were trustworthy. It is said that al-Bukhārī collected over 300,000 ḥadīth but included only 2,602 traditions in his book. At the time, Bukhārī classified the traditions as *ṣaḥīḥ* (trustworthy), *ḥasan* (good), and *ḍaʿīf* (weak). (Fadel, 1995, pg 161-197) The weak traditions were then discarded. Bukhārī was not alone in doing this. Around the same time, other Muslim scholars also recognized the complete literary vacuum surrounding the beginnings of Islam, and they also gathered and vetted what people said about Muḥammad. Thus, much of our record of early Islam was edited by al-Bukhārī and the others who gathered ḥadīths after him.

### 3. Al Ṭabarī – history seen 300 years later

Al-Ṭabarī was a Muslim historian who lived from 839 to 923 AD. Ṭabarī's book is officially titled *Tārīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*, which means the history of prophets and kings. These 38 volumes provide us with the Islamic view of the history of the world from Adam and Eve up to 915 AD. The first four volumes parallel many things that are found in the Bible. Ṭabarī was his nickname, since he came from Ṭabarīstan, which is in Iran south of Tehran. Ṭabarī knew the Qur'ān by heart when he was 7 years old. While some Hanbalite Sunni Muslims have accused him of having Shi'ite tendencies, there is no basis for that except that he was Iranian. Ṭabarī was a Sunni Muslim, even though he was from Iran. Ṭabarī was first a Shafi'ite, and then later he founded his own school. (al-Ṭabarī vol.1 pg 62) There was discord between different schools (al-Ṭabarī vol.1 pg 66) and the Hanbalites would use violence to intimidate Muslims belonging to other schools. (al-Ṭabarī vol.1 page 71)

### 4. Yāqūt – geography now unquestioned

Yāqūt ibn 'Abdullāh al-Rūmī al-Hamawī (Yāqūt) (1179-1229 AD) was a Syrian biographer and geographer. "*Al-Rūmī*" ("from Rūm") refers to his Greek (Byzantine) descent, "al-Hamawī" means that he is from Hama, Syria, and his father's name was 'Abdullāh. The word *yāqūt* means ruby. He was known for his encyclopedic writings of the Muslim world. Yāqūt was sold as a slave to someone who later moved to Baghdad. Upon recognizing his abilities, Yāqūt's purchaser provided him with a good education. He was later freed, and traveled a great deal. Yāqūt also earned a living copying and selling manuscripts. His book *Muḥjam al-buldān* is an encyclopedic geography which he started in 1224 AD and finished around 1228 AD, one year before he died. Since his geography was constructed six hundred years after the death of

Muḥammad, it is not very helpful in determining early locations. His book is available today in Arabic in several volumes, and is referred to several times in this study. However, anyone wanting to use Yāqūt to defend Islamic geography must admit that he is a very late writer and not an authority on early and pre-Islamic geography. It is important however, to know that Yāqūt wrote his book because he realized that a complete geography of Islam was in need, as there was confusion over the location of various places (which we shall look at in the next chapter).

From these four representative writers (many more are mentioned in appendices A and B) we can see that these historians wrote many years after the events they described. As we mentioned, they used a system of a chain of narrators known as the *isnād* (supporters) as their authority. This system of *isnād* consisted of a chronological list of the narrators, each mentioning the one from whom they heard the ḥadīth, until mentioning the originator of the report along with the report itself. All of the reports and sayings of early Islam were then judged by the *isnād* and classified as being strong or weak, depending on the completeness of the chain of narrators and the presence of Islamic authorities among the chain.

### Issues with isnād

There were problems with isnād, as often conflicting stories were told, and even related by the same narrators. An example of this can be found in Al Ṭabarī's recounting of the story of Isaac and Ishmael. Al Ṭabarī gives us a list of over ten reports, complete with their supporting isnād, that claim Abraham went to sacrifice Ishmael on the mountain. Then Al Ṭabarī immediately gives us another list of over ten reports, complete with all their supporting isnād, that claim Abraham took Isaac up the mountain to sacrifice him, not Ishmael. (Ṭabarī, Volume II, page 89)

Clearly both cannot be true, but since Al Ṭabarī cannot prove either one, he provides us with both sides of the argument, and even shows us that some isnād are the same ones on both sides. Obviously people relating these stories to Al Ṭabarī, claiming they heard it from someone who heard it from someone who heard it from Muḥammad, could not clarify whether Muḥammad revealed that it was Isaac or Ishmael that became Abraham's child for sacrifice.

In the end Al Ṭabarī concludes: *The earliest sages of our prophet's nation disagree about which of Abraham's two sons it was that he was commanded to sacrifice. Some say it was Isaac, while others say it was Ishmael. Both views are supported by statements related on the authority of the Messenger of God.* (Al-Ṭabarī

Volume II, page 82) If *isnād* could not be authoritative in this case, how can it be claimed as authoritative in others?

One would assume that the writers of history and the collectors of ḥadīths would reject any ḥadīths that referred to Petra. Kamali provides us with seven criteria that were used for rejecting ḥadīths. (Kamali, 2009, pg 76)

1. The language of the ḥadīth must be eloquent, not rude or crude.
2. The ḥadīth should not contain corruption of previously established knowledge. For example, one rejected ḥadīth reported that Muḥammad stated that Noah's ark circled the Ka'ba seven times before it landed.
3. Ḥadīths must not oppose the Qur'ān.
4. If a ḥadīth fails to pass the test of historicity it must be rejected. For example, one rejected ḥadīth reported that Muḥammad spoke in a Roman bath, but it is known that there were no baths in Mecca or Medina so it was rejected. Petra however, had a Roman bath.
5. If the ḥadīth smacks of scholastic fanaticism it must be rejected. For example, someone claiming to have known Muḥammad and to have followed him but later became a Shi'ite, was rejected by the Sunni writers.
6. When a ḥadīth would have affected large numbers of people, but only one person reported it, then it was rejected. For example, the teaching that no one can touch his sexual organs and then immediately pray was only reported by one writer, but if it was true, then many would have known it, practiced it and reported it.
7. When ḥadīths reported extraordinary large numbers or obviously exaggerated blessings or curses, it was rejected.

Therefore I believe that by the time of the Abbāsīd writers, any ḥadīths that mentioned Petra would have been excluded, and only those that remembered the Holy City as "Mecca" would have been included, simply because it was then universally accepted that the Holy City had always been at Mecca.

In the end, the writers of the Abbāsīd period put together a history and picture of Islam that was in accordance with the thinking of their day. Muslims all over the world, then as now, turned to them for their authority on how Islam came into being. However today with modern technology, researchers and archeologists are beginning to put the pieces together, and unravel the Abbāsīd version of history to discover what actually happened in the first years of Islam.



## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

### THE CASE FOR 'AQABA AND AL AQṢA

The location of 'Aqaba in early Islamic literature is an important factor in this study as there are several places in the Middle East known by this name. *Al-'Aqaba* appears several times in the story of Muḥammad while he was living in Mecca during the early part of his prophethood. We will go through these occurrences to try and determine what we can learn about the location of 'Aqaba and its relation to Mecca and Medina. (The 'al' in front of 'Aqaba simply denotes the definite case and could be translated "the.")

Al Ṭabarī Volume VI, 2109, page 124 tells us that during the days of the pagan pilgrimage, Muḥammad met some of the tribe of Anṣār (Quraysh in Medina) as they traveled from Medina to Mecca and preached to them. This took place in al-'Aqaba, which was between Medina and Mecca. (See also Guillaume, 2006, page 198)

The following year, twelve of the Anṣār came on the pilgrimage to Mecca. During their trip they met Muḥammad at al-'Aqaba and took an oath of allegiance to him. (Ṭabarī, Volume VI page 126) After the pilgrimage they returned to Medina and spread the teachings of Islam.

The year following this, some of the Anṣār went on the pagan pilgrimage to Mecca, and they again agreed to meet Muḥammad in al-'Aqaba in the middle of the days of *al-tashrīq*. These are three days (11-13th) of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja, following after the day of sacrifice on the tenth day (Ṭabarī Volume VI, page 130, footnote 208) when the time of fasting has ended. During this time, the pagan Quraysh in 'Aqaba argued whether Muḥammad prayed towards Syria or towards the Ka'ba. It was unclear to them. Muḥammad agreed to meet with these Anṣār at al-'Aqaba, and their meeting was held in secret, at night in a ravine. In the middle of the night (page 135) as they were returning

to the Holy City, there was a shout from the top of al-'Aqaba, in a most piercing voice, "People of the stations of Minā, do you want a blameworthy person and the apostates with him who have gathered together to wage war on you?" Muḥammad replied to his followers "What does the enemy of God say? This is the Azabb (devil) of al-'Aqaba, the son of the devil Azyab. Listen, Enemy of God, by Allāh, I shall deal with you!" They continued to hold back, but one of them wanted to fall on the people of Minā with their swords in the morning. Muḥammad told them to go back to their tents, as they had not been commanded to do this.

After the emigration to Medina, al-'Aqaba is not mentioned until year 9 AH. (Al Ṭabarī Volume IX page 54) The prophet Muḥammad was passing through the ancient town of al-Ḥijr (near Mada'in Ṣāliḥ) (IX, page 52) when the people complained of having very little rain. Muḥammad prayed, and there was some rain. Then they moved on (Ṭabarī Volume IX 1699, page 54) and met 'Umarah ibn Hazm, who was one of those present at the pledge of al-'Aqaba.

Ismail K. Poonawala, the translator of Ṭabarī Volume IX (in footnote 380) informs us that al-'Aqaba was a mountain pass between Minā and Mecca. This needs some clarification, as the word Minā has no meaning in Arabic, but Mīnā means *harbour* (also spelled mīna or miyan). Today Minā is a wide open plain around 5 kilometers from present day Mecca (70 kilometers inland



*Above: The plains of Mina fill with tents during the time of pilgrimage.*

from the Red Sea) and is part of the pilgrimage tradition. As you can see from the photo, the area around Mecca and Minā is very flat, with a few mountains rising from the desert floor. Along the way from Mecca to Minā, there is a side ravine between the mountain ranges that is known today as 'Aqaba. Muslim scholars tell us that this is the 'Aqaba where Muḥammad's first followers made the famous 'Aqaba pledge.

If we accept the proposed theory that the original holy city is Petra rather than Mecca in Saudi Arabia, then Muḥammad would not have met with his first followers over a thousand kilometers south of Petra, especially if they were of the Anṣār tribe, which lived in Medina. In this case we should look for an 'Aqaba closer to Petra, and then look at arguments for and against each location.

## Aila

Today most people identify 'Aqaba not with Mecca, but with the modern city of 'Aqaba at the north end of the Gulf of 'Aqaba on the Red Sea. This is a port city, and the beginning of the road that goes up into the highlands of ancient Edom. In ancient times however, this city was known by other names such as Aila, the name the Romans gave the city. I believe that the Nabataeans used another name, Leuce Come, which we will examine a bit later on.

The Islamic literature of the Abbāsīd period clearly calls the city of 'Aqaba by its Roman name: Aila. For example, 'Aqaba is called Aila in Al Ṭabarī IX, page 58. When Muḥammad travels north to Tabūk, the governor of Aylah (Aila) comes to him and makes a treaty with him. Here Aila is identified as the seaport at the northern end of the Gulf of 'Aqaba (EI2, V.S. Aila)

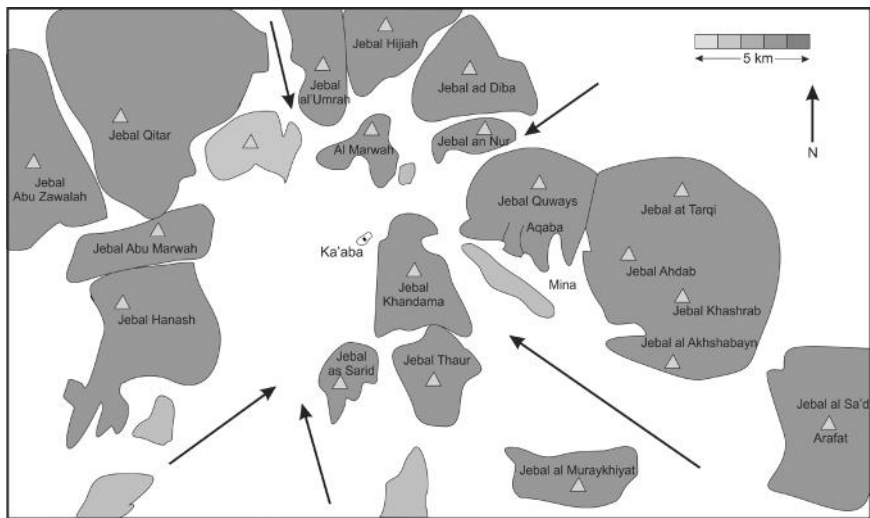
Aila is mentioned again in Ṭabarī Volume 11, 2079, page 73 when Abū Bakr travels from Medina to Syria. He takes the road of *al-mu'riqah* or sweating. This refers to the very humid conditions on the road along the Red Sea coast. Y. Blankenship (the translator) cross-references this with *Caetani, Annali*, II, 1121 n 3; and Donner, *Conquests*, 115.

It is obvious from Islamic literature that the 'Aqaba referred to by Ibn Ishāq in his book *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* is the one beside Mecca, and not the city of Aila. (Cobb, 1995) However, when considering our proposed change of locations, I would suggest that the *Pledge of 'Aqaba* was indeed taken near the modern city of 'Aqaba known to the Romans as Aila. It is my belief that the later Abbāsīd writers used the older Roman name of Aila for 'Aqaba, and then found a new location for 'Aqaba near the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

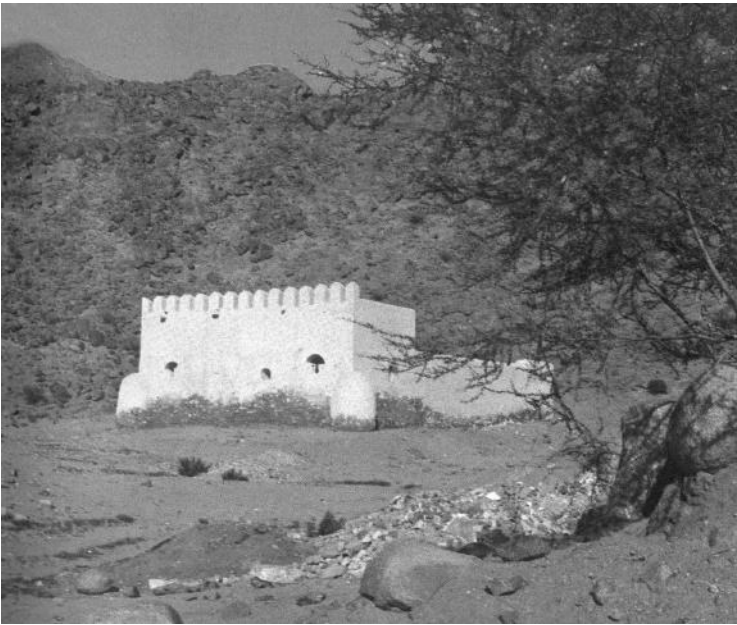
'Aqaba beside Mecca

There are several problems with identifying 'Aqaba in its current location near Mecca. First, let's consider the meaning of the word 'Aqaba.

Hugh's Dictionary of Islam tells us: *"Aqabah is a sheltered glen near Minā, celebrated as the scene of the two pledges, the first and second pledge of al-'Aqabah. The first pledge was made by ten men of the tribe of Khazraj and ten of Aus when*



Above: 'Aqaba in the map above is a ravine above Mina. It does not lead anywhere, but is simply a place where water runs off of Jebal Quways.



Left: A commemorative mosque in the Aqaba ravine near Mecca.

they plighted their faith to Muḥammad thus: -- "We will not worship, any but one God; we will not steal; nor commit adultery; nor kill our children; nor will we slander our neighbors; and we will obey the Prophet of God." The date assigned to this pledge by Sir W. Muir is April 21, AD. 621. The second pledge was a few months afterwards when seventy three men and two women came forward, one by one, and took an oath of fealty to the Prophet. Muḥammad named twelve of the chief of these men, and said: "Moses chose from amongst his people twelve leaders. Ye shall be sureties for the rest, even as were the Apostles of Jesus; and I am surety for my people. And the people answered, *Amin, So be it.*" (Muir's Life of Mahomet, volume ii., pages 216, 232)

Hans Wehr's dictionary tells us that the Arabic meaning for 'Aqaba is somewhat vague, and can have several meanings. Most Arabs would understand the word 'aqab to mean a steep road or track, or a difficult pass up through the mountains. (Wehr, page 733, entry "Aqaba) However, it also could mean a 'heel' or the way up from the foot to the body. In all cases the meaning contains the idea of moving upward.

Yāqūt tells us that there are several ways of using 'Aqaba. It can be used in construct state with other words... such as: *'Aqaba of the riders*, or the *mounting of the riders*. (Yāqūt, Mu'jam al-Buldān, volume 4, page 134, 'Aqaba)

Early travelers in Arabia also noted that the term 'Aqaba was used by Bedouin to refer to moving upward in different locations. For example, James Theodore Bent notes in his book *Southern Arabia* (Bent, 1900, page 88):

*"Having left these villages behind us, we climbed rapidly higher and higher, until at an elevation of over 4,000 feet we found ourselves at last on a broad, level tableland, stretching as far as the eye could reach in every direction. This is no doubt the 'Maratha Mountains' of Ptolemy, the Mons Excelsus of Pliny, \* which shuts off the Hadhramout, where once flourished the frankincense and the myrrh. Words cannot express the desolate aspect of this vast table-land, Akaba or the 'going-up' as the Arabs call it."* \* Pliny, xii. 14, 52: *'In medio Arabiae fere sunt Adramitae pagus Saboraum in monte excelso.'*

So it is clear that the 'Aqaba leads upward to something. The problem with the present location of 'Aqaba near Mecca is that it is a crevice in the side of a mountain but it goes upward to nowhere. (See the map left) There is nothing at the top of Jebal Quways, and there was no road or path to the top. In actuality it is a place where rain water runs downward. I don't find the name 'Aqaba a very good fit for this location.

Second, Al Ṭabarī (Volume 6, 1218, page 130-136) and Ibn Ishāq (Guillaume, 2006, *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, page 198-199) both make it plain that 'Aqaba was the location of a major market, and people came from great distances to

the market. This market was held at least annually, for Muḥammad met his followers at this market each year. It must have been a major market for members of the Anṣār tribe to travel there each year all the way from Medina. The present location of 'Aqaba is only three miles from the Ka'ba in Mecca, and is not on a path from anywhere to anywhere. It would be very strange for a main market to be there, tucked away in a small crevice in a mountain, let alone a large market when it is so close to the main markets in Mecca. So how did this location become known as 'Aqaba?

### 'Aqaba in Jordan

The present city of 'Aqaba has had several names during its long history. While it is currently called 'Aqaba, the Romans called it *Ayla* and I believe the Nabataeans called it *Leuce Come*. Before that it was known as Elath (Genesis 14:1-6). "Eben Gezer" is also mentioned in Numbers 33:35 and Deuteronomy 2:8. I Kings 9:26 mentions "*ships in Ezion-Gebber, which is beside Eloth (Elath) on the shore of the Red Sea in the Land of Edom.*" 2 Chronicles 8:17 also mentions these two locations and I Kings 9:27-28 describes a navel expedition sent out from this location.

For many years historians and archaeologists have wondered about the location of the Nabataean port city of Leuce Come (meaning *white village*). This village is mentioned in several ancient writings, such as the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Casson, 1989, pages 61 - 62) and Strabo's Geography (16.4.23). The most serious guess at the location of Leuce Come comes from the famous naval historian Lionel Casson who calculated the location of Leuce Come by using the port of Myos Hormos. He assumed that the Myos Harbor (*Mussel Harbor*) was located at Abū Sha'r on the western side of the Red Sea. He defends this opinion on page 96 of his translation of the Periplus Maris Erythraei. From this location on the west shore of the Gulf of Suez, he follows the writer's description and comes to the conclusion that Leuce Come was located in the vicinity of 'Aynunah on the shores of Saudi Arabia. (Casson, 1989, page 143) Casson goes on to mention some of the other educated guesses that have been made concerning the location of Leuce Come, such as Haura and Yanbu further south on the Saudi Arabian coast.

These educated guesses were all based on scholarly study and opinion. However, since their writings several important archaeological discoveries have been made. The location of Myos Hormos, the starting place of this description, has now been positively fixed at Quseir al-Qadīm far to the south of



Casson's guess of Abū Sha'r. The ruins at Quseir al-Qadīm were the subject of exploratory excavations between 1978 and 1982 (Whitcomb and Johnson 1979; 1982), when it was thought to be the relatively minor Roman port of Leucos Limen, a view apparently confirmed by a somewhat obscure piece of pottery (Bagnall, 1986) that was held by Casson. Some scholars even voiced the opinion that Leucos Limen might have been Leuce Come.

Then in 1994, ostraca from the French excavations at Zerqa on the road between Quseir and Qift showed that, beyond doubt, the port at the end of the road was indeed called Myos Hormos. (Cuvigny, 2003) (Sidebotham, 2005) Archaeological work done in 1999 demonstrated that the road ended at Quseir al-Qadīm (rather than Quseir) and amongst the few pieces of pottery the archaeologists recovered was one bearing the name "*Myos Hormos*". Suddenly historians realized that Quseir al-Qadīm was not a minor trading station, but was rather Myos Hormos, the renowned ancient port that traded with India and beyond. (Peacock, 2008)

The positive identification of Myos Hormos then changed all of the previous suggestions for the location of Leuce Come. Myos Hormos was not located in the Gulf of Suez, but on the Red Sea itself. This new location shed a very interesting light on how we now view the words in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. Using the new location of Myos Hormos, I endeavoured to discover where Leuce Come was located.

## The search

I started my search for Leuce Come using the description of its location as found in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: (19).

*"Now to the left of Berenice, sailing for two or three days from Mussel Harbor eastward across the adjacent gulf (is this across the Red Sea or is it a gulf on the Egypt side?), there is another harbor and fortified place, which is called White Village (Leuce Come), from which there is a road to Petra, which is subject to Malichas, King of the Nabataeans." ... "It holds the position of a market town for the small vessels sent there from (South) Arabia; and so a centurion is stationed there as a collector of one-fourth of the merchandise imported, with an armed force, as a garrison."*

To locate this missing city we must determine if the "White Village" was south or north of Berenice, and if it was on the Egyptian or Arabian side of the Red Sea.

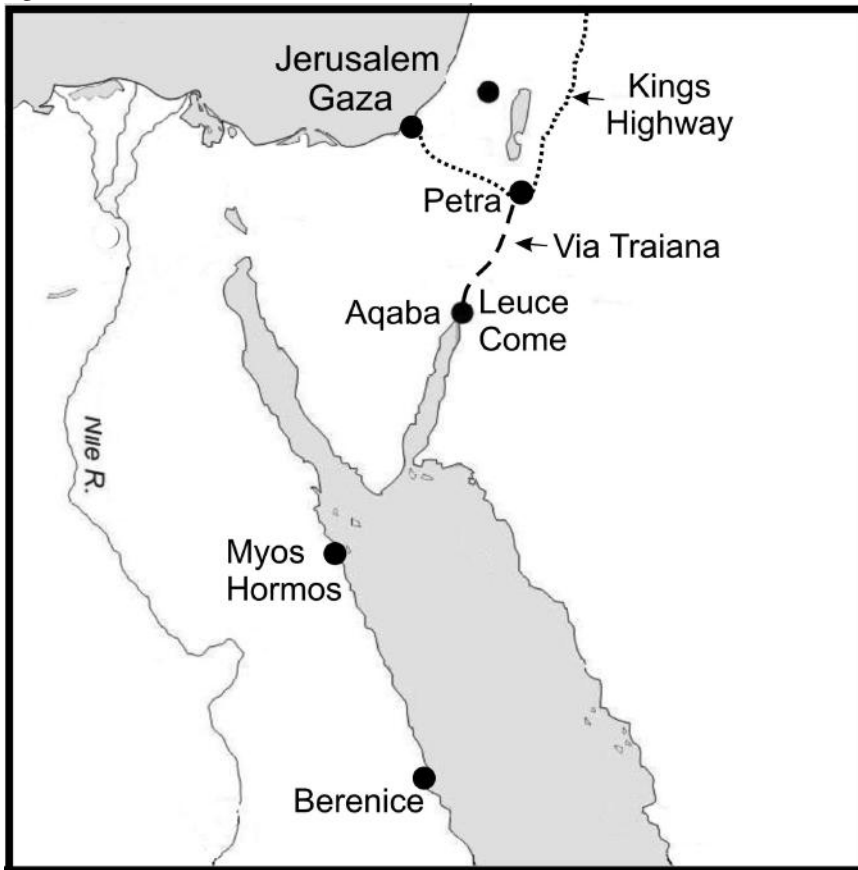


### North or south?

From the quote above, the presence of a road linking the White Village with Petra is undeniable. It would make little sense to describe a port south of Berenice on the Egypt side that had a road linking to Petra (which is far to the north of Berenice). So it would seem that the White Village must have been located across the Red Sea. The problem is that there are no ports that fit this description, nor or there any roads that fit the description.

The other important term is the use of the word “to the left.” This term can be understood from the opening sentence of the Periplus: “first comes Egypt’s port of Myos Hormos, and beyond it, after a sail of 1800 stades to the right, Berenice. The ports of both are bays on the Red Sea on the edge of Egypt.”

So the writer is imagining himself standing on the shores of Egypt (he was writing from Alexandria). He locates Myos Hormos and Berenice for us, and tells us that Berenice is to the right of Myos Hormos. This would indicate that right means “southeast.”



Now a few paragraphs later he tells us that the “White Village” is to the “left” of Berenice. He does not give the distance in stades, but rather in runs.

At this point his directions seem a little confused, but I would like to point out that they are quite clear if you know what he is talking about. First of all, we are talking north of Berenice. Then he adds the sentence: “after a voyage of two or three runs eastward from Myos Hormos past the gulf lying alongside.”

Look at the map on the previous page. He points us north of Berenice, the main port on the Red Sea. He then takes us to the smaller port of Myos Hormos. So our journey starts in the south and moves north. The writer then tells us to travel eastward from Myos Hormos for two or three runs, past the gulf that lies alongside of Myos Hormos. Given the now positive location of Myos Hormos and the northward course of the writer’s directions, there is only one conclusion that can be reached.

North of Myos Hormos the Red Sea splits into two branches. The writer tells us to take the east branch and go north for two or three runs. He doesn’t tell us where to find the port, because we will run into it at the end of the “bay.” Today this place is known as ‘Aqaba, or in ancient times Aila.

It would make no sense for the writer to start us in Berenice, take us north to Myos Hormos, and then south to some port on the Saudi side of the Red Sea. Rather the writer starts us in Berenice, takes us north to Myos Hormos, and then expects us to continue traveling north (in the eastern gulf or bay) until we reach Leuce Come (Aila).

Alia was a place built of white sand structures. Excavations are currently taking place, but the Nabataean port has been mostly destroyed. It did, however, contain many mud buildings. The Periplus informs us that the “*White Village*” had a road attaching it to Petra. This fits very well. The Romans built the *Via Traiana* overtop of the then existing road that was known in ancient times as “*The King’s Highway*.” This road linked Aila with Petra, and north to Damascus. It fits the description of the Periplus perfectly. There was a fort in Aila, and the city was definitely under the control of Malichus, the king of the Nabataeans.

The Periplus tells us that this port was used by small craft (there is no deep harbour at Alia proper) and that it was loaded with freight from south Arabia. It is also interesting to note that the Periplus, which was written to describe “Trade on the Red Sea” does not mention Aila at all. This seeming oversight can now be understood by identifying the “*White Village*” with the known port of “*Aila*.”

### Farther south

The Periplus then tells us that after this harbour, (White Village) which extended “far” down the Red Sea, there are a variety tribes, with some huts along the coast, and they are pirates. It tells us that to set a course along the coast of Arabia is altogether risky, since the region with its lack of harbours offers poor anchorage, is foul with rocky stretches, and cannot be approached because of cliffs. This is why it is important for sailors to sail to the “*Burnt Island*” before approaching the coast. Several historians have suggested that the “burnt island” is Jabal al-Ta’ir, which has a nearly dead volcano. (Casson, Muller, Schoff) Then sailing down this coast, the port of Muza is on the left hand shore. (paraphrased from *The Periplus Maris Eruthraei* 20 - 21)

This sounds like a perfect description of the Saudi coast, looking south from Aila. That is why we cannot find Leuce-Come along that barren coast. It was never there.

### Other considerations: Strabo

There are two other considerations that must be taken into our calculations. Strabo relates the account of the attempted Roman invasion of Arabia. The Romans built boats on the Egyptian side, and sailed them to Leuce-Come.

*“After enduring great hardships and distress, he arrived on the fifteenth day at Leuce-Come, a large mart in the territory of the Nabataeans, with the loss of many of his vessels, some with all their crews, in consequence of the difficulty of the navigation, but by no opposition from an enemy. These misfortunes were occasioned by the perfidy of Syllaëus, who insisted that there was no road for an army by land to Leuce-Come, to which and from which place the camel traders travel with ease and in safety from Sela, and back to Sela, with so large a body of men and camels as to differ in no respect from an army.”*XVI.iv.24

Notice that they endured great hardships and distress in a “fifteen day journey” to Leuce Come. They lost many vessels along the way because of the difficulty of navigation. This has always puzzled me. To sail across the Red Sea is quite easy. To sail north to Aila however, would have been a very tricky job for Roman boats with square “lug sails.” Most of the year the north-eastern arm of the Red Sea (Gulf of ’Aqaba) is plagued with winds from the northwest, making the journey up the sea almost impossible.

By locating Leuce-Come as Aila, this passage of Strabo now becomes more understandable. The Romans would have had to sail through the rocky entrance to the Gulf of ’Aqaba, and northward along the rocky coasts where the Roman boats could easily have fouled.

### Is Aila the 'Aqaba of Islam?

The descriptions of 'Aqaba in Al Ṭabarī and Ibn Ishāq could be applied to both locations, although the location in Saudi Arabia has several problems:

1. It is south of Mecca, and therefore not between Mecca and Medina.
2. It is out of the way and not on a road to anywhere, and therefore a very unlikely place for a large market.
3. Since it is not on a path to anywhere, the term 'Aqaba or "*going up*" is an awkward fit.

In contrast, consider the support for Aila being the 'Aqaba of Islam:

1. Strabo XVI.iv.24 tells us that in his time there was a large market at Aila.
2. The road going up into the mountains behind Aila was known as the 'Aqaba of Aila" Eventually the name "Aqaba of Aila" was reduced to only 'Aqaba which is the name used today.
3. The 'Aqaba of Aila is less than 50 kilometers from Petra, and located between Mecca and Medina

Therefore, based on this research, I would propose that the location known as 'Aqaba today (Aila, Leuce Come, Ezon Geber, and Elath) are all referring to the same location, and are synonymous with the 'Aqaba in the Qur'ān. It is my suggestion that Yāqūt, writing six hundred years after the death of Muḥammad, was forced to find a location near Mecca that fit the description of 'Aqaba. His choice of the ravine near Mecca was a natural one, but probably incorrect.

Gerd-R Puin in his article in *The Hidden Origins of Islam* (Puin, 2010) suggests that Leuce Come can be found in the Qur'ān. He notes that Wetzein was the first to connect Al'Aykah/Laykah with Leuke Come, and that Musil recalls the Greek 'Leuke' meaning white. (pg 339)

Puin points out that the phrase Laykah appears four times in the Cairo edition of the Qur'ān, and seems to be a place name. (Sūra 15:78, 50:14, 26:176, 38:13) There are variant readings of this name in early copies of the Qur'ān. Puin comes to the conclusion (pg 342) that this phrase must refer to Leuke Come. He then presents several of the traditional arguments concerning placing Leuke Come on the eastern shores of the Red Sea, and suggests that Leuke Come = al-Hawra. But as we have shown, the directions to Leuce Come in the *The Periplus Maris Eruthraei* locate Leuke Come where 'Aqaba is today. This provides us with a strong possibility that 'Aqaba (Leuce Come) is mentioned four times in the early copies of the Qur'ān, once again pointing to a northern setting for the Qur'ān.

## Al-Aqsa

In recent years some debate has risen over the location of the place known as Masjid al Aqsa. It is commonly thought by Muslims to be a mountain in Jerusalem, and indeed the mosque there bears this name. But is this mosque really built on the location of Al Aqsa?

The Qur'ān mentions Al-Aqsa in Sūra 17:1: *Glory to (Allāh) who did take his servant for journey by night from the sacred mosque (ḥaram) to the farthest mosque whose precincts (al-Aqsa) we did bless in order that we might show him some of our signs: for he is the one who heareth and seeth (all things).* Qur'ān 17:1 (Yusuf 'Alī)

سبحان الذي أسرى بعبده ليلاً من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى الذي باركنا حوله لنريه من آياته أنه هو السميع البصير

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 2:281 adds: *Narrated Abū Huraira: The Prophet said, "Do not set out on a journey except for three mosques: 1) Al-Masjid-al-ḥaram, 2) the Mosque of Allāh's Apostle, and 3) the Mosque of Al-Aqsa.*

Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 4:585 adds: *Narrated Abū Dhar. I said, "O Allāh's Apostle! Which mosque was first built on the surface of the earth?" He said, "Al-Masjid-al-ḥaram." I said, "Which was built next?" He replied "The mosque of Al-Aqsa." I said, "What was the period of construction between the two?" He said, "Forty years." He added, "Wherever (you may be, and) the prayer time becomes due, perform the prayer there, for the best thing is to do so (i.e. to offer the prayers in time)."*

Fiqh us Sunnah 5:65 tells us: *Ibn Taimiyyah said, "There is no other sanctuary in the whole world besides these two, not even the Al-Aqsa Mosque, nor any other, even though some ignorant people call them ḥaram al-Maqdis and ḥaram al-Khalil. By consensus ḥaram Makkah is the only ḥaram (sanctuary). About Madinah there is no such consensus. A majority of scholars, however, hold that Madinah is also a sanctuary, as mentioned in ḥadīth on this subject. Muslim scholars disagree about a third sanctuary, namely, Wuja, a valley of Al-Tā'if. Ash-Shafi'i regards it a sanctuary. Ash-Shawkani agrees with him, but the majority of the scholars disagree and do not consider it a sanctuary." (65A) The majority of scholars believes Makkah has preference over Madinah.*

In an Arabic television program Zakaria Boutros presented evidence from Islamic sources which he claims support a theory that the Al-Aqsa Mosque referred to in Sūra 17 and in the ḥadīths was a literal mosque located not in Jerusalem, but a few miles outside of the Holy City. His evidence is as follows:

In *Kitāb al-Tārikh wa al-Maghazi* (Book of History and Campaigns) early Muslim historian and biographer al-Wāqidī described Muḥammad's stay in the village of Jiranah a few miles outside Mecca. He wrote, "*The Prophet arrived in Jiranah on Thursday, and remained 13 nights. He then departed Jiranah after praying at the Al-Aqṣa Mosque located on the shore of the river bed. The Prophet used to pray there whenever he came to Jiranah.*"

Another early historian, Azraqī, described in his book *Mecca and its Antiquities* a discussion between two men named Muḥammad ibn Tariq and Mujahid. Muḥammad said, "*Mujahid and I agreed on Jiranah, because he informed me the Prophet used to pray at the Al-Aqṣa Mosque located on the shore of the river bed. The other nearby mosque, the Al-Adna Mosque, was built by a man from the Quraysh tribe.*"

Al-Aqṣa in Arabic means "the farthest point", and Al-Adna means "the nearest point" or the "lowest point." The two mosques were simply named according to their location. The "nearer" or "lower" mosque was the Al-Adna Mosque, and the farther one was Al-Aqṣa.

Another early Mecca historian, Ibn Ishāq al-Fakihi noted in his book *Ancient and Modern Mecca* that Muslims who wanted to perform the 'umrah (Minor Pilgrimage) would first purify themselves at the neighboring villages of Tanim and Jiranah. The Al-Adna Mosque in Tanim was significant because Muḥammad's wife 'Ā'isha had purified herself there, and the Prophet himself had prayed in the Al-Aqṣa Mosque in Jiranah.

Ḥadīth historian Abū 'Alī recorded in *Masnad Abū 'Alī* that Umm Salmah heard Muḥammad say, "*Whoever prepares for the 'umrah by purifying himself in the Al-Aqṣa Mosque before he goes to the ḥaram mosque in Mecca will have his sins forgiven before he even commits them.*"

The above sources all indicate that the Al-Aqṣa Mosque referred to by Muḥammad in Qur'ān 17:1 was the mosque in Jiranah, a village near to Mecca. The famous mosque known today by the same name in Jerusalem was built almost a century later.

# CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

## QUR'ĀNIC GEOGRAPHY

While concrete evidence of Islam in the first 70 years AH remains scant, there is enough in existence to demonstrate that Islam was a practiced religion during this time. (Hoyland, 1997, page 545) As we have demonstrated in this book, the setting of the Qur'ān and its initial audience all seem to have been focused on northern Arabia. The geographical references in the Qur'ān such as 'Ad, Thamud, Midian and Medina all point to a northern Arabian origin. The only reference that is south of Medina is one reference to the *valley of Mecca* (and perhaps also the reference to the *valley of Bacca*). However, when we examined the descriptions of Mecca in early Islamic literature nothing seemed to fit. Finally, when examining all of the mosques (that are still discernible) during the first one hundred years after the Hijra, we discovered that they all faced modern day Petra in north Arabia rather than Mecca in southern Arabia. Then, during the next hundred years, mosques pointed to either Petra or Mecca while a few in Spain and North Africa pointed along a line parallel to them. This we labeled the *Time of Confusion*. Starting in 750 AD Abbāsīd rule was established, and all mosques built after this pointed to Mecca with the exception of the Umayyad mosques in Spain and North Africa which only followed suit after 822 AD.

The Changing of the Qibla		
100% point to Petra (of those mosques we could determine)	12 % point to Petra 50 % point to Mecca 38 % point parallel	100 % point to Mecca
Petra	Confusion	Mecca
1 AH - 107 AH 622 AD - 725 AD	107 AH - 207 AH 725 AD - 822 AD	207 AH - Present 822AD - Present
2nd Civil War		Abbasid rule begins



We also noted that under Abbāsīd rule, earlier histories were either edited, or doubt was cast on them by the writers of the Abbāsīd era. New histories and ḥadīths emerged under the Abbāsīds, and any ḥadīths that did not reflect the Islamic thinking of the Abbāsīds were discredited and ignored. The few early collections that survived were classified as untrustworthy. We also noted that there was a literary vacuum in Arabia, so the Abbāsīd writers only had to deal with common knowledge and popular opinion as there were few literary sources that opposed them.

### **Moving the Black Stone**

We noted that the early copies of the Qur'ān (in the first 70 years AH) do not contain the verses in Sūra 2 that address the changing of the qibla. These verses, and indeed Sūra 2, are missing. They appear in the later, Abbāsīd Qur'āns. Since there were so few Qur'āns in existence, the Abbāsīd scribes could easily claim that the Abbāsīd edition was more complete than the earlier copies. Since they were backed by politicians with the political will to squelch all rebellion, the new "complete" Qur'āns carried weight.

While we will probably never know for sure all the details of how the Black Stone came to be in Mecca, several things seem obvious.

During the Meccan rebellion of 64 AH to 74 AH we know that the Ka'ba was destroyed and later rebuilt by Ibn al-Zubayr. We also know that the Mecsans purchased many horses, camels and baggage during this period for moving. I suggested that the Black Stone was moved from Petra to Mecca during this time to keep the Umayyad armies from obtaining it. Even if the Umayyads captured the Holy City (which they eventually did) the Black Stone was out of their reach. Since Ibn al-Zubayr claimed that the new Ka'ba was built on an older foundation laid by the Prophet Ibrāhīm, people started to go to Mecca in Saudi Arabia to visit it, and so the Umayyads initially left it alone as they were concentrating on the civil wars they were facing. As the following years were filled with political upheavals, the Umayyads never sent an army south to Mecca to reclaim the stone.

A few years later in 89 AH, Muslims started to use signs in their mosques to indicate the new direction of prayer. This was followed by the miḥrab niche built into new mosques to point the faithful towards the stone in Mecca, rather than towards Petra, the direction that all of the previous mosques faced. Then in 94 AH, a massive earthquake destroyed towns and cities in Palestine and Syria. Petra was left in ruins. I suggested that most people would now have been against moving the Black Stone back to Petra. Besides being in ruins, the Holy City was filled with pagan temples and tombs, all reminders to them of

"jahiliya" or the times of ignorance in the past. Since the Meccan location was spared from earthquake damage, it would have seemed that God ordained Mecca to be the true location of the Ka'ba.

By 112 AH John of Damascus mentions in chapters 100 & 101 of his book *De Haersibus* that the Muslims of his time were "*idolaters and worshippers of the morning star and Aphrodite whom in fact they call achbar in their own language which means "great."* He later describes their action, "*How then do you rub yourselves on a stone at your Chabatha (Ka'ba) and hail the stone with fond kisses? ... This, then which they call "stone" is the head of Aphrodite, whom they used to worship and whom they call achbar.*" He then mentions the sayings that Muḥammad composed along with their names such as Woman, Camel, Table, and Cow. It appears that at that time the sayings of Muḥammad were known as individual poems, and that the Qur'ān was not yet referred to as a single identifiable book. (Hoyland, 1997, page 486)

Therefore, since the Qur'ān did not speak to either location as being correct, Umayyad Muslims had no authority to challenge the new location of the Black Stone. This new location seems to have been supported by the Muslim clerics in Kūfa, who were opposed to everything Umayyad. When writing about the events of 67 AH, Al Ṭabarī relates an account where the people of Kūfa say to Ibn al-Zabayr that they were "*people who turn to the same qibla as you.*" (Ṭabarī XXI, pg 107, 112) This indicates that there were at least two qiblas at this time, and that the people of Kūfa prayed towards the same qibla as al-Zubayr. (This would have been Mecca not Petra) Ṭabarī also notes that there was no official pilgrimage that year, indicating that there was some conflict over the pilgrimage.

In an eighth century document containing the dialog between the Byzantine ruler Leo and the Muslim caliph 'Umar (referred to above, Gaudeul, 1984, page 127-28) Christian Leo seem to have no objection to Abraham being associated with the Ka'ba. In this document Leo, a Christian, asks 'Umar: *Do you feel no shame to have venerated that house which is called Ka'ba, the dwelling of Abraham?*" This demonstrates to us that at that time the church had no objection to the Ka'ba being associated with Abraham. It is only in later Christian literature that Christian apologetics state that Abraham never visited the far southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Is it possible that during the time of Leo and 'Umar the church recognized the Ka'ba as being located just south of the Dead Sea in Petra, and not in Mecca in Arabia? (Hoyland, 1997, page 495)

Leo also tells us that Abū Turāb and Salmān the Persian composed the Qur'ān *even though the rumor has got around among you that God sent it down*

from the heavens.... As for your book, you have already given us examples of such falsifications and one knows among others of a certain Ḥajjāj named by you as governor of Persia, who had men gather your ancient books, which he replaced by others composed by himself according to his taste and which he disseminated everywhere in your nation, because it was easier by far to undertake such a task among a people speaking a single language. From this destruction, nevertheless, there escaped a few of the works of Abū Turāb, for Hajjaj could not make them disappear completely. (Leo-'Umar, Letter, in Armenian, 292, 297-98) (Hoyland, 1997, page 501)

A similar account is told by 'Abd al-Masīḥ al Kindī and Abraham of Tiberias, both writing during the reign of Ma'mūn (813-33). "Then there was the matter of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, namely that he gathered together every last copy and caused to be omitted from the text many things.... and a version (*naskih*) was written according to the composition (*ta'lif*) favored by Ḥajjāj in six copies (*maṣāḥif*) and one was sent to Egypt, another to Syria another to Medīna, another to Mecca, another to Kūfa and another to Baṣra." (Hoyland, 1997, page 501) In appendix C these are known as the 'Uthmān Qur'āns.

This is echoed in the Islamic source by Ibn Shabba "*Tarikh al'Madīna*" 1.7 where: "*Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf wrote exemplars of the Qur'ān (maṣāḥif) and sent them to the chief cities (al-amṣār)*" (Hoyland, 1997, page 501)

But, you might argue, wouldn't someone object? While there were objections, one must remember that the Abbāsids based their rule on the authority of being connected to members of Muḥammad's family. (Kennedy, 2005, page 4) Second, the Quraysh tribe was disbanded to the far reaches of the empire. Many of those in Arabia had been killed in the rebellions. Added to this, in Baghdad there were many Islamic scholars who supported the new Qur'ān and the Meccan location. Who was to argue? The Abbāsids seemed to encourage not only the study of religion but the study of all knowledge. In the years that followed, scores of scholars emerged and Baghdad became a world-renowned center of learning.

### **Qarmatian rebellion**

Many revolts against Abbāsīd rule occurred during the eighth and ninth centuries. By 890 AD (277 AH) dissatisfaction with the Abbāsīd changes grew in central Arabia, giving room for Shī'a Ismā'īlī groups to propagate their teachings. They taught that the pilgrimage to Mecca was simply a superstition, and so they desired to build a Muslim society based on reason and equality. The Muslim world at this time was economically successful and wealthy, based largely on a huge slave-based economy. (Nakash, 2006) In 899 AD, the

Qarmāṭians took control of Bahrain's capital Hajar, and also al-Hasa which became the capital of their state. The Qarmāṭians tried to stop Muslims from going to Mecca for the pilgrimage. They so vehemently opposed pilgrimages to Mecca that in 906 AD they began ambushing caravans and massacring pilgrims. Then in 927 AD they sacked Mecca, desecrated the Well of Zamzam with corpses of ḥajj pilgrims, and then removed the Black Stone and took it to Al-Hasa. In 931 the Qarmāṭians chose a new Mahdī-Caliph who set about abolishing Sharī'a law, and changing the qibla direction yet again. Since the old qibla was lost, they instituted a new qibla that required the faithful to always pray towards fire. When the new Mahdī-Caliph began to curse Muḥammad and the other prophets, instituting a number of strange new ceremonies as well as executing some of the nobles, the Qarmāṭians decided their new Mahdī-Caliph was an imposter and they killed him.

With the Black Stone in captivity and the pilgrimages halted, Islam was in crisis. In 952 AD the Abbāsids agreed to pay a huge sum for the return of the Black Stone. When they received it back, it had been broken into several pieces. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007) When it was returned, it was wrapped in a sack and thrown into the Friday Mosque of Kūfa accompanied by a note saying "By command we took it, and by command we have brought it back." Its abduction and removal caused further damage, breaking the stone into seven pieces. (Glasse, 2001, page 245)

After a defeat at the hands of the Abbāsids in 976 the Qarmāṭians focused on internal issues and slowly their status was reduced to that of a local power. According to the Arabist & historian Curtis Larsen, this had important repercussions for the Qarmāṭian's ability to extract tribute from the region and slowly their finances failed. (Larsen, 1984, page 65) Eventually the Qarmāṭians were expelled from Iraq by the Buyids (985 AD) and they faded from history. (Busse, 1975) (Muir, 1915, pages 558-562)

### Early manuscript issues

Many early texts, including Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian and Islamic sources have problems with defining the author, date or time in which they were written. Robert Hoyland points out in *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Hoyland, 1997, page 34-40) that when thinking of early manuscripts "we should speak of several stages in the process of editing before the emergence of a final redaction (the *textus receptus*) the different versions produced along the way being to some extent autonomous." He notes that as texts were copied and reproduced at later times, changes were often introduced resulting in variant

readings. Distinguishing what was written in an original text is almost impossible. Hoyland continues on page 37:

*The redactional process might follow a linear course. Thus the History of Mecca by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Azraqi (d 837) passed through the hands of his grandson Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqi (d. ca. 865), Ishaw al-Khuza'i (d 920) and Muḥammad al Khuza'i (wr. 961).*

This is also notably the case of the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad by Ishāq, which was later edited by his grandson Ibn Ḥishām. (Guillaume, Ishāq, page 691)

Since many of these manuscripts were adjusted to be “politically correct” later, we have the problem of trying to determine what the texts might have originally contained. In effect, we must read back into the text to discover places where the editors neglected to make changes. For instance, if the original direction of prayer was towards Petra but was later moved to Mecca in the south of Arabia, the later writers and editors had to find ways of editing earlier manuscripts to remove all the references to Petra and make them all refer to Mecca. One example of this was the introduction of Jerusalem as the direction of the earlier qibla. This idea is found mostly in later writings after Abbāsīd writers began to do their work, and never in the early writings. Even the term 'Al-Aqsa was later applied to Jerusalem to give it some credit as the earlier focus of the qibla. So researchers today have the difficult job of trying to read into texts what they originally contained before later editors tried to 'improve' them according to what was politically or religiously correct at the time. (See Hoyland page 565 – 566)

### **Bukhārī's contradiction**

Despite his best efforts of substituting Mecca for Petra, Bukhārī had trouble keeping his facts straight when describing the original direction of prayer. In one passage he tells us that the original qibla direction was towards Syria (Damascus) and in another place he says it was towards Jerusalem. *While some people were offering morning prayer at Qubā' a man came to them and said, "A Qur'ānic order has been revealed to Allāh's Apostle tonight that he should face the Ka'ba at Mecca (in prayer), so you too should turn your faces towards it."* *At that moment their faces were towards Shām.* (This is the Arab name for Damascus, which means "north" Wehr page 525) *(and on hearing that) they turned towards the Ka'ba (at Mecca).* Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 6:17

A few lines away from this he records the qibla as being Jerusalem: *We prayed along with the Prophet facing Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months.*

*Then Allāh ordered him to turn his face towards the qibla (in Mecca): "And from whence-so-ever you start forth (for prayers) turn your face in the direction of (the Sacred Mosque of Mecca) Al-Masjid-al ḥaram..." (2.149) Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Hadīth 6:19*

A strong indication of the meaning of the word "Sham" is found a few pages later in Bukhārī when he clearly identifies Damascus (the center of Marwān's power) as "Sham."

*When Ibn Ziyād and Marwān were in Sham and Ibn Az-Zubair took over the authority in Mecca and Qurra' (the Khārījites) revolted in Baṣra, I went out with my father to Abū Barza al-Aslami till we entered upon him in his house while he was sitting in the shade of a room built of cane. So we sat with him and my father started talking to him saying, "O Abū Barza! Don't you see in what dilemma the people have fallen?" The first thing heard him saying, "I seek reward from Allāh for myself because of being angry and scornful at the Quraysh tribe. O you Arabs! You know very well that you were in misery and were few in number and misguided, and that Allāh has brought you out of all that with Islam and with Muḥammad till he brought you to this state (of prosperity and happiness) which you see now; and it is this worldly wealth and pleasures which has caused mischief to appear among you. The one who is in Sham (i.e., Marwān), by Allāh, is not fighting except for the sake of worldly gain; and those who are among you, by Allāh, are not fighting except for the sake of worldly gain; and that one who is in Mecca (i.e., Ibn Az-Zubair) by Allāh, is not fighting except for the sake of worldly gain."* Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Hadīth 9:228

So where did the first qibla point to? I believe that it pointed towards Petra, and that this was called "Syria" in the minds of the Arabs, because Petra was a city in the Roman province of Syria. It would be similar to saying one prayed towards Ontario in one sentence and then towards Toronto in another. In this case either Bukhārī or perhaps a later unnamed editor inserted Jerusalem into the text, but failed to change the reference to Sham (Damascus).

### **A question of time**

Muslims adhere to the importance of the direction of prayer. To them, God had dictated the direction that people should pray. The Qur'ān states in Sūra 10:87: *We inspired Moses and his brother with this message: "Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt make your dwellings into places of worship and establish (a qibla) regular prayers: and give glad tidings to those who believe!"* (Yūsuf Alī)

For Muslims the direction of prayer is towards the Ka'ba and the Black Stone. Al-Bukhārī's Ḥadīths state:

*When the prophet entered the Ka'ba, he invoked Allāh in each and every side of it and did not pray till he came out of it, and offered a two-Rak'at prayer facing the Ka'ba and said, "This is the qibla."* Bukhārī 1.391

*Allāh's apostle prayed facing Bayt al-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months but he loved to face the Ka'ba (at Mecca) so Allāh revealed: "Verily, we have seen the turning of your face to the heaven!" (2.144) So the prophet faced the Ka'ba and the fools amongst the people namely "the Jews" said, "What has turned them from their qibla (Bayt al-Maqdis) which they formerly observed?" (Allāh revealed): "Say: 'To Allāh belongs the east and the west. He guides whom he will to a straight path.'" (2.142) A man prayed with the prophet (facing the Ka'ba) and went out. He saw some of the Anṣār praying the 'Asr prayer with their faces towards Bayt al-Maqdis, he said, "I bear witness that I prayed with Allāh's Apostle facing the Ka'ba." So all the people turned their faces towards the Ka'ba.* Bukhārī 1.392

One of the main arguments against the Holy City of Islam being in northern Arabia and then changed to southern Arabian during the closing years of the Umayyad Dynasty is that the Qur'ān seems to indicate that this change took place during Muḥammad's lifetime. These verses are in Sūra 2:142-147

*The fools among the people will say: "What hath turned them from the qibla to which they were used?" Say: To Allāh belong both east and west; he guideth whom he will to a way that is straight. Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Apostle a witness over yourselves; and we appointed the qibla to which thou wast used only to test those who followed the apostle from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous except to those guided by Allāh. And never would Allāh make your faith of no effect. For Allāh is to all people most surely full of kindness most merciful. We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens; now shall we turn thee to a qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; wherever ye are turn your faces in that direction. The people of the book know well that that is the truth from their Lord nor is Allāh unmindful of what they do. Even if thou wert to bring to the people of the book all the signs (together) they would not follow thy qibla; nor art thou going to follow their qibla; nor indeed will they follow each other's qibla. If thou after the knowledge hath reached thee wert to follow their (vain) desires then wert thou indeed (clearly) in the wrong. The people of the book know this as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know. The truth is from thy Lord so be not at all in doubt. To each is a*



*goal to which Allāh turns him; then strive together (as in a race) toward all that is good. Wheresoever ye are Allāh will bring you together. For Allāh hath power over all things. From whencesoever thou startest forth turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; that is indeed the truth from thy Lord. And Allāh is not unmindful of what ye do. So from whencesoever thou startest forth turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; among wheresoever ye are turn your face thither that there be no ground of dispute against you among the people except those of them that are bent on wickedness; so fear them not but fear me; and that I may complete My favors on you and ye may (consent to) be guided. A similar (favor have ye already received) in that we have sent among you an apostle of your own rehearsing to you Our signs and sanctifying you and instructing you in scripture and wisdom and in new knowledge. Then do ye remember me; I will remember you. Be grateful to me and reject not faith.* (Yusif Ali translation)

Note that the Qur'ān does not say where the previous qibla pointed to, it only tells us that the qibla was changed towards the Sacred Mosque. It also admits that the change of the qibla was momentous to all except those guided by Allāh.

If the Qur'ān is the exact word of Allāh and a duplicate of the original one in heaven, then it cannot be changed or corrected. All Muslims everywhere understand from these verses that the qibla was changed during Muḥammad's life time. Islamic scholars several hundred years after Muḥammad's death inform us that the original qibla pointed to Jerusalem. They insist that when Muḥammad received the revelation of Sūra 2 that he stood in the Medina mosque, and turned, and faced south instead of north (towards Syria). The Qur'ān however, gives us no clue as to the direction of the old qibla, or even of the new qibla, except that it is towards the sacred mosque.

The ḥadīths are not very helpful on this point. The rules regarding the direction one should face mostly pertain to people who are urinating or defecating so that they don't expose themselves in the direction of the qibla.

*Allāh's Apostle said, "If anyone of you goes to an open space for answering the call of nature he should neither face nor turn his back towards the qibla; he should either face the east or the west."* Bukhārī 1:146

*Yahyā related to me from Mālik from Ishāq ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Abi Ṭalḥa that Rafī ibn Ishāq, a mawla of the family of ash-Shifā who was known as the mawla of Abū Ṭalḥa, heard Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣarī, one of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, say, while he was in Egypt, "By*

*Allāh! I don't know how to deal with these lavatories." The Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, said, "When you go to defecate or urinate, do not expose your genitals towards the qibla, and do not put your back to it." Al Mūwaṭṭa 14:1*

Al Mūwaṭṭa 14:7 contains an interesting phrase: *Yahyā related to me from Mālik from Yahyā ibn Saʿīd that Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab said, "The Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, prayed towards the Bayt al-Maqdis for sixteen months after arriving in Medina. Then the qibla was moved, two months before the battle of Badr."*

All of this stands in contrast to the archeological, historical and literary evidence that indicates the qibla changed seventy years after the Hijra, and that this change was gradually accepted over the next one hundred years. There are also strong indicators that later writers tampered with sacred texts and constructed new histories that supported their theories. What really happened twelve hundred years ago in Arabia? When comparing the geography presented to us by the Abbāsīd writers with archeological evidence as well as literary and historical records, something doesn't match up.

The only conclusion I come to is that Islam was founded in northern Arabia in the city of Petra. It was there that the first parts of the Qur'ān were revealed before the faithful were forced to flee to Medina. Thus, the prophet Muḥammad never visited Mecca, nor did any of the first four rightly guided caliphs. Mecca was never a centre of worship in ancient times, and was not part of the ancient trade routes in Arabia. All down through history the Arabs made pilgrimages to the holy sites in the city of Petra, which had many ancient temples and churches. It was in Petra that 350 idols were retrieved from the rubble after an earthquake and set up in a central courtyard. It was in Petra that Muḥammad directed the destruction of all the idols except one, the Black Stone. This stone remained in the Ka'ba in Petra until it was later taken by the followers of Ibn al-Zubayr deep into Arabia to the village of Mecca for safe keeping from the Ummayyad armies. And today it is to this stone that Muslims face, rather than to their holy city and the qibla that Muḥammad gave them.

I see no other way of interpreting the facts I discovered, be they archeological, historical, or literary. But these are my personal conclusions. I am open to learning more, and discovering what really took place in ancient Arabia. I trust that Islamic scholars all around the world will study and seek to answer the material presented in this book.



# **SECTION VII**

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY

On the following pages I present a timeline of Islamic history from 550 AD to 1095 AD. While I have tried to be as accurate as possible, I have had to estimate some dates and they may be out by one year. It is always difficult to match the Muslim lunar calendar with dates on the western calendar. As far as possible, I have tried to follow the dates and events as given by al-Ṭabarī.

It is also important to realize that the timeline presented here is given to demonstrate the progress of events rather than trying to argue that one or another date is correct. We will leave that up to historians who specialize in those fields. As stated, the whole purpose of this appendix is to simply provide the reader with an overview of the progress of Islamic history. I sincerely believe that such a graphical presentation will help readers understand how some events happened closer together, and how others were separated by many years.

One of the reasons for doing this is to demonstrate to readers that when referring to an “early source,” they need to check how early or late that source actually is. I use three symbols in the timeline to help readers quickly identify major events:
















Battle Fought    Mosque Built    Book Written

















Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
550			
551	July 9th a massive earthquake strikes Beirut region and destroys buildings throughout the Middle East.	Petra suffers earthquake damage	
552			
553			
554			
555			
556			










Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
557			
558			
559			
560			
561			
562			
563			
564			
565			
566			
567			
568			
569			
570	Birth of Muḥammad, Year of the Elephant (approx)	Mecca attacked by Yemenis with an elephant.	
571			
572			
573			
574			
575			
576	Death of Aminah, mother of Muḥammad (approx)		
577			
578	Death of 'Abdul Muṭallib (approx)		
579			
580			
581			
582			
583	Muḥammad's journey to Syria with Abū Ṭalib (approx)	Muḥammad is 14 years old	
584			
585			
586			
587			
588			
589	Civil war: The Quraysh fight the Kinana	known as Sacrilegious Wars	













Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
590			
591			
592			
593	Muḥammad works for Khadija (approx)		
594			
595	Muḥammad marries Khadija (approx)	Muḥammad is 25 years old	
596			
597			
598			
599			
600			
601			
602			
603			
604			
605	Rebuilding of the Ka'ba. Muḥammad is chosen to place the Black Stone.	Muḥammad is 35 years old	
606			
607			
608			
609			
610	First revelation in the cave at Ḥira	Muḥammad is 40 years old	
611	Khadijah submits to Islam		
612	First rituals of Islam prescribed	First believers	
613	Mount Ṣafa declaration	Public preaching	
614	Some Muslims migrate to Abyssinia	Persecution begins	
615			
616	Second migration to Abyssinia		
617	Boycott of the Hashemites and Muḥammad by the Quraysh		
618	Satanic Verses given (approx)		
619	Boycotts lifted, death of Abū Talif and Khadija	Known as the <i>Year of Sorrow</i>	














Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
620	Visit to Tā'if, "Ascension to the Heavens"	Some in Medina believe. First Pledge of 'Aqaba	
621		Second Pledge of 'Aqaba	
622	Hijra, migration to Medina, first year in the Islamic calendar. First Friday Prayers, Marriage with 'Ā'ishah. Raiding begins.	 Quba Mosque built, original direction unknown	1
623	Raid on Nakhlah. Al Ṭabarī says the qibla changed this year.	 Mosque of the Prophet built facing north towards Petra.	2
624	 Battle of Badr	Campaign against Banu Qaynuqa. Zamzam is covered by a tent. Several assassinations carried out.	3
625	 Battle of Uḥud	First 'Eid al-Aḍḥa celebrated. Expulsion of Banu Nadir Jews from Medina, more raiding.	4
626	Muḥammad marries Zaynab	 Mosque of the Two Qiblas built facing north toward Petra.	5
627	 Battle of the Trench, enslavement of Nabi Qurayṣah	 Great Mosque of Guangzhou, China built facing Petra	6
628	 Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, Battle of Khaybar	Further raiding. Ambassadors sent to neighboring nations.	7
629	 Battle of Mu'ta	Conquest of the Holy City. Battle of Hunayn, Battle of Awṭās, Siege of Tā'if.	8
630	 Expedition to Tabūk	More raids	9
631	 More raids, people of Thaḳīf adopt Islam	Raiding continues	10
632	 Rebellion in Najrān	Farewell pilgrimage to the Holy City. Death of Muḥammad. Abū Bakr assumes power as caliph.	11
633	 Battles of Dhū al-Qaṣṣah, Battle of Dhū Ḥusā, Battle of Buzākha, Battle of Safār	Apostates dealt with. Yemen and Bahrain dealt with. Battle of Madhār, Battle of Wālajah, campaigns against Banu Tamīm.	12













Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
634	 Conquest of Yarmūk, Bosra, Firāḍ, Damascus, Battle of Ajnāḍin, Baysān, & Tiberias	Khālīd's Pilgrimage. Death of Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb assumes power as the second caliph, battle of Namāriq, Battle of Saqāṭiyyah.	13
635	 Battle of the Bridge, Battle of Buwayb, Battle of Fiḥl	Battle for Qāḍisiyyah Jerusalem taken, Baṣra built up	14
636	 Conquest of Ḥimṣ, Qinnasrīn, Caesarea, and Gaza.	Battle of Ajnādayn, Place of prayer built in Jerusalem	15
637	 Conquest of Syria	 Library at Cteiphon burned	16
638	 Conquest of Jazīrah		17
639	 Conquest of Khūzestān	Advance into Egypt, Plague of Emmaus.	18
640	 Battle of Babylon in Egypt		19
641	 Battle of Nihāwand, Conquest of Alexandria in Egypt.		20
642	 Conquest of Egypt  Library in Alexandria burned.	 Mosque built in Fustāt, Egypt but is rebuilt in 673, 698 & 827 AD. Crone claims that there is literary evidence the qibla was changed in later renovations to point further south.	21
643	 Conquest of Azerbaijān and Ṭabarīstān (Mazandaran).	 Egyptian papyrus PERF 558 written in Arabic cursive with dotted letters.	22
644	 Conquest of Fārs, Kermān, Šistān, Mekrān, Khurāsān, Assassination of 'Umar.	'Uthmān ibn Affān becomes caliph.	23
645			24
646	 Campaigns in Khurāsān, Armenia and Asia Minor.		25

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
647	 Campaigns in North Africa, Conquest of Cyprus.		26
648	 Campaigns against the Byzantines.		27
649			28
650			29
651	First Muslim envoy arrives in China. (Yung-hui reigns) and says that his king is the 2nd Caliph who had ruled for 34 years.	 TuYu, T'ung tien, CX-CIII, translated by Wakeman, Western Barbarians, 892-925	30
652	Disaffection against the rule of 'Uthmān.		31
653			32
654			33
655	 Naval battle of the Masts against the Byzantines.		34-35
656	 'Uthmān is killed. 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib becomes fourth caliph. Battle of the Camel.		36
657	 Battle of Ṣiffin.	'Alī shifts the capital from Medina to Kūfa, a newly established city.	37
658	 Battle of Nahrawān.		38
659	 Conquest of Egypt by Mu'āwiyah I.		39
660	 'Alī recaptures Hijaz and Yemen from Mu'āwiyah. Mu'āwiyah I declares himself as caliph in Damascus.	<b>Umayyad Dynasty</b> Mu'āwiyah chooses Damascus over Medina and the Holy City.	40












Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
661	 'Alī assassinated by Khārijites.	Al Ḥassan surrenders Kūfa. Mu'āwiyah kills opponents.	41
662	 Raids on the Byzantines.		42
663	 Khārijites revolt.	Continued raids on the Byzantines	43
664	 Invasion into Byzantine territory.		44
665	Baṣra governor changed several times.		45
666		Raids against the Byzantines.	46
667	 Campaign against Antakia (Antioch).	Raids against the Byzantines.	47
668	Raid on Sicily.	Various sea raids, continued campaign against Antakia.	48
669	 Raids on the Byzantines.	Continued sea raids.	49
670	 Raids on the Byzantines. Continued sea raids.	Ḥassān ibn 'Alī, second Imām of the Shiites is killed. Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī becomes Imām of the Shiites.	50
671	 Raids against the Byzantines.	Ḥujr bin 'Adi executed. Advance in North Africa. 'Uqba ibn Nāfe founds the town of Kairouān in Tunisia. Conquest of Kābul.	51
672	 Continued raids into Byzantine area.	The Byzantines are being slowly weakened and pushed back.	52
673	 Rhodes conquered. Campaigns in Khurāsān.	 Mosque in Fustāt, Egypt is completely rebuilt, doubling in size, and this time with minarets. Direction unknown. (See 642, 698, 711 & 827 AD)	53
674	 Island near Constantinople taken.		54










Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
675	Muslims cross the Oxus. Bukhāra becomes a vassal state.		55
676	Continued campaigns against the Byzantines.		56
677	 Continued campaigns against the Byzantines.		57
678	 Continued campaigns against the Byzantines.	Occupation of Samarkand. Siege of Constantinople.	58
679	 Continued campaigns against the Byzantines.		59
680	 Battle of Karbalā		60
681	Death of Mu'āwiyah. Yazīd I becomes caliph. Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī is killed. 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn becomes Imām of the Shiites.	Ibn al Zubayr disrupts pilgrims.	61
682	 North Africa, 'Uqba ibn Nāfe marches to the Atlantic, is ambushed and killed at Biskra.	Muslims evacuate Kairouān and withdraw to Burqa. Discontent in Medina	62-63
683	'Abdallah ibn Zubayr declares himself as the caliph in the Holy City. Ḥusayn ibn Numayr blockades the Holy City. Death of Yazid, Syrians withdraw. Mu'āwiyah II becomes caliph.	The Ka'ba damaged by ballista stones, the veil and roof burned with fire. Walls are then demolished and Zubayr places the Black Stone on silk in a temporary stand.	63-64
684	 Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ. Baṣra and Kūfa become centers of rebellion.	Marwān I becomes the caliph in Damascus. Death of Marwān I. 'Abd al Mālik becomes caliph in Damascus. Gathering at Ḥusayn's tomb.	64-65
685	The Azraqī revolt, Kūfa rebels. Al Mukhtār revenges against the murderers of Ḥusayn bin 'Alī. Al Mukhtār declares himself as the caliph at Kūfa. Al Mukhtār sends an army to the Holy City.	'Abdallah ibn Zubayr claims he finds the foundation stones that Abraham laid of the real Ka'ba (no location mentioned.) No pilgrimage this year. Did Zubayr build a new Ka'ba in Mecca this year?	65-66











Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
686	 Battle of Kūfa between the forces of Mukhtār and 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr. Mukhtār killed.	First mention of the "people who turn to the same qibla as you." (Ṭabarī XXI, pg 107, 112) No official pilgrimage this year.	66-67
687	Severe drought in the Middle East, no large campaigns.	No official pilgrimage this year.	67-68
688	Revolt in Damascus.	Four separate banners at the pilgrimage because of the civil wars. Was this to different locations?	68-69
689	Byzantines attack and are paid off. No other history recorded for this year, other than the people in the Holy City bought many horses and camels and much baggage for moving.	'Abdallāh ibn Zubayr himself leads the new pilgrimage. Was this to the new location?	69-70
690	 Battle of Dayr al-Jāthaliq, Kūfa falls to 'Abdul Malik and Mus'ab is killed.	Zubayr leads the new pilgrimage again.	70-71
691	 War at Sūlāf.	Ḥajjāj sent to the Holy City to take it. Ḥajjāj leads the pilgrimage because of the siege.	72
692	 Siege of Mecca.  The fall of the Holy City and the death of Zubayr. 'Abdul Malik becomes the sole Caliph in Damascus.	Rebels in the Holy City defeated, but further revolts by others fully occupy the Caliph's attention. Najdah ibn 'Āmir established a break-away Kharijite state in al-Yamāmah and captures Tā'if. They are dissuaded from taking the Holy City and Medina. Najdah assassinated.	73
693	Al-Ḥajjāj with the approval of Umayyad Caliph 'Abdul Malik bin Marwān, demolished what Ibn al-Zubayr had changed in the Holy City.	Apparently the Ka'ba and other holy sites in the Holy city are restored to the way the Quraysh had it.	74
694	Baṣran troops revolt against Ḥajjāj		75
695	 Khārijites revolt in Jazīrah and Ahwāz. Battle of Karun.	Campaigns in North Africa. Muslims once again withdraw to Barqa. Advance in Transoxiana and occupy Kish.	76
696			77
697		Advance in Transoxiana and occupy Kish.	78












Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
698		 Mosque in Fuṣṭāṭ, Egypt is completely rebuilt, doubling in size, again. Direction is uncertain. (See 642, 698, & 827 AD)	79
699	The Azraqī leader is killed by 'Abd al Mālik's armies.	 'Alī, a grandson of 'Abbās, a paternal uncle of the prophet Muḥammad builds a large house at Ḥumeima, 27 miles south of Petra. This building is oriented towards Petra. Years later, an outside mosque is oriented towards Mecca.	80
700	 Campaigns against the Berbers in North Africa. Ḥajjāj at Baṣra.	 Great Mosque of Ba'albek built, orientation closer to Petra than to Mecca. Governor of Mecca not listed.	81
701	 Ibn al-Ash'ath battles Ḥajjāj.	 Umayyad buildings in Amman Jordan built facing Petra. They had to be rebuilt after a later earthquake. Governor of Mecca not listed.	82
702	 Battle of Dayr al-Jamājim.	Battle of Maskin. Ibn al-Ash'ath is defeated. Ḥajjāj begins to build Wasīṭ mosque facing Petra.	83
703	Ja'far al-Ṣadiq, sixth Imām of Shi'ite is born.	The fortress of Nīzak is conquered by the Ḥajjāj.	84
704	 Ḥajjāj commands al Mufaḍḍal to take Bādghīs.		85
705	Death of 'Abd al Malik, Al-Walid I becomes Umayyad caliph (for ten years). Governor of Mecca not listed.	 Great Mosque of Ṣan'a built, orientation towards both Petra and Mecca.	86
706	New governor of Medina. Governor of Mecca not mentioned. Pilgrimage this year.	 Khirbat al Minya built orientation towards Petra. The Wasīṭ mosque in Iraq is constructed, with a qibla pointing directly at Petra	87
707	 Reconstruction of the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina. Foundations re-laid. The qibla wall is changed. Ṭabari XXIII pg 141	 Ibn Ishāq is born (author of <i>Sīrat Rasūl Allāh</i> ). Governor of Mecca not mentioned	88

















Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
708	 Conquest of Sūriyah. New governor of Mecca. Al-Wāqidi records that in his day the location of the well of Zamzam is lost. Ṭabarī XXIII pg 148	 The niche or mihrab is introduced to re-orient mosques towards Mecca.	89
709	 Bukhāra conquered.	 Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem built facing Petra. The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is built facing Petra.	90
710	Khālid al-Qaṣri appointed as governor of Mecca. He is very strict and enforces unpopular views.	Khālid insists only the caliph's interpretation of history and religion are correct.	91
711	 Spain conquered by Ṭāriq bin Ziyād. Transoxiana falls into Muslim hands.	 Mosque in Fustaṭ, Egypt is renovated with a concave prayer niche. (See 642, 673, 698 & 827 AD) P. Crone & M. Cook, Hagarism, 1977 point out that there is literary evidence the orientation of the mosque had to be changed to point further south.	92
712	 Conquest of Sind by Muḥammad bin Qāsim.	Samarkand conquered.	93
713	 'Alī Ibn Ḥusayn, the fourth Imām of Shī'ia poisoned. Muḥammad al-Bāqir becomes Imām. Conquest of Multān.	Al-Ṭabarī notes that there was a massive earthquake this year in Syria. (XXIII, pg 204) Holy City is a refuge for outcasts and political refugees.	94
714	 Khirbat al Maḥjar mosque and palace structure built near Jericho facing Petra.	 Al Anjar Mosque near Beirut built facing Petra.	95
715	Death of Walid I. Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik becomes Umayyad Caliph (2 years).	Muslim armies approach China.	96
716	 Second Arab siege of Constantinople.		97
717	Death of Sulaymān. 'Umar II becomes Umayyad Caliph. Pact of 'Umar (3 years).		98 -99
718			100










Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
719			101
720	Death of 'Umar II. Yazīd II becomes Umayyad Caliph (4 years).	 Mosque of 'Umar in Bosra built, facing Petra.	102
721			103
722			104
723			105
724	Death of Yazīd I, Ḥishām becomes Umayyad Caliph (19 years).	<b>TIME OF CONFUSION BEGINS</b>	106
725	 Muslims enter in France.	 Qasr al Hayr al Gharbī built 37 miles west of Palmyra. Orientation between Mecca and Petra.	107
726			108
727		 Banghore Mosque in Pakistan built without a miḥrab, the whole complex faces Mecca.	109
728		 Qasr al Hayr al Sharqī built in Syria, mosque oriented between Petra and Mecca.	110
729			111
730	 John of Damascus (during the time of Leo III) mentions the compositions of Muḥammad (Woman, Camel, Table, and Cow) as separate writings and not yet compiled into one book.	 The Umayyad palace and mosque on Amman citadel are built facing Mecca.	112
731			113
732	 Battle of Tours (Poitiers) in France, Arab advance into Europe halted.		114
733			115
734			116
735			117
736			118
737	 Muslim victories reversed at Avignon in France.		119

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
738			120
739	Yazīd II declares all images & pictures be removed from churches.		121
740	 Shī'a Zaydī Revolt under Zayd bin 'Alī. Berber revolt in North Africa. Battle of the Nobles.	 The earliest mention of Mecca is found in the text: Continuatio Byzantia Arabica dating to this year.	122
741	 Battle of Baqdura in North Africa.		123
742	 Muslims engage Leo in battle and take plunder. Muslim rule restored in Qaiawān.	Abbāsīd supporters go on pilgrimage. Plague in the Middle East for several years.	124
743	Muḥammad al-Bāqir poisoned. Ja'far al-Ṣādīq becomes Imām. Death of Hishām. Al-Walid II becomes Umayyad Caliph. ( 1 year) Shī'a revolt in Khurāsān under Yahyā ibn Zayd.	 Mushatta Palace and Mosque near Amman Airport built, whole complex faces Petra.	125
744	 Hims, Palestine and Jordan rebel. Battle of 'Ain al Jurr.	Marwān II becomes Umayyad Caliph Walid II disposed. Yazīd III becomes Umayyad Caliph. for several months. After his death Ibrāhīm becomes Umayyad Caliph and is overthrown.	126
745	Mūsa al-Kāzim, seventh Imām of Shī'a born. Kūfa and Moṣul occupied by the Khārijites.		127
746	Battle of Rupa Thutha. Kūfa and Moṣul occupied by Marwān II.	A strong earthquake destroys cities in Syria and Jordan.	128
747	 Revolt of Abū Muslim in Khurāsān.		128
748	 Battle of Rayy.		130
749	 Battle of Iṣfahān and Battle of Nahāwand.	Kūfa captured by the Abbāsīds. As-Saffāh becomes Abbāsīd Caliph at Kūfa.	131-132
750	 Battle of Zāb. Fall of Damascus. End of Umayyads. Abbāsīds begin to rule from Baghdad.	<b>Abbāsīd Rule Begins</b>	132








Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
751	 Conquest of Wasit by Abbāsīd. Battle of Ṭalās with Tang Dynasty.	Murder of Abū Salama.	133
752			134
753	Death of al-Saffāh. Accession of al-Manṣūr as caliph. Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad bin 'Umar al-Wāqidi al-Madani is born.	 The Great Mosque of Shibam built original direction unknown.	135-136
754	 Revolt of 'Abdallāh bin 'Alī. Murder of Abū Muslim.		136-137
755	 Constantine Copronymus takes Malatyah. Sunbādh revolt in Khurāsān.		137-138
756	'Abd al-Rahmān I founds Umayyad state in Spain.	Byzantines and Muslims retire from battle for several years.	138-139
757			139-140
758	Rāwandiyyah Revolt.		141
759		People of Baṣra change their qibla to Ḥimmān. Tabarī XXVIII pg 80	142
760			143
761	Descendants of 'Alī transported from Medina to Iraq.	 Ibn Ishāq writes <i>Sīrat Rasūl Allāh</i> , 130 years after the death of Muḥammad.	144
762	 Muḥammad 'Abdallāh in Medina revolts.	 The Mosque of Manṣūr in newly constructed Baghdad points to Mecca.	145
763	 Defeat of Abbāsids in Spain.	Baghdad under construction. Main part of the city completed. Known as the "City of Peace."	146
764	 Fighting in Armenia.		147
765	 Ja'far al-Ṣādīq, sixth Imām of Shi'ia is poisoned for creating Shariah Law.	Fighting continues in Armenia. Mūsā al-Kāzim becomes Imām. 'Alī al-Riḍā, 8th Imām is born.	148
766	 Sayram in Central Asia captured from the Nestorians.	Walls of Baghdad are completed.	149
767	Kharijī state set up by Ibn Madrar at Sijilmasa. Ustad Sees revolt in Khurāsān.		150








Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
768	Pirates (Kurk) attack Jeddah.		151
769			152
770	Navel expedition against the Kurk.	 Ribat Fortress in Tunisia: Its foundations were laid this year, and its final construction was in 822 AD. The second floor mosque pointed south.	153
771	Construction begins in Rāfiqah.	Lightning kills faithful in a mosque in Ḥarām.	154
772	 Battle of Janbi in North Africa. Rustamid state set up in Morocco.	 The Great Mosque of Raqqa in Syria built, the whole building complex faces Petra not Mecca.	155
773			156
774		 Abū Mikhnaf writes <i>Maqal al-Ḥusayn</i> .	157
775	Death of Abbāsīd Caliph al-Manṣūr. Accession of Al-Mahdī.		158
776			159
777	 Siege of Saragossa in Spain	Khurāsān rebels.	160
778		Continued trouble in Khurāsān.	161
779			162- 163
780		Al Mahdī builds Qaṣr al-Salamah.	163-164
781		Three year truce with Byzantines.	164 -165
782			165-166
783		Al Ḥaram Mosque expanded considerably.	166-167
784	 Byzantines break the truce.	 The Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain built; the direction parallels Mecca & Petra but does not point at either.	168
785	Death of Caliph Mahdī. Accession of Al-Ḥādī.		169
786	Death of Ḥādī. Accession of Hārūn al-Rashīd.		170
787			171








Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
788	Idrisid state set up in the Maghrib. Death of 'Abd-al-Raḥmān I of Spain and accession of Ḥishām I.		172
789			173
790			174
791	Al Farāḥīdī collects fifteen scales of poetry and compares them with the Qur'ān.	 Al Farāḥīdī writes <i>Kitāb al-'Ayn</i> – an Arabic dictionary in eight volumes.	175
792	 Invasion of South France.		176
793			177
794			178
795		 Mālik ibn Anas writes <i>Al Muwaṭṭa'a</i> .	179
796	Death of Ḥishām in Spain, accession of al-Ḥakam I.		180
797			181
798			182
799	 Suppression of the revolt of the Khazars.		183
800	Mūsā al-Kāzim is poisoned in prison of Hārūn al-Rashīd. 'Alī al-Riḍā becomes Imām. Aghlabid rule is established in North Africa.		184
801			185
802			186
803	Downfall of Barmākids. Execution of Ja'far Barmakī.	 Al-Wāqidī emigrates to Iraq from Medina. Writes many histories.	187
804			188
805	 Campaigns against the Byzantines. Capture of the islands of Rhodes and Cyprus.		189
806			190
807		 'Abd Allāh ibn Wāḥb writes <i>Al-Gāmi'</i> .	191
808			192







Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
809	Death of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Accession of al-Amin.		193
810			194
811	 Battle of Rayy in Persia.		195
812			196
813			197-198
814	 Civil war between Amin and al-Ma'mūn. Amin killed and Ma'mūn becomes the Caliph.		199
815	 Shī'a revolt under Ibn Tuba Tabs.	Birth of Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā b. Isaac al-Rawandi, who authored the <i>Zumurrud</i> : the <i>Kitab al-Damigh</i> and "The Futility of Wisdom" ( <i>ʿAbath al-Ḥikma</i> ).	200
816	 Shī'a revolt in Mecca. Harthama quells the revolt. In Spain the Umayyads capture the island of Corsica.		201
817	Harthama killed.	 Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia built with a qibla direction north-west-southeast.	202
818	 'Alī al-Riḍā is poisoned in Mashhad. Muḥammad al-Taḳī becomes Imām. The Umayyads of Spain capture the islands of Ibiza, Majorca and Sardinia.	 Tayalīsī, Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarud writes <i>Musnad</i> .	203
819		 Ḥishām Ibn al-Kalbī writes " <i>The Abundance of Kinship</i> ."	204
820			205
821			206
822	Death of Al-Ḥakam I in Spain, accession of 'Abd-al-Raḥmān II.	 Al-Wāqidi writes <i>Book of History and Campaigns</i> .	207
823	Death of Ṭāhir in Khurāsān, Accession of Ṭalḥa ibn Ṭāhir.		208














Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
824		 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hamām al-Ṣan'ānī, Abū Bakr writes " <i>al-Muṣannaf</i> ."	209
825			210
826			211
827	'Alī al-Hādī, the 10th Shī'a Imām is born. Ma'mūn declares the Mu'tazilī creed as the state religion.	 Mosque in Fuṣṭāt, Egypt is renovated a third time. (See 642, 673, 698, 711 & 827 AD) During the 9th century Al Ma'mūn added a new area on the southwest side. During the Faṭamid era the mosque had five minarets, which are no longer present. In 1169 the mosque was destroyed by fire, and rebuilt by Ṣaladīn in 1179. It was destroyed again and rebuilt in 1796.	212
828			213
829			214
830			215
831			216
832			217
833	Death of Ma'mūn. Accession of al-Mu'taṣim.	 Ibn Ḥishām edits the errors out of <i>Sīrat Rasūl Allāh</i> 60 years after Ibn Ishāq dies.	218
834		 al-Ḥumaydī, Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr writes <i>Musnad</i> .	219
835	Muḥammad al-Taḳī is poisoned. 'Alī al-Hādī becomes Imām.		220
836	Mu'taṣim moves capital to Samarra.		221
837	 Revolt of the Jats in Asia.		222
838	 Revolt of Bābak in Azerbaijan suppressed.		223
839	 Revolt of Māziār in Ṭabarīstan. The Muslims occupy south Italy. Capture of the city of Messina in Sicily.		224







Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
840			225
841			226
842	Death of Mu'taṣim. Accession of al-Wāthiq.	 Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād al-Marwazī writes <i>Kitāb al-ḥitan</i> .	227
843			228
844			229
845		 Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd writes: " <i>The book of Major Classes</i> " <i>Kitāb Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra</i> .	230
846	Ḥasan al-'Askarī, a Shī'a Imām is born.		231
847	Death of Wāthiq, accession of Al-Mutawakkil.	 Great Mosque of Samarra faces Mecca.	232
848			233-234
849	Death of Ṭāhirid dynasty ruler 'Abdullāh ibn Ṭāhir al-Khurāsānī, accession of Ṭāhir II.	 Ibn Abi Shayba, 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad writes <i>Al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fi l-aḥādīth wa-al-'āthār</i> ; 15 vols.	235
850	Al-Mutawakkil restores orthodoxy.	 Great Mosque of Susa Tunisia faces south, parallel to a line drawn between Petra and Mecca.	236
851			237
852	Death of 'Abd-al-Raḥmān II of Spain. Accession of Muḥammad I.		238
853			239
854		 Khalīfa ibn Khayyāt writes <i>Tārikh</i> and <i>Tabaqāt</i> .	240
855		 Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal writes <i>al-Musnad</i> , 6 vols.	241
856	'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz founds the Habbārid rule in Sind.		242
857			243
858	Al-Mutawakkil founds the town of Ja'fariya.		244

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
859		 Abū Dulaf Mosque in Iraq faces Mecca.	245
860	Aḥmad founds Sāmānīd rule in Transoxiana.		246
861	Murder of Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Mu-tawakkil. Accession of al-Muntaṣir.		247
862	Al-Muntaṣir poisoned to death. Accession of al-Musta'in.		248
863		 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd writes <i>al-Muntakhab min musnad 'Abd ib ḥumayd</i> .	249
864	Ḥassan ibn Zayd established Sa'īdī state in Ṭabarīstan.		250
865			251
866	Al-Musta'in flees from Samarra, Accession of al-Mu'tazz.	Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ukhayḍī, a descendent of 'Alī, establishes an independent kingdom in Yamāmah.	252
867	Ya'qūb Laith Ṣaffārī founds the Ṣaffarīd rule in Ṣīstān.		253
868	'Alī al-Hādī is poisoned. Ḥassan al-'Askarī becomes Imām. Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the last Imām of Shi'ia is born. Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn founds the Ṭulūnīd rule in Egypt.	 Al-Dārim 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān writes <i>Kitāb as-Sunan</i> – 1363 ḥadīths.	254
869	The Abbāsīd Caliph Mu'tazz forced to abdicate, then dies. Accession of Al-Muhtadi. Beginning of Zanj revolt in Baṣra.	 Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī writes <i>al-Jamī' al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> , 7275 ḥadīths.	255
870	 Turks revolt against Muhtadi. His death and accession of al-Mu'tamid. Al-Bukhārī dies (Author of the Bukhārī ḥadīth) 238 years after the death of Muḥammad. (54 years after Mecca is moved.)	 Ibn Ṭulūn Mosque in Egypt faces Mecca. All mosques after this face Mecca.	256
871		 Ibn 'Abd-al-Ḥakam writes <i>History of the Conquest of Egypt and North Africa and Spain</i> .	257
872			258




Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
873	Ṭāhirid rule ends.		259
874	 Ḥasan al-'Askarī is poisoned. Muḥammad al-Mahdī becomes Imām. Shi'ites believe he is in hiding until the end of time. Zanjī state established at al-Muktara during Zanj revolt in southern Iraq. Death of the Sāmānid ruler, Aḥmad, accession of Naṣr I.		260
875		 Imām Muslim writes <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> , 9200 ḥadīths.	261
876			262
877	Death of Ya'qūb Laith Ṣaffārī in Ṣistān. Accession of 'Umr bin Layth.		263
878			264
879			265
880			266
881			267
882			268
883	End of the Zanj Revolt.		269
884			270
885	Death of Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn in Egypt. Accession of Khumārawaih ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn.	 Ibn Qutaybah, 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim writes <i>Kitāb al-ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth</i> .	271-272
886	Death of Muḥammad I, the Umayyad ruler of Spain. Accession of al-Mundhir.	 Ibn Mājah, Muḥammad ibn Yazīd writes: <i>Sunan Ibn Mājah</i> .	273
887			274
888	Death of Mundhir, Umayyad ruler of Spain. Accession of 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Umawī.	 Abū Dāwūd writes <i>Sunan Abū Dāwūd</i> – 4800 ḥadīths.	275
889			276
890		 al-Fasāwī, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Sufyān writes <i>Kitāb al-ma'rifa wa al-tārikh</i> , 3 vols.	277








Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
891	The Qarmatian state established in Baḥrain. Declared that the pilgrims should not go to Mecca.	 Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī writes <i>"Book of the Conquests of Lands."</i>	278
892	Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mu'tadid becomes Caliph. Death of the Sāmānīd ruler, Naṣr, accession of Ismā'īl I.	 Ḥadīth: Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. 'Isā writes <i>Sunan</i> (ḥadīth) 4000 ḥadīths in 4 vols.	279
893	Zaidi Imāmate is established in Yemen by al-Ḥādī Yaḥyā bin al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim.		280
894	The Rustamids become vassals of Spain.		281
895			282
896	Death of Khumārawaih ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn. Accession of 'Abdul Asakir Jaish.	 Ibn Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawarī writes <i>"General History"</i> and <i>Al-Fiqh al-Akbar</i> .	283
897	Assassination of 'Abdul Asakir Jaish. Accession of Abū Mūsā Ḥārūn.		284
898	 Qarmāṭians sack Baṣra.	 Aḥmad al-Ya'qūbī writes <i>"Book of Countries"</i> (A Geography).	285
899			286
900			287
901			288
902	Death of Abbāsīd Caliph al Mu'tadid. Accession of al-Muktafi as Caliph.	Death of the Ṣaffārid ruler 'Amr Bin Laith.	289
903	Assassination of the Qarmatian ruler Abū Sa'īd of Qarmatia, accession of Abū Ṭāhir.		290
904			291
905	'Abdullāh bin Ḥamdān founds the Ḥamdānīd rule in Moṣul and Jazīrah.	End of the Ṭūlūnīd rule in Egypt.	292
906			293
907			294
908	 Death of Abbāsīd Caliph Muktafi. Accession of al-Muqtadir. End of the Ṣaffārid rule. Annexation of their territories by the Sāmānīds.		295






Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
909	 Sa'īd ibn Ḥusayn, with the help of his chief commander 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥusayn overthrows the Aghlābids and founds the Faṭimid rule in North Africa.	Sa'īd Ibn Ḥusayn changes his title to Imām 'Abid Allāh al-Mahdī Billāh. Sunni Islam ends in North Africa.	296
910			297
911			298
912	Death of the Umayyad 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad in Spain, accession of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III.		299
913	Assassination of the Sāmānid ruler Aḥmad II. Accession of Naṣr II.		300
914			301-302
915		 Al-Nasā'ī writes <i>Sunan al-kubra</i> (ḥadīth)	303
916			304
917			305
918			306
919			307
920			308
921		 Al-Nasā'ī i writes <i>Al Sunnan Al Ṣughra</i>	309
922			310
923		 Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al Ṭabarī writes: <i>"History of the Prophets and Kings."</i>	311
924			312
925			313
926			314
927			315
928	Mardāwīj ibn Zayyār founds the Ziyārid rule in Ṭabarīstan.		316
929	 Qarmāṭians sack Mecca and carry the Black Stone away.	In Spain 'Abd al-Raḥmān III declares himself caliph of Córdoba.	317
930	Qarmāṭians desecrate the well of Zamzam with Muslim corpses during the ḥajj.		318
931	Death of the Abbāsid Caliph Muqtadir, accession of al-Qāhir.		319






Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
932			320
933			321
934	Deposition of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Qāhīr, accession of al-Rāḍī. Death of the Faṭimid Caliph 'Ubayd Allāh, accession of al-Qā'im. 'Imād al-Daula Abū al-Ḥasan establishes Būyid government in Fārs.	 al-'Uqaylī writes <i>Kitāb al-Du'afā' al-kabīr</i> 4 vols.	322
935	Rukn al-Daula conquers Rayy and establishes Būyid government in Rayy. Assassination of Ziyarid ruler Mardaḳij, accession of Qashimgir. Death of Ḥamdānīd ruler 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥamdān, accession of Naṣir al-Daula.	 Aḥmad ibn Fadlān writes <i>Kitāb ilā Mulūk al-Ṣaḡāliba</i> and becomes the basis for the film: <i>The 13th Warrior</i> .	323
936	Ibn Raiq launches a coup and becomes the Amīr al-Umarā' under Abbāsīd Caliph al-Rāḍī.		324
937			325
938	Bajkam launches a coup and takes Baghdad.	 Ibn Abi Ḥātim al-Razī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān writes <i>Al-Jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl</i> , with introduction, 9 volumes.	326
939			327
940	Death of Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Rāḍī. Accession of al-Muttaqī.	 Thiqat al-Islam Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulaynī writes: <i>The Sufficient in the Knowledge of Religion</i> Size: 8 vols. It contains 16,099 traditions.	328
941	Assassination of Bajkam, Kurtakin takes power.	 Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulaynī writes: <i>al-Usul min al-kafī</i> 8 vol.	329
942	 Ibn Raiq recaptures Baghdad.		330
943	Al-Ba'idī takes power. Abbāsīd Caliph al-Muttaqī takes refuge with the Ḥamdānīds. Sā'il al-Daula retakes Baghdad and the caliph returns. Tūzūn takes power and Sā'il al-Daula retires to Moṣul.	Death of Sāmānīd ruler Naṣr II, accession of Ḥamid Nūḥ I.	331









Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
944	Al-Muttaqi is blinded and deposed, accession of Al-Mustakfi.		332
945	Death of Tūzūn. Shīrẓād becomes Amīr ul-Umarā'. The Mu'izz al-Daula capture power and establish the Būyid of Iraq. Deposition of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mustakfi.	 Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Ḥamdānī writes " <i>Geography of the Arabian Peninsula</i> " and " <i>Crown</i> " a history of the Himyarites.	333-334
946	Death of the Faṭimid Caliph al-Qā'im. Accession of Maṣṣūr. Death of the Ikhshīd ruler of Muḥammad bin Ṭughj, accession of 'Abdul Qāsim Unghur.		335
947			336
948			337
949	Death of the Būyid Shah of Fārs, 'Imād al-Daula. Accession of 'Aḍud al-Daula.		338
950			339
951	Qarmāṭians return the Black Stone to Mecca after 22 years, receiving a huge ransom.		340
952			341
953			342
954	Death of the Sāmānīd ruler Ḥamid Nūḥ I, accession of 'Abdūl Malik I.		343
955		 Al-Dāraqutnī, 'Alī ibn 'Umar writes <i>al-Sunan</i> , 4 volumes.	344
956		 Al Mas'ūdī writes " <i>The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems.</i> "	345
957			346
958			347
959			348
960			349
961	Death of Sāmānīd ruler 'Abdūl Malik I, accession of Maṣṣūr I. Alp Tegin founds the rule of the Ghasnavids.	Death of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abdul Rahman III in Spain, accession of al Ḥakam II. Death of the Ikhshīd ruler Unghur accession of 'Abdul Ḥasan 'Alī.	350
962			351
963			352








Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
964			353
965	Death of the Qarmāṭian ruler Abū Maṣṣūr, Accession of Ḥasan A'zam. Assassination of Ikhshīd ruler Abū Ḥasan 'Alī, power captured by Malik Kafūr.	 Ibn Hibbān al-Buṣṭī, Muḥammad writes <i>Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān</i> .	354
966			355
967	Death of the Būyid Sulṭān Mu'izz al Daula accession of Azād al Daula Bakhtīār.	Death of Ḥamdānid ruler Sā'il al Daula.	356
968	 Byzantines occupy Aleppo. Death of the Ikhshīd ruler Malik Kafūr, accession of Abū al-Fawāris.		357
969	 The Faṭimids conquer Egypt.		358
970			359
971			360
972	Balkīn (Bologhine) ibn Zīrī founds the rule of the Zīrids Algeria.		361
973	 Shī'a Sunni disturbances in Baghdad, power captured in Baghdad by the Turkish General Subuktigin. (Sabktakayn)		362
974	Abdication of the Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Muṭṭī', accession of at-Ṭā'ī'.	 Qāḍī al-Nu'mān writes <i>"The Beginning of the Mission and Establishment of the State."</i>	363
975	Death of the Turk General Subuktigin. (Sabktakayn)	Death of the Faṭimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz.	364
976	 The Būyid Sulṭān 'Izz-al Daula recaptures power with the help of his cousin 'Aḍud al-Daula. Death of the Sāmānid ruler Maṣṣūr I, accession of Nūḥ II.	In Spain death of the Umayyad Caliph al-Ḥakam II, accession of Ḥishām II.	365
977		 Ibn al-Qūṭīyya writes <i>Tārīkh ifṭitāḥ al-Andalus (History of the Conquest of al-Andalus)</i> and also the Arabic grammars: <i>Book on the Conjugation of Verbs</i> and <i>Book on the Shortened and Extended Alif</i> .	366-367

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
978	 Death of the Būyid Sulṭān Azād al Daula Bakhtīār, power captured by Aḍud Daula. The Ḥamdānids overthrown by the Būyids		368
979	Subuktrigin. (Sabktakayn) becomes the 'Amīr of Ghaznī.		369
980			370
981			371
982	Death of the Būyid Sulṭān Aḍud al-Daula, accession of Samsam al-Doula.		372
983			373
984			374
985			375
986	The Būyid Sulṭān Samsam al-Daula overthrown by Sharaf al-Daula.	 Ibn Babūya writes <i>Man lā yaḥḍurah al-faḳīh</i> (For him not in the Presence of a Jurisprudent). Size: 4 vols 5998 traditions.	376
987			377
988			378
989	Death of the Būyid Sulṭān Sharaf al- Daula, accession of Baha' al-Daula.		379
990		 Abū Ḥamid Aḥmed ibn Muḥammad al-Saghani al-Aṣṭurlābī writes a history of science.	380
991	Deposition of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Tā'i' and accession of al-Qādir.		381
992		 Ibn al-Nadīm writes <i>Kitāb al-Fihrist</i> .	382
993			383
994			384
995		 Ad Dāraqutnī writes <i>Sunan</i> .	385
996	Death of Zīrid ruler Maṣṣūr, accession of Nāṣir al Daula Badīs.		386





Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
997	Death of Sāmānid ruler Nūḥ II, accession of Maṣṣūr II.		387
998	Death of Sāmānid ruler Maṣṣūr II, accession of 'Abdul Mālik II. Mahmud of Ghaznavid becomes the Amīr of Ghaznī.		388
999	End of the Sāmānids.		389
1000			390
1001	 Maḥmūd of Ghaznavid defeats the Hindu Shāhis.		391
1002			392
1003			393
1004	 Maḥmūd of Ghaznavid captures Bhera. (Bhatia)		391
1005			395
1006			396
1007			397
1008	 Maḥmūd of Ghaznavid defeats the Rajputs.		398
1009			399
1010	Abdication of Ḥishām II in Spain. Accession of Muḥammad II.		400-401
1011	In Spain Muḥammad II is overthrown by Sulaymān II.	 Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī writes a number of books including: <i>I'jāz al-Qur'ān</i> and <i>Kitāb tathbīd al-awā'il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā'il</i>	402
1012	Death of the Būyid Baha' al-Daula, accession of Sulṭān al-Daula.	 Ibn Fāraḍī writes " <i>History of Learned Men of Andalusia.</i> "	403
1013			404

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
1014		 al-Ḥakim al-Naysaburi Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh writes <i>An introduction to the science of tradition (al-Madkhal ilā ma'rifat al-Iklil)</i>	405
1015			406
1016	Death of the Zīrid ruler Nāṣir al- Daula Badis, accession of al Mu'izz.		407
1017			408
1018	In Spain, power is captured by 'Abd al-Raḥmān IV.		409
1019	 Conquest of the Punjab by Maḥmud of Ghaznavid.		410
1020	 The Būyid Sulṭān al-Daula is overthrown by Musharrif al-Daula.	Death of the Faṭimid Caliph Al Ḥakim, accession of 'Alī Al-Zāhir.	411
1021			412
1022			413
1023			414
1024	In Spain, assassination of 'Abd al-Raḥmān IV.		415
1025	Death of the Būyid Musharrif al-Daula, accession of Jalal al-Daula.		416
1026			417
1027	Ḥisham III becomes Caliph in Córdoba.		418
1028			419
1029			420
1030	In Spain deposition of Ḥishām II, and the end of the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba. Death of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Qādir, accession of Al-Qā'im.	 Abū 'Alī Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya'qub Ibn Miskawayh writes <i>Experiences of Nations (Tajārib al-umam)</i> .	421
1031			422
1032			423
1033			424
1034			425

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
1035			426
1036	Death of the Faṭimid Caliph 'Alī Al-Zāhir, accession of Ma'ad al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh. Toghrūl is crowned as the king of the Seljuks.		427
1037	Seljuks under Toghrūl sack the city of Ghaznī.		428
1038		 Abū Nu'aim, Aḥmad ibn 'Abdullāh al-Isbahani writes <i>Hilyat al-Awliyā wa tabaqāt al-aṣfiyā</i> . ( <i>The Adornment of the Saints and the Ranks of the Spiritual Elite</i> )	429
1039			430
1040	 Battle of Dandanqan, the Seljuks defeat the Ghaznavids. Deposition of Ghaznavid Sultān Mas'ūd and accession of Meḥmūd of Ghaznawī.	Al-Murābiṭūn (Almoravid Berbers) come to power in North Africa.	431
1041	Ghaznawī Sultān Maḥmūd is overthrown by Mawdūd.		432
1042			433
1043			434
1044	Death of the Būyid Jalal al Daula, Accession of Abū Kalijar.		435
1045			436
1046	Basāsiri captures power in Baghdad.		437
1047	The Zīrids in North Africa repudiate allegiance to the Faṭimids and transfer allegiance to the Abbāsids.		438
1048	Death of the Būyid Abū Kalijar, accession of Malik al-Raḥīm.		439-440
1049			441
1050	Yūsuf bin Tāshfin comes to power in the Maghrib.		442
1051			443
1052			444
1053			445
1054			446

Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
1055	Toghrül overthrows the Būyids.		447
1056			448
1057	 Basāsīrī recaptures power in Baghdad, deposes al-Qā'im and offers allegiance to the Faṭimid Caliph.		449
1058		 al-Najashī writes <i>Kitāb al-Rijāl</i> .	450
1059	Toghrül recaptures power in Baghdad, Al-Qā'im is restored as the Caliph.		451
1060	Ibrāhīm of Ghaznavid becomes the Sultān. Yūsuf bin Tāshfīn founds the city of Murrākush.	The Zīrids abandon their capital Ashir and establish their capital at Bougie. (Béjaia in Algeria)	452
1061			453
1062	Death of the Zīrid ruler Al Mu'izz, accession of his son Tamim.		454
1063	Death of the Seljuk Sultān Toghrül, accession of Alp Arsalan.		455
1064		 Ḥadīth: Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥuṣayn writes many books among them <i>al-Sunan al-Kubra</i> , ( <i>Sunan al-Bayhaqī</i> ) 10 vols.	456
1065			457
1066			458
1067		 Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Tūsī (Nasir al-Din al-Tūsī) writes many books on science and navigation plus: <i>Rectification of the Statutes</i> 10 vols Contents: 1359 ḥadīths.	459
1068		 al-Tūsī writes <i>Reflection upon the Disputed Traditions</i> , 4 vols Contents: 5511 ḥadīths.	460
1069			461
1070			462
1071	 Battle of Manzikert, the Byzantine emperor taken captive by the Seljuks.	 Al Khāṭib al-Baghdaḍi writes " <i>The History of Baghdad</i> ."	463
1072			464



Date AD	Event	Comment	Date AH
1073	Death of Alp Arslan, accession of Mālik Shāh.		465-6
1074			467
1075			468
1076			469
1077	Death of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Qā'im, accession of Al-Muqtadī.	 Abul Fazl Beyhaqī writes " <i>Masoudian History</i> ."	470
1078			471
1081			474
1082	 Battle of Zallakha. The Al-Murābiṭūn Berbers defeat the Christians in Spain. Death of the Sultān Sulaiman of Rum and accession of Kilij Arslan.		475
1083			476
1090			483
1091	 The Normans conquer the island of Sicily, end of the Muslim rule on the island.		484
1092	Death of the Seljuk Sultān Mālik Shāh I, accession of Maḥmūd I of Great Seljuk.		485
1094	Death of Seljuk Sultān Maḥmūd I, accession of Barkyāruq. Death of the Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Muqtadī, accession of Mustahzir.		487
1095	 First Crusade launched in Europe.		488

## APPENDIX B

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EARLY ISLAMIC SOURCES

*Note: These sources are provided here in chronological order from earlier to later dates. This is a comprehensive list of early sources, but I have tried to include those that speak in some way to early Islamic geography or related subjects. I realize that in making such a list I assuredly have overlooked some sources, or may be unaware of their existence.*

#### **Radd 'alā al-qadariya**

719 AD (100 AH) Authored by Hasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya. edet-ed/translated by van Ess in *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie*, 11-37 (back)/35-100.

#### **Dīwān**

730 AD (112 AH) Authored by Tammām ibn Ghālib al-Farazdaq, edited by 'Abd Allāh Ismā'il al-Ṣāwī, Cairo, 1936.

#### **Kitāb al-sunan**

734 AD (116 AH) Authored by Makhul al-Shamī, this manuscript is referred to by later writers, but no copies of the manuscript are known to have survived.

#### **Sīrat rasūl Allāh**

761 AD (144 AH) Translated from the Arabic by Alfred Guillaume, this book remains the one main authority on the life of Muḥammad. Ibn Ishāq wrote about 130 years after the death of Muḥammad, so his book is the earliest authority and accepted by many as the greatest authority on the life of the prophet. Many later Islamic historian quote Ibn Ishāq extensively. Unfortunately, the original work has not survived, and we only have a later manuscript that has been considerably edited by Ibn Ḥishām. (See *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh – Edited*) on page 482.

#### **Juz' ibn jurayj**

767 AD (150 AH) Authored by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Jurayj, his original works were copied by his student Ḥajjāj ibn Muḥammad around 821 AD (206 AH). This small work has been published by Dar al-Kawthar, Riyadh 1412. It contains 73 narrations with full isnād.

### al Jami'

770 AD (153 AH) Authored by Ma'mar ibn Rashīd. The Jami' has been discovered by Fuat Muḥammad Sazkīn, author of the Tārīkh al-Turāth al-'Arabī, and edited. The work can also be found at the end of the edition of the *Muṣannaḥ of 'abd al-Razzāq*, ed. by Ḥabīb al Raḥmān al A'zami. It is a major source with more than 1600 narrations with isnāds.

### Kitāb al-manāsik

773 AD (156 AH) Authored by Sa'īd ibn Abi 'Aruba. Beside ḥadīths, this book also contains some histories of the Companions and Followers of Muḥammad. The largest part of this book is made up of questions and answers by the author and others experts. The book has been edited by 'Āmir Ḥasan Ṣabri and published by Dar al-Bashā'ir in 2000 AD (1421 AH).

### Kitāb al-suna

773 AH (157 AH) Authored by 'Abd al Raḥmān ibn 'Amr (al-'Awza'i.) This book was published in 1993 by Dar al-Nafa'is in Beirut under the title *Sunan al-'Awza'i: Aḥadīth wa-Athār wa-Fatāwā*. This book contains quotations but is not the manuscript composed by al-'Awza'i. For quotations from this book see also Abū Yūsuf's Radd 'ala Siyar al-'Awza' i and al-Shafi'i's Kitāb al-Umm.

### Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn

774 AD (157 AH) Abū Miknaf is attributed as the author of this book which narrates the story of the battle of Karbalā and the death of Hussein ibn 'Alī. There are several English translations of this book available on the Internet.

### Kitāb al-sunan

780 (163 AH) Authored by Ibrāhīm ibn Raḥman al-Khurāsānī. Part of this lost Sunan has been found and published (from the manuscript Zāhiriyyah) under the title "*Mashyakha*", which is said to be a mistake by a copyist. The 208 ḥadīths contained in this book are probably part of a chapter *Radd 'ala al-Jahmiyyah*, similar to the chapters of the Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan Ibn Maja. This book is edited by Muḥammad Tāhir Malik and published in Damascus 1982 (1403 AH).

### Musnad of Rabī' ibn Ṣabīḥ

786 AD (170 AH) Authored by al-Rabī' ibn al-Ṣabīḥ. Apparently this book is published, and several theses refer to it, but I have been unable to locate it.

### Musnad 'Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak, wa-yalihi Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Silah

787 AD (181 AH) Authored by 'Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak. This book is edited by Mustafa 'Uthmān Muḥammad, and published by Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya,

Beirut 1991. An earlier edition by Subhi al-Badri al-Samarri, published by Maktabat al-Ma'arif in Riyadh, is also available.

### **Al Juz' Fihi Majlis Fawā'id al-Layth Ibn Sa'd**

791 AD (175 AH) Authored by al Layth ibn Sa'd. This was published by Dar 'Alim al-Kutub il Nashr wa al-Tawzi', Riyadh 1986 (1407 AH). Another book by Al-Layth ibn Sa'd is *Risālib* (letters send to Malik) which has been published many times, recently by Abū Ghuddah.

### **Kitāb al 'ayn**

791 AD (175 AH) This extensive dictionary was written by Abū 'Abd Ar-Rahmān Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Al Farāhīdī (Al Farāhīdī) and is considered the first Arabic dictionary and the standard for ḥarakat (vowling of Arabic script). The dictionary was not arranged alphabetically but rather by phonetics, following the pattern of pronunciation of the Arabic alphabet from the deepest letter of the throat ('ayn) to the last letter pronounced by the lips, that being (mīm). The modern version of this book was printed by Maktabah Al Hilal, having been reviewed by Dr. Mahdī al Makhzūmī and Dr. Ibrāhīm Al Samirā'ī, in eight volumes. There is, however, some question as to whether or not the book in its modern form is the original as authored by Al Khalīl or if it is a work based on his original work. (*Farahidi*, Khalīl Bin Aḥmed (1980). Al-'Ain. Ibrāhīm Samara'ai and Mahdī Makhzūmī (eds.). Baghdad: Mutanabi Printing House)

### **Al Muwaṭṭa'**

795 AD (179 AH) The Muwaṭṭa' is an early collection of 1720 ḥadīth compiled and edited by Imām Mālik ibn Anas. It is considered to be the earliest collection of ḥadīths which covers rituals, rites, customs, traditions, norms and laws of the time of the prophet. Imām Mālik composed the *Muwaṭṭa'* over a period of forty years to represent the "well-trodden path" of the people of Medina. Its name also means that it is the book that is "many times agreed upon" about whose contents the people of Medina were unanimously agreed. Its high standing is such that people of every school of fiqh and all of the imāms of ḥadīth scholarship agree upon its authenticity. A good source for this ḥadīth collection is the electronic version found in the 'Alim CD, where it can be read, searched or compared with other leading ḥadīth collections. Printed edition published in Cairo, 1951.

### **Ḥadīth Isma'il ibn Ja'far**

796 AD (180 AH) Authored by Isma'il ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Kathīr. This is a collection of 473 narrations, published in 1997 (1418 AH) by Maktabat al-Rushd. Many of the narrations in it are considered *Thulathiyāt* or narrations containing just three narrators back to Muḥammad.

### **Kitāb al-'Āthār, Kitāb al-kharāj, and al-radd 'alā siyar al-awzā'i**

798 AD (182 AH) Authored by Abū Yūsuf Yāqūb ibn Ibrāhīm. This has been published many times. It contains many ḥādīths (especially on the authority of Abū Ḥanīfah) in the form of Sunan (starting with al-Tahara etc). It contains over a thousand narrations. It was first published in 1936 (1355 AH) in Hyderabad by Abū al-Wafā al-Afghānī. *Kitāb al-kharāj*, Cairo, 1933, *Al-radd 'alā siyar al-Awzā'i* editor Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī, Cairo, 1938.

### **Kitāb al-sunan**

799 AD (183 AH) Authored by Ḥishām ibn Bashir. He also authored a Tafsīr and a book on Qirā'at. I have not been able to locate any of these.

### **al-Mūwaṭṭa'**

800 AD (184 AH) Authored by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Abū Yaḥyā al-Aslamī. I have not been able to obtain a copy of this book.

### **Tārīkh futuḥ al-shām**

800 AD, authored by Muḥammad ibn 'Adb al-Azdī, edited by 'Abed al-Mun'im 'Abd Allāh Āmir, Cairo, 1970.

### **Kitāb al-zuhd**

801 AD (185 AH) Authored by al-Mu'āfa ibn 'Imrān al-Mawṣilī. This book contains 268 ḥādīths. It is edited by 'Āmir Ḥasan Sabri and published by Dar al-bashā'ir al-Islamiyyah in 1999 (1420 AH).

### **Kitāb al-Āthār Imām Abū Ḥanīfa**

805 AD (189 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī who was a student of Abū Ḥanīfah. It has also been edited by Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī and has been published several times. It includes some 266 narrations with isnāds. *Kitāb al-Athār* was published in 2007 and is available from White Thread Press.

### **Al-Jami'**

807 AD (191 AH) Authored by 'Abd Allāh ibn Wahb who also wrote *al-Mūwaṭṭa'* and a Musnad, the latter of which was transmitted by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam al-Miṣrī. Part of the original *Al Jami'* has been found and published in Germany by Miklos Muranyi as: *al-Gami'*. *Die Koranwissenschaften*, in Wiesbaden, 1992. As for the *Mūwaṭṭa'*, it has also been published in part by Miklos Muranyi in Wiesbaden, 1992.

**Kitāb al-dū'a'in**

811 AD (195 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl. This manuscript can be found at the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria.

**Kitāb al-zuhd**

812 AD (197 AH) Authored by Waki' ibn al-Jarrāh, transmitted by 'Abbās ibn Warrāq (847 AD) and quoted by Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad. Part of the lost Muṣannaf consists of his *Kitāb al-Zuhd* which has been published by the Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah, Beirut 1993 (3 volumes). Apparently *Kitāb al-Zuhd* was published by Dar Ibn Hazm 2003 (1424 AH). It contains 539 narrations, many of which are ḥādiths.

**al-Jami' al-Ṣaḥiḥ**

(Undated, 2nd century AH) Authored by Rabi' ibn Ḥabīb al-Farāhidī. The book reports ḥādiths from 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbās, 'Aysha ibn Abī Bakr and others, mostly through Baṣran Shuyukh. The work has been published more than once; the latest is the 4-volume edition by Dar al-Ḥikma, Beirut, and Maktabat al-Istiḳāma, from Oman, in 1995.

**Kitāb al-kharāj**

818 AD (203 AH) Authored by Yaḥyā ibn Ādam al-Quraishī, edited by T. W. Junybnoll, published by Leiden in 1896.

**Musnad**

818 AD (203 AH) Authored by Abū Dāwūd al-Tayalīsī. The first modern publication is from Hayderabad, dated 1903 (1321 AH). In 1999 a 4 volume edition from Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī was published by Dar Hajar.

**Jamharat al nasab**

819 AD (204 AH) Authored by Ḥishām ibn al-Kalbī and known in English as *The Abundance of Kinship*. It has been translated into German by W. Caskel (*Das genealogische Werk des Hisam Ibn Muḥammad al Kalbi*) in 1966.

**Kitāb al-umm****Al-risāla****Musnad al-shāfi'i**

820 AD (204 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'i. It contains 625 ḥādith and was published by Dar al-Ma'rifah in Beirut 1985 (1406 AH). *Kitāb al-umm* published at Bulaq, 1903-1908. *Al-risāla* edited by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Cairo, 1940.

### **Futūhushām & Kitāb al-tārīkh wa al-maghāzī**

822 AD (207 AH) Authored by Al-Wāqidī. *Kitāb al-tārīkh wa al-maghāzī* is known in English as the “*Book of History and Campaigns*.” The book *Futūhushām* is known in English as “*The Islamic Conquest of Syria*.” This is translated by Mawlana Sulaymān al Kindī and published by Ta-Ha Publishers, London, 2005. Many Islamic scholars consider al-Wāqidī’s works as full of lies as they are not in accordance with modern Islamic thinking.

### **al-Muṣannaf ‘Abd al Razzāq al-Ṣan’ānī**

826 AD (211 AH) Authored by ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hamām al-Ṣan’ānī, edited by Ḥabīb al Raḥmān al A’zamī of India and published in Beirut, 1970-1972 (1390-1392 AH) by the Majlis al-’Ilmī in 10 volumes. The *Kitāb al-Salat* is not yet published, as far as I know; but a manuscript is housed in the Zāhiriyya library in Syria. The newly found lost part of the Muṣannaf edited in 2005 by ‘Isā al-Himyarī is considered a forgery by some.

### **Sīrat rasūl Allāh (Edited)**

833 AD (218 AH) In this year, Ibn Hishām edited the errors out of Sīrat Rasūl Allāh. Some scholars feel that he deleted large portions of the earlier work, and also made more changes than are documented in his notes at the end of the book. Ibn Hishām made these changes 60 years after Ibn Ishāq died and around 200 years after the death of Muḥammad.

### **Musnad al-Ḥumaydī**

834 AD (219 AH) Authored by ‘Abdallāh b. Zubayr al-Ḥumaidī (Ḥumaydī). This has been published in two volumes by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A’zamī in the book: *Manshurāt al-Majlis al-’Ilmi*, in Karachi, 1963. Also published in Beirut by ‘Alam al-Kutub in 1960 (1380 AH) in 2 volumes.

### **Gharib al-Ḥadīth & Musnad**

837 AD (223 AH) Authored by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām al-Baghdādī. This is particularly interesting because *Gharib al-ḥadīth* contains the date: Dhū al-Qa’da 252 AH (866 AD). This manuscript is known as MS Leiden Or. 298 and described as: Arabic, paper, 241 ff., upright script (with application of ihmal), dated 866 AD and thereby probably the oldest dated Arabic manuscript on paper, bound in a full-leather standard library binding. The volume contains an incomplete copy of *Gharib al-ḥadīth*, by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām al-Baghdādī. This manuscript was used as MS No. 3 by Muḥammad ‘Azim al-Dīn in his edition of the text: *Gharib al-ḥadīth li-Abī ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām al-Ḥarawī*, Hyderabad 1964-1967 (1384-1387 AH) (4 vols.) Also see *Kitāb al-amwāl*, ed. Muhammad Khalil Haras, Cairo, 1968.



### **Kitāb al-Sunan**

842 AD (227 AH) Authored by Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr. Published as: *The Sunan Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr* by Dar al-Sumay, Riyadh, in five volumes in 1993. The editor is Saʿīd ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz āl Humayyid. Some scholars consider the earlier edition by Ḥabīb ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, in a single volume as outdated.

### **Kitāb al-Fitan**

843 AD (228 AH) Authored by Nuʾaym ibn Ḥammād al-Khuzāʿī. A large number of the narrations in this book are considered weak by mainline Islamic scholars and many of the narrations are considered spurious. However there has been a renewed interest in this book since the growth of apocalyptic Islamic literature. The book is known as Nuʾaym ibn Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, published in Mecca in 1991 by Maktabah al-Tājarʾiāh.

### **Kitāb Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr**

845 AD (230 AH) Authored by Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd and known in English as *The Book of Major Classes*. This book was published by Islamic Book Service, Idara Islamiyat-e-Diniyat, or Kitāb Bhavan (India) Edited by A. Moinhul Haq, (Volumes 1 & 2 combined) and available from the Online Islamic Store.

### **Musnad Ibn al-Jaʿd**

845 AD (230 AH) Authored by ʿAlī ibn al-Jaʿd. An early publication was made in Kuwait in 1985 by Maktabat al-Falah in 2 volumes. The editor was ʿAbd al-Mahdī ibn ʿAbd al-Qadir ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī. The book was later published in 1990 by Dar Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah in Beirut. The editor of this edition was ʿĀmir Aḥmad Haydar. An early manuscript exists in Koprulu, Turkey.

### **Kitāb al-ʿIlm**

848 AD (234 AH) Authored by Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb al-Nasāʿī (Abū Khaythama) Nasāʿī's work was included in: Ṣaḥīḥs of Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Nasāʿī, and Ibn Mājah, edited by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albanī, and published in 1966.

### **Al Zumurrud**

The date of the Zumurrud is unknown and the original text is lost. However, later Islamic writers have quoted it, providing us with some of the original text. The book is thought to have been authored by Ibn al-Rawandī (827 – 911) who was an early skeptic of Islam and a critic of religion in general. In his early days he was a Mutazilite scholar, but after rejecting the Mutazilite doctrine he adhered to Shīʿa Islam for a brief period of time and later became a freethinker who repudiated Islam and all revealed religion. Though none of his works survived his opinions have been preserved through his critics and the surviving books that

answered him. The book with the most preserved fragments is an Ismā'īlī book refuting Al-Rawandī's ideology is the *Kitāb al-Zumurrud* (*The Book of the Emerald*).

### **Al-Kitāb al-Muṣannaf fil-Ḥadīth wa al-Āthār**

849 AD (235 AH) Authored by Ibn Abī Shayba, 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad in 15 volumes. Edited by 'Abd al-Khalqī Khan al-Afghani, Mukhtār Aḥmad al-Nadwi and 'Āmir al-'Umari al-'Azami, and published in Bombay in 1966-1983 (1399-1403 AH). There are also two later published editions, both from 1989. *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah fi al-aḥādīth wa-al-Āthār*, ed. Sa'īd al-Lahham, 9 volumes, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1989. Also: *Al-Kitāb al-Muṣannaf fi al-aḥādīth wa-al-Āthār*, ed. Kamal Yūsuf al-Hut, 7 vols., Beirut: Dar al-Taj, 1989. He also authored several other books including *Kitāb al-Imān*, published in 1966 by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Din al-Albani, and *Kitāb al-Adab* located in Ṣāḥiriyya in Syria. As for the Musnad, which is less known to the general public, it has been published in two volumes by Dar al-Watan in 1997, Riyadh. The editors are Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Adil ibn Yūsuf al-Ghazzawī and Abū al-Fawaris Aḥmad Farid al-Mazidī.

### **Kitāb nasab Quraysh**

851 AD (236 AH) Authored by Muṣ'ab ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Zubayrī, edited by E. Lévi-Provençal, Cairo, 1953

### **Musnad 'Ā'isha bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq**

852 AD (238 AH) Authored by Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Rahawayh. This is only part of Rahawayh's writings. They were edited by Jamilah Shawkat, and published by Kulīyat al-'Ulum al-Islami wa al-Sharqīyyah of the University of Punjab in 1991. There is also an earlier publication under the title Musnad Ishāq ibn Rahawayh, edited by 'Abd al-Ghafur 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ḥusayn Burr al-Balushī. This edition was published in Medina by Maktabat al-Imān in 1990. I am not sure if it is the same extraction or if it includes more of the original *Musnad of Ibn Rahawayh*.

### **Ṭabaqāt & Tārīkh**

854 AD (240 AH) Both of these books are authored by Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt al-'Uṣfūrī. The full text of the book *Tārīkh* was not known until an 11th-century copy was found in Rabat, Morocco in 1966 Edited by Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umari, revised edition, Beirut, 1977.

### **Musnad Imām Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Ḥanbal**

855 AD (241 AH) Authored by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal in 6 volumes. The real author of this collection was Ḥanbal's son 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad (303 AH) who edited

the ḥadīths of his father into one book. The 30,000 ḥadīths collected in it have been published many times. A popular edition is that of Aḥmad Muḥammad Shakir, Cairo 1949-1955, by Dar al-Ma'arif, and Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, Beirut. Another is edited by 'Abdallāh al-Darwish and Abū al-Fida al-Naqid, and published in 10 volumes by Dar al-Fikr in 1991, Beirut. A new edition was published in 2005 by the Noor Foundation International, Jordan. I am aware of five volumes of the Noor Foundation Series.

### **Kitāb al-dīn wa al dawla**

#### **Al-radd 'ala al-naṣārā**

855 AD (241 AH) Authored by Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī. *Kitāb Dawla* edited by Adil Nuweihed, published in Beirut in 1977, and *Al Radd* edited by I. A. Khalife and W. Kutsch in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 36 (1959) 119-48.

### **Kitāb al-muḥabbar**

859 AD (245 AH) Authored by Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb. Edited by Ilse Lichenstadter, Hyderabad, 1942.

### **Musnad Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās**

860 AD (246 AH) Authored by al-Dawraqi, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm and published by Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyyah in 1987, in Beirut. The editor is 'Amir Ḥasan Sabri.

### **al-Muntakhab min Musnad 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd**

863 AD (249 AH) Authored by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd. This contains only part of the original musnad. Published by 'Ālam al-Kutub, Beirut, in 1988. It was edited by Ṣubḥī Badri al-Samarra'i and Mahmud Muḥammad al-Sa'īdī.

### **Kitāb Sunan al-Dārimī**

868 AD (254 AH) Authored by 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī. The *Sunan al-Dārimī* was edited by Fawāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and Khālid al-Sab'a al-'Ālamī in 2 volumes. Published in 1987, Beirut, by Dar al-Kitāb al-'Arabi. It contains 1363 ḥadīths. There is also a *Tartīb of the Sunan al-Dārimī* published by Maktabat al-Rushd, Riyadh, 1987.

### **Kitāb al-futūḥ**

868 AD (254 AH) Authored by Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī. Edited by M. 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān, published in Hyderabad, 1968-76)

### **Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī**

869 AD (255 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, this collection contains 7275 ḥadīths, and is considered by many Muslims as the most trusted collection after the Qurʾān. Copies of Bukhārī in English have been printed and are widely available. There are many commentaries written on Bukhārī's collection as well. A good source for Bukhārī is the electronic version found in the Alim CD, where it can be read or searched and compared with other leading ḥadīth collections.

### **Kitāb al-bayān was al-tabyīn**

**Fī-banī umayya**

**Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb**

**Fī hujaj al-nubūwa**

**Al-radd ʿala al-naṣārā**

**Fī ṣināʾat al-kalām**

**Al-ʿibar wa al-iʿtibār**

869 AD (255 AH) Authored by Abu ʿUthmān ʿAmir ibn Baḥr al Jāḥiẓ. Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ published in Cairo 1933, 1948-50.

### **Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā**

871 AD (257 AH) Authored by Ibn ʿAbd-al-Ḥakam, ʿAbū al-Qāsim, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. This book is known in English as: *“The History of the Conquest of Egypt and North Africa and Spain.”* Published in 1858 by Yale University Press, and more recently by Gorgias Press New Haven, 1992, LLC, 2002, edited by Charles C. Torrey, and available from major book sellers.

### **Juz' fī khābar Aḥmad ibn al-Furat**

872 AD (258 AH) Authored by Aḥmad ibn al-Furat al-Dabbi al-Razi, Abū Maṣʿūd. Most scholars believe that none of his many Musnad and Muṣannaf books have survived, but according to some a manuscript exists in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria.

### **Al-Musnad Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim**

875 AD (261 AH) Authored by Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim) it contains some 2200 ḥadīths and is considered the most authentic after Bukhārī. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim extracted these from over 300,000 that he first collected. A good source for this ḥadīth collection is the electronic version found in the ʿAlīm CD, where it can be read or searched and compared with other leading ḥadīth collections.

### **Musnad al-Kabīr al-Mu'allal**

875 AD (262 AH) Authored by Ya'qūb ibn Shaybah, Abū Yūsuf, only a part has been published under the title of *Musnad Amīr al-Mu'minūn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb*. Published by The Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah, Beirut, 1985. Editor: Kamal Yūsuf al-Hut.

### **Tārīkh al-Medina al-Munawwara**

876 AD (262 AH) Authored by Abū Zayd 'Umar Ibn Shabba. Edited by Fuhaym Muḥammad Shaltūt, Mecca 1979

### **Kitāb al-Zuhd**

878 AD (264 AH) Authored by Abū Zur'a al-Razi, 'Ubaydallāh ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, this book is no longer in existence, but sections of it are quoted in the Isaba of Ibn Hajar and many of his ḥadīths have been recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Razi in his Taqdim, Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl and other works.

### **Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth**

#### **Tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān**

#### **Kitāb al-ma'ārif**

#### **'Uyūn al-akhbār**

885 AD (272 AH) Authored by Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh bin Muslim Ibn Qutaybah al-Dinawarī (Ibn Qutaybah) and known in English as *The Interpretation of Conflict Narrations*. As far as I know this is only available in Arabic and French. Translated and edited in French by Gerard Lecomte as *Le traite des divergences du hadit d'Ibn Qutayba*, Damascus: Institut Français du Damas, 1962. *Tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān* edited by Aḥmad Ṣaqr and published in Cairo, 1958. *Kitāb al-ma'ārif* Edited by Tharwat 'Ukāsha and published in Cairo 1960, *'Uyūn al-akhbār* edited by Yūsuf 'Alī Tawīl and published in Beirut in 1986.

### **Juz' min al-Musnad**

886 AD (273 AH) Authored by Abū Umayy Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Tarsūsī, a copy of this manuscript is located in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria.

### **Sunan Ibn Mājah**

886 AD (273 AH) Authored by Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Ibn Mājah al-Rab'ī al-Qazwīnī (Ibn Maja) this ḥadīth collection is considered as one of the six canonical ḥadīths. It contains over 4000 ḥadīths, and is widely available in Arabic. Published in English by Kazi Publications, 1993, titled: *Sunan Ibn Maja: One of the 6 Authentic Compilations of Ḥadīth*.

### **Sunan Abū Dāwūd**

888 AD (275 AH) Abū Dāwūd is one of the six major collections of ḥadīths. Abū Dāwūd collected over 50,000 ḥadīths and reduced them down to 4800 ḥadīths that he felt were authentic. However, he created his collection over 200 years after they took place. A good source for this ḥadīth collection is the electronic version found in the 'Alīm CD, where it can be read or searched and compared with other leading ḥadīth collections.

### **Sunan Baqī al-Qurṭubī**

889 AD (276 AH) Authored by Baqī ibn Makhlad al-Qurṭubī (Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān). Only the index exists. This has been edited in a short work based on Ibn Hazm and other sources. His ḥadīths (as quoted from the Musnad) can be found in the works of later writers, such as Ibn Hazm and ibn 'Abd al-Barr.

### **Kitāb al-zuhd**

890 AD (277 AH) Authored by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Hanzali this manuscript has not been published, but apparently exists in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria. For references to his ḥadīths, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī's books.

### **Kitāb al-ma'rifa wa al-tārikh**

890 AD (277 AH) Authored by al-Fasawī, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Sufyān in 3 volumes, published by Akram Diyā' al 'Umarī, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981. In English it is commonly referred to as: *The Book of Biography and History*.

### **Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān and Ansāb al-ashrāf**

892 AD (279 AH) Authored by Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī and known in English as *Book of the Conquests of Lands*, and initially edited by M. J. de Goeje as *Liber expugnationis regionum* (Leiden, 1870; Cairo, 1901). It has also been translated by Philip Hitti in *The Origins of the Islamic State*, (1916, 1924) Columbia University, New York, and republished in 2002 by Gorgias Press LLC. *Ansāb al-ashrāf* was published by Bibliotheca Islamica, Beirut.

### **Sunan Tirmidhī**

892 AD (279 AH) Authored by Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn Sawrah ibn Mūsā ibn al Dahhāk al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī (Tirmidhī), this book contains 4000 ḥadīths in 4 volumes. This is considered one of the six canonical ḥadīth collections. A good source for this ḥadīth collection is the English electronic version found in the 'Alīm CD

**Musnad 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf: Riwāyat Abū Sahl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Qattan**

894 AD (281 AH) Authored by Abū al-'Abbās al-Bartī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Isā the original manuscript has been lost. However, a part of it was discovered and published by Ibn Hazm, Beirut 1994. Editor: Salāh ibn 'Ayid al-Shallāhī.

**Musnad Abū Usāma**

895 AD (282 AH) Authored by al-Ḥārith ibn Abū Usāma, Abū Muḥammad al-Tamimi. Part of this Musnad is known as *al-Muntaqa*, a manuscript in Cairo, and *al-'Awali al-Mustakhraja min Musnad al-Ḥārith*, in the riwāya of Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn Khallad (359 AH/969 AD), a manuscript in the Zāhiriyya library in Syria.

**Musnad Abū Hurayra**

3rd century AD. Authored by Ibrāhīm ibn Harb al-'Askarī, Abū Ishāq. A manuscript of this Musnad is in the Zāhiriyya library in Syria.

**Kitāb al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl ("General History")**

**Kitāb al-shi'r wa al-shu'arā ("Book of Poetry and Poets")**

**Kitāb al-kabīr ("Great Book" in history of sciences)**

**Kitāb al-buldān ("Book of Geography")**

896 AD (283 AH) These books (and more) were authored by Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawārī. Today he is touted as asserting the Kurdish cause over 1000 years ago.

**Tārīkh**

**Kitāb al-buldān**

898 AD (285 AH) Authored by Aḥmad ibn Abū Ya'qūb ibn Ja'far ibn Wahb Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qūbī this book is known in English as the "*Book of Countries*." This book has been translated by Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden, 1892)(BGA Vol. 7). *Tārīkh* is edited by M. T. Houtsma, Leiden 1883.

**Kitāb al-buldān**

903 AD (290) Authored by Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī. Edited by M.J. de Goeje, Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum 5; Leiden, 1885.

**Al-Musnad Al-Kabīr & Al-'Ilal**

905 AD (292 AH) Authored by Aḥmad bin 'Amr bin 'Abdul-Khaliq Al-Basrī (Abū Bakr al-Bazzār) who is considered an eminent scholar of ḥadīth.



### **Sunan Al Şughra & Sunan Al-Kubra**

915 AD (303 AH) These two are one of many books authored by: Abū Bakr, Aḥmad bin Al-Ḥusain.

### **Musnad Abū al 'Abbās**

916 AD (303 AH) Authored by al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān al-Nasawī Abū al-'Abbās. The original writings have been lost but he is quoted by Ibn Hajar in the *Isaba*. A collection of forty of these ḥadīths has been located in the Zāhiriyya library in Syria.

### **Musnad Abū Ya'lā**

919 AD (307 AH) Authored by Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, this musnad has been published more than once. The latest and perhaps the best publication is by Dar al-Ma'mūn li al-Turath, Damascus, in 16 volumes, edited by Ḥusayn Sālim Asad, between the years 1984-1994.

### **Musnad al-Rūyānī**

919 AD (307 AH) Authored by al-Rūyānī, Muḥammad ibn Hārūn and published in 3 volumes. This is a collection of ḥadīths originally collected by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Rūyānī. Edited by Ayman 'Alī Abū Yamanī and published by Mu'assasat Qurtubah in 1995.

### **Kitāb al-mahāsin wa-al masāwī**

920 AD (307 AH) Authored by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al Bayhaqī, edited by F. Schwlly, Giessen, 1902

### **Sunan al-Şughra**

921 AD (309 AH) Authored by Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb ibn Alī ibn Sīnān Abū 'Abd ar-Rahmān al-Nasā'ī, this is considered one of the six canonical ḥadīth collections. It has been published in Arabic under the title: *Sunan Al-Nasā'ī al-Sughra*, by Dar al-Salam

### **al-Jami' al-Şaḥīḥ**

923 AD (311 AH) Authored by Abū Ḥafṣ al-Bujayri, 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Hamadhani al-Samarqandī. The original manuscript, *Jami' al-Musnad* can be found in the Zāhiriyya library in Syria.

### Tārikh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk

923 AD (311 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al Ṭabarī and known in English as the “*History of the prophets and Kings*” in 39 volumes. Al Ṭabarī was a Persian historian who wrote exclusively in Arabic and lived during the time of the Qarmatian rebellion. He also wrote *al-musamma Jami’ al-bayān fi ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, a commentary on the Qur’ān which is in circulation in Arabic. Below is a list of the volume title, translator and dates (AD) covered in each of the volumes of his History of the Prophets and Kings. This series is published by SUNNY, State University of New York and widely available.

- Vol. 01 General Introduction & from the Creation to the Flood (Franz Rosenthal)
- Vol. 02 Prophets & Patriarchs (William Brinner)
- Vol. 03 The Children of Israel (William Brinner)
- Vol. 04 The Ancient Kingdoms (Moshe Perlmann)
- Vol. 05 The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen (C.E. Bosworth)
- Vol. 06 Muḥammad at Mecca (W.M. Watt and M.V. McDonald)
- Vol. 07 The Foundation of the Community - Muḥammad at al-Madina, (M.V. McDonald) 622-626 AD
- Vol. 08 The Victory of Islam (Michael Fishbein) 626-630 AD
- Vol. 09 The Last Years of the Prophet: The Formation of the State, (Ismael Poonawala) 630-632 AD
- Vol. 10 The Conquest of Arabia, (Fred M. Donner) 632-633 AD
- Vol. 11 The Challenge to the Empires (Khālid Blankinship) 633-635 AD
- Vol. 12 The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah & the Conquest of Syria & Palestine (Yohanan Friedmann) 635-637 AD
- Vol. 13 The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, & Egypt: The Middle Years of ‘Umar’s Caliphate, (Gautier H.A. Juynboll) 636-642 AD
- Vol. 14 The Conquest of Iran (G. Rex Smith) 641-643 AD
- Vol. 15 The Crisis of the Early Caliphate: The Reign of ‘Uthmān, (R. Stephen Humphreys) 644-656 AD
- Vol. 16 The Community Divided: The Caliphate of ‘Alī I (Adrian Brockert) 656-657 AD
- Vol. 17 The First Civil War: From the Battle of Ṣiffin to the Death of ‘Alī, (G.R. Hawting) 656-661 AD
- Vol. 18 Between Civil Wars: The Caliphate of Mu’āwiyah (Michael G. Morony) 661-680 AD
- Vol. 19 The Caliphate of Yazīd B. Mu’āwiyah, (I.K.A. Howard) 680-683
- Vol. 20 The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority & the Coming of the Marwānids: The Caliphates of Mu’āwiyah II & Marwān I (G.R. Hawting) 683-685 AD
- Vol. 21 The Victory of the Marwānids, (Michael Fishbein) 685-693 AD
- Vol. 22 The Marwānid Restoration: The Caliphate of ‘Abd al-Mālik (Everett K. Rowson) 693-701 AD

- Vol. 23 The Zenith of the Marwānid House: The Last Years of 'Abd al-Mālik & the Caliphate of al-Walid (Martin Hinds) 700-715 AD
- Vol. 24 The Empire in Transition: The Caliphates of Sulaymān, 'Umar, & Yazid, (David Stephan Powers) 715-724 AD
- Vol. 25 The End of Expansion: The Caliphate of Ḥishām, (Khālid Yaha Blankinship) 724-738 AD
- Vol. 26 The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate: Prelude to Revolution, (Carole Hillenbrand) 738-744 AD
- Vol. 27 The Abbāsīd Revolution, (John Alden Williams) 743-750 AD
- Vol. 28 Abbāsīd Authority Affirmed: The Early Years of al-Manṣūr, (Jane Dammen McAuliffe) 753-763 AD
- Vol. 29 Al-Manṣūr & al-Mahdī, (Hugh Kennedy) 763-786 AD
- Vol. 30 The Abbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium: The Caliphates of Mūsā al-Hadj & Hārūn al-Rashīd, (C.E. Bosworth) 785-809 AD
- Vol. 31 The War Between Brothers, (Michael Fishbein) 809-813 AD
- Vol. 32 The Absolutists in Power: The Caliphate of al-Ma'mūn, (C.E. Bosworth) 813-833 AD
- Vol. 33 Storm and Stress Along the Northern Frontiers of the Abbāsīd Caliphate, (C.E. Bosworth) 833-841 AD
- Vol. 34 Incipient Decline: The Caliphates of al-Wathig, al-Mutawakkil & al-Muntasir, (Joel L Kraemer) 841-863 AD
- Vol. 35 The Crisis of the Abbāsīd Caliphate (George Saliba) 683-869AD
- Vol. 36 The Revolt of the Zanj, (David Waines) 869-879 AD
- Vol. 37 The Abbāsīd Recovery: The War Against the Zanj (Philip M. Fields) 879-892 AD
- Vol. 38 The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad: The Caliphate of al-Mu'tadid al-Muktafi & al-Muqtadir, (Franz Rosenthal) 892-915 AD
- Vol. 39 Biographies of the Prophet's Companions & Their Successors: al-Ṭabarī's Supplement to His History (Ella Landau-Tasseron)
- Vol. 40 Index

### **Musnad Amīr al-Mu'minūn 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz**

925 AD (312 AH) Authored by Ibn al-Baghandī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān and published by Maktabat Dar al-Da'wah, Aleppo, in 1397. Edited by Muḥammad 'Awwama. There is another publication of this Musnad by the Maktabat al-Thaqafah al-Diniyyah, Cairo, in 1986. The editor of this publication is Abū Hajar Muḥammad al-Sa'īd ibn Basyuni Zaghlul. It has been reported that several other Ibn al-Baghandi manuscripts have been found.

### **Musnad Abū al-'Abbās al-Sarrāj**

925 AD (313 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Nisabūrī. Part of this manuscript has been located in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria.

### **Musnad al-Mustakhraj 'ala Kitāb Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj**

928 AD (316 AH) Authored by Abū 'Awana al-Isfara'inī, it was initially published by Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmāniyyah, Hayderabad, in 1943 (1362 AH) and later in Cairo (1995) by Maktabat al-Sunnah. They published an additional part of this Musnad as: *al-Qism al-Mafqud min Musnad Abi 'Awana: al-mustakhraj min Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The editor is Ayman 'Arif al-Dimashqī.

### **'Ilal al-Ḥadīth & Kitāb al-Marāsil**

928 AD (327 AH) Authored by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, whose full name was: Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Razī. His *'Ilal al-ḥadīth* was published in 1926 in Cairo (2 volumes). *Kitāb al-Marāsil* was published in Hayderabad in 1923 (1341 AH). Ḥadīths of his can also be found in *Jurḥ wa al-Tā'dil*, the *Taqdima*, and a single manuscript entitled *ḥadīth* in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria.

### **Kitāb al-maṣāḥif**

928 AD (316 AH) Authored by Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī. Found in Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān: the Old Codices, by A. Jeffery, Leiden, 1937.

### **Musnad 'Ā'isha**

928 AD (316 AH) Authored by Abū Bakr ibn Abū Dāwūd, 'Abdallāh ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath. Part of this work is found in the Zāhiriyya Library Syria.

### **Musnad al-Hibb ibn al-Hibb Usāma ibn Zayd**

929 AD (317 AH) Authored by Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī, 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad and published as *Musnad al-Hibb ibn al-Hibb Usāma ibn Zayd* by Dar al-Diya', Riyadh in 1989, and edited by Abū Ashbal al-Zuhayri Ḥasan ibn Amīn ibn al-Manduh. Al-Baghawi is also the author of many other works.

### **Musnad Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq**

930 AD (318 AH) Authored by Ibn Sā'id, Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdadī, this manuscript is located in the Zāhiriyya Library in Syria

### **Kitāb al-Ḍū'afā' al-Kabīr**

934 AD (322 AH) Authored by Muzahim al-'Uqaylī his poetical remains have been collected and published into 4 volumes. Published as: *The Poetical Remains of Muzahim al-'Uqaili*, F. Krenkow (ed and trans) Leiden, 1920.

### **Kitāb ila Mulk al-Ṣaqālība**

935 AD (323 AH) Authored by Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-Abbās ibn Rashīd ibn Hammād (Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān) and published as *Ibn Faḍlān's Journey To Russia*,

translated by Richard N. Frye, Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005. This book is the basis for the 1999 film: *The 13th Warrior*.

### **al-Kafi fi 'ilm al-dīn**

940 AD (329 AH) Authored by Thiqaṭ al-Islam Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī. It contains 8 volumes with over 16,099 traditions

### **Al-'iqd al-farīd**

940 AD (328 AH) Authored by Abū 'Umar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Rabbihī. Edited by Mufid Muḥammad Qumayḥa and 'Abd al-Majīd al-Tarḥīnī, published in Beirut in 1983.

### **al-kāfi fi al-uṣūl wa al-furū'**

941 AD (329 AH) Authored by Kulaini, (Abū Ja'far) Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq comprising 8 volumes.

### **Ṣifat Jazīrat al-'Arab & Iklīl**

945 AD (334 AH) Authored by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ya'qūb al-Ḥamdānī (Ḥamdānī) and known in English as "*Geography of the Arabian Peninsula*." Originally translated by A. Sprenger in *Post- und Reiserouten des Orients* (Leipzig, 1864) and later *Alte Geographie Arabiens* (Bern, 1875), it was edited by D. H. Müller (Leiden, 1884; cf. Sprenger's criticism in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 45, pp. 361-394. His second great work *Iklīl (Crown)* concerns the genealogies of the Himyarites and the wars of their kings in ten volumes. Of this, part 8 on the citadels and castles of south Arabia, has been edited and annotated by Müller in *Die Burgen und Schlösser Sudarabiens* (Vienna, 1879-1881).

### **Tārīkh al-Mawṣil**

946 AD (334 AH) Authored by Abū Zakarīyā Yazīd ibn Muḥammad al-Azdī. Edited by 'Alī Ḥabība, Cairo, 1967

### **al-Sunan Dāraqutnī**

955 AD (344 AH) Authored by 'Alī ibn 'Umar writes al-Sunan, (Al-Dāraqutnī) and published by Arab World Publishing House in 2 volumes. This is an important book because he argues for the weakness of 78 ḥadīths in al-Bukhārī and 100 in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

### **Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawāhar**

#### **Kitāb al-tanbīh wa al-ishrāf**

956 AD (345 AH) Authored by Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī (Al Mas'ūdī). *Murūj* is known in English as "*The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*." This is a history that begins with Adam and goes up to the

Abbāsīd period. Arabic copies have been in circulation for many years. The first European version was published in both French and Arabic between 1861 and 1877 by the Societe Asiatique of Paris by Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille. For over 100 years this version was the standard version used by Western scholars until Charles Pellat published a French revision between 1966 and 1974. This revision was published by the Universite Libanaise in Beirut and consisted of five volumes. The only current English version was published in 1989 and was translated and edited by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. According to this edition's introduction, their English translation is heavily edited and contains only a fragment of the original manuscript due to the editors' personal research interests, and focuses almost exclusively on the Abbāsīd history of Mas'udi. Their introduction also outlines how the editors relied mainly on the Pellat revision in French and are therefore mainly working from the French translation with the Arabic source text as a background guide. (Masudi. *The Meadows of Gold: The Abbāsīds*. Translated and edited by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. London: Kegan Paul International, 1989.) *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa al-ishrāf* was edited by M. J. de Goeje and published by Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum 8, Leiden, 1894.

### **Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān (al-raqāsīm wa al-anwā')**

965 AD (354 AH) Authored by Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Hibbān ibn Aḥmad al-Tamīmī al-Bustī (Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī, Muḥammad) this small collection of ḥadīth was intended to contain only authentic ḥadīth. It was published in Cairo in 1952

### **Kitāb al-bad' wa al tārikh**

966 AD (355 AH) Authored by Abū Naṣr al-Muṭaḥhar ibn al-Muṭaḥhar al-Maqdisī. Translated by C. Huart, Published in Paris 1899-1919.

### **Kitāb al-aghānī**

967 AD (356 AH) Authored by Abu Al-Faraj 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahanī, published in Bulaq, Cairo, 1868

### **Kitāb iftitāḥ al-da'wa wa-ibtidā' al-dawla**

#### **Da'ā'im al-Islām**

974 AD (363 AH) Authored by Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān ibn Muḥammad ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Aḥmad ibn Hayyun al-Tamīmī (al Qadi al-Nu'mān) and known in English as "*The Beginning of the Mission and Establishment of the State*" narrates the rise of the Faṭimids. Nu'mān also wrote *The Pillars of Islam*, which was accepted as the official code for the Faṭimid state. Al-Nu'mān's other major works are the *Ikhṭilāf usul al-madhāhib* (Differences Among the Schools of Law), the

*Kitāb al-majālis wa'l-musayarāt* (The Book of Sessions and Excursions) and the *Kitāb al-himma fi adab itbā' al-ā'imma* (The Book of Etiquette Necessary for Followers of the Imāms).

### **al-Kāmil fi Ḍū'afā' al-rijāl**

976 AD (365 AH) Authored by Ibn al-Qattan (Ibn 'Adī) and published in 6 volumes in Beirut by Dar al-Fikr, 1984. It includes many allegedly fabricated ḥadīth reports, some of which the author defends

### **Kitāb Tārīkh 'ulamā' al Andalus**

977 AD (366 AH) Authored by Abū Bakr ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn al-Qūṭiyya (Ibn al-Qūṭiyya) with the English title: *History of the Learned Men of Al-Andalus*, plus several books on grammar.

### **Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-aqālīm**

985 AD (375 AH) Authored by Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muqaddasi, Translated by M.J. de Goeje, *Descriptio imperii moslemici*, Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum 3, Leiden, 1877.

### **Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh**

986 AD (376 AH) Authored by (Ibn Babūya) Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn Babawayh al-Qummī known in English as *For him not in the Presence of Jurisprudent* in 4 volumes. It contains 5998 traditions.

### **Kitāb al-fihrist**

992 AD (382 AH) Authored by Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad bin Ishāq al-Nadīm (Ibn al-Nadīm) this book was intended to be an index of all books written in Arabic. (*Kitāb al-Fihrist mit Anmerkungen hrsg. von Gustav Flügel*, 5 vols., Leipzig 1871)

### **al-Tamhīd fi al-radd 'ala al-mulḥada wa al-rafidha wa al-khawārij wa al-mu'tazila**

1011 AD (402 AH) Authored by Muḥammad ibn al-Tayyib ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Qāsim (Ibn al-Baqillanī)

### **al-Madkhal ila ma'rifat al-Iklīl**

1014 AD (405 AH) Authored by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh and known in English as "*An introduction to the science of tradition.*"



### **Ḥilyat al-awliyā wa ṭabaqāt al-asfiyā**

1038 AD (429 AH) Authored by Abū Nu'aim, Aḥmad ibn 'Abdullāh al-Isbahānī and published by Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, in 10 vols., 1932-1938

### **al-Sunan al Kubra al-Bayhaqī**

1064 AD (456 AH) Authored by (Bayhaqī) Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī Ibn Mūsā al-Khusrujirdī al-Bayhaqī in 10 volumes. Al-Dhahabī claims that Baykaqī wrote more than a thousand works. At least sixteen have been published. This book, *al-Sunan al Kubra* is known in English as “*The Major Work of the Prophet's Sunna*.”

### **Tahdhīb al-aḥkām**

1068 AD (460 AH) Authored by al-Shaykh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Tusī and known in English as *Reflection upon the Disputed Traditions*. Size: 4 volumes. Contains: 5511 ḥadīths. Al-Tusī also wrote: *al-Istibsar fi ma ukhtulif fihī min al-akhbar* known in English as *Reflection upon the Disputed Tradition*. Size: 10 volumes, contains: 1359 ḥadīths

### **Tārīkh Baghdad**

1071AD (463 AH) Authored by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Thābit ibn Aḥmad ibn Mahdī al-Shafī'ī, (Al Khatib al-Baghdādī) and known as “*The History of Baghdad*.” Al Baghdādī wrote many other books as well. His writings influenced the science of ḥadīth.

### **Tārīkh al-Beyhaqī**

1077 AD (470 AH) Authored by Ibn Zeyd ibn Muḥammad Abū al-Fazl Moḥammad ibn Hussein ibn Suleyman Ayoub Anṣarī Evesi Khazimī Beyhaqī Shafe'ī (Abu al Fazl Beyhaqī) and known in English as the “*Masoudian History*.” Published in Arabic in 1908 and again in 1928

### **Mu'jam al-buldān**

1228 AD (625 AH) Authored by Yāqūt ibn 'Abdallāh al-Rūmī al-Ḥamawī. I have included Yāqūt's book here because he is frequently cited as a source for Islamic geography, even though he wrote over 600 years after the death of Muḥammad. Yāqūt was a Syrian biographer and geographer from Ḥama, Syria who produced a “literary geography” that covered history, ethnography, and myths related to the places mentioned in early Islamic sources. It is possible to download scans of the Arabic copy from the internet.

## APPENDIX C

### Early Qur'āns and 2:143-145 and 48:24

ID	Location	Date AH	Comments
Ms 01-15-9	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cent.	San'a Manuscript. Image. 142213B shows 48.24 with a variant reading.
DAM 01-18.3	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains 8:2-8:11 and 8:41-46. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-25.1	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains 1:7-2:16, 7:29-44, 7:204-6:17, 42_49-43:32, 26:122-156, 41:1-16 Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-27.1	UNESCO CD	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Begins with 2:265, and missing 48:2-55:16. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-28.1	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or Cent, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains last of 33 and beginning of 34, last of 34 and beginning of 35, 52:40-53:25, 53:25-54:1. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-29.1	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains 2:150-164, 3:45-55, 14:43-15:20, 19:90-20:40, 40:18-34, 42:45-53, 43:77-19, 46:26-32. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-30.1	UNESCO CD	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains 4:1-5, 7:44-54, 16:123-17:11, 18:17-28, 18:46-61, 20:75-98, 20:127-21:15, 22:78-23:27, 55:51-56:22. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 01-32.1	UNESCO CD	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript. Contains 2:31-38, 5:48-54, 5:72-80, 7:3-9, 7:50-67, 36:226-37:20. Missing the two verses we are looking for.
DAM 20-33/1	UNESCO CD	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	San'a Manuscript, known as the Great Umayyad Qur'an. Contains 1:1-7, 2:39-43, 55:55-78, 56:1-20, 67:21-30, 68:43-52, 69:1-50, 74:56-77:27, 79:25-34, 85:1-5, 89:13-90:1, 99:2-100:8, 110:2-3, 114:3-6. Missing the two verses we are looking for. It is in Kūfī script and has Sūra dividers.
Qur'ānic Fragment	unknown	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	<a href="http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth2.html">http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth2.html</a> Contains only 3:34-184
Qur'ānic Leaf	unknown	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	<a href="http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth3.html">http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth3.html</a> Contains only 14:19-44
A Perg. 2	Vienna	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains only 28:61-73

ID	Location	Date AH	Comments
A Perg. 213	Vienna	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains only 51:3-37 and 52:6-43
P. Michaelides No. 32	Cairo	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains parts of Sūra 54 & 55
Un-named	T.R. Mus. Kuwait	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Written in Ma'ilī slanted, no vowels,
Mixt. 917	Vienna	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Contains 2:97-2:286, with fragments to 35:. Austrian National Library, Vienna Folios 1r-23r contain 2:97-2:286
Fragment	London	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains Sūra 74 1-27 and 34-56
M 1563	University of Birmingham, Mingana Collection	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Century	An early fragmentary Qur'ān written in Kūfic script, dated to the late 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> century AH. It contains notes and diacritical marks added by a later hand. The Qur'ān begins at 2:276 and ends at 68:7. However it is missing the pages with Sūra 42.21 to 66.8. <a href="http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/Islamic_Arabic_1563">http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/Islamic_Arabic_1563</a>
M 1572	University of Birmingham, Mingana Collection	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	A very early fragmentary Qur'ān, written in Kūfic script. Recently re-dated as possibly the end seventh century. The pages have been wrongly folded, so that the text is disordered. Contains 19:93-20.39, 4:192-175, 5:1-11, 6: 74-97, 6: 97-122, 6:122-43, 18:17-31, 4:129-52. <a href="http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/Islamic_Arabic_1572">http://vmr.bham.ac.uk/Collections/Mingana/Islamic_Arabic_1572</a>
LNS 19 CA(ab)	D.A.I. Kuwait.	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	This manuscript is in Hejazi script and contains 5:89-6:12. It is non-vowled, and possibly is a part of BL MS 2165 (below).
QUR-1-TSR	T.R. Mus. Kuwait	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains only 5:18-5:29.
Ms Or. Fol 4313	Berlin	late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Begins at 4:54 and ends at 5:87. It is missing the two verses we are looking for.
BL Or. MS 1397	British Library	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Dated too late for our study.
BL Or. MS 1399	British Library	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Reference # ACS 66, fiche number 9. Contains S.48:24 but not S. 2:144-145
BL Or. MS 2165	British Library	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Known as the Ma'il Qur'ān, written in the ma'ilī script from the Hijaz. It begins with 7:24 and ends with 22:72. It contains 121 folios, no vowels, and marking for the verses, but does not contain S. 2:143-145 or S 48:24.

ID	Location	Date AH	Comments
BNF Arabe 328	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	<a href="http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/courses/arabic_manuscripts/Paris-BNF-Arabe-0328a-2009.pdf">http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/courses/arabic_manuscripts/Paris-BNF-Arabe-0328a-2009.pdf</a> . Contains: 2:275-3:43, 3:84-5:33, 6:20-8:25, 9:66-10:78, 12:85-15:87, 35:13-41, 38:66-39:15.
BNF Arabe 331	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Dated too late for our study.
BNF Arabe 340	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cen- tury	Dated too late for our study.
BNF Arabe 343	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cen- tury	Dated too late for our study.
BNF Arabe 345	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cen- tury	Dated too late for our study.
BNF Arabe 370	Biblio- theque Nationale in Paris	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cen- tury	Dated too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.1	Munich MDZ Collection	624 AH	<a href="http://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=faecher_index&amp;l=de&amp;kl=311">http://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=faecher_index&amp;l=de&amp;kl=311</a> Dated too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2	Munich MDZ Collection)	705 AH	Dated too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.3	Munich MDZ Collection	704 AH	Dated too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.6	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Gold leaf, voweled, showing verse separation, too late to be useful for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.9	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Persian, voweled, artwork, variety of dyes, verse separation, obviously too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.12	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Persian, voweled text, Verse separation, too late to be useful for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.1113	Munich MDZ Collection	790 AH	Dated too late for our study.

ID	Location	Date AH	Comments
BSB.Cod. arab.1341	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Fragment Sūra 43:49-74. Appears to be an early Qur'ān, but the fragment does not contain the verses we are looking for.
BSB.Cod. arab.2603	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Gold leaf, voweled, Kūfīc script, showing verse separations, obviously too late to be useful for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2640	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Vowled, gold leaf, verse separation, obviously too late to be useful to our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2642	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Egyptian, voweled, florets separating verses. Obviously too late to be useful to our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2670	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Voweled, artwork, Egyptian, Verse separation, obviously too late to be useful to our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2674	Munich MDZ Collection	940 AH	Dated too late for our study.
BSB.Cod. arab.2675	Munich MDZ Collection	undated	Gold leaf, voweled, florets, verse separation, obviously too late for our study.
Qur'ān of 'Uthmān	Tashkent, Uzbekistan UNESCO CD	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Another early copy of the Qur'ān that is claimed to be the one that 'Uthmān gathered. Jeffery dated it to early 3 <sup>rd</sup> century. Radiocarbon dated to 2 <sup>nd</sup> century AH. Folios 1 - 32 contain S 2:7 - 2:177, photographed by Pisarev in 1905. Paper leaves ff. 1 - 2r, 8, 13 - 15. Sūra 48:24 is missing. This is Qur'ān is too late to relate to our study.
Qur'ān of 'Uthmān	Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> century	The folio with 2:143-145 is missing and written in a later hand. Al Fatah is written on folios 370a - 373b.
Qur'ān of 'Uthmān, Topkapi Codex	Topkapi Museum, Istanbul	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	This Qur'ān "of 'Uthmān" is at the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, and is claimed to be from the 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> century AH. This is not 'Uthmān's Qur'ān, for the manuscript clearly shows the script, illumination and marking of vowels that are from the Umayyad times (i.e., late 1st century / early 2nd century of <i>hijra</i> . Contains 2:143-145 and 48:24. The verses are separated by rosets and triangles. Kūfīc script, perhaps voweled at a later time.
Mingana Palimpsest	Cambridge University	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Hijazi Script. Fragmented. Starts with 7:139 and ends with 45:20. Missing the two verses we are looking for.

ID	Location	Date AH	Comments
The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān	Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, Russia	2nd Century	Radio carbon placed this around the final quarter of the 8th Century AD. Written in Hijazi script. The is scattered around in various places, and obviously written by two different copyists. Folio 1b contains 2:140 to part of 2:144. It contains about 40% of the Qur'ān. Folio 69r contains 48:24 This Qur'ān is too late to relate to our study.
The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān	Al Hussein Mosque, Cairo	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Probably a copy made on the order of the Governor of Egypt 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān, brother of Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, and not one of the Qur'āns sent by the third caliph, 'Uthmān to various Islamic regions. Some folios of Al-Baqarah are written in a later hand. (1b-59a). Fatah is in folios 900b-909a
The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān MS 139	Egyptian National Library, Cairo	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	This manuscript has been divided up between different museums. It begins with Sūra 3, and is missing the section containing Sūra 47-48
The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān	Damascus	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	Contains 31:33-32:4. Missing the two verses we are looking for.

### Dating Early Qur'āns

During my research I discovered that most Qur'āns have no date assigned to them. Many of those that do have dates are assigned dates that cover large periods of time, say 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century AH. Even these broad dates are open to interpretation. Along with this there are several schools of thought, each with their carefully presented arguments as to why some manuscripts may be earlier than others.

### Vowels

For instance, to the casual observer, it may seem that scripts without vowels (wakf markings) must be earlier than those with vowels. This assumption is generally true, but for those who argue an early date for many Qur'āns, they feel that even though later Qur'āns were voweled, early manuscripts of the Qur'ān were originally written without vowels and the vowels were added by a later scribe making them appear to be from a later date. Another argument of those supporting earlier dates is that of masāhif or the business of copying Qur'āns. They feel that the first vowel system came into use shortly after the

first masāhif were written, and claim that some later masāhif were unvoiced even after 400 AH. Those supporting an early date often refer to a manuscript known as PERF 558. This is a bilingual Greek and Arabic document from Ichnas in Egypt which dates itself from 22-57 AH. This manuscript is voweled demonstrating that Arabic script was voweled early, therefore one cannot say that Qur'āns without vowels are earlier than those with vowels. Those arguing against vowels being evidence of early writing also point to PERF 558. They admit that early vowelizing was occasionally used in Arabic writing, especially if the intended recipient did not speak Arabic well. PERF 558 is a good example of this, as Emir 'Abdallāh is writing to Greeks in Herakleopolis, and thus he added vowel signs to make sure that the Greek court clearly understood the message. On the other hand, they argue that all early Qur'āns were written without vowels, because the intended audience were all Arabic speaking Muslims.

Alba Fedeli (Fedeli, 2010, pg 324) notes "... it was just in the fourth century AH that Abū Bakr ibn Mujahid (d. 324/936) accepted only the readings based on a fairly uniform consonantal text and he chose seven well-known Qur'ān teachers of the second century and declared that their readings all had divine authority that the others lacked." This story was made official only in the year 322/934 when the scholar Ibn Miqsam was forced to retract his view that the consonantal text could be read in any manner that was grammatically correct. (Baalbaki, 1999) In the following year another Qur'ān scholar, Ibn Shanabudh was similarly condemned and forced to renounce his view that it was permissible to use the readings of Ibn Mad'ud and Ubayy.

## Script Type

There were several types of very early Arabic Script all known later as Ḥijazi script: al-Ḥiri (from Ḥira), al-Anbārī (from Anbār), al-Maqqi (from Mecca) and al-Madani (from Medina). A later script was developed in Iraq in the area of the city of Kūfa, and was known as Kūfic script. Kūfa was established as a military and administrative center. It contained tribesmen from Arabia rather than Iraqis. These tribesmen were given land, known as "nasib." On the eve of the first civil war, an incident occurred from which we can clearly see that nasib refers to land not money or booty. (Donner, 1981, pg 240) There are no references to any early industries that focused on writing copies of the Qur'ān. The famous author of Fihrist, Ibn Nadim, who died around 390 AH was the first to use the word "Kūfic", distinguishing it from the Ḥijazi script. Those



who like to date Kūfic script as being very early, argue that Kūfic script cannot have originated in Kūfa, since that city was founded in 17 AH and the Kūfic script is known to have existed before that date. They do admit though, that Kūfa was the great intellectual center that developed Arabic calligraphy. Eventually the Abbāsīd rulers adopted Kūfic script as the norm, and it was used as the official Abbāsīd script.

However, those that argue against Kūfic being an early script point out that for many years the city of Kūfa was involved in wars and internal Islamic struggles. During the Umayyad time period, Kūfa was in conflict with the Umayyads, choosing their own caliphs over those in Damascus, and fighting civil wars with the Umayyad Caliphs. As we point out in this book, they even used the same qibla as the rebels in the Holy City. "The people who turn to the same qibla as us." (Ṭabarī 21: 107, 112), rather than the qibla used in Damascus. Thus, one would expect all early Kūfic Qur'āns to support the qibla as Mecca rather than Petra.

From numismatic studies presented by Voloker Popp, (Popp, 2010) early Islamic coins dated 17 AH were printed in Greek, not Arabic. (Popp, pg 42) A coin from Harran (Harraan) dated 16 AH (pg 61) is written in Arabic but dated using Greek letters. 'Abd al-Mālik's coin (pg 63) from 65-85 AD follows the Byzantine pattern of coins, with the depiction of the Arabian ruler with a sword, inscribed with a non Kūfic Arabic text.

Those that support an early Kūfic script mention that there are several small fragments at the Austrian National Library in Vienna that have been dated to the beginning of the second century AH. (A Perg 186, 193, 196, 201, 203, 208). In Baḥrain there are also two fragments of Qur'ānic writing that date from the end of the first century AD, written in a form of Kūfic. There is a tombstone of one named 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khair al-Ḥajrī, 31 AH / 652 CE whose inscription is chiseled in rock, making it appear as if it is Kūfic script. Indeed some have suggested that perhaps Kūfic developed from chiseled inscriptions rather than the flowing letters of Ḥijazi scripts.

Hejazi Script also dates very early. PERF No. 558, which we mentioned earlier is a bilingual Greek/Arabic papyri that contains the date 22 AH / 642 AD and it is written in Hejazi cursive.

## APPENDIX D BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES

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