

## Map 83 Nabataea Meridionalis

Compiled by D.F. Graf, 1996

### Introduction

The Nabataean Arab kingdom centered at Petra (Map 71) stretched from Damascus (Map 69) to the region of Egra (modern Meda'in Salih) in the Hijaz of Saudi Arabia. This map covers the southern part of the kingdom (Arabia Eudaemon: see Map 76), the poorest known from an archaeological standpoint. The fundamental exploration of Jaussen and Savignac (Sartre 1996) has been followed by only sporadic expeditions of limited scope (Ingraham 1981; Graf 1988); many questions about the landscape remain unanswered (Bowersock 1983; 1988). There is no question that the region was an integral part of the Nabataean realm (Gatier 1988; cf. Bowersock 1988). Strabo (16.4.18) describes this part of Nabataea as having "a large population and abundant pasturage." The density of ancient settlements known here from classical geographers is far greater than in other parts of Arabia (MacAdam 1989, 311). The explanation for this disparity is clearly that better sources were available for this region.

Pliny's list of toponyms and ethnonyms for Arabia is probably derived from itineraries supplied to Aelius Gallus for his Arabian expedition in 25 B.C.; these in turn presumably reflect trade routes actively used in the decades just prior to the expedition (RE Suppl. 11, col. 1291). The sources for Ptolemy's extensive listings are far more complex; they probably constitute a conflation of various geographical writings from the early Hellenistic period to his own time (cf. Groom 1986, 71), from Ariston (Agatharchides 87a) to Marinus of Tyre (RE Suppl. 12, cols. 791-838), representing primarily itineraries by land and sea (Brice 1984, 177). More than 150 villages and towns are listed for Arabia Eudaemon, along with the related tribes of the region, physical features (mountains, bays, coastline), and islands. Ptolemy's latitudes for the northwest of the Arabian peninsula are fairly accurate (Groom 1986, 67), although the longitude when plotted for the inland towns consistently appears somewhat exaggerated in length (Groom 1981, 85; Brice 1984, 177). Nevertheless, as elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean (Carmody 1976, 609), the general impression of Ptolemy's coordinates for the Red Sea Arabian littoral is that they are approximately correct and should be respected.

That said, the precise location of many of these sites remains a problem. The pioneering topographical work of Sprenger (1875) has largely been absorbed into RE, and although over a century old now it is still the basic guide for the identification of most of the sites. The other important early effort to identify the toponyms and tribes of the region is that of Musil (1926), which unfortunately was not systematic or complete. The more recent reassessment of the ancient toponyms by von Wissmann (RE Suppl. 12; 1976) is mainly adopted here, with some reservation. Both Sprenger and von Wissmann employed a similar toponymical methodology in identifying ancient settlements. Each assumes that the toponyms are essentially a product of itineraries of trans-Arabian trade routes. As a result, many of their identifications are based on purely linguistic homophonia, seeking for similar sounding modern toponyms in proximity to known routes, without any archaeological confirmation. The problems in this approach are substantial. The presumed pre-Islamic routes are at times purely hypothetical, derived mainly from itineraries of later Islamic geographers (Potts 1988, 133-34). Even more troublesome is the fact that a good critical edition of the relevant sections of Ptolemy (6.6-7) is still lacking (MacAdam 1989, 316-17).

Further archaeological exploration of the region is highly desirable. It may help to resolve such issues as the location of the Nabataean-Roman port of Leuke Kome (Young 1997). This has been located at various sites on the Arabian coast, including al-Haura' or Umm Lajj (Sprenger 1875, 28), Yanbu' al-Bar (RE Suppl. 12, cols. 540-42; von Wissmann 1976, 466; not marked), and Egra (modern al-Wajh; Gatier 1988, 186-87). The archaeological (Ingraham 1981, 71) and topographical (Kirwan 1984, 55) evidence, however, points to 'Aynuna further north. Only a few Hellenistic-Roman sherds were found at al-Haura' and Umm Lajj. None has been found at al-Wajh. Meantime, Yanbu' al-Bahr is still poorly investigated (Ingraham 1981, 78), whereas 'Aynuna has extensive Nabataean-Roman ruins. In sum, with the exception of a few settlements like Meda'in Salih (Egra), al-'Ula (Dedan),

and Tayma' (Thaima), the naming of the vast majority of the sites is still a matter of linguistic and geographical guesswork.

Some archaeological support for an extensive population existing in this region in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is reflected in the substantial epigraphic evidence from Arabia. The peninsula is covered with thousands of rock inscriptions in the Old Arabian script that was used from perhaps as early as the eighth century B.C. until the dawn of Islam. The earliest epigraphic evidence occurs in the regions of Tayma' and al-'Ula from the sixth century B.C., but the most substantial finds are in what has been classified as "Thamudic" script as a matter of convenience, after the legendary tribe of the region (Graf 1990, 133). The initial organization of the script into five types ("A" through "E"), was later revised as geographical categories (Taymanite and Dedanite = A, Najdi = B, Hijazi = C-D, and Tabuki = E), in full cognizance that further refinement was needed (Winnett 1970). For example, it is now evident that the "E" type emanating mainly from the Roman era extends well beyond Tabuk (ancient Baclanaza), with texts appearing as far north as the environs of 'Amman (ancient Philadelpheia, Map 71 B2); they thus largely coincide with the Nabataean realm, and in fact attest by their content that many of the individuals were constituents of the kingdom. The substantial corpus of Nabataean-Aramaic texts from Meda'in Salih (Jausen 1909; Healey 1993), must now be expanded to include more recent Nabataean-Aramaic and Thamudic pre-Islamic Arabic epigraphic finds from the northwest of the peninsula (Livingstone 1985; al-Theeb 1993), particularly the monumental Greek-Aramaic bilingual text from the Thamudic temple at Ruwafah dated to the reign of M. Aurelius and L. Verus (Parr 1972, 54-58; Graf 1978, 9-12).

Although epigraphic evidence for Christianity in the region is minimal (Beaucamp 1981), the existence of monasteries in the region of Midian is known from Islamic sources (Shahid 1984, 326). By the time of the Islamic conquests, the Arab tribes of Judham, 'Amila and Bali had occupied the area north of Baclanaza (Tabuk) as *foederati* for the Byzantine empire (Shahid 1984, 383-84).

## Directory

All place names are in Saudi Arabia unless otherwise noted

### Names

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
C4	Achroua	HR	al-Mu'ayyiq	Ptol. 6.7.28; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 538
A2	Aelana/ Aila		JOR	See Map 76
A4	Ainos Ins.		An Nu'man	Ptol. 6.7.43; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 539
B5	Akra?	HR	30 miles SE al-Wajh	Ghabban 1993, 252-53
D7	Alouare	HR	al-Buwayra	Ptol. 6.7.31; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 537
A1	Ammatha		JOR	See Map 71
C4	Apataioi § Arataei	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21; RE
B5/C1	Arabia			See Map 3
A2	Aramaua		JOR	See Map 76
C5	Arreni	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 536
C7	Arsai	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.4
D4	Athritai	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.159; Ptol. 6.7.21; RE
A2	Auara		JOR	See Map 76
D5	Ausara	HR	Awra?	Ptol. 6.7.30; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, cols. 537, 552
B3	Baclanaza	H?R	Tabuk	Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 530
D5	<i>al-Bada'i'</i>	HR		Bawden 1979, 71

B5	Badais	HR	al-Bada'?	Ptol. 6.7.30; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 546
B6	Banoubaroi	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.4; RE
C5	Carrei § Cariati	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157; RE
C6	Chersonnesos? M.		Ra's Abu Madd	Ptol. 6.7.3; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 540
B5	Darae	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6. 150; Ptol. 6.7.4; RE Darrhai
C5	Dedan/ <i>al-'Ula</i> § Dadanu	AHR		Gadd 1958, 81; Parr 1968, 204-14; RE Suppl. 12 Ophir, cols. 948-54; Beaulieu 1989, 173; Salles 1996
B4	<i>Disa</i>	HR		Ingraham 1981, 75-76
B5	Egra	HR	al-Wajh / Wadi Hamz	Strabo 16.4.24; Burton 1879, 2.106-16; RE
B5	Egra/ <i>Meda'in Salih</i> § Agra	HR		Ptol. 6.7.29; Winnett 1970, 130-32; Healey 1993 Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.156
A4	Erythr(ae)um/ Rubrum Mare			See Map 4
D4	Gaia Polis	HR	Ghayl al-Waggag?	Ptol. 6.7.29; RE Suppl. 12 Ophir, col. 968
E7	<i>al-Hamrah</i>	HR		Ingraham 1981, 76
C6	<i>al-Haura'</i>	RL?		Wohaibi 1973, 74-76
D6	Hemnatae	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 5.157; RE
E6	Hibra	A	Khaybar	Gadd 1958, 81; Beaulieu 1989, 173
B5	Hippos Kome	HR	al-'Uwaynid?	Ptol. 6.7.2; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, cols. 538-39
B5	Hippos? Oros		Jebel 'Antar (Liban)	Ptol. 6.7.2; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, cols. 538-39
B4	<i>Hufrat az-Zawiyah</i>		upland plain	Parr 1972, 27-28
inset	Iathrippa § Athribis § Lathrippa	AHR	Medina	StByz <i>Ἰάθριππα</i> ; RE  Ptol. 6.7.31
D6	<i>Juthuth</i>	R		Ingraham 1981, 76
B4	Kh., see Khirbet <i>Khirbet ash-Shiqri</i>	R?		Parr 1972, 27-28
C5	<i>Khief al-Zarah</i>	A		Bawden 1979
C7	Kinaidokolpitai			See Map 4
B4	Laba	HR	al-Bad'?	Ptol. 6.7.28; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 530
A3	Leuke Kome?/ Onne?	HR	'Aynuna SAU	Ingraham 1981, 76-77
A3	Madiane/ Midian			See Map 76
B4	Madiama	AHR	Qanara	Ptol. 6.7.27; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 536; Knauf 1985
D5	Maisaimaneis	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21; RE
D6	Malichai <i>Meda'in Salih</i> = Egra Midian = Madiane	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.23; RE
D6	Mochoura	HR	Umm Dharb?	Ptol. 6.7.31; RE; Wohaibi 1973, 157-61
A4	Modiana? Modiana? = <i>al-Muwalih</i>	HR		Ptol. 6.7.2
A1	<i>el-Mutrab</i>		JOR	See Map 71
A4	<i>al-Muwalihl</i> Modiana?	HR	Duba	Ptol. 6.7.2; RE Midian; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 533
B2	Nabataea			See Map 3

D3	Obraka	HR	Abraq al-Ruayma?	Ptol. 6.7.28; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 533
A3	Onne? = Leuke Kome? Ostama	AHR	Qurayyah	Ptol. 6.7.27; Musil 1926, 312; Parr 1968, 219-41
E6	Oudenoï	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21; RE Udenoi
B5	Phoinikon Kome	HR	al-Wajh?	Ptol. 6.7.3; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 539
A2	'Praesidio'		JOR	See Map 76
D6	<i>Qal'eh al-Farah</i>	R		Ingraham 1981, 76
C5	<i>Qubur al-Jundi</i>	HR		Graf 1988, 192-202
A2	<i>Quweira</i>		JOR	See Map 76
B6	Raunathou Kome	HR	Khurraiym Sa'id?	Ptol. 6.7.3; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 534
B4	Robathoi Rubrum Mare = Erythr(ae)um Mare	A?HR	Aramaic: Rubat	Parr 1972, 58
B4	<i>Ruwwafah</i>	AHR		Parr 1972, 57-58; Graf 1978; Beaucamp 1979
B2	Sarakenoi § Araceni	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21 Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157
A2	Skenitai	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21
B4	Sidenoi	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.4; RE
B4	Soaka	HR	Sawaq	Ptol. 6.7.29; RE; Ingraham 1981, 76
B2	Suelleni	H?R		Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157; RE
	Tamudaei = Thamydenoi			
B2	Thaditai	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.21
D4	Thaima	H?R	Tayma'	Ptol. 6.7.29; Bawden 1980; 1981
B4	Thamydenoi/ Tamudaei	HR		Agatharchides 94a-95a; Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.157; Ptol. 6.7.21; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 535
A4	Thamyditai	H?R		Ptol. 6.7.4; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 535; Beaucamp 1979
E3	Thapaua	HR	al-'Assafiya?	Ptol. 6.7.27; Musil 1926, 312; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 530
D6	Thoumna	HR	Hadīyah?	Ptol. 6.7.31; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 537
	<i>al-'Ula</i> = Dedan			
C6	<i>Umm Lajj</i>	RL?		Wohaibi 1973, 74-76
A2	Via Nova Traiana			See Map 71
C5	<i>Wadi al-Qura'</i>	RL		Wohaibi 1973, 293-300; Nasif 1979; Shahid 1989, 294
C6	<i>Wadi Hamadh</i>	RL?		D.F. Graf
E5	Yadihu	AHR	Afirit al-'Ayda	Gadd 1958, 83; Beaulieu 1989, 173; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 550
A1	Zodacatha		JOR	See Map 71
A7	Zaigaina Ins.		Daedalus reef	Ptol. 6.7.43; RE Suppl. 12 Madiama, col. 544

## Roads

Itinerary	Period	Reference
Iathrippa → Hibra → Thaima → N	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Iathrippa → Thouma → Egra → Baclanaza → NW	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Baclanaza → al-Muwalih/Modiana?	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
E → W at Ostama	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
E Baclanaza → Thapaua	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Modiana? → Laba → S	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Modiana? → Badais → Egra	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Badais → Egra	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
Leuke Kome?/Onne? → Phoinikon Kome → E	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
al-Haura' → E	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997
N → S route W of Thoumna	AHR	Potts 1988; De Maigret 1997; MacDonald 1997

## Bibliography

- Bawden 1979  
G. Bawden, "Khief El-Zahrah and the nature of Dedanite hegemony in the al-'Ula Oasis," *Atlat* 3 (1979) 63-72.
- Bawden 1980  
G. Bawden, C. Edens and R. Miller, "Preliminary archaeological investigations at Taymā," *Atlat* 4 (1980) 69-106.
- Bawden 1981  
G. Bawden, "Recent radiocarbon dates from Tayma," *Atlat* 5 (1981) 149-53.
- Beaucamp 1979  
J. Beaucamp, "Rawwafa," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 9, cols. 1467-75, Paris, 1979.
- Beaucamp 1981  
J. Beaucamp and C. Robin, "Le christianisme dans la péninsule arabe d'après l'épigraphie et l'archéologie," *TravMém* 8 (1981) 45-61.
- Beaulieu 1989  
P.-A. Beaulieu, *The reign of Nabonidus king of Babylon 556-539 B.C.*, New Haven, 1989.
- Bowersock 1983  
G.W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge, MA, 1983.
- Bowersock 1988  
G.W. Bowersock, "The Three Arabias in Ptolemy's Geography," in P.-L. Gatier, B. Helly and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds.), *Géographie historique au Proche Orient*, Notes et Monographies Techniques 23, pp. 47-53, Paris, 1988.
- Brice 1984  
W.C. Brice, "The classical trade-routes of Arabia, from the evidence of Ptolemy, Strabo and Pliny," in A.-R. Al-Ansary (ed.), *Studies in the History of Arabia, II: pre-Islamic Arabia*, pp. 177-81, Riyadh, 1984.
- Burton 1879  
R.F. Burton, *The land of Midian revisited*, 2 vols., London, 1879.
- Carmody 1976  
F.J. Carmody, "Ptolemy's triangulation of the eastern Mediterranean," *Isis* 67 (1976) 601-609.
- De Maigret 1997  
A. De Maigret, "The Frankincense Road from Najran to Ma'an: a hypothetical itinerary," in A. Avanzini (ed.), *Profumi d'Arabia*, pp. 315-32, Rome, 1997.
- Gadd 1958  
C.J. Gadd, "The Harran inscriptions of Nabonidus," *AS* 8 (1958) 35-92.
- Gatier 1988  
P.-L. Gatier and J.-F. Salles, "Aux frontières méridionales du domaine nabatéen," in J.-F. Salles (ed.), *L'Arabie et ses mers bordières, I: Itinéraires et voisinages*, pp. 173-90, Lyon, 1988.
- Ghabban 1993  
A.I. Ghabban, *Islamic archaeology of northwestern Saudi Arabia II*, Riyadh, 1993.
- Graf 1978  
D.F. Graf, "The Saracens and the defense of the Arabian frontier," *BASOR* 229 (1978) 1-26.

- Graf 1988  
D.F. Graf, "Qura 'Arabiyya and Provincia Arabia," in P.-L. Gatier, B. Helly and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds.), *Géographie historique au Proche Orient*, Notes et Monographies Techniques 23, pp. 171-211, Paris, 1988.
- Graf 1990  
D.F. Graf, "Arabia during Achaemenid times," in A. Kuhrt and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds.), *Achaemenid History IV: Centre and Periphery*, pp. 131-48, Leiden, 1990.
- Groom 1981  
N. Groom, *Frankincense and myrrh: a study of the Arabian incense trade*, London, 1981.
- Groom 1986  
N. Groom, "Eastern Arabia in Ptolemy's map," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 16 (1986) 65-75.
- Healey 1993  
J.F. Healey, *The Nabataean tomb inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*, Journal of Semitic Studies Suppl. 1, Oxford, 1993.
- Ingraham 1981  
M.L. Ingraham et al., "Saudi Arabian comprehensive survey program: preliminary report on a reconnaissance survey of the northwestern province (with a note on a brief survey of the northern province)," *Atlat* 5 (1981) 58-84.
- Jaussen 1909  
A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, 2 vols., Paris, 1909, 1914.
- Kirwan 1984  
L.P. Kirwan, "Where to search for the ancient port of Leuke Kome," in A.-R. Al-Ansary (ed.), *Studies in the history of Arabia II: pre-Islamic Arabia*, pp. 55-61, Riyadh, 1984.
- Knauf 1985  
E.A. Knauf, "Madiama," *ZDMG* 135 (1985) 16-21.
- Livingstone 1985  
A. Livingstone et al., "Epigraphic Survey, 1404-1984," *Atlat* 9 (1985) 128-44.
- MacAdam 1989  
H.I. MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria: three views of ancient Arabia and its peoples," in T. Fahd (ed.), *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel*, Travaux du Centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 10, 1989, 289-320.
- MacDonald 1997  
M.C.A. MacDonald, "Trade routes and trade goods at the northern end of the 'Incense Road' in the first millennium B.C.," in A. Avanzini (ed.), *Profumi d'Arabia*, pp. 333-50, Rome, 1997.
- Musil 1926  
A. Musil, *The northern Hegâz: a topographical itinerary*, New York, 1926.
- Nasif 1979  
A.A. Nasif, "The identification of the Wadi al-Qura and the ancient Islamic site of al-Mibyât," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 5 (1979) 1-19.
- Parr 1968  
P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding and J.E. Dayton, "Preliminary survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968," *BIAL* 8-9 (1968-69) 193-242.
- Parr 1972  
P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding and J.E. Dayton, "Preliminary survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968," *BIAL* 10 (1972) 23-61.
- Potts 1988  
D. Potts, "Trans-Arabian routes of the pre-Islamic period," in *L'Arabie et ses mers bordières, I: Itinéraires et voisinages*, pp. 127-62, Lyon, 1988.
- Salles 1996  
J.-F. Salles, "Al-'Ula-Dédan: recherches récentes," *Topoi* 6 (1996) 565-607.
- Sartre 1996  
M. Sartre, "La mission en Arabie des Pères A. Jaussen et R. Savignac: historique et bilan scientifique," *Topoi* 6 (1996) 533-52.
- Shahid 1984  
I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the fourth century*, Washington, DC, 1984.
- Shahid 1989  
I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the fifth century*, Washington, DC, 1989.
- Sprenger 1875  
A. Sprenger, *Die alte Geographie Arabiens als Grundlage der Entwicklungsgechichte des Semitismus*, Bern, 1875.
- al-Theeb 1993  
S.A.-R. al-Theeb, *Aramaic and Nabataean inscriptions from north-west Saudi Arabia*, Riyadh, 1993.

von Wissmann 1976

H. von Wissmann, "Die Geschichte der Sabäerreichs und der Feldzug des Aelius Gallus," *ANRW* II.9.1 (1976) 308-544.

Winnett 1970

F.V. Winnett and W.L. Reed, *Ancient records from North Arabia*, Near and Middle Eastern Series 6, Toronto, 1970.

Wohaibi 1973

A. al-Wohaibi, *The northern Hijaz in the writings of the Arab geographers, 800-1150*, Beirut, 1973.

Young 1997

G.K. Young, "The customs-collector at the Nabataean Port of Leuke Kome (PME 19)," *ZPE* 119 (1997) 266-68.