

THE ROMAN ARMY IN JORDAN

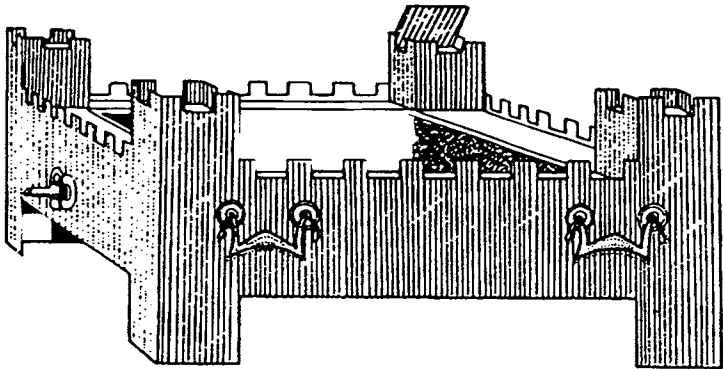
David Kennedy



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PREFACE

*To Barri Jones (1936–1999) and
Derrick Riley (1915–1993)*

As has become traditional, the Organizing Committee of the XVIIIth Congress of Roman Frontier Studies to be held in Amman, Jordan in September 2000, commissioned a ‘handbook’. In the first instance these handbooks are provided to participants for active use during excursions to sites and to provide a context for those site visits and for papers at the congress. More generally, the handbook is a survey of the military history and archaeological evidence for the area in question and intended to be of wider interest to scholars and of longer term value. The character of handbooks has varied considerably in recent years and this one will be different again. This will be only the second time in over half a century the Congress has been outside Europe; only the second time in the Middle East (Tel Aviv 1967). That has required special considerations. Few participants will be familiar with any part of the Middle East, with the character of archaeological sites there and the evidence in general. Moreover, the military history of Rome in the East is generally less familiar than that of Europe. It is also often much longer — seven centuries from Pompey the Great to the arrival of Islam — and the history of Rome in the 5th, 6th and early 7th century AD is beyond the scope of Roman army studies for much of the West.

This handbook has had to be written in some haste. It would not have been possible at all without the potential of the internet and the generous and rapid responses of many friends and colleagues to a barrage of questions. I am particularly grateful to (alphabetically), Bob Bewley, Hans-Dieter Bienert, Mike Bishop, Karen Borstad, David Breeze, Zbig Fiema, Phil Freeman, Shelagh Gregory, Ben Isaac, Theodor Kissel, Bill Leadbetter, Burton MacDonald, John Oleson, Tom Parker, Kay Prag, Margaret Roxan, Alan Walmsley, Thomas Weber, Don Whitcomb and Sue

Willetts. Outstanding, however, have been David Graf and Tom Parker. The former’s knowledge of so much of Nabataean and Roman Jordan and the literature on it has been invaluable as I daily posed questions and received helpful and prompt responses. The latter read several sections of the text and offered valued suggestions most of which I readily adopted. Putting together this book for an immovable deadline would not have been possible either without the practical involvement of several others: Mary Zingross typed, translated and checked many of the texts; Shelagh Gregory and Tom Parker generously allowed the inclusion of many of their drawings; and Neil Kennedy was invaluable in helping prepare the text for submission. In particular, Julie Kennedy read the text repeatedly, produced drawings and other illustrations, prepared the JADIS and other identifying data, co-ordinated much of the entire enterprise and always seemed to know where vital items were filed; without her the book certainly could not have been completed.

Throughout I have illustrated the sites by means of numerous aerial photographs. I am much indebted to the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre for the generosity and support they have shown over more than 20 years in supplying photographs from their archive. In particular I am grateful to a former Director-General, Brigadier General Rifat Majali. More recently I have been able to realise a long-term ambition by flying in Jordan explicitly to view landscapes and sites and photograph them. I am grateful to Alison McQuitty and Patricia Salti who helped launch the enterprise in 1997, and to Wing Commander Mike Sedman, Air Attaché at the British Embassy (1996–1999), without whom it would probably never have ‘got off the ground’. With the sustained and gracious support and interest of Prince Hassan and

Brigadier General Prince Feisal the project did get into the air. I am deeply indebted to both Their Royal Highnesses. Bob Bewley has shared in this flying enterprise since 1998, has provided expert guidance and good company and saved me from several gaffes I prefer not to remember. He has also provided some of the photographs used here. He joins me in offering our thanks to the many delightful people with whom we have worked at the Air Lift Wing at RJAF Marka at Amman, the old RAF base from which British pilots flew to photograph archaeological sites in the 1920s and 30s and even apparently their Ottoman and German predecessors in 1917–18: Brigadier General Ziad Hanandeh, Brigadier General Mohammad Zouabi, Lt. Colonel Hussein Obeidat, Lt. Colonel Omar Sadeq Damra, Major Belal Asfour, Major Khaled Migdadi, Major Mohammad al-Eghwari, Major Samir Ayoub, Captain Bassem al-Hilwani, Captain Daher Talafha, Captain Osama, Captain Rousan, Captain Saket and the several co-pilots who have shared the flying. Especially notable amongst the crewmen who looked after us in flight have been Sergeants Feisal and Bassem Khaled al-Maytah.

Two friends, now dead, played a large part in stimulating my interest in the Near East, in the Roman army and in Aerial Archaeology and in guiding me in my research — Barri Jones as an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher and a supporter of my efforts at the University of Manchester in the early 1970s and Derrick Riley from whom I learned a great deal about flying and fieldwork while at the University of Sheffield and with whom I collaborated to my great good fortune on our book, *Rome's Desert Frontier*.

I have been fortunate to have had talented and supportive research students of my own. It is a source of considerable satisfaction that they are so prominent in the bibliography and a pleasure to name them here as people from whom I have learned a great deal: Mike Bishop, Phil Freeman and Shelagh Gregory.

I was conscious in writing this book that although I have travelled in almost every part of Jordan and visited many Roman military sites, my direct familiarity with sites diminished as I moved south and west from the area of my principal fieldwork in the Hauran and Azraq Basin. In particular, the new material from the Wadi Araba has been a problem and the need to interpret sites in Jordan in the context of what lies just beyond modern frontiers but in areas once part of the same province as Jordan.

Despite the efforts of many people who read parts of this in draft and the anonymous reader appointed by the Limes Committee doubtless errors remain. I would be grateful for details of errors and omissions, sent to:

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*Kalamunda, Perth:
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The rapid production of the first edition of this book was matched by the speed with which it sold out. The Publication Committee of the CBRL kindly agreed not just to a reprint but to a revised second edition. This provided the

opportunity to correct some of the errors in the first edition but also to update the contents. Jordan continues to be a productive area for fieldwork on the Roman military and there has been a surprising amount to add. Work on this new edition coincided, too, with the publication of the proceedings of the Limes Congress for which the book was originally written (Freeman *et al.* 2002) itself providing a significant amount of new material to take into account. Once again I am grateful to many people who have sent me copies of their publications and kept me abreast of unpublished work: Nabil Atallah, Zbig Fiema, Phil Freeman, Maurice Lenoir, Ariel Lewin and John Oleson. Particularly to be

thanked is Kay Prag for the care and consideration she has shown in drawing my attention to errors and developments. My colleague Sherylee Bassett kindly checked all the Greek and Latin for me and prepared some of the new texts. Finally, Caroline Middleton has again carried out the important task of preparing the text and numerous illustrations for the printer. I am very grateful for her efficiency and good-natured approach to the task.

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CHRONOLOGY

A. Chronological Terminology

There is considerable variation in the terms employed and even in the meaning given to some of them. Throughout this book, in conformity with most British practice, the term 'Roman' is employed to cover the entire span from the arrival of Pompey the Great in Syria in 63 BC to the Battle of the Yarmuk in AD 636 and the end of Roman rule in the region. Thereafter the term employed is Byzantine. American and some other scholars commonly apply the term 'Byzantine' to the latter half of this period, usually beginning with the Christian Empire in AD 324. There is a common practice, too, of treating the last phase of Nabataean independence as 'Nabataean/Early Roman'.

For the purposes of dating many archaeologists in Jordan now employ a chronology governed largely by dates of historical significance. Archaeologists in particular are all too aware of the undesirability of such seeming precision and of the implication that pottery types and forms changed with political control. Nevertheless, the categorisation has been found useful and has been given widespread use in the past two or three decades. Many of the works on which this handbook is founded employ the terms and the following tabulation (adapted from Miller 1991: 27) is included here for convenience.

Chalco	CHALCOLITHIC	4500–3300 BC
EB	EARLY BRONZE AGE	3300–1950
EB I	Early Bronze	3300–2900
EB II		2900–2300
EB III		2300–2100
EB IV		2100–1950
MB	MIDDLE BRONZE AGE	1950–1550
MB I		1950–1750
MB II		1750–1550
LB	LATE BRONZE AGE	1550–1200
LB I		1550–1400
LB I		1400–1200
IR	IRON AGE	1200–300
IR I		1200–900
IR II		900–332
Pers(ian) [= IR IIC]		540–332
Hell	HELLENISTIC	332–64
Nab	NABATAEAN	300 BC – AD 106
Rom	ROMAN	64 BC – AD 324
ERom		64 BC – AD 135
LRom		135–324

Byz	BYZANTINE	324–640
EByz		324–491
LByz		491–640
EIsl	EARLY ISLAMIC	640–1174
Um	Umayyad	640–750
Abb	Abbasid	750–969
Fat	Fatimid	969–1071
	Seljuk-Zenjid	1071–1174
LIsl	LATE ISLAMIC	1174–1918
Ay	Ayyubid	1174–1263
Mam	Mamluk	1263–1516
EOtt	Early Ottoman	1516–1703
LOtt	Late Ottoman	1703–1918
Mod	MODERN	1918–

B. Nabataean King List

The earliest Nabataean rulers known are attested only once each. The first named is an ‘Aretas’ c. 168 BC who is assigned the numeral I with the subsequent rulers following from there. The list only becomes secure with the man we call Obodas III.¹

Aretas I	c. 168 BC
Aretas II	c. 120/110–96
Obodas I	96–85
Rabbel I	85/84
Aretas III	84–62/61
Obodas II	62/61–59
Malichus I	59–30
Obodas III	30–9
Aretas IV	9 BC – AD 40
Malichus II	40–70
Rabbel II	70–106

C. Eras

From the Hellenistic period onwards several ‘eras’ were employed in the region and dates can be found in all of them:

Seleucid	dated from 312/11 BC
Pompeian	dated from 62 BC
Gabinian	dated from 55 BC
Era of the Province of Arabia	dated from AD 106

¹ From Nehmé and Villeneuve 1999: 148

GLOSSARY AND A NOTE ON PLACE-NAMES

Term (plus common alternatives)	Abbreviation	Meaning
'Ain (Ayn, 'ayn)		spring
Bir (bi'r)		well, cistern
Birkeh (Birket)		pool, reservoir
Deir (Dayr)		monastery, shrine
Ghadir		water hole, water hole in wadi
Ghor		lowland, plain depression, marshy plain
Hammam		baths
Husn		fortress
Jebel (Jabal)	J.	mountain, hill
Khan		inn, caravanserai
Khirbet (Khirbat)	Kh.	ruins, village
Muhattat (Mahattat)		station, railroad station
Naqb		pass
Qa'		mudflat
Qal'at		fort
Qasr	Q.	castle, palace, fort
Qaryat		settlement, village
Ras (ra's)		peak, point, mountain
Rujm		cairn, hill, tomb
Siq		narrow pass
Tell (Tall)	T.	hill
Wadi	W.	wadi, stream (usually only seasonal)

Transliteration of place-names from Arabic into the Roman alphabet is notoriously inconsistent and users of this handbook are likely to find spellings employed here at variance with those found in other books and on maps. I have normally given preference to the form used by the scholars most involved in writing about specific places and tried then to be consistent in my usage of common place-name elements, preferring Ain to Ayn and Qasr to Kasr, etc. I have not generally used diacritical marks at all.

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs in the colour section are numbered within the sequence of the relevant chapter where they are indicated by the addition of the letter C — e.g. Fig. 7.3C. To allow the photographs to be reproduced at maximum size and minimum obscuring, each is marked only by the figure number in one corner. Readers can turn to the List of Illustrations for the full caption.

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PART A

1. ROMAN JORDAN

A. This book

This is explicitly a handbook. It is designed in the first instance to meet the needs of the several hundred participants in the XVIIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Amman, 2000), and then of the increasing numbers of visitors to the Roman military sites of Jordan. All of them require a convenient source of basic information, helpful illustrations and guidance to further reading.

Jordan has been well served in recent years with the publication of Parker's *Romans and Saracens* (1986). However, though it is barely 15 years since it was written, it is already in need of updating in several important respects. Parker's own extensive fieldwork from Umm el-Jimal in the north through the Lejjun area to Aqaba in the far south has illuminated the subject enormously. There has been excavation by others, too, most importantly Oleson at Humayma. Significant also has been the considerable amount of work done to refine what is known of scores more sites: some test-trenching, the surface collection of dating material and new or improved plans. Aerial photographs have also allowed us to see a number of sites with greater clarity and understanding than was possible for some of the pioneers of the first half of this century who often worked under difficulties hard now to believe. Then there has been a succession of new discoveries (Umm el-Quttein, Kh. Khaw, Qaryat el-Hadid, Kh. Ain) or the revelation of features barely suspected before (e.g. the city walls of Gadara (Umm Qeis)). Finally, there has been the enormous improvement in our knowledge of the extent and dating of the vital infrastructure — the road network, not least through the fieldwork of Graf.

Within the last few years, Gregory's study of *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier* (1995–97) included numerous sites from Jordan and was able to take account of recent research and discoveries. In many ways, her analysis and interpretation has set the study

of the subject on a much firmer foundation and surer path. The three volumes are, however, too weighty to be a convenient handbook to the Near East as a whole much less to Jordan alone. Moreover, they were completed in 1991, and, like Parker's book, have been overtaken by some of the newer work outlined above.

It will be readily apparent, that this book draws extensively on the work of Parker and Gregory. It does not aim to replace either of them but nor is it simply an update. The aim has been to provide, largely as requested by the Organizing Committee for the XVIIIth Congress, chapters on the geography (ch. 3) and history (ch. 4) and a guide to the army (chs 5 and 6) in Part A, and then a survey in Part B of the physical remains at the more significant sites and what else may be said about each place (chs 7–20). To this I have added chapters on Roman Jordan (ch. 1) and evidence (ch. 2), and something on the military sites beyond the Jordanian frontier but related to what lies inside (ch. 21). The Bibliography is not exhaustive: it includes items cited in the book as well as a number of more general works on the Roman army not explicitly cited but of interest to readers.

In Part B, the gazetteer, I have been uneven in my treatment. First, the intention was to provide a guide to all the sites of military significance in the Roman period. In many instances that involved places with visible remains. The entry for such sites has concentrated very much on what can be seen or, in some cases, what could once be seen. In most instances the site description and discussion has been accompanied by a plan and a photograph. Some sites have been included, usually briefly, for other reasons: such as the discovery of a military inscription or a documentary reference to the place as a Roman military location. Beyond this additional attention was given to those sites to be visited during the Congress and selected

for their outstanding importance or the quality of their remains. Such sites are generally more extensively illustrated. The material is presented in a series of chapters covering what seem to be discrete geographical zones (Fig. 1.1). They begin in the north-east at the Azraq Oasis then continue in an anti-clockwise direction through the Basalt Desert and Decapolis before running south to the Red Sea. The Wadi Araba is treated last and a final chapter looks at some of the military sites of

the Roman period in adjacent parts of Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

In each case the entry begins with a reference to where the site can be found in the JADIS volume and the form of the name used there. It goes on to provide the map number of the 1: 50,000 K737 series on which the site can be traced and provides the coordinates according to different grid systems. Those maps also offer the means of locating sites

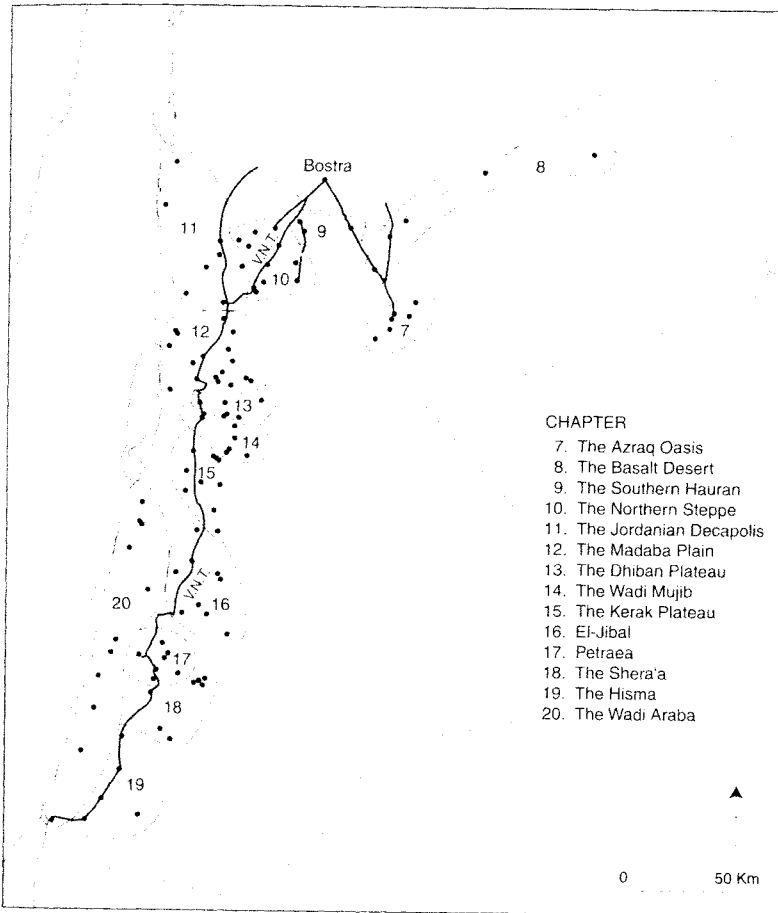


Fig. 1.1: Map of Jordan showing the areas into which it has been divided for the purposes of the present book. Also shown is the Via Nova Traiana, the 'Via Severiana' and a few of the other roads of the Northern Steppe.

according to a six figure number based on the UTM grid. For example, the first site, Azraq Duruz, would be BR945295 which is derived from the last three numbers from each part of the UTM reference: UTME 2945 and UTMN 35295.

Throughout this book sites are illustrated where possible by an aerial view. Until recently most aerial photographs were taken by or for the military. Nevertheless they are a marvellous source not just of information but of understanding through the medium of a novel and informative perspective. The earliest for Jordan are those taken by the German Air Force in 1918, operating in support of the Ottoman forces. Two made use of here give shape to two forts, one of which is only known from the aerial photograph (Beer Sheva: ch. 21) while the other has transformed our understanding of a second (Qaryat el-Hadid: ch. 10). The RAF took other photographs in the 1920s and 30s and many were deliberately of archaeological sites, some of them military and often of considerable value (ch. 7: the camp at Qasr el-Azraq). More systematic was the aerial survey of Sir Aurel Stein in 1939 but most of those have now been superseded by better images. Richard Cleave and the late Jim Sauer both took aerial photographs of Roman military sites in the 1970s and some of their results have been instrumental in heightening awareness of the character and quality of the sites of Jordan. The 1953 Hunting Survey, made available in total in the 1980s through the generous attitude of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre and its former Director, Brigadier General Majali, is a mine of valuable information and several forts are illustrated from that. One (Kh. Khaw: ch. 10) was first identified from this series. Now there is the growing corpus of recent aerial views taken by the present writer and Dr Bob Bewley. In 1997, 1998 and again in 1999, successive flights were made in helicopters of the Royal Jordanian Air Force through the support of Prince Hassan and Prince Feisal (Kennedy 1998a; 2000b). It is a pleasure to be able to publish so many of them here for the first time including one of a probable Roman fort discovered from the air in 1999 (Kh. Ain: ch. 10).

B. The familiarity of the subject

Comparison with the handbooks prepared for previous Congresses of Roman Frontier Studies will show many differences. First, excavation in Jordan has been far slighter than in Europe and much of it has been very recent. Consequently, many sites are known only from surface survey, some of which are the work of decades if not generations in the past. For many sites there are no plans or they are poor or unreliable, there are no phases of development to be discussed and few artifacts to illustrate. Second, the sites themselves require far more illustration. The Near East as a whole is relatively unfamiliar even to the participants in this Congress. A straw survey conducted a decade ago in relation to *Rome's Desert Frontier* (Kennedy and Riley 1990), revealed that even the better-informed academics could think of very few Roman military sites in the Near East and in practice could only actually name Masada and Dura Europos. In short, this book has to be more helpful than its predecessors. It is not just the sites that are unfamiliar; the landscape and environment are novel for most scholars. The inclusion of a generous number of photographs — particularly aerial views — goes towards meeting these difficulties.

An aerial view may in some cases be the only 'plan' of a site; it will certainly be an instructive perspective to have alongside a plan. The aerial view also provides a wider context and hence a guide to the landscape often impossible to capture at ground level. On the other hand, the structures themselves are often well-preserved to a degree seldom seen outside the Middle East and North Africa. A photograph, especially an aerial view, for Jordan can be evocative in a way not possible in Europe of structures robbed to ground level or even with aerial photographs of crop marks.

Finally, most Congresses have focused on the exploration of a limited area around the Congress centre: the Antonine Wall and forts in Central Scotland for the Stirling Congress, the coastal forts of south-east England for the Canterbury Congress. The goal here must be more ambitious.

to take account both of the relative inaccessibility of the sites of Jordan, the absence of any other previous congress in any adjacent Arab country and the need to provide a context for the scatter of sites to be seen by participants.

C. The history of exploration

Instability in the Ottoman Empire in much of the 19th century imposed serious limitations on how far the more intrepid explorers and travellers could reach in areas for which there was little security. Nevertheless, early in the century travellers began to explore and write about their observations. Johann Burckhardt was at Petra in 1812, Ulrich Seetzen travelled through the southern Decapolis in 1806 and in 1816 William Bankes ventured into the steppe to explore the ruins reported at Umm el-Jimal. These 19th century accounts are especially valuable because the observers were seeing a landscape very different from that of today when population growth and development has transformed almost everything and destroyed many sites. Indeed, as late as 1893 George Robinson Lees could write of Amman, today a sprawling city of over 1.5 million, as a place much changed since his visit of three years earlier (1895: 3–4): "... after riding two hours along a road marked by cart-wheels, we arrived at Amman. ... The population had increased to the number of one thousand Circassians besides Arab shopkeepers from Es-Salt. Two streets had been formed, one for shops alone, and nearly all the houses were surrounded by a yard enclosed by a stone wall. ... Fresh meat can be bought almost every day of the week, and there is actually a baker's shop."

Many of the early travellers were men with a Classical education and brought an interest in the Graeco-Roman past to set beside their exploration of 'the Holy Land'. Apart from their comments and description of ancient sites, some produced sketches of places and in the second half of the century often refer to photographs taken. Sadly, however, few of these early photographs were published and fewer still have survived (MacAdam 1986a: Part II).

The major breakthrough for scholarship, especially for those with an interest in the Roman army, came later in the century, with the work of Rudolph Brünnow and Alfred von Domaszewski. Those two great German scholars took advantage of Ottoman re-assertion of control in the region and the opening up of the steppe through colonisation, garrisons and then the Hejaz Railway to work there in 1897 and 1898. Their coverage was impressive, extending from Petra up to the Hauran in what is now southern Syria. The outcome was the volumes of their monumental study, *Die Provincia Arabia* (1904–09) (= PA). In putting it together they drew on not just their own observations and records but quoted extensively from the score of travellers who had been to various places before them and they provided a brief biography of the individuals concerned and their work. The resulting volumes contain a wealth of description, several hundred photographs and plans of the military installations. No less important they went beyond mere registering and description and offered analysis. Soon afterwards, the members of the Princeton Expedition to Syria (= PES) passed through the north of Jordan, extending the coverage of their German predecessors further out into the steppe and eastern Hauran. The result was the recording of several military inscriptions in a province in which they are rare and the addition of plans of several key forts (esp. chs 8, 9, 10 below: Butler *et al.* 1907–1949).

The creation of the British Mandate of Transjordan after the First World War and the establishment of a Department of Antiquities opened the country up for exploration on a grand scale. Foremost amongst those active then — though not primarily concerned with the Roman period much less the Roman army — was the American, Nelson Glueck (1900–1971). This period between the two World Wars was when the enterprising French Jesuit priest, Père Antoine Poidebard, carried out his extraordinary aerial surveys over the French Mandate of Syria. In 1939 his imitator, the Hungarian-British orientalist, Sir Aurel Stein, spent several weeks being flown over

Transjordan by the RAF explicitly to record the extension from Syria of the Roman Limes (Stein). Interest in the region languished until the 1970s when Glen Bowersock again raised awareness of Roman Arabia in a seminal article in the *Journal of Roman Studies* (1971). By the time Bowersock's monograph on *Roman Arabia* appeared in 1983 others had become involved in fieldwork explicitly directed at unveiling and understanding the Roman army and military installations in Jordan. Foremost is Thomas Parker with his survey of the 'frontier', excavations at the fortress of Lejjun and neighbouring sites in central Jordan, and now excavations and survey at Aqaba (1986; and cf. chs 14, 15, 16 and 20 below). Others pursuing military aspects of Roman Jordan in the past 25 years (whose publications may be found in the Bibliography) have been Graf, Kennedy and MacAdam with fieldwork and, on historical aspects, Speidel and Isaac. It has figured too as components of work by Sartre (1982), Kennedy and Riley (1990), Dodgeon and Lieu (1991), Shahid (1984a; 1984b; 1989; 1995), Millar (1993), Kennedy (Bibliography, *passim*), Gregory (1995–97), Greatrex *et al.* 2002 and in the excellent collections of essays edited by Humphrey (1995; 1999; 2002).

Research on the Roman army and frontier in Jordan has not only increased in quantity but matured too. The first papers on Roman Jordan to appear at a Limes Congress were only in 1979 (at Stirling) but the region has emerged as a regular feature in subsequent volumes, largely thanks to Parker. A further impetus has been given to research on the eastern frontier as a whole by the series of four conferences devoted to it, some of which have included items on Jordan (Mitchell 1983; Freeman and Kennedy 1986; French and Lightfoot 1989; Dabrowa 1994). A fifth — at the University of Miami — is planned for 2002. Moreover, a fruitful debate has emerged between divergent interpretations of the data and explanations of the role of the army (Parker, Graf and Isaac: cf. ch. 5). There is now, thanks to ground surveys throughout Jordan and to Michael MacDonald's research on the nomads (see Bibliography), increased

interest in soldier-civilian interaction (cf. Kennedy 2000a).

The Congress for which this book has been the motivation is both a symbol of the maturing of research on Roman Jordan (and the Near East as a whole) and also a further significant impetus in that research.

D. Guide to available further reading

The major studies of almost a century ago (PA; PES), though dated and only normally available in specialist libraries, are well worth investigation to understand the quality of preservation seen by those scholars and to appreciate their contribution. Nor should we neglect the less well-known writers of the 19th century, extracts from whose works can be found in PA.

Of relatively recent publications, fundamental for the province of which Jordan is the greater part, is G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (1983), a highly readable, informative and stimulating study. For the military installations in the province even his own subsequent work has not undermined the usefulness of S. T. Parker, *Romans and Saracens. A History of the Arabian Frontier* (1986). For the army in the province of Arabia, Chapter 5 will reveal how much we are indebted still to the long contribution by M. P. Speidel, "The Roman army in Arabia", in ANRW. Finally, we are fortunate now to have the collection of a large group of substantial, thoughtful and provocative essays from a period of more than twenty years published as D. F. Graf, *Rome and the Arabian Frontier: from the Nabataeans to the Saracens* (1997).

As for broader studies encompassing Jordan and themes central to the study of its army, outstanding is the major interpretative study, B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East* (rev. ed., 1992). I. Shahid has been tireless in publishing a succession of studies few scholars have the expertise to undertake with his *Rome and the Arabs* (1984a) followed in succession by *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century, ... the*

Fifth Century, ... the Sixth Century (1984b; 1989; 1995). F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 B.C. – A.D. 337* (1993) is a recent, valuable and provocative source of information and discussion. A substantial and useful reaction to this last, with a great deal devoted to Jordan is W. Ball, *Rome in the East*, 2000. Finally, there is the superb collection of evidence and sensible discussion and interpretation in S. Gregory, *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier* (1995–97; cf. 1996).

E. The future

New discoveries will continue to appear, excavations are in progress on military sites and ground surveys will continue to contribute. Publications arising from a succession of conferences on the military history of the Roman East have played a part in stimulating research; another is in preparation from that at Venosa in Italy in 1999 (Lewin 2000). The present conference will give an immense additional impetus which will be carried on by the planned conference on the Roman army in the East at Miami, Florida in 2002.

More high quality excavation is certainly required of the commendable quality and speed of publication of Parker and Oleson. A desideratum is publication of the excavations at Udruh in the early 1980s. No less important is simply the detailed and more accurate recording of what is supposedly 'known'. For too many sites we are working with sketch plans from surveys early this century. Many were done rapidly and were intended only as temporary guides to what was seen. Too often they have become the formalised plans of structures and create confusion when two such plans are in blatant conflict. Inexpensive but detailed architectural surveys of sites for which the only plan is that of Brünnow and von Domaszewski, the Princeton Expedition or Glueck are highly desirable. Where the only plan is by Musil the need is still greater.

There are other kinds of research. The accessibility of extracts from earlier visitors provided by the collection in Brünnow and

von Domaszewski has had a negative effect. There is a need to return to the full text by Seetzen and Doughty and Tristram. Moreover, many of these 19th century visitors record taking photographs although few published any. The archives of Brünnow and von Domaszewski and the Princeton Expedition are safe and catalogued (MacAdam 1986a: Part II). Sites such as Zizia, long lost under modern settlement, could be considerably illuminated through study of early photographs. Besides, many of these 19th century scholars are a delight to read for their own sake. They were travelling in a landscape that was thinly settled in a way hard to believe today. Indeed, in many places there were no settled populations and deserted ancient sites were visited only by occasional nomads. The accounts of a century ago are evocative as well as informative.

F. Getting around

This is not a guidebook; it does not pretend to offer instructions on roads to follow or turns to make. That would be far beyond the scope of a handbook and also extremely difficult in a country in which development is rapid and new roads are constantly appearing and familiar landmarks lost.

Visiting Roman Jordan is relatively easy. Jordanians are welcoming and hospitable and travel is largely unrestricted. Most of the sites discussed here are accessible on sealed roads and distances are modest. Maps are more problematic. Only small-scale sheets are generally available and few of the sites of the Roman army are marked. Scholars can often obtain access to larger scale maps at the Department of Antiquities or at one of the foreign research centres (Council for British Research in the Levant, Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche Orient, American Center for Oriental Research, Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiliges Landes, etc). To assist with finding places the entries below provide detailed references not just to JADIS, the Jordanian data base of archaeological sites, but to various grid referencing systems.

2. THE EVIDENCE AND METHODOLOGIES

A. Literary and sub-literary sources

Literary sources are uneven in chronological distribution and value. Diodorus Siculus and Strabo are the principal sources on the Nabataean background; the latter and Josephus carry us through to about AD 70. Josephus — especially his *Jewish Antiquities* — is particularly useful as the work of an ‘insider’ writing about the Near East. The subsequent two centuries are poorly attested, not least the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom and the formation of the new province of Arabia in AD 106; only Cassius Dio is of much value. With the 3rd century, events in Arabia are reported more frequently as successive nomadic powers emerge and cause military upsets but the sources are often only much later and highly derivative. Unfortunately the relevant section in Ammianus Marcellinus’ historical survey of Arabia is missing and we have only his brief characterisation as a guide to the mid-4th century. Christian writers become increasingly important, recording events in what had become ‘the Holy Land’. Eusebius provides helpful references in his *Onomasticon* to places with garrisons but the number is small. He is now dated to c. AD 293 (Barnes 1975; 1981: 110–111).

There are of course other written sources. Outstanding is the *Notitia Dignitatum* (ch. 6) with its list of regiments and place-names and a date for this battle order of c. AD 400. The *Notitia* can be read together with the Peutinger Table, the Roman map depicting and naming places and providing distances between them. In conjunction these two have permitted a number of garrison places to be located. Nevertheless, most of the places for units in the *Notitia* remain uncertain or unknown (Kennedy *forthc.* a).

B. Papyrological and epigraphic evidence

Only a few papyri have any bearing on the military in Jordan but those in question are of considerable value (chs 5, 15 and 17) and include

now two documents of the Babatha Archive with their reference to a senior military officer (ch. 15).

The most frustrating deficiency — despite extensive exploration — is that we have not even a fragment of a military diploma amongst the 400+ examples from the empire as a whole. The relatively late date for the creation of the province may be part of the explanation — four of the six for Syria are of the period before AD 106. On the other hand, some of the units mentioned on the diplomas of Syria and Syria Palaestina may have been based in what is now Jordan. In general, we are dependent for reconstructing the army list for Arabia on the *Notitia Dignitatum* (above and ch. 6) and on an unimpressive and uneven scatter of inscriptions (below and Fig. 2.1).

Most inscriptions of any kind come from the north. An exception is the fascinating group — from outside Jordan but relating to the province of Arabia — of graffiti scratched by Roman soldiers on the rock outcrop near Medain Saleh in north-western Saudi Arabia and their formal Nabataean counterparts, the tomb dedications mentioning officers at Medain Saleh itself (ch. 21). Milestones, offering a guide to some of the major phases of road-building and maintenance, are found much more widely; in some places, milestations are marked still by multiple milestones, several by a dozen or more. Examples range in date from the 1st century AD to the late 4th after which they cease even if, apparently, road-building itself continued. A weakness in this group comes in the south where many are anepigraphic and seemingly part of a tradition of painting the text (Graf 1995b). A few coins are of use but Arabia is not much noticed by the selectors of images and legends and there are few coin hoards from Jordan.

Inscriptions are of enormous value. They are often precisely datable, sometimes name regiments or the officers overseeing the work;

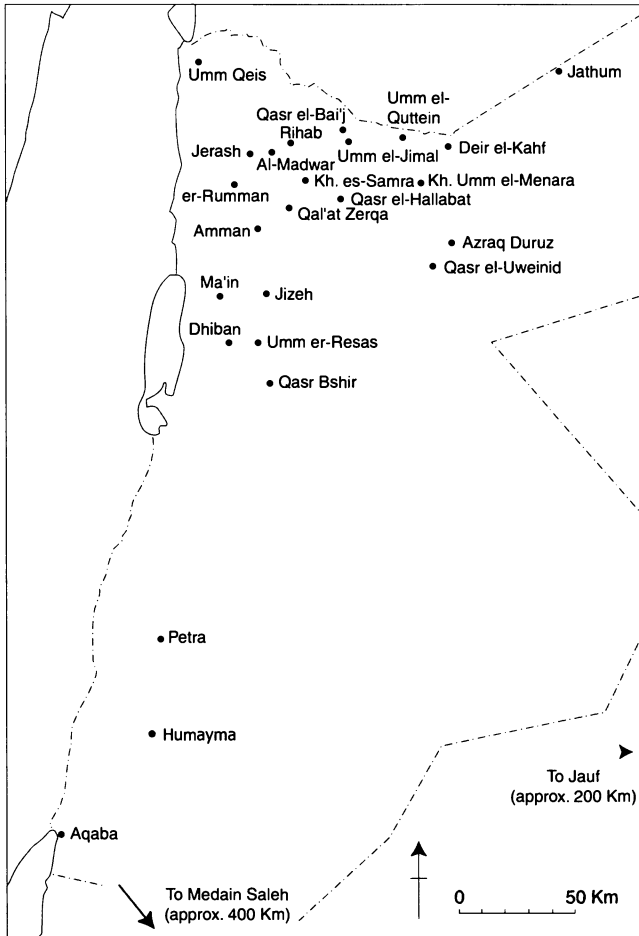


Fig. 2.1: Map showing the find spots of military inscriptions in Jordan.

a few even give place names. There are two cautionary lessons to emerge in recent years. First, building material, especially well-cut stone and including inscriptions, was often moved in antiquity to neighbouring sites and that occurred again in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is sometimes not possible to attach a dated building inscription to the military structure or site on which it was found. Sometimes it is clear it probably comes from elsewhere. The small fort at Qasr el-Uweinid (ch. 7) is an early example of the problem. Two dated Latin building inscriptions may seem surprising enough on such a modest

structure; that one of them records a rare reference to construction of a bath-building is even more astonishing. No such structure is evident, the circumstances make it most unlikely and there is a plausible alternative at the great oasis pools a few kilometres away.

The second problem is in the distribution of such evidence. As Fig. 2.1 shows, overwhelmingly military texts come from the north-east and from a handful of northern towns. Their absence across much of Jordan may be because the supposed Roman military sites are no such thing, or modern development

in those areas destroyed them or because the fashion was for painted inscriptions. Canova's survey of Moab alone recorded several hundred, but not one that was military (1954). There are inscriptions from these areas; they are just very seldom military. It is striking how little epigraphic evidence has been recovered from the extensive excavations on undoubted Roman military sites at el-Lejjun, Udruh, Humayma and Aqaba — and the abundance of such inscriptions largely found by surface exploration in the north-east. It is no accident that the earliest and latest building inscriptions come from the north-east, from Qasr el-Uweiniid (AD 200) and Qasr el-Hallabat (AD 529) respectively.

The fragments of the Beer Sheva Edict(s) include a list of place-names in the Late Roman province of Palestine alongside each of which is a sum of money expressed as so many *nomismata*.¹ It was once thought that these were the sums paid by the populations in the places concerned as their *annona militaris* but the amounts seemed at variance with the relative importance of the places. It is now widely agreed that the sums are the payments made by the soldiers in each place to the Dux of the province (van Berchem 1952: 33–36; Isaac 1998: 451–452; cf. Mayerson 1986 and 1994: ch. 23). In short, the list of place-names is a list of garrisons. Several are in Jordan. Unfortunately the edict(s) is not closely dated; it can be anywhere between the early 4th century and Anastasius but probably later rather than earlier.

C. The physical remains

As the discussion and illustrations in Part B will bring out, the physical remains are a very different matter. Jordan has a wealth of well-preserved military structures. Qasr Bshir is one of the best preserved forts anywhere in the empire and has a dated building inscription in place above the main gate (ch. 14). Forts abound and in recent years several have been the object of excavation — the 'Castellum' at Umm el-Jimal, Qasr el-Hallabat, Qasr Bshir,

Da'ajaniya and Humayma, and the fortresses at Lejjun and Udruh. New forts continue to be discovered: Umm el-Quttein, the 'Castellum' at Umm el-Jimal, Kh. Khaw, Qaryat el-Hadid, Kh. Ain, Tell Faysal, and Humayma. Moreover, there has been a growing awareness of the Nabataean background. Just as the Nabataean army was modelled on those of the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire, so, too, we must be more alert to supposedly Roman forts having a Nabataean origin.

There are some traces of the temporary camps of the Roman army in Jordan. The siege camps around the Herodian fortress of Machaerus (ch. 12) are now quite well-known and there are possible examples at Azraq Duruz (ch. 7) and Tell Abara (ch. 17) just south of Udruh. Less well-known is the probable large camp in the Jordan Valley at Azeima (ch. 12) and we might in future have to add another at 'Kh. Abu Safat' on the route to the El-Jafr Oasis (ch. 16).

Finally, we can go beyond 'forts' and draw in, too, the growing corpus of evidence for city defences. Sadly very little of this has been the outcome of systematic excavation, but we may draw at least a little comfort from the increasingly extensive revelation, consolidation and presentation of the walls of Gadara (Umm Qeis), Gerasa (Jerash) and Philadelphia (Amman) (all in ch. 11) to add to the systematically explored walls of Aila (Aqaba) (ch. 20).

The written evidence is not increasing much although there is abundant scope for clarifying it. The physical remains are increasing — or rather while Roman military sites are often being damaged or lost entirely, the numbers known to us are increasing and what we know about many is growing rapidly. There are also different pre-occupations for fieldworkers. Parker and Oleson have both given prominence to environmental evidence at Lejjun (ch. 15) and Humayma (ch. 19)

¹ The *nomismat* is the Late Roman gold coin struck at 72 to the pound of gold, a little over half the weight of the earlier *aureus*.

respectively and scholars are increasingly interested in how forts were provided with water or food and where it originated.

Attention has spread beyond the military structure itself to the settlement of which it was a part and with whose history it is engaged. De Vries' work at Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9) is important here (1998). The development and proliferation of ground survey in Jordan has also focussed attention more widely still — on the landscape within which military structures lay, the impact of these structures on their environment and, in particular, of the wider human environment. Ground survey has 'peopled' landscapes with farms and villages and tracks and shown what else was there. Increasingly scholars are analysing the data with new questions in mind. Not just the fundamentals of Who and When but more penetrating questions. Why were particular sites selected? What was the function of the garrison? What was the relationship of soldier to civilian? How did the two develop? How and Why did things change? Military history is far more engaged with the wider history of the region than before.

D. Exploration and approaches to the evidence

Three features will be evident in this book. First, Jordan has enormous potential in its numerous and generally well-preserved sites. Second, without excavation, the current interpretations are uncertain at best and the reliance on inscriptions and typology is unwise. Third, there has been a simplistic tendency to identify every square structure as a 'fort', and every 'fort' as Roman.

The first of these can be illustrated by simply turning to the gazetteer and gauging the breadth and richness of the evidence. More than that, the excavations at Humayma illustrate the potential to be gained from systematic fieldwork (ch. 19). At a stroke, the discoveries there have filled in a significant gap for the military history of the Roman Near East as a whole — a 2nd century fort and one with features (projecting towers) largely unsuspected at such an early date.

Second, excavation has allowed a refinement in dating seldom possible before. Parker, for example, has been able to offer close dates for the initial construction of the fortress at Lejjun (ch. 15) and the forts at Qasr Bshir (ch. 14), Kh. el-Fityan (ch. 15) and Da'ajaniya (ch. 16). Surface sherding on sites can be helpful but too often forces judgements based more on expectation and pre-conceived ideas than on what the data says. Examination of the typology of sites has also been problematic. Gregory's scepticism has been salutary and her mammoth survey will be a durable enterprise. Even that, however, has been undermined now by the discovery that Humayma has projecting corner and interval towers in the Trajanic period. Excavation has also revealed the extent of continuity on sites. Sites can now be traced from Nabataean (or earlier) times through to the Roman or from Roman into the Islamic. Sites with military remains do not always conveniently start and finish in the Roman period.

Finally, exploration in the region has been dominated by western scholars. Many saw what they wanted to see; many were blind to the sophistication of periods other than the Classical. Unlike Western Europe where Roman military sites can seldom be confused with the remains of any other period, the archaeological record in the Near East is far richer and more complex. Scholars have often assumed that 'square/rectangular', well-built structures, were overwhelmingly likely to be Roman. The mounting evidence of the sophistication of non-Classical civilization in the region has been altering that perception. In Jordan, for example, it is now clear that many of the best-known landmarks of Petra pre-date the Roman annexation by decades or even generations. Moabite hillforts have been familiar for decades, but the development of Nabataean archaeology in the last 20 years has alerted us to the number of 'Roman' sites we must now see as Nabataean in origin and to Nabataean military architecture as a field with a large corpus of data and great potential. It is not just that some 'Roman forts' are now seen to be Nabataean or reused Nabataean, but

that we should be looking for the inspiration of Nabataean military architecture and its influence on Rome. At the other end, it is now clear that the Islamic period, especially the Umayyad that followed the end of Roman rule, was a period of vigour combining continuity and innovation. Dussaud (and Macler) (1903: 438), men of their time, naturally viewed the large stone-built square structures at El-Fedein as Roman. A Roman military post is certainly likely but the visible structures are Islamic. Not far away is Qasr el-Hallabat; the Princeton Expedition was in no doubt — there was nothing Islamic about it but excavation has revealed its conversion to a splendid Umayyad residence with mosaics and plastered walls. Prominent ‘Roman’ forts elsewhere in Jordan are being excised from the list. Qastal south of Amman, with tall walls and striking circular towers, is not at all Roman and recent work has argued that all three of the ‘square’ structures at Umm el-Walid are Islamic.

E. Contrasts and comparisons

From the perspective of scholars more familiar with Europe, there are features of the archaeology of the Roman army in Jordan (indeed, of the Near East as a whole), worth singling out. First, the time span is greater. The barbarian invasions that ended Roman rule in north-western Europe were not paralleled in the East. Instead, Roman military history continues for over two centuries longer. Next, the physical remains, though often well-preserved, are generally much later than in Europe. There is little anywhere in the Near East of the 1st century BC or the 1st AD; until recently with excavation at Humayma, there was little even of the 2nd century AD. Most sites in fact seemed to be late 3rd century onwards. Third and related to this is the type of structure encountered. The temporary camps so common in Britain and increasingly elsewhere in Roman Europe, are rare in the Near East. Excluding the siege camps around a few well-known places, mainly in Israel, there is little else. In Jordan there are the siege camps around Machaerus as a modest

counterpart to Masada. On the other hand there is now a little evidence for temporary camps at four sites discussed below. Nor does the East have the forts of turf, earth, clay and timber so common in Europe. In the West the army had to develop a military architecture in a landscape largely devoid of convenient ready-made billets. The Roman army in the Near East could, of course, be billeted in towns and villages rather than constructing purpose-built forts. It was not until it began to move into areas with thinner settlement and lacking towns that purpose-built forts were needed.

Two related features of military sites in the West are different in Jordan. Instead of the wells so common on European sites, eastern forts could not normally tap into groundwater (but cf. Azraq Duruz, ch. 7). Instead, water had to be harvested and stored. Cisterns abound, reservoirs are common and dams can be found widely either to pond water in river beds or depressions or deflect it seasonally into channels to fill cisterns or reservoirs. Routine and very visible features of the eastern fort are the external reservoir and cisterns, and cisterns inside the fort. Archaeologically they are the counterpart to the frequent granaries of the West which are uncommon in the East (or at least not very visible as distinctive structures). The mechanism for controlling steppe and desert lands will have been inherited from Rome’s predecessors in the Near East including the Nabataeans but also from early Roman Egypt where a recently published inscription (one of at least three identical versions) neatly describes the process in the Eastern Desert during the reign of Vespasian:

1. BAGNALL ET AL. 2001: 325–326:

In the 9th year of Emperor Caesar Augustus Vespasianus, L. Julius Ursus, Prefect of Egypt, returning from Berenike gave instructions for a well to be sought in this place. When it had been found, he ordered a fort and cisterns to be constructed, under the direction of M. Trebonius Valens, Prefect of the Desert Region of Berenike [mont<i>s Berenicidis].

Date: AD76/7

Also uncommon or invisible, are military bath-buildings. Until recently they were virtually unknown on military sites in the Roman Near East. Now there are several in Jordan, all the result of excavation or more intensive exploration in recent years: Qasr el-Uweinid (ch. 7), el-Lejjun (ch. 15), Kh. el-Khalde (ch. 19), and Bir Madkhur (ch. 20) (cf. Yotvata in Israel, ch. 21).

Extensive and intensive excavation in the West has brought great quantities of military artifacts to light, not least military equipment

(cf. Bishop and Coulston 1993). Conversely, the lack of excavation means there is an imbalance in the East. Even worse, unlike the West with the fashion of erecting tombstones depicting soldiers in their equipment, there is virtually no such evidence in the East. A handful of figured tombstones from the East and the wall-paintings of Dura Europos are the two obvious sources of representation of soldiers. For Jordan more narrowly the situation is worse still as figured tombstones of any kind are rare. A consequence has been the relative importance of modest pieces of equipment at Humayma (ch. 19) and in a grave near the Dead Sea (Parker 1994).

3. GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Jordan is a small country of 96,000 sq. km, much of it desert of chert, boulders or sand. The population (1998) is 4.6 million most of whom live in a relatively narrow strip along the western side of the country.

A. Physical geography

The two defining features of the geography of Jordan are the Rift Valley and the desert (Fig. 3.1). Beginning at Lake Tiberias the R. Jordan runs south through a valley falling from c. 200 m below sea level (bsl) in a meandering

course to enter the Dead Sea c. 104 km away. The latter, c. 400 m bsl extends 80 km south and up to 17 km broad. South of the Dead Sea for c. 170 km stretches the broad trough of the Wadi Araba, dry apart from a few springs and up to 15 km broad in places. The Gulf of Aqaba at its southern end, is a flooded extension of the valley, one of the two northern arms of the Red Sea.

East of the Rift Valley the land rises more steeply than on the west and to a higher

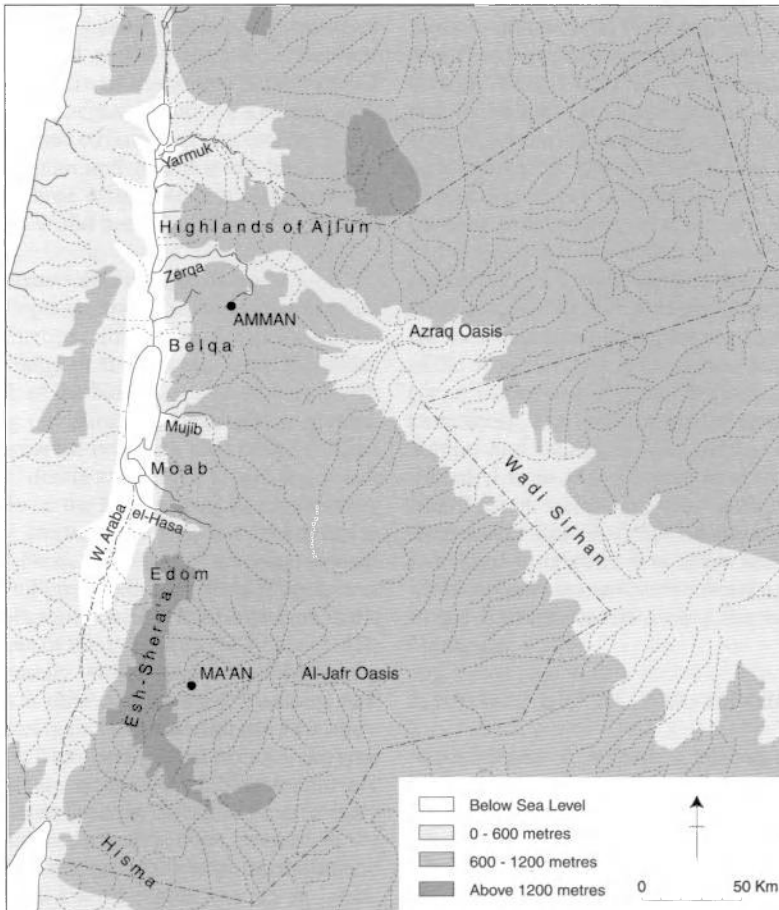


Fig. 3.1: Physical Geography of Jordan.

plateau. Or rather to a series of plateaux or areas of highland. The various divisions of this upland are created by a succession of east to west water courses cutting down through the hills to enter the Rift Valley. There are dozens of them but several create significant natural features and divide the land along the west of the country into four major zones. In the north, the most important by far, is the Wadi Yarmuk, a major perennial watercourse. Next is the Wadi Zerqa, perennial from the vicinity of Amman but with a much more modest flow. Third is the stream emerging from the great slash of the Wadi Mujib into the Dead Sea. Another great canyon, the Wadi al-Hasa joins the Dead Sea just near its southern end.

From north to south the zones on the plateau are the Highlands of Ajlun, with its greatest height of c. 1400 m between Ajlun and Jerash but generally only half that height elsewhere. The Highlands of Amman or Northern Belqa, south of the W. Zerqa are less extensive and less high but again create an attractive environment for settlement. The Southern Belqa is the lower plateau stretching south along the east of the Dead Sea and split in two by the deep gouge of the Wadi Mujib and its great tributary the Wala. In antiquity this was Moab. Ancient Edom occupied the next zone, the highlands that rise up south of the Wadi al-Hasa reach c. 1200 m. In the north they are called Al-Jibal and in the south Esh-Shera'a. It is here that the pink and red sandstone appears in which Petra lies. The Shera'a curves finally eastwards to create a scarp. South of the scarp lies an extension of the Shera'a running along the eastern side of the Wadi Araba before broadening largely to bar access to the Red Sea. In between lies the flat expanse of the Hisma Desert.

East of the Shera'a lies the great basin of Al-Jafr with its oasis. Seasonal rainfall drains eastwards into it but the intervening land is barren. Further north, the arable lands of the plateau fall away more slowly shading into chert covered desert stretching east towards the Wadi Sirhan. The latter is a broad shallow trough running south-east to north-west for

300 km from deep in Saudi Arabia to just south of the Azraq Oasis. The latter lies at the centre of another extensive drainage basin. On the south chert-covered and dry; to the east, north and north-west, it is the landscape of the basalt desert. Black basalt boulders and volcanic outcrops are scattered across a wide area spanning the border with Syria and Saudi Arabia. Between the basalt and chert deserts and the highlands further west lies a broad area of steppe, flat and of potential use to settlers in the right circumstances.

B. Water resources and rainfall

The Jordan provides a constant and substantial water supply for irrigation. Next, the Yarmuk then the Zerqa are important courses but watering narrower valleys. There are no other major water courses and the Dead Sea, of course, is highly saline, settlement around its shores being determined by a handful of local springs. In the east, the oases at Azraq and Al-Jafr are significant water sources but with limited scope for settlement around them.

The key to significant settlement is rainfall and the map (Fig. 3.2) tells the story. Dry farming — farming relying only on natural precipitation, requires an annual average minimum of 200 mm. Some cereals such as barley can be grown on less but this is marginal farming. Most of Jordan has significantly less than 200 mm; often less than 100 mm.

At an early date people began to develop mechanisms to cope with limited rainfall and shortages. The areas of arable soils but limited rainfall particularly stimulated populations intent on settlement initially to collect water and store it for household use but later to use on a grander scale. In addition to the cisterns often found in the courtyards of houses in the marginal areas or where springs and groundwater could not be tapped, a wide range of other constructions appeared. Dams were constructed to pond water or deflect it into channels to fill larger cisterns and immense reservoirs. The latter are a common feature in the steppe areas of Jordan today, many of them of great antiquity but often attributed to the

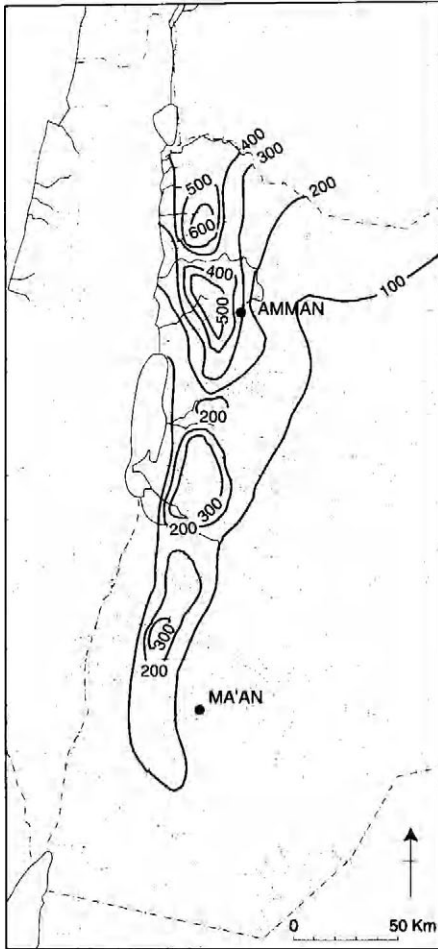


Fig. 3.2: Mean annual precipitation in Jordan (after Atlas 112).

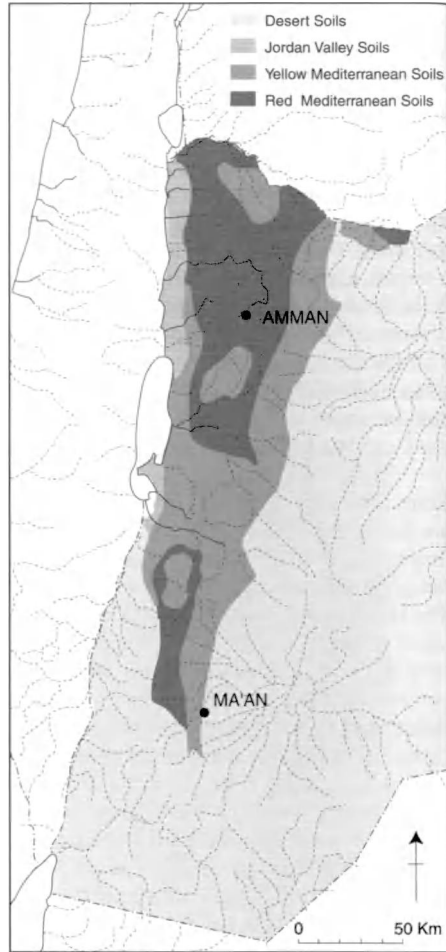


Fig. 3.3: The soils of Jordan (after Atlas 134).

Nabataean and Roman period. That at Jizeh (ch. 12, Zizia) may be the largest at c. 128 x 100 x 5.3 m (c. 68,000 cu. m) (Kennedy 1995a).

Such efforts produced stores of water that went beyond household needs to allow the watering of orchards and flocks. The result was to alter the basic settlement pattern. The major concentrations of population in the highland areas extended outwards into areas of arable soils where farms and villages appeared and developed. Some became extensive and Millar's "world of villages" for the Roman

Near East was one that included extensive tracts of steppe lands and settlements. Some villages in the Hauran in the north were really small towns.

Even in the steppe there was scope for development. Farmers and semi-nomads stored water but also found mechanisms for maximising the effects of low rainfall on otherwise arable soils. The succession of low parallel walls found built across wadi courses in such areas created small fields but also had the effect of ponding seasonal water flow and

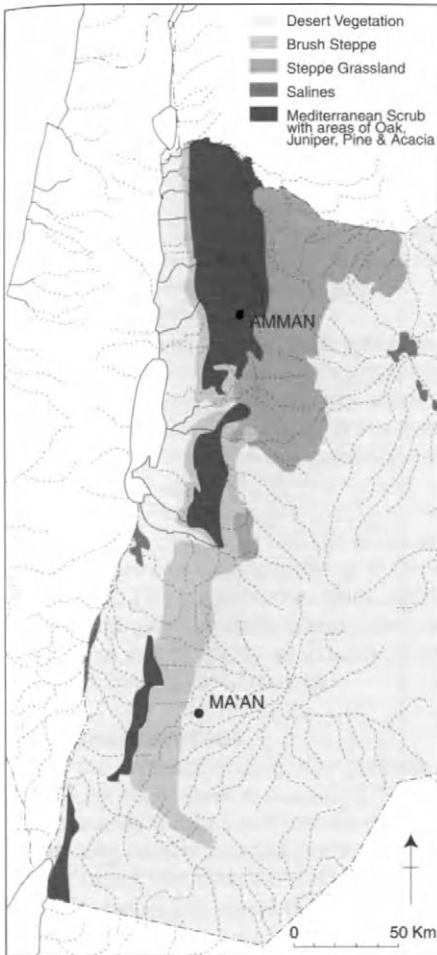


Fig. 3.4: Natural vegetation of Jordan (after Atlas 135).

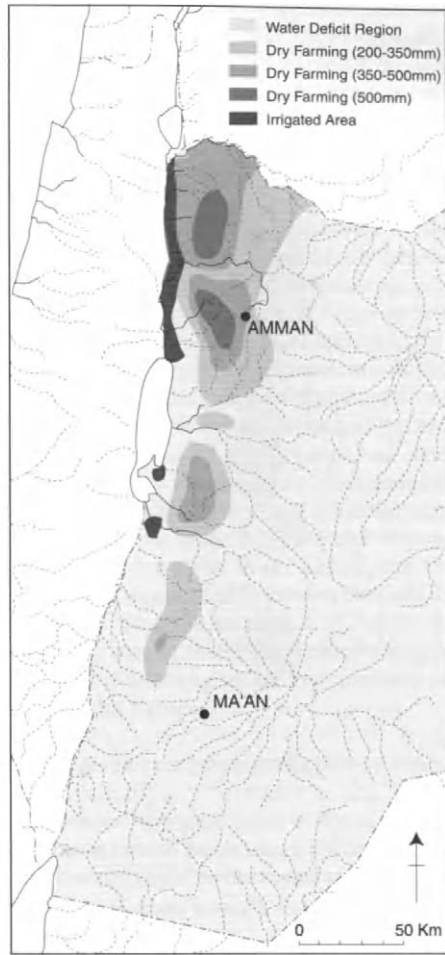


Fig. 3.5: Agricultural areas of Jordan (after Atlas 133).

trapping soils for modest farming (Kennedy 1998c: 67–73).

C. Soils and other natural resources

Figure 3.3 sets out the pattern of soils in Jordan. From the perspective of farmers, the key soils are the Red and Yellow and the soils of the Jordan Valley. The pattern is of a broad strip beginning at the Shera'a escarpment, stretching north and gradually broadening. It extends out to the east along the border with Syria and a continuation of this map would show a broad swathe of arable soils, higher

rainfall and extensive settlement in the adjacent part of modern Syria. This was the northern part of Roman Arabia, location of the capital, Bostra and of its sole legion.

The desert is generally barren and there is seldom any settlement to be found. But it was not empty. Nomads developed mechanisms to allow subsistence, grazing flocks of goats and herds of camels on seasonal vegetation and exploiting pools before they dry up and force them to migrate westwards to the steppe, plateaux and highlands. The desert, or at least

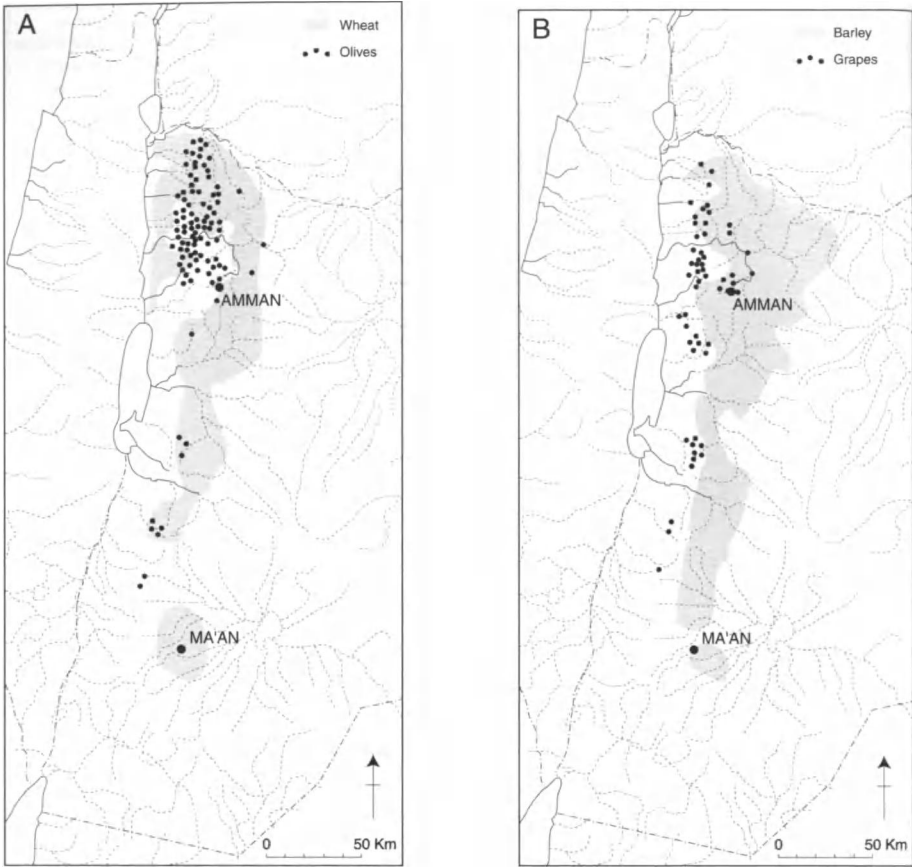


Fig. 3.6: Planted areas for (a) wheat and olives and (b) barley and grapes (after Atlas 117, 123, 127).

the basalt part of it, was also the home of abundant game, hares and gazelle in particular. Recent exploration of the region has brought out the extent to which a seemingly inhospitable and empty landscape is in fact littered with ancient traces. In particular, ancient nomadic seasonal encampments and the thousands of ‘kites’, animal traps whose walls can run for hundreds of metres, that extend in chains across the basalt into Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Fowden 1999; cf. Kennedy 1998c: 74–80; 2000a). People lived there, they migrated annually and they interacted with the semi-nomadic populations of the steppe and the settled populations further west still. They had an effect, too, on the routes

that traversed this region. The settled peoples of Roman Jordan would have been familiar with the nomad as a feature of their world as would the Roman authorities.

D. Vegetation and agriculture

The greater part of Jordan is desert with characteristic vegetation of small scrub, suitable only for grazing. Of the same character are the sandstone and granite mountains stretching alongside the Rift Valley and spread out in the south along the frontier with Saudi Arabia.

A long narrow belt stretches down the areas of highland and plateaux from the River

Yarmuk to the bottom of the Dead Sea. There one finds areas populated by more extensive Mediterranean scrub with a few pockets in the Highlands of Ajlun and in the Northern Belqa of oak and pine forest. To the east lies a broad area of steppe grassland capable of supporting arable farming where water is available. Likewise in the south a narrow band of scrub steppe extends down through the regions of Al-Jibal and Esh-Shera'a.

The combination of adequate water and suitable soils allows Jordan today as, probably, in antiquity when rainfall patterns seem to have been broadly the same, to practice the dry farming of cereals over the areas shown on Figures 3.4 and 3.5.

In addition to cereals the remains of oil and grape presses attest to the growing of olives and grapes. This could be done quite widely as a cottage garden activity where water was stored, but was primarily an industry of the highland areas of the north-west.

E. Communications

From the west the Rift Valley presents a significant impediment to movement. Several roads crossed it in antiquity but the demands of the long descent into and climb out of the valley meant that even the western parts of

Jordan would have seemed more distant in travel time than they were in reality. In fact, the nearest part of the Mediterranean is only 60 km from the Jordan in a straight line.

Within Jordan, north-south movement within the highland zone and on the succeeding plateaux was punctuated at intervals by the great barriers of first the Wadi Mujib then the Wadi al-Hasa. This was nevertheless the line of the major route in Roman times largely following the route of the more ancient King's Highway. However, other routes ran further east, through the edge of the steppe and avoiding the main settled areas and the two great wadis. The Romans plainly had some stretches of road in this area — misleadingly called the *Via Militaris* — and it was the route in Islamic times of the Pilgrim Road. Beyond lay routes down the Wadi Sirhan into the Arabian peninsula and beyond to the Gulf. In the south the route south-east of Aqaba ran down the eastern side of the Hedjaz to the port at Leuke Kome (Aynunah?) or continued on land to the Yemen.

In the desert over considerable parts of Jordan the availability of water was the key to movement. The great oases at Azraq and Al-Jafr were natural points on a route and at other stops water could be harvested and stored.

4: THE ROMANS IN JORDAN

A. Introduction

Jordan first entered the Roman world in the mid-60s BC.¹ During the preceding two decades the rump of the Hellenistic kingdom of Syria had collapsed into chaos and civil war. Much of it was annexed to the short-lived empire of Tigranes the Great of Armenia and in the south, when Armenian troops withdrew, the forces of the Nabataean king Aretas III (84–62/61 BC) seized Damascus and intervened in the struggle going on in Judaea. In 65 BC Pompey's general M. Aemilius Scaurus revealed the calibre of the new power in the region when he ordered Aretas to withdraw his army east of the R. Jordan.

The region was transformed in 64 BC when Pompey formed a province of Syria, establishing Roman control in the Near East for almost exactly seven centuries. For the lands which are now Jordan the effects were immediate. In 63 BC Pompey recognised the autonomy of the Greek cities of the Decapolis, several of which lay in north-western Jordan. These Decapolis cities henceforth officially dated their affairs by a new era beginning in or around that year, the so-called Pompeian Era. More aggressively — according to the historian Josephus — Pompey planned an expedition against the Nabataean king but was deflected by events further north. The ambition — whether its objective was punitive or acquisitive — was taken up in 62 BC by Scaurus whom Pompey left in command of his new province of Syria.

1. JOSEPHUS (*Ant.J.* 14.80–82. Trans. R. Marcus, Loeb ed.):

Σκαύρου δ' ἐπὶ Πέτραν τῆς Ἀραβίας στρατεύσαντος καὶ διὰ τὸ δυσεμβολωτάτην εἶναι τὰ ἐν κύκλῳ δημοῦντος αὐτῆς, ... Ἀντίπατρος ... πεμψθεὶς τε πρὸς Ἀρέταν

προσβευτῆς ὑπὸ Σκαύρου ... πείθει καὶ αὐτὸν ἀργύριον ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ δημοθῆναι τὴν χώραν δοῦναι ... καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔλυσε τὸν πόλεμον Σκαύρος ...

Scaurus then marched against Petra in Arabia, and because it was difficult of access, ravaged the country round about it ... And when Antipater [father of the future Herod the Great] was sent by Scaurus as an envoy to Aretas ... he persuaded him to pay a sum of money to save his country being ravaged ... And on these terms Scaurus ended the war ...

The Nabataean kingdom survived and was to last a further 168 years. Rome, however, was firmly entrenched in what is now northern Jordan, its dominance of the region only to end in AD 636 when the armies of Islam inflicted a crushing defeat in the same area.

B. Early Roman Jordan

In the late 1st century BC part of Jordan belonged to the kingdom of the Jewish king, Herod the Great. This strip of land — the Peraea — extended from the R. Jordan eastwards up onto the plateau where it met the boundaries of the southernmost Decapolis cities: Capitolias (Beit Ras), Gerasa (Jerash) and Philadelphia (Amman). In the 1st century AD the elimination of the descendants of Herod the Great from their rule over his former territories brought the Peraea, too, under direct Roman administration — and hence another strip of Jordan. During this same period, the Decapolis cities in northern Jordan were part of the province of Syria and there are a striking number of inscriptions at Gerasa recording dedications to imperial governors and procurators.

The Julio-Claudian period witnessed tensions in the relationship between the Herods and their Nabataean neighbours (and kinsmen —

¹ Bowersock's *Roman Arabia* (1983) remains indispensable for the detailed account of the province and discussion of the evidence. I have not generally provided detailed referencing to that book.

Herod's mother was Nabataean). More dangerously, there was also confrontation between Rome and Nabataea. In c. 26 BC, Augustus had relied on the Nabataeans as guides and auxiliaries when he despatched his Prefect of Egypt, Aelius Gallus, on an expedition down the eastern shore of the Red Sea to the kingdom of the Sabaeans in modern Yemen. A garrison was established at Athloula from which a bilingual Greek and Latin tombstone has come:

2. BOWERSOCK 1983: 148–153:

[P.] CORNE[LIVS ...]
EQVES. N[.....]

ΠΟΥΒΑΙΣΚΟΡΝ[ΗΑΙΟΣ...]

Publius Cornelius, cavalryman [...]

The ultimate failure of the expedition was blamed on the alleged duplicity of the Nabataean royal official Syllaeus.

Relations were often bad in the generations that followed. There was strife between Herod and the Nabataeans and Augustus is said to have considered giving the latter's kingdom to Herod at one point. Indeed, a case has been argued (Bowersock 1983: 53–57) for a brief annexation of Nabataea at the time of Gaius Caesar's expedition to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba in AD 1 (ch. 20):

3. PLINY THE ELDER (*NH* 6.160. Trans. H. Rackham, Loeb ed.):

Romana arma solus in eam terram adhuc intulit Aelius Gallus ex equestri ordine; nam C. Caesar Augusti filius prospexit tantum Arabiam.

Aelius Gallus, a member of the Order of Knights, is the only person who has hitherto carried the arms of Rome into this country; for Gaius Caesar son of Augustus only had a glimpse of Arabia.

In the early 30s AD Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40) invaded the territory of Herod Antipas and defeated his forces. Soon after, the

emperor Tiberius sent the governor of Syria, Aulus Vitellius, to invade Nabataea with two legions and auxiliaries. They may not have had time to cross from Judaea into Nabataea when news of the emperor's death in 37 enabled Vitellius to abandon the expedition. The next — and last — Roman expedition was to be almost 70 years later. During that period the most significant event came in 67 when the next Nabataean king, Malichus II (AD 40–70), sent 5000 infantry and 1000 cavalry to assist Titus in ending the Jewish War. The reign of the last king, Rabbel II (70–106), goes largely unnoticed in the literary sources.

C. The later Nabataean kingdom

The Nabataean kings were dependents of the Roman Empire as the Herods and the other allied rulers of the Near East were. However, their distance from the main centre of Roman power in north-western Syria and the difficulty of attacking the core of their kingdom and its main city of Petra allowed them a considerable degree of autonomy. It was an autonomy they used to expand and develop their domain. By the time of its annexation, the kingdom had become extensive, stretching from the Hauran in what is now southern Syria, east of the Decapolis, then down through Moab, Edom through Petraea and the Hisma Desert to the Gulf of Aqaba. More than that, it extended, too, west across the Wadi Araba to encompass the Negev Desert and Sinai and south along the eastern side of the Red Sea at least as far as Medain Saleh in the Hedjaz. In the east there was control of some kind in the Wadi Sirhan perhaps as far down as the Jauf Oasis (ch. 21) (Fig. 4.1).

The city of Petra is the most brilliant example of their civilisation. As we now know, such principal monuments as the theatre and the Qasr el-Bint, once thought to belong to the period after the Roman annexation, were in fact already a century old in AD 106. The great tombs are probably also of the 1st century AD or earlier. Certainly the very similar examples at Medain Saleh in Saudi Arabia include many

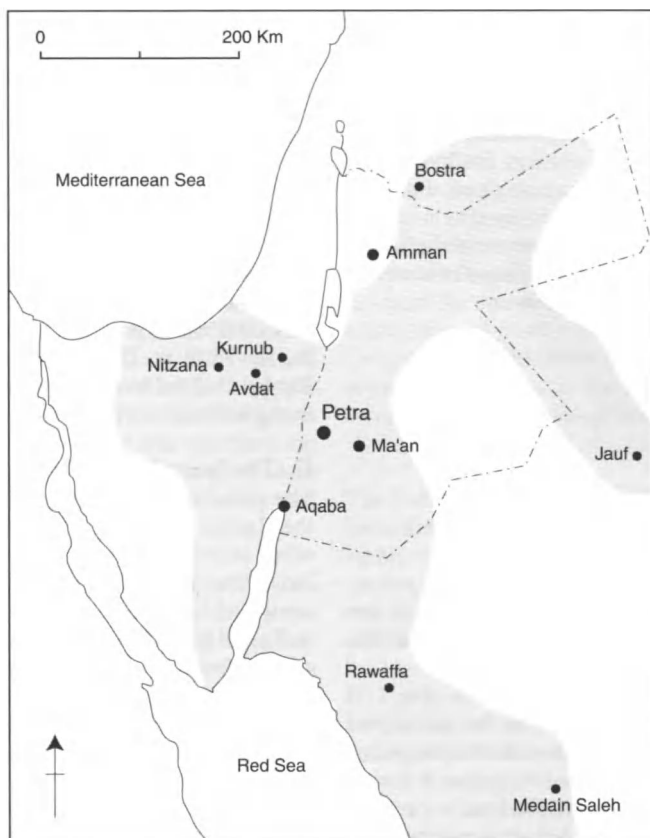


Fig. 4.1: Map of the Nabataean Kingdom.

with dated inscriptions, all belonging to the half century beginning in AD 1. In the west the settlements of the Negev Desert developed in this period into towns but it was in the north that the kingdom made its most direct contact with Rome. There is growing evidence for Nabataean activity in a broad swathe from the Madaba Plain south of Philadelphia (Amman) curving north-eastwards through the steppe to encompass the fertile lands of the Hauran. There, in southern Syria, a score of large villages/small towns appeared amongst which the city of Bostra stands out. By AD 106 it may have rivalled Petra; certainly under Roman rule Bostra was a more suitable centre than

the latter and after 106 was the seat of provincial government and the legionary base (chs 5 and 21).

D. Arabia

In AD 106 the Nabataean kingdom was annexed. There are no contemporary accounts. According to an early 3rd century writer:

4. CASSIUS DIO (68.14.5 [XIPH.]. Trans E. Cary, Loeb ed.):

Κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον χρόνον καὶ Πάλμας τῆς Συρίας ἄρχων τὴν Ἀραβίαν τὴν πρὸς τῇ Πέτρῳ ἐχειρώσατο καὶ Ῥωμαίων ἱππικοὺν ἐποιήσατο.

About this same time, Palma, the governor of Syria, subdued the part of Arabia around Petra and made it subject to the Romans.

5. AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, a century and a half later wrote (14.8.13. Trans J. C. Rolfe, Loeb ed.):

Hanc provinciae imposito nomine, rectoreque adtributo, obtemperare legibus nostris Traianus compulit imperator ...

[Arabia] was given the name of a province, assigned a governor and compelled to obey our laws by the emperor Trajan ...

No motivation is mentioned and scholars have speculated on various possibilities: the end of the dynasty, the region developed sufficiently to be annexed profitably, the attractions of the rich trade through the kingdom (Freeman 1996). It seems to have been anticipated, however, as may be inferred from a remarkable discharge diploma published by Pflaum (1967). It is dated 24 September 105, several months before the campaign began and has been widely interpreted as implying preparations long before the event. The regimental list records three *alae* and seven cohorts in Egypt itself, but then goes on to add:

6. RMD I: 9:

item extranlatarum in Iudaeam I Hispanorum et I Thebaeorum

Also transferred to Judaea, (Cohorts) I Hispanorum and I Thebaeorum

Neither of these regiments is on any subsequent diploma of Judaea/Syria Palaestina. Nor is either found anywhere else thereafter. The consensus has been that both were transferred to Judaea in

anticipation of a campaign into Nabataea, then remained as part of the initial garrison (Speidel 1977: 709–710; Gracey 1981: 272–273; Strobel 1988: 254) (ch. 5).

Following annexation a major restructuring took place in the region. Some of the Decapolis cities remained attached to the province of Syria and some belonged to Syria Palaestina. The southern group — Adraha, Dium, Gerasa and Philadelphia — were joined henceforth to the former Nabataean kingdom. It seems likely that the new Roman province incorporated all of the former Nabataean kingdom not just in the Negev and Hisma but in the Hedjaz, too (ch. 21). The outcome might have been a province called Petraea or Nabataea; instead, a large new province with the evocative name of Arabia was created.²

Debate has continued on the degree of force required in the annexation. Cassius Dio observed that Palma “... subdued [ἐχειρώσατο] the part of Arabia around Petra” (68.14.5 [Xiph.]). The word used by Ammianus Marcellinus (14.8.13) in the 4th century was *compulit*, which need not imply outright warfare. Finally, the term used on the coins struck to celebrate the new province — *Arabia Adquisita*, ‘Arabia Acquired’, seems more in tune with a largely bloodless process. Perhaps like Commagene a generation before, there had been no more than partial and half-hearted resistance (Kennedy 1983a). Whatever the case, the man responsible was handsomely rewarded: “... triumphal ornaments and decreed a statue in the Forum of Augustus” (ILS 1023) and awarded a second consulship in 109.

The infrastructure was the first to be tackled by the new power in the land. First came the great highways extending those already created in the territory of the southern Decapolis cities. Most important was that

² The name was that long applied more loosely to a wide area from Mesopotamia to the Arabian peninsula which was inhabited by ‘Arabs’. One consequence was confusion. Ammianus, for example, continues in the passage cited above to write of Trajan’s frequent victories over the inhabitants but, by placing these at the time of his “... war with Media and the Parthians” makes clear that he must be referring not to Provincia Arabia but to the Arabs of Mesopotamia. Likewise, the 3rd century Syriac text of Bardaisan of Edessa is a reference to the Severan annexation of Arab Osrhoene rather than Nabataean Arabia.

which ran the length of the province. The Via Nova Traiana — as some of its milestones proclaim — ran from Bostra near the border with the province of Syria, through the steppe east of the Decapolis to link onto the ancient King's Highway at Philadelphia (Amman). From there it ran south crossing the great Wadi el-Mujib and the Wadi al-Hasa, diverted through Petra then down over the Shera'a escarpment to cross the Hisma Desert en route to Aila (Aqaba) on the Red Sea. Numerous milestones enable us to date its construction between 111 and 114 and scores of others record frequent repair and reconstruction through to the 4th century.

Other roads followed, a few of which may be singled out for their relevance to the military history of the province. Recent reports of a string of Tetrarchic milestones in the Wadi Araba between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba are now supported by traces of a road found in a current survey (ch. 21). In the steppe and desert east of the Via Nova Traiana stray milestones, some perhaps dated to Trajan or Severus and once thought to mark a continuous 'Via Militaris', more likely belong only to discontinuous stretches of road (Graf 1997a). In the desert in the north-east, milestones and sections of road have revealed an initiative of Septimius Severus in 208/10 which pushed a road down as far as the Azraq Oasis (ch. 7). A century later, a network of roads were driven through the steppe and basalt lands of the southern Hauran and marked by milestones of the Tetrarchic period (ch. 10).

The new province blossomed. A substantial garrison (ch. 5) provided security and the regular pay of its soldiers brought prosperity to their garrison places. The southern Decapolis cities continued the programme of urban development begun in the 1st century AD and much of the road network there was built or reconstructed. Gerasa in particular embarked on a massive programme of building in the city itself and the radiating

roads are dated by their earliest milestones to the 2nd century AD.

East of the southern Decapolis cities, Bostra and the other Hauran towns grew; pottery collected on surveys suggests many of the villages of the intervening steppe were either foundations of the Roman period or were Nabataean ones given an impetus now. Likewise, excavation further south at Rabbathmoab/Areopolis (Rabbah), Petra and Hauara (Humayma) and in the Negev towns reveal a similar picture of slow development. Ground survey has been instrumental in giving substance to a further dimension. Fergus Millar has characterised the Near East as a whole as a "world of villages" (1993). Scores are appearing in every survey throughout the country and a few have been the object of excavation (cf. Kennedy 1998d: 97–99; 2000a).

The eastern and southern boundaries of the new province are problematic. Here were to be found nomads, people related to the settled Nabataeans and some of whom may have been thought of as 'Nabataean'. Here, too, Nabataean power had penetrated with some outposts as far east as Dumat al-Jandal (Jauf) and as far south as Hegra (Medain Saleh), both in Saudi Arabia (ch. 21). Rome evidently inherited the interest in both areas in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries but to what extent is unclear. The most revealing evidence is from the Hedjaz:

6. A BILINGUAL (GREEK AND NABATAEAN) INSCRIPTION, two further Greek inscriptions and another in Nabataea from Rawaffa, about 225 km south-south-east of Aila (Aqaba) (Milik 1971). The Nabataean part of the bilingual inscription translates as follows:³

For the well-being of the rulers of the whole world [... Marcus] Aurelius and Lucius Aurelius Verus Conquerors of Armenia, this is the temple which the confederation of the Thamudeni built, (i.e.) the leaders of their confederation, in order that it might be

³ Translation after Bowersock 1975: 515. The texts are most conveniently viewed in Graf 1978: 9–10; cf. Milik 1971. The text has been discussed again recently in Macdonald 1995.

[established] by their hand and worship conducted [for them forever]. Through the encouragement of Antistius Adventus the governor [who ...] and made peace among them.

Date: c. AD 166

The presence of a temple to the reigning emperors, the use of Greek and the role of the governor of Arabia have been argued both as evidence for the Hedjaz being part of the directly administered Roman province (Bowersock 1975) — and against it (Graf 1978: 9–10; 1988: 172, 178–180). No less important is the evidence it provides of some kind of Roman involvement with the nomadic tribes of the region and that the latter are organised in some sort of confederation. This is hardly unexpected, however, even if we lack details. Other places as points of contact and interaction have been suggested: Nemara in Syria and Qasr Burqu, Qasr Bshir and Da'ajaniya in Jordan.

E. Late Roman Jordan

The 3rd century saw an increase in insecurity for Arabia that was to continue with great frequency thereafter. The Tetrarchic period in particular was to be one of extensive construction of military installations and the repair or construction of roads. The political structure was also transformed with the creation of several smaller provinces, Jordan now being divided between two of those (Fig. 4.2). It is now, too, that people described as Saracens loom large. The term appears first with Ptolemy in the early 2nd century but Diocletian is credited with a war against them in 290 and they appear regularly thereafter. It is in this same period that sources speak of rulers amongst the nomads who are more than mere tribal chiefs. Some are described as kings and there is good reason to believe that as was happening on other frontiers, the smaller groups of the steppe and desert in the East were coming together in confederations (cf. the Rawaffa inscription above). These may have been a reaction to the power of Rome;

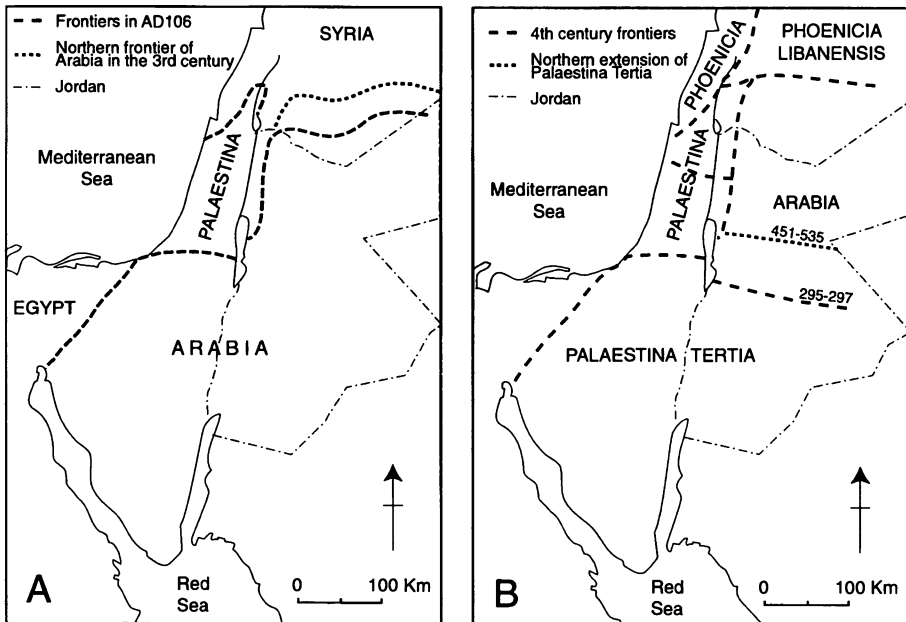


Fig. 4.2: Map of Jordan with (a) Roman Arabia of AD 106 superimposed and (b) the late Roman provinces and Jordan.

they were certainly a more potent threat to her control and obliged her to adopt new structures for treating with the nomads. Saracens are named as enemies and raids and warfare are cited — e.g. in the reign of Valens (364–378) ‘Mavia, Queen of the Saracens’, attacked the *limes* and towns of Palestine and Arabia. But these same people could be allies, their actual level of threat may have been limited (cf. Graf 1989) and they also appear providing named units in the Roman army (Not. Dig. Or. 28.17; 32.27; 32.28; cf. 34.22. None is in Arabia or Palaestina Tertia).

The 4th century saw the christianising of many nomads as well as the settled populations of the province. In the centuries that followed, Rome relied extensively on the growing power of these Christian nomads. From the early 6th century successive rulers of the Ghassanid confederation wielded power in the steppe and desert from central Syria to Jordan, supporting Rome in her wars with Persia and acting as a conduit in her relations with the nomadic peoples of the region.

The great cities of the province witnessed a collapse in public building of the type seen in the previous period. Instead, however, came churches, reflecting the victory of Christianity. What characterises so many of these buildings is the wealth of elaborate mosaics on their floors. Still the most famous is the Madaba Map of the 6th century AD but now we have too the remarkable examples in the church of Mt Nebo nearby and in the churches of Umm er-Resas (Piccirillo 1993) (ch. 3). Many bear texts with precise internal dates suggesting a great flourishing in such work in the 6th century. It is in this same broad period that the settlements of Jordan seem to have grown to their greatest size and degree of development. The classic examples are in north-eastern Jordan, at the stone-built towns of Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9), Umm es-Surab and a dozen others on either side of the modern frontier with Syria. These last three centuries of Roman rule emerge as the peak of settlement in terms of numbers, size and sophistication. Even in these large villages/

small towns churches abound — 15 in Umm el-Jimal, for example.

The end came in the early 7th century. Raids by nomads had been a feature for centuries but the rise of Islam in the Arabian peninsula brought a new force into the equation. It occurred against a background of frequent wars between the two great powers of the Old World — Rome and Sasanian Persia. The latter occupied much of the Near East including Jordan from 614–628 but Rome recovered and emerged victorious. It did not last. We can say little about the military re-occupation of the region; presumably strongpoints were again garrisoned. The first Islamic forces raided southern Syria in 629 — the only invasion actually led by the Prophet before his death, but judging by the swift surrender of some towns to the invaders, most places were ungarrisoned. Only seven years later it was all over. The decisive battle was fought in south-western Syria, just beyond the R. Yarmuk and brought to an end Roman control not just of Jordan but of the entire Near East as far as the Taurus Mountains.

F. From Roman to Umayyad Jordan

Roman civilisation and prosperity continued after the victory of Islam. For many the change was purely political. The population of the region was essentially ‘Arab’ as it had been for centuries. Greek may have been the language of government and of the imperial and local elites and the leading families of the towns when they commissioned mosaics and tombstones. However, there is good reason to believe that the population remained in large part still ‘Syrian’ in language (Aramaic and proto-Arabic) and culture and there are also a number of mosaic inscriptions in Syriac. Even the Greek texts of church mosaics reveal people with hellenised semitic names as is common, too, on tombstones. Christianity flourished, churches continued to be adorned with new mosaics, some now dated specifically to the decades after AD 636. The new Umayyad rulers of Jordan and the wider Near East were based nearby in Damascus and

for a century (AD 640–750) presided over a brilliant empire extending as far west as Spain. Only in the 8th century does significant evidence begin to emerge of decline and that may have been accelerated by the removal of political power eastwards to Baghdad under the Abbasid dynasty (AD 750–969).

The Roman period may not be truly over until the 8th century in wider cultural terms. Militarily, however, the victory of Islam did not just drive out the Roman forces that had first entered Jordan seven centuries before.

One of the purposes of the army had gone. Troops henceforth were there to police the civil population and the road system — not least the pilgrim roads into the Arabian peninsula. The forces needed to police and guard against the nomads had in any case been largely replaced generations before the Battle of the Yarmuk by putting the control of the steppe and desert in the hands of nomad chiefs. The Umayyads ruled over not just the Roman Near East but Sasanian Persia, too, the ‘frontier’ now lay far to the north and ran west to east rather than vertically.

5. THE ROMAN ARMY IN JORDAN¹

A. Before AD 106

Before AD 106, parts of Jordan already belonged to the adjacent provinces of Syria and Judaea. There is some evidence of forces stationed there. At the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66, there was a garrison at Machaerus as there was at the other Herodian fortress nearby at Masada (Jos. *BJ* II.485). Three tombstones from Jerash dated to the 1st century AD name troopers of the Ala Thracum Augusta (sic). The regiment was probably there for a few years — no more than a generation — after the end of the First Jewish War (ch. 11). Doubtless troops were based elsewhere in the Peraea and the southern Decapolis after the upheavals of the Jewish War but we need not suppose it was normally substantial. The urban populations were relatively small and external security would not have been a factor along this meeting place of provinces and allied kingdom.

More widely, Roman troops certainly entered the Nabataean kingdom on campaign. In 62 BC it was the army of Scaurus — probably overwhelmingly legionary troops at that date in the late Republic (ch. 4). They are said to have operated around Petra and we are now

beginning to identify actual or possible temporary camps which belong to such campaigns (chs 7, 12, 16 and 17). Later, some of the army of L. Vitellius may have entered Nabataea before being recalled when news of the death of Tiberius arrived in AD 37.

In AD 106 the disposition of forces in the provinces with which Arabia was to share borders can be tabulated with a reasonable degree of accuracy (see Table 5.1 below).

B. The Nabataean army

The earliest known Nabataean conflicts were in the late 4th century BC against the forces of the Macedonian king Antigonus I. In the contemporary account of Hieronymus of Cardia (preserved in the late 1st century BC history of Diodorus Siculus), we are told of an ascetic, nomadic people, well-able to withstand powerful opponents. In 312/311, Antigonus sent his general Athenaeus to attack Petra with 4000 infantry and 600 cavalry while its people were preoccupied elsewhere with a festival.³ In a counter-attack by 8000 Nabataeans on the retreating Macedonians, all but 50 of Athenaeus' force was annihilated. As presented by Hieronymus/ Diodorus, the

Table 5.1: Legions and auxiliary regiments in provinces adjacent to the Nabataean kingdom on the eve of the creation of the province of Arabia.

PROVINCE	LEGIONS	PLACE	ALAE	COHORTS
SYRIA	VI Ferrata	Samosata?	c. 8	c. 19
	IV Scythica	Zeugma		
	III Gallica	Raphanaea?		
IUDAEA	X Fretensis	Jerusalem	3	12 ²
EGYPT	III Cyrenaica	Alexandria	3	9
	XXII Deiotariana			

¹ Fundamental to any survey of the Roman army in this area are Speidel 1977 and Gracey 1981.

² Derived from military diplomas of c. AD 136–7 (?) (RMD 160) and 139 (CIL XVI: 87) which may reflect an increased number in the aftermath of the Bar-Kochva Revolt.

³ The suggestion that “petra” of the Greek source may be Sela or Buseirah rather than Petra 40 km to the south, has been regularly but inconclusively, canvassed. See most recently Bosworth 2002: 187–210, esp. 202–203.

subsequent invasion by Antigonos' son Demetrius, was brief and ineffective despite the doubling in forces to 4000 infantry and 4000 cavalry. Soon after, at the Dead Sea 6000 Nabataeans defeated the Macedonian forces of the historian Hieronymus who was the eye-witness source for Dionysus' account of these episodes (Hornblower 1981: 144–151). The considerable military potential of the Nabataeans is clear and their defeats of parts of the paramount military machine of the age is striking. The contrast with the unwarlike image in the account of Hieronymus/Diodorus' near contemporary Strabo and in Josephus a century later, has been stressed by Graf (1994: 270) as part of his case for re-evaluating the military reputation of the Nabataeans. Plainly the Nabataeans of this early date were highly effective although part of Graf's case may need to be qualified. Bosworth (2002) notes that Plutarch's account of Demetrius' campaign, though briefer, records a successful outcome. He argues, therefore, that Hieronymus' account of these events was designed to justify his own defeat by exaggerating the capacity of the Nabataeans and giving a false report of Demetrius' expedition.

The Nabataean heartlands are depicted in Diodorus as protected by nature but not impregnable and that remains the theme in later times when Roman armies operate there. The same historian reports sizeable Nabataean forces and comparable figures are quoted in a succession of later writers. Thus, in 87 BC we hear of 10,000 Nabataean cavalry (Jos. *AntJ* 13.15.1 [391]; *BJ* 1.4.7 [101–102]). In 65 BC, the impossible figure of 50,000 cavalry plus the infantry is mentioned (Jos. *BJ* 1.6.2 [126]; cf. *AntJ* 14.2.1 [19]), 6000 of whom were killed (*AntJ* 14.2.3 [33]). In 27 BC the Nabataeans contributed 1000 soldiers for Aelius Gallus' expedition into Arabia (Strabo 16.4. 23 [780]). In 31 BC Herod the Great slew 12,000 and took 4000 prisoners in an engagement (*AntJ* 15.5.4 [147–160]; *BJ* 1.19.5 [380–385]). Finally, in AD 67 the Roman forces mustered to put down the Jewish rebels included 1000 cavalry and 5000 infantry ("mainly bowmen") from Nabataea (*BJ* 3.4.2 [68]).

The numbers are varied and Nabataea was not an unchanging entity in this long period. The impression is that by the 1st century BC/1st century AD the Nabataean state could field an army of at least several thousand troops. In the earlier periods we are told explicitly of large numbers of cavalry and it was cavalry that Malchus I sent to aid Caesar at Alexandria in 47 (Caes. *BA* 1.1). Surprisingly, therefore, cavalry represent only a small part of the force sent to Vespasian in 67 and of the regiments Rome recruited after annexation (below). Trying to place a firm figure on the size of the Nabataean army at any point may be a false approach. Rather, we should suppose there to have been a small long-service royal army augmented by short-term levies provided by regional *strategoï* — civil and military officials — in time of war. Contrary to the impression often adopted in earlier works that the Nabataeans were ineffective warriors, Graf (1994) has now shown the falseness of such claims and that they were in fact often successful.

The organisation of this army is relatively well-known, largely from the numerous references to ranks in Nabataean inscriptions. Graf's collection of these and analysis of them (1994: 274–290) reveals an army employing the terminology of the Hellenistic armies. Although other allied rulers soon began to employ the terminology of the Roman army after it arrived in the region, we have little evidence for the Nabataeans following suit (but cf. the tomb inscription from Medain Saleh for a man described as a QNTRYN [transliterating the Greek *kenturion* presumably] and ch. 20 for a *hekatontarchos* ('centurion')).

C. The annexation of Nabataea and formation of Provincia Arabia

The *ornamenta triumphalis* awarded to Palma might by themselves have implied a significant campaign but the consensus of opinion remains that the process of annexation was largely uncontested (ch. 4). The evidence is thin, largely based on silence about fighting and the absence of signs of destruction. We know nothing about the motivation but can

say a little about the degree of premeditation (ch. 4).

One element is the pair of regiments transferred from Egypt to Judaea in 105 and thought to have been used in the annexation: Cohortes I Hispanorum and I Thebaeorum. As noted in Chapter 4, however, neither can be traced later in Arabia (or anywhere else). Some of the regiments subsequently found in Arabia and previously in adjacent provinces may have formed part of the annexation force: Ala (Veterana?) Gaetulorum, Cohors I Augusta Thracum, Cohors I Thracum, Cohors III Thracum (?), Cohors VII Hispanorum (below).

Comelius Palma surely brought troops south from his province of Syria. The core of his force would have been drawn from one or more legions. In fact, one of the Syrian legions — VI Ferrata — is attested in the first generation of the new province (below). Although its probable Syrian base was Samosata, by far the most distant of the Syrian fortresses from the Palma's scene of operations in AD 106, it may well have seemed the one that could be spared.⁴ For some years it was assumed that VI Ferrata had been the initial garrison. Then, a papyrus of 107 was published, showing Egyptian soldiers at Petra in, most probably, the Egyptian legion III Cyrenaica (below). Debate has continued ever since but ultimately it must await more evidence. A provisional solution is to infer the legionary component of the expedition as all or parts drawn from at least two legions: VI Ferrata and III Cyrenaica. Subsequently III Cyrenaica returned to Egypt but early in Hadrian's reign it was replaced there by II Traiana with III Cyrenaica moving to Arabia and VI Ferrata to Judaea. There is no reason to suppose these moves simultaneous but all would have occurred c. 123 (Kennedy

1980a; Fiema 1987; Oleson *et al.* 2002: 112; Strobel 1988; Zayadine and Fiema 1986).⁵

The overall force to which these units contributed must have been several thousand strong to match the anticipated strength of Nabataean forces (above). We may combine this scanty evidence with geographic considerations. It would have made good military sense to use these troops as a unified force, concentrated in southern Syria or northern Judaea before driving into Nabataea. On the other hand, the presence of part of the legion III Cyrenaica at Petra a few months later may imply a simultaneous drive eastwards into the Nabataean Negev Desert and across the W. Araba to seize Petra itself. This had been the likely route of Athenaeus four centuries earlier.

In the early years of the province the troops were evidently engaged in construction. The Egyptian papyrus of 107 (below and ch. 17) explicitly speaks of "stone-cutting". This was precisely the period when the great highway of Trajan, the Via Nova Traiana, was constructed. We may also surmise the construction of forts and the work involved in taking over Nabataean forts. The new province may have stimulated military activity just to bind it to the existing provinces. This may underlie the building inscription of the Legion VI Ferrata found at Salt (Gadara) in the Peraea and that, perhaps of the same legion, from Umm er-Rumman (ch. 11). As this legion belonged to Syria until the early 2nd century this text should be dated to after its transfer to Syria Palaestina.

D. The Cohortes Petraeorum

The accounts of the annexation give no hint of how the royal army reacted and what became of it. Soon after, however, epigraphic evidence appears naming Cohortes I–VI

⁴ Of the three Syrian legions, IV Scythica was certainly at Zeugma. The other two known fortresses at this time were Raphanaea west of Emesa (Homs) and Samosata on the Euphrates in the far north of the province. Both the two remaining legions can be placed at each of these places; until new and decisive evidence is found one can do no more than express a preference.

⁵ Although I am ultimately unconvinced, readers should note that Freeman (1996) has made a powerful case for the interesting suggestion that a province and an 'initial garrison' did not emerge until about 111. Prior to that there was simply a military situation with the forces of AD 106 reacting to circumstances. Cf. now Lenoir 2002.

Ulpiae Petraeorum.⁶ Some, probably all, were *cohortes equitatae* (infantry but with a cavalry component); two, probably three, were *milliariae*, and one at least included mounted archers. The total strength and the proportion of infantry to cavalry is reminiscent of the 5000 infantry and 1000 cavalry contributed to Vespasian's army in Judaea in 67 (Jos. BJ 3.4.2 [68]).

It seems likely the regiments were formed from the former royal army but the difference between the first three which were *milliariae*, and the next three which were not, may imply a difference in place and date of formation. On the basis of the 25/6 year cycle of recruitment and discharge, a case can be made for these units being formalised in the period AD 111–114, the same period we find other hints at Arabia taking shape as a province (Freeman 1996; Graf 1994: 299). However, the diploma of 157 for Cohors I implies a formation date of c. 106/7 while the diplomas of 136/7, 139 and 160 for Cohortes IV and VI may suggest a formation date a few years later.⁷

The regiments are only ever attested as based in the East but never in Arabia. Nevertheless, there are grounds for supposing that regiments were not always removed immediately from their home province after formation and it may be we should include some are all of the Cohortes Petraeorum or their predecessors amongst the initial garrison of the province.

All the attestations of personnel of these regiments are for their commanders, none of whom is a Nabataean. On the other hand, Nabataeans as well as men from elsewhere in the province of Arabia do appear in the ranks of other Roman army units (below).

E. The Roman garrison from AD 106 to the fourth century

The annexation of the Nabataean kingdom transformed the military arrangements in the

entire area and had longer term repercussions for the Near East as a whole. The continuing internal problems of Judaea — soon to be renamed Syria Palaestina — led to an unusual situation. Even after 106 when it was no longer a 'frontier province' a legion as well as a large force of auxiliaries remained (Table 5.1 above); indeed, a generation later the garrison was increased to two legions — the only instance in the early empire of a legionary garrison in an inner province. Whatever role Judaea had had as a 'frontier province' was now transferred to Arabia along with responsibility for internal security there (below).

Part of the garrison of the new province may already have been in those parts of the future province about to be added to Nabataea to create Arabia. Even those, however, are likely to have been soon uprooted to use them more effectively in the new strategic and tactical reality of 106 and beyond.

The list of attested regiments is modest, impoverished by the absence of diplomas and with many uncertainties. Speidel argued in 1977 that Arabia during the 2nd and 3rd centuries probably had a garrison of about 10,000 — the legion plus a similar number of auxiliaries. A significant number of these lay in those parts of Arabia outside modern Jordan.

Legions

III Cyrenaica: The earliest attestation is the letter of Julius Apollinarius to his father in 107 (*P. Mich.* 466) (quoted in ch. 17). The papyrus was found at Karanis in Egypt and doubtless writer, recipient and the named comrades of the writer were Egyptians (Speidel 1977: 692–693; cf. Bowersock 1983: 81, n. 18). No legion is mentioned but the recipient had previously been in III Cyrenaica (*P. Mich.* 571) and the writer was in that same legion in 119 (*P. Mich.* 562). It is dated 26 March 107 and was evidently written from Arabia.

⁶ The evidence is collected and discussed by Graf 1994.

⁷ The Ala Ulpia Dromedariorum stationed in Syria has been seen as another Nabataean regiment but without an ethnic that is speculation. A better possibility is the Ala Dromedariorum (sic) (below).

The letter allows us to infer that Apollinarius and his comrades are at Petra, the military situation still does not permit leave, the force to which he belongs consists of two or more cohorts and one of those cohorts is about to leave for Bostra. The reference to “stone-cutting” implies building work, whether roads or military installations is not stated and we have few explicitly military building inscriptions from southern Jordan.

In subsequent generations, the legion probably routinely participated in major eastern wars as well as others further afield. There is explicit evidence for Trajan’s Parthian War, the Jewish War at the end of Trajan’s reign, Hadrian’s Jewish War, the Parthian War of Caracalla and, probably, those of Septimius Severus and Valerian; it may even have contributed to a campaign in Lower Germany in the 3rd century (Speidel 1977: 721–722). One casualty of such a war is described on his tombstone at Bostra as having died in 215 in Mesopotamia during the Parthian War of Caracalla (IGLS 13: 9396). Presumably auxiliary regiments also contributed to such wars. Finally, inscriptions of 209–211, 216 and 211–222 record a detachment on the Euphrates at Dura Europos (Rep. VII/VIII 85f, no. 847; AE 1937: 239; 1934: 277; cf. Gilliam *apud* Bellinger 1959: 25).

A fortress was established at Bostra; it is a full-size fortress, albeit at the lowest end of the size range (ch. 21), but there are grounds for believing the legion — perhaps even more than was common — was fragmented and seldom, if ever, to be found there *in toto*. Bostra certainly remained the base. There are numerous inscriptions to it there over the next three centuries, its coinage in the 2nd century included issues with the legend LEG III CYR (Kindler 1983: 92–93) and it is placed there by Ptolemy in the 2nd century and by the Notitia Dignitatum c. 400, the final mention of the legion. The reference is notable as by this time it is common to find legions listed there fragmented permanently and recorded at more than one base. The III Cyrenaica is not recorded in this way. Surprising, because although there are numerous inscriptions from

Bostra naming the legion, equally striking are those in every corner of the province from the early 2nd century explicitly referring to detachments, *vexillationes*.

VI Ferrata: There is evidence for believing this legion took part in the expedition to annex Nabataea then served as the legionary garrison — or part of it — during the next generation. One item is the tombstone of a soldier of this legion buried at Bostra and originating at Philadelphia (Amman) (ch. 11). More persuasive is the reused inscription from Gerasa (ch. 11) dated to 118/9 and naming a detachment from this legion and now there is a new hint from Humayma (ch. 19). Soon after it was transferred permanently to Judaea.

IV Martia: Only the entry in the Notitia Dignitatum (ch. 6) tells of the existence of this legion in the — by then — shrunken province of Arabia. It is commonly located at Lejjun (ch. 15).

Auxiliary Regiments

Speidel noted in 1977 (699) that our knowledge of the garrison of Arabia had considerably improved since Cheesman had written his bleak “auxilia as yet unknown” in 1914. Unfortunately no new evidence has been found since 1977 and we still have no diploma for Arabia. The survey by Speidel remains fundamental (1977: 699–717; cf. Gracey 1981: I, 270–327; II, 100–129).

Several regiments are attested from inscriptions but most are known from their presence in the Notitia Dignitatum. The following are attested in Jordan; the full list for Arabia together with more detail is available in Speidel 1977. Those known only from the Notitia Dignitatum are omitted — the full text of the Notitia entries is the subject of Chapter 6. Further reference may be found under the sites from which the evidence comes where texts are usually cited in full.

Ala Dromedariorum: several graffiti in Greek, Latin and Nabataean cut into a rock face between Medain Saleh and Al-Ula in the

Hedjaz of north-western Saudi Arabia include this regiment. It seems to have been guarding a road station and the best guess is that they are 2nd century AD in date. It is also attested in the far north of the province later north of Bostra (Speidel 1977: 703–704).

Ala Veterana Gaetulorum: the regiment was in Judaea as late as 86. In, probably, the 2nd century, it was just south of Medain Saleh in the Hedjaz. A dedication of, probably, the late 2nd century, explicitly attests it in Arabia (Speidel 1977: 705–706).

Cohors V Afrorum Severiana: a building inscription of AD 212 from Qasr el-Hallabat in northern Jordan (ch. 10) names this as one of four regiments credited with the work (Speidel 1977: 708).

Cohors I Hispanorum: the Egyptian diploma of AD 105 recording two regiments (see I Thebaeorum below) transferred into Judaea is often interpreted as giving us the names of two regiments being positioned for the conquest of Nabataea. It is never heard of again (Speidel 1977: 709).

Cohors VI Hispanorum: attested on a tombstone at el-Basiri c. 90 km south-west of Palmyra in the 1st century AD then named on the Qasr el-Hallabat inscription of AD 212. It is not subsequently attested but it is commonly believed the regiment was later converted to cavalry to appear in that form in the Notitia Dignitatum (Speidel 1977: 706–707, 709).

Cohors I Thebaeorum: (see Cohors I Hispanorum above). A papyrus of AD 114 mentions a soldier serving “under Severus” and is interpreted as Claudius Severus, governor of Arabia, 107–115 (Speidel 1977: 709).

Cohors III (?) Augusta Thracum Equitata: attested in northern Jordan at Umm el-Quttein in a probable 2nd century dedication. The numeral is problematic and it may be the same as I Augusta Thracum attested at Motha (Imtan) to the north-east (ch. 21) and, more

problematically, at Kurnub (Mampsis) in the Negev Desert (ch. 21) (Speidel 1977: 710–711).

Cohors I Thracum: attested on the Hallabat inscription (above) of AD 212. It may be the same as the regiment at Motha (Imtan) (above) (Speidel 1977: 711).

Other Units

Although attested just outside Jordan, at Motha (Imtan) and Inat nearby in southern Syria (ch. 21), worth noting are the **Gothi Gentiles**, Gothic auxiliaries, dated by a text to as early as AD 208 (Speidel 1977: 712–716) — so far the earliest certain attestation of Goths (Speidel 1984: 410).

The Guards of the provincial governor, the **Equites and Pedites Singulares**, are attested at Bostra as one might expect but also, apparently, on a graffito from the Basalt Desert just inside Jordan at Jathum (ch. 8) (Speidel 1977: 716–717). Cf. ch. 1 for legionaries in cities or on detachment.

The Notitia Dignitatum includes numerous Late Roman formations, mainly the prestigious Equites and locally recruited Native regiments of horsemen and/or archers. These are treated separately below in ch. 6.

F. The fifth century to the Islamic conquest

For the following centuries the evidence is even more difficult. We cannot locate many of the garrison places listed in the Notitia Dignitatum and in the subsequent centuries have little evidence of any kind. The Notitia is, however, our last significant solid ground for the army in the province. The Beer Sheva Edict, though fragmentary and of disputed date (ch. 2), provides several place-names for garrisons if not for the units themselves. Although still at an early stage of reading, already the Petra Papyri of the mid-6th century are producing valuable evidence for garrison places in the last generations of Roman rule, but again without naming the units (Fiema 2002b: 134; cf. 2002a: 228). For this period

we are forced to rely on inferences on garrison sizes at specific forts and attempts to quantify these from impressions of the scale of military activity overall. What is striking is the small size of forts and of forces employed in the last generations before the Islamic victory. ‘Armies’ of a few hundred are common and a few thousand is a large field force. By now, of course, Rome relied increasingly on relations with tribal leaders who were recognised and subsidised to police and defend the pre-desert and desert areas. The nature of the forces of such men as Abu Kharib/ Abocharabos in southern Jordan in the 6th century can only be guessed at.

G. ‘Jordanians’ in the Roman Army

‘Arabs’ from east of the Jordan were employed as mercenaries by the Hasmonaean and Herodian kings (Graf 1994: 296; cf. Kennedy 2000c). Under Roman rule, several soldiers whose home lay in Jordan appear in regiments of the Roman army. Three came from Philadelphia in the 1st century AD when it was still part of Syria and the Nabataean kingdom was still in existence. The recipient of a diploma (CIL XVI: 159) in Mauretania Tingitana of AD 88 was a cavalryman:

1. Cohort(is) II (Syrorum) milliariae sagittariorum, cui praest Ti. Claudius Pedito, equiti Domitio Domiti f., Philad(elp)ia

Trooper Domitius, the son of Domitius, of Philadelphia, of the Cohort II Syrorum Milliaria Sagittariorum, under the command of Tiberius Claudius Pedito

The regiment is well known in Mauretania usually with its full name including the ethnic “Syrorum”. As Domitius probably derived his romanised name from Cn. Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria a generation earlier and had been recruited c. 62/3, this will have been one of the new regiments recruited at that time for Corbulo’s eastern campaigns (Kennedy 1983b: esp. 256 and 259)

It is probably significant that the other two Philadelphians, Apuleius commemorating his brother on a tombstone at Carnuntum (ILS 9168), seem also to have been recruited in the same year but to a different regiment:

2. Proculus, Rabili f., Col(lina tribu), Philad(elp)ia, mil(es) optio coh(ortis) II Italic(a) c(ivium) R(omanorum), 7 Fa[us]tini, ex vexil(latione) sagit(ariorum) exer(citu) Syriaci stip(endiorum) VII vixit ann(orum) XXVI. Apuleius frater f(aciendum) c(uravit).

Proculus, the son of Rabilus, of the Tribe Collina, from Philadelphia, Soldier and Optio of the Cohort II Italica Civium Romanorum, of the Century of Faustinus, formerly of the Detachment of Archers of the Syrian Army, served for 7 years and lived for 26. Apuleius his brother made this.

The brothers were probably brought west by Mucianus in AD 70. Despite their Greek and Roman personal names and origin in a city of the Decapolis their father has a romanised Semitic name, common not least amongst the Nabataeans where two kings were called Rabbel. Philadelphia bordered Nabataean territory, Nabataean coins and pottery have been found there and we have a bilingual Greek-Nabataean inscription from Zizia dedicated by Demas who explicitly says he is from “Amman” (as opposed to Philadelphia) (IGLS XXI: 154) (cf. Wenning 1992: 84–86) (ch. 12). There may have been a Nabataean community at Philadelphia and the Nabataean name Demas is also attested at Gerasa (IGLS XXI: p. 181).

Most likely also from the Jordanian city of Philadelphia is a fourth soldier. An *optio* of the Legion VI Ferrata, he was buried at Bostra in, probably, the first half of the 2nd century (IGLS XIII: 9179). A fifth served in Legion II Traiana in the 2nd or 3rd century (CIL III: 6580).⁸

Also from a Decapolis city were the three legionaries who gave their homes as Capitolia (Beit Ras): ILS 2103 (VI Ferrata); CIL VIII:

⁸ For all these legionaries see Forni 1953; 1974.

18084 (III Augusta); CIL X: 532 (VI Ferrata) and the two from Gadara (CIL III: 181 = 6697 (X Fretensis); AE 1957: 238 (II Traiana)).

As Speidel observes, initially the army in Arabia/Jordan will have been largely from other provinces (1977: 719). Recruitment from elsewhere certainly continued, including, probably, the draft of some 700 men from the Legion III Augusta in Africa to an unspecified "Legion III" in AD 127 (ILS 2487; Kennedy 1980a: 305–306). However, one may be certain that from an early date local recruits were enrolled in regiments stationed in Jordan and the *Exercitus Arabicus* of the 3rd century AD may have been largely of local origin. We have already noted the T. Flavius Marcianus of Philadelphia, who died while serving in III Cyrenaica at Bostra (IGLS XIII: 9179, above) and can add "Mesamaros, cavalryman of (the Legio (III) Cyr(enaica), of the Nabataean people" (IGRR III: 1257). Finally there are the Nabataeans in the regiments stationed between al-Ula and Medain Saleh (above).

H. The role of the army

As will emerge in Part B, we have very little evidence for where the Roman army actually was in the 2nd century AD. The legion was at Bostra and that made sense in terms of supply from the rich cereal lands of that area and the significance of Bostra as a major city with a thick scatter of settlements all around. From an early date, however, we find references to detachments in distant places including the Hedjaz in north-western Saudi Arabia. The impression is that large parts of the legion were often on long-term detachment to other places as discrete units as well as the expected employment of individuals as *beneficiarii*.

It is from the Hedjaz, too, that we have the graffiti of two cavalry regiments (above) both, probably, of the same century and now we have the evidence from excavation of the fort at Humayma in the Hisma Desert just north of the Hedjaz, as being Trajanic. Finally, we can add the papyrus of 127 of the cavalry

prefect at Rabbathmoab in central Jordan (ch. 15). We may suppose from this thin scatter of evidence that the early garrison was distributed throughout the territory of the new province, both in the urban centres and in distant outposts. In the cities or centres of population density, their role initially at least may well have been to maintain order internally. Beyond the towns there is the strong possibility that Roman troops simply took over some at least of the forts previously occupied by Nabataean garrisons along the great trade routes of the region.

In the 3rd century the early decades are marked by significant work in the north-east. Apparently new forts at Qasr el-Hallabat, Qasr el-Azraq and Qasr el-Uweinid and a new highway striking south from Syria to the Azraq Oasis. It may be now, too, that the route through the Wadi Sirhan deep into Arabia was explored. The development is certainly Severan and parallels what was happening in Tripolitania in the same period where forts were built deep in the steppe and to control desert oases (cf. Kennedy 1980b). This development takes place in the region of Basalt Desert well-known for the abundance of its archaeological sites and contrasting with the chert desert further south. The obvious explanations for Roman interest are to control the nomadic peoples who were probably significantly more numerous here and/or the caravan route through the Wadi Sirhan.

The next major development comes in the later 3rd century. The province of Arabia was split. The name Arabia was retained for the northern half while the part south of the Wadi el-Hasa became now Palaestina Tertia, each part now governed by a Dux with his own army. Army reforms saw the disappearance of the large legions of the Early Roman period. Instead one finds twice as many legions, many of them new formations, but also a quarter or less of the strength of their predecessors. About the same time, the reforms of successive late 3rd and early 4th century emperors saw the introduction of new cavalry regiments and the

progressive downgrading of the existing alae and cohortes. Archaeologically we can see the creation of a string of new or reconstructed forts. Dating suggests they were built c. AD 300 and there are notable similarities: the two new legionary bases at Betthorus/um (el-Lejjun) and Adrou (Udruh) are the most striking examples and the current excavations at Aqaba may yet find the legionary base known to have been established at Aila about the same time (ch. 20). Smaller forts of this period are of a new design, approximately square with square towers projecting prominently at the corners at least and rooms built against the inside of the circuit wall. Known examples are all about 1 ha in size (Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9), Kh. Khaw (ch. 10), Da'ajaniya (ch. 16) and Avdat (ch. 21)).

The 4th century saw further new construction but mainly attested by inscriptions. As these are almost exclusively from the north of Jordan they may be producing a distorted picture. Certainly, the regiments and garrison places listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* of c. AD 400 reveal a wide spread of regiments across the two provinces that once made up Arabia (ch. 6). Although many place names cannot be identified, enough is known to show garrisons in towns and in the countryside, in the interior as well as the "frontier". Closer inspection shows that the old Graeco-Roman cities of the Jordanian Decapolis and Petra are missing and that the towns with garrisons — with the exception of Bostra — are those of the steppe or on major routes. The legionary bases show the variety of location: Bostra, the old legionary base of three centuries standing, capital of the province and centre of population; Betthorus/um (el-Lejjun) a seemingly quite new site in a well-watered but small valley on the edge of the steppe and in the centre of the heart of the old Moabite Plateau between the Wadis Mujib and el-Hasa; Adrou (Udruh) a new fortress in an old Nabataean town; and Aila (Aqaba) at a strategically important position at a nexus of sea and land routes. In contrast to this significant series of military sites located in

the east of the provinces of Arabia and Palaestina, older, more advanced posts in the desert, especially the northern Basalt Desert, seem to be given up. Looking beyond the military sites to the infrastructure and settlement, one finds a great many new roads of the Tetrarchic period and a significant rise in the number of sites of the Late Roman period in the steppe. The impression is that population increase and military control of the steppe are the key features of the 4th century onwards. Which came first is not known (cf. Kennedy 2000a).

Despite a thin scatter of inscriptions from north-eastern Jordan, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine where the Roman army was in the 5th and 6th centuries or anything of its character. There is no new *Notitia* for the next two centuries much less diplomas, no Eusebius to mention garrison places and surface sherds collected on military sites cannot demonstrate military occupation. Indeed, excavation at military sites shows clearly the construction of churches inside several and the apparent development of the sites for civil purposes (e.g. Mefaat, ch. 13). There are garrisons in a few places of special importance such as the copper mines of the Wadi Faynan and doubtless the garrisons implied in the Beer Sheva Edict(s) reflect the scatter of small detachments across the region. However, the impression is of a much-reduced military establishment and relatively few garrisons of any size, broader security being provided by a more distant field army. Internally, the large garrisons of the 2nd century AD may have been unnecessary. The nomads were controlled by diplomacy and subsidy, increased populations and the extension of settlement across the steppe may have removed the scope for banditry and diminished the scale of nomadism. Until the great Persian invasions of the early 7th century and then those of Islam soon after, the region of Jordan may well have been regarded as militarily a backwater, intensively settled and stable.

6. THE ROMAN ARMY AND ITS GARRISON PLACES IN THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM

The Notitia Dignitatum

Oriens XXXVII: Dux Arabiae

As is true of all the entries for *Duces* this chapter in the Notitia commences with an illustration of some of the forts under the command of this senior officer together with

their names. In this case ten forts are shown and named as follows (from Seeck 1876): The names are those of the first ten units in the next part of the list. The forts of the 11 units named in the second half of the list are not illustrated and named independently of the list.

	3. Animotha		4. Tricomia
	5. Areopolis		6. Speluncis
7. Ziza			
	8. Mefa	9. Gadda	10. Bostra
		11. Diafenis	
12. Betthoro			

13. *Sub dispositione viri spectabilis ducis Arabiae* ("Under the control of the Most Admirable Duke of Arabia"):
 14. *Equites scutarii Illyriciani, Motha*
 15. *Equites promoti Illyriciani, Tricomia*
 16. *Equites Dalmat[ae] Illyriciani, Ziza*
 17. *Equites Mauri Illyriciani, Areopoli*
 18. *Equites promoti indigenae, Speluncis*
 19. *Equites promoti indigenae, Mefa*
 20. *Equites sagittarii indigenae, Gadda*
 21. *Praefectus legionis tertiae Cyrenaicae, Bostra*
 22. *Praefectus legionis quartae Martiae, Betthoro*
 23. *Equites sagittarii indigenae, Dia-Fenis*
 24. *Et quae de minore laterculo emittuntur* ("And these which are assigned from the lesser register"):
 25. *Ala nona miliaria, Auatha*
 26. *Ala sexta Hispanorum, Gomoha*
 27. *Ala secunda Constantiana, Libona*
 28. *Ala secunda miliarensis, Naarsafari*
 29. *Ala prima Valentia, Thainatha*
 30. *Ala secunda felix Valentiniana, apud Adtitha* ("near Adtitha")
 31. *Cohors prima miliaria Thracum, Adtitha*
 32. *Cohors prima Thrac[um], Asabaia*
 33. *Cohors octava vol[un]taria, Ualtha*
 34. *Cohors tertia felix Arabum, in ripa Uade Afaris fluuii in castris Arnonensibus* ("on the bank of the river in the Wadi Afar at Castra Arnonensibus")
 35. *Cohors tertia Alp[i]norum, apud Arnona* ("near Arnona").

Oriens XXXIV: Dux Palaestinae

This chapter too commences with an illustration of some of the forts under the command of this senior officer together with their names. In this case 13 forts are shown and named as follows:

	3. Menoida	5. Berosaba	
		6. Chermula	7. Zoara
8. Zdocatha	9. Sabaia		10. Birsama
11. Robatha	12. Haure		
13. Veterocania	14. Mohaila		15. Aelia
	16. Aila		

The names are those of the first 13 units in the next part of the list. The forts of the 17 units named in the second half of the list are not illustrated and named independently of the list.

17. *Sub dispositione viri spectabilis ducis Palaestinae* (“Under the control of the Most Admirable Duke of Palestine”):
18. *Equites Dalmatae Illyriciani, Berosabae*
19. *Equites promoti Illyriciani, Menochiae*
20. *Equites scutarii Illyriciani, Chermulae*
21. *Equites Mauri Illyriciani, Aeliae*
22. *Equites Thamudeni Illyriciani, Birsama*
23. *Equites promoti indigenae, Sabaiae*
24. *Equites promoti indigenae, Zdocathae*
25. *Equites sagittarii indigenae, Hauanae*
26. *Equites sagittarii indigenae, Zoarae*
27. [*Equites sagittarii indigenae, Robathae*]
28. *Equites primi felices [sagittarii indigenae] Palaestini, Sabure sive Veterocariae*
29. *Equites sagittarii indigenae, Moahile*
30. *Praefectus legion[is] decimae Fretensis, Ailae*
31. *Et quae de minore laterculo emittuntur* (“And these which are assigned from the lesser register”):
32. *Ala prima miliaria Sebastena, Asuada*
33. *Ala Antana dromedariorum, Admatha*
34. *Ala Constantiana, Toloha*
35. *Ala secunda felix Valentiana, apud Praesidium*
36. *Ala prima miliaria, Hasta*
37. *Ala Idiota constituta*
38. *Cohors duodecima Valeria, Afro*
39. *Cohors decima Carthagenensis, Cartha*
40. *Cohors prima argenteriana, Tarba*
41. *Cohors quarta frygum, Praesidio*
42. *Cohors secunda Gratiana, Ihibo*

43. *Cohors prima equitata, Calamona*
44. *Cohors secunda Galatarum, Arieldela*
45. *Cohors prima Flavia, Moleatha*
46. *Cohors quarta Palaestinorum, Thamana*
47. *Cohors secunda Cretensis, iuxta Iordanem fluvium* (“near to the River Jordan”)
48. *Cohors prima salutaria, inter Aeliam et Hierichunta* (“between Aelia and Hierichunta”)

Many of these units and place-names are discussed in the Part B below. A few can be identified with confidence; most cannot. Under the *Dux Arabiae* we know: Areopolis, Ziza, Mefa, Bostra and Beththoro. Under the *Dux Palaestinae* it is: Berosaba, Zoara, Zdocatha, Haure, Aelia, Aila, Toloha and Praesidio. The remaining three-quarters consist of places for which there are hotly debated suggestions (as is the case with several in northern Jordan), unsubstantiated suggestions or just bafflement. It is notable that most of the places that can be identified are from the first part of each list where the new regiments of the Late Roman army and the legions are listed. The old auxiliary regiments in the second part of each list seem to have been based in general in smaller, less well-known places.

Principal Reading: Seeck 1876; Vailhé 1898/99; Domaszewski 1898; Brunnnow 1909; Kennedy forthc. b; cf. Lewin forthc. b.

PART B

7. THE AZRAQ OASIS

Azraq is an easy drive on surfaced highways c. 90 km east from Amman.¹ After Palmyra, it is the location of the second largest oasis in the Syrian Desert. Until recently there were two major perennial pools, each of which had attracted settlement from early prehistory onwards. O. G. S. Crawford was there in November 1928, his description a generation later of “one of the most romantic sites I have ever seen” (1955: 196) evoking an image hard to see today where the northern pool once lay but explaining pre-modern occupation:

“The country is spacious and undulating. ... In the far distance rise the peaks of blue volcanoes, emerging apparently from a rolling sea of heather — actually the hills of the flint-desert whose myriad brown flints reflect a purple sheen. In the foreground is a huge reedy lagoon, fed by a perennial spring, and over the yellow-green rushes pass flights of duck and other birds. On the margin straggle a few palms. Otherwise the scene recalls Killarney” (Crawford 1929: 507).²

The place was ‘owned’ in some sense by the Druze of southern Syria in the 19th century, but seems to have been controlled by them through local Arabs who lived sporadically in the Roman fort at Azraq Duruz, the northern

pools. This was also the HQ of the Arab Army in the winter of 1917/18 when T. E. Lawrence lived in the fort. Permanent settlement only began again in the 1920s when Druze refugees from their rebellion in French Syria took up residence in the fort. Soon afterwards the British Mandate authorities established an RAF base and a desert police fort west of the southern pools at Azraq Shishan. Other Roman military sites were located at springs in the wider basin or near points where water could be ponded in a wadi or reached by a well in summer.

The major water source in a very arid region (less than 100 mm of rain annually) attracted nomads and served as an important staging point on routes of transhumance and trade (Fig. 7.1). In particular, the broad but shallow trough of the W. Sirhan begins just south-east of Azraq Shishan and stretches south-eastwards for 300 km (Fig. 3.1). Beyond, c. 100 km to the east, lies the great Arabian oasis of Dumat al-Jandal and routes to the Gulf. In modern times the W. Sirhan was known as the Darb el-Gazawat, “The Way of Raids” (Jaussen and Savignac 1922: 12). Roman interest in the Azraq Basin may be supposed to have been motivated both by a desire to control a key water supply and the people who used it and as a centre for policing traffic on

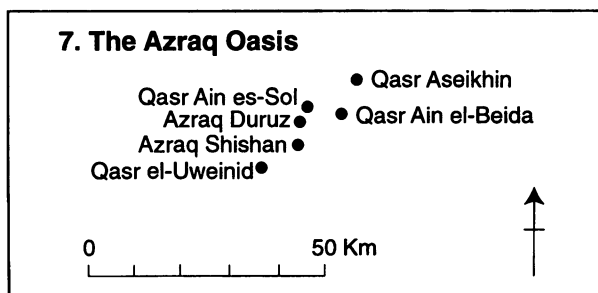


Fig. 7.1: The Azraq Oasis: map of the military sites.

¹ An extensive discussion of the oasis and its sites is available in Kennedy 1982: ch. 4 and elsewhere. It has recently been the subject of an MA thesis by Nivene Hashash (University of Jordan, 1999 [in Arabic]).

² Hill (1897: 37–38) thought the land east of Qastal reminiscent of Sussex.



Fig. 7.2: Qasr el-Azraq ('Azraq Castle'): vertical RAF aerial photograph of 1922. Note the extensive areas of pools and marshes east of the fort and the outline of the 'playing card' shaped fort within which it is set (Crawford Archive, Oxford).

the routes to and from the oasis. These led into Arabia along the W. Sirhan, north through Deir el-Kahf and Imtan into Syria, east and north-east to Qasr Burqu, north-west to Bostra and west to the steppe and arable lands of the Highlands of Ajlun and the Belqa (Fig. 3.1). There has been no excavation at any of the military sites in the Basin but almost all have been planned to some degree. Surface artifacts have suggested periods of use but especially informative has been a surprisingly rich harvest of inscriptions to which can be added literary sources. Some have provided precise dates and place-names and others have dated at least one of the Roman roads identified in the Basin. The earliest epigraphic date is Severan, known from two building inscriptions and from several milestones. Several other inscriptions are early 4th century. For the post-Roman period there is the report under the year AD 744 of the mediaeval Arab

historian Tabari that the Umayyad caliph Walid II had a residence at Azraq. An Arabic inscription over the gate of the fort at Azraq Duruz includes the date AD 1237. There is only slight ceramic evidence for the later 4th century in Parker's sharding of the principal sites (1986: 178, Table 1). There is virtually nothing for the 5th and 6th centuries (cf. Qasr el-Aseikhin, below) and attempts to identify Azraq itself in the lists of the Notitia Dignitatum have been inconclusive. It may have been given up in the mid-4th century and unoccupied by c. 400.

**A. BASIE (AZRAQ DURUZ)
 JADIS 3214.001; QASR EL-AZRAQ; MAP
 3353 I; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2945; UTMN
 35295; PGE 323.000; PGN 144.100**

(a) Crawford spotted what is probably the earliest Roman military building at Azraq. He

is worth quoting because the structure in question is a rarity in the Near East and it is much to his credit that he spotted it:

“It is tempting also to see in the round-cornered enclosure in which the castle stands (askew) a Roman camp. It now consists of a founded wall of boulders. It looks old, and there are suggestions of a traversed entrance ...” (1929: 507)

He did not fly over it unfortunately and by the 1970s the modern village had overgrown it. Fortunately it shows on old aerial photographs including some obtained by Crawford (Fig. 7.2). The dimensions are at least c. 100 x 125 m (c. 1.25 ha) but it may be as much as twice that size. It is reminiscent of the siege camps of Masada and Machaerus but no traces of internal structures are visible. (Cf. ch. 12 (Azaima); ch. 16 (‘Kh. Abu Safat’); ch. 7 (Tell Abara).

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 72–77, pls XVIIb and XVIIIb, 87–88; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 101–109

(b) Qasr el-Azraq (Azraq Duruz/‘Azraq Castle’) (Figs 7.2 and 7.3C). The Roman fort on the west side of the major northern pools at Azraq has been familiar since travellers’ reports of the 19th century. It has plainly undergone a great deal of rebuilding and modification not least in the mediaeval Arab period. The present gate enters through a tower on the face of which is an Arabic inscription recording construction of the ‘castle’ in AD 1237 and above is a mediaeval machicolation. Occupation by the Druze in the 1920s and 30s and more recent clearance and consolidation caused further alterations. Nevertheless, the lower courses of large basalt blocks seem to preserve the original form of the fort and Gregory has produced a suggested reconstruction from the present plan (Fig. 7.4). Walls c. 2 m wide formed a near square, 79 x 72 m (0.57 ha) with rectangular towers (6/6.5 x 8/9.5 m) projecting c. 1 m at each corner. There is one intermediate tower on the north and pairs flank likely gates on south and east. There is a postern just south of the north-west

tower (Room 19c). A large structure identified as a *Praetorium* projects on the west and has two surviving storeys with a probable third or a rooftop level. Some of the towers may have been three storeys and the rooms against the walls were probably two storeyed on the west at least. Staircases gave access to upper levels in the towers and the *Praetorium* and another (Room 27) led down to what seems to have been a well tapping into the pool water just a short distance to the east. The courtyard is 65 x 60 m and has traces of undated foundations. Gregory suggests the scatter of well-drafted masonry around the site may have belonged to a prestige building sited here.

The obvious parallel for the site is Bourada in Numidia. There one finds a similar size, a parallel *Praetorium* projecting on one side and a large building in the courtyard incorporating a bath suite (Fig. 7.4b). The towers however are different. Bourada has been dated to the 330s, broadly contemporary with available dates for Qasr el-Azraq. In the absence of excavation and stratified artifacts, we must turn to surface sherds which extend sporadically from the Iron Age to the Ottoman period. There is a concentration in the 3rd and early 4th centuries; conversely, no sherds were found of the later 4th through to early 7th century (Parker 1986: 178). More useful are the inscriptions.

Several Severan milestone fragments (ch. 8) brought into the fort in recent years from a nearby Roman road (below) bear dates of 208/10. The small fort at Qasr el-Uweinid (below) c. 14 km south-west of Azraq has two Severan building inscriptions; it is inconceivable that there would be a garrison at this peripheral location and none at one or even both of the large springs/pools at Azraq itself. Arguably the playing-card fort (above, (a)) is the Severan fort. Alternatively, Gregory suggests the fort we see, like Bourada, is of the 330s but represents a total rebuilding of the now hidden Severan fort. There is epigraphic support for the latter from Latin inscriptions found in the fort but we must be cautious with these. The milestone pieces have certainly been brought there from the road for some miles to the north (ch. 8) and it is possible, though less likely, that

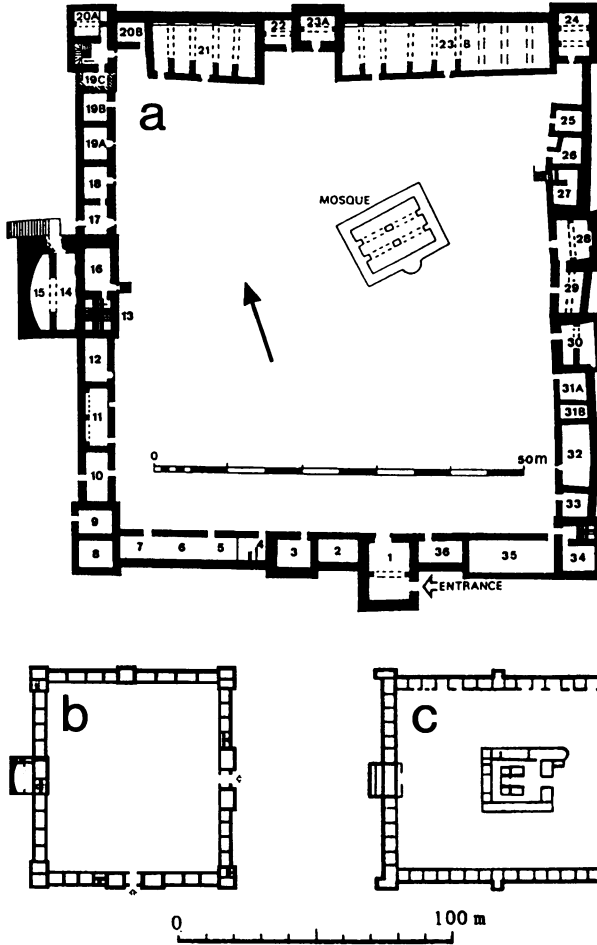


Fig. 7.4: *Qasr el-Azraq: (a) Plan of the 'castle'; (b) suggested reconstruction (from Gregory 1995-97: 3, Fig. F9.1) and the fort at Bourada, Numidia (from Lander 1984: 195).*

one or more of the building inscriptions was brought to Qasr el-Azraq from elsewhere in the Basin. There is a lost inscription dateable between AD 138 and 222 (Kennedy 1982: 95–96) which may refer to a military construction. The earliest surviving text is of probably Aurelian with a succession of others datable to the Tetrarchy and dynasty of Constantine.

1. A MASSIVE INCOMPLETE ALTAR, in two pieces, part in metrical Greek. The dedication in Latin reads (Kennedy 1982: 91–93):

I(ovi) Invic[to Soli]/ pro salute [e]t vic[t(oriis)]/ imp(eratorum duorum) et C(a)es(arum duorum)/ Ioviorum et Herculiorum

To Jupiter the Unconquerable Sun, for the Safety and Victory of both Emperors and both Caesars, the Jovian and Herculan

Date: c. 300.³

Christol and Lenoir (2001: 174, n. 64) have reminded us that Dussaud and Macler (1903:

³ The divine attributes of the Tetrarchs in line 4 gave rise in the past to the mistaken belief that there was an inscription at Azraq dated to the Emperor Jovian (AD 363–4).

670-671, no. 85) read in the Greek text the name of “Heraclius, Protector”. This officer makes sense now in the light of more recent discoveries with references to another Protector, Vincentius, (below and ch. 8) who is probably a predecessor or successor of Heraclius.

2. ROAD BUILDING RECORD (Fig. 7.5a):

[.....]/ [.....]/ [...]per mil(it)es fortiss(imos) suos/ legg(ionum) XI Kl(audiae) et VII Kl(audiae)/ et I Ital(icae) et III Fl(aviae) et/ I Ill(yricorum) praetensione/ colicata mil(itibus) suis ex/ leg(ione) III Kyr(enaicae). A Bostra/ Dasianis mil(ia passuum) XVI et/ a Basienis Amat(a) XXXII/ et ab Amata Dumata/ m(ilia passuum) CCVIII

[Our Lord Aurelian ... built this (?) ...] through his very brave soldiers of the Legions XI Claudia, and VII Claudia, and I Italica, and III Flavia, and I Illyricorum, when in the field with his soldiers of the Legion III Cyrenaica. From Bostra towards (B)asi(e)nis 16 miles; from Basienis towards Amata 32 miles; from Amata towards Dumata 208 miles⁴

Date: Probably Aurelian of AD 273

The stone was evidently set up at Qasr el-Azraq on the road from Bostra through the oasis and onwards, as a desert route presumably, to Dumata (Jauf in Saudi Arabia). Various readings and interpretations have resulted in Azraq being identified as Dasianis (= Dia Fenis of the *Notitia Dignitatum*)/ Basienis (cf. ch. 8) but it seems more likely to have been Amatha (Christol and Lenoir 2001) (cf. ch. 8, below).

3. DEDICATORY BUILDING INSCRIPTION (Fig. 7.5b):

[Salvo] Constantino maxi/[mo victo]re ac triumphatore se/[mp(er) Aug(usto) e]t Constantino et/ [Consta]ntio nn(o)bb(ilissimus) Caess(aribus duobus)/ [... in]curia vetustate/ [castel?]um ruina conlapsam/ [.....]iussit Fl. Severinus

For the Health of Contantine Great Conqueror and Ever Triumphator, Augustus, and Constantine and Constantius the Most Noble Caesars. Flavius Severinus commanded the rebuilding of [the castellum?] which had fallen into ruin through great age⁵

Date: AD 326–333

Flavius Severinus is known only from a second inscription at Azraq.

4. DEDICATORY BUILDING INSCRIPTION (Fig. 7.5c):

[Providentia ddd(ominorum) n]nn(ostrorum trium) Constantini/ maximi trium]fatoris semp(er) Aug(usti) et/ [Constantini et Const]anti nobb(ilissimorum) Caess(arum duorum)/[..... c. 18 letters]Amatham olim ne[g]lect{a}m/[..... c. 18 letters]restaurari iussit Fl(avius) Seve/[rinus c. 13 letters]i curante Vincentio/ [protectore ... Dalma]ti et Zenofili vv(irorum) cc(larissimorum) co(n)s(ulum).

By the Providence of Our Lords Constantine Great Ever Triumphator, Augustus, and Constantine and Constantius the Most Noble Caesars, Amatha long neglected Flavius Severinus commanded it to be restored ... through the agency of the Protector Vincentius, in the consulships of the Most Illustrious Men (Flavius Julius) Dalmatius and (Domitius) Zenofilus.⁶

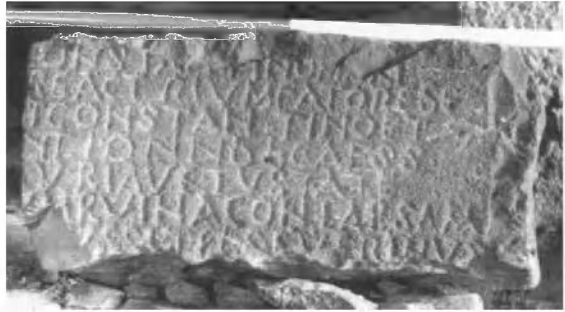
⁴ The importance of the text is evident in the number of attempts to read and interpret it, not least the final lines with their catalogue of place names and distances. I have adopted the most recent reading, that by Bauzou (1996) as brilliantly re-interpreted by Christol and Lenoir (2001). The places will be discussed elsewhere (Kennedy forthc. b).

⁵ The reading is that of Zuckerman (1994: 84) now improved by Christol and Lenoir (2001: 175) which I have preferred over that by earlier readers including myself.

⁶ The reading is again that of Zuckerman (1994: 86 n. 13).



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Fig. 7.5: Qasr el-Azraq (a) Text recording road construction to and beyond Azraq; (b) Severinus text; (c) Building inscription of AD 333 naming the Protector Vincentius; (d) Text of 323-333.

Date: AD 333

Vincentius is named overseeing military construction on an inscription found c. 37 km north-west of Azraq and dated to 334 (ch. 8).

5. DEDICATORY BUILDING INSCRIPTION (Fig. 7.5d):

Salvo d. n. Con[stantino Maximo victore]/ ac triumfator[e semp(er) Aug(usto) et Constantino]/ et Constantio [nn. bb. Caess. ... c. 12 letters .../.....]tempore [...

*For the Health of Constantine Great Conqueror and Ever Triumphant, Augustus, and Constantine and Constantius the Most Noble Caesars ... in the time ...*⁷

Date: AD 323–333⁸

Finally there is the form of the fort. Until the recent discovery of slightly projecting towers in the fort dated to the Trajanic period at Humayma (ch. 19), quadrilateral forts with high walls and projecting towers have commonly been dated to the late 3rd century onwards.

Principal Reading: Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 264–270, 416–417; Kennedy 1982: 72–96, 170–175; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 179–181; Gregory 300–307; 1997: 3, Figs F9.1–9.6

B. AZRAQ SHISHAN

JADIS 3213.003; AZRAQ ESH-SHISHAN; MAP 3353.I; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2932; UTMN 35242; PGE 321.900; PGN 138.900

The impressive reservoir on the west side of the southern pools at Azraq and the long walls encircling part of the pools and marsh, are most likely early Islamic. So, too, are likely to be the buildings just west of the reservoir and now buried beneath the modern village. However, it is inconceivable that the southern

pools were not policed by at least a detachment from Qasr el-Azraq in the Severan period and again after c. 300, perhaps using the small rectangular structure visible on the aerial photograph (Fig. 7.6).

As noted above, the fort at Bourada in Numidia included a bath-building inside the courtyard. One may suppose a bath to have been provided at Azraq at one or other of the pools and there was certainly such a building somewhere in the Azraq Basin as the next entry shows.

Principal Reading: Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 279, 419–421; Kennedy 1982: 96–107

C. QASR EL-UWEINID

JADIS 3113.001; QASR EL-UWEINID; MAP 3353.IV; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2854; UTMN 35190; PGE 314.400; PGN 133.500

This small fort lies c. 14 km south-west of Azraq Shishan on the scarp above a bend in the Wadi Butm (Fig. 7.7C). The complex consists of (Fig. 7.8b):

1. A well-built free-standing tower 9.5 m square of two or three storeys.
2. Around the tower but not aligned to it is irregular quadrilateral of very rough masonry with a rubble fill, c. 65 x 44 m (c. 0.25 ha). Against the walls were constructed rooms with their own walls. There is a narrow entrance on the west side facing the tower doorway.
3. A second tower 12 m square and still standing over 4 m high across the wadi to the west. It consists of massive masonry giving walls 1.2 m thick (Fig. 78a).

At first sight this is a relatively uncomplicated site. Pottery is limited in its chronological range and is homogeneous (Parker 1986: 17) though a few sherds might be late 1st/early 2nd century but believed the datable material (107 of 358 sherds) to be mid-2nd to early 4th century, with ‘Late Roman IV’ (late 3rd/early

⁷ Revising the restorations published in Kennedy and MacAdam 1985: 97–8.

⁸ There may once have been a further Latin inscription at the site: Kennedy 1982: 95–6, no. 18.



Fig. 7.6: Azraq Shishan. RAF aerial photograph of 1927 showing the buried building beside the reservoir (APA27/AP1009).

4th century) predominating. Sherds collected by Kennedy, however, were dated about 50 years earlier (Stein = Gregory and Kennedy 1985: 422).

From it have come the two earliest building inscriptions from Arabia:

1. A BUILDING INSCRIPTION on a long basalt block still lying in front of the scarp tower from which it may have fallen (Fig. 7.9a):

Pro salute et ingolumitate domi/norum nn. imp. Augg. L. Septimi Se/veri Pii Pertinacis et M. Aureli An/[tonini et] P. [[Septimi Getae Caes(aris) per L.] M[arium?]]/.Perpetu[[um leg(atum) Augg. pro pr(aetore) caste]]llum no/

v{u}m Severianum a[[edificaverunt? vex(illationis) leg(ionis) III Cyr?]]

For the Safety and Soundness of Our Lords the Emperors Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Publius Septimius Geta Caesar. Through the agency of Lucius Marius Perpetuus Proprætorian Legate of the Augusti Castellum Novum Severianum was [built by a detachment of Legion III Cyrenaica?]⁹

Date: AD 200–202

2. A BUILDING INSCRIPTION found by Sir Aurel Stein just in front of the same tower doorway, but subsequently lost (Fig. 7.9b):

⁹ A slightly revised reading of Kennedy 1982: 124–125; cf. Christol and Lenoir 2001: 165.

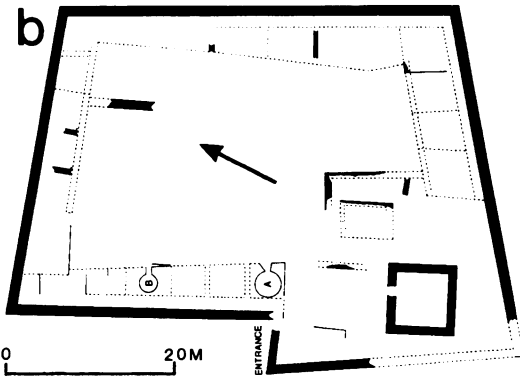
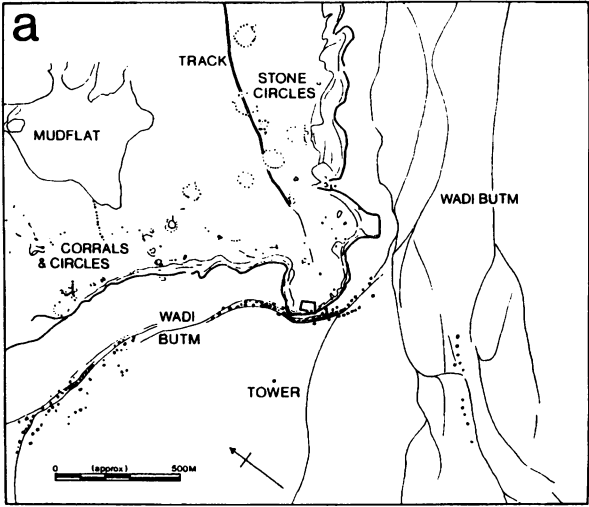


Fig. 7.8: *Qasr el-Uweinid*: (a) plan of the locality, the fort and two towers. Note the profusion of other man-made structures on the basalt high ground; (b) the fort.

Castellum et s(uum)/ praesidium Seve/rianum.
 Vexillatio/ leg(ionis) III Cyrenic(ae) (sic)
 baln(eum)/ Mucia[no] et Fab[ian]o
 [co(n)]s(ulibus) extruxit

Date: AD 201¹¹

*Castellum and its Praesidium Severianum. A detachment of the Legion III Cyrenaica erected this bath-building in the consulships of (M. Nonius Arrius) Mucianus and (L. Annius) Fabianus*¹⁰

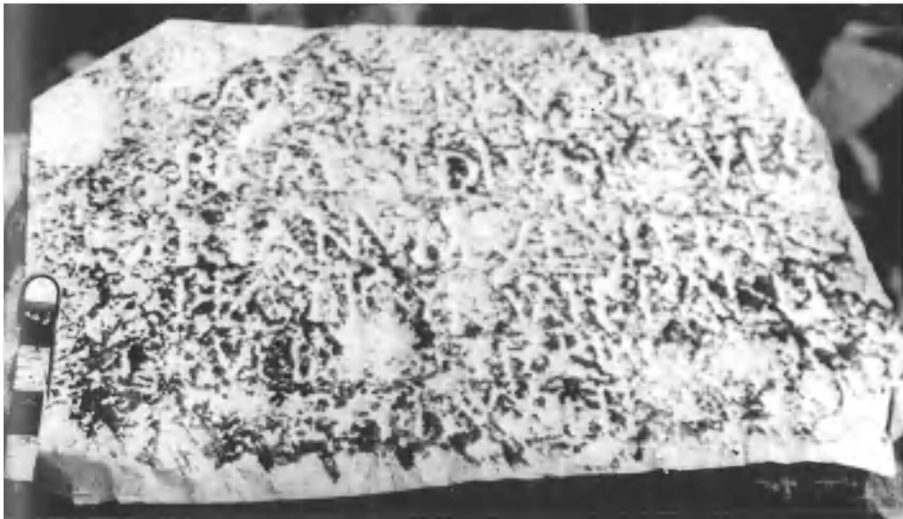
There is good reason to see the earliest significant construction as Roman and it might well be Severan. The construction styles, however, are very different in each component and we may need to think in terms of a tower on the scarp, later added to with a large outer enclosure wall and provided at some stage with a second tower in the wadi. The difficulty

¹⁰ The reading is that of Kennedy 1982: 125 but incorporating the suggestion of Lander 1984: 136.

¹¹ A third and possibly fourth inscription may once have existed, one of them from the tower in the wadi (Kennedy 1982: 126, nos 21 and 22).



(a)



(b)

Fig. 7.9: Qasr el-Uweinid. The two Latin building inscriptions — the earliest from Arabia.

is that the presence of two building inscriptions at such a modest site is surprising and the claim of one to be the record of construction of a bath-building at such a place has caused incredulity amongst most commentators. The water that ponds and stands in the bend of the wadi below is modest. It is far more plausible that the Severan fort and bath-building referred to would have been at one of the two Azraq pools. If that is so, then we must allow for the possibility that both inscriptions arrived on the site as building material from another location and may not give us the precise dates we had hoped for.

Gregory stressed the poor quality of the masonry in the fort itself and suggested that this enclosure wall may have been the work of an early Islamic development of a site on which a Roman tower already stood. However, she had already observed that the masonry was paralleled in its crudity at Da'ajaniya — a very different fort in other respects — which has been dated by excavation to early 4th century (ch. 16) (Gregory 320; cf. 376–382). Now Welsby (1998) has linked these same two sites — uniquely in Arabia he thought (cf. ch. 19 (Kh. el-Khalde)) — from the evidence he has noted of the walls having been thickened

and heightened at some point and sees it as paralleling an occasional practice in Roman Europe.

There may be something in both views. Despite the absence of characteristic Islamic sherds at the site, the mediaeval Arab writer Muqaddasi explicitly names "al-Awnid" as a halting place east of Amman on the route down the W. Sirhan into Arabia (Musil 1927: 337, 517; cf. Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy 1985): 285). Isaac (1992: 174) has pointed out that *praesidium* is the term used for a military police post on a road (cf. chs 19 and 20).¹² Perhaps, paralleling Qasr el-Azraq, at Uweinid an essentially Roman site developed from a Severan tower to a Tetrarchic fort with a later Islamic thickening of the walls and a further tower.

Finally, there is the meaning of 'Castellum novum'. As Lander (1984: 136) noted, the same phrase in an inscription at Qasr el-Hallabat (ch. 11) was taken to imply that there was an earlier military structure on the site. That makes good sense but the Hallabat inscription, too, is now suspected of being an import from another site. Both the 'Castellum novum' in the Uweinid text and its implied predecessor may be at Azraq rather than here

Principal Reading: Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 281–285, 421–422; Kennedy 1982: 113–118; Lander 1984: 134–138; Parker 1986: 17–19, 178; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 159–161; Gregory 316–322; Welsby 1998

D. QASR ASEIKHIN

**JADIS 3315.001; QASR EL-USEIKHIN;
MAP 3353.I; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 3064;
UTMN 35364; PGE 334.600; PGN 151.600**

The location of this fortlet is one of the most striking in Jordan (Fig. 7.10C). From Qasr el-Azraq, the conical outline of the Jebel Aseikhin is a landmark on the horizon 13.5

km to the north-east. Perched on the summit is a small fort with extensive views in every direction including the Azraq Oasis sites and the Roman road that passes a few kilometres to its west as well as a track linking Azraq to Qasr Burqu to the north-east (ch. 8). The fort is constructed inside an earlier circuit wall, there are stone heaps on one slope and a dam and reservoir on another (Fig. 7.11a).

The fortlet is c. 23 m sq (0.04 ha) (Fig. 7.11b). Heaped rubble does not obscure a well-preserved structure in masonry laid in careful courses, some of it well-cut. Walls still stand 3m + high and some rooms still have arches for roofs and some of their corbelling in place. The door on the south gives onto a vestibule leading into a small courtyard around which single-storeyed rooms are arranged symmetrical about an axis through this doorway. Stairs lead to the roof.

Difficulty of access has left Aseikhin relatively unexplored but it has been regarded as a Roman outpost since as early as Gertrude Bell's visit on 31 December 1913. There has been no excavation and there are no inscriptions or coins. Flints have been collected all around and there is widespread evidence of prehistoric activity on the site and nearby. The surface pottery, though abundant, has been difficult to identify and the fragment of relief-decorated lamp seen by Sir Aurel Stein is lost. The scatter of dated sherds extends from the 1st century AD to the early 4th then again from the mid-6th into the 7th. Another clue is the small quarry site with traces still of the diagonal chisel marks regarded as characteristically Nabataean. Although no Nabataean pottery has been identified, the growing evidence for their activity in this wider area is worth bearing in mind as is the potential for limited agriculture on the slopes and in the wadi. A possible sequence might be a Nabataean fortlet-cum-farm of

¹² Two of the forts at which we have evidence of walls being thickened and heightened are called Praesidium (Qasr el-Uweinid and Kh. el-Khalde (ch. 20)).

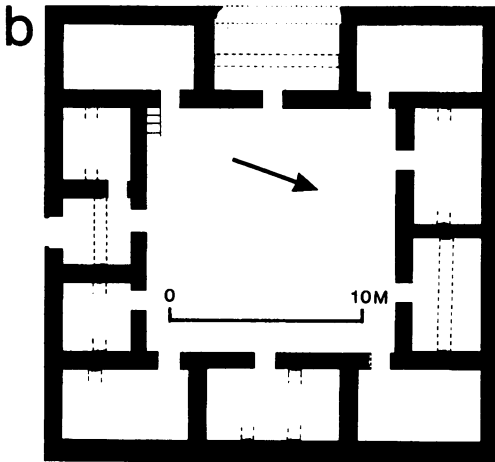
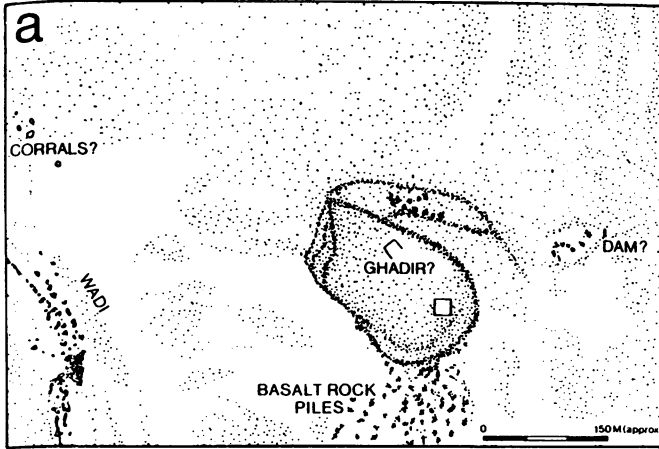


Fig. 7.11: *Qasr Aseikhin*: (a) sketch plan of the structures from an aerial photograph; (b) plan of the fortlet (from Kennedy 1982: 109 and 111).

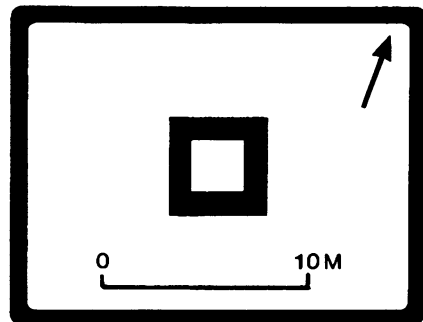


Fig. 7.12: *Qasr Ain el-Beida*: plan (from Kennedy 1982: 119, Fig. 26.8).

the 1st century AD, later used as a Roman outpost in the 3rd and/or early 4th century, with a final (civilian?) occupation in the later 6th.

Principal Reading: Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 273–277, 419; Kennedy 1982: 107–113; Parker 1986: 16–17, 178; Gregory 313–315

E. QASR AIN EL-BEIDA

**JADIS 3314.001; NO NAME; MAP 3353.I;
UTM ZONE 37; UTME 3030; UTMN 35294;
PGE 331.500; PGN 144.500**

A small tower, 5.14 m sq, with walls 1.2 m thick but surviving only to 1.2 m It is set within an unexpected rectangular enclosure with rounded corners, 21 x 16 m, though this barely survives above ground level (Fig. 7.12). The area is fertile and again extensively farmed (cf. Gilbertson and Kennedy 1984: 153). It is on a route eastward which also by-passes the Azraq pools on the east. Safaitic graffiti have

been noted nearby (Kennedy and Cowie 1984: 324). It may have served as both outpost and farm at different times but there is no dating evidence.

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 119 Fig. 26.8, 186–187; Gregory 311–312

(F. QASR AIN ES-SOL)

JADIS 3214.002; QASR AIN EL-SIL; MAP 3353.I; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2958; UTMN 35305; PGE 324.200; PGN 145.300

The small square structure and added bath suite seem from recent clearance to be an early Islamic farm rather than a Roman fortlet as once believed. A Severan milestone from the nearby road was reused as a vertical fulcrum in an olive press in one room (ch. 8).

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 128–132; Gilbertson and Kennedy 1984: 155, 158–160; AJ 150–154; Gregory 308–310

8: THE BASALT DESERT

Several roads and routes have been well-known since the 19th century coming into and extending beyond Azraq (Fig. 8.1). None is a surfaced road but one (A) was certainly marked by milestones, a second (B) had milestones on a more distant stretch although not near Azraq itself and a third (C) is known to have been in use in Roman times from the road stone found at Qasr el-Azraq. The others are no more than ancient tracks, probably in use in Roman times and inferred as such from supposed Roman military structures nearby.

A. THE 'VIA SEVERIANA'

(a) Travellers in this region long ago began describing the traces of the Roman road they encountered running south from Syria to the Azraq Oasis as the Strata Diocletiana, regarding it as a spur or extension of the well-known road of that name from Palmyra southwest towards Damascus. It now seems certain, however, that the numerous pieces of Severan milestone found at Qasr el-Azraq and reused at Ain es-Sol nearby (ch. 7) came from this road (below). What, if any, name it bore is unknown; 'Via Severiana' is coined here for convenience on the parallel of both the Strata Diocletiana and the Via Nova Traiana.

The 'road' is in fact a cleared track, 15–20 m wide marked by a low heap of stones on either side. North of Qasr el-Azraq the traces visible earlier this century have been lost and it must be picked up well beyond the modern settlement and its extensive land clearance. About 5 km north of the oasis a road branches off to the north-west (below).

(b) About 8 km north of the fort at Azraq Duruz is Rujm Mudawer, a tower just west of the road, 6.7 x 7.3 m and still c. 3 m high (Kennedy 1982: 119, Fig. 26.3, 177–179). The road has not been followed further in recent times but other such towers are likely (Fig. 8.2a).

(c) One such tower, c. 16 km north of Qasr el-Azraq, is Qasr el-Huweinit (BR950959), on the west of the road and again with commanding views. It is 6.2 x 6.35 m and still up to 1.75 m high (Kennedy 1997: 90–91) (Fig. 8.2b).

(d) No further towers have been reported further north where travellers have followed this road up into modern Syria to pass through Inat and Imtan, both of them known military sites (ch. 21).

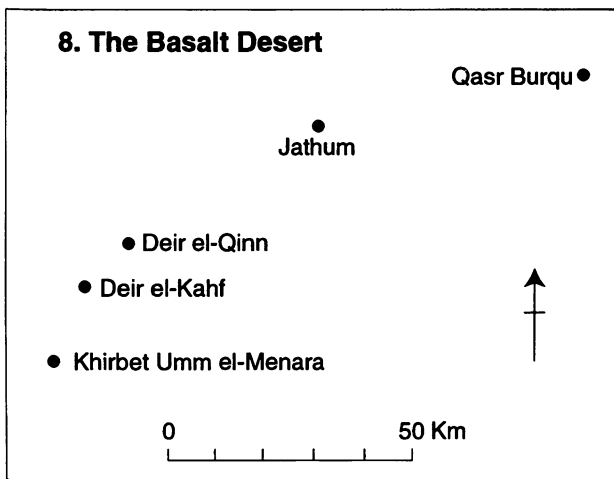


Fig. 8.1: Map of the sites in the Basalt Desert.

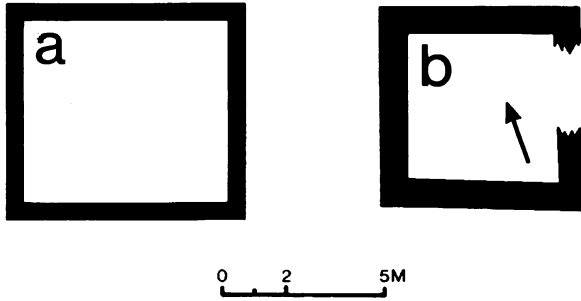


Fig. 8.2: The roadside towers at (a) Rujm Mudawer and (b) Qasr el-Huweinit (after Kennedy 1982: 119, Fig. 26.3 and 1997: 91, Fig. 15).

(e) Clearance of the Druze material inside Qasr el-Azraq brought to light parts of several milestones, while another was found, reused as part of an olive press inside the probable Umayyad farm at Qasr Ain es-Sol (ch. 7), and a squared milestone base was found beside the Roman road about 5 km north of Rujm Mudawer (above). The commander of the RAF in Transjordan in the late 1920s mentions seeing “a number (of milestones) lying about” on the road and “rescuing” one (Rees 1927: 89). This last was uninscribed but is of the same type as all the others: black basalt (unlike the limestone of those on the Via Nova Traiana and further west), shorter and slimmer than the basalt examples from Umm el-Quttein (below and ch. 10). None is complete:

1. THE FULLEST TEXT is (Kennedy and MacAdam 1985: 104–105):

Imp(erator) Caes(ar) L(ucius) Septim(ius)/ [Se]verus Pius Pert(inax)/ Aug(ustus) Arab(icus) Adiabe(nicus) Par(th(icus) Max(imus), P(ater) P(atriciae), Pont(ifex) Max(imus)/ trib(uniciae) pot(estatis) [X]V[III], Co(n)s(ul) II/I, Proco(n)s(ul) (vacat) et/ Imp(erator) Caes(ar) Aug(ustus) (sic) M(arcus) Aurel(ius)/ Antoninus Pius/ Aug(ustus) trib(uniciae) pot(estatis) X[II?]/ Co(n)s(ul) III, Proco(n)s(ul)/[per]/ [.....]/ [Leg(atus) eorum/ [Co(n)s(ul) Des(ignatus) Aug(ustus)]/ [M. P.]/ [(the same number in Greek)]

The Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, Great Conqueror of the Arabs, the Adiabeni and of

the Parthians, Father of his Country, Chief Priest, holding Tribunician Power for the 18th Time, Thrice Consul, Proconsul and The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Augustus, holding Tribunician Power for the 12th Time, Thrice Consul, Proconsul, [through the agency of], their Governor, Designated Consul ... miles ...]

Date: AD 208/10

(f) The road continues across the border into modern Syria and stretches of it have been recognised near Imtan (ch. 21). Now part of a milestone has been found reused near Imtan. The latter has been dated to 162 and seems to belong to a road running east from Adraha, Bostra and Salcha to terminate at Motha (Imtan). It bears the numeral XXII, the distance back to Bostra. It seems that the Severan period saw the creation of a new road passing through the terminal points of a lateral road out into the basalt desert (Kissel 2002).

To date, several Severan milestones can be assigned to this road but none of any other date. It leads to a place (the Azraq Oasis) with clear evidence of Severan activity including two dated building inscriptions. Although it may well have continued in use in later periods, the evidence all points to this being essentially a Severan road a date that harmonises with a Severan advance into the Libyan Desert (Kennedy 1980b).

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 169–186; Kennedy 1997: 88–91

B. AZRAQ TO DUMAT AL-JANDAL
(JAUF)

The road stone discussed in Chapter 7 clearly mentions Dumata, Dumat al-Jandal/Jauf in Saudi Arabia as a place with a named distance. No milestones have ever been found on this long stretch leading down the Wadi Sirhan then east to Jauf and probably none were ever set up there. Rather, we should probably view the reference as no more than an indication of a desert route to a known and important place (cf. ch. 21).

C. AZRAQ TO BOSTRA

Branching off the 'Via Severiana' c. 5 km to the north of Azraq Duruz is a road whose line can be traced to aerial photographs. It runs north-west to Umm el-Quttein but there are no milestones on this stretch to prove or date it. A possible roadside tower has been suggested at Kh. Umm el-Menara from near which has also come a most important military inscription (below). Then, just before Umm el-Quttein, however, is a possible watch-tower on the volcanic peak of Jebel Ku'eis (ch. 10). Beyond Quttein the road survives for a short distance as a cobbled surface with boundary ridges and central spine and a milestone of AD 293–305 found beside it is proof of its origin (ch. 10). It continued ultimately into Syria and onwards direct to Bostra.

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1997: 77–78

(D. KHIRBET UMM EL-MENARA)
NO JADIS; MAP 3354.III; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2818; UTMN 35659; PGE 308.900; PGN
180.300 (NOT JADIS 3018.001, EL-MANARA)

The site lies c. 37 km north-west of Azraq Oasis on an ancient track to Umm el-Quttein and Bostra. There are traces still of what Glueck thought to be a "Roman-Byzantine police-post" and adjacent cistern. More important is the discovery by the teams building the nearby lateral oil pipeline and road of a Latin inscription. It has generally been assumed this originated at this road-post but MacAdam has suggested instead it was moved there from Umm el-Quttein. Importantly it names a place — Basie — which is probably that on the Azraq road stone where it appears as Basienis (ch. 8). Some recent commentators have argued that Basie is Azraq (Speidel 1987: 217–218; Zuckerman 1994) but it seems better to identify Azraq as Amat(h)a. Certainly the two mileages — XVI and XXXII MP — on the Azraq inscription discussed above (ch. 7) add up to a close approximation of the overall distance from Bostra to Azraq. MacAdam's suggestion then acquires greater force as Umm el-Quttein is very nearly 16 MP from Bostra and the fort and ruins there would be Basie/ Basienis (cf. ch. 9).



Fig. 8.3: Kh. Umm el-Menara: Latin inscription of the Protector Vincentius.

2. LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION found beside the Baghdad Highway near Kh. Umm el-Menara (Iliffe 1942 = AE 1948: 136) (Fig. 8.3):

Cum pervidisset Vincentius prote/ctor agens Basie plurimas ex agra/riensibus dum aqua(s) sibi in uso trans/ferent insidiados a Saracenas pe/risse receptaculum aquar(um) ex funda/mentis fecit. Optato et Paulino vv(iris) cc(larissimus) cons(s)ulibus).

Vincentius, who was acting as Protector, on duty at Basie, observing that many of the agrarienses had been ambushed and killed by the Saracens while fetching water for themselves, laid out and constructed a reservoir for the water. (He did this) in the Consulship of the Most Illustrious Optatus and Paulinus.

Date: AD 334

As we have seen, Vincentius was carrying out work at Azraq the previous year (ch. 7). *Stationes agrariae* are mentioned frequently in the 4th century history of Ammianus Marcellinus (van Berchem 1952: 30) as places where troops have secured a vulnerable location — in this case providing a protecting watering place.

Principal Reading: Iliffe 1942; Kennedy 1982: 184–185; Kennedy *et al.* 1986: 151; Isaac 1992: 175–176; Zuckerman 1994

E. DEIR EL-KAHF

JADIS 3218.001; DEIR EL-KAHF; MAP 3354.I; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2965; UTMN 35739; PGE 323.500; PGN 188.300

Deir el-Kahf is a major fort, lying beside this same 'Via Severiana', c. 45 km north of Azraq (Fig. 8.4C). At the beginning of this century the ruins were totally uninhabited; today the modern village has encroached on them and much stone has been removed including all of the inscribed blocks once visible. Unlike Azraq with its springs and pools, water here has to be harvested for storage in reservoirs and cisterns which abound. Also unlike Azraq

is the extensive arable farming around. It lies on the boundary between basalt and fertile soils which stretch north and north-west into modern Syria which is just 3 km away. The Princeton Expedition passing through the area almost a century ago remarked on "the remains of ancient walls that divided fields" all the way from Inat southwards (PES II.A.2: 145).

The ruins consist of a tower, the fort, the remains of other structures (houses?), several cisterns and reservoirs and a dam (Fig. 8.5a).

(a) A small tower stands beside a reservoir c. 100 m north-east of the fort. It is c. 2.28 x 1.8 m sq and still at least 6 m high (Fig. 8.6). The reservoir is said to hold water throughout the year. As the tower would make little military sense so close to the fort, we may infer it to be earlier or an addition designed, as with the work of Vincentius in the text above, to provide a secure access to water. The earliest certain date for Deir el-Kahf is AD 306 (below). A tower and reservoir beside the Severan road at the point where it moves from arable land to basalt would make sense.

(b) The fort lies on even ground between two small wadis that merge just south of it (Fig. 8.5a). Even now it is one of the best-preserved in Jordan (cf. Fig. 8.4C). The almost exact square is c. 60 m, 0.36 ha with walls 1.5 m thick and two storeys high (Fig. 8.5b). Three corner towers are c. 9 m sq and three storeys high but project only 1.5 m and there are two intermediate towers. Gregory notes another similarity with Azraq in the similarity of its rooms to those on the west side at Azraq, a fort 50% larger. The entrance is in the middle of the east wall (A). Rooms are three storeyed in the towers and two storeyed where built against the walls around most sides. There is an anomaly in the plan of the south-east corner (B) where a building inscription was reused (below). The masonry is largely rough basalt blocks but some bossed and well-drafted finishes may imply repair or rebuilding or a finer structure in or nearby (below).

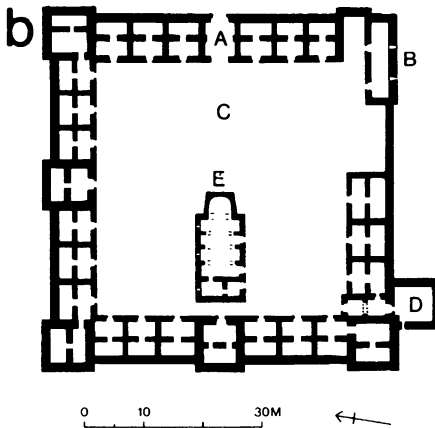
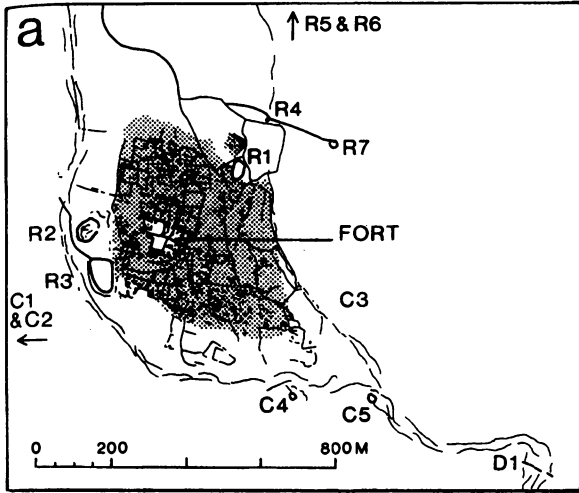


Fig. 8.5: Deir el-Kahf: (a) Plan of the site from a vertical aerial photograph of 1953 (from Kennedy 1995a: 282, Fig. 6); (b) plan of the fort (after Kennedy and Riley 1990: 179, Fig. 125).

The cistern in the courtyard has lost its roof and now appears as a deep open square pit (C). A further water source is just outside the south-west corner where a postern gives access to a projecting room within which is a second cistern (D).

3. AN UNDATED GREEK INSCRIPTION was recorded in situ on the lintel above the postern (D) (PES III.A.2: 128–129, no. 230) (Fig. 8.7):

Ἐπὶ Ἀγροίππου ἐπάρχου ἐγένε[το] ὁ λάκκος καὶ ὁ ἀγωγός.

Under the command of Agrippa, the Prefect, the cistern and the aqueduct were built.²

Date: 3rd/4th century?

Little remains of the ‘chapel’ reported by the Princeton Expedition (E) and just visible on

² The Prefect Agrippa may be the same man named on an epitaph built into an arch in the fort for his daughter Eratation (PES III.A.2: 129, no.231) For the term *lacus*/ *λάκκος* as employed in Egypt’s Eastern Desert see Cuvigny 2001.



Fig. 8.6: Deir el-Kahf: tower and reservoir c. 100 m. north-east of the fort as seen by Sir Aurel Stein in 1939 (By permission British Library: Stein 1939: 069).

Poidebard's aerial photograph c. 30 years later. A number of unexpected architectural pieces including column capitals, bases and drums, found in the internal cistern (C) or at the western end, imply an ornate building and may belong to this building (Fig. 8.8). Stein thought it the remains of a tower and Gregory has noted it lies where one would have expected a *principia*.

Two dated building inscriptions were still visible when the Princeton Expedition visited in 1904 but were lost by the time of Stein's visit in 1939. A third, actually found c. 10 km to the north at Inat, was said by the locals there to have come from Deir el-Kahf. As there is

further evidence for villagers in what is now Syria travelling south to take away building material from Jordanian sites, it is included here.³

4. BROKEN LATIN INSCRIPTION "found among the stones in front of the Roman fortress" (PES III.A.2: 126–127, no. 228; cf. Dussaud and Macler 1901: 181, no. 52; CIL III: 14380). Now lost (Fig. 8.9).

[Imperatoribus] Caesari(bu)s Fl(avio) Valerio/
[Constantino e]t Gal(erio) Val(erio)Maximiano/
[Piis Felic(ibus) in]vic(tis) Aug(ustis) et/[Fl(avio)
Val(erio) Seve]ro et Gal(erio) Valerio/
[Maximino no]b(ilissimis) Caes(aribus).
"Ἐτ(ους) σα'.



Fig. 8.7: Deir el-Kahf: inscription of Agrippa (from PES III.A.2: 128, Insc. 230).

³ It is not normally treated as from Deir el-Kahf but that may be an oversight because of the compartmentalisation of sites between Syria and Jordan. Parker 1986: 145 treats it as belonging to Inat.



Fig. 8.8: Deir el-Kahf: architectural pieces in the cistern (C) (SHS 94/1.12A).

By the Emperors Caesars Flavius Valerius Constantine and Galerius Valerius Maximianus Pius Felix Unconquerable Augusti and Flavius Valerius Severus and Galerius Valerius Maximinus the Most Noble Caesars. Year 201 (of the Province)

124–125, no. 224; cf. Dussaud and Macler 1901: 177, no. 47) (Fig. 8.10):

Ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου μου Σιλουινιανοῦ τοῦ δ(ιασ)η(μοτάτου) δουκὸς ἐγένετο ὁ πύργος, ἐκ προνοίας καὶ σπουδῆς Πρίσκου ἐπάχου. Ἔτει σμγ⁴.

Date: AD 306⁴

Under my Lord Silvinianus, Most Eminent Dux, the tower [purgos] was built, by provision and effort of Priscus, Prefect. In the Year 243 (of the Province).

5. GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION recorded at Inat in southern Syria c. 10 km north of Kahf by Dussaud and Macler and the Princeton Expedition and said by the locals to have come from ‘Deir el-Kahf’ (PES III.A.2:

Date: AD 348/9

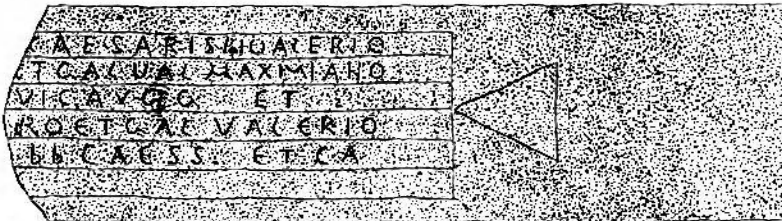


Fig. 8.9: Deir el-Kahf: Latin building inscription (from PES III.A.2: 126, Insc. 228).

⁴ The Year 201 is 306/7 but Constantius Chlorus died in Britain on 25 July 306.

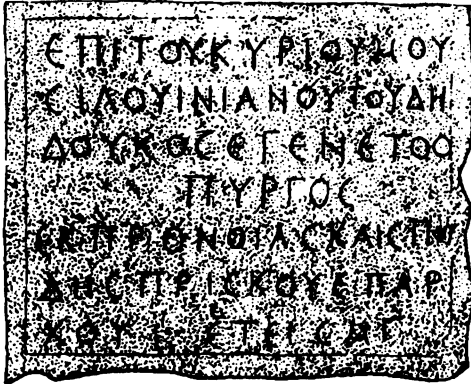


Fig. 8.10: Deir el-Kahf (?): Greek inscription (recorded at Inat) (from PES III.A.2: 125, Insc. 224).

‘Silvinianus’ is probably the Flavius Salvinianus recorded building *phouria* at Kh. el-Aradji and at Rudaymé on the desert’s edge north-east of Shohba (Sartre 1982: 103, no. 66bis).

6. LATIN INSCRIPTION ON SEVEN BLOCKS reused in the face of the eastern end of the south wall where the plan shows an anomaly (B). (PES III.A.2: 127–128, no. 229; cf. Dussaud and Macler 1901: 179–180, nos 55–51; CIL III: 14381, 14383). Now lost. (Fig. 8.11):

Salvis ac victoribus d(ominis) n(ostris) Valentiniano et Valente et Gratiano aeternis triunfatoribus senper Augustis hunc castellu(m) [i]n [.....]sede posit[um] atque [ampli]a[t]um disposi[t]ione Maximini v(iri)

c(larissimi) com(itis) et ducis haec monumenta <te>testa[n]tur, insistentibus Valen[t]iniano prae[fect]o [coh](ortis) et So[z]omeno et Cointo scriniariis[.]

For the Health and Victories of Our Lords Valentinian and Valens and Gratian, Eternal Victors, Ever Augusti, this Castellum [....] under the care of the Most Illustrious Maximinus, Comes and Dux, these records are set up, through the agency of the Valentinianus, Prefect of the Cohort, and the Record-Keepers Sozomen and Quintus.

Date: AD 367–375

(Flavius) Maximinus is also recorded on two military building inscriptions of AD 368 at Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9 below) and on a dedication to the same emperors of 364/367 at Dhibin 35 km to the west-north-west on the road from Bostra to Umm el-Quttein (Sartre 1982: 105, no. 72).

Chronology and phases: Epigraphic dates range from 306 to c. 367; one does not name the structure, the second names a tower and the third a *Castellum*. Two of these are certainly no longer *in situ* and the third had fallen from a possible location which need not have been the original one. Parker (1986: 178) reported ancient pottery extending from the 2nd century to the 8th and that can now be extended back into the 1st century AD if not earlier from sherds recorded by the Southern Hauran Survey (Kennedy and Freeman, in prep.). The largest group by far are Umayyad

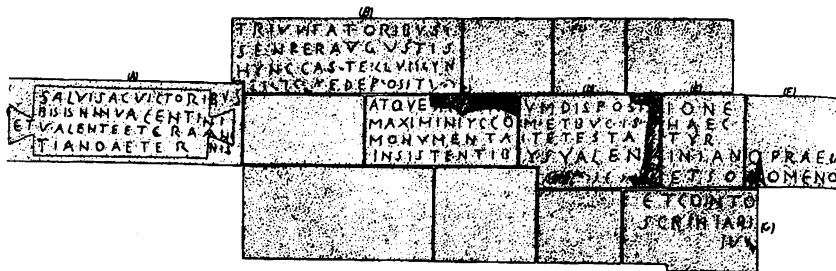


Fig. 8.11: Deir el-Kahf: Latin inscription reused in the south wall (from PES III.A.2: 128, Insc. 229).

(7th and 8th century). Next, we should recollect that the road on which Kahf stands is almost certainly Severan in origin (above). Then there is the suggestion that Deir el-Kahf ('The Monastery of the Cave' in Arabic) is the place-name *Spelunca* of the *Notitia Dignitatum* base of the *Equites promoti indigenae* (Not. Dig. Or. 37.6 and 18). Finally, the monastery referred to — if the term has any validity — suggests 6th or 7th century occupation.

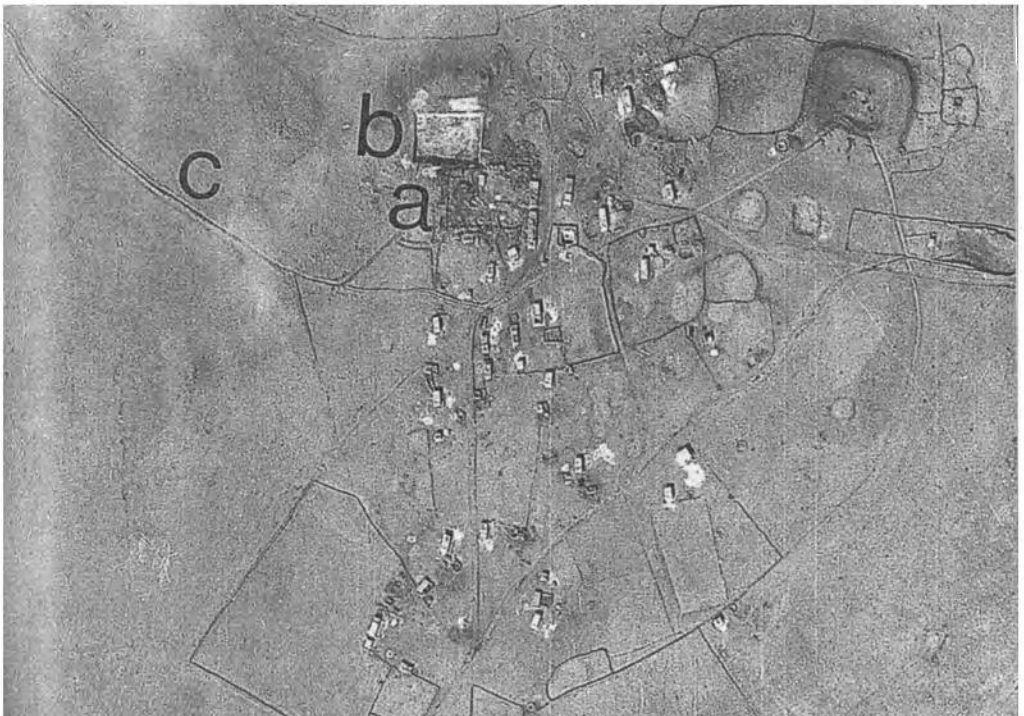
In the light of all this and the discovery now of rock-cut tombs with Nabataean inscriptions just to the east (MacDonald 1982: 172) and the dating for Deir el-Qinn (below), we may guess at a possible Nabataean station here. More certain is a tower or, more likely, a small road fort in the Severan period. This was proposed almost a century ago because of the rebuilding inferred for the south-east quadrant

(PES II.A.2: 145) (see Fig. 8.6b). Whatever the merits of the latter — it is rejected by Gregory — such a structure is entirely possible somewhere on this site. There was building in 306, followed by a tower in 348/9, and later still c. 367 a *Castellum*. In later centuries there was further occupation of some kind here still, possibly even one of the desert monasteries found elsewhere.

Garrison: Ground floor rooms in the towers have been seen as stabling for horses and the other rooms could have accommodated as many as 400–500 men. That seems excessive for such a location unless it was also supporting outposts in the vicinity both on the road and further east.

(c) Water harvesting and storage system. In addition to the two cisterns inside the fort, there are substantial traces of a sophisticated

Fig. 8.12: Deir el-Qinn in a vertical aerial photograph of 1978. A = 'fort'; B = reservoir; C = water channel from west to feed cisterns to the south of the fort with a spur into the south-west corner of the reservoir (APA 78/45).



system: several reservoirs (R) and cisterns (C) in the village, others on the hillslopes nearby and a substantial dam downstream (D) (Fig. 8.5a).

Principal Reading: PES II.A.2: 145–148; III.A.2: 126–129; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 254–259, 413; Parker 1986: 21–24, 178; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 178–179; Kennedy 1995a: 278–282; Gregory 276–281

F. DEIR EL-QINN

JADIS 3319.001; KHIRBET DEIR EL-KINN; Map 3354.I; UTM Zone 37; UTME 3045; UTMN 35808; PGE 331.100; PGN 195.900

Deir el-Qinn lies c. 11 km north-east of Deir el-Kahf and, like the latter, on the lateral boundary of arable soils and basalt. Few visitors have reached it — neither the Princeton Expedition nor Parker and it was off the track both of travellers to Azraq from the north or those coming in through Qasr Burqu on the north-east. Stein's remains the most detailed publication but there is now

evidence from the Southern Hauran Survey and an aerial photograph of 1978. The site comprises the fort, a tower inside its courtyard, a large external reservoir together with a scatter of cisterns and water channels, traces of houses and another large square structure. No plan has been published but the overall layout may be seen on the vertical aerial photograph (Fig. 8.12).

The fort is partly overbuilt along the west side by modern housing but the site has been re-settled more recently than Deir el-Kahf and is less damaged by stone-robbing. The walls, enclosing a rectangle c. 73 x 56 m, are of crude unmortared basalt blocks about 1 m thick and still two or more metres high in places. Rooms of c. 5 x 6 m are built against the insides of these walls on the north, west and south at least and account for the modern name: the 'Monastery of chicken-coops' (Fig. 8.13).

The tower is of a better build and quality of masonry implying, perhaps, a different date. It stands on a rock outcrop in the open courtyard of

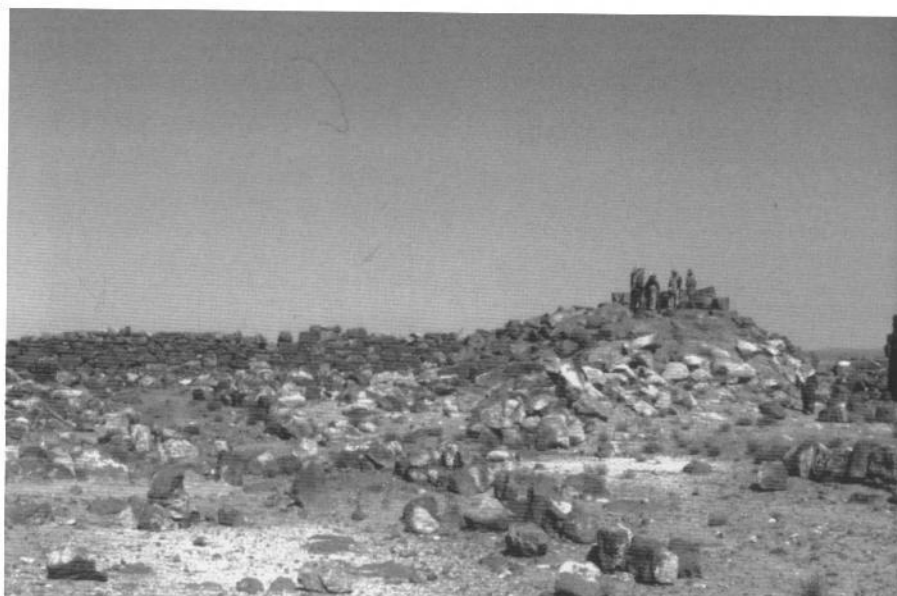


Fig. 8.13: Deir el-Qinn: part of the rooms against the west wall; the tower is on the right in the foreground.

the fort and measures 7.3 m square with an internal division into two rooms.

The reservoir is an irregular quadrilateral, c. 55 x 33.75 x 3.4 m, just outside the north wall of the fort. It is fed by a channel coming in from the west which forks with one spur into the reservoir and a second to fill one of several cisterns.

Aerial photographs of the 1940s show the site with even less modern encumbrance and leave little doubt there was an ancient settlement on the east and south of the fort as is implied by the scatter of cisterns in those areas.

Date: An unreadable graffito in Greek letters is incised into the rock outcrop (MacAdam and Graf 1989: 184–185; pl. XXVI.1). Pottery is abundant and much is readable. The span is from the 1st to 4th century and includes several pieces of Nabataean and several Eastern Sigillata A (Kennedy and Freeman in prep.).

The dates allow the possibility of a Nabataean settlement passing into Roman control but probably ceasing to be occupied in the 4th century. A recent commentator has suggested the place may have been a purpose built monastery or residence for hermits, perhaps built around an earlier nomadic water and gathering point marked by a tower (Helms 1991: 191, 210 n. 4).

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 299; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 251–253, 412; Gregory 282–283

G. JATHUM

NO JADIS ; Map 3455.II; UTM Zone 37; UTM 3405; UTMN 36052; PGE 366.700; PGN 221.400 — approximate location. (Not JADIS 3722.001, JATHUM)

In the basalt desert north-east of Deir el-Qinn several hundred inscriptions incised on stones and basalt outcrops have been recorded. Most are Safaitic and Kufic, but several are in Greek and include one of considerable interest.

7. GREEK INSCRIPTION found where the Wadi Jathum crosses from Syria into Jordan (AE 1956: 183 = SEG XVI: 819 with revision in Macdonald 1993: 349–350).

Ὁ βίος οὐδέν ἐστιν. Διομήδης καθαρωδὸς καὶ Ἀβχαρος κο[υρ]εὺς ἐξῆλθαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὸν ἔρημον μετὰ στρατηγοῦ ὀπλειτῶν καὶ ἕστακαν ἐγγὺς τόπῳ λεγομ[έ]νῳ σιο[υ] Ἀβγάρ[ου].

Life is nothing (or worth nothing). [As for] Diomedes the lyrist and Abcharos the barber, the two (of them) went out into the desert with the commander of the foot soldiers [strategos hopeiton] and were stationed near the place called the Cairn of Abgar.

Date: Speidel has seen these people as part of the civilian entourage of a provincial governor on tour from Bostra. Perhaps rather they were attached to a Herodian or Nabataean commander.

The early report spoke of it being “beside a ruin, possibly a desert fortification or tomb” but Macdonald discounts this reporting only cairns.

Principal Reading: Mowry 1953; Kennedy 1982: 299; Speidel 1977: 717; MacDonald 1993: 349–350

H. QASR BURQU

JADIS 4222.001; QASR BURQU; Map 3555.II; UTM Zone 37; UTM 4027; UTMN 36085; PGE 428.400; PGN 227.200

Almost due east 65 km from Jathum lie the tower and enclosure of Qasr Burqu, frequently regarded as Roman in origin. The remains stand at the southern end of a lake formed by a dam and have received surprisingly numerous visitors despite the remoteness of the place (Fig. 8.14C).

The tower is constructed from coursed basalt forming a rectangle of c. 12 x 8 m, some still standing to almost 12 m (Fig. 8.15). There are three rooms at ground level. It is commonly

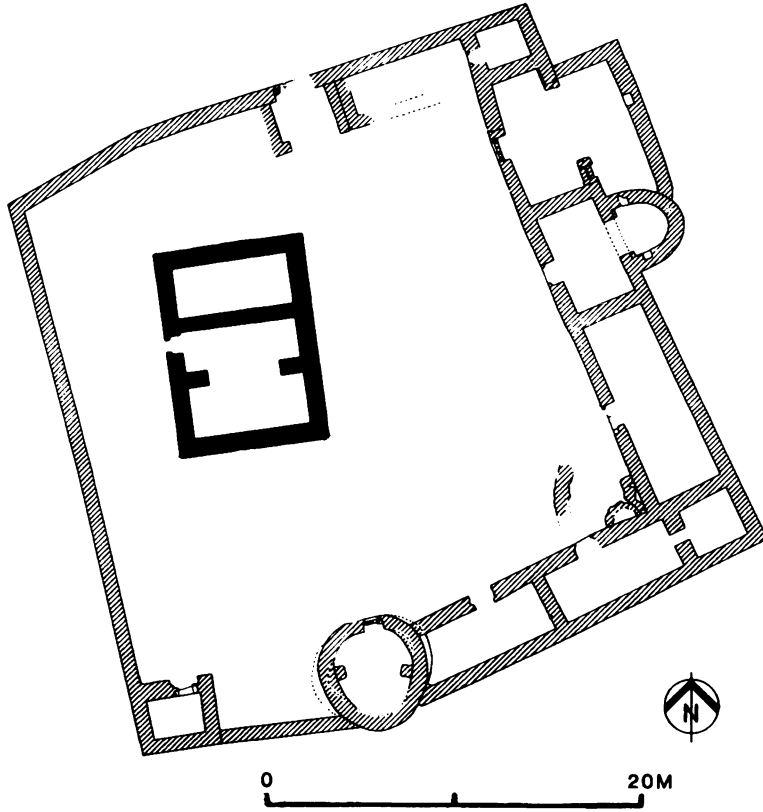


Fig. 8.15: *Qasr Burqu: plan (after Helms 1991: 194, Fig. 3).*

regarded as the earlier part of the site. Around it lies an irregular quadrilateral enclosure with rooms built against the walls on south, east and part of the north sides. An Arabic inscription on a lintel bears the date AD 700 but there is a Greek epitaph, several Safaitic graffiti and also a Christian cross and the enclosure has traces of rebuilding.

Stretching north is a lake formed by a dam c. 100 m long built across the wadi c. 500 m north of the fort. The masonry type in the dam has suggested it is ancient and contemporary.

Interpretations have varied considerably from Nabataean to Islamic and the most recent examination following sondages has had to leave much of the proposed interpretation uncertain.

The remoteness of the place is against the possibility of the tower as an official Roman military structure. The most recent interpretation suggests it began as a centre for beduin in what was essentially a no-man's-land between Rome and Persia. Later it was developed as perhaps a monastery and later still as a great meeting place for nomads as happens still nearby at ar-Risha (Helms 1991).

Date: Dating is insecure but the most likely sequence is of a tower and watering point of the 3rd/4th century AD or later being developed in the Early Islamic period.

Principal Reading: Kennedy and Riley 1990: 71–73, 216, 218–220; Gregory 239–243; Helms 1991

9. THE SOUTHERN HAURAN

The Southern Hauran is the final area of fertile soils and relatively good rainfall before the drier conditions of the steppe and the arid and inhospitable ones of the Basalt Desert. In practice the land is, or has been, thickly strewn with basalt boulders, too, but clearance exposes rich soils and water-harvesting and storage allow settlement. There are traces of widespread settlement from prehistory onwards. In the Nabataean to Early Islamic periods fields and farmsteads, villages and small towns, abounded, stretching across the border to Bostra, Salkhad and beyond into the Hauran proper. It was evidently a densely settled area and the numbers, size and quality of buildings in the villages and towns imply a measure of prosperity. But this is marginal land for farming, confronting the desert and its nomads and interacting with them. It is no surprise to find it being exploited extensively or that it was policed and protected by the army (Fig. 9.1).

A. UMM EL-QUTTEIN
**JADIS 3019.009; TELL UMM EL-
 QUTTEIN; MAP 3354.IV; UTM ZONE 37;
 UTME 2771; UTMN 35781; PGE 303.900;
 PGN192.200**

About 50 km separate the 'Via Severiana' from the Via Nova Traiana to its west; Umm el-Quttein lies about midway, c. 21 km west-north-west of Deir el-Kahf. Significant buildings including towered houses were photographed by the Princeton Expedition in 1904 but an extensive beduin village has

largely destroyed them. Likewise, many of the inscriptions reported in the past are now lost. On the other hand, fieldwork and the interpretation of aerial photographs have disclosed the fort previously inferred from an inscription. This was a substantial settlement with a large fort, two major reservoirs and numerous cisterns, and the churches and houses of a small town. Part of a surfaced road has been traced and the large corpus of inscriptions includes several of significance.

(a) The aerial photograph of 1953 (Fig. 9.2) shows the clear trace of a regular, rectangular enclosure in the northern part of the town. No towers are visible, there is an apparent gate in the centre of the east wall and it overlooks the major reservoir. The dimensions are c. 156 x 120 m, 1.87 ha (c. 527 x 405 Roman Feet). Despite extensive development, the circuit may be followed at several places on the ground.

This is a large fort and of a type not much found in the Near East. The likely garrison is named on an altar reused as the base of an arch in a church just beyond the north wall. The building inscription from Jebel Ku'eis (below) may also have originated in Quttein.

1. A GREEK INSCRIPTION (PES III.A.2: 118–119, no. 211):

Ἐπὶ Ἀζύζου Γεαρ[υ] οὐετρανοῦ Ἀ[ρ]έθου ἐκτίσθη.

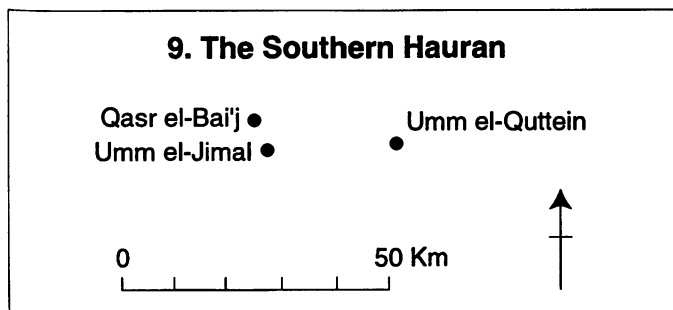


Fig. 9.1: Map of the military sites in the Southern Hauran.

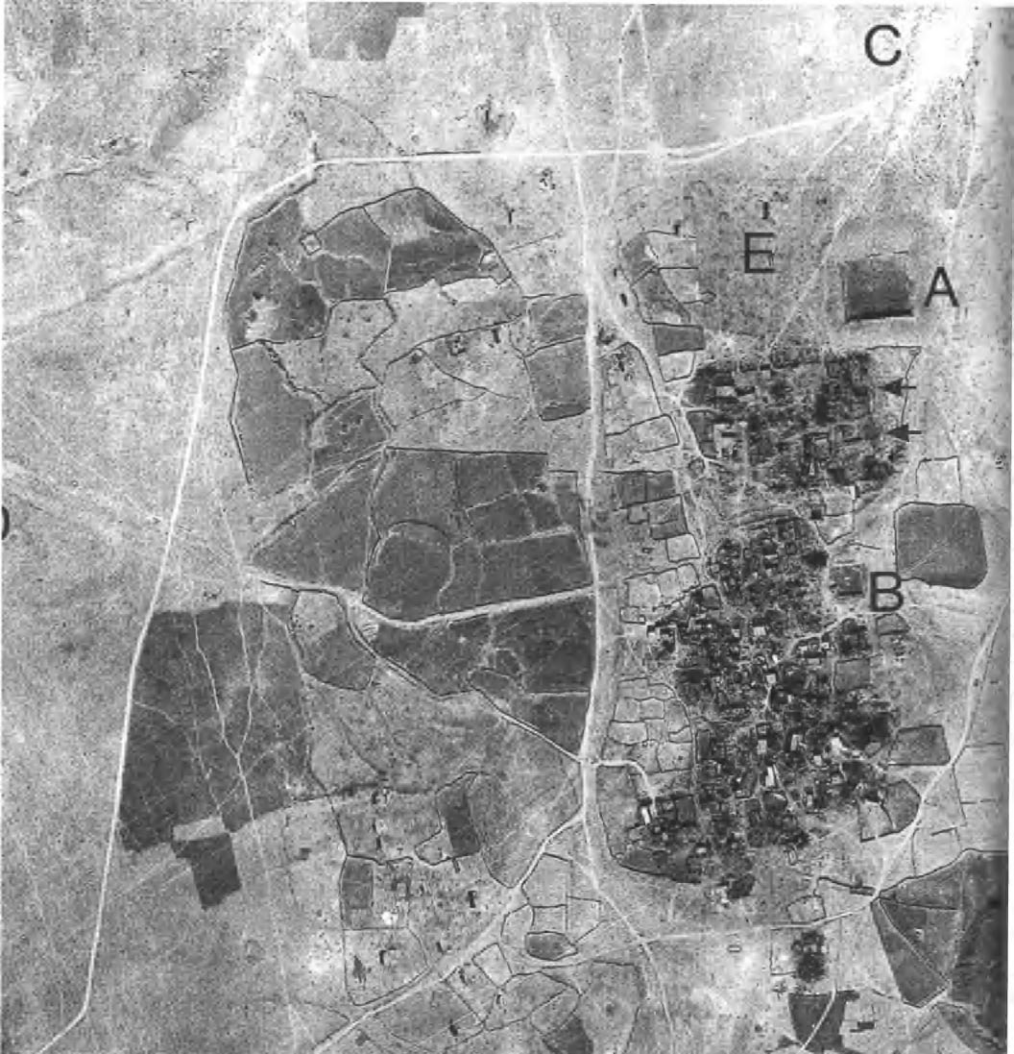


Fig. 9.2: Umm el-Quttein: Vertical aerial view in 1953. The arrows indicate the fort; A and B = reservoirs; C = water channel into A; D = road to Bostra; E = ancient town.

(This) was built under the direction of Azis, (son) of Ghaiyar, a veteran (of the armies) of Aretas.

Date: If Aretas is the Nabataean king, Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40) is the most likely.

2. LATIN INSCRIPTION first read by Dunand (1926: 328). It is damaged where the cohort numeral appears (Fig. 9.3):

COH I[II?]/AVGTHR/EQ

Cohors I[II?] Augusta Thracum Equitata

Date: Fort form and inscription point to a date in the 2nd or early 3rd century AD.

Dunand and subsequent commentators have read I Thracum, a regiment attested at Imtan c. 25 km to the north-east (above and ch. 21).



Fig. 9.3: Umm el-Quttein: Latin inscription reused in church just beyond north wall of the fort.

That certainly makes sense but the spacing allows for at least one, probably two, more vertical strokes. Cohors II is attested in Pannonia but III is attested in Syria in 88, 156/7 and 227 (Kennedy and MacAdam 1986: 234–236). The fort dimensions would accord with a unit of this size.

The ancient town developed not just south of the fort but inside the fortifications. There is no evidence of this early fort being remodelled but there is a possible indicator of a 4th century military structure. As noted above (chs 7 and 8), there are grounds for identifying Umm el-Quttein as Basie/ Basienis (and perhaps as the Diafenis of the Notitia Dignitatum: MacAdam 1989: 303). The further implication then is of a military post there in AD 334 and still perhaps at the end of that century. Certainly the inscriptions include one which is for a late Roman soldier:

3. TOMBSTONE built into the doorway of a modern house (PES III.A.2, 119–120, no. 213) (Fig. 9.4):

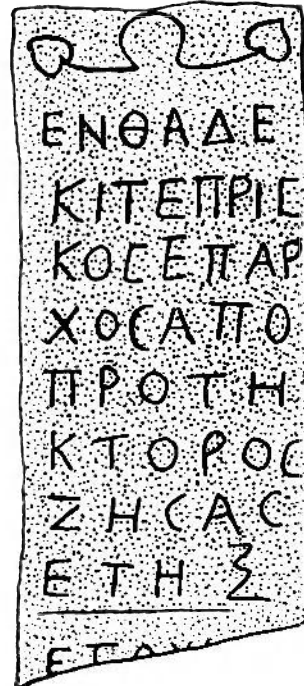


Fig. 9.4: Umm el-Quttein: Greek epitaph for a Protector (PES III.A.2, Inscr. 213).

Ἐνθάδε κῆτε Πρίσκοϲ, ἔπαρχοϲ ἀπὸ προτήκοροϲ, ζήϲασ ἔτη ξ'. Ἔτοϲ ...

Here lies Priscus, Praefectus, former Protector, having lived 60 years. The year ...

Date: Priscus has long been equated with the Prefect Priscus on a military inscription attributed to Deir el-Kahf (ch. 8). That is dated to 348/9 so this should be not long afterwards.

There are numerous other inscriptions from Umm el-Quttein: ten are in Nabataean — one dated by the last king (Rabbel II: AD 71–106); numerous Greek tombstones and a dedication of the year AD 265/6. Pottery extends the settlement through into the Early Islamic centuries.

An interpretation may be that in the early 2nd century AD a small Nabataean settlement and possibly a military post became the base of a Roman auxiliary regiment. The fort was later taken over by the expanding Late Roman town. There may have been some sort of military activity there in the 4th century but it need not have been more than a tower.

Umm el-Quttein became the hub of a road network but all branches are later than the inferred date of the fort and inscription. The principal road is that which ran through Umm el-Quttein from Bostra c. 26 km to the north-west and continued across the lava desert to join the 'Via Severiana' about 5 km north of Azraq. It is certainly this road that is referred to on the road building inscription at Azraq (ch. 8). The road was probably again largely a cleared surface across the chert-covered

landscape or through the basalt boulders to the south-east. Just north-west of Umm el-Quttein, however, a stretch of the road foundation, small boulders set between kerbs and with a central spine as on the Via Nova Traiana, has been found. Lying beside it was part of a small basalt milestone, like those from Azraq but in this case dated to 293–305. From Umm el-Quttein itself, six milestones have been recorded ranging from 293–305 to 317–324. Two were found on the road west to Umm el-Jimal — again 293–305, and one of 317? on the road north-east to Salkhad at Tell Ghariya. All are on basalt but of the same large dimensions as the limestone examples elsewhere in Jordan rather than the small basalt ones occasionally encountered elsewhere (chs 7 and 10).

(b) Jebel Ku'eis is a striking volcanic peak rising on the horizon c. 4 km to the south-west. A well-built structure with an impressive basalt door is perched on the crest. It is certainly not military — perhaps a temple — but the location provides such a remarkable view over the surrounding landscape that it was no real surprise when a Latin inscription was found amongst the ruins:

4. PART OF A LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION (Kennedy and MacAdam 1986: 232–233) (Fig. 9.5):

Vexillatio/Leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae) per/[> ...4 or 5 letters ...?CMLXVI?]

(Built by a) detachment of the Legion III Cyrenaica through the agency of [? ...



Fig. 9.5: Umm el-Quttein: Drawing of the Latin building inscription of Legion III Cyrenaica from Jebel Ku'eis.



Fig. 9.6: Vertical aerial view of Umm el-Jimal in 1953 (APA 53/HAS 56.062). A = Castellum; B = town walls; C = the Nabataean/Roman town; D = Gate of Commodus; E = Barracks. The photo is best viewed upside down for the shadows to be optically correct.

The stone may have been brought from Umm el-Quttein as part of the material for a new structure. A watch-post, however, is possible. Some of the pottery is 1st–3rd century but the majority is 4th–8th century.

Date: 2nd – 4th century

Principal reading: PES II.A.2: 137–142; III.A.2: 116–121; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 259–261, 413–414; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 141–143; Gregory 274–275; Kennedy and Freeman in prep

B. UMM EL-JIMAL

JADIS 2719.002; UMM EL-JIMAL; MAP 3254.1; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2523; UTMN 35800; PGE 279.100; PGN 193.200

As noted, a road west from Umm el-Quttein is implied by two milestones of 293–305. It runs through a succession of ancient and modern villages until it reaches Umm el-Jimal c. 25 km due west and the same distance from Bostra. Jimal is the largest of the ancient deserted towns of the Southern Hauran. It has been under excavation and now regional survey since 1972. The extensive ruins of the town (Fig. 9.6) have been well-known to visitors since the remarkable visit of William John Banks in 1818. Although often thought of as ‘Roman’, excavation has revealed a small Nabataean/Early Roman town, succeeded on an adjacent site by a Late Roman/Early Islamic one (Fig. 9.7a). The reason for the shift may be that the construction of a fort and water supply just north-west of the early settlement stimulated development and drew new settlement to that area which in time took over the area of the subsequently abandoned fort. Epigraphic evidence reveals other military activity at Jimal.

(a) Although some kind of Nabataean military activity is likely here, the earliest evidence is of the later 2nd century AD and may point to an early fort.

5. LATIN INSCRIPTION found lying in the ‘Gate of Commodus’ (fig. 9.7a: D) on the

north-west side of the town (PES III.A.3: 131–132, no. 232) (Fig. 9.8). Now lost.

Imp(eratore) Caes(are) M(arco) Aur(elio) Antonino/ Aug(usto) Arm(eniaco) Part(hico) Med(ico) Germ(anico) Sarm(atico)/ [[et Imp(eratore) Caes(are) L(ucio) Aur(elio) Commodo Aug(usto) Germ(anico)]]/ [[Sarm(atico)]] opus valli perfectum sub [...]/ [.....] Severo leg(ato) Aug(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) co(n)s(ule) des(ignato)

By the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, Conqueror of the Armenians, Parthians, Medians, Germans and Sarmatians [[and the Emperor Caesar Lucius Aurelius Commodus Augustus, Conqueror of the Germans and Sarmatians]] the rampart work having been completed by Severus, Proprætorian Legate of the Emperors, Consul Designate

Date: AD 177–180

The gate to which this belonged certainly was that of the later town but the gate itself may have belonged originally to some earlier structure. It is c. 4.4 m wide with projecting towers 4.8 m square (Fig. 9.9). Though still impressive earlier this century, it is “a very simple structure” ... “almost devoid of ornament”. In fact, there is reason to suppose the gate and inscription belonged originally to a late 2nd century fort. Now that we have a Early Roman town nearby, the notion of a 2nd century town wall for the antique town is unsustainable and we might return to Littmann’s observation of traces in places of earlier walls c. 1.8 m thick (PES II.A.3: 158; cf. Gregory 272).

(b) There is a substantial fort against the east wall. Discovered in 1981, there has been excavation and although its walls, originally 1.9 m thick, consist now of mounds of rubble c. 1 m high, it shows clearly on aerial photographs (Figs 9.6 and 9.10C). It is an irregular quadrilateral with sides c. 95–112 m. c. 1 ha (Fig. 9.7b). There are projecting rectangular towers at the angles and pairs of towers overlapping the walls at three of the

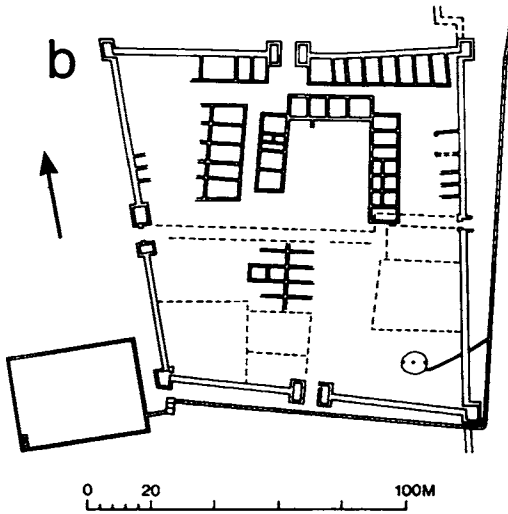
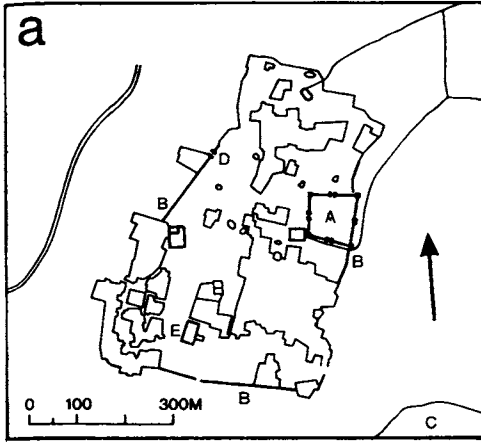


Fig. 9.7: Umm el-jimal: Plan of (a) the Late Antique city and (b) the Castellum.

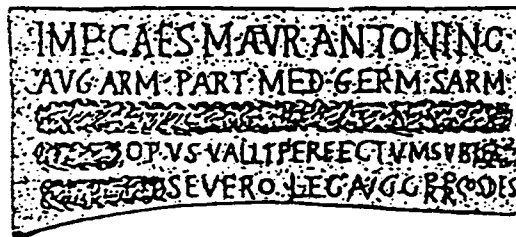


Fig. 9.8: Umm el-Jimal: Inscription from the Gate of Commodus (PES III.A.3: Inscr. 232).

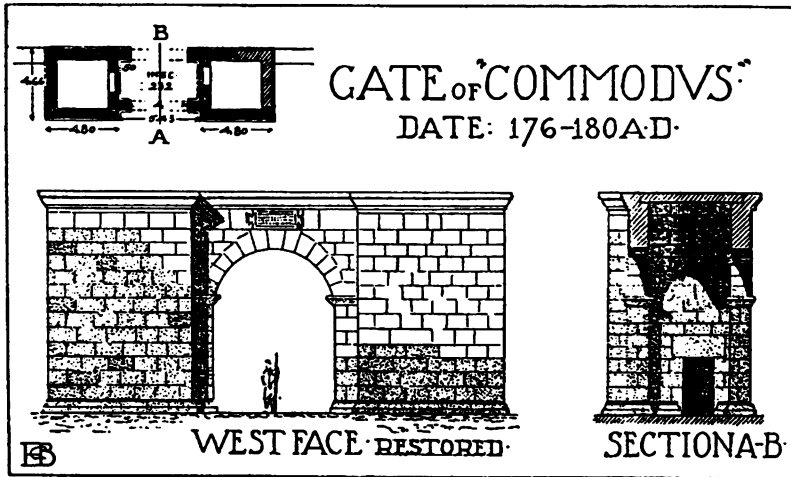


Fig 9.9: Umm el-Jimal: Gate of Commodus (from PES II.A.3: 157).

four gates. There are rooms built both against the walls and in the courtyard area and a building identified as a *Principia* in the northern half. It is similar in size and internal arrangements to Da'ajaniya in the far south of Jordan (ch. 16); though much larger, it is also strongly reminiscent of the fort at Kh. es-Samra only c. 25 km to the south-west (ch. 10).

The excavations have yet to be published and dating is unclear. The excavators believe it to have been constructed c. AD 300 but that is based on no more than Late Roman (mid-2nd to early 4th century) pottery from the foundation levels of the barracks and Constantinian coins. It seems to have been abutted by the town wall which would imply it as earlier in date than the latter.

Although cisterns abound inside the town and beyond, the most striking feature of the water supply is the large reservoir, 40 x 28.5 x 3–4 m. It lies just beyond the south-east angle of the *Castellum* and is fed by an aqueduct from a dam across a wadi to the north-east. The location may imply its construction specifically for the *Castellum*.

(c) The town walls are barely 1 m thick in places, made of crudely shaped courses of

basalt boulders and lacking buttresses or towers. The impression is of a simple defensive circuit employing in places the external walls of tall buildings and only given some indication of grandeur by the 'Commodus Gate' and its inscription. The West, South, South-West and North-East Gates are modest structures. Pottery from excavation suggests an original construction in or after the mid-2nd–3rd century; i.e. it could be as early as the Commodus inscription or of the 4th century. Later reconstruction may be associated with 6th/early 7th century pottery (Parker in de Vries 1998: 143–144).

(d) Two new Latin inscriptions — both damaged — record the construction of towers. They are very similar and may be of the same date. The more complete reads:

6. LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION reused in an ancient house in the south-east corner (Atallah 1996: 17–18). The lower half of the final line is missing.

Salvis et victorib(us) d(ominis) n(ostris) Valent[iniano]/ et Valente et Grati[ano] semper Aug(ustis)]/ prospiciens saluiferum fore cunctis F[l(abius)] Maximinus dux hanc turrem exsurgere ius[sit a fun]damentis eius.

speculo, curante Agat[ho/daimone, trib(un)o m(ilitum) vex(illationis). D(ominis) n(ostris) Valentinia[no]/ et Valente II co(n)s(ulibus)./ Per vex(illationem) VIII Dalmatam devotissimam.

For the Health and Victories of Our Lords Valentinian and Valens and Gratian, Ever Augusti, foreseeing what will be needed for the safety of all, Flavius Maximinus, Dux, ordered this tower to be raised up from the foundations, as a watch tower, in the charge of Agathodaimon, Military Tribune of the Vexillation in the consulate for the second time of Our Lords Valentinian and Valens. By the agency of the Most Devoted Vexillation of the (Equites) VIII Dalmatarum.

Date: AD 368

The second inscription is laid out differently but is almost identical in its wording. The governor Flavius Maximus is given the fuller titles he bears on the text from Deir el-Kahf (ch. 8, above): v(ir) c(larissimus) com(es) et dux (Most Illustrious Comes and Dux) (Atallah 1996: 19–20). It was found in the

north-east corner and raises the possibility they belong to towers constructed on the main angles of the town wall (cf. Fig. 9.6 and 9.7a). There was evidently a ‘Burgus’ at Umm el-Jimal but it is uncertain which of the identified military structures it was — if any.

7. A WELL-PRESERVED LATIN INSCRIPTION reused as a lintel in a later church (PES III.A.3: 131–132, no. 233 = ILS 773) (Fig. 9.11):

Salvis d(ominis) n(ostris) Valentiniano, Valente et Gratiano/ victoriosissimis, semper Aug(ustis), dispositione Iuli,/ v(iri) c(larissimi), com(itis), magistri equitum et peditum, fabri/catus est burgu[s] ex fundamento mano devo/tissimorum Equitum IX Dalm(atarum), s(ub) c(ura) Vahali trib(uni),/ in consulatum d(omini) n(ostris) Gratiani, perpetui Aug(usti) iterum/ et Probi, v(iri) c(larissimi).

For the Health of Our Lords Valentinian, Valens and Gratian, Most Victorious, Forever August, under the direction of the Most



Fig. 9.11: Umm el-Jimal: The Burgus inscription of AD 371 as reused.

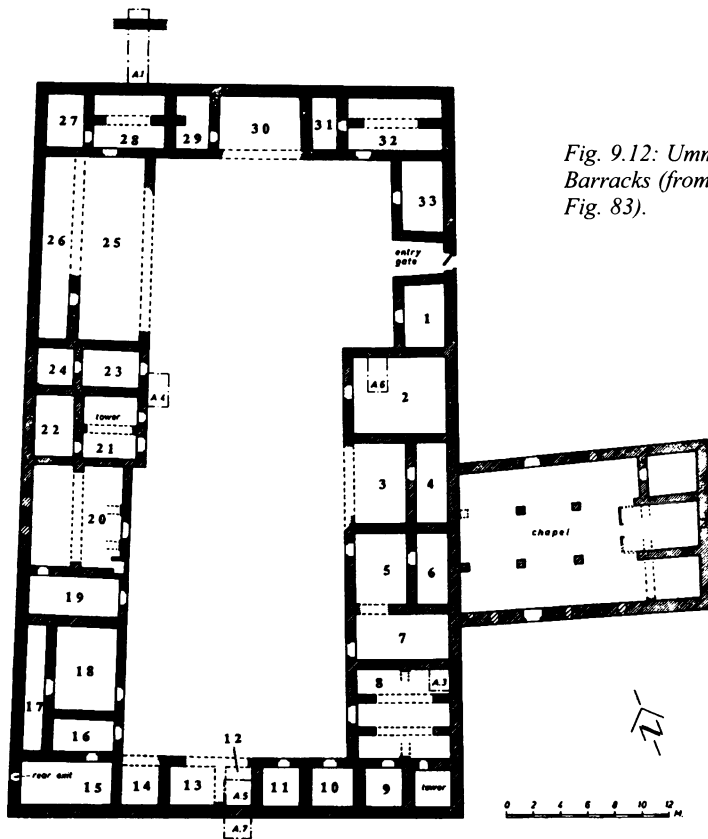


Fig. 9.12: Umm el-Jimal: The Barracks (from De Vries 1998: 133, Fig. 83).

Illustrious Julius, Comes, Master of the Cavalry and Infantry, a Burgus was built from ground level through the efforts of the Most Devoted Equites VIII Dalmatarum, in the charge of the Tribune Vahalus, in the consulate for the second time of our Lord Gratian, Forever Augustus, and the Most Illustrious Probus.

Date: AD 371

Later ‘burgus’ was used to mean a fortified settlement but at this date it was still probably only a ‘small fortification’. According to Vegetius (4.10) a *burgus* was an outpost to protect a water supply beyond the range of missiles from the main defences.

(e) The so-called ‘Barracks’ are an irregular rectangle c. 55 x 34 m, 0.2 ha (Fig. 9.12). The walls still stand several metres high. Rooms

are ranged against the walls with an open courtyard and there are two tall towers on the west side and south-east angle, three and six storeys high respectively. Neither projects. It plainly underwent development and rebuilding but has been regarded as a typical *Castellum* since the Princeton Expedition’s analysis.

Soundings have recently been published which found the enclosure wall overlay a level containing 4th–5th century pottery (Parker in de Vries 1998: 131–142). Although this is very broad, it has been taken to support the belief that this structure is the *kastellos* of an inscription (Fig. 9.13):

8. GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION found in a house courtyard just south of the West Gate (PES III.A.3: 136–137, no. 237) (Fig. 9.13):

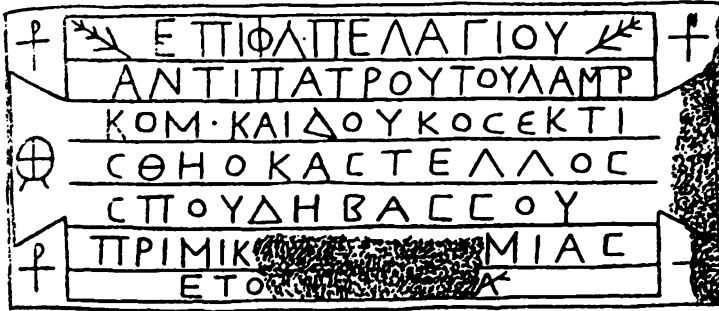


Fig. 9.13: Umm el-Jimal: The Princeton Expedition's drawings of the Kastellos inscription of AD 412/3 (from PES III.A.3: Inscr. 237).

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Πελαγίου Ἀντιπάρχου τοῦ λαμπρομάχου κόμης καὶ δουκὸς ἐκτίσθη ὁ κάστελλος, σπουδῇ Βάσσου προμικερ(ίου)]μίας, ἔτο[υς] τζ' (or τη') [ινδ(ικτιώνος) ι]α'.

Under the Most Illustrious Flavius Pelagius Antipater, Comes and Dux, the Castellum [kastellos] was founded, under the supervision of Bassus, Primicerius . . . , in the Year 307 [or 308], in the Eleventh Indiction.

Date: AD 412–3

The same man is named building another *kastellos* at Qasr el-Bai'j in AD 412 (below). Gregory is sceptical of assigning this text to the 'Barracks'. She notes the broadness of the excavation dating and that the towers are said to be later additions — in short that it need not be early 5th century and would look very unmilitary. That would raise the question of what the *kastellos* was and as Gregory says, "It is still not possible to tie the inscriptions convincingly to specific, known buildings."

(f) The *burgus* and *kastellos* inscriptions span the date of the Notitia Dignitatum and there have been several attempts to identify a place-name and garrison in that document. The suggestion that it was Thantia/Thainatha seems now to have been rejected (Kennedy 1982: 148–155; de Vries 1998: 36–37) and it has been argued that there was no garrison here when the Notitia was drawn up (Knauf 1984: 580). Recently, MacAdam (1986a: 17) has suggested it may be Suraththa, a place-name

in Ptolemy but we might still have an open mind about the many uncertainties in the Notitia.

(g) Excavation has confirmed the thriving nature of the town well into the Umayyad period (AD 640–675) and another inscription from Jimal is a reminder that the site may well have had a military role after the early 5th century. Amongst the tombstones is one referring to the tutor of Ghadima, King of the Tanukh and Knauf (1984: 585–586) has seen Jimal as a stronghold of the Ghassanid allies of Rome in the 6th century.

Principal reading: PES II.A.3; III.A.3; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 183–185; Gregory 266–273; Parker in de Vries 1998: chs 6 and 7

C. QASR EL-BAI'J
**JADIS 2719.005; BA'1J; MAP 3254.I; UTM
 ZONE 37; UTME 2500; UTMN 35846;
 PGE 276.600; PGN 197.800**

The 'Gate of Commodus' at Umm el-Jimal opened onto a road that led north-west to other ancient villages and towns. Most seem to have been purely civilian but one, just 5 km from Jimal, was certainly military.

Although the aerial view reveals the core of the site quite clearly (Fig. 9.14), the modern village has destroyed much of what was standing when the Princeton Expedition recorded the site in 1904 and obscured much of what survives. What they identified was a small black basalt fort on a rocky outcrop. As they reconstructed it in an influential and



Fig. 9.14: Qasr el-Bai'j: aerial view looking north (APA 98/4.26 (B)).

evocative drawing, it was a two-storeyed fort, c. 41 m square, had three-storeyed towers at the angles and great cisterns beneath the fort and under a later external development. They were emphatic on one point: “There are no remains here of an older structure; the whole building belongs to the fifth century, ...”. The date came from an inscription.

9. GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION found inside the ruins and called a lintel (PES III.A.2: 42, no. 21). Now lost (Fig. 9.15):

*Ἐπὶ Φλ(αοῦ)ιου Πελαγ(ίου) Ἀντιπάτρου
δουκὸς ἐκτίσθη καὶ ἐχορημάτισεν ὁ
κάστελλος ἔτι τῆς Δαάσου ηκ'.*

*Under Flavius Pelagius Antipater, Dux, the
Castellum [kastellos] was founded and received
its name in the year 306, on the 28th of Daisius.*

Date: AD 411/12

Flavius Pelagius Antipater is the same man credited with building another *kastellos* at



Fig. 9.15: Qasr el-Bai'j: Kastellos inscription (from PES III.A.2: Inscr. 21).

Umm el-Jimal the following year. Unfortunately the name of the fort is omitted.

Gregory is sceptical of a single period. She notes the abundant Umayyad pottery and the likelihood of such a place being reused and modified as happened elsewhere. Her interesting hypothetical reinterpretation of the remains envisages the *kastellos* as simply the square area around the cistern courtyard, the rest being later developments which might well have encompassed a monastery and reuse in the Umayyad period (Fig. 9.16). As much does survive on the site, there would be scope for investigation.

Principal Reading: PES II.A.2: 80–83; III.A.2: 42–44; Parker 1986: 24–26; Gregory 261–265

D. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

The best-known road of Roman Jordan runs just 1 km west of Qasr el-Bai'j. The start was the provincial capital of Bostra from which it runs south-west across the open landscape to enter the hills at Thugrat el-Jubb c. 30 km away (ch. 10). From there this northern part of the great highway follows a more sinuous path through hills and valleys, to Philadelphia, c. 45 km away in a straight line. Over a century of observations by a succession of scholars have now been brought together in a detailed study by Thomas Bauzou (1998).

The road can still be traced in this part of the Southern Hauran as a foundation of field stones, set between kerbs and with a central spine (Fig. 9.17). The beaten earth surface has been lost. Throughout its length milestones

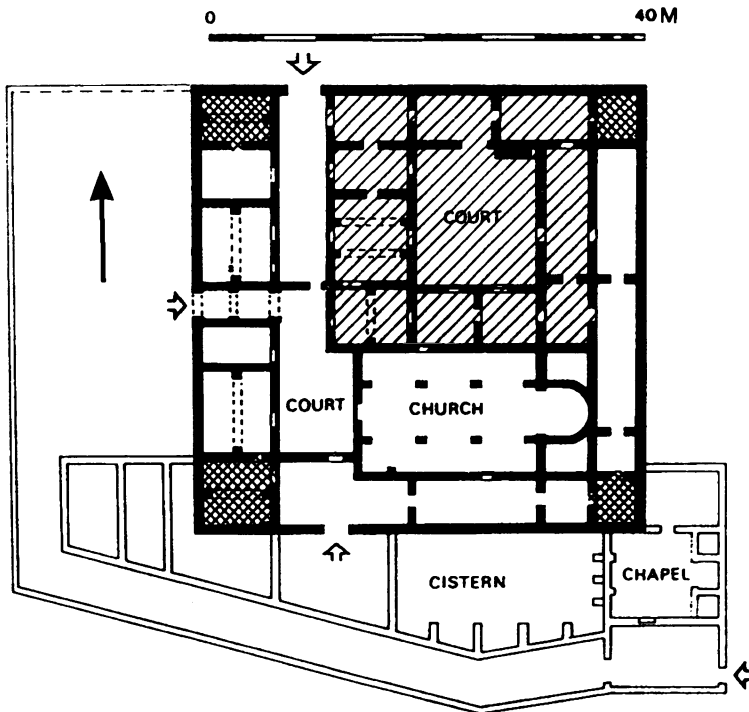


Fig. 9.16: Qasr el-Bai'j: plan showing Gregory's interpretation with the original *kastellos* in the north-east (hatched). The suggested towers are the cross-hatched rooms in the angles (from Gregory 3: Fl.1a).



Fig. 9.17: The Via Nova Traiana: This is a stretch of the road just west of Qasr el-Bai'j as it appeared in 1978 before recent farming extension had encroached on it.

were set up every Roman mile, limestone drums on a squared base, 2–3 m high and 50 or more cm in diameter. Mile-stations often have multiple stones, anything up to nine. They range in date from those of the original Trajanic construction in c. AD 114 to the 4th century, numerous reflecting repairs and reconstructions. Many can still be seen scattered at mile-stations or in adjacent fields. Some of the Trajanic ones include the famous inscription describing the road as running from ‘the boundaries of Syria as far as the Red Sea’.

Although Qasr el-Bai'j is not on the road, it is close enough to be sure it was selected as an eminence overlooking the road and traffic on the plain below and providing security and water in this arid area. There were structures on the road itself: towers at intervals but occasionally rather larger structures like the tower set inside a walled enclosure at Mile-station XIV just west of Qasr el-Baij.

Principal Reading: PES III.A: vii–xxviii; Kennedy 1982: 144–159; Bauzou 1998

10. THE NORTHERN STEPPE

South and west of Umm el-Jimal the basalt is left behind and one enters an area of steppe — fertile soils for the most part but with little rainfall. Such terrain and conditions extend far to the south; in this chapter we shall look at the northern sector, that extending from just east of Gerasa to the start of the basalt again beyond Qasr el-Hallabat (Fig. 10.1). The sites discussed are treated in three groups: east of the Via Nova Traiana (B, C and D), on the Via Nova (E, F, G and H) and west of the highway (I, J and K).

A. ROADS AND ROUTES

The principal highway in this region is again the Via Nova Traiana. Beyond Thantia (Thughrat el-Jubb) where it enters the hills, the course has been damaged by the building of the Hedjaz railway a century ago. Nevertheless, it has been traced in detail down past Kh. es-Samra, through modern Zerqa and past Qaryat el-Hadid to follow the upper part of the Wadi Zerqa to Philadelphia. Again, it is a constructed highway with a field stone foundation bounded by kerbs and central spine over which a surface of beaten earth once lay. Numerous limestone milestones have been recorded, many of which are still *in situ*.

In the north, a branch came off the Via Nova at Menara and ran south-west to El-Fedein. Like the Via Nova it is marked by regular

roadside towers and milestones. The earliest of the latter are of Marcus Aurelius. It is commonly assumed this road continued beyond El-Fedein, west across the steppe to Gerasa as would make sense. Although there are traces of possible road in places and soldiers are attested in places en route (below), so far no milestones have been found and no incontrovertible stretch of road.

Further east, a road runs south from Umm el-Jimal past Al-Qihati 16 km away and on to Qasr el-Hallabat. Milestones of the First Tetrarchy dated to 1 March 293–May 305 have recently been found, small black basalt columns similar to those from further east. This is simply a cleared road, visible on aerial photographs as a dark streak across the landscape. After Qasr el-Hallabat the road may have turned west to pass Kh. Khaw and link up with the Via Nova Traiana at Zerqa.

Finally, an ancient transhumance route runs north-west from the Azraq Oasis, past a succession of large seasonal lakes to turn just at Qasr el-Hallabat north along to Umm el-Jimal and the Southern Hauran.

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1995b; Kennedy and Al-Husan 1996; Kennedy 1997; Bauzou 1998; Kennedy 2000a

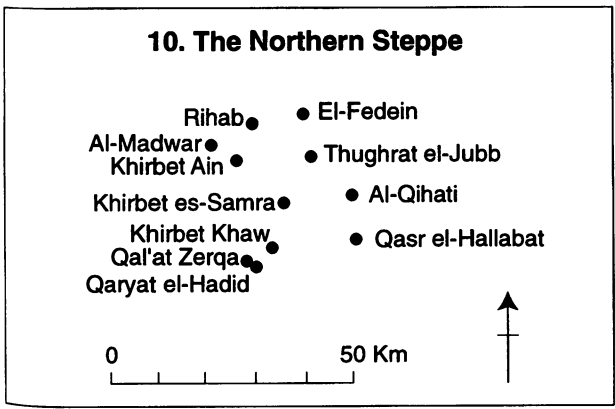


Fig. 10.1: Map of the Northern Steppe.

B. AL-QIHATI

JADIS 2717.006; TELL EL-QIHATI; MAP 3254.II; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2474; UTMN 35632; PGE 274.800; PGN 176.300

Al-Qihati lies just over 1 km west of this last road on the edge of a flat-topped hill about 90 m above the plain with superb views in all directions (Fig. 10.2). It is a rectangular quadrilateral, 39 x 37.5 x 38.5 x 33.5 m, c. 0.14 ha. Sherds range largely from the 1st century BC to the 6th AD but the site is otherwise unexplored and deserves attention not least because of a curiosity. As the aerial photo shows, there is a second wall just outside the first on the west side. That is now paralleled at the remarkably similar new site at Kh. Ain (below).

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 161; AJ II.2: 466–469; Kennedy 1997: 86

C. QASR EL-HALLABAT

JADIS 2716.001; QASR EL-HALLABAT; MAP 3254.II; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2479; UTMN 35540; PGE 275.500; PGN 167.200

The fort is situated in a commanding position on a small outcrop (Fig. 10.3) 16 km from the Via Nova Traiana and 27 km south of Umm el-Jimal; the Azraq Oasis lies c. 55 km to the south-east. It has extensive views across the plains from north-west to south-east but there are low hills to the south beyond which lies arid and barren chert-covered desert. Closer inspection reveals a mixture of deep black basalt and honey-coloured limestone, well over 100 inscribed blocks and architectural pieces, an ancient ruined mosque, cisterns, houses, a large reservoir and a small but sophisticated irrigated garden area. When seen by the Princeton Expedition it was totally uninhabited on an empty plain. They reported traces of ancient fields all around, however, and the area is now intensively farmed.

(a) Despite looting of stone in modern times, the surviving fort remains impressive and excavation and clearance of mounds of

collapsed masonry has brought it into sharper focus (Fig. 10.4). It is c. 38 m square (0.13 ha), has projecting corner towers c. 5.7 m square and walls c. 1.5 m thick. The masonry is a mixture of limestone (the original and most extensive) and basalt, of various standards of preparation and employed in different ways.

Inspection has revealed a series of modifications and developments. The Princeton Expedition's view that the site was wholly Roman has been firmly disposed of by Bisheh's excavations showing that the final major phase was as an Umayyad residence with mosaic floors, ornate decoration, an adjacent mosque and a bath-house 3 km to the east at Hammam as-Sarakh. Bisheh has also argued that this phase involved the importation of basalt for the total reconstruction of the internal rooms where it is the principal building material and for repairs in the circuit wall on the north. He bases this on the near total absence of pre-Islamic sherds inside the fort and argues that as Hallabat is a modest and isolated fort the huge number of inscriptions, not least the 100+ blocks of an imperial edict on military administration, cannot have originated here. As Gregory observes, the first of these points may be accounted for simply: the fort sits on a rocky outcrop and the undoubted Umayyad phase of remodelling would have involved a clearing away of earlier material. Certainly pre-Islamic pottery is abundant elsewhere on the site. As she points out, too, Bisheh believes the Umayyad phase involved single-storeyed rooms and stone not required would have been left over. The Umayyad builders used limestone throughout their mosque and at their bath-building at Hammam as-Sarakh. The oddity of Qasr el-Hallabat as the location of a copy of a lengthy imperial edict is undeniable. The fragments of the same Anastasian edict found at Bostra, Salkhad and even Umm el-Jimal are understandable; Imtan, however, is more modest. A detailed study of the text or a petrological analysis of the edict fragments at Hallabat and Umm el-Jimal might reveal if they are from the same single copy. If they are the same copy then a huge number of



Fig. 10.2: Al-Qihati: aerial view of the fort looking north-east (APA 97/A5.31).



Fig. 10.3: Qasr el-Hallabat: seen from the west in 1980.



Fig. 10.4: *Qasr el-Hallabat: aerial view looking east (APA 97/A6.20).*

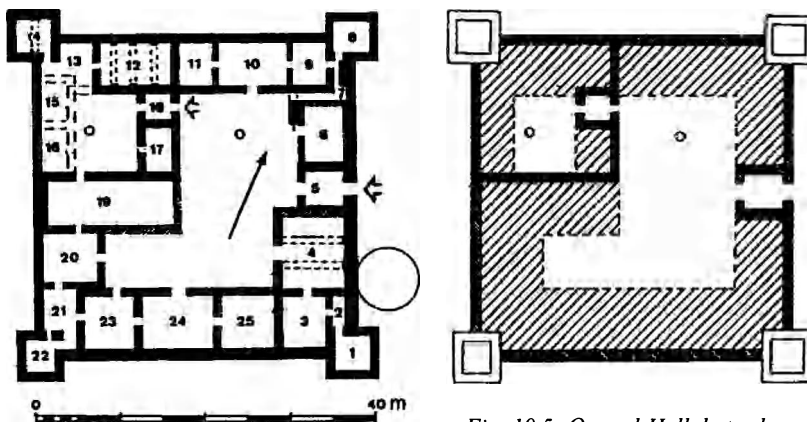


Fig. 10.5: *Qasr el-Hallabat; plan and interpretation (from Gregory 3: F7.1).*

blocks are still missing; if they are different copies even more blocks are missing but we need not set aside the inscriptions of Qasr el-Hallabat as imported from Umm el-Jimal or some such neighbouring site as Kh. es-Samra or Kh. Khaw.

The principal phases of development are (Fig. 10.5):

- a small enclosure 17.5 m square, of large limestone blocks;
- a major extension creating an enclosure 38 m square with rooms against the walls. again of limestone and encapsulating the earlier fortlet;
- walls raised in height, second storeys added to the rooms and three-storeyed towers inserted at the corners.



Fig. 10.6: *Qasr el-Hallabat: Latin building inscription now in the former Officers' Mess at RJAF Marka, Amman.*

Pottery ranges from Nabataean to Early Islamic in and around the fort. The epigraphic evidence is amongst the richest anywhere in Jordan and should be particularly useful if we can trust that it originated at Hallabat. The earliest items, both basalt and reused as building material in walls of the rooms of the larger enclosure, are non-military epitaphs: part of a Nabataean one (Room 4) and a Greek one with the date AD 178 (Room 11). Three others are explicitly military:

1. A LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION found just outside Room 10. Recently rediscovered at the RJAF base at Marka (Kennedy 1982; 39–40, no. 3; 2000d) (Fig. 10.6):

Pro salute domini imp(eratoris)/ Aug(usti)
n(ostri) M(arci) Aureli Antonini Pii/ Felicis
Arabici Adiab(enici) Parthici/ Brittanici
Maximi castellum nov(um) aedificaverunt

mil(ites) c(o)h(ortium) VI Hisp(anorum), I
Thrac(um)/ V Afr(orum) Sev(e)r(ianae), III
RR, per Phurnium Iulianum leg(atum)/
Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore).

*For the Safety of Our Lord the Emperor
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Great
Conqueror of the Arabs, Adiabeniens,
Parthians and Britons, the soldiers of the
Cohorts VI Hispanorum, I Thracum, V
Afrorum Severiana, III Thracum (?) built the
new Castellum through the agency of Furnius
Julianus, Imperial Proprætorian Governor.*

Date: AD 213/ 4

This has long been one of the more significant inscriptions from the Roman province of Arabia, giving a precise construction date, the names of four regiments involved¹ and presumably part of the provincial garrison and

¹ In the penultimate line, the final regiment is designated by several letters, some in ligature, with the III being overlain by the cross bars of a T an/or H. We may note that of the alternatives suggested by the Princeton Expedition — III T(H)R<R>(ACUM) or II IT(U)R(AEORUM) — the traces might better favour the former.

the implications of the phrase *Castellum novum*, ‘new fort’. As the site has at least three major phases, the phrase could refer to the construction of a fort where one had previously existed. At Qasr el-Uweinid, however, the same phrase in an inscription of AD 201 is difficult to interpret in that fashion (ch. 7).

2. A Greek inscription giving the text of an imperial edict relating to the administration of military affairs in the province. Over 100 blocks have now been found, many built into walls or amongst the rubble. Too much is still missing to allow detailed reading, implying much has been removed to some other place or that only part of the wall on which it was inscribed was brought to Hallabat. All are reused in secondary contexts.

Date: AD 491–518

3. GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION built into the external courtyard wall of Room 11 (PES III.A.2: 22–23, NO. 18; Kennedy 1982: 40, PL. VIB) (Fig. 10.7):

Ἐπὶ Φλαουίου Ἀναστασίου
ὑπερφρεσι(άτου) καὶ πανευφ(ήμου) ἀπ(ὸ)
ὑπάτων καὶ) δοῦξ ἀνευέωθη τὰ κάστρα ἐν
ἔτι ικηδ', χρ(όνου)ς ξ' ἰνδ(ικτιώνου)ς.

Under the Most Excellent and Renowned Flavius Anastasius, Consul and Dux, the fort (kastra) was restored in the Year 424, in the Seventh Indiction.

Date: AD 529

This is the latest building inscription from Arabia.

As Gregory has concluded, it is difficult to link these inscriptions with confidence to the identifiable phases. The situation is made more complex still by other factors:

- the Nabataean tombstone may imply an earlier Nabataean military presence, too, in an obviously key location;
- a limestone block inside the Phase 1 fortlet: the uninscribed *tabula ansata* could be purely decorative or it may once have had a painted inscription (cf. ch. 19 (Quweira));



Fig. 10.7: *Qasr el-Hallabat*: Crawford's view of the courtyard wall of Rooms 10 and 11 in 1928 when they still stood two storeys high. Note the building inscription of 529 in place below the window on the left. The Latin inscription of 212–214 was apparently also once set in this wall.

- the uncorroborated report many years ago but by a generally reliable witness — that “Some time in the seventh century it became a monastic establishment and an inscription recording this fact is now built into the main gate of the Arab Legion camp at Zerka” (quoted in Kennedy 1982: 40–41, no. 5).

Plainly this was a site with a complex history extending over several centuries. The question of the origin of the inscriptions is crucial for Hallabat itself but also has wider ramifications if they do not belong to this site. To which site(s) should we look for the forts whose construction was carried out in AD 212–214 and 529? As we have seen, Umm el-Jimal is the place proposed by Bisheh but we should not exclude either Kh. es-Samra or, now, Kh.

Khaw, both of which are basalt and closer; neither has produced a single certain military inscription (below).

(b) All around the hill on which Qasr el-Hallabat stands are traces of houses and cisterns. On the low ground 400 m to the south is a large irregular reservoir, c. 82 x 80 m. About 600 m to the north-west, Bisheh has now excavated on the agricultural feature, revealing walls and sluices to control the irrigation of a series of small fields. As it employs some parts of the Anastasian edict, he dates it to the Umayyad period.

(c) As noted above, the site lay on a marked road and on a migratory route from Azraq to the south-east.

Fig. 10.8: Kh. Khaw: vertical aerial view in 1953 (APA 53/HAS 54.034).



Principal Reading: PES II.A: 70–77; III.A.2: 21–42; Kennedy 1982: ch. 3; Parker 1986: 30–32; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 199–202; AJ II.2: 245–251; Kennedy and Al-Husan 1996; Gregory 289–297; Kennedy 1997: 80–88

D. KHIRBET KHAW

JADIS 2516.004; KHIRBET KHAU; MAP 3254.III; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2294; UTMN 35543; PGE 257.100; PGN 166.800

The ruins lie on the north side of the old highway from Zerka to Mafraq on a low hill. This is one of the least known sites in Jordan; over half a century ago it was taken within the perimeter of the modern military camp at Zerqa and has remained inaccessible until 1998 when limited access was permitted. Old aerial photographs have also been of enormous importance. The site consists of a small town of c. 5.5 ha — about the same as Kh. es-Samra (below) — including a fort, caravanserai and houses (Fig. 10.8). Both on the aerial photos and on the ground there is clear evidence of the interior of the fort having been reused and even its outline is obscured on the north side. It is clearly an irregular quadrilateral. The dimensions are: c. 100 x 100 x 94 x 88 m, c. 0.93 ha; this is a little smaller than the *castellum* at Umm el-Jimal. There are apparent gates in the middle of west and south sides, both apparently flanked by projecting towers. Towers also projected at all but the north-east corner but their shape and dimensions are unclear under considerable heaps of debris.

No inscriptions of any kind have ever been reported — unusual in this area and none was found during the recent visit. Ceramic evidence from inside the fort ranged from the 1st/2nd to 3rd century AD then the late 6th century and possibly later Early Islamic material. Typologically, the fort is close to Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9), Da'ajaniya (ch. 16) and Avdat I (ch. 21), all of which are also about 1 ha in size and datable to c. AD 300.

It has been common for a century to identify Kh. Khaw as Gadda, a place-name on the Peutinger Table XIII MP before Philadelphia. Certainly somewhere in the vicinity of Zerqa is implied by that distance. Gadda also appears in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or. 37. 20):

4. *EQUITES SAGITTARII INDIGENAE, GADDA.*

Native Horse Archers, at Gadda

Date: c. AD 400

The equation is not certain and Khaw itself is some distance from the highway. There are alternatives (below).

The Via Nova Traiana passes by about 2 km to the west. As noted above, there may have been a road coming this way from Qasr el-Hallabat c. 19 km to the east and, if so, it presumably continued to join the Via Nova. No trace of this road is visible.

Principal Reading: PA II 224–225; Kennedy 2001a

E. THANTIA (?)

(THUGHRAT EL-JUBB)

JADIS 2618.010; NO NAME; MAP 3254.IV; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2388; UTMN 35738; PGE 265.800; PGN 186.600

As seen in the previous chapter, there are no certain military sites on the Via Nova Traiana south of Bostra — even Qasr el-Bai'j is about 1 km east of the road. The modern village of Thughrat el-Jubb on the hilltop contains traces of ruined buildings and cisterns. There are no proven traces of any military structure.² The place, however, is a commanding one at the boundary of hill and plain, with a wide view over the latter and the Via Nova that passes through. It has been argued that this location fits the Thantia of the Peutinger Table, given as

² Sapin believes he has found traces of a military enclosure but details are lacking.

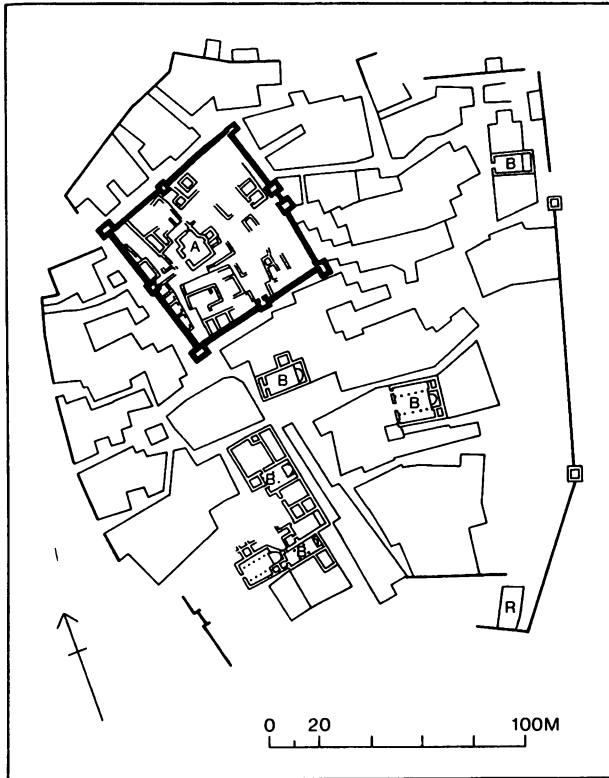


Fig. 10.9: *Kh. es-Samra*: plan of the town and fort (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 146).

XXIV MP from Bostra along the Roman highway. Thantia is certainly Thainatha of the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. 37.29):

5. ALA PRIMA VALENTIA, THAINATHA

The Ala I Valentia, at Thainatha

Date: c. AD 400

The presence of a regiment of cavalry at this place would make good sense.

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 152–54

F. ADITHA/HATITA (?)
(KHIRBET ES-SAMRA)

JADIS 2517.001; KHIRBET ES-SAMRA;
MAP 3254.III; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2324; UTMN 35641; PGE 259.800;
PGN 176.700

The site lies between two branches of the Via Nova Traiana a few hundred metres away. Bostra is c. 48 km to the north-east and Philadelphia c. 37 to the south-south-west; Kh. Khaw is c. 11 km to the south. The ruins consist of a town of c. 6 ha, a fort and a tower on the Via Nova (Fig. 10.9). The building material is basalt throughout. There may be a predecessor to the visible fort.

(a) The plan of the town walls is remarkably regular on the north and east sides, straight and meeting at a near right angle, contrasting with the rest of the circuit (Fig. 10.10C). As has been suggested for Umm el-Jimal, these may reflect the alignment for an earlier defensive wall within which the town developed. Certainly there is abundant evidence of a Nabataean settlement here and we may suppose either a Nabataean post of some kind or an early Roman fort — or both.

(b) The fort is an irregular quadrilateral c. 60 x 65 m, 0.39 ha. Irregular quadrangular towers project at each corner; others overlap the wall on either side of the main gate on the east and at the middle point of each of the other walls. Although significantly smaller, the overall shape of the fort is strongly reminiscent of the *Castellum* at Umm el-Jimal. Most of the interior is reused but there are traces of what may be original rooms against the west wall and the unexpected plan of the later church (A) reflects earlier foundations which may have been those of the *Principia* one would expect here.

Excavation has suggested a construction date of 2nd or 3rd century with the main gate built c. 300. During the 6th century the latter was blocked. Two texts may be helpful:

6. PART OF AN UNFINISHED LATIN INSCRIPTION (Gatier 1998: 381, NO. 64):

Salvis d(ominis) n(ostris) Valentiniano,/
Valente et Gratiano, victorios/simis sem[per
Aug(ustis) ... vacat]

*For the Health of Our Lords Valentinian,
Valens and Gratian, the Most Victorious,
Forever Augusti ...*

Date: AD 367–375

The inscription was reused in a church in the town and the editor is circumspect about attributing it to the fort. The same three emperors are found building/rebuilding military structures at Umm el-Jimal (*burgus* in 371) and Deir el-Kahf (*castellum* in 367–75) and here, too, they are probably involved with the fort.

7. THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (OR. 37.30; 31) records regiments at:

(a) Ala secunda felix Valentiniana, apud Adtitha

The Ala II Felix Valentiniana, near Adtitha

(b) Cohors prima miliaria Thracum, Adtitha

The Cohors I Thracum Miliaria, at Adtitha

Date: c. AD 400

A place-name Hatita is known from the Peutinger Table, XI MP north of Gadda and IX MP south of Thantia. Now there is a grafitto on a rock outcrop 1.5 km south-south-west from Samra, near the road and 20 m from a tower: “*Μνεσθη Βορεον Αδειθα*.” Gatier (1998: 381–382, no. 65) regards it as a toponym and as the translation of semitic Hadid, “The New (Place)”. If this is correct, we should look for a fort ‘*apud Adtitha*’ in the vicinity.

(c) In addition to a tower beside the road south of the town, one 500 m east of the fort has been excavated and dated post c. AD 230.

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 30; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 198–200; Gregory 284–288; Humbert and Desreumaux 1998

G. QAL’AT ZERQA
JADIS 2516.002; QASR SHABIB (ZARQA);
MAP 3254.III; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2247; UTMN 35514; PGE 252.500;
PGN 163.700

This place is well-known as the location of a medieval khan on a ‘small isolated hill and visible from a long distance’ still being used into this century as a secure resting place on the Pilgrim Road. As the Princeton Expedition noted, it is on the edge of the desert (= steppe) but close by the perennial Wadi Zerqa. They recorded an inscription whose first lines are unreadable (PES III.A.1: 16–17; App. III.A.1: v–vi):

8. LATIN INSCRIPTION reused in the medieval khan (Fig. 10.11):

[...O I I I ...I]mp(eratores) Augg(usti)
tute[lae] gratia ex Palaes/[tina in Arabia]m
tra[nstu]lerunt, [c]astra quoque (e)x solo oppo/
[rtuno loco] exstruxerunt per Aurel[ium
Theone]m leg(atum) Aug(ustorum)/[...]

*The Emperors Augusti Valerian and Gallienus
for the protection of the country transferred*

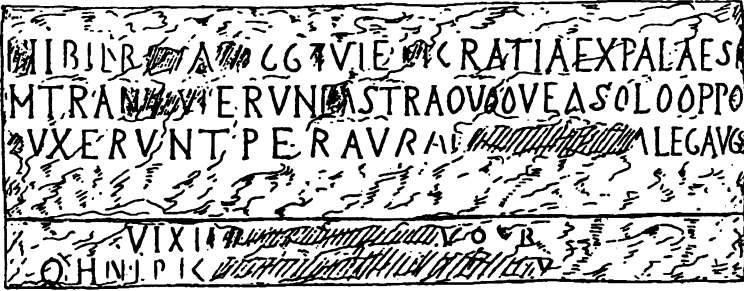


Fig. 10.11: Qal'at Zerqa: Latin inscription (PES III.A1: III. inscr 12).

troops from Palestine into Arabia, also built this Fort in a suitable place through the agency of Aurelius Theo, Imperial Governor ...

Date: AD 253/59 (the known dates of Aelius Aurelius Theo in Arabia: Sartre 1982: 92, no. 38)

The Princeton Expedition has been followed in more recent times by commentators (e.g. Speidel 1977: 725) who have supposed the inscription originated not at Qal'at Zerqa but at Qaryat el-Hadid, a little further south. That may be the case, but is not necessary.

Principal Reading: PA II: 222–223; PES III.A.1: 16–17; App. III.A.1: v–vi

**H. QARYAT EL-HADID
NO JADIS ; MAP 3254.III; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2249; UTMN 35495;
PGE 253.000; PGN 161.600**

The rapid expansion of modern Zerqa has largely overgrown this site and led to confusion. It is partly now beneath a bus station and mosque. Fortunately it was described by two early visitors who noted its great extent and importance; unfortunately they took no photographs. It has been traced now on old aerial photographs. The site lay on the east of the Via Nova Traiana between the 40th and 41st milestones and beside the perennial W. Zerqa. It consisted of two walled rectilinear enclosures and some other structures (Fig. 10.12). A Bronze Age settlement lies on a hilltop just to the north.

(a) The fort drawn by Brünnow and von Domaszewski (Fig. 10.13) shows a large rectangle c. 158 x 105 m, 1.7 ha with a gate c. 7 m wide about one third of the way along the south wall. Towers c. 5 m square project at the corners, two more straddle the wall at the gate and there are at least 3 interval towers. The air photographs show it to be less regular in shape and from several measurements the suggested dimensions may be c. 158 (N), 107 (E), 175 (S) and 137 (W) m, c. 1.85 ha (B on Fig. 10.12). There appear to be projecting towers at the two visible corners, two on the east wall and one on the north wall. A modern track dividing the fort in the proportion 1:2 may be an ancient *Via Principalis*; the *Via Praetoria* would then lead westwards to a *Porta Praetoria* facing the Wadi Zerqa. Traces of building aligned on the walls are visible in the eastern half of the fort.

Glueck reported abundant Roman pottery including what he called Pergamene sigillata (1939: 207). As noted above, the military building inscription found at Qal'at Zerqa has been thought to originate here.

(b) The second enclosure (C on Fig. 10.12) is given shape and extent only from old air photos (Fig. 10.14), not least one taken by the German Air Force in 1918 (Kennedy 2002: 102, Fig. 4). It is much larger — c. 174 and 207 m, c. 3.6 ha (possibly 174 x 181 m, c. 3.15 ha). There are hints of a second wall on the north side — a later extension or where a larger structure had been reduced.

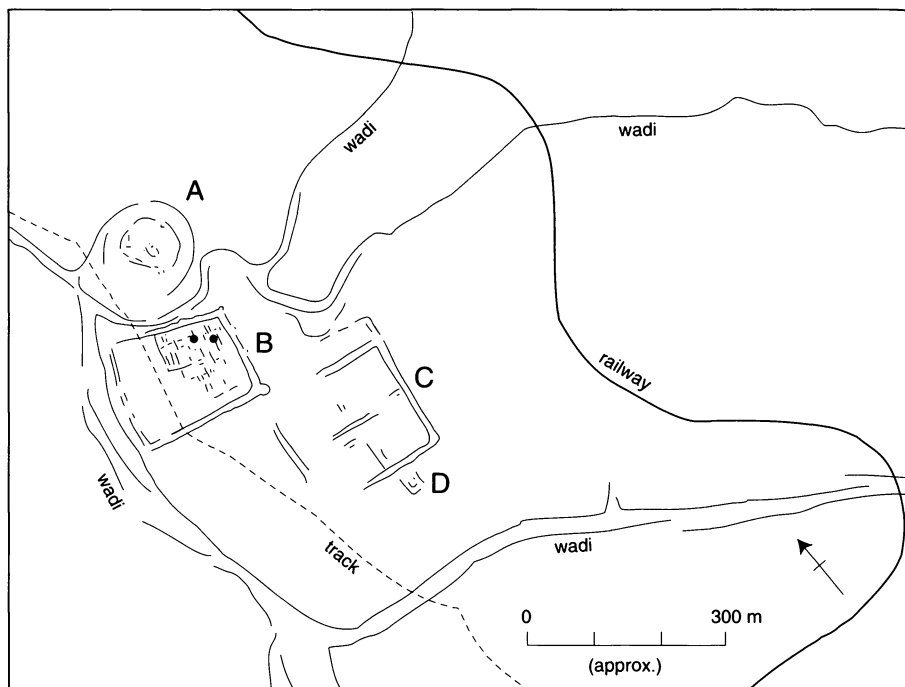


Fig. 10.12: *Qaryat el-Hadid: sketch plan from aerial photographs of 1918, 1951 and 1953 (from Kennedy forthc. d).*

(c) A small rectangular structure (D), c. 23 x 11 m lies just south of C.

None of these structures is now visible but some of the column drums mentioned by Brünnow and von Domaszewski are still to be seen beside the river.

Largely on the basis of the name, the place was once identified as the Adtitha of the Notitia Dignitatum but the inscription from Kh. es-Samra seems now to show that to be Adtitha (above). Without better dating we cannot be certain there was an active military station here c. AD 400.

On the parallel of such other sites as Kh. es-Samra (above) and Umm er Resas (ch. 13), a possible interpretation would be of a site with a large fort (C) with a later slightly smaller fort (B) which was subsequently developed as a walled town.

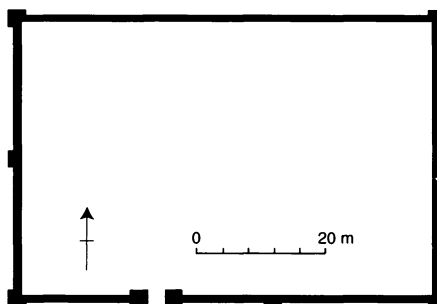


Fig. 10.13: *Qaryat el-Hadid: plan of the fort (after PA II: fig. 842).*

Principal Reading: PA II, 222–223; Kennedy 2002b.

(I. EL-FEDEIN)
JADIS 2619.001; KHIRBET EL-FEDEIN;
MAP 3254.IV; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 23678; UTMN 358213; PGE 263.480;
PGN 194.840



Fig. 10.14: Qaryat el-Hadid: vertical air photograph of 1951 showing the outline of the two major enclosures and the Bronze Age tell (APA 51/RAF 5117).

The well-known ruins at El-Fedein in modern Mafraq, just west of the station of the Hedjaz railway consist of a spring and reservoir, a prehistoric tell and ‘fortress’, a church built inside the latter, a Byzantine-Umayyad house and an Abassid ‘palace’. A literary source describes it as the location of a monastery in the 6th century and it is named as an Umayyad palace in the mid-8th century. The place was certainly the destination of the Roman road running south-west from Menara on the Via Nova (and probably continuing to Gerasa) (above). No Roman military remains have been reported but some sort of military post would be likely. Several milestones have been found there but some at least may have come from the Via Nova.

Principal Reading: AJ II.1, 221–224; Kennedy 1997: 74–76

J. AL-MADWAR AND RIHAB
JADIS 2418.020; MEDWAR; MAP 3154.I;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7823;
UTMN 35764; PGE 244.100; PGN 188.400
JADIS 2519.001; RIHAB; MAP 3254.IV;
UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2264;
UTMN 35803; PGE 253.200; PGN 192.700

These two places also lie on the line of the inferred Roman road from Bostra through El-Fedein then run across the steppe before entering the hilly country east of Gerasa. Both lie on the steppe; Rihab is the modern regional centre. No military structure has been found at either but both have produced inscriptions naming soldiers.

9. PART OF AN EPITAPH IN GREEK from Al-Madwar (Mittmann 1970: 186, no. 22):

[...μα...]ιος, στρατι(ώτ)ης λεγ(εῶνος) γ' ...

[...ma...]ios, *soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica* ...

Date: 2nd–4th century AD?

10. AN ALTAR WITH LATIN DEDICATION from Rihab (Gatier 1998: 393, no. 84):

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano)/
 L(ucius) Porci/us Dext(er) b(ene)f(iciarius)
 co(n)s(ularis)

To Jupiter Best and Greatest Heliopolitanus, Lucius Porcius Dexter, beneficiarius of the Consul.

Date: 2nd or early 3rd century AD — probably no later than the Severan period.

11. EPITAPH IN GREEK from Rihab (Gatier 1998: 399, no. 103):

[Ἰ]ούλι(ος)/ Πάλμα/ς στρα(τιῶτης)/
 Λεγ(εῶνος) Τε/ρ(τίας) Κυρι(ναϊκής)/
 ἐτ(ῶν) κδ´.

Julius Palmas, soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica, aged 24 years.

Date: 2–4th century AD?

Collectively, these unexpected traces of individual soldiers, two of them certainly legionaries and the third a *beneficiarius* of the provincial governor, may point to one or more official stations of the public postal service along this stretch of road (cf. Gatier 1998: 393).

Principal Reading: Mittmann 1970: 120–121, 187–194; Humbert and Desreumaux 1998: passim; Kennedy 2000a

K. KHIRBET AIN
NO JADIS ; MAP 3254.IV; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2230; UTMN 35747; PGE 250.100;
PGN 186.800 – APPROXIMATE
LOCATION.

(JADIS 2418.029, KHIRBET AIN, APPLIES PRINCIPALLY TO THE RUINS IN THE VILLAGE RATHER THAN THE FORT.)

The extensive ruins here have received little attention and the fullest report is confusing. The site consists of a spring, a prehistoric tell, a village of the ‘Roman’ period, a monumental free-standing Roman tomb to the south and farm nearby



Fig. 10.15: Kh. Ain: aerial view looking north-west of the fortlet on the ridge above the village. Note the openings of cisterns, the inner enclosure and the wall in front of the west side (APA 99/12.26).

then a rectangular structure on the crest of the hill above the village. The latter has largely passed notice entirely; one commentator identified it as a monastery. From the air it looks both from its location and character to be a small fort.

The fortlet on the ridge is impressive, measuring c 48 x 39 m, 0.19 ha (Fig. 10.15). There is a gate in the west wall opening towards one of several cisterns in and around the structure. Part of the interior has been walled off to form an inner enclosure. The walls are of well-drafted masonry c. 1 m thick. Notable is a second wall on the west side in front of and parallel with that of the fort.

It is strikingly similar to Al-Qihati (Fig. 10.2) in location, form, size (0.14 ha) and the second outer wall on one side (above).

Architectural pieces around the south-west corner hint at a grander building associated with the site. Further to the south-west is a broad staircase cut into the hillside.

Pottery (identified by Ina Kehrberg) ranged from late 2nd/1st BC Hellenistic to a few Islamic pieces. It included 1st/2nd centuries AD sigillata, some 3rd century Roman and a great deal of 6th–7th century.

Principal Reading: AJ II.1: 131–132; Sapin 1998: 119, 123; Kennedy 2001d

11. THE JORDANIAN DECAPOLIS

The Decapolis is a convenient term here for the region of north-western Jordan from the steppe west to the R. Jordan, and from the Syrian frontier south to the vicinity of Amman. It comprises quite different geographical and environmental zones — the fringes of the steppe, the Highlands of Ajlun and of the Northern Belqa, then the trough of the Jordan Valley on the west.

The region underwent varying military experiences — military occupation, frontier region and finally the creation of urban defences in the Late Roman period. It was politically and administratively divided, too. The Jordan Valley and a strip of territory up onto the plateau was part of the Herodian Peraea then later, under Roman rule, the same region, including four of the Decapolis cities (Gadara, Pella, Dium and Capitolias), belonged to the province of Judaea/Syria Palaestina.

The evidence is very different from that of the regions all around and it was plainly never militarised to any great extent after the first century of Roman rule; no Decapolis city, for example, is listed as a garrison place in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

A. ROADS AND ROUTES

The principal Roman road was the ancient King's Highway, running from Adraha (Dera'a) in Syria down through Gerasa (Jerash) to Philadelphia (Amman) where it met and largely merged with the Via Nova Traiana which came in there from the north-east (chs 9 and 10). The route of this highway has been traced in several places not least by milestones. From Adraha to Gerasa the earliest is of Hadrian for AD 120. South of Gerasa the earliest is now of Trajan.

Another highway ran north-west from Gerasa to Pella in the Jordan valley and on to Scythopolis or north to Gadara. Towers and 'forts' on the high ground overlooking it have been reported north-west of Ajlun (Palumbo *et al.* 1993: 315; Atallah 2003). The earliest known milestones are of AD 112 for Trajan but some mention 'restoration' implying perhaps a Flavian origin as was certainly the case for the extension westwards to Legio/Caparcozna. As we have seen a road east from Gerasa to El-Fedein has long been supposed but not traced (ch. 10). Further north, the last of the major highways ran from Bostra through Adraha and Capitolias to Gadara. The only indication of date comes from the bridge

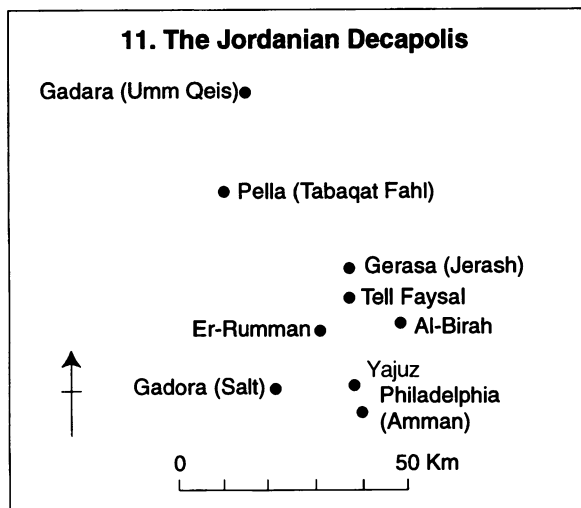


Fig. 11.1: Map of military sites in the Decapolis area.

inscription on the Wadi Zedi between Adraha and Bostra which is of AD 164.

Principal Reading: Thomsen 1917; Mittmann 1966; Graf, Isaac and Roll 1992; Kennedy 2000a

**B. GADARA (UMM QEIS)
JADIS 2122.001; UMM QEIS; MAP 3155.III;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7572;
UTMN 36165; PGE 213.900; PGN 229.100**

The city of Gadara extends beyond the western edge of the village of Umm Qeis. It lies on a high plateau with sweeping views north and north-west over the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley and Sea of Galilee. Both ancient and modern names evoke its role — Gadara

derives from a Semitic term meaning ‘fortification’ and in early Arabic *mkes* means ‘frontier post’.

In Hellenistic times the place was developed as a Ptolemaic military colony on their contested frontier with Seleucid Syria. Although literary sources are often confused about identifying this place, there is enough to be sure it was regarded as a strong place in Hellenistic and early Roman times, evidently well-fortified.

There are no military inscriptions from Gadara attesting regiments in garrison at any point. On the other hand, a *primus pilus* made a dedication to Trajan in the city (Weber forthc.).

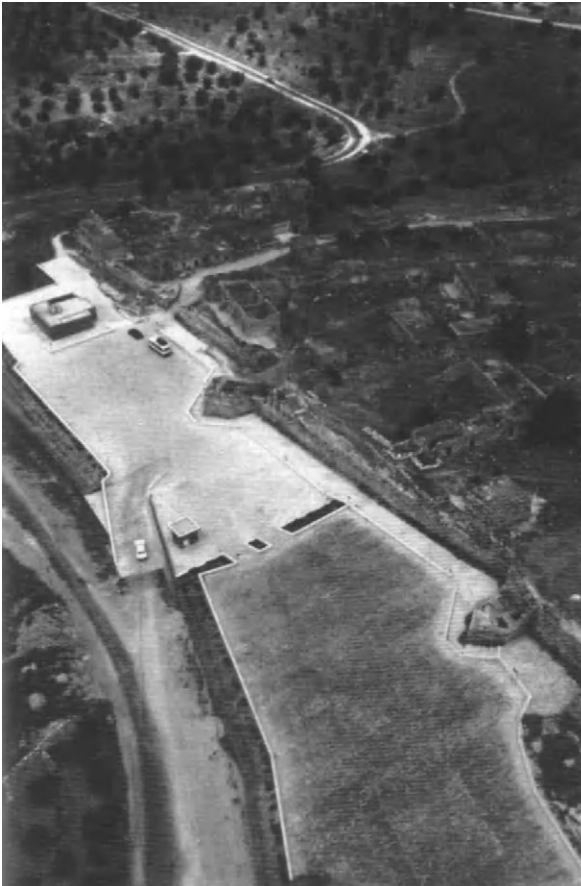


Fig. 11.2: Gadara: aerial view of the south city wall looking north-west (APA 98/43.37).

I. A BILINGUAL GREEK-LATIN INSCRIPTION dedicating a statue to Trajan:

Imp(eratori) Nervae Traiano Caesari/
Aug(usto) Germanico Dacico ex Testa/mento
M(arci) Iuli Secundi p(rimi) p(ili) Iulia/ C(aii)
f(ilia) Grata uxor ♠ et heres

Αὐτοκράτορι Νέρωνα Τραιάνῳ / Καίσαρι
Σεβαστῶ Γερμανικῶ / Δακικῶ ἐκ διαθήκης
Μάρκου / Ἰουλίου Σεκούνδου Π(ριμ)ι
π(ιλαρίου) / Ἰούλια Γαίου θυγατήρ Γράτα
/ γαμέτη αὐτοῦ καὶ κληρονόμος.

For the Emperor Nerva Trajan Caesar Augustus Germanicus Dacicus, by the terms of the will of Marcus Julius Secundus, Primus Pilus. Julia Grata, daughter of Gaius, his wife and heir (carried it out).

Date: AD 102–115

Two Gadarenes are attested serving in legions: L. Philocalus Valens of the Syrian Legion X Fretensis was buried at Djebeil in Syria (CIL III: 6697) and another was discharged from II Traiana in Egypt 157.

The major military feature of Gadara is the city wall — or walls. They have been partially excavated in recent years. On the south-east is a tower and part of the walls of the Hellenistic or early Roman acropolis. On the south side of the acropolis hill, excavation has now revealed the early Hellenistic wall which once surrounded the entire hill (Hoffmann 2002: 102–105, esp. figs 150–151). Built of well-cut limestone in header and stretcher technique, it is c. 2.2 m wide and up to 6 m high. It zig-zags twice, on each occasion to protect a gate. Along its length is a succession of projecting pentagonal towers (Fig. 11.2).

On the west, apparently marking a gate on the line of the early Roman city wall, is a pair of circular towers on either side of the main road, the so-called Tiberias Gate. Further west again is the pair of rectangular towers of the West Gate built from reused material in, apparently, a necropolis. Parts of the city wall (3.3 m wide)

have been traced on the north side but with reused material only in the foundations. Dating is no more certain than after the middle of the 1st century AD. On the south and south-west the Roman wall, earth and stones within a pair of facing walls, has been traced for 1.7 km. It is dated to the later 1st century AD (Hoffmann 1997: 513; cf. Hoffmann 2002: 110–111, fig. 165).

Principal Reading: Kemer and Hoffmann 1993; Hoffmann 1997; Hoffmann 2002; Weber forthc.

C. PELLA (TABAQAT FAHL)

**NO JADIS FOR SITE ON TELL AL-HUSN;
MAP 3154.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7459;
UTMN 35933; PGE 208.100;
PGN 206.200**

The only significant military structure at Pella in the Jordan Valley is a possible Byzantine fort on the summit of Tell al-Husn. It consists of a sequence of buildings from early Roman occupation onwards but that for the 6th century AD has been interpreted as for ‘a policing and administrative garrison’. Certainly the complex of rectilinear rooms around an inner courtyard (Fig. 11.3) is unmilitary but the excavators may be correct in their overall interpretation.

Principal Reading: Watson and Tidmarsh 1996: 304–305

D. GERASA (JERASH)

**JADIS 2318.002; JERASH; MAP 3154.I; UTM
ZONE 36; UTME 7723; UTMN 35753; PGE
234.100; PGN 187.600**

Although it has earlier precursors, Gerasa is principally a city of the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Islamic periods. Like other Decapolis cities it was warred over by Ptolemies and Seleucids and plainly had defences in this period. Those probably remained in use through into the 1st century AD when we hear of the city in the context of the Jewish War of AD 66–70. A high standard of preservation and extensive excavation has left above average military remains, most importantly, several military inscriptions and the superb city walls.

(a) Some inscriptions imply the presence of the actual unit:

2. BILINGUAL LATIN AND GREEK TOMBSTONE (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 446–467, no. 199):

Val(erius) [Tenes] Eptace[nti]s f(ilius)/ o(ptio) alae I Thracum/ Aug(ustae). Q(uintus) V[eases]/ frater eius fecit

Ἰ(ούλιος) Οὐ(αλέριος) Τένες Ἐπτακέντου υἱός/ Κ(όιντος) Οὐεάσης ἐπόησεν ὁ ἀδελφός αὐτοῦ

(Here lies) Julius Valerius Tenes, the son of Eptacentis, Optio of the Ala I Augusta Thracum. Quintus Veases his brother made this

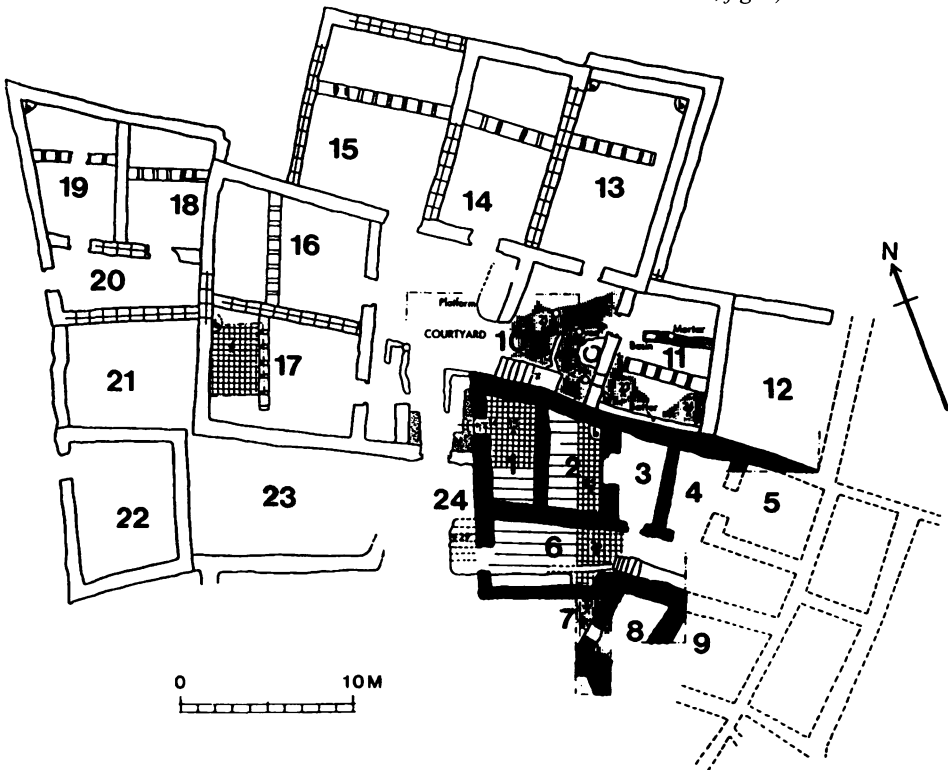
3. BILINGUAL LATIN AND GREEK TOMBSTONE (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 447, no. 200):

Ziemices Ziopen f(ilius) eque[s] alae/ Thracum Aug(ustae) turma[e] Cai/ Vesperi hic situs est. Heres [fecit ex]/ testamento

Ζιμικένθις Ἐζιωπῆν υἱὸς ἰπτεῦ[ς]/ Εἴλης Θρακῶν Σεβαστῆς τύρμης/ Γαίω Ἐσπερίω ἐνθάδε κείται./ ἰπύησεν ὁ κληρονόμος/ ἐγ διαθήκης

Here lies Ziemices, the son of Ziopen, Trooper of the Ala (I) Augusta Thracum, Squadron of Vesper. His heir made this in accordance with his will

Fig. 11.3: Pella: plan of the Byzantine 'fort' (after Watson and Tidmarsh 1996: 296, fig. 2).



4. LATIN TOMBSTONE (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 447, no. 201):

Doritses Tarsi f(i)lius/ eques alae Thracum/
Aug(ustae) tur(mae) Terenti vixit/ an(nos)
XXXII, militavit/ an(nos) XII, h(ic) s(itus) e(st).

Here lies Doritses, the son of Tarsus, Trooper of the Ala (I) Augusta Thracum, Squadron of Terentius, lived 32 years, served 12.

Date: 1st century AD based on the use of the nominative in all three. The regiment is attested in Raetia in 107 (CIL XVI: 55) and at Traiesmauer in 140–143 (CIL III: 5654).

All these men have Thracian names and seem to have been stationed at Gerasa. Gracey (1981: 270) has suggested they were located at Gerasa in the aftermath of the First Jewish



Fig. 11.4: Gerasa: inscription recording a detachment of Legion VI Ferrata.

War. It was common in this period for soldiers to be billeted in towns. There is, however, an unexplained fortification wall on the hill south of the later city walls which may relate to an encampment (Kennedy 1998: 56, pl. 2).

In other instances the soldiers are there temporarily — two are Hadrianic:

5. REUSED LATIN INSCRIPTION (Fig. 11.4) (Kennedy 1980a: 297–9):

..U]lpiae fide[.../ provinciae ?] Arabiae/
vexill(ationis)]leg.VI Ferr(atae)/ imp(eratore)
Caes(are) T]raiano Hadriano/Aug(usto)
trib.pote]st. III cos[III]/ ...]runt ex Alex[andria]

... Ulpia ... [of the province of?] Arabia, [a detachment of] Legion VI Ferrata [by the Emperor Caesar] Trajan Hadrian [Augustus] in his third [Tribunician] Power, [Thrice] Consul, [...] from Alex[andria].

Date: 10 December 118 – 9 December 119

What this detachment of legionaries was doing at Gerasa is unknown (cf. below).

6. ALTAR WITH LATIN TEXT. Now lost (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 390–391, no. 30):

Pro salute/ Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) n(ostri)
Traian(i)/Hadriani Aug(usti) p(atris) p(atriciae)/
Deaniae (sic) Aug(ustae)/ Equites sing(ulares)
eius qui/ hibernati sunt Antioch[i]/ae ad
Chrysorhoan quae/ et Gerasa hiera et asylo(s)
et au/tonomos, quorum curam agit/ M(arcus)
Calven<ti>us Viator (centurio) leg(ionis) V
M[a]/cedonicae, turmae V[III]:/ Flavi Titi,
Statili Roma[ni],/ Val(eri) Bassi, Cani
August[ini]?/ [...] Paterni, Ulpi Festi,/ Ulpi
Victoris, Ulpi Agrippini, v(otum) s(oluerunt)
l(ibentes) m(erito)/ honoris et pietatis causa

To Augustan Diana for the Welfare of Our Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, Father of His Country. His Mounted Bodyguards who have been wintering at Antioch on the Chrysorhoas known as Gerasa

Sacred, Inviolable and Autonomous, Marcus Calventius Viator, Centurion of the Legion V Macedonica, in Command of the Eight Squadrons — of Flavius Titus, Statilius Romanus, Valerius Bassus, Canus Augustinus, [...] Paternus, Ulpius Festus, Ulpius Victor, Ulpius Agrippinus — freely and willingly fulfilled his vow, out of honour and dutifulness.

Date: AD 130

This remarkable text records the occasion when Hadrian wintered in Gerasa in the course of a tour in the region. Apart from the Equites Singulares mentioned here we may suppose that considerable numbers of other troops in his entourage were at Gerasa or nearby at that same time.

Several inscriptions of the 2nd or 3rd century in Latin or Greek name the Legion III Cyrenaica. The circumstances that brought them to Gerasa are unknown — perhaps during the governor's assize tour or as part of a permanent detachment associated with road security to the east of Gerasa (ch. 10). A few are notable:

7. LATIN ALTAR from the Temple of Artemis Propylaea (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 391, no. 31):

Deanae/ Flavius Apollinaris mil(es)/ leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae)

To Diana. Flavius Apollinaris, soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica.

Date: 2nd century AD

Other soldiers of this legion seem to be responsible for another altar at Gerasa "To the Ancestral God" (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 391, no. 23).

8. SOLDIER OF THE SAME LEGION DIED AT GERASA (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 450, no. 211):

D(is) M(anibus)/ C(aio) Iul(io) Zenophilo/ mil(iti) leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae)

To the Spirits of the departed Gaius Julius Zenophilus, soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica.

Date: 2nd/3rd century

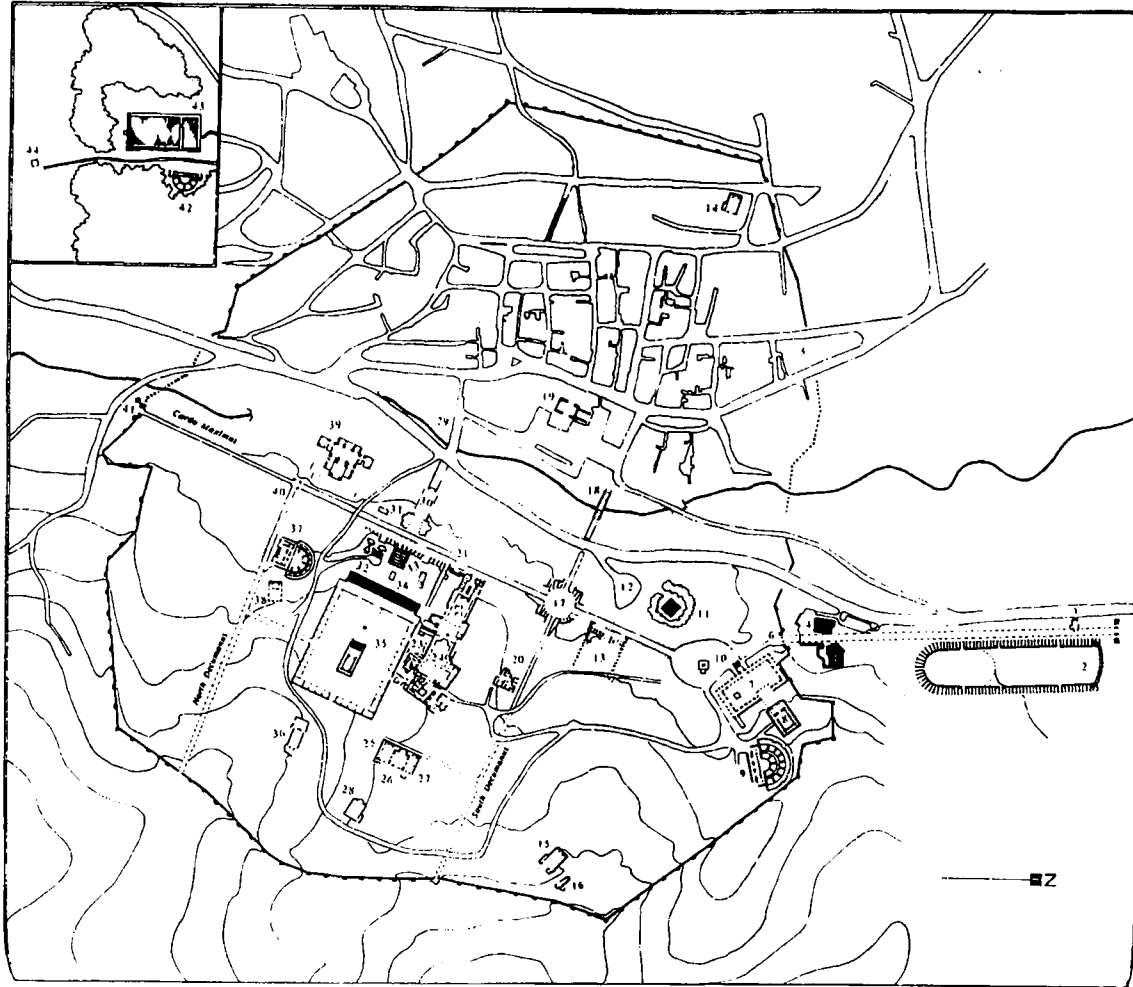
Cf. (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 391, no. 212) for another tombstone of III Cyrenaica.

Then there are other inscriptions naming III Cyrenaica but generally uninformative (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 391, nos 197, 213) or naming soldiers but without identifying the unit (nos 183 (centurion), 208 (*cornicularius*)). A few are of closer interest as they seem to show military families in the city. A Greek text of AD 83–96 in which T. Flavius Dionysus, a veteran and decurion (of a cavalry regiment presumably), records putting up money towards the financing of part of a block of seats in the South Theatre (no. 52). Part of a Greek inscription recording a man with the striking and rare Greek names [Moeragenes] son of Molpon, who describes his son as a centurion (no. 42). An equestrian appears in a mid-3rd century dedication in the Artemis Propylaea in which he describes himself as "Flavius Munatius, the son of Flavius Munatius, centurion" (no. 62). Then there is Germanus: at the well-known late 2nd century tomb of this name at Birketein 2 km north of the city. The fragmentary text describes this man as *clomophorus* which is the Greek equivalent of *vitifer* (=centurion) (no. 219) and seems to be saying something about campaigns. This is probably the same Germanus named on a column and described as Chief Centurion (*primus pilus*) (no. 102). Another inscription — this time on a sarcophagus — refers to soldiering (*stratiati*) (no. 221). Finally, there is an important text from the Late Roman period:

9. GREEK MOSAIC INSCRIPTION from a church (Welles *apud* Kraeling 1938: 481, no. 311):

Κύριε/ ὁ Θεός τοῦ ἁγίου/ Κοσμά καί/ Δαμιανοῦ/ ἐλέησον τὸν τριβοῦνον/ Δαγισθέον καὶ πρόσδεξε τὴν αὐτοῦ/ προσφορὰν.

JERASH PLAN



1. Hadrian Arched Gate
2. The Hippodrome
3. Marianos Church
4. Viskora' Centre & Restaurant
5. The Water Gate
6. The South Gate
7. The Zeus Esplanade
8. The Zeus Temple
9. The South Theatre
10. The Oval Plaza
11. The Camp Hill
12. Civic Complex, House of the Blues
13. The Market Place
14. Procopius Church
15. SS Peter & Paul
16. Monastery Church
17. The South Tetrapylon
18. The South Bridge
19. East Baths
20. The Umayyad House
21. The Nymphaeum
22. The Cathedral
23. The Bath of Placcus & Clergy House
24. St Theodore
25. SS Cosmas & Damianus
26. St. John
27. St. George
28. Bishop Genesis Church
29. The North Bridge
30. The Propylaea Church
31. The Umayyad Mosque
32. Department of Antiquities Office
33. Artemis Propylaea
34. The Intermediate Terrace
35. The Artemis Temple Complex
36. The Synagogue Church
37. The North Theatre
38. Bishop Isaiiah Church
39. West Baths
40. North Tetrapylon
41. North Gate
42. Birkastein Theatre
43. Birkastein Reservoir
44. The Tomb of Germanicus

Fig. 11.5: Gerasa: plan of the city and its walls (R. E. Patten).

Lord, God of Saint(s) Cosmas and Damianus, have mercy on the Tribune Dagisthaeus and accept his offering.

Date: AD 533

Dagisthaeus is identified with the well-known general of Justinian reported on at length by Procopius in his account of his campaigns in Lazica (*Wars* 2.29.10–30.48; PLRE III: 380 ('Dagisthaeus 1') and 380–383 ('Dagisthaeus 2')). At this earlier date he may have been commander of a garrison in the city or region (cf. the 'Tribune and Regional Governor' at Ma'in, ch. 12).

The impression is of a city which had a garrison only briefly in the 1st century AD and, probably, the 6th. Nevertheless, soldiers were a not uncommon sight, some settled there, a few achieving prominence. Presumably some Gerasenes served in the Roman army but surprisingly, only one is attested amongst the known origins of soldiers.

10. DISCHARGE DIPLOMA issued to a marine in the fleet at Misenum on the Bay of Naples and found on Corsica to which, presumably, he returned (CIL XVI: 15):

... gregali M(arco) Damae f(ili), Suro Garaseno.

To Marine Marcus, the son of Dama, a Syrian Gerasene.

Date: 5 April AD 71

(b) The city walls are extensive and well-preserved. They enclose an irregular area of c. 85 ha on both sides of the perennial W. Jerash and are pierced by at least five gates (Fig. 11.5). The circuit can be traced for most of its 3.456 km, some parts still standing several metres high, others recently cleared. The wall is quite narrow, c. 3 m; likewise the towers, though numerous — about every 17–22 m totalling at least 101 — are modest in scale, c. 6 m square. Gregory (1995 I: 67) suggests they

were intended "as much for decoration and prestige as defence". Nevertheless they remain an impressive feature of the site (Fig. 11.6C).

Their date is problematic. A single inscription has long been used to assign them to the Flavian period. Recently that has been challenged and a late 3rd/early 4th century date proposed. Even that is open to challenge with a suggestion that part at least is earlier than the late 2nd century. Clearly detailed research is required. As things stand we may be reasonably certain only of dating the main gates: the North Gate (Trajanic) and the South Gate and Arch of Hadrian (Hadrianic). Also requiring investigation are the two long stretches of enigmatic wall on the hill west of the hippodrome.

Principal Reading: Kraeling 1938; Seigne 1992: 335; Kennedy 1998d: 56–59

E. TELL FAYSAL?

JADIS 2318.081; TELL FAYSAL; MAP 3154.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7724; UTMN 35684; PGE 234.030; PGN 180.670

Seven kilometres south of Gerasa just where the Wadi Jerash joins the W. Zerqa (the Jabbok of biblical times), there is a small fertile plain. The modern highway crosses here and although the Roman road to Philadelphia crossed some distance to the east, this too was evidently a key crossing point in antiquity. Modern road building exposed a major structure in the angle just west of the wadi junctions.

A rectangular fortified structure with massive walls, c. 31.5 x 37–40 m, 0.126 ha. Construction is dated to late 2nd/early 3rd century AD on the basis of pottery and coins. Reused in the Late Roman period but the main use is placed in the 3rd century AD.

Principal Reading: Palumbo *et al.* 1993

F. UMM ER-RUMMAN

JADIS 2217.051; ER-RUMMAN (NORTH); MAP 3154.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7672; UTMN 35623; PGE 228.800; PGN 174.700

South-west of Tell Faysal is a series of villages which have been shown by survey to have been at their greatest extent in the Roman period. Umm er-Rumman, c. 6 km from Tell Faysal, is one of these. Earlier this century an inscription (now lost) was reported here which the most recent editor suggests may be restored as:

11. PART OF A LATIN INSCRIPTION (IGLS 21: 1):

Leg(io) VI F[errata]

Date: 1st-3rd century?

Principal Reading: Gordon and Knauf 1987; IGLS 21:29

G. AL-BIRAH

JADIS 2417.021; TELL EL-BIREH; MAP 3254.III; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 21811; UTMN 356298; PGE 245.500; PGN 175.060

Tell al-Birah lies on the W. Zerqa c. 17 km east of Umm er-Rumman. About 100 m south of the tell, the Wadi az-Zarqa/Wadi al-Dulayl Archaeological Project recorded what they believed to be two Roman period barrack blocks on a promontory.

Principal Reading: Palumbo *et al.* 1996: 390, Site 67

H. GADORA (SALT)

JADIS 2116.003; SALT; MAP 3154.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7573; UTMN 35481; PGE 218.600; PGN 160.700

Modern Salt overlies ancient Gadora, a city of the Peraea and, therefore, part of the province of Palestine rather than Arabia. Just as the Legion III Cyrenaica is attested in the cities of Arabia (see Gerasa and Philadelphia) so too the legion of Palestine in the cities of that province.

12. LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION in two pieces (IGLS 21: 3):

Vexillatio/ Leg(ionis) VI Fer(ratae)

(Built by) a detachment of the Legion VI Ferrata

Date: 2nd century (?)

The editor of IGLS speculated the troops may have been engaged in the construction of a road through Gadora to Gerasa where a detachment was engaged in some activity in AD 118/9 (above).

I. YAJUZ

JADIS 2315.166; KHIRBET YAJUZ; MAP 3154.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7698; UTMN 35477; PGE 236.900; PGN 159.900

Several years of excavation on this small town astride the Roman road from Philadelphia to Gerasa (now just beyond the edge of Greater Amman) has included the discovery of a damaged Greek inscription mentioning a soldier. It has been published briefly.

13. GREEK INSCRIPTION reused and damaged (Suleiman 1999: 21):

Δ.Ο. CΙΛΟΥΑΝΟC / ΑΚΥΙΛΙΦΕΡ / ΕΥ[CEB]ΩΝ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ

D. O. (?) Silvanos, Standard-Bearer erected [this] out of reverence

J. PHILADELPHIA (AMMAN)

JADIS 2315.001; AMMAN/FORUM-THEATRE; MAP 3153.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7779; UTMN 35390; PGE 237.940; PGN 151.200

Modern Amman obscures and has destroyed much of this large Decapolis city. The evidence for the Roman army in Philadelphia is similar to that for Gerasa but less abundant.

The citadel walls have recently been explored to reveal various phases from the Middle Bronze Age, including not just the well-known

Hellenistic stretches but a significant 2nd century AD phase and a later Umayyad rebuilding. By the end of the 1st century BC the Nabataeans seem to have controlled the vicinity, fought a battle with Herod the Great there and to have had a fortress (*phourion*) nearby (Jos. AJ 15.5.4 [148–150]; BJ 1.19.5 [380]).

There are few inscriptions from the city — a fraction of the number at Gerasa — and only three are military.

14. LATIN TOMBSTONE (IGLS 21: 34):

D(is) m(anibus)/ Ti(berius) Claudius/
Ant[on]inus/ mil[es] le[g](ionis) III
Cyr(enaicae)/ do[mo] Hi[erap](oli)/ mil(itavit)
ann(is) XVII.

To the Spirits of the Departed. Tiberius Claudius Antoninus, soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica, from Hierapolis, served for 17 years.

Date: 2nd century (?)

The soldier probably came from Syrian Hierapolis, Bambyce/Membidj, just west of the river in northern Syria. As with the counterparts at Gerasa he may have been at Philadelphia in the entourage of the governor or a senior official or as part of a possible road-station here.

The explanation for the second certainly implies attendance on the governor:

15. A LATIN INSCRIPTION (IGLS 21: 13):

[Salu]ti et Aescul[a]/ [pi]o sanctissimis/ [d]eis
Terentius/ Heraclitus b(ene)[f](iciarius)/
Claudi Capito/lini pro inco/lumitate do/mus
divinae et/ [prae]sidis sui/ [respo]nsoque Di[i]/
[Iovi?]s votum sol/vit.

To the Most Holy Gods, Health and Aesculapius, Terentius Heraclitus, Beneficiarius of (the governor) Claudius Capitolinus, for the preservation of the

Imperial Household and of his governor, and by the oracle of the god Jupiter, has completed his vow.

Date: AD 245

Unexpected are two inscriptions mentioning men of Legion X Fretensis, normally stationed at Jerusalem in Syria Palaestina.

16. GREEK EPITAPH (IGLS 21: 30):

Ἡρεννίαν Εἰσθαν τὴν ἄωρον θυγατέρα
Ἡρεννίου/ Μόσχου (ἐκατόνταρχος)
λεγιῶνος/ ἰ Φορεν(τηνοῖας) Σεουη/ ριανῆς ψη/
φίσματι βουλήσ και δέμου.

Herennius Moschus, Centurion of the Legion X Fretensis Severiana, honours Herennia Eistha, his daughter prematurely dead, by decree of the Council and People (of Philadelphia).

Date: AD 222–235

17. GREEK EPITAPH (IGLS 21: 26):

[Αὐρ(ήλιον)]/ Ο(ὐ)ίκτω[ρα οὐετρα]/ νὸν
ἀπὸ λεγι(εῶνος)/ Δεκάτης Φο(ετηνοῖας)/
Γορδιανῆς,/ Αὐρ(ηλ..) Ουίκτω/[ρ--].

Aurelius Victor ... honours Aurelius Victor, Veteran of the Legion X Fretensis Gordiana.

Date: AD 238–244

The latter is a veteran and the former a senior soldier with evident high standing in Philadelphia. Rather than suppose a detachment of the Legion X Fretensis at Philadelphia it is simpler and more probable that these are men from Philadelphia who had served in that legion in Syria Palaestina. By the end of the century X Fretensis had moved permanently to Aila (Aqaba), by then part of the divided province of Arabia (ch. 4).

Philadelphia is named as the home of several soldiers, some with revealing names:

18. AN EPITAPH found at Carnuntum in Pannonia (Austria) (ILS 9168):

Proculus Rabili f(ili) Col(lina tribu), Philadel(phia), mil(es) optio coh(ortis) II Italic(ae) c(ivium) R(omanorum) (centuria) Fa[us]tino, ex vexil(latione) sagit(tariorum) exer(citus) Syriaci stip(endia) VII, vixit an(norum) XXVI. Apuleius frater f(aciendum) c(uravit).

Proculus, the son of Rabilus, of the Tribe Collina, of Philadelphia, Soldier and Optio of the Cohort II Italica Civium Romanorum, Century of Faustinus, of the detachment of archers from the Syrian army. Served for 7 years, lived 26. Apuleius his brother undertook the making of this.

Date: Probably AD 69

Proculus and Apuleius have Roman names and citizenship but the latinised form of their father's name cannot hide its Semitic origin, as Nabataean Rabel.

19. DISCHARGE DIPLOMA issued to a cavalryman in the army of Mauretania Tingitana and found at Rabat, Morocco (CIL XVI: 159):

... cohort(is) II milliariae sagittar(iorum), cui praest Ti. Claudius Pedito, equiti Domitio Domiti f(ili), Philad(elpia).

Trooper Domitius, son of Domitius, of Philadelphia, of the Cohort II Milliarum Sagittariorum (Equitata), under the command of Tiberius Claudius Pedito.

Date: January AD 88

Proculus, Apuleius and Domitius seem all to have been recruited by the Syrian governor Cn. Domitius Corbulo in 62/3 for his

Armenian campaigns. Arguably they were part of a massive recruitment including the formation of a series of new milliary (thousand-strong) auxiliary regiments at this time (Kennedy 1983b). Apparently the Decapolis, part of the province of Syria still, provided significant numbers (cf. Isaac 1998: 318–319).¹

20. LATIN EPITAPH from Mainz, Germany (Schleiermacher 1984: no. 23)

Flavius Proclus/eq(ues) sing(ularis) Aug(usti), domo/ [Pi]lodelphia (sic), an(norum) XX/ [stip(endiorum?) h(eres) f(aciendum)] c(uravit).

Flavius Proclus, Mounted Bodyguard of the Augustus, from Philadelphia, aged 20 [of ?? years service. His heir had this erected].

Date: late 1st century AD (Speidel (1994: 16 and 36).

Proclus is depicted on the tombstone as a mounted archer.

21. LATIN EPITAPH from Bostra (IGLS 13: 9179):

[T(itus) Flavius M(arci) f(ilius)] Col(lina) Marcia[nus], domo Phila[d(elpia), op(tio)] hast(ati) leg(ionis) VI Fe[rr(atae) Fl(avia)] Lu]culla mater e[t Fl(avia)] Ialla soror [her(edes) eius].

Titus Flavius Marcianus, son of Marcus, of the tribe Collina, originating from Philadelphia, Optio Hastatus of the Legion VI Ferrata. Flavia Luculla his mother and Flavia Ialla his sister, his heirs (set this up).

Date: before the middle of the 2nd century AD

¹ RMD 9 is another diploma, issued in AD 109 to a soldier from Hippos, a Decapolis city north of the R. Yarmuk, whose name, M. Spedius Corbulo, may imply he was the son of another recruit of AD 62/3.

Modern Amman is a centre for horse breeding and the same may have been true of Philadelphia, making it especially attractive to the Roman army (Graf 1994: 267). There is a possible hint of this in the account of the martyrdom of SS Zeno and Zenas at Philadelphia in the 4th century at a location called the *hippikon*.² That has been variously

interpreted as a hippodrome or horse market (MacAdam 1992: 38) or as the cavalry barracks of a garrison (Milik 1960: 162, n. 33) (cf. Moore 1964: 1). Zeno seems to be a soldier and explicitly says he is from the fort of Ziz(i)a (ch. 12).

Principal Reading: IGLS 21: 36–64 *passim*; MacAdam 1992: 38; Wood 1993

² The date is year 1 of Maximianus, 304, but the governor Maximus mentioned might not be the man known c. 357.

12. THE MADABA PLAIN

The highland zone of north-western Jordan gives way south of Amman to a region of plain centred on Madaba. On the east this shades into the steppe; on the west into hill country which then falls away towards the deep trough of the Jordan Valley and the start of the Dead Sea. On the south it is separated from the continuing plateau by the great slash of the Wadi Mujib and its tributaries (Fig. 12.1).

In the early 1st century AD the western part, a small strip of the Peraea, passed from Herodian rule into Roman provincial administration. All the rest was part of the Nabataean kingdom until annexation and incorporation into the new province of Arabia in AD 106.

The region is packed with military remains. In the light of its varied history they are equally disparate in character from Herodian border fortress-palace and Roman siege works to fortified towns and forts and towers in the steppe.

A. THE ROAD SYSTEM

The ancient King's Highway coming south from Syria through Gerasa joins up with the new Roman highway, the Via Nova Traiana, at Philadelphia. The roads continue south under its new Roman name. Although stretches of it have been traced, its precise course immediately south of Philadelphia is

uncertain. However, it evidently passed through Madaba and Dhiban to a crossing of the Wadi Mujib, then on through Rabba towards Petra. There are again numerous milestones not just of the initial Trajanic laying out but of subsequent maintenance and reconstruction.

There are numerous other roads in the region linking the Via Nova to the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea areas. One that has been well-explored recently is that from Esbus (Hesban) west into the Jordan Valley to Livias. Alongside it have been traced not just numerous milestones (from AD 213) but a series of towers and even something described as a 'fort'. More importantly, a strategic highway of some kind lies further east. This so-called 'Via Militaris' was once thought to be a continuous highway linking the more easterly forts along the edge of the steppe and roughly paralleling the modern Desert Highway that runs through the same area. Recent investigation, however, has found no proof of such a continuous road; rather, it seems to be a series of stretches of road, some with a north-south alignment, others linking back towards the Via Nova.

The Via Nova was a built road with foundations and surface and leaving still a clear trace. The roads further east are the

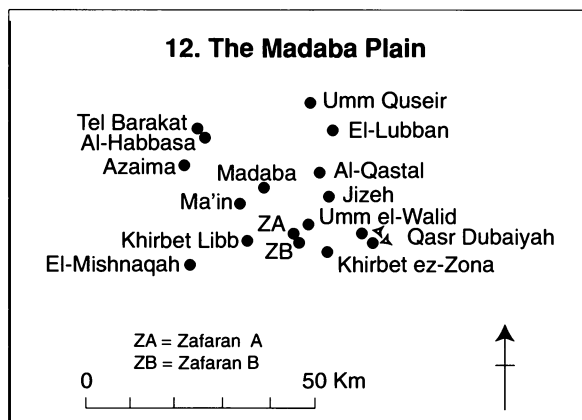


Fig. 12.1: Map of the sites of the Madaba Plain.

characteristic roads of the steppe or desert, simply cleared ways marked by milestones.

Principal Reading: Graf 1997a; 1997b; Piccirillo 1996; Findlater 2002

B. WADI KAFRAIN

NO JADIS FOR AL-HABBASA; MAP 3153.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7538; UTMN 35261; PGE 214.400; PGN 138.600
NO JADIS FOR TEL BARAKAT; MAP 3153.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7528; UTMN 35270; PGE 213.700; PGN 139.750

About 20 km west of Philadelphia the W. Kafrain is one of a number of wadis rising on the plateau which then descends into the Jordan Valley. At a point about 20 km south-south-west of Gadora (Salt) and c. 28 west-south-west of Philadelphia, a hot spring on the mid-slope has attracted settlement for millennia. Ottoman forces occupied the area a century ago and in recent times the Jordan army has made use of ancient structures including some of a military character. A dam across the wadi has created the Kafrain Dam and three 'forts' have recently been re-examined there (Fig. 12.2a). The 'Plateau Fort' is Iron Age, but two are Herodian and/or Roman; and a fourth, apparently Hasmonaean, was recently identified and excavated.

(a) The irregular outline of the al-Habbasa fort lies c. 1 km south of the dam and just east of the hot spring (Fig. 12.2b). Its commanding position has wide views over the Jordan Valley below on the west. It encloses about 0.5 ha. That divides into an artificially raised-up 'citadel' in the south-east made of massive unmortared masonry with a terraced lower enclosure in the north and west of rather smaller stones. Rooms are built against the walls in both areas. A water channel comes in from the east and five cisterns were noted along its route. The small quantities of pottery were divided between Hellenistic/ Early Roman and Late Roman/ Byzantine and there may be some Umayyad.

(b) The fort at Tell Barakat lies on a ridge just beyond the western end of the modern dam wall (Fig. 12.2c). The upper part on the western and higher hill (not shown) is apparently Early Bronze Age. The lower enclosure (Fig. 12.3) with at least two towers on the east is thought by the recent surveyors to be a Roman fort but diagnostic pottery was scarce and ranged from Pre-Herodian to Late Roman.

The surveyors believe these to be a contemporary pair, combining "to make a coherent military control system for the rich agricultural area to the west" where the small towns of Abila and Livias lay. They note that Herod continued in the area around Jericho the practice of his Hasmonean predecessors in creating fortresses in a rich arable area. This may have been the situation on the W. Kafrain. The pottery would be consistent with a Herodian fort reused in the early Roman period when this part of the Peraea was a frontier of sorts with the Nabataeans to the east and south.

Principal Reading: Prag and Barnes 1996; Waheeb 1997: 466–467

C. AZAIMA

JADIS 2013.021; AZEIMAH CAMP; MAP 3153.IV; UTM ZONE 36; BUT GRID REF. SHOULD BE UTME 7482; UTMN 35193; PGE 208.800; PGN 131.900

About 10 km south-west of the Kafrain forts and the same distance west of Mt Nebo, is a most unusual site. Seen on aerial photographs it strikes a Roman archaeologist immediately as a temporary camp of the kind so common in north-western Europe but rare in the east (Fig. 12.4C). The nearest examples are the siege camps around Masada and the smaller examples at Machaerus (below). This is evidently how earlier commentators saw it too even at ground level: Abel described a structure made of brown boulders and thought he saw the traces of an internal layout as well. Today the outline is still very clear, a rectangle of c. 110 x 75 m, 0.825 ha with possible

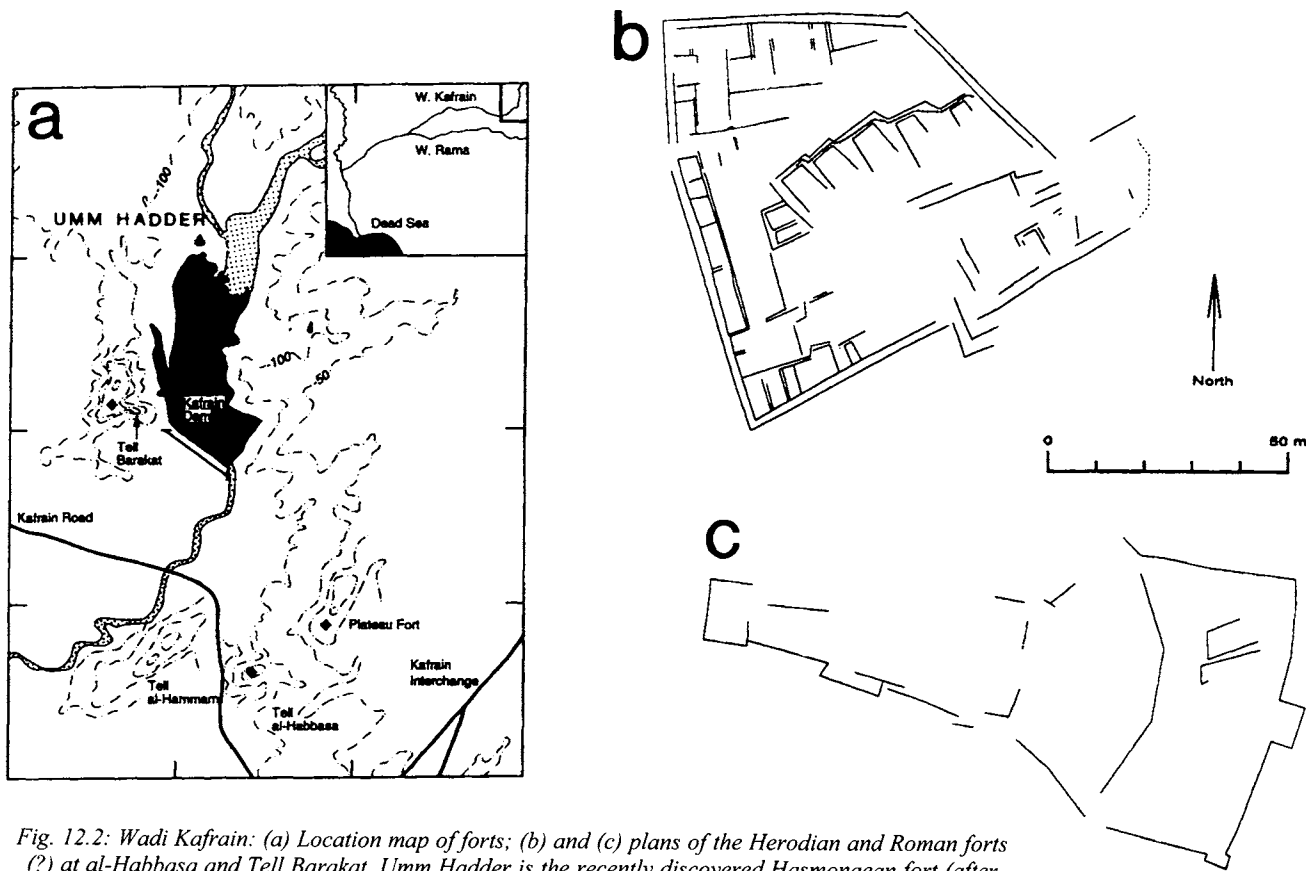


Fig. 12.2: Wadi Kafraïn: (a) Location map of forts; (b) and (c) plans of the Herodian and Roman forts (?) at al-Habbasa and Tell Barakat. Umm Hadder is the recently discovered Hasmonaean fort (after Prag and Barnes 1996: 42, Figs 1, 9 and 13).



Fig. 12.3: Wadi Kafraïn: aerial view of Roman fort (?) of Tell Barakat looking south (APA 98/27.37).

rounding of the corners.¹ The size is comparable to Camps A and C at Masada and sufficient to house perhaps 1000 men. The Shu'aib-Hisban Project explored it recently, noting rounded corners, possible entrances one third of the way along the longer sides and a shallow internal stratigraphy. The rarity of such sites in the Near East as a whole makes this of particular importance and deserving of closer investigation (cf. chs 7, 16 and 17). Even on the 1953 aerial photos there are no traces of internal structures and by 1998 the interior was being farmed.

Abel suggested its construction during the campaigns of the First Jewish War (AD 66–73) which culminated in the capture of Machaerus and Masada. This is speculation — the location is certainly on the route to Machaerus, for example, via an ancient road — the Darb abu-el-Hasan he refers to — but it might equally be associated with Roman campaigns against the Nabataeans on other

occasions including at the moment of annexation in AD 106.

Principal Reading: Abel 1932: 77–84; Mallon *et al.* 1934: 149; Strobel 1974: 179, 181; Prag (unpublished survey notes)

D. BEELMAOUS (MA'IN)
JADIS 2112.001; MA'IN; MAP 3153.III;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7591;
UTMN 35083; PGE 219.800; PGN 120.900

About 18 km south-east of Azaima and c. 8 south-west of Madaba, is the town of Ma'in, the Beelmaous of Eusebius (*Onom.* 44. 21–24; 45.25–28). An inscription on a mosaic points to military activity in the Late Roman period.

1. GREEK INSCRIPTION (IGLS 21: NO. 162):

Ἐπὶ Φλαουίου Μαρτυρίου/λαμπροστάτου καὶ
 περιβλ(έπτου) τριβ(ούνου)/[τοπ]οτηροῦ
 ἀπὸ/ [θεμελ]ίων ἐκτίσθη κα(ὶ)/ [ἐτελι]ώθη

¹ Measured from the 1953 aerial photograph. Mallon *et al.* 1934: 149 give 115 x 80 m, 0.92 ha.

τοῦτο τὸ περιβάτον ἐπὶ τῆς ἰα' ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).

Under Flavius Martyrius, Most Illustrious and Admirable, Tribune and Regional Governor, this bath was constructed from the foundations and completed, in the 11th Year of the Indiction.

Date: late 6th/early 7th century AD

**E. MACHAERUS (EL-MISHNAQAH)
JADIS 2010.001; MEKAWER; MAP
3153.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7491;
UTMN 34956; PGE 209.300; PGN 108.500**

Machaerus is about 21 km south of Azaima in the hills of north-western Moab overlooking the Dead Sea. It is located on and around a conical hill amongst steep-sided valleys and hills at a point c. 7 km east of the Dead Sea.



Fig. 12.5: Machaerus: aerial view looking east. The palace is in the centre; note the traces of a camp (bottom right), part of the wall of circumvallation and the siege ramp between these two (APA 98/30.10).

Although much less well-known than Masada, the siege of another Herodian fortress-palace and the traces that survive are a dramatic reminder of the activities of the Roman army. As with Masada, we have a description in the contemporary historian Josephus, the traces of the fortress itself and the Roman siege-works, and the outcome of recent excavation.

As is well-known, the site had been established by the Jewish Hasmonaeans then developed by Herod the Great in the late 1st century BC as a border fortress and safe retreat in his Peraean territory (Fig. 12.5). Not far off was his villa at Callirhoe (Zerqa Ma'in). In the next generation it is here at Machaerus that John the Baptist is thought to have been executed by Herod Antipas. After the various components of Herod the Great's kingdom passed into Roman hands Masada and Machaerus received Roman garrisons. Both were seized by the rebels in AD 66 when the First Jewish Revolt began. The rebels held the fortress until at least 70 when the governor of Judaea, Lucilius Bassus, led the forces of his province from their recent capture of Jerusalem to eliminate pockets of resistance elsewhere.

2. JOSEPHUS (*Jewish War* 7.163–216 *passim*. Trans. R. Feldman, Loeb ed.):

(a) μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ πᾶν ὅσον ἦν στρατιωτικὸν συναγαγόν, πολὺ δ' ἦν κατὰ μέρη διηρημένον, καὶ τῶν ταγματῶν τὸ δέκατον, ἔγνω στρατεῦν ἐπὶ Μαχαιροῦντα· ... αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ τὸ τετειχισμένον πετροδὴς ὄχθος ἐστὶν εἰς μῆμιστον ὕψος ἐγηγερούμενος, ὡς εἶναι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δυσχείρωτος, ...

(b) Ἡρώδης δὲ βασιλεύοντι παντὸς ἔδοξε μᾶλλον ἐπιμελείας ἄξιον εἶναι καὶ κατασκευῆς ὀχυρωτάτης, μάλιστα καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν Ἀράβων γειτνίασιν· κείται γὰρ ἐν ἐπικαίρῳ πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνων γῆν ἀποβλέπον.

(c) Βάσσω δὲ περισηπόμενος τὸ χωρίον ἔγνω ποιεῖσθαι τὴν πρόσσodon χωννῆς τὴν φάραγγα τὴν πρὸς ταῖς ἀνατολαῖς καὶ τῶν ἔργων εἶχετο, σπουδῆν ποιούμενος ἢ τάχος ἐξᾶραι τὸ χῶμα καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ῥαδίαν ποιῆσαι τὴν πολιορκίαν.

(d) ὁρᾷ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ τις στρατοπέδου Ροῦφου γένος Αἰγύπτιος, καὶ μηδενὸς ἂν προσδοκῆσαντος ἐξαίφνης ἐπιδρομῶν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀράμενος αὐτὸν τοῖς ὄπλοις, ἕως κατεῖχε τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν τειχῶν ἰδόντας ἐκπληξίς, φθάνει τὸν ἄνδρα μεταθεῖς πρὸς τὸ Ῥωμαίων στρατόπεδον.

He [Lucilius Bassus] next concentrated all the numerous scattered detachments of troops, including the Tenth Legion, having determined to march against Machaerus. ... For the site that is fortified is itself a rocky eminence, rising to so great a height that on that account alone its reduction would be difficult; while nature had further contrived to render it inaccessible.

But Herod, on becoming king, regarded the place as supremely deserving of attention and of the strongest fortification, more especially from its proximity to Arabia, conveniently situated, as it was, with regard to that country, which it faces.

Bassus, after reconnoitring the place on all sides, decided to approach it by filling up the eastern ravine; to this task he now applied himself, labouring to raise with all speed the embankment which was to facilitate the siege.

(A young defender stayed outside the gate after one bout of fighting). *Thereupon, spying his opportunity, a soldier in the Roman ranks named Rufus, a native of Egypt, made a sudden dash upon him, such as none could have expected, lifted him up, armour and all, while the spectators on the wall were paralysed with astonishment, and succeeded in transporting the fellow to the Roman camp.*

The siege works were primarily the work of Legion X Fretensis as they were at Masada soon after. The site and the scale of the siege works are very different to Masada and were incomplete at the time the defenders capitulated. As the map shows (Fig. 12.6), a wall of circumvallation with square towers or

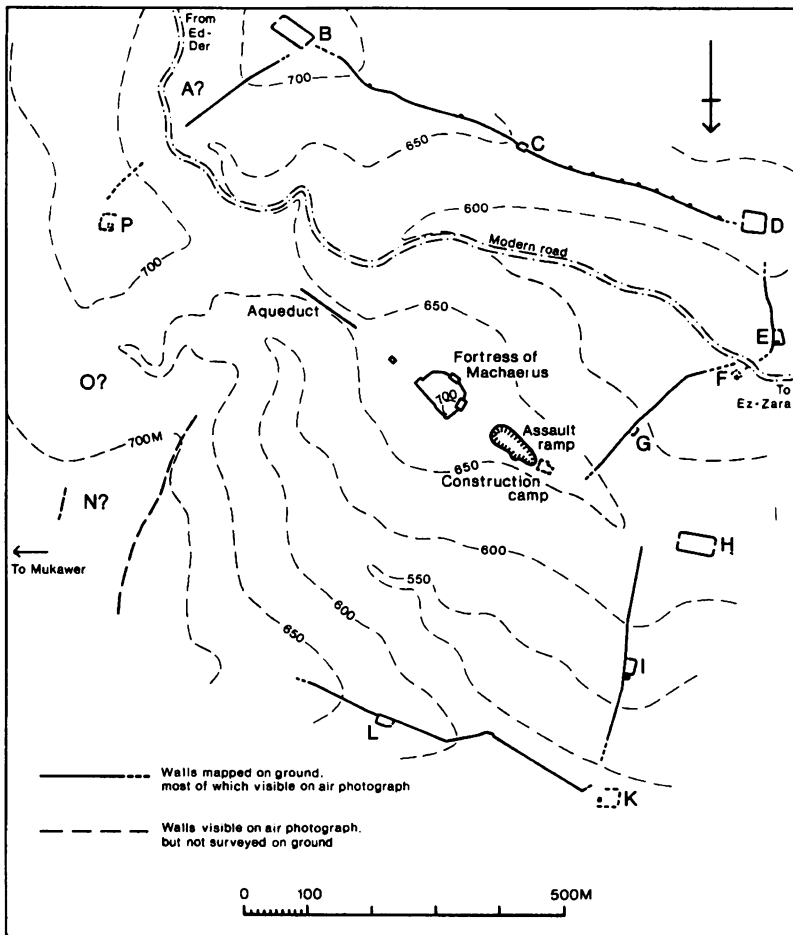


Fig. 12.6: Machaerus: plan of the fortress, siege ramp, camps and wall of circumvallation (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 48).

buttresses runs around the adjacent hills. On or close to this wall are ten or eleven camps. The circumvallation at Masada is a little longer but the primary difference there is with the much larger camps. A large camp for the bulk of Lucilius Bassus' army may yet be traced, perhaps beneath the modern village of Mukawer. The siege ramp is also more modest than at Masada but it, too, may have been unfinished.

Principal Reading: AJ II.2: 384–386; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 99–101

F. LIBONNA

JADIS 2211.011; KHIRBET LIBB; MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7620; UTMN 35003; PGE 222.300; PGN 112.800 JADIS 2413.030; EL-LUBBAN; MAP 3153.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7805; UTMN 35250; PGE 241.300 PGN 137.100

Two sets of ruins are contenders for a place where the *Notitia Dignitatum* locates a regiment of cavalry.

3. NOTITIA DIGNITATUM Or. 37.27:

Ala secunda Constantiana, Libona

The Ala II Constantiniana, at Libona

Date: c. AD 400

Kh. Libb lies on a hill beside the Via Nova, halfway between Madaba and Dhiban. Visitors noted ruins there of an ancient village and that it lies in the midst of rich arable land. Aerial photographs of 1953 confirm the spread of ruins beneath and around the re-emerging modern village. The position commands both a view over the Roman highway and west over a route leading down towards Machaerus and Callirhoe on the shores of the Dead Sea, 15–20 km away.

El-Lubban lies c. 31 km to the north-east, c. 11 km south of Philadelphia and just on the edge of the steppe. Graf has reported traces of a Roman road in this area and milestones have been recovered at Yadudeh, east of the Via Nova. This is a modern centre for horse rearing. The region is now extensively cultivated and villages obscure ancient remains. Travellers of the 19th century report remains at el-Lubban: Layard found a "... spacious and well-constructed reservoir... near the remains of an ancient town, which the sheikh called Leban". Gray Hill visited 'Looban'; "Considerable ruins, partly inhabited, covering two eminences, and a hollow between them. Also a well-built oblong pool of good masonry ..." (Hill 1896: 46).



Fig. 12.7: Zizia: aerial view of the reservoir looking south-west (APA 98/11.29).

At neither place is there any report of a fort and none may now be traceable in view of modern developments. Nor is this the place to debate the merits of the case. On balance I am inclined to favour el-Lubban as ancient Libona, a garrison on the edge of the steppe making more sense c. AD 400 than one some distance to the west on the Via Nova. It would accord better, too, with the next site.

Principal Reading: PA I: 20; II: 178; Graf 1997a: 274–276; Kennedy forthc. a

(G. AL-QASTAL)

**JADIS 2312.002; QASTAL EL-BALQA;
MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7783; UTMN 35162; PGE 239.000;
PGN 128.400**

Although the site has often been described as a Roman fort, largely on the basis of the implications of the name, fieldwork has revealed the existing structures as an elaborate Umayyad palace and associated buildings. There is no reason to doubt a pre-Islamic settlement as the pottery from the site implies, but there is no evidence of a Roman fort. That may have been 2 km to the south-west at Zabayir al-Qastal (Kennedy forthc. a); certainly there was a fort c. 5 km to the south.

Principal Reading: PA II: 95–103; AJ II.2: 458–465; Parker 1986: 39–41

H. ZIZIA (JIZEH)

**JADIS 2412.005; ZIZIA; MAP 3153.II; UTM
ZONE 36; UTME 7803;
UTMN 35113; PGE 240.800; PGN 123.400**

The immense Roman reservoir beside the modern highway at Jizeh, the largest in Arabia at c. 128 x 100 x 5.3 m (c. 68,000 cu. m), is a well-known landmark (Fig. 12.7). Most of the buildings associated with it have, however, long disappeared beneath the present town. They were once extensive: Tristram (1873: 197), for example, says it “must have been one of the most important places of Roman Arabia”. Aerial photographs taken by the German Air Force in 1918 reveal

an extensive settlement stretching to the south-east of the reservoir and elaborate water deflection works on the wadi; some of that is visible still in more recent photographs of 1953 (Kennedy forthc. a).

Visitors to the site reported not just a town and medieval castle but a fort which may have been that of the Late Roman period. Tristram (1873: 204) writes of the Roman ruins on a ridge between the two castles. He says they [the castles or ruins?] are “in character, a repetition of those of Um Weleed, but more extensive”. As we shall see below, however, the significant military remains at Umm el-Walid seem not to be Roman. Only the remains reused in the police post at Jizeh have survived.

It is named directly or by implication in ancient written sources:

4. THE MARTYR ZENO declared to the governor before whom he was being tried at Philadelphia in AD 304 (*AcS* lun. vol. 5: 405–411 on p. 406):

“I am indeed of ethnic [pagan] origin; but I am a Christian, and if you care to know about my military service, I have dedicated myself to my Emperor Christ, and under Him I shall be a more renowned soldier, and for this reason I am rightly called Zeno, for I know that those who believe in Christ shall indeed ‘live’. Furthermore, as for my home, it is in the fort of Palestine named Zozion, and I am of no mean rank.” (trans Moore 1964: 2–3).

Despite the description of it as being in Palestine rather than Arabia, this has been seen as a reference to Zizia and that there was a fort there in the early 4th century.

5. NOTITIA DIGNITATUM Or. 37.7 and 16:

Equites Dalmat[ae] Illyriciani, Ziza

The Dalmatian Illyrian Cavalry, at Ziza

Date: AD 400

6. A GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION was recorded by earlier visitors built into the wall of the medieval castle. Now lost (IGLS 21: 155):

† Ἐπὶ Φλ(αοῦίου) Παύλου ἐνδοξ[ο(τάτου)]/
δοικός, σπουδῆ Πέτροι/ τὸν τόπον
[ἄ]ρχοντος, [ῦ]πο λαμπρο(τάτου)
Χρισ[το]γ[ό]νου, ἀν[εν(εώθη ?)]/[τῶ] νοε'
ἔ[τ(ε)]χρ(όνων) ιδ' ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος), Δ(ίου) θ'.

Under Flavius Paulus, the Illustrious Dux, through the zeal of Peter, Archon of the place, and through the Illustrious Christogonos, this building has been reconstructed, in the Year 475, in the 14th Indiction, 9th day of the month Dios.

Date: AD 580

There is no way of telling if this is military or civil and the latter may be more likely.

Principal Reading: PA II: 91–94; Parker 1986: 41

I. UMM QUSEIR

JADIS 2314.133; UMM QUSEIR; MAP 3153.I; UTM ZONE 36;

UTME 7755; UTMN 35326; PGE 236.400; PGN 144.800

This large area of ruins lies c. 10.5 km south-east of Madaba and about 7 km south-west of Zizia. Towers abound in Jordan but a few stand out; this is one such. Tristram (1873: 197) described the place as “one of the most conspicuous landmarks of the district” ... “a strong massive tower, of which much more remains than of its neighbours”. It is c. 12 x 11.4 m (Fig. 12.8). Glueck reported Nabataean sherds all around the tower but Graf thinks it was reused in Roman times (1997a: 275).

Principal Reading: PA II: 90; Glueck 1934: 9–10; pls 2–3

(J. UMM EL-WALID)

JADIS 2311.002; UMM EL-WALID; MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7747;

UTMN 35052; PGE 235.300; PGN 117.300

The ruins of this ancient town lie c. 2 km south of Umm Quseir at a junction of ancient roads in the zone between the Via Nova (c. 12 km to the west) and the sections of the ‘Via Militaris’ (c. 8 km to the east). The “extraordinarily large site packed with ruins” (Glueck 1934: 10) covers about 4 ha and includes to the north-west a cemetery with monumental tomb and Greek epitaph. One early visitor reported a town wall enclosing at least part of the settlement and traces of that may be visible on the aerial photograph. The extensive remains include two striking structures which may be interpreted as fort or caravanserai. The larger of the two, on the north-east side, has been cleared to reveal a plan with circular towers and a layout that is clearly Islamic.

On the south-west, there is a structure, c. 40 m square, 0.16 ha, with a large courtyard surrounded by rooms built against a wall of 1.5–1.8 m in thickness (Fig. 12.9). The purpose is uncertain. There are no towers and it could be a caravanserai. As Parker observes, however, such structures exist elsewhere where they are demonstrably military (e.g. Qasr el-Bai’j, ch. 8) and could, in any case, have served a dual purpose as caravanserai and fort.

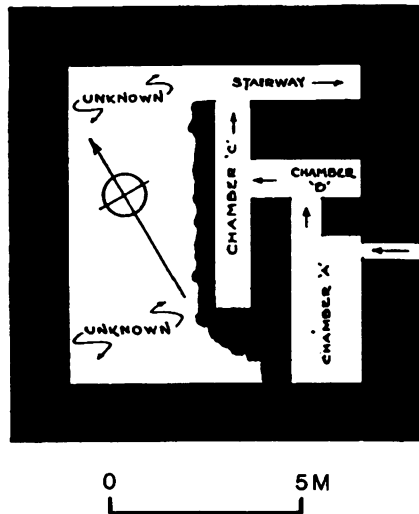


Fig. 12.8: Umm Quseir: plan of the tower (after Glueck 1934: 89, pl. 3).

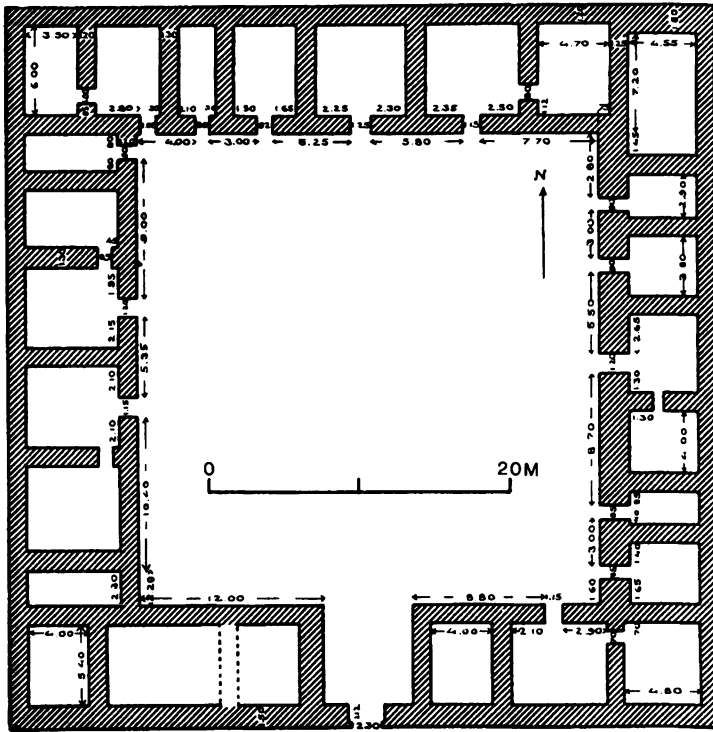


Fig. 12.9: Umm el-Walid: plan of the caravanserai/fort (after PA II, 89, fig. 670).

Date: Pottery collected by Parker extends from Nabataean to Umayyad times but with a striking absence of any for the 5th to early 7th century. More recently, Graf found only 2nd and 3rd century pottery at this structure (1997a: 275). Now, however, Bujard has examined this structure and that at Khan ez-Zebib (ch. 13) and argued that both are Islamic. In short, the pottery may be residual from the Roman settlement.

Principal Reading: PA II: 87–90; Glueck 1934: 10–12; Parker 1986: 41–43; Gregory 323–4; Bujard 1997

K. ZAFARAN

ZAFARAN A — JADIS 2311.001; QASR EZ-ZA'FARAN; MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7724; UTMN 35015; PGE 232.700; PGN 113.800

AND JADIS 2311.007; QASR EZ-ZA'FARAN II; MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7724; UTMN 35017; PGE 232.800; PGN 114.000
ZAFARAN B — NO JADIS; MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7735; UTMN 35002; PGE 233.200; PGN 112.400

The two towers of Zafaran A and B lie c. 4.5 km south-west of Umm el-Walid on a route leading through to the fertile plain between Dhiban and Umm er-Resas. Like that at Umm Quseir, they deserve inclusion for their size and the quality of survival (Fig. 12.10).

(a) Zafaran A is a rectangle, 21.5 x 16.5 m, walls still several metres high. It is set on the circular summit of a hill with wide views all around.² All around and partly abutting are later structures, one of which includes ranges

² The circular platform referred to by Parker seems to be natural.

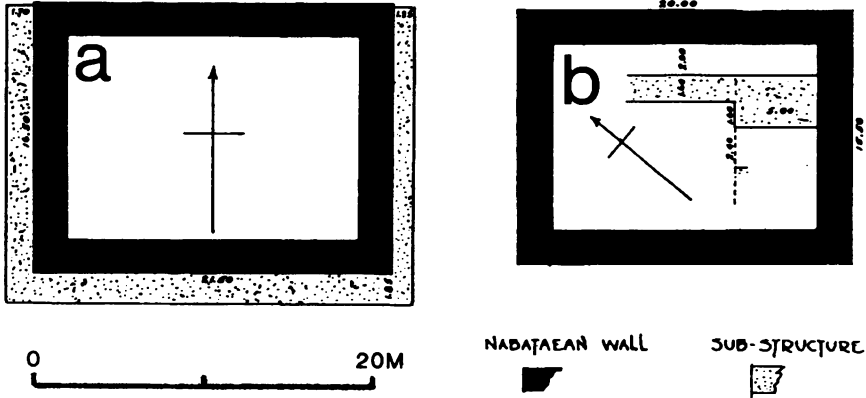


Fig. 12.10: Zafaran: plans of towers A and B (after Glueck 1934: 91, pl. 5).

of rooms within a rectilinear structure (Fig. 12.11C). The tower seems built over an earlier structure, (cf. the towered farm at Rujum el-Qasr: Hirschfeld 1997; Fig. 37)

(b) Zafaran B is about 1 km south-east of A, on lower ground but with sweeping views down over the winding course of the Wadi ath-Themad to its east. Its dimensions are c. 20 x 15.5 m. It too is built over an earlier structure.

In both cases the origin of the structure seems pre-Roman. Zafaran A is probably Nabataean in origin but perhaps reused in the 2nd–4th

century; Zafaran B may be Iron Age in origin but with a 4th century phase of occupation. The evidence for Roman occupation is purely pottery and in neither case need it be military.

Principal Reading: Glueck 1934: 30–31; Parker 1986: 44–45

L. KHIRBET EZ-ZONA
**JADIS 2311.008; KHIRBET EZ-ZONA;
 MAP 3153.II; UTM ZONE 36;
 UTME 7787; UTMN 34983; PGE 238.900;
 PGN 110.500**

The site lies on high ground above a loop of the Wadi ath-Themad c. 7 km east-south-east of Zafaran A. The pale colour of the limestone and its destruction to ground level make it difficult to find even from the air.

The walls are a massive 2–2.5 m thick, with towers 4 m square projecting 2 m at each corner and others at the mid-point of three sides. Glueck says it is 30 m square but his plan — the only one drawn — gives contradictory numbers and has interval towers on each of its sides (Fig. 12.12); Parker says it is 40 x 44 m, 0.176 ha. The 1953 aerial photograph cannot help beyond confirming an apparent gate — c. 3 m wide according to Parker — on the south-east wall.

Pottery seen by Glueck was “Roman, Byzantine and Arab”; Parker reports Iron Age but the

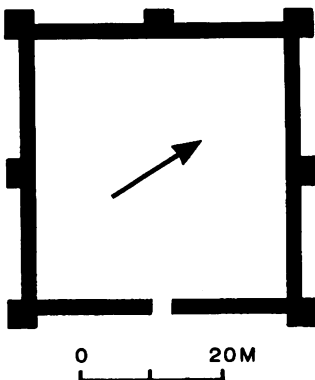


Fig. 12.12: Kh. ez-Zona; plan of the fort as recorded by Glueck (1934: 90, pl. 4) but giving dimensions as corrected by Parker and omitting an interval tower on the south-east.

bulk was late 3rd to mid-7th century The latter suggested a date of c. AD 300 on the basis of form but Gregory thinks it may be Iron Age in origin.

Principal Reading: Glueck 1934: 27, 30; Parker 1986: 45–46; Gregory 325–326

(M. QASR DUBAIYAH)
**JADIS 2411.003; QUSAYR DUBAI'AH;
MAP 3253.III; UTM ZONE 37;
UTME 2201; UTMN 34997; PGE 249.700;
PGN 111.900
AND NO JADIS; MAP 3253.3; UTM ZONE
37; UTME 2167; UTMN 35022;
PGE 246.200; PGN 114.300 (BUT NOT
2411.002, KHIRBET EL-SIKER WHICH
HAS THE SAME GRID REF. IN JADIS
BUT IS ACTUALLY APPROXIMATELY
10 KM TO THE NORTH WEST.)**

The 20th century police fort at Qal'at ed-Dab'ah lies just south of two large rectangular reservoirs that suggest an earlier presence here. Recent examination of the hajj fort has concluded that the traces of earlier walls and the unusual plan, reflect its origin as a reconstruction of a Roman fort (Petersen 1989: 101–103, 105).

Five kilometres to the north-west,³ however, Glueck reported Quseir Dubai'ah:

“It is an extensive ruined site, consisting of a large number of ruined buildings and foundation walls, in addition to a number of low mounds and cave cisterns. On top of a small knoll are the ruins of a small tower, the lower courses of which are preserved. Quantities of all kinds of Nabataean sherds were found” (1934: 30).

The aerial photos show traces of ruins and also the faint outline of a rectilinear structure. More interesting, however, is the dark streak running in from the north. No track appears on the 1:50,000 map in this area and on the aerial photographs of the area south of Umm el-

Jimal (ch. 9) an almost identical feature has been proven by milestones to be the trace of a Roman road. In this case the feature can be traced northwards for several kilometres in a straight line then picked up again on the same alignment just south of the great medieval Islamic palace of Qasr el-Meshatta.

7. AVI-YONAH (1976: 32; citing Abel II, 189) identifies here what he calls Qasr Supa'ia (sic) as Asabaia of the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. 37.32):

Cohors prima Thrac[um], Asabaia

The Cohors II Thracum, at Asabaia

Principal Reading: Glueck 1934: 30; Petersen 1989: 100–106; (JADIS 2411.003 Qusayr Dubai'ah (p. 2.158) assumes it is the police fort site of Qal'at ed-Dab'ah)

N. MADABA

**JADIS 2212.002; MADABA; Map 3153.II;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7648; UTMN 35124;
PGE 225.300; PGN 124.800**

Madaba was one of the major towns of the Nabataean kingdom and, like Rabba and Charac would have been an immediate target for the Roman occupiers in AD 106. We know of Nabataean forces there before 106 and there is some evidence for a Roman presence (IGLS 21: 117)

Γ(άϊον) Δομίτιον / Ἀλεξάνδρον /
(ἐκατόνταρχον) λεγιῶνος γ' Κυρηναϊῆς
* / ἠπόλις / εἰνολίας καί / ἀγνείας / χάρον

The city honours Gaius Domitius Alexandros, centurion of the Legion III Cyrenaica for his benevolence and uprightness.

Date: 2nd or 3rd century AD

For the name in use locally see ch. 11 under Philadelphia.

³ Glueck mistakenly places it north-east rather than north-west.



fig. 7.3C





Fig. 7.10C

Fig. 3.4C





Fig. 8.14C

Fig. 9.10C





Fig. 10.10C

Fig. 11.6C





Fig. 12.4C

Fig. 12.11C





Fig. 13.7C

Fig. 149C







Fig. 15.11C



Fig. 15.13C



Fig. 1.30





Fig. 19.6C



Fig. 20.10C



13. THE DHIBAN PLATEAU

South of Zafaran the land begins to rise into the hills around the striking Iron Age site of Rumeil with its superb views north over the Wadi ath-Themad. Within a few kilometres the road re-emerges from the hills onto a new plateau. In fact this plateau is really an extension of the Belqa which stretches south from around Amman. However, the first part, the Madaba Plain, is divided from the second by first the hills and valleys around Rumeil then, in the west, the major valley of the Wadi Wala and its tributaries. The W. Wala runs south-west to join the W. Mujib just before it plunges down to the Dead Sea. The outcome is the Dhiban Plateau, an area of high ground, small but fertile and intensively settled. Its bounds are the W. Rumeil in the north, the W. Wala in the west, W. Mujib in the south and shading off into the steppe and desert to the east (Fig. 13.1).

A. DIBON (DHIBAN)

JADIS 2210.002; DHIBAN; MAP 3153.II;

UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7635;

UTMN 34888; PGE 224.500; PGN 101.200

Modern Dhiban lies in the far west of the plateau on the King's Highway/Via Nova Traiana c. 24 km south of Madaba and just 3 km before the highway plunges down into the Wadi Mujib. It had been the massively fortified capital of the Moabite kingdom in the 9th century BC at which time the famous

stele of King Mesha was set up there on the tell site just north-west of the modern village. Later it was abandoned for about 550 years before re-emerging as a Nabataean settlement inside a rebuilt enclosure wall on the tell. In Roman times it was no more than a large village. It would make sense for this to have been a garrison place or at least a manned road station overlooking what had become by then the Via Nova Traiana running past on the east. There is scant physical evidence of any kind for such a post but two inscriptions offer rare written evidence from this region south of the Decapolis.

(a) The recent excavators report a tower uncovered illegally on the western knoll which they thought may be Roman.

(b) In addition to a handful of Greek epitaphs there are two building inscriptions:

1. PART OF A GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION (IGLS 21: 178):

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς τῶν Κυριῶν ἡμῶν Αὐτοκρατόρων Λουκίου Σεπτιμίου / Σεουήρου καὶ Ἀντωνεῖνου Σεβαστῶν καὶ Γέτα] / Καίσαρος νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ
approx. 20 letters]

For the Safety and Everlasting Life of Our Lords the Emperors Lucius Septimius Severus

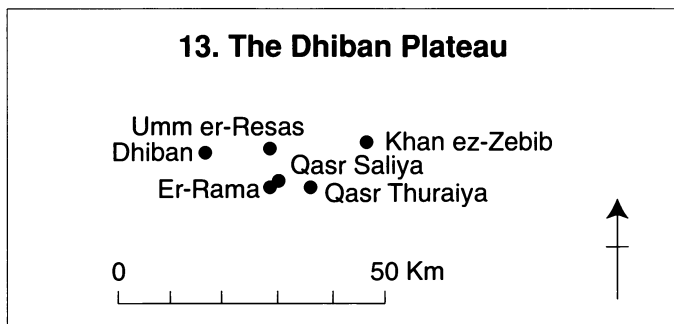


Fig. 13.1: The Dhiban Plateau.

and Antoninus Augustus and Geta Caesar his sons ...

Date: AD 201–209

This may have recorded a military structure (Gatier 1986: 197).

2. GREEK BUILDING INSCRIPTION (IGLS 21: 179):

Ἐκ κελεύσεως/Κλαυδίου Καπιτωλίνου/προσβευτοῦ) Σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀντιστρατήγου/ὁ π[ύργος] ἐγέν(ετο) φνζ´.

By order of Claudius Capitolinus, Proprietarian Governor of the Augustus, the tower was constructed in (the Year) 557.

Date: AD 245–6 (according to the Seleucid era).

The site and vicinity of Dhiban would repay closer investigation for further traces of the Roman military something that may emerge from the current Dhiban Plateau Survey.

Principal Reading: AJ I: 206–210; OEANE 2: 156–158

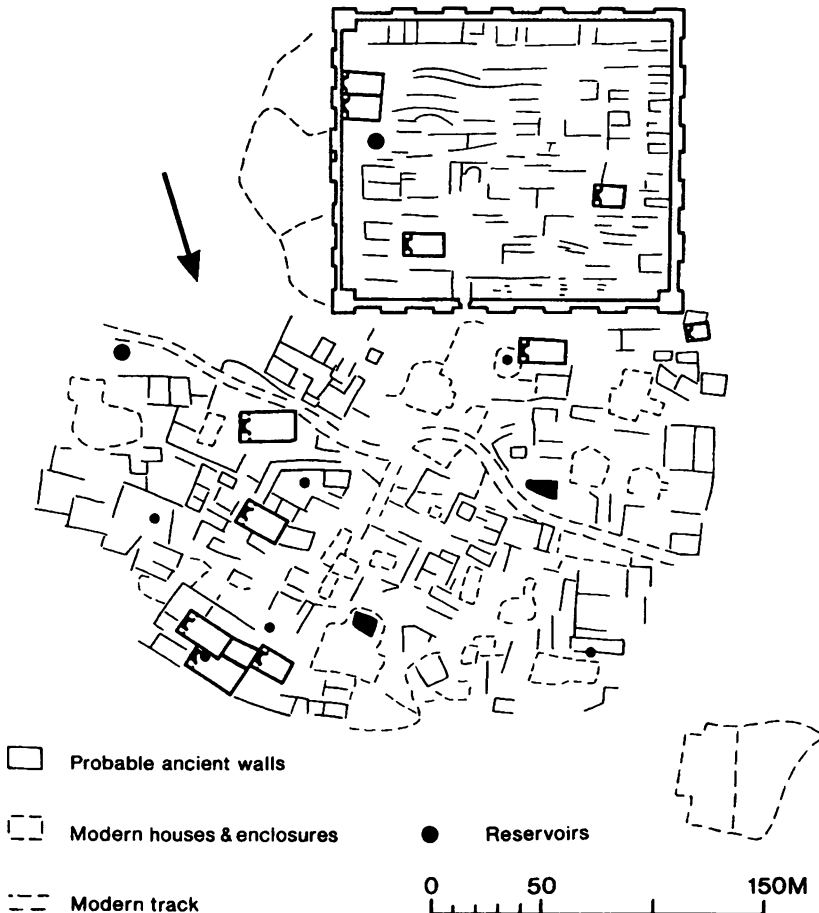


Fig. 13.2: Mefaat (Umm er-Resas): plan of the fort and extra-mural settlement.

**B. MEFAAT (UMM ER-RESAS)
JADIS 2310.001; UMM ER-RASAS; Map
3153.II; UTM Zone 36; UTME 7774; UTMN
34888; PGE 237.400; PGN 101.000**

A century of speculation on the location of the ancient place Mefaat (*vel sim*) has now been resolved. The name appears beside vignettes of cities in church mosaics at the extensive ruins of Umm er-Resas 13 km east of Dhiban. The inclusion of Mefaat has been interpreted as evidence of the identification with Umm er-Resas (but cf. Elitzur 1989; Younker and Daviau 1993).

The ruins lie on good arable land on the northern edge of the Dhiban Plain. They consist of a rectangular walled settlement, an even larger extra-mural settlement on its north, a series of cisterns, and isolated ruins stretching beyond again towards a tall (15 m) square tower 2 km away (Fig. 13.2).

The fort is large — 158 x 139 m, 2.2 ha. The walls are 2 m thick and made of huge blocks, eighteen rectangular buttresses mark the walls projecting 1–1.25 m — as on the town wall at Qanawat in Syria (Gregory 328) and rectangular towers straddle the corners. The

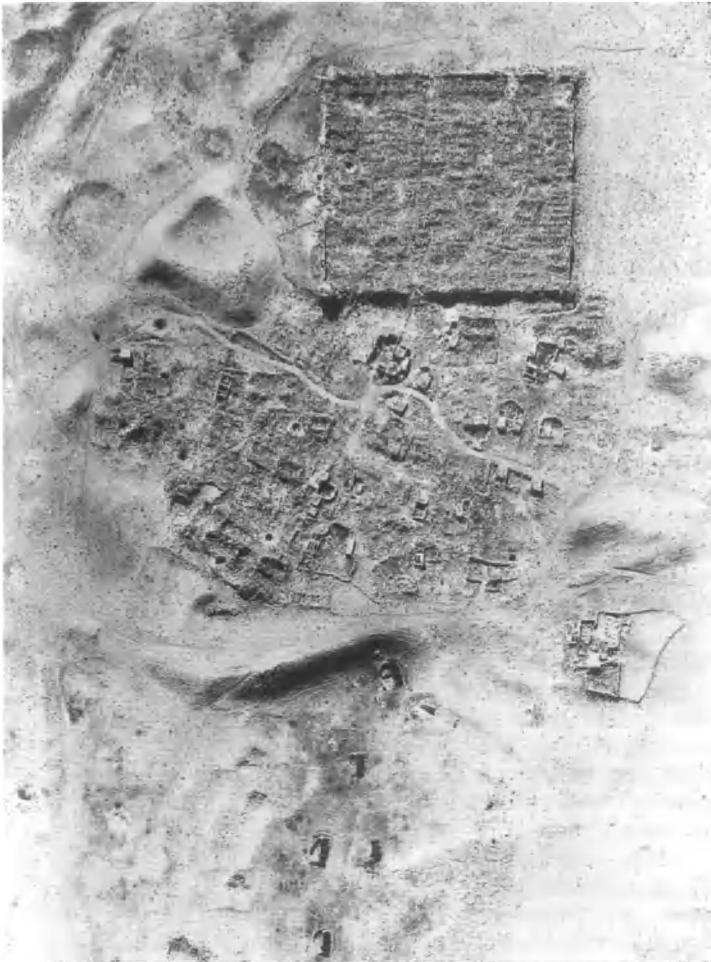


Fig. 13.3: Mefaat (Umm er-Resas): vertical aerial view of 1978 (IGN-78-JOR, no. 1731). North is at the bottom.

principle gate is in the middle of the east side but in a second phase two smaller gates were added off-centre on the north and south sides. Excavation has revealed four later churches inside the walls (as well as a dozen in the extra-mural settlement) and it is clear the original layout of the fort interior has been adapted for later use. Nevertheless, the alignments are largely parallel to the long sides and suggest an original ordered arrangement including ranges of rooms built against the walls (Fig. 13.3). Excavation points to original construction in the late-3rd/ early 4th century.

The fort is very large by Arabian standards — more than twice the size of those at Umm el-Jimal and Da’ajaniya, for example. But it was not the beginning of military activity at this place:

3. A NABATAEAN INSCRIPTION was discovered here a century ago (CIS 195):

This is the tomb of the Strategos Abd-Maliku, son of Obaishu, which his brother the Strategos la’murū made in Year 1 of King Malichus, King of the Nabataeans.

Date: AD 41 (= Year 1 of Malichus II)

There is good reason to believe this title went beyond civil authority to encompass military activity (Graf 1994: 275–279).

4. IN THE 4TH CENTURY the church historian Eusebius included in his *Onomasticon* (128.21–3; 129.20f):

Μηφαάθ ... ἐστὶν ἐπέκεινα τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ἔνθα φρουρίον ἐγκάθηται στρατιωτῶν παρὰ τὴν ἔρημον.

Mephaat/ Mefaath ... est trans Iordanem in qua praesidium Romanorum militum sedet propter vicinam solitudinem.

Mefaath ... the other side of the Jordan in which there is situated a garrison of (Roman) soldiers beside a neighbouring desert place.

Date: c. AD 293

5. THERE IS AN ENTRY in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or. 37.8 and 19):

Equites promoti indigenae, Mefa.

Advanced Native Cavalry, at Mefa.

Date: c. AD 400

6. IN *DIALOGUE* 20, 38–40, Palladius, writing between AD 405–407 about the places

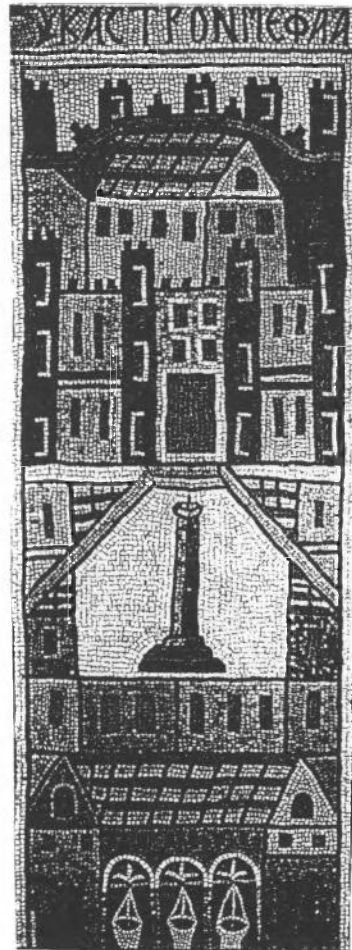


Fig. 13.4: Mefaath (Umm er-Resas): *Kastron Mefaath* from a mosaic at Umm er-Resas.



Fig. 13.5: Khan ez-Zebib: Aerial view looking south-west (APA 98/14.7). Beyond the corner of the Islamic caravanserai are other buried remains including — in the middle — what has been identified as an earlier Roman caravanserai or, now, another Umayyad building.

to which four exiled bishops were sent on the frontiers of the empire, tells us:

Εὐλύσιονδέ Βόστρας τῆς Ἀράβων ἐσώτερον ὁδὸν τριῶν ἡμερῶν ὁμοίως εἰς φρούριον Μ ἤφᾶς καλούμενον, πλησίον τῶν Σαρακηνῶν.

Eulysios was three days journey from Bostra, in Arabia, likewise in a fort called Mephas, near the Saracens (adapted from Gatier 1999: 216).

Date: AD 405–7

7. THREE MOSAIC INSCRIPTIONS depict schematic images of places in the region and include the place name (Fig. 13.4):

Καστρον Μεφαα

Date: AD 574 or 589 (Church of the Lions); 718 (as re-dated by Schick 1995) and 756 (Church of St. Stephen).

8. ‘MAYFA’A’ is mentioned in biographies of the Prophet as a village whose Christian inhabitants killed Zayd ibn ‘Amr Nuqil an early convert to Islam.

Principal Reading: PA II: 63–72; Piccirillo 1986; Elitzur 1989; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 189–193; ABD s.v. Mephaath; Gregory 327–329; Younker and Daviau 1993; Piccirillo 1993: 205–243; Bujard 1995; Schick 1995; OEANE 5: 279–281 (s.v. Umm er-Resas); Gatier 1999: 216–218. Cf. Lewin forthc. a.

(C. KHAN EZ-ZEBIB)

JADIS 2510.001; KHIRBET KHAN EZ-ZABIB; MAP 3253.III; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 22467; UTMN 349033; PGE 254.590; PGN 102.710

The caravanserai at this remote spot c. 18 km south-east of Kh. ez-Zona and c. 5 east of the Desert Highway, is well-known and plainly Islamic. Tristram and other 19th century observers noted the presence of earlier ‘Greek’

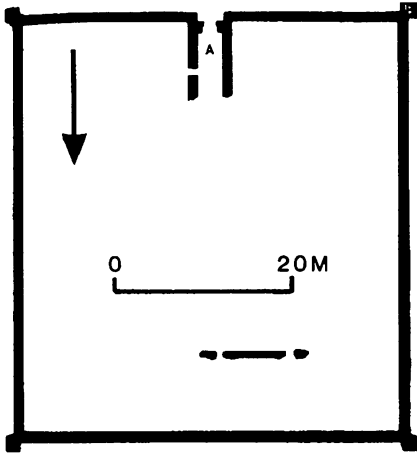


Fig. 13.6: Khan ez-Zebib: plan of the caravanserai/fort (after PA II: 81–82, fig. 662).

material and of other structures that seemed to be the remains of a small Late Roman town. Although now damaged, just beyond the north-east corner of the Islamic caravanserai may still be seen the remains of a large rectangular structure (Fig. 13.5). Brünnow and von Domaszewski identified it as a Roman caravanserai and drew a sketch-plan (Fig. 13.6). Its overall dimensions, c. 44 x 49 m, are similar to those of Kh. ez-Zona (above). The walls, however, are much slimmer (c. 1 m) and the square projecting towers are only on the corners and very small (c. 1.75 m and projecting about 1 m). Unusual is the long vestibule running back from the narrow gate on the south side. Surface sherds led Parker to support a Roman date but he notes that its function — fort or caravanserai — is unknown. Further doubt has now been cast by Bujard arguing that, as at Umm el-Walid, all of these structures are Umayyad.

Principal Reading: PA II: 76–82; Parker 1986: 45–48; Bujard 1997

(D. QASR SALIYA AND ER-RAMA)
**JADIS 2309.002; QASR SALIYEH; MAP
 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7773;
 UTMN 34838; PGE 237.500; PGN 095.900**

**JADIS 2309.003; ER-RAMA; MAP 3152.I;
 UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7760;
 UTMN 34836; PGE 235.900; PGN 095.800
 AND JADIS 2309.004; ER-RAMA; MAP
 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7760;
 UTMN 34822; PGE 235.900; PGN 094.500**

These two large towers lie respectively 5 and 8 km south of Mefaat/Umm er-Resas. Saliya is c. 25 x 19.2 m and set on a hill amongst extensive ruins. Er-Rama is c. 20 m square. Pottery finds suggest an Iron Age or possibly Nabataean origin for the former and probably Nabataean for the latter. Some Roman pottery at each may indicate later military usage but that is speculative and assumes a keen Roman military interest in the approaches to the Wadi Mujib.

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 48–50; AJA 1998: 574–575

**E. QASR THURAIYA
 JADIS 2409.002; QASR ETH-THURAIYA;
 MAP 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36;
 UTME 7842; UTMN 34803; PGE 244.100;
 PGN 092.400**

This small but impressive fort lies on a bare hill amongst a network of wadis draining down into a major tributary of the W. Mujib to the south (Fig. 13.7C). The square enclosure is 37.5 x 34.5 m with walls 1.7 m (north and

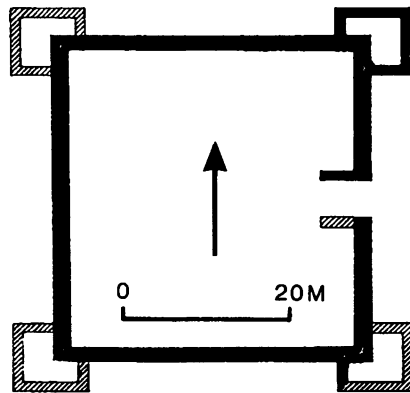


Fig. 13.8: Qasr Thuraiya: plan of the fort (after PA II: 63. Fig. 644).

south) and 2 m (east and west) thick (Fig. 13.8). At the corners are rectangular projecting towers. Sizes vary — the only fully measurable example (on the north-east) is 8.2 x 7.4 m. The entrance on the east has parallel walls running back into the interior. There are some traces still of rooms built against the circuit wall. To the north are a number of cistern openings.

The closest parallel for this fort is that at Quweira in the Hisma (ch. 19).

An apparent Roman road from Umm er-Resas to Thuraiya then south across the Wadi Su'eida towards Qasr el-Al (ch. 14) has now been reported (references and photographs in Lewin forthc. a)

Date: The small number of surface sherds collected by Parker were overwhelmingly Roman (late 3rd to mid-5th century).

Principal Reading: PA II: 62–63; Parker 1986: 50–51; Gregory 336–337

14. THE WADI MUJIB

The immense slash of the Wadi Mujib cuts Northern Moab off from the Central and Southern parts of the Moabite Plateau.¹ Although the King's Highway/Via Nova Traiana crosses the valley, even today traffic across the Mujib is slight and contrasts sharply with the busy traffic up to the rim on either side. In short, the Mujib was probably always both a great barrier to north-south movement and an obvious political barrier (Fig. 14.1).

The Mujib is formed by the convergence of two large wadis themselves fed by scores of smaller tributaries. In broad terms the main courses are the W. as-Su'eida and the W. Mujib itself. The former starts some 45 km east of the Dead Sea and divides Qasr Thuraiya on its north from Qasr el-AI on the south. The W. Mujib commences to the south-east just north of the fortress of Lejjun and runs north-north-west for c. 25 km to join the W. as-Su'eida. The King's Highway/Via Nova Traiana crosses some 2 km west of the juncture and the combined course runs c. 22 km further before reaching the Dead Sea. The result is that approaching from the north, the plateau continues to the rim of a broadly east-west barrier formed by the W. as-Su'eida — W. Mujib. On the south, however, the approach is far more difficult to the east of the Via Nova Traiana because of the direction and character of the Mujib — hence the Biblical use of the expression 'valleys of the Arnon'. One effect

is to create a triangle between the W. as-Su'eida and the W. Mujib within which lie several military sites including Qasr Bshir. The second is the need to police the trough of the Mujib itself.

A. THE CHARACTER OF THE MUJIB AREA

The ancients too were struck by the great size of the Mujib (cf. Fig. 14.5) and report more than usual about its military character and the steps taken to secure it.

1. THE BIBLE mentions the Arnon on 25 occasions (ABD s.v. Arnon). The tradition continued with Christian writers most notably the church historian Eusebius (*Onom.* 10.15–24; 11.13–23):

δείκνυται δὲ εἰς ἔτι νῦν τόπος φαραγγώδης σφόδρα χαλεπὸς ὁ Ἀρνονᾶς ὀνομαζόμενος, παρατείνων ἐπὶ τὰ βόρεια τῆς Ἀρεοπόλεως, ἐν ᾧ καὶ φρούρια πανταχόθεν φυλάττει στρατιωτικὰ διὰ τὸ φοβερὸν τοῦ τόπου.

ostendunt regionis illius accolae locum vallis in praeurpta demersae satis horribilem et periculosum, qui a plerisque usque nunc Arnonas appellatur extenditurque ad septentrionem Areopoleos. in quo et militum ex omni parte praesidia distributa plenum sanguinis et formidinis testantur ingressum.

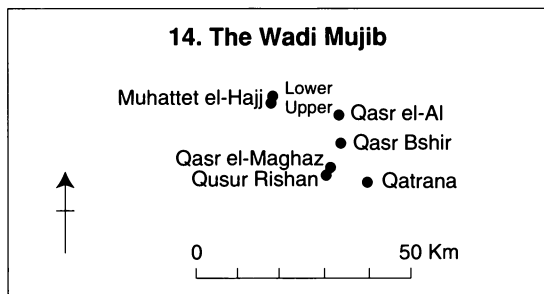


Fig. 14.1: Map of the Wadi Mujib.

¹ For a superb graphic illustration of the scale, form and potential impact of this feature see the satellite photograph included in a pocket in Miller 1991.

To this day is shown a very treacherous place with ravines, called the Arnonas, extending north of Areopolis, in which garrisons of soldiers keep guard everywhere due to the terrifying nature of the place.

Date: c. AD 293

What is meant by *phrouria/praesidia* is unclear — towers, forts or both? Equally, Eusebius' directions cannot be treated as more than very generalised — north or east of Areopolis (= Er-Rabba, below). What is clear is that the tangle of wadis and the rugged and relatively inaccessible depths of the W. Mujib

itself were renowned for their frightening character. As Graf observes, however, we are probably concerned here not with some threat from the nomads but from bandits who commonly frequented such places throughout the Roman Empire.² In short, the garrisons here are police posts. That would suit the two small forts on the Via Nova but is harder to see as the explanation for the fortifications further east. One suggestion for the latter is that they policed a route skirting the eastern ends of the Mujib complex which traffic had to follow in winter when the stream in the Mujib made crossing difficult or even carried away the bridge (Koucky 1987: 74–75).



Fig. 14.2: Aerial view in 1937 of the supposed Via Nova Traiana rising from the stream of the Arnon up the southern slope to the plateau beyond the southern rim.

² Isaac 1992: 92 n. 180 citing *Pratum Spirituale*, PG 87.3.2851–3112, ch. 155 for a robber chief operating around the Arnon during the reign of the Emperor Maurice (AD 582–602).



Fig. 14.3: Muhattet el-Hajj (Lower): aerial view looking east (APA 98/35.15).

2. THERE ARE TWO RELEVANT ENTRIES in the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. 37.34; 35)

(a) Cohors tertia felix Arabum, in ripa Uade Afaris fluuii in castris Arnonensibus

Cohors III Felix Arabum, on the bank of the river in the Wadi Afar at Castra Arnonensibus

(b) Cohors tertia Alp[i]norum, apud Arnona

Cohors III Alpinorum, near Arnona

Date: c. AD 400

We do not know where the W. Afar was. It might be an alternative name for the Mujib or for a tributary. That it merited two regiments

does, however, underscore the significance of this area.

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 48; Graf 1989: 347 (= Graf 1997: X. 347)

B. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

Traffic passing north–south in this area could use the Via Nova across the W. Mujib. The direct distance across is some 5 km but, with depths of several hundred metres it was a long route zig-zagging down and up again and very strenuous. It was also potentially dangerous because remote from most settlement on the plateau on either side. For many years, a route seemingly marked by milestones with its course visible climbing up the steep sides of the wadi (Fig. 14.2), has been identified as

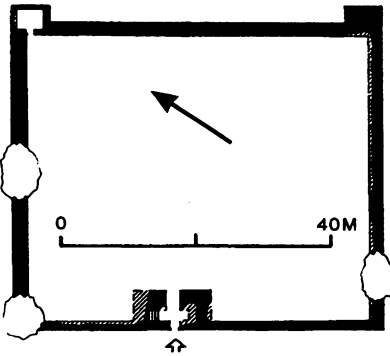


Fig. 14.4: Muhattet el-Hajj (Lower): plan of the fort (from Gregory 3: F17).

the Roman road. Chaim Ben David has suggested the real Roman road may be further east.

The milestones record construction in AD 111 and repairs/reconstruction in 162, 193/4, 213/9, 288, and 361/3 (Thomsen 1917: 49, nos 125–127).

Graf's survey found no trace of another Roman road further east and suggested the milestone found east of Lejjun was on a road running east from the latter rather than a putative north–south 'Via Militaris' in this region, skirting east of the Mujib tributaries (Graf 1997a: 277).

Principal Reading: Kennedy and Riley 1990: 86; Graf 1997a: 276–277

C. MUHATTET EL-HAJJ (LOWER)
NO JADIS; MAP 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7665; UTMN 34828;
PGE 226.700; PGN 095.200

This is the first of two small forts lying beside the Via Nova Traiana on its crossing of the W. Mujib (Fig. 14.3). After the road has crossed by a bridge whose remains are visible, it ascended the lower slopes and passed this small fort. It consists of a rectangular enclosure c. 56 x 46 m, 0.25 ha, with two rectangular towers projecting on the eastern side (Fig. 14.4). The north, east and south walls are c. 2.3 m thick but that on the west is only c. 1.4 m. On the same side is a gate with internal

towers on either side, one with stairs and a barrel vault surviving at the beginning of this century. There are traces of another wall beyond the west side that may explain the absence of corner towers and narrower wall — i.e. an original thicker west wall beyond the current one or an annexe. There are no certain traces of internal rooms though these can be seen against the 'earlier' west wall. There is a reservoir c. 23 m square c. 150 m south-east and uphill of the fort and at least one cistern nearer the fort.

Parker's small pottery sample was largely Roman with none earlier than Nabataean.

Principal Reading: PA I: 39–41; Parker 1986: 55–56; Gregory 330–332

D. MUHATTET EL-HAJJ
(UPPER [= KARAKUN])
JADIS 2209.004; MUHATTET EL HAJ;
MAP 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7658; UTMN 34812; PGE 225.700;
PGN 093.700

This small fort lies on the southern rim of the W. Mujib where the Via Nova ends its ascent from the wadi. It has spectacular views north over the wadi (Fig. 14.5) as well as commanding the southern approach to the rim from the plateau around Er-Rabba.

Mounds of rubble still mark the clear outline of a structure c. 50 m square with walls c. 2.2 m thick and a gate in the middle of the south side (Fig. 14.6). Towers straddle the wall on either side of the gate and there are square towers at the corners and the mid-point of each of the other walls. Each is about 4.7 m square. Brünnow and von Domaszewski noted a wall walkway at c. 3 m and "cantilevered staircases". There are some traces of internal structures against the walls and of cisterns inside to the north-east.

Surface sherds collected by Glueck, Parker and now Miller suggest a Nabataean occupation of the site continuing through the Roman centuries. Commentators see it as 'Late Roman', i.e. Diocletianic or 4th century.



Fig. 14.5 Muhattet el-Hajj (Upper): aerial view looking north-west with the Wadi Mujib below (APA 98/35.18).

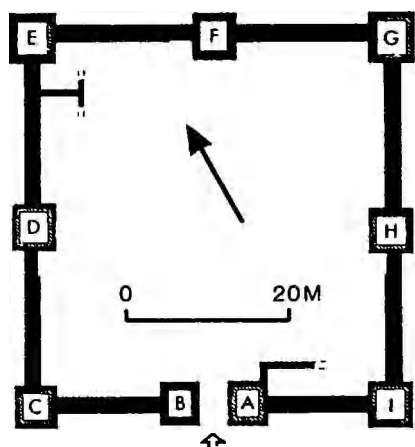


Fig. 14.6: Muhattet el-Hajj (Upper): plan of the fort (from Gregory F18).

Principal Reading: PA I: 42–45; Parker 1986: 57–58; Gregory 333–335

E. QASR EL-AL

**JADIS 2408.016; QASR EL-AL; MAP 3152.I;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7824 (NOT 7800);
UTMN 34768 (NOT 34723); PGE 242.300;
PGN 088.800**

The ruins at Qasr el-Al are c. 4 km south-west of Qasr Thuraiyah and c. 17 km east-south-east of the Muhattet el-Hajj sites. They are visible on their high peak from a great distance and offer commanding views all around over most of the sites discussed here (Fig. 14.7).

The site consists of a rectilinear enclosure with walls c. 1.5 m thick with various structures in,

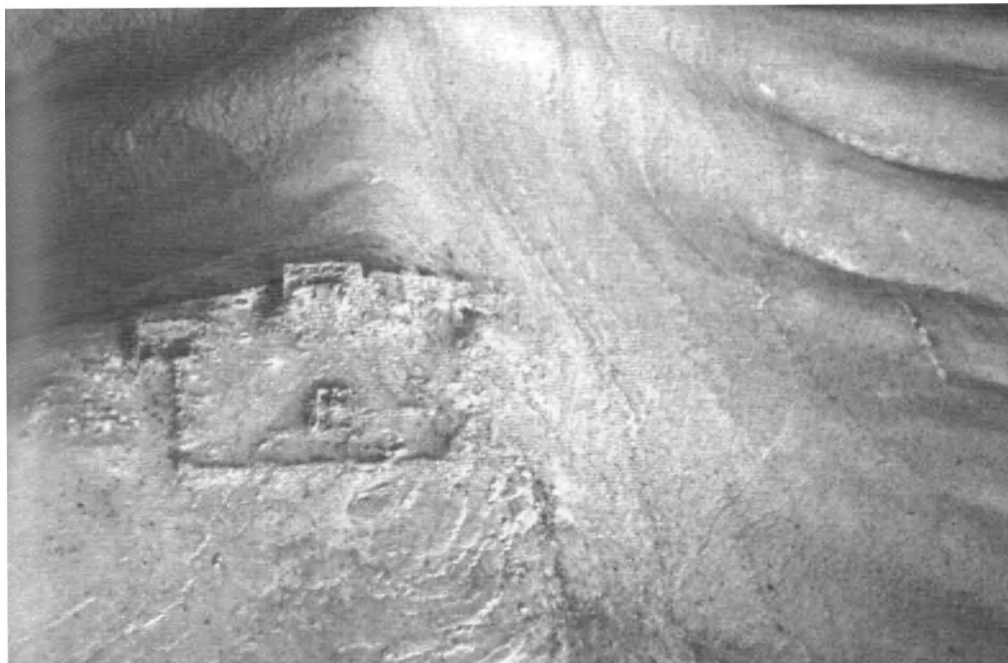


Fig. 14.7: *Qasr el-Al*: aerial view looking east (APA 98/14.32).

on or beside it. On the west side are the walls of a huge rectangular tower, 20 x 16 m, of coursed masonry, 1.2 m thick and still standing to over 6 m in places. The internal plan is unusual: a series of ten small square rooms surrounding a long narrow central courtyard (Fig. 14.8). There are several cisterns to the east.

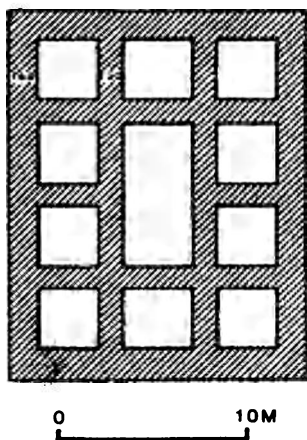


Fig. 14.8: *Qasr el-Al*: plan of the tower (after PA II: 61, fig. 640).

Pottery suggests the earliest occupation of some part of the site belongs to the Iron Age but with later Nabataean and Roman occupation. A Nabataean graffito is scratched on a stone of the tower (Clark 1987b: 753). The commanding position gives more grounds than usual for supposing the Roman phase may have been military.

The region south of Qasr el-Al abounds in towers, some — such as Qasr Abu el-Karaq 3 km north-west of Qasr Bshir — still standing to several metres in height. The only dating indication is provided by surface sherding. In many instances there is has an abundance of pottery from the Iron Age or Nabataean/Early Roman periods and little from Roman periods (Koucky 1987: App. A). In such circumstances it is unwise to treat the structure as Roman military, temporary squatter occupation being the more likely explanation at a structure whose military function belonged to an earlier period.

Principal Reading: PA II: 61; Glueck 1939: 101–103; 1970: 168; Parker 1986: 50–52; Koucky 1987

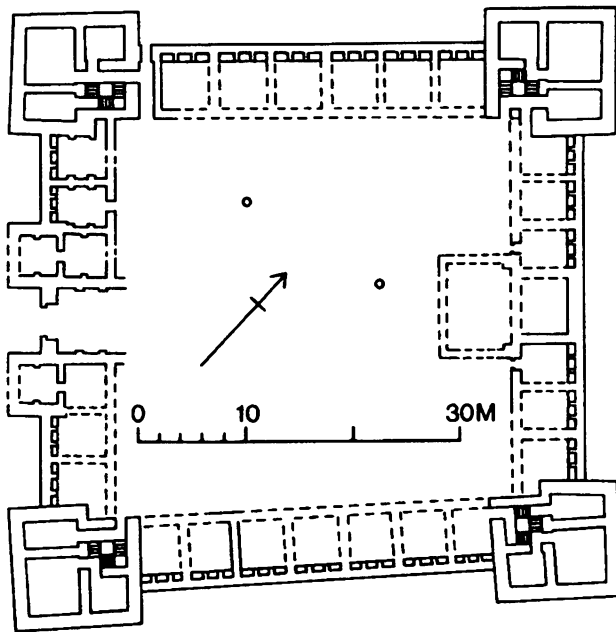


Fig. 14.10: *Qasr Bshir: plan of the fort (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: 177, Fig. 123).*

F. QASR BSHIR

JADIS 2408.007; QAR BSHIR; MAP 3152.I;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7830;
UTMN 34708; PGE 242.900; PGN083.100

This is probably the best-preserved Roman fort in Jordan; indeed, in the Middle East (Fig. 14.9C). Its design is novel and important in the discussion of Roman military architecture of the region. It is important, too, because it has been the object of recent excavation and has a building inscription, a great rarity outside the basalt region.

The site lies on a barren rolling plateau c. 7 km south of Qasr el-AI and c. 15 km north-east of Lejjun. It consists of a fort and a large reservoir c. 500 m to the south-west. From its slight eminence and tall walls it has commanding views all around. It has been suggested this was the route of a road in Roman times, skirting the eastern limits of the Mujib and its tributaries from Umm er-Resas round to Lejjun. There is an uninscribed milestone known from just south-east of Lejjun but no other trace of a road.

The trapezoidal curtain walls enclose an area of c. 57 x 54 m, 0.31 ha (Fig. 14.10). They are

made of coursed masonry, 1.5 m thick and still stand several metres high despite considerable damage since the descriptions and photographs of 19th century travellers. Some very large blocks were used in the base of towers, there is fine ashlar around the gateway and some bossed blocks have been interpreted by Gregory as reuse of material from an earlier structure on the site.

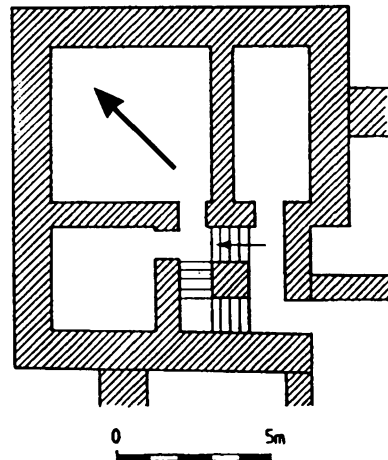


Fig. 14.11: *Qasr Bshir: detail of the north tower (from Gregory 3: F20.1b).*



Fig. 14.12: Qasr Bshir: the gate with Latin inscription in 1984.

Particularly striking, however, are the four massive corner towers (Fig. 14.11). Each is about 12 m square with 'square spiral' staircase and three rooms, and rise for three storeys to a roof height of about 10.3 m. They project 3 m beyond the walls. There are slit windows at upper levels which Gregory thinks were for light and ventilation rather than weapons. Doors gave access to the walkway and rooftops of surrounding rooms at a height of about 6 m.

The main entrance is in the middle of the south-east wall and is flanked by two square towers partly projecting back inside the fort. The lintel of the arched doorway bears an inscription (Fig. 14.12).

3. LATIN BUILDING INSCRIPTION (CIL III: 14,149):

Optimis maximisque principibus nostris Gaio Aurelio Valerio Diocletiano Pio Felici Invicto Augusto et Marco Aurelio Valerio Maximiano Pio Felici Invicto Augusto et Flavio Valerio Constantio et Galerio Valerio Maximiano nobilissimus Caesaribus. Castra Praetorii Moberni a fundamentis, Aurelius Asclepiades praeses provinciae Arabiae perfici curavit.

To our Best and Greatest Rulers, Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletian, Pious, Fortunate, Unconquered Augustus, and Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus, Pious, Fortunate, Unconquered Augustus, and

Flavius Valerius Constantius and Galerius Valerius Maximianus, Most Noble Caesars. Aurelius Asclepiades, Praeses of the Province of Arabia commanded that Castra Praetorium Mobene (?) be constructed from the foundations.

Date: AD 293–305

Beyond the gate is a two-storeyed room through which the passage reaches the courtyard.

The courtyard is surrounded by rooms built against the walls and each about 5 m square. Many have now collapsed but their regular layout is clear and all seem to have mangers against the rear wall.³ Roofs of stone slabs were supported on ledges and there were two storeys.

Notable is the presence of a rectangular room projecting into the courtyard from the north-east wall of the fort opposite the gate. It is backed by a room against the wall that has no mangers and is reminiscent of the *Principia* structure at Qasr el-Azraq.

There is a small postern just north of the west tower and two cisterns lie under the courtyard. A further three cisterns have been noted outside the fort and there is a large square

reservoir (c. 64 x 47.5 m) c. 500 m away. On the north-west side of the fort are two buildings, one thought to be developed around an earlier Nabataean tower. A tower lies about 350 m to the north-east and is also thought to be Nabataean.

Test excavation has suggested that the site began as a Nabataean tower, the Roman fort was then built in the late 3rd/early 4th century, occupied throughout the 4th and perhaps into the 5th (including a stratified coin of 347–348). Umayyad pottery indicates reoccupation and Gregory has argued that this involved actual reconstruction of at least the gateway: the arch arrangement is awkward and she noted the remains above the door of a machicolation, a device that only begins to appear in the 6th–8th centuries.

The ‘fort’ is unusual in other respects, too. First, the explicit name it bears does not appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Second, despite the length of the inscription, no regimental commander is named. Third, Isaac (1992: 172–175) has developed the explanation of Vincent of a century ago that this is not a fort in the normal sense but a *Praetorium*, the residence for a governor on tour. Fourth, the striking feature of the site is the massive towers, almost as if these were the primary element then linked by a curtain wall. It may be that we should interpret this site not as a fort for a discrete unit of the Roman army but as a governor’s residence for interaction with the inhabitants of this region that also doubled as a fortified police post on a road. The existence of such a road is, however, doubtful (Graf 1997a: 276–277). Usage in the north of Jordan has prepared us for a different terminology for military structures: the contemporary inscription at Deir el-Kahf calls that fort a *Castrum* and later the term *Castellum* appears at sites in the Hauran. *Castra* is unexpected but is in fact found in the inscription from Qal’at Zerqa (ch. 10), Mefaat (ch. 13) and in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for precisely this area of the Wadi Mujib (above, no. 2).⁴

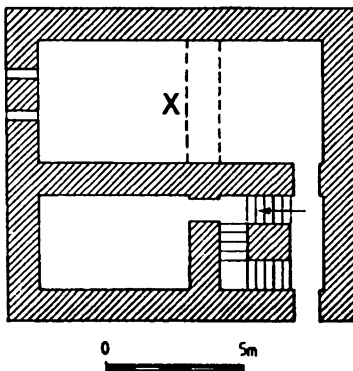


Fig. 14.13: *Qasr el-Maqhaz*: plan (from Gregory 3: F20.1d).

³ That these are found only on the lower floor argues against the suggestion they are cupboards.

⁴ I am grateful to Tom Parker for this observation.

Qasr Bshir may rather have been simply the point of contact of Roman government with the nomads of the region who left their graffiti on the walls of towers hereabouts (including one on a wall at Bshir) and with the populations of the steppe lands whose settlements are being recorded in the vicinity (Koucky 1987; Clark 1987b). That leaves the question of why this location was selected and where else such contact might take place?

Principal Reading: PA II: 49–60; Parker 1987: 457–495; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 176–178; Clark 1987a: 457–495; Isaac 1992: 172–175; Gregory 338–344

G. QASR EL-MAQHAZ

JADIS 2307.025; QASR EL-MAQAZ; MAP 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7796; UTMN 34645; PGE 239.200; PGN 076.700

The route from Qasr Bshir south-west to Lejjun passes by a scatter of towers on the hills. Two stand out. Brünnow and von Domaszewski (PA II: 47–48) singled out Qasr el-Maqhaz because its scale and character was very similar to the remarkable corner towers of Qasr Bshir (Fig. 14.13). It is 12.7 x 11.7 m and, like Bshir, has a square spiral staircase supporting the suggestion that the towers of Bshir were conceived of as four free-standing towers linked by a curtain wall.

The design suggests a broadly contemporary date to Qasr Bshir (c. AD 300) and surface pottery ranges from Nabataean/Early Roman through the Roman period.

Principal Reading: PA II: 47–48; Koucky 1987: 80–81, Site 68; Gregory 343

H. QUSUR RISHAN

JADIS 2307.017; QUSUR RISHAN; MAP 3152.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7787; UTMN 34640; PGE 238.307; PGN 076.200

About 2 km further south-west on this track is the largest of a number of sites at the locality

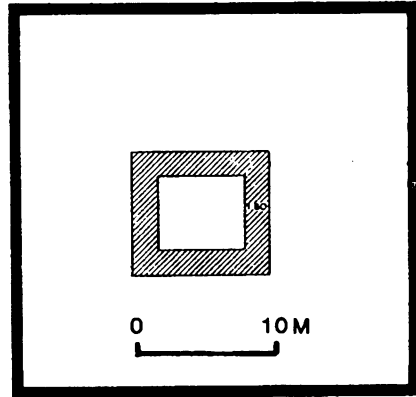


Fig. 14.14: *Qusur Rishan (Qasr el-Bayda): plan (from PA II: 47).*

called Qusur Rishan. Survey has recorded four towers here. Surface sherds suggest a Nabataean origin. At what has been called Qasr el-Bayda is a rectangular enclosure, 30 x 29 m with a narrow wall of c. 0.80 m. In the middle is a tower, c. 10 x 9 m (Fig. 14.14). The thin scatter of surface sherds were mainly Roman but with a few Nabataean/Early Roman.

Principal Reading: PA II: 46–47; Koucky 1987: 80–81, Site 62D

(H. QATRANA)

JADIS 2407.025; EL-QATRANA; MAP 3252.III; UTM ZONE 37; UTME 2181; UTMN 34604; PGE 249.000; PGN 072.700

The hajj fort and large reservoir are well-known at this site. The former was built in 1531 but the reservoir is believed to be Roman (Petersen 1989: 100–101). Surface pottery of the Roman period is quite common (plus a few Nabataean/Early Roman) (Koucky 1987: 96–97, Site 611) and one recent commentator has suggested a Roman fort once lay here (Graf 1997a: 277). Certainly at least one other hajj fort (Qal'at ed-Dab'ah, ch. 13) may have had a Roman predecessor.

Principal Reading: Koucky 1987: 96–97, Site 611; Petersen 1989: *passim*

15. THE KERAK PLATEAU

South of the W. Mujib stretches the heart of ancient Moab. It is conveniently delineated 50 km to the south by the second great wadi of Jordan, the Wadi el-Hesa, also running roughly west to east into the Dead Sea. In between, at roughly the mid-point between these two wadis lies Kerak, on its own smaller wadi (the W. Kerak) but looking out over the Moabite plateau. As the inscription from Qasr Bshir showed, c. AD 300 the Roman authorities still recognised the term 'Moab' for this region.

Here as elsewhere, the plateau is cut off from the Dead Sea by the rugged escarpment rising up on its eastern shore. It is cut, however, by the W. Kerak which allows a relatively easy descent to the Rift Valley and to the Lisan Peninsula. The latter provides a shorter crossing to Palestine. The W. Kerak and the continuation of the highway towards Qatrana divided the area into Central Moab and Southern Moab. The plateau soils are fertile and rainfall allows dry farming for at least 15 km to the east of Kerak; the steppe lands with rainfall of 100 mm or less commence just before the depression around Qatrana.

It is this region east of the Dead Sea scarp that this chapter treats, but excluding the W. Mujib and sites within its fan. For present purposes the term Kerak Plateau is used.

A.RABBATHMOAB/AREOPOLIS
(ER-RABBA)

JADIS 2207.002; RABBAH; MAP 3152.IV;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7608;
UTMN 34630; PGE 220.300; PGN 075.500

South of Muhattet el-Hajj (Upper) the Via Nova Traiana skirts along the western edge of the Kerak Plateau. After about 20 km it passes through Rabbathmoab, the modern village of Er-Rabba. Bowersock (1983: 88) concludes that Rabbathmoab, along with Petra, Characmoab and Bostra, was one of the 4 principal centres of the new Trajanic province. We might have expected a military force in each at least initially. In fact, there are no military remains to be seen at Er-Rabba but two documentary sources prove its military rôle:

1. ONE OF THE GREEK PAPYRI OF THE BABATHA ARCHIVE found in a Dead Sea cave reports that in order to register her property for the census Babatha has to present herself at Rabbathmoab before the governor's representative who is described as praefectus equitum — implying the garrisoning there of an ala (P. Yadin 16):

In the reign of (Hadrian ...) ... in the city of Rabbath-Moab. As a census of Arabia is being conducted by Titus Aninius Sextius

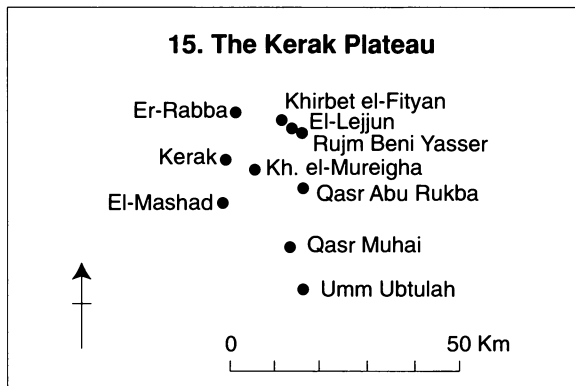


Fig. 15.1: The Kerak Plateau: map of the military sites.

*Florentinus, Imperial Governor, I Babtha (sic)
... register what I possess ...*

*Translation of subscription of the Prefect: I,
Priscus, Prefect of Cavalry (eparchos
hippeon), received [this] ...*

Date: 4 December AD 127

A second papyrus from the same cave but a different archive has now been published confirming the presence of this officer.

2. An entry in the NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (OR. 34.17):

Equites Mauri Illyriciani, Areopoli

Moorish Cavalry from Illyricum, at Areopolis

Date: c. AD 400

Areopolis is the name adopted by Rabbath in the Roman period. In the Severan period it struck its own coinage, some depicting Ares (Spijkerman 1978: 299). The place reappears prominently in the last years of Roman rule when it was the mustering place of troops to oppose the forces of Islam. Arab sources call it Ma'ab and refer to a camp there. It was apparently the first Roman city to fall to them in 633 or 634.

Principal Reading: PA I: 54–59; Miller 1991: 65–66, Site 108; Kaegi 1992: 83–87

(B. CHARACMOAB (KERAK))
**JADIS 2106.001; KERAK CASTLE; MAP
3152.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7575;
UTMN 34529; PGE 216.800; PGN 065.500**

The Moabite and Nabataean town of Characmoab stood at a key point in this region. Under Roman rule it developed further, briefly striking its own coinage in the early 3rd century (Spijkerman 1978: 286). In the Middle Ages it came to be dominated by the great Crusader

castle that still overlooks the town. We may suppose it was a Roman garrison place of some kind but we have no evidence of the Roman army there: no inscriptions and it is not listed in the Notitia Dignitatum.

Principal Reading: Miller 1991: 89, Site 204

(C. MUTAH, EL-MASHAD)

**JADIS 2105.030; EL-MASHHAD; MAP
3152.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7584;
UTMN 34429; PGE 217.500; PGN 055.500**

According to the Arab writer al-Bakri, Mutah is where an Arab Islamic army, said to be 3000 strong and led by the Prophet's adopted son, was defeated by a (supposedly) huge Byzantine one in AD 629. The purpose of the raid was to seize the renowned swords made in this area. The implication may be that there was a Byzantine arms manufactory at Mutah. However, the more likely explanation may be simply that it was here that probing Islamic forces encountered Byzantine troops reoccupying the area after 15 years of Persian rule. There is an Islamic shrine to the east at el-Mashad, c. 10 km south of Characmoab, commemorating the event and the death of its leader.¹

3. ACCORDING TO THE GREEK CHRONICLER THEOPHANES (*Chron.* 335 AM 6123 trans. Mango and Scott 1997: 466):

Mouamed, who had died earlier, had appointed four emirs to fight those members of the Arab nation who were Christian, and they came in front of a village called Mouchea, in which was stationed the vicarius Theodore ... The vicarius ... gathered all the soldiers of the desert guard ... attacked them at a village called Mothous, and killed three emirs and the bulk of their army ... Now some of the neighbouring Arabs were receiving small payments from the emperors for guarding the approaches to the desert. At that time a certain eunuch arrived to distribute the wages of the soldiers, and when the Arabs came to receive

¹ The Motha of the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. 37.14) is commonly identified as Motha (Imtan) in southern Syria (ch. 21) rather than this place (contra Kaegi 1992: 72).

their wages according to custom, the eunuch drove them away saying, "The emperor can barely pay his soldiers their wages, much less these dogs!" Distressed by this the Arabs went over to their fellow-tribesmen ...

The passage is interesting both for what it tells us about 'desert guards' in this wider area and what we may infer about their numbers that they can destroy a force of several thousand strong, and for subsidies being paid to some Arabs as part of imperial policy.

Date: AD 630/1

Principal Reading: Miller 1991: 119–121; Kaegi 1992: 71–74, 79–83; EI 7: 756a–b

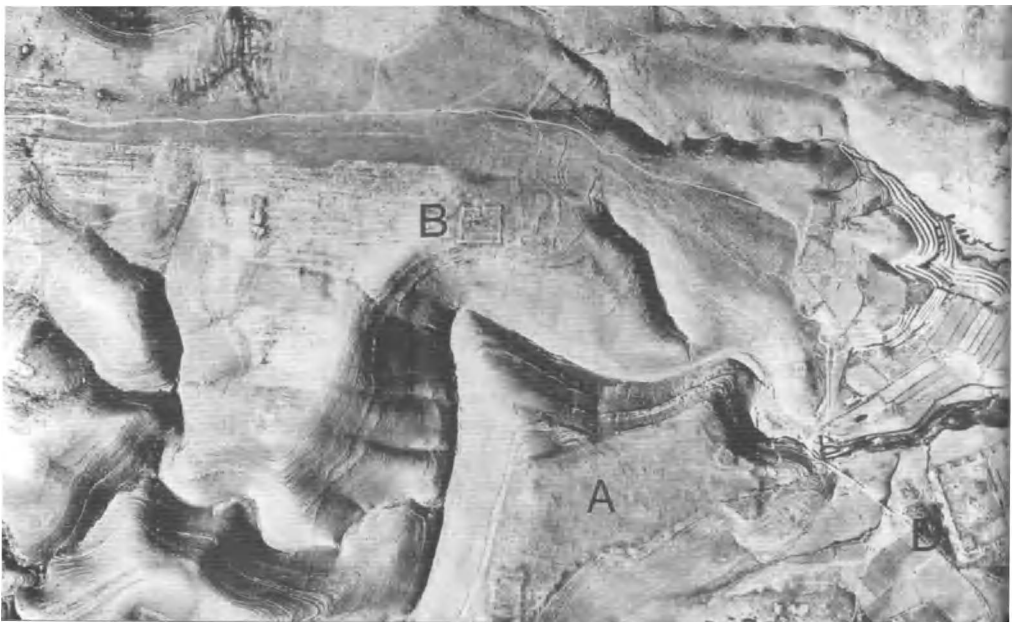
**D. BETTHORUS/UM (?) (EL-LEJJUN)
JADIS 2307.002; LEJJUN; MAP 3152.II;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7731;
UTMN 34597; PGE 232.700; PGN 072.000**

The ruins lie about 15 km east of Kerak, just 2 km north of the road to Qatrana. Qasr Bshir

is c. 15 km north-east. The modern name, attested since the 19th century, reflects the belief that this was a Roman camp for a legion (cf. Lejjun in Israel, formerly the base of the Legion VI Ferrata at Caparcotna/Maximianopolis). Although it was common for the beduin to attribute ancient ruins to the Romans, in this case they were correct. The site is just south of the origins of the W. Mujib and lies in the small but fertile Wadi Lejjun. A spring rises 500 m to the west and runs past the north wall. The place has attracted settlement and military attention in various periods (Fig. 15.2): a substantial walled Early Bronze Age town lies on a hilltop (A) west of the spring; the origins of Kh. el-Fityan to its north (B) are probably Iron Age; just south-east of B are the lines of an Ottoman barracks (C). The Roman fortress is just east of all these (D). Although Nabataean material has been reported none can be attributed to a military structure.

Along with Udruh (ch. 17) the fortress is one of the two largest purely military structures in

Fig. 15.2: El-Lejjun: vertical aerial view of 1982. A = Early Bronze Age town; B = Kh. el-Fityan; C = Ottoman barracks; D = Roman fortress (APA 82/IGN57–100).



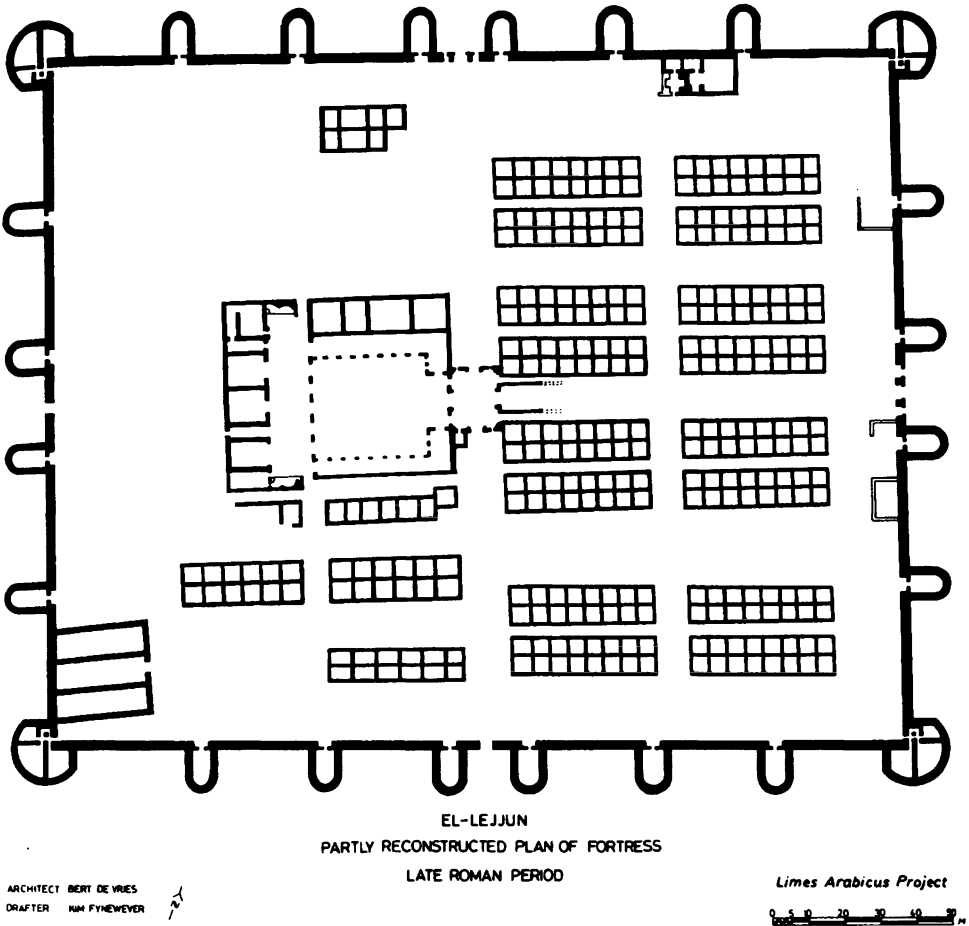


Fig. 15.4: El-Lejjun: plan of Phase 1, c. AD 300 (from Parker *forthc.*).

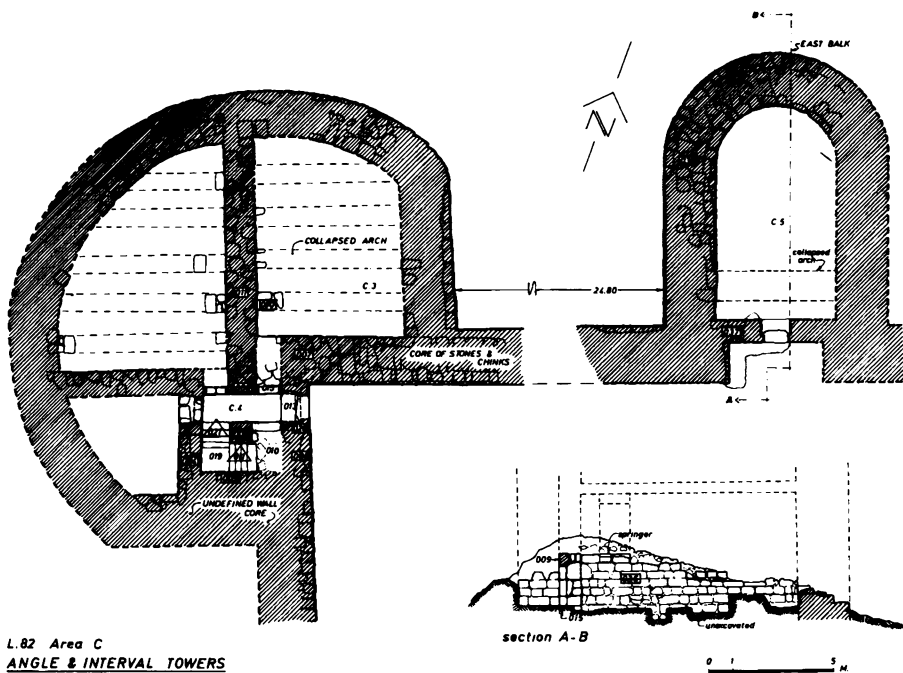
Jordan. Despite extensive removal of stone for reuse, the site remains remarkably well preserved and has impressed writers from the 19th century onwards. Even at ground level the general layout of the site is quite clear although in detail Brännow and von Domaszewski misinterpreted the barracks. The extensive modern excavations by Parker have made it the best known and probably most important military site in Jordan.

As may be readily seen in the aerial photographs (Figs 15.2 and 3C), the fortress is a rectangle, c. 247 x 190 m, c. 4.7 ha (Fig. 15.4). The walls are massive: pale limestone c. 2.5 m thick with two faces and a rubble fill.

Some of the blocks used were individually huge. It is thought to have stood 5–6 m high.

There are 24 massive towers, all bonded into the curtain wall and probably two storeys high. All the towers project up to 11 m and all begin with straight sides at right angles to the curtain wall before finally curving. Distances between the towers vary from 31 to 45 m.

Excavation has included the north-west corner tower, interval tower 7 and the north gate. The north-west corner tower is reminiscent of Qasr Bshir with a 'square spiral' staircase rising from a ground floor plan of three rooms (Fig. 15.5a). The diameter of the curve is 21.3 m.



L.82 Area C
ANGLE & INTERVAL TOWERS
 drawn by Bert De Vries & Eric Green

Central Limes Arabicus Project

Fig. 15.5: El-Lejjun: plan of (a) the north-west corner tower and (b) of interval tower 7 (from Parker forthc.).

Ceilings were formed with slabs of black basalt supported on arches reminiscent of the Hauran architecture in the north. Interval tower 7 is 9 m wide at the base and projects 10.86 m (Fig. 15.5b). The staircase rises beneath a barrel-vault.

The gates are notable for the use of massive monoliths, particularly as lintel stones. The west and south gates have single openings, 2.55 and 3.32 m respectively. The north and east gates have a central entrance flanked on each side by smaller ones. The north gate is 3.45 m wide with side entrances of c. 1.5 m. The east gate is the largest, 3.85 m with side entrances of c. 2.3 m.

Plans of the internal buildings drawn from surface mounds of rubble have been sharply revised in the light of excavation. As the plan (Fig. 15.4) shows the interior was divided by a cross road from the south to north gates (*Via Principalis*) and another, with colonnades,

from the east gate (*Via Praetoria*) meeting it at right angles in the typical T-pattern of so many Roman forts. Likewise, behind (west of) the junction lies a *Principia*, c. 63 x 52.5 m (Fig. 15.4). West of its courtyard is a raised tribunal and west again the central room of the suite would have been the shrine for the standards. In a later rebuild one section at least is estimated to have stood to 8 m. East of the *Principia* is an unroofed *Groma*, a building spanning the centre point of the fort and whose four entrances linked the three roads and the entrance to the *Principia*. Interestingly, this structure incorporated reused Nabataean capitals.

The Phase 1 barracks in the eastern half have been reconstructed from traces beneath those of the later phase. They consisted of eight long blocks each with 18 pairs of rooms, a total of 144 pairs, each room c. 5.1 x 5 m except for those at the end beside the *Via Principalis*

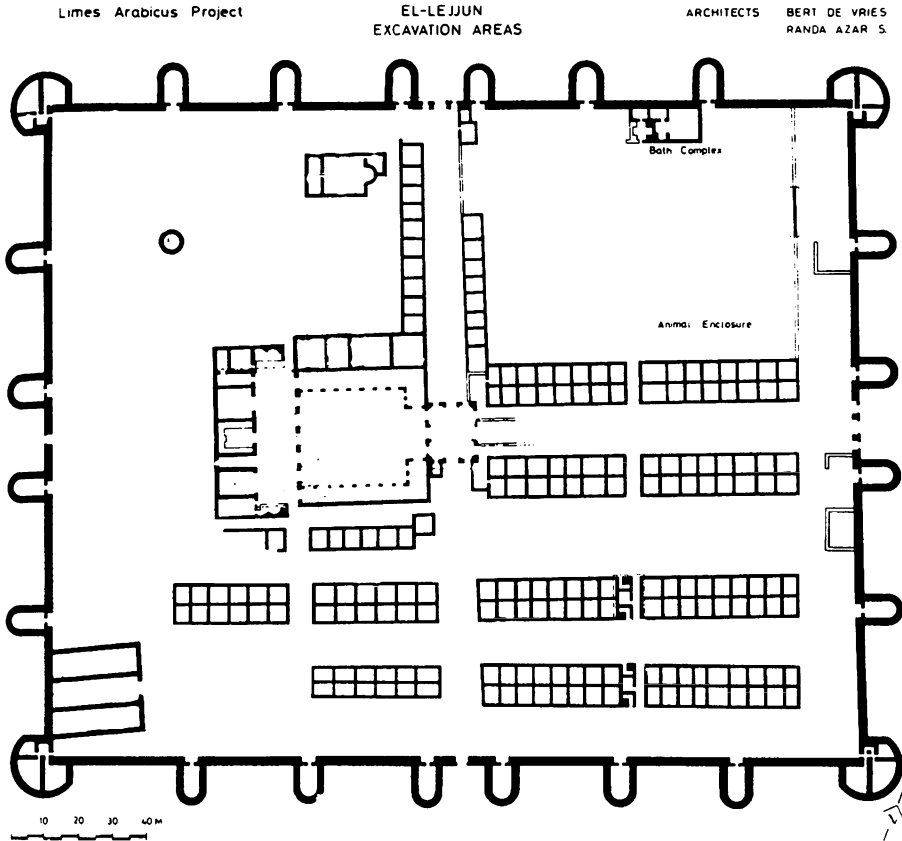


Fig. 15.6: El-Lejjun: plan of Phase 2, c. post-AD 363 (from Parker *forthc.*).

which were a little larger. Tiles suggest the roofs were pitched and covered in terracotta tiles.

In the south-west corner the large triple-aisled building (c. 28 x 25 m) has been identified as a granary (X). A bath building was constructed against the interior of the eastern end of the north wall (Y). In the north-west quadrant the cistern (Z) was probably fed by a conduit from the dam at the spring c. 300 m west of the fortress.

Excavation has dated all of this Phase 1 to c. AD 300.

The second major phase brought about a radical reconstruction of the barracks. Instead of the eight blocks in the eastern half, there were now four (Fig. 15.6). Their positions

were slightly different and the internal layout changed, too. The pairs of rooms are entered from the south into one c. 5.2 x 3.95 m. There is a communicating door through into a smaller room and the latter has three 'cupboard' recesses. The arrangements now divide each long block into two parts with eight pairs of rooms on either side of a passageway beside which are two 'square spiral' staircases on either side of a small central room. Parker believes these gave access to roofs but Gregory has argued for a second storey with living and storage space on different levels. In this phase three arches in each room supported basalt stone beams for a flat roof.

In addition to these blocks, there were now three more in the western half south of the

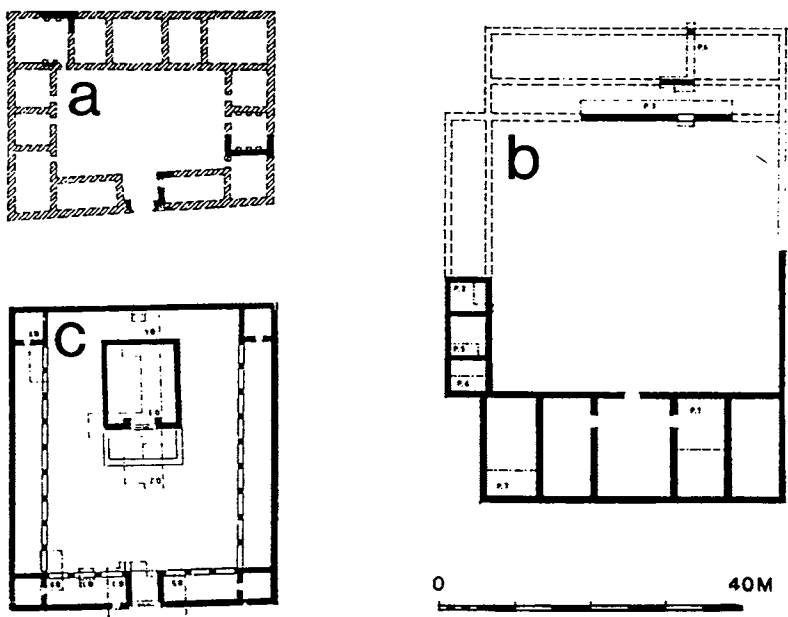


Fig. 15.7: El-Lejjun: plans of buildings in the vicus: (a) Mansio; (b) courtyard building; (c) temple (Gregory 3: F22.12 b, c and d).

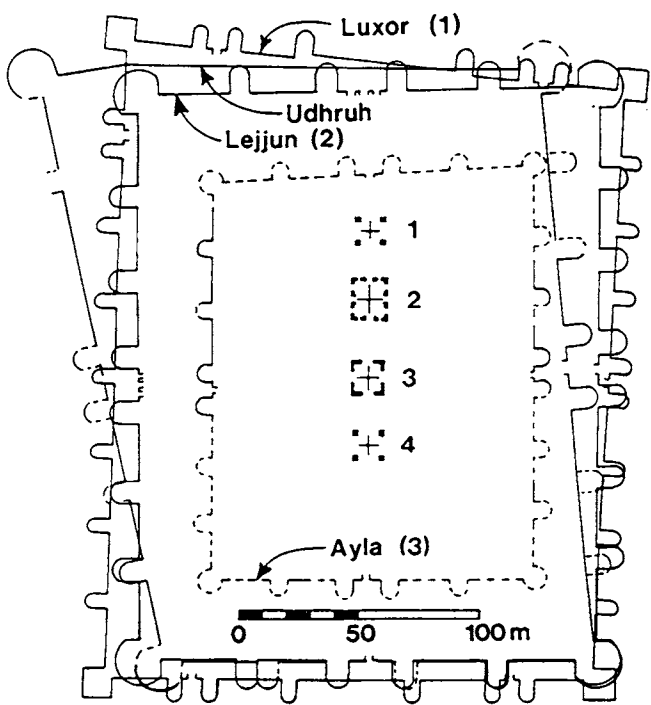


Fig. 15.8: El-Lejjun: comparative plans of the fortresses at Lejjun, Udruh and Luxor and the Islamic city at Ayla (from Whitcomb 1990).

Principia, consisting of six pairs of rooms. Between them and the *Principia* was built a single row of rooms and two further long suites rooms were added on either side of the northern *Via Principalis*. Their sizes varied considerably.

The space now left in the north-east quadrant was used for holding animals.

Phase 2 is dated to soon after AD 363 because of the clear evidence of extensive damage caused by the dated earthquake of that year.

Later remodelling made modifications in various places, not least the construction of a church c. AD 500.

Outside the walls were extensive traces of settlement on the west, south and east — the stream from the springs runs along the north. About 100 m from the north-west corner is a *Mansio*, c. 35 x 28 m (Fig. 5.7a). It is Phase 1 and not rebuilt after the earthquake. East of the fortress is a second building with rooms around a courtyard, c. 62 x 47 m (Fig. 15.7b). Not far away is what has been identified as a temple set within a colonnaded courtyard, c. 40 x 35 m (Fig. 15.7c).

Discussion: The fortress went through two major phases: initial construction c. AD 300 and major rebuilding soon after AD 363. In later years other reconstruction took place and at least one major building (the church) was added). Final abandonment took place c. AD 550. As Gregory observes, the overall form is similar to contemporary military structures at Luxor and Qasr Qarun in Egypt (cf. Whitcomb 1990) (Fig. 15.8). The closest parallel by far, however, is the very similar fortress in Jordan at Udruh (ch. 17).

Calculations suggest the barracks could have accommodated c. 2000 men in Phase 1 and c. 1000 in Phase 2. It is believed the fortress was built originally to accommodate one of the legions of the later empire when sizes had been reduced from c. 5000 men to a fraction of that. Indeed, Lejjun is an important guide to what

the strength of such a legion may have been. The legion in question may be known:

4. An entry in the NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 37.22; cf. 12):

Praefectus legionis quartae Martiae, Betthoro

The Prefect of the Legion IV Martia, at Betthorus/um

Date c. AD 400

The legion is not otherwise known — presumably a late 3rd century creation — but Betthorus/um may be restored on a fragment of the Beer Sheva Edict(s) (Abel 1967: II, 190).

Principal Reading: PA II: 24–38; Parker 1987: 183–428; 1990; 1991; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 129–131; Gregory 349–359 (an excellent short survey); Parker forthc.

E. KHIRBET EL-FITYAN
JADIS 2307.087; KHIRBET EL-FITYAN;
MAP 3152.II; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7721; UTMN 34602; PGE 231.600;
PGN 072.600

The fort lies in a spectacular position c. 1.3 km west-north-west of El-Lejjun, on the north rim of the W. Lejjun and c. 100 m higher than the fortress. It has excellent views to the east and controlled access from the west (Fig. 15.2).

The fort has received some modest test-trenching and reveals a more complex picture than earlier explorers thought. It now seems clear that the site began as an Iron Age II fort that Roman builders took over c. AD 300, restoring and inserting at least one barrack block. Although rebuilding may have been extensive it was reconstructing the essentially Iron Age design rather than presenting a Roman one. The towers, for example, are non-Roman but can be paralleled in the Iron Age II.

The fort of the Roman period was a distorted rectangle, c. 78.8 x 76.8 m, 0.63 ha, with gates on three sides and towers c. 4 m square

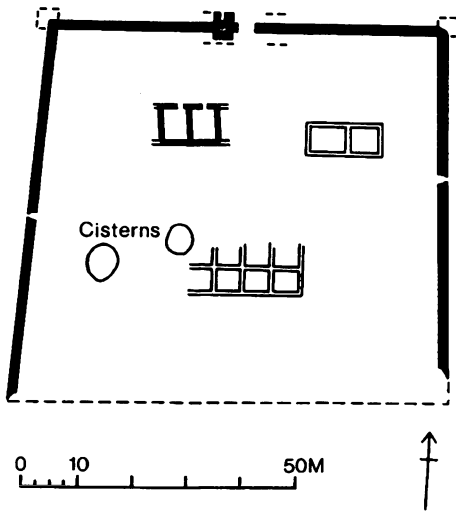


Fig. 15.9: Kh. el-Fityan: plan (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: 176, Fig. 121).

projecting at the corners (Fig. 15.9). There are two internal cisterns. Parts of the south wall have been lost into the wadi but are quite clear on old aerial photographs. Presumably the garrison was provided from Lejjun.

Date: Iron Age II but rebuilt c. AD 300 and occupied to c. 500.

Principal Reading: PA II: 38–40; Parker 1987: 429–446; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 175–176; Gregory 345–348

F. RUJM BENI YASSER
JADIS 2307.095; RUJM LEJJUN; MAP
3152.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7742;
UTMN 34595; PGE 233.700; PGN 071.800

This site lies on a hill c. 1.5 km east of Lejjun and overlooks the W. Lejjun from that side. The remains consist of an irregular courtyard surrounded by ranges of rooms, c. 36 x 20 m. Towers were built into this on the west and two on the east (Fig. 15.10). Test-excavation suggested construction in the Nabataean period, a lengthy occupation, abandonment then reoccupation c. AD 300. At that time the large west tower may have been built as

pottery of that period was recovered in the foundation core. It seems to have been abandoned c. AD 500.

Date: Nabataean; reused and added to c. AD 300

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 79–80; 1987: 447–456; Gregory 360–361

G. QASR ABU RUKBA
JADIS 2305.031; QASR ABU RUKBAH;
MAP 3152.II; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7747; UTMN 34457; PGE 233.900;
PGN 058.000

The hills east and south of Lejjun are dotted with towers. One of the better-preserved and, now, explored is this one c. 14 km south of the fortress (Fig. 15.11C). Test-excavation has suggested this is a Roman original construction rather than reuse. It is c. 10.5 m square with walls c. 1.3 m thick (Fig. 15.12). The walls still stand to over 11 m. There is a doorway on the north-west wall and slit windows at higher levels. Corbelled stairs led to what Gregory believes were probably timber floors at the upper levels.

Principal Reading: PA II: 43–45; Parker 1986: 79–82; Gregory 362–364

(H. QASR MUHAI)
JADIS 2304.005; MAHI; MAP 3151.I; UTM
ZONE 36; UTME 7730; UTMN 34326; PGE
231.900; PGN 044.900

Qasr Muhai lies c. 14 km south of Qasr Abu Rukba. It is on the northern side of the long, broad and fertile valley of the Wadi Qufeiq which runs east–west at this point. The site is well-known with surface sherds of several periods from the Late Bronze Age onwards and strong evidence of Nabataean occupation in particular. The remains stretch for about 500 m along a ridge which commands the approach from the desert. Glueck (1939: 68) reported a “great outer wall” near the highest point and the Kerak Plateau Survey identified this with the “foundation remains of a

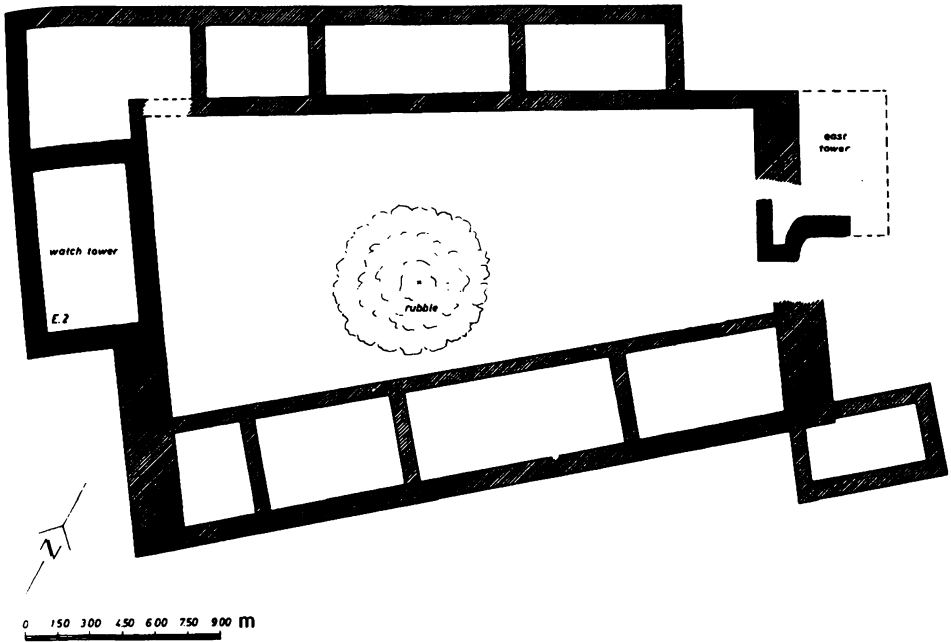


Fig. 15.10: Rujm Beni Yasser: plan (from Parker 1987: 450, Fig. 85).

rectangular wall (60 x 55+ m) which enclosed the summit area ... This outer wall was of different masonry than the structure on the summit which it enclosed, and there is some evidence of rectangular subdivisions (small rooms?) built against its inside face” (Miller 1991: 164). An aerial view shows the structure

in question (Fig. 15.13C). The rectangular form and commanding location suggest a military function and there is a strong possibility that this or some other structure was garrisoned in the Roman period given its key location.

Principal Reading: Miller 1991: 163–166, Site 436

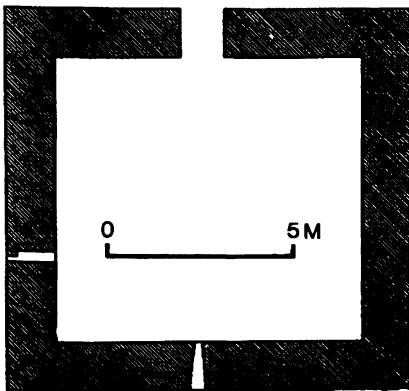


Fig. 15.12: Qasr Abu Rukba: plan (from Parker forthc.).

I. UMM UBTULAH
 JADIS 2303.537–541; WHNBS SITE 349
 A–G; MAP 3151.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME
 77453; UTMN 342103;
 PGE 233.220; PGN 033.340

About 25 km south of Kerak the Wadi el-Hasa cuts across the landscape. Although less imposing than the Wadi Mujib it is still a great landmark, running some 50 km from out in the steppe westwards and down into the Dead Sea. In the late 3rd century when the province of Arabia was divided the break came here, cutting off Moab in the north



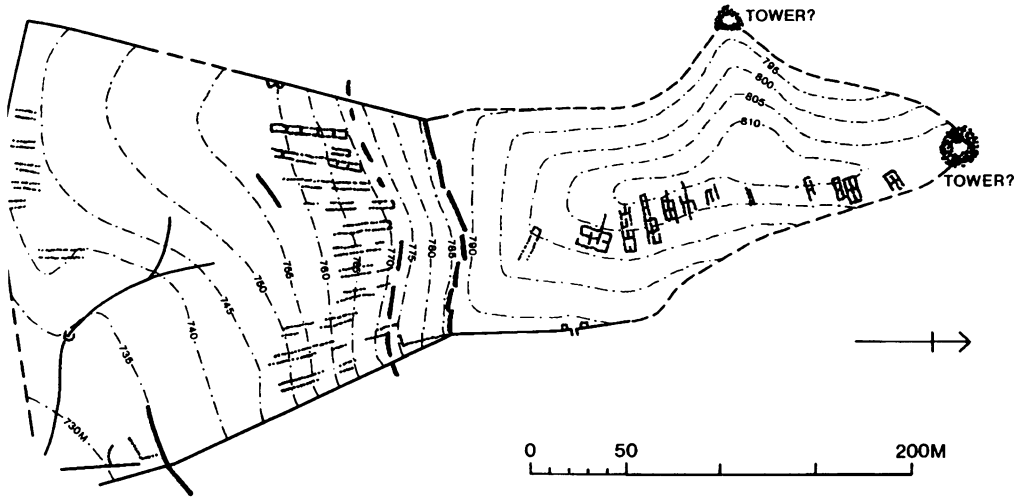


Fig. 15.15: Umm Ubtulah: plan (Kennedy and Riley 1990: 224, Fig. 179).

from the heartland of the old Nabataean kingdom south of the Hasa and the Hisma Desert below that.

About 11 km east of where the Via Nova Traiana crosses the wadi and about 35 km south of Lejjun, the W. el-Hasa comes round in a tight loop leaving a ridged promontory on the north side. Umm Ubtulah, a site only found in the 1980s, lies here (Fig. 15.14). It consists of two adjoining enclosures running from the wadi up and along this ridge, c. 520 x 250 m (Fig. 15.15). The outline is formed by a limestone wall but is irregular. However, the lower (southern) enclosure is largely formed by straight sides. It is here, too, that the internal buildings are most regular, seeming to most commentators to look like rows of parallel barrack blocks. Surface sherds on the upper enclosure are exclusively Bronze Age. Those from the lower enclosure include Bronze Age but are predominantly Nabataean and Roman. We may be looking at a Bronze Age fortress on the hilltop later added to by the construction of a camp of c. 6–7 ha on the slope below in the Nabataean or Roman periods.

Principal Reading: MacDonald 1984; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 223–224; Gregory 365–366

J. KHIRBET EL-MUREIGHA
JADIS 2094.001; Khirbet el-Mureighah; Map 3150.3; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7443; UTMN 33340; PGE 201.300; PGN 947.000

The site lies 11 km south-east of Kerak at a natural crossroads on the fertile plain of central Moab (Fig. 15.16). It lies on the highest point of a ridge overlooking the plain all around and the trade routes that intersected nearby. There is Bronze Age pottery but the first major occupation was probably Nabataean. The walled area measures c. 90 x 105 m, c. 1 ha. The size is very similar to that of forts of c. AD 300 (e.g. Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9); Kh. Khaw (ch. 10); Da’ajaniya (ch. 16); Avdat (ch. 16)). Traces can be seen of projecting towers at the corners and on the walls. The main entrance is in the middle of the wall on the left. It is undated but included here as a possible Nabataean and/ or Roman fort.

Principal Reading: Miller 1991: 123–125, Site 316

Fig. 15.14 (opposite): Umm Ubtulah: aerial view looking north-west (APA 98/18.12).

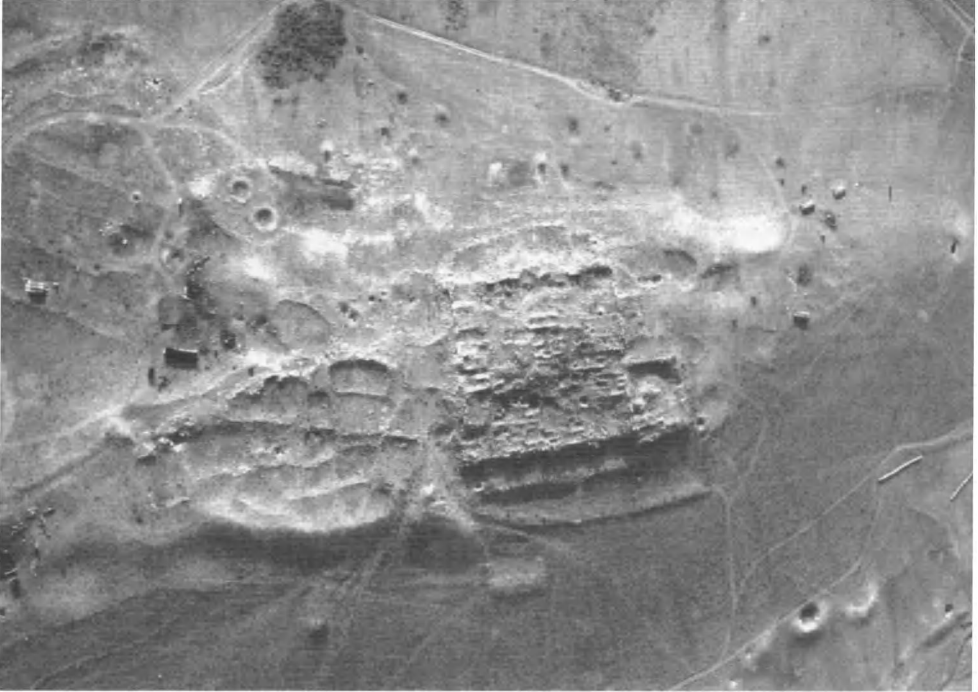


Fig. 15.16 Khirbet el-Mureigha. Aerial view looking north over the 'fort' and some of its surrounding earthworks (APA98/SL16.29, 14 May 1998).

16. EL-JIBAL

South of the Wadi el-Hasa as far as the Shera's Scarp is a region defined as the Highlands of Ma'an. It is here divided into three parts: the first, this chapter, El-Jibal, a modern regional name descended from the Nabataean district of Gabalitis (compare the text of Eusebius below). Next is Petra and the territory immediately to its east (ch. 17). Then finally (ch. 18), Esh-Shera'a, the southern part of the Ma'an Highlands.

The terrain south of the Wadi el-Hasa is more rugged in the west where the King's Highway crosses the high ground south of the wadi then runs through winding valleys past Tafila and on to Shobak, both of them the sites of imposing medieval castles (Fig. 16.1).

A. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

The road can be followed in the north quite easily and many milestones ranging from Trajan to Constantine have been reported. Part has been traced recently by the Wadi el-Hasa Survey which recorded an area of steps cut into the bedrock for the road surface at one point (MacDonald 1988: 147, pl. 18) and a road-station beside the highway just south of the wadi. Further south the Via Nova diverged from the ancient King's Highway. The latter continued along the edge of the mountains while the Roman highway took a more easterly route passing through Thana/Thoana (At-Tuwana) before rejoining the line of the King's Highway a few kilometres south of Gharandal.

B. RUJM EL-FARIDIYYEH
JADIS 2203.070; KHIRBET EL-FARIDIYYEH; MAP 3151.I;
UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7636; UTMN 34221;
PGE 222.400; PGN 034.700

The aerial photograph of 1937 (Fig. 16.2) shows the Roman road, about 6 m wide, crossing the plateau with the Wadi el-Hasa in the distance and the W. Jais, a tributary, on the left. The dark spots beside the road in the distance are small towers. In the centre, just west of the road are the collapsed walls of the road-station, 36 x 42 m. It consists of a courtyard with ranges of rooms around (Fig. 16.3; cf. ch. 17 for Kh. Ail).

Date: surface pottery finds are predominantly Nabataean (1st century BC – 1st century AD) and Roman (c. 300–500).

Principal Reading: Parker 1986: 89–91; MacDonald 1988: 226–228; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 86–89; Gregory 369–370

(C. ROBOTHA (RUWATH))
NO JADIS; MAP 3151.III; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7526; UTMN 34010;
PGE 211.000; PGN 013.300

Just west of Roman and Byzantine Gharandal (Arieldela) are the remains of Ruwath, hidden now beneath modern settlement. It has been suggested as the place mentioned in Eusebius.

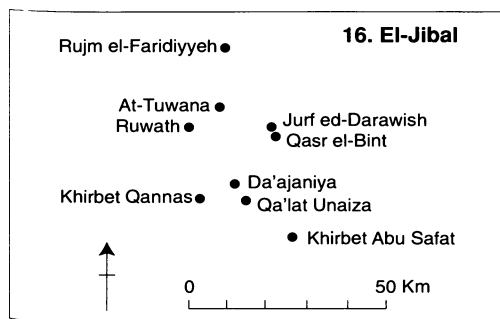


Fig. 16.1: Map of El-Jibal.



Fig. 16.2: Rujm el-Faridiyyeh: aerial view of 1937 looking north from about 60 m (APA 37/RAF 12741).

1. EUSEBIUS (*Onom.* p. 142, ll. 11–12; p. 143, ll. 14–16 [Klostermann]):

Ῥοωβώθ (Gen 36, 37). πόλις ἄλλη, ἧ “παρὰ ποταμόν”. ἔνθα ἦν βασιλεὺς Ἰδομαίων. καὶ νῦν ἐστὶ φρούριον ἐν τῇ Γεβαληνῇ.

Rooboth urbs alia iuxta fluvium ubi erat rex Edom. Et usque hodie est praesidium in

regione Gebalena et vicus grandis qui hoc vocabulo nuncupatur.

Rooboth is another city, near the river, where the king of Idumaeans was. And upto today there is a garrison in the region of Gebalena.

Date: c. AD 293

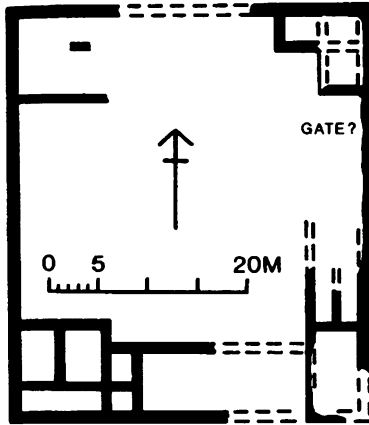


Fig. 16.3: Rujm el-Faridiyyeh: plan of the road-station (after MacDonald et al. 1988: fig. 59).

A military role is attributed too by the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. 37. 27; cf. 11):

2. [EQUITES SAGITTARII INDIGENAE, ROBATHAE]¹

Native Horse Archers, at Robatha

Date: c. AD 400

The similarity has been pointed out between this place-name and the ancient Arab tribe Robathoi (Rubatu) named in a 2nd century Greek inscription from Rawaffa in the Hedjaz of north-west Saudi Arabia (Bowersock 1971: 231).

3. THE BEER SHEVA EDICT(S) include a reference to the same place with the implication of a military post (Frag. V, line 8):

(ἀπὸ) Ῥοβαθαῖς [νο(μίσματα) ...] μγ' (καὶ) τ{οῖς} ...

Robatha, 43 solidi ...

Date: between the early 4th century and Anastasius but probably later rather than earlier.

The site today is disappearing under the modern settlement. No commentator has noted any significant military structure and surface sherds range from Bronze Age to Mamluk. The modern name is pre-Arabic, perhaps pre-Semitic (A. Walmsley, pers. comm.). The site seems to have superseded Gharandal as the political centre of the region in Islamic times.

Certainty is impossible and only fieldwork is likely to resolve the matter. Isaac suggests the native cavalry at Robatha should be looked for “in or near fairly substantial settlements”. That would accord with Ruwath and adjacent Gharandal — but also with other places.

Principal Reading: Alt 1935: 30–31; Graf 1979: 124–125; Fiema 1991: App. C; Isaac 1998: 461 and n. 110

(D. THANA/THOANA/THORNIA
(AT-TUWANA))

**JADIS 2101.004; ET-TUWANEH; MAP
3151.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7611;
UTMN 3405; PGE 219.500; PGN 017.800**

The site lies c. 9 km north-east of Ruwath on a stretch of the Via Nova Traiana described by Fiema (1997: 316) as “one of the best preserved in Jordan”. It is strung out along the road itself in a north–south ribbon to create a substantial small town, c. 800 x 450 m, c. 36 ha (Fig. 16.4).

The place is confidently identified as Thana/Thoana of Ptolemy’s Geography and Thomia of the Peutinger Table (but cf. Hart 1986: 340). It is not listed in the Notitia Dignitatum. No certain military structure has been identified here but the site is certainly at its height in the Nabataean and Roman periods. A military presence of some kind would be expected. As the air photograph shows, there is a large enclosure, c. 120 x 80 m, c. 1.5 ha, on the eastern side of the site on top of the highest hill. This may be the structure suggested by Hart as a caravanseraï.

¹ The restoration can be made with confidence as Robatha is listed amongst the vignettes of towns at the head of the chapter and the sequence of regiment types is predictable.

Date: the place-name identification and surface pottery suggest a Nabataean and Roman date.

Principal Reading: PA I: 88–91; Glueck 1934: 80–81; 1939: 53; Fiema 1997

E. JURF ED-DARAWISH
JADIS 2301.001; JURF ED-DARAWISH;
MAP 3151.II; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7746; UTMN 33987;
PGE 232.900; PGN 011.000
(MIS-NAMED QASR EL-BINT ON 1:50,000
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP)

A small fort has been known for a century buried in the alluvial deposit at the crossing of the Wadi Jurf at Jurf ed-Darawish. The

aerial photo shows the earthworks of a buried square structure which is said to be c. 36 m square with walls 1.7 m thick (Fig. 16.5). Brünnow and von Domaszewski thought the building technique 'late'; according to Gregory that term has often turned out to mean Islamic.

A string of eight milestones was found on a road leading to and from the crossing but none has an inscription (Thomsen 1917: 57–58, nos 177–184).

Date: Parker found only 14 datable surface sherds, all of the period c. 200–300.

Principal Reading: PA II: 14; Parker 1986: 91; Gregory 371–372



Fig. 16.4: Thana/ Thoana (at-Tuwana): vertical aerial view of 1953 (APA 53/ HAS14.093).



Fig. 16.5: *Jurf ed-Darawish: aerial view looking north-east (APA 98/20.24).*

F. QASR EL-BINT

**LOCATION UNCERTAIN. NO JADIS;
MAP 3151.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7780;
UTMN 33976; PGE 236.300; PGN 009.700**

This large tower stands on a hilltop about 3 km south-east of Jurf ed-Darawish with views in all directions (Fig. 16.6). The overall dimensions are 12.25 x 9 m but the walls are of varying thickness, from 0.95 to 1.9 m. Ground floor rooms are arched or vaulted and stairs suggest at least one more storey. Further rooms were built against the tower at a later date. There is a cistern to the east.

Date: Dated surface sherds ranged from Nabataean to 5th century.

Principal Reading: PA II: 14–15; Parker 1986: 91–93; Gregory 373–375

G. DA'AJANIYA

**JADIS 2299.003; KHIRBET ED-
DAJANIYA; MAP 3151.II; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7650; UTMN 33834; PGE 222.900
(NOT 225.900); PGN 995.900**

This striking fort lies on a slight rise on the edge of the steppe c. 13 km south-west of Jurf ed-Darawish and c. 9 km east-north-east of Qannas. The Via Nova is c. 12 km to the west. Its size, the quality of preservation of the curtain wall in particular and the black basalt employed in its walls make it stand out clearly (Fig. 16.7). It has extensive views to north, south and east as well as back towards the line of the Jebel Da'ajaniya to the west. Recent test-trenching has clarified the dating.

The walls are of crudely shaped stones and boulders with a mud rubble core. Mortar and even plaster has been used extensively to give an appearance of 'rows of black spots on a white ground'. This is regarded by Gregory as original and she believes the fort may, for aesthetic reasons, have had the black basalt plastered over entirely.

The circuit is a distorted square of c. 100 m square, c. 1 ha (Fig. 16.8). The walls are 2.25 m thick and a century ago Brännow and von Domaszewski noted a walkway at a height of 4.7 m. Towers (c. 8 m square) straddle the

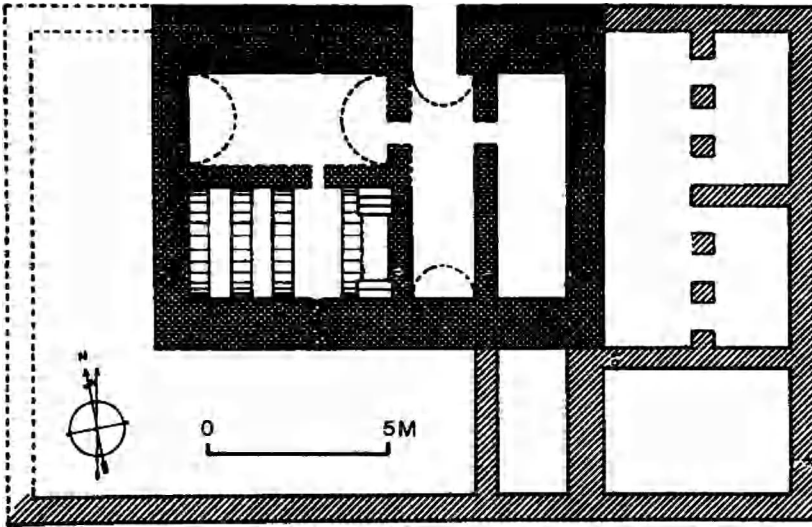


Fig. 16.6: Qasr el-Bint: plan of the tower complex (after PA II: 14, fig. 569).



Fig. 16.7: Da'ajaniya: aerial view looking north (APA 98/20.14).

corners. There are two interval towers on each side 22.5 to 25 m apart except the east where there are four, each c. 4–5 m square and c. 13 m apart. The main gates are on the east and west sides but with a small postern on the south wall beside an interval tower.

The main internal division is made by the broad road linking the gates. At the west end it runs over a long rectangular cistern (13.8 x 5.5 m) whose roof has now gone. All around are the remains or traces of almost 60 rectangular rooms built against the outside

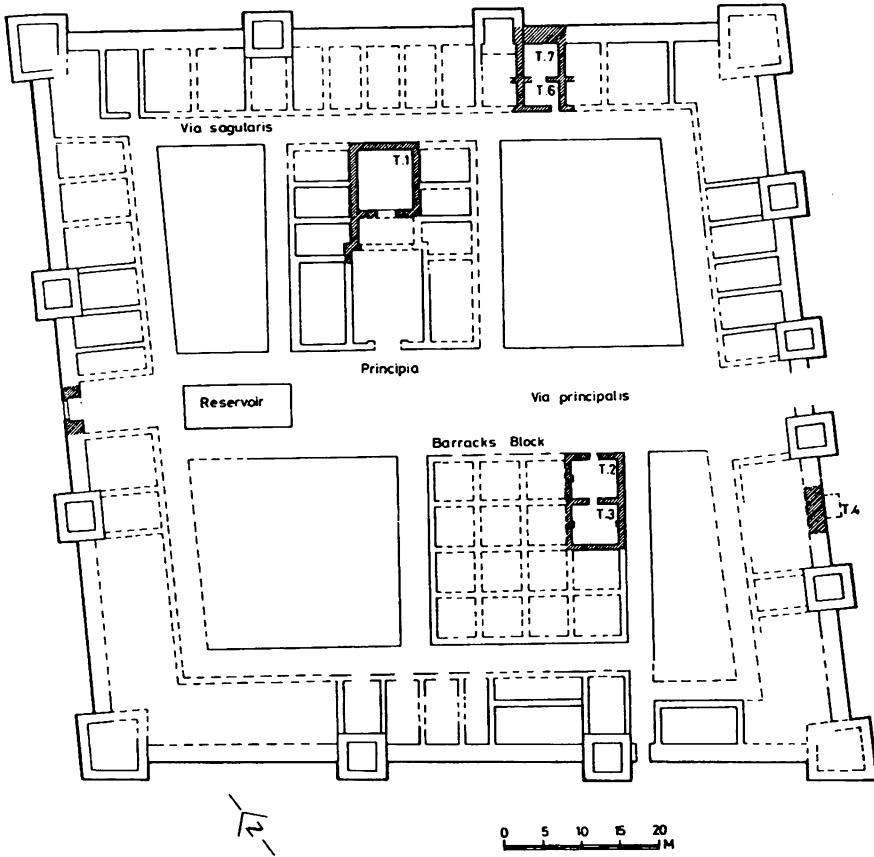


Fig. 16.8: Da'ajaniya: plan (Parker 1991: fig. 25).

wall. In the northern half of the fort a *Principia* occupies the expected place but of an unexpected design. The rest of the space in both halves of the fort is taken up with what are probably barracks. Part of one has now been excavated to show square rooms 5 x 5.6 m. The consensus is that the fort was for a cavalry or part-mounted regiment and there is adequate space for a regular auxiliary unit of about 500 men, especially if some at least of the buildings were two storeys high.

Surface sherds suggested an early Roman date (2nd century) and one commentator (Lander) thought the type architecturally transitional and perhaps Severan in date. Excavation has

found stratified pottery and coins that point rather to a construction date of c. AD 300 with occupation in the 5th century. That would accord well with the excavation date for the *Castellum* at Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9). Moreover, the latter is very similar in many respects: size, distorted square shape, internal layout. Other broadly similar forts are those at Avdat in the Negev Desert (ch. 21) and now at Kh. Khaw (ch. 10), both of which are also about 1 ha and of similar shape.

As Gregory observes, the site was presumably modified and reused after the early 4th century. Welsby has now re-examined the defences and identified what seems to be a heightening of the walls involving building over the initial

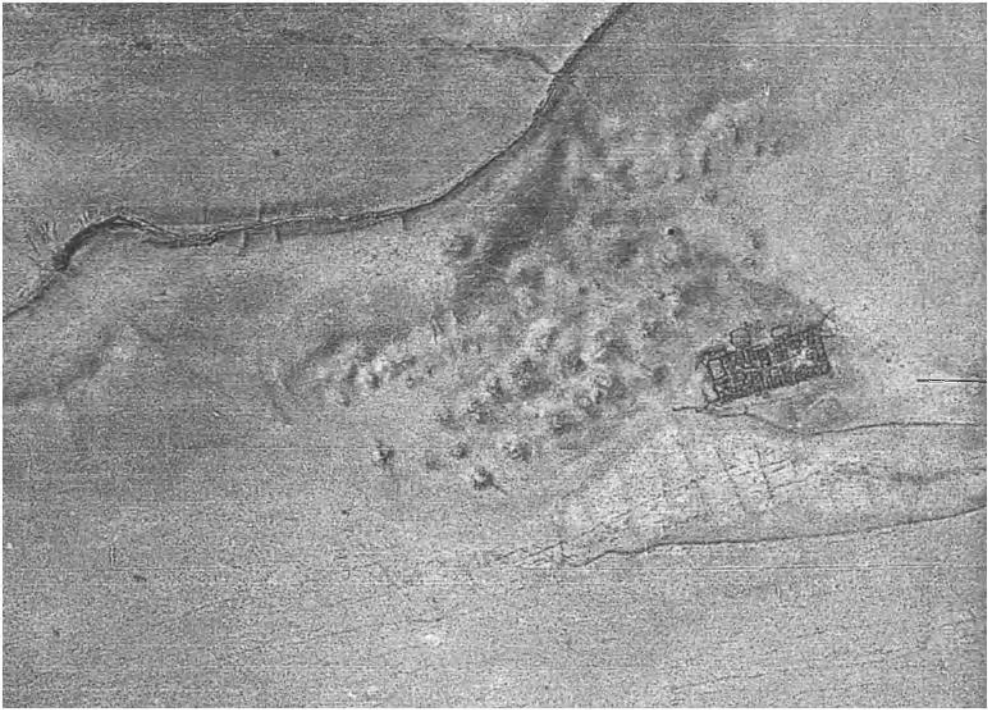


Fig. 16.9: Kh. Qannas: vertical aerial view in 1953 (APA53/HAS25.046).

parapet walk. He has argued for the same phenomenon at Qasr el-Uweinid (ch. 7) and, as we shall see below, it seems also to have occurred at Kh. el-Khalde (ch. 19).

In addition to the internal cistern, the postern gave access to a wadi on the south and to a large reservoir a short distance along it. A few structures have been identified outside the walls, especially on the east.

The location suggests a unit to patrol and police the steppe and protect the settlements of the Jebel Da'ajaniya area. The reservoir suggests provision for large numbers of animals. Da'ajaniya may have been a mustering point for nomads and herders, comparable, perhaps, to what has been suggested for Qasr Bshir (ch. 14).

Date: probably built c. AD 300. Ten dated coins from surface and excavation range from 308/10 to 350/55 with another from 491/8.

Principal Reading: PA II: 8–13; Lander 1984: 144–145; Parker 1986: 93–94; Parker 1991; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 172–175; Freeman 1990; Gregory 376–382; Welsby 1998; Godwin in Parker forthc.

(H. KHIRBET QANNAS)
JADIS 2199.003; NO NAME; MAP 3151.III;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7562;
UTMN 33801; PGE 214.100; PGN 992.800

This important site lies c. 9 km west-south-west of Da'ajaniya. Shobak is c. 11 km to the west. The site is c. 800 m north of the road from Shobak through Dusaq to Muhattet Uneiza. Remarkably the place has been largely neglected, the first recorded visit only coming in the mid-1990s.

The air photograph (Fig. 16.9) can be amplified from a recent ground survey. Now we have a surveyed plan and fuller description. Overall, the structure is c. 100 x 35 m, c. 0.35 ha. The remains

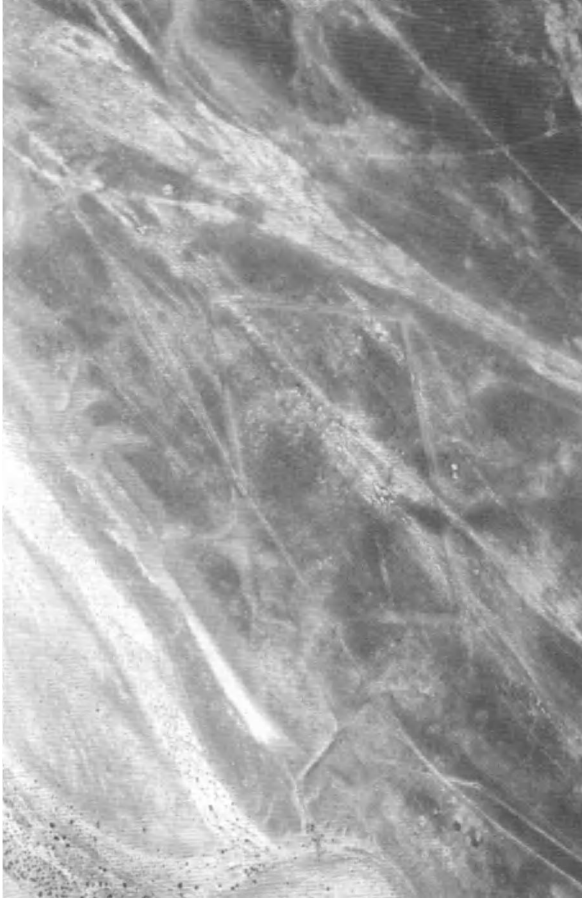


Fig. 16.10: 'Khirbet Abu Safat': aerial view looking north (APA 98/19.35).

show as a walled enclosure with rooms built against the curtain wall. There are projecting towers on the north-west and south-west corners, and at intervals along the long sides; the air photograph suggests them on the eastern corners, too. The long rectangular complex may consist of two elements: a square structure with central courtyard at the east end and the remaining two thirds on the west a later addition. A possible interpretation is of an adjoining fort and caravanserai which have been linked to create a single walled enclosure (cf. Kh. el-Khalde, ch. 19).

To the west and north between this structure and the Wadi Nijil, are clear traces of pitting

from modern digging in what may be an extensive extra-mural settlement 260 x 450 m, c. 11.7 ha. Ground exploration has now identified 'over 40 bell-shaped cisterns' and to the east it noted 'a small cemetery'. To the south is an extensive area of fields — c. 500 x 125 m, c. 6.25 ha — revealed as cross-walls spanning a small wadi and surrounded by a wall.

Preliminary examination of some surface sherds suggests occupation roughly contemporary with Da'ajaniya at a site on a caravan route leading to Petra via Shobak (Graf 1997a: 278). It lies on the Khatt Shebib but may have been built from some of its stones and therefore post-dates it.

Principal Reading: Very little: JADIS 2199.003; Graf 1997a: 278; Zayadine 1992: 229; Findlater 2002: 142-143; fig. 6

I. 'KHIRBET ABU SAFAT'
NO JADIS; MAP 3150.I; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7802; UTMN 33683;
PGE 238.000; PGN 980.600

This is a previously unreported site, discovered in the course of aerial photographic interpretation (Fig. 16.10). The site lies in the Al-Jafr Depression, c. 25 km south-east of Qannas and in the direction of Jafr itself. It is located on the north side of the Wadi Abu Safat. The site is a rectangular enclosure c. 200 x 130 m, 2.6 ha. It appears to have slightly rounded corners and there are traces of breaks in the bank. The only internal traces are beduin corrals. It is closest in character to Azaima just north of the Dead

Sea (ch. 12) but that is much smaller: c. 110 x 75, 0.825 ha.

Date: It has not been visited on the ground and is included here because of its similarity to a Roman temporary camp.

(J. QAL'AT UNAIZA)
NO JADIS; MAP 3150.I; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7686; UTMN 33763; PGE 226.500;
PGN 988.800

Recent work at this well-known fort on the Hajj Road 8 km south-east of Da'ajaniya has revealed traces of a larger rectilinear structure of which the present building is a remodelled part. Pottery suggests it may be Roman and a military role on this desert route is possible.

Principal Reading: Findlater 2002: 140-141; fig. 2

17. PETRAEA

South of the Shobak – Aneiza road there is a gap in the known military structures extending for some 15 km until close to Petra. At that point a large number of sites strew the map and these can be treated as a group for the zone between Petra and Ma'an (Fig. 17.1).

A. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

The Via Nova Traiana can be traced at several points north of Petra but other roads were built in this densely settled area. Graf has recently demonstrated that there is a network of roads and milestones around Petra and that, contrary to recent belief, the Via Nova did go to Petra; the road passing further east near Adrou/Adroa is a different road rather than the Via Nova.

A well-preserved section of the Via Nova existed near Hai just north of Petra but much has recently been damaged by bulldozing. Graf has also now published several stretches of the roads and newly discovered milestone caches in this area.

Principal Reading: Graf 1995a (= 1997c: VI)

B. PETRA

JADIS 1997.001; PETRA; MAP 3050.I;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7346;
UTMN 33579; PGE 192.000; PGN 971.100

Bostra had probably become the principal city of the Nabataean kingdom and the seat of government in the generation before the Roman

annexation. Nevertheless, Petra will certainly have remained a place where parts of the royal forces were based; throughout the Roman period there is evidence for soldiers in and around Petra.

The earliest evidence for Roman forces at Petra comes within months of the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom.

1. A PAPYRUS from Karanis in Egypt is a letter of a soldier of the Legion III Cyrenaica and apparently written from Petra (*P. Mich.* 466):

Ἰ[ο]ύλιος Ἀπ[ο]λινάριος Ἰο[υ]λίω
 Σαβείνῳ τῷ γλυκν[τάτω πα]τρὶ --- etc.
 γίνεται[ι δὲ καλῶς μοι. μετὰ τὸ] τὸν
 Σαράπιν
 εὐτυχῶ[ς ἐνθάδε με εὐδοῶσαι ἄλλων ἀλ-
 [λ.] . . [± 17] ε
 [. . . .] [. .] . . [.] ν [ὄ]λης τῆς
 [ἡμέρ]ας λίθους κοπι[ό]ντων καὶ
 [ἄλλα π]οιούντων, ἐγὼ μέχρι σή-
 [μερον] οὐθὲν τούτων ἔπαθον, ἀλλὰ
 [καὶ ἐρω]τήσαντός μου Κλαύδιον
 Σε[ρο]ῦ[η]ρον τὸν ὑπατικὸν εἶνα με
 λιβράριον ἑαυτοῦ ποιήση, εἰπόντος
 δὲ [α]ὐτοῦ ὅτι τόπος οὐ σχολάζ[ι], ἐν
 τοσοῦτῳ δὲ λιβράριόν σε λεγεῶνος
 ποιήσω ἐφ' ἐλπίδων, κλήρω οὖν
 ἐγενόμην ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπατικοῦ τῆς
 λεγεῶνος πρὸς τὸν κορηκουλάριον. --- etc.
 ἐργασίαν δὲ δάσω εὐθέως ἐὰν ἄρ-
 ξηται ὁ ἡγεμῶν δίδόναι κομμεῆτον
 εὐθέως ἐλθὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ἀσπάζεται

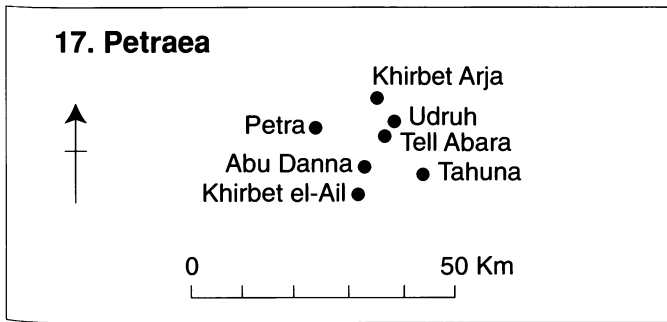


Fig. 17.1: Map of the Petra region.

σε Ουόλυσσιο[ς] Πρόκλος Λονγεῖνος
 Πάκκιος
 Ουαλέριο Σεμπρόνιο[ς] Ουαλέριος Έρμα. . .
 Ίούλιος Πρίσκος Ἀπολλινάριος . . . ἰών
 [καὶ οἱ] κοντ[ουβε]ρ[υ]νάριοι πάντες,
 ἀσπάζου Ἰουλίαν τὴν κυρίαν
 μου ἀδελφήν, ὁμοίως Σαραπιάδα καὶ τ[ῆ]ν
 μητέραν, τὴν μάμαν Σαμ-
 βάθιον, Θερμοῦθιν καὶ τὰ
 τέκνα αὐτῆς, τὸν πατέρα Παγκίου καὶ πάντας
 τοὺς κολλήγας σου κατ'
 ὄνομα καὶ τοὺς ἐν οἴκῳ.
 ἐρροῦσθαι σε εἶχομαι. ἔτους ι Τραιανοῦ
 τοῦ κυρίου Φαμενώθ λ.
 εὐχαριστῶ Ουόλυσσιῳ καὶ Λονγεῖνῳ τῷ
 Βαρβάρῳ. μεταδώσις τοῖς παρὰ
 Ἀφροδάτος τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ
 ἀρτυματοπόλο[υ]
 ὅτι ἐστράτευσάν <με> ἰς χώ[ρ]την εἰς
 Βόστραν. κάθηται [π]ρὸ ἡ ἡμερῶν
 Πέτρας καὶ < >

Julius Apollinarius to Julius Sabinus, his dearest father, - - - Things are going well for me. After Sarapis conducted me hither in safety, while others [. . .] all day long were cutting building stones and doing other things, until today I endured none of these hardships; but indeed I asked Claudius Severus the consularis to make me a secretary on his own staff and he said, 'There is no vacancy, but meanwhile I shall make you a secretary of the legion with hopes of advancement.' With this assignment, therefore, I went from the consularis of the legion to the cornicularius. - - - I shall take pains, as soon as the commander begins to grant furloughs, to come to you immediately. Volusius Proclus salutes you, as do Longinus Paccius, Valerius Sempronius, Valerius Herma[. . .], Julius Priscus, Apollonarius [. . .] ion, and all their comrades. Salute Julia my lady sister, likewise Sarapias and my mother, my grandmother Sambathion, Thermouthis and her children, the father of Paccius, and all your colleagues individually, and those at home. I pray for your good health. The 10th year of Trajan, our lord, Phamenoth 30.

I am grateful to Volusius and Longinus Barbarus. You will tell the firm of Aphrodas, the son of the condiment dealer, that they enrolled me in the cohort going to Bosra. It lies 8 days' journey from Petra and [. . .]

Date: 26 March AD 107

As discussed above (ch. 5), the implication is that two cohorts were at Petra at that point but one was about to leave for Bostra. It is likely that there were always at least a few Roman soldiers at Petra. As a major city, the old royal capital, an assize centre and soon to be honoured as Metropolis (AD 114) and later as Colonia (AD 218/222), we would expect *beneficarii* of the governor and perhaps even a modest permanent force in the 2nd and 3rd centuries at least. There is some evidence of these:

2. LATIN INSCRIPTION on pink sandstone found in the vicinity of Petra (IGLS XXI: 52) (Fig. 17.2):

C. Antonius Valens/ equ(es) leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae),/ (centuria) [É]provitiani (?), vix(it)/ an(nos) XXIV, mil(itavit) V [or m(enses) IV]. H(ic) s(epultus est) [or s(itus est)].

Gaius Antonius Valens, trooper of the Legion III Cyrenaica, Century of [. . .] provitianus, lived for 24 years, served for 5 (?). He lies buried here.

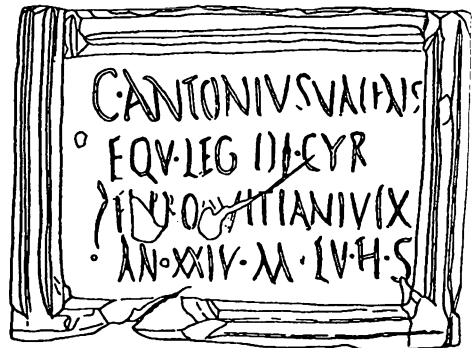


Fig. 17.2: Epitaph of C. Antonius Valens found in the vicinity of Petra.

Date: 2nd/3rd century AD

A second military inscription has recently come to light.

3. INSCRIPTION IN GREEK found in the course of excavation on the North Ridge. Damaged and only a summary of part is available (*AJA* 1999: 510–511):

“It certainly mentions Palaestina Salutaris and also seems to mention ‘speakers of a barbarian tongue’ and ‘fighting’. It may be honoring a person, perhaps a soldier.”

Date: second half of 4th century AD

Eusebius does not explicitly credit the city with a garrison in the late 3rd century and it is not listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* of c. AD 400 or on any of the fragments of the Beer Sheva Edict(s). The next reference of interest comes from a recently published inscription:

4. GRAFFITO IN GREEK incised on a rock face at a road station on the Wadi Sleisel about 3 km north of the urban centre of the town (Zayadine 1992: 218–222 = IGLS XXI: 36):

ΕΝΕΙΟΡΟ ΤΩΠΩ
ΜΝΗΘΗ ΑΒΔΟΟΒΔΑΣ Α (vacat) ΒΔ
ΟΟΒΔΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΑΠΟ ΓΗΝΟΜΕΝΟΥ ΜΑ
ΓΙΤΡΟΥ ΟΠΛΙΤΩ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΜΔ
Α ΜΕΤΑΞΥCΑΜΑΡΩ ΚΑΙ ΜΨΙ
ΝΑΜΛΑΕΙ

In this Holy Place, made in memory of Abdoobodas son of Abdoobodas, by men of the former Magister of the Soldiers (stationed) at M between Samar and MPSI Namla.

Date: early 5th century — possibly late 4th?

The editor rightly discounts the translation of Magister Peditum, a very high rank of the late Roman army. Rather, the archaic term ‘hoplites’, paralleled in the far north-east of Jordan in the graffito of the Wadi Jathum discussed above (ch. 8: *strategos hoplitou*),

should refer to a local garrison and its relatively junior commander. The text seems best interpreted as referring to the former commander of a body of soldiers, stationed at a place whose name begins M[...], and seems to lie on the route leading north out of Petra via the wadi still called Wadi Namala before descending to the west into the Wadi Araba.

5. A GREEK INSCRIPTION incised on the Urn Tomb (IGLS XX, IG IV: no. 50):

Ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀτσιοτάτου Ἰάσονος ἐπισκόπου
Θ(εο)ῦ χάριτι ἤγι/ ἄσθη ὁ τόπος τῆ/ ε’
Λώου τοῦ ἔ(τους) τμα / παρόντος νομμέ/
ρου τῶν γενναιοτάτων [Τετραποδαλμα] / τ[ῶ]ν
καὶ Ἰουλιανοῦ δι/ακόνου ΛΠ.ΝΙΑΣ † /
Χ[ρ]([ιστοῦ]) σάξον[ος-]

Through the Holy Bishop Jason, by the grace of God, this place was consecrated, the 5th Loos of the year 341, in the presence of the Most Courageous Numerus of III Dalmatae and of Julianus, Deacon ... of Christ the Saviour ...

Date: 24 July AD 446/7

Principal Reading: Sartre 1993: 81–84

C. TOWERS

The region east of Petra is strewn with towers on many hilltops. The survey of the region around Adrou/Adroa, for example, recorded almost one hundred, most of which were identified as Roman. In many instances the survey also noted roads or walls connecting these towers. The full report has yet to be published. Cf. further below under Khatt Shebib (ch. 18).

Principal Reading: Killick 1986: *passim*; 1987: 32–34

(D. KHIRBET ARJA II)

**NO JADIS; MAP 3150.IV; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7465; UTMN 33644; PGE 204.200;
PGN 977.500 (NOT 2097.013, EL-ARJA OR
2098.010, KHIRBET EL-ARJA)**

About 20 km south-west of Shobak and c. 9 km north-north-east of Wadi Musa is a rectangular structure above a tributary of the Wadi Arja identified as a 'fort' (Killick 1987: 30; cf. Graf 1997a: 279 '*Castellum*'). It is about 18 x 14 m and pottery suggests a 2nd century date as well as later occupation.¹ The survey director observes that it is difficult to differentiate between fort and fortified farmstead and suggested that their function may have been interchangeable over a long period (Killick 1986: 438; 440).

Principal Reading: Killick 1987: 30–31

E. ADROU/ADROA (UDRUH)
JADIS 2097.002; UDRUH; MAP 3150.IV;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7496;
UTMN 33583; PGE 207.100; PGN 971.100

About 6 km south-east of Khirbet Arja and c. 15 due east of Petra is the important ancient Roman and Islamic town that still bears much the same name as in antiquity. It lies on the western edge of a small fertile area watered by springs and on a line of springs running south-east towards Ma'an (Fig. 17.3C).

Udruh is one of the two largest military structures in Jordan. It is strikingly similar in detail to that at Bethorus/um (El-Lejjun) (ch. 15) and of an almost identical size. The type is similar to contemporary Roman military structures at Luxor and Qasr Qarun in Egypt (Gregory 357–8; cf. Whitcomb 1990).

The fortress is built on an east-facing slope which resulted in a quite considerable difference in level from one end to the other — as much as 25 m in places. The uneven ground may also explain the distortion in shape — not just a quadrilateral but a bend in the east wall (Fig. 17.4). The overall dimensions are (clockwise from north): 246, 207, 248 and 177 m, c. 4.7 ha. The east wall has a bend just after the northernmost interval tower (no. 13). The building material of the circuit

wall was basalt in the foundations with limestone ashlar above encasing a mortared rubble core. It is 3 m thick and still stands to 6 m on the west side after clearance. The walkway will have been at about that height but, because of the drop in height across the site, must have been stepped down in places.

There are gates in approximately the centre of each side. Each is c. 3 m wide through a single arched entrance. That on the north has sockets for a double-leaved door and traces of wheel ruts in the threshold. Each is flanked by a pair of interval towers that are closer together at those points. In total there are 20 interval towers — four on each short side and six on the long at varying intervals. Each consists of a pair of walls projecting at right angles to the curtain for about 6–7 m followed by a semi-circular end to give a total projection of c. 11 m. Each is entered by a door in the rear and ascended by a staircase with barrel-vault. The excavator reports all as contemporary with the wall but not bonded into it.

The corner towers project 13–15 m with straight sides finishing in a semicircle of c. 22 m diameter (Fig. 17.5). Excavation of the south-west tower revealed four ground floor rooms and a 'square spiral' staircase.

The only excavation on an internal building suggested it may have been the *Principia*. Elsewhere inside may be seen the traces of walls protruding from a ruinfield of collapsed walls.

Buildings lie beyond the walls as well, attesting to the importance of the place. Documentary sources name it frequently from Ptolemy in the early 2nd century to a Byzantine chronicler in 630 then several Islamic sources. But they name it as a settlement: Eusebius mentions no garrison in his reference and it does not appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

¹ Glueck 1939: 54 seems to have been looking at a different site that he calls Kh. Arja and where he saw some Early Iron Age pottery but predominantly Nabataean. Presumably actually at the modern village of Arja c. 3.5 km to the west. Graf calls Killick's site 'Arja' (1997a: 279).

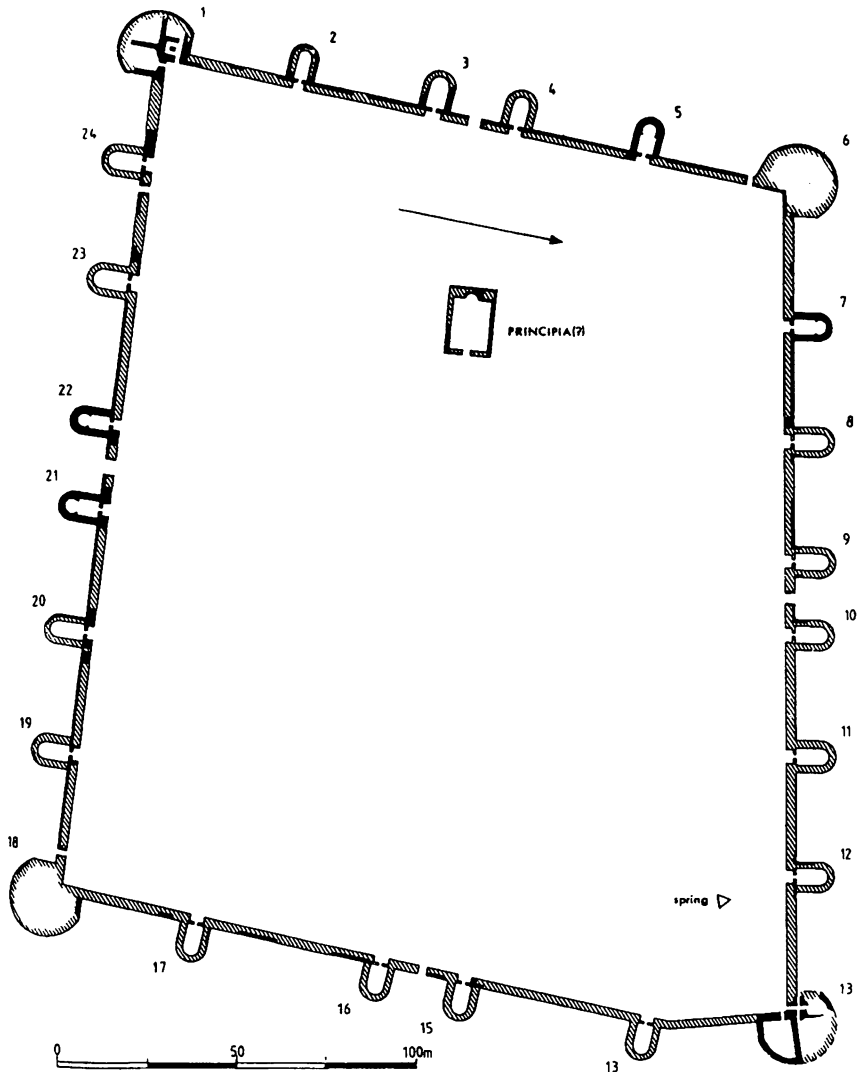


Fig. 17.4: Adrou/Adroa (Udruh): plan (from Gregory 3: F30.1).

Comparing it with Betthorus/um (El-Lejjun) (ch. 15), Gregory notes that in many respects Adrou/Adroa is “bigger and better”. Not overall size but in detail of the main features and in the sophistication of the work. The former was undoubtedly constructed as a fortress from the outset and seems never to have been anything else of significance; it is probably the base of a legion in the Notitia Dignitatum. Conversely, Adrou/Adroa is

known in the numerous documents as a town only and is not listed in the Notitia. As Gregory observes, an early 2nd century fort may well have stood at somewhere as important as Adroa. Later, it may have received a legion (VI Ferrata?) into a new fortress paralleling that at Betthorus/um or one imitating the other. This phase did not outlast the 4th century and the site developed as a purely civil settlement within and around the fortress walls.

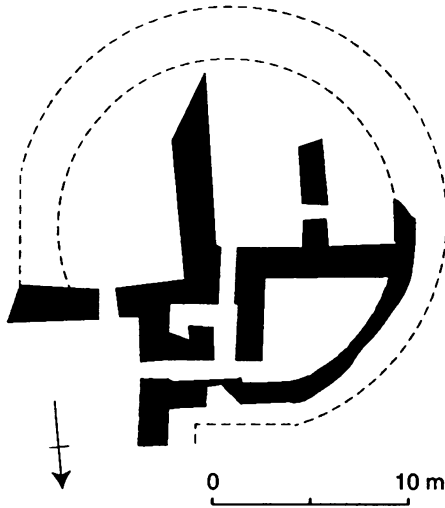


Fig. 17.5: Adrou/Adroa (Udruh): Tower 1 (after Gregory 3: F30.2).

Date: c. AD 300? The final report is awaited and interpretation relies on several articles, none more recent than 1987. The excavator originally viewed the military site as probably Trajanic but may later have had other thoughts. Certainly it is strikingly similar to Betthorus/um (el-Lejjun) which is convincingly dated to c. AD 300.

Principal Reading: PA II: 431–463; Killick 1983; 1986; 1987; Parker 1986: 94–98; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 131–134; Gregory 383–389

F. TELL ABARA

JADIS 2096.003; TELL ABARA; MAP 3150.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7489; UTMN 33563; PGE 206.300; PGN 969.200

About 2 km south-south-west of Adrou/Adroa, the hill called Tell Abara has around its summit the outline of a regular enclosure (Fig. 17.6) first noted by Killick. It is a rectangle, c. 150 x 120 m, c. 1.8 ha, with openings in the middle of the east and west sides. The striking features are the rectangular outline on a hilltop where curving lines might

have been expected and the presence of a bank curving out to mask the approach to the east gate — an external *clavicula*. It looks very like a Roman temporary camp, a structure rare in the Middle East (cf. Azraq, Azaima and 'Kh. Abu Safat', chs 7, 12, and 17).

Principal Reading: Killick 1986: 436–438; 1987: 28–29; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 107–108

(G. ABU DANNA)

JADIS 2096.007; ABU DANNA; MAP 3150.IV; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7437; UTMN 33502; PGE 201.000; PGN 963.300

A rectangular structure 'constructed from well-drafted ashlar' has been identified at Abu Danna, c. 10 km south-west of Adrou/Adroa. No plan or dating evidence has been published and only a single photograph.

Principal Reading: Killick 1986: 438–439; 1987: 30; cf. Graf 1997a: 279 ('*Castellum*')

H. KHIRBET EL-AIL

JADIS 2095.001; KHIRBET EL-AYL; MAP 3150.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7434; UTMN 33451; PGE 200.700; PGN 958.200

This fort lies on a hill beside a spring, c. 5 km south of Abu Danna, overlooking the Via Nova to the east. Parts of two milestones were found on the site. The modern village had already destroyed much of the fort and settlement early this century. Earlier visitors recorded a rectangular structure c. 60 x 69 m and a corner tower c. 8 m square (Fig. 17.7; cf. ch. 16 for Rujm el-Faridiyyeh).

Date: Surface pottery ranged from the Iron Age to Late Ottoman but the majority was Nabataean and Roman. Commentators have regarded the fort as Roman on slim architectural grounds.

Principal Reading: PA I: 467–8; Glueck 1935: 74–75; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 434–435; Parker 1986: 98–99; Killick 1986: 438; Gregory 390–391

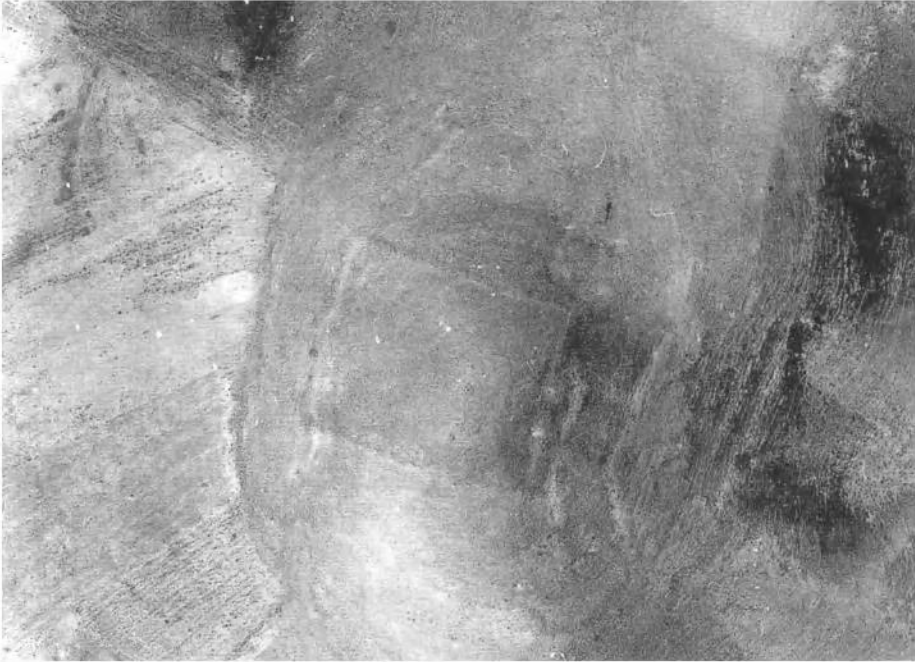


Fig. 17.6: Tell Abara: vertical air photograph (APA 81/14.14).

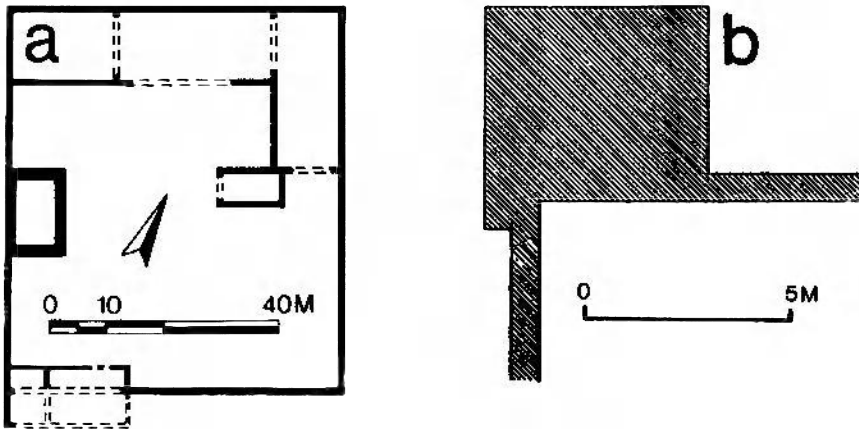


Fig. 17.7: Kh. el-Ail: (a) rectangular structure seen by Musil; (b) south-east corner tower (from PA II: 467).

I. THEMAN

Somewhere in the vicinity of Petra and presumably on this eastern side not too far from modern Wadi Musa, was a garrison place:

6. ACCORDING TO EUSEBIUS (*Onom.* p. 96, ll. 19–21; p. 97, ll. 14–19 [ed. Klostermann]).

Θαμάν (*Gen 36, 11*). χώρα ἡγεμόνων Ἐδῶμ ἐν τῇ Γεβαλιτικῇ, ἀπὸ Θαμάν υἱοῦ Ἐλιφάζ υἱοῦ Ἡσαῦ. ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς ἔτι νῦν κώμη ἐστὶ Θαμάν, ἀπέχουσα Πέτρων ὀμφρὶ τὰ εἴςμιεῖα, ἐν ἣ καὶ ἐγκάθηται στρατιωτικόν.

Theman, regio principum Edom in terra Gebalitica, a Theman filio Elifaz filii Esau sortita vocabulum. sed et usque hodie est villa Theman nomine distans ab urbe Petra quinque

milibus, ubi et Romanorum militum praesidium sedet.

Theman, a country of the rulers of Edom in the land of Gebalena its name derived from Theman, the son of Elifaz son of Esau. But even up to today there is a village named Theman, distant fifteen (or five?) miles from Petra, where there is also a military garrison.

Date: c. AD 293

Although superficially helpful, in fact the reference is exasperating. The numbers are probably rounded and there is not even a general direction from Petra. Nor are we given any indication of the size of garrison — a regiment, a small detachment? Moreover, Eusebius gives the distance as 15 miles while

Fig. 17.8: Tahuna: aerial view in 1953 (APA 53/25.062).



Jerome's translation has five. However, the identification of the place as being also the site of a *kome/villa* may be more helpful. One modern commentator has suggested equating the *kome/villa* with its garrison with the reference elsewhere to an imperial estate in this vicinity, the *Salus Hieraticus* (Avi-Yonah 1976: 101).

(J. JEBEL TAHUNA)

**JADIS 2196.001; NO NAME; MAP 3150.III;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7551;
UTMN 33484; PGE 212.400; PGN 961.100**

This is a remarkable and surprisingly little-known site. No certain military structure is known but it is included here because of the possibility that it is *Theman*, the '*kome/villa*' site and garrison place mentioned by Eusebius (above).

The *Jebel Tahuna* is a series of hills c. 12 km east-north-east of *Ail* and 12 km south-east of *Adrou/Adroa*. It is especially striking from the air as buried features stand out clearly (Fig. 17.8). Modern commentaries are brief: *Killick* (1986: 438–439) describes this as a key area for tapping water even today. He reports a rampart 4 km long and c. 2.5 m high, enclosing a farming area and town. He and others refer to a dam, a reservoir, aqueducts (to *Adrou*), church and possible '*Castellum*'. As the aerial photograph shows, there is a concentration of buried structures of a rectilinear character including one that could be a *caravanserai* or fort. There are broad similarities with the sites east of *Ma'an* (ch. 18)

Date: the surface pottery is said to be 'Byzantine' (= Late Roman).

Principal Reading: *Killick* 1986: 438–440, 442; 1987: 32; *Graf* 1997a: 279

K. CARCARIA

A military post is reported in two sources:

7. ACCORDING TO EUSEBIUS (*Onom.* p. 116, ll. 17–19; p. 110, ll. 13–15 [ed. *Klostermann*]).

Καρκᾶ. ἐνθα “Ζεβεὲ καὶ Σαλιμανᾶ”, οὓς ἀνεῖλε Γεδεών. καὶ ἔστι νῦν Καρκαρία φρούριον ἀπέχον Πέτρας πόλεως μόνην <ἡ μέραν>.

Carcar, ubi erant *Zebee* et *Salmana*, quos interfecit *Gedeon*. et est usque hodie castellum cognomento *Carcaria*, unius diei itinere ab urbe *Petra* distans.

Carca. Zebee and Salmana, whom Gedeon killed, used to be there. And it is now Carcaria, a garrison distant one day's journey from the city of Petra.

8. THE BEERSHEVA EDICT(S) includes a reference (*Frag. II*, line 6):

α' Καρκαρίας νιες [τοῖς δοίλ' ν.]

Date: between the early 4th century and *Anastasius* but probably later rather than earlier.

9. The site has been identified with an entry in the *NOTITIA DIGNITATUM* (*Or.* 37.28):

Equites primi felices [sagittarii indigenae] Palaestini, Sabure sive Veterocariae

The First Fortunate Regiment of Mounted Palestinian Native Archers, at Sabura or Veterocaria.

Sabura has been equated with *Es-Sabra* a day's walk, 6.5 km south-south-west of *Petra*, at a place with a small theatre, a Nabataean settlement and mining centre.

Principal Reading: *PA I*: 425–427; *Hartmann* 1913: 184–185; *Avi-Yonah* 1976: 97; *AJ II.2*: 500–505; *Fiema* 1991: 303, n. 16

18. THE SHERA'A

The southern part of the Highlands of Ma'an is known as Esh-Shera'a, a name descended from Biblical Seir. Shera'a is the name, too, of the mountains that run down the western side of the plateau before curving eastwards to create the Shera'a Scarp south of which lies the Hisma Desert (Fig. 18.1).

Ma'an was as far south as the great journeys of exploration by Brännow and von Domszewski reached in 1897 and 1898. Two major ancient but enigmatic sites lie just east of the town but the principal Roman military sites are in the west of this region and along the final stretch of the Shera'a Scarp.

(A. MA'AN, EL-HAMMAM AND EL-MUTRAB)

JADIS 2295.005; MA'AN; MAP 3150.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7635; UTMN 33436; PGE 220.700; PGN 956.200
JADIS 2295.002; EL-HAMMAM; MAP 3150.II; UTM ZONE 36; GRID REF. SHOULD BE UTME 7651; UTMN 33449; PGE 222.500; PGN 957.500
JADIS 2295.001; EL-MUTRAB; MAP 3150.II; UTM ZONE 36; GRID REF. SHOULD BE UTME 7685; UTMN 33449; PGE 226.000; PGN 957.500

Ma'an is today a large, bustling desert town on the Desert Highway and Hedjaz Railway. It was already a surprisingly substantial place in the early 19th century. In part that was because of its location on the Pilgrim Road

and as a nodal point on ancient caravan routes. More particularly, it was the abundant water to be found there. All early visitors remark on the springs in and around the town and to its west, the lush gardens, orchards and greenery in what was a modest but important oasis (PA II: 1-3; Musil 1926: 2-3; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 295).

Little has been explored archaeologically at Ma'an itself; and very inadequately even at the important sites to the east. The impression is that Ma'an and its neighbours all began to flourish most fully in the post-Roman period when major, and perhaps unfinished efforts were made to irrigate an area of several square kilometres east of Ma'an. It seems clear, however, that such a well-watered and strategically important place must have attracted attention in the Roman period. Findlater's survey to the north has underscored the direction being taken by the Roman road coming south from Jurf ed-Darawish and the Roman sites in that area. At Ma'an itself, early Arab writers believed there had been pre-Islamic settlement and one refers to a stronghold and governor there in the Byzantine period (Musil 1926: 247). At three sites east of Ma'an — el-Hammam, Kh. Samra and el-Mutrab, late Roman pottery is prominent albeit in the context of small numbers (cf. Kennedy 1992a: 482).

The remarkable sites just east of Ma'an seem to be a parallel of sorts to the important site at Tahuna (ch. 17) and there would be value in

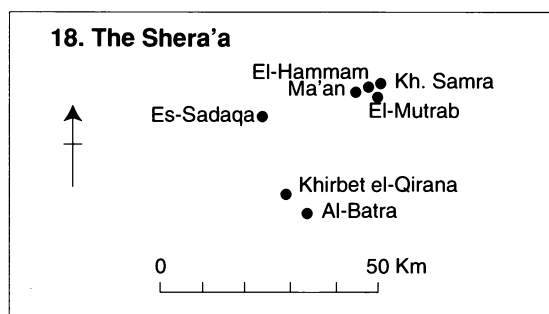


Fig. 18.1: Map of the Shera'a region.



Fig. 18.2: El-Hammam: near vertical aerial view of the reservoir and caravanserai/fort (?) (APA 98/18.36). The latter has now been bulldozed entirely since this photograph in 1998 (Kennedy and Bewley 2001: 73–76).

investigating them together (Fig. 18.2). Findlater has brought some clarity to fragmentary data and confused interpretation. Visitors have identified a substantial but irregular “wall” several kilometres long surrounding a long triangular area extending c. 5 km east from Ma’an and up to 3 km wide, spanning two wadis running east from Ma’an itself and from the satellite town of as-Samiyye 2 km to the north (Fig. 18.3). Running through the area is a long aqueduct with several subsidiary channels. Also visible on the air photographs of 1953 are fossilised field boundaries and irrigation ditches with clear traces of the lines of pits for trees. Also beyond dispute are the two large square structures at el-Hammam and el-Mutrab respectively, and the large reservoirs associated with each. Parker, following Brünnow and von

Domaszewski, saw them as Roman forts but Gregory is right to be sceptical. Visible on the air photographs and now visited by Findlater is a third such structure at Kh. Samra.

El-Hammam lies 2.1 km north-east of the town centre of Ma’an. It consists of a large reservoir (c. 67 m square) and, beside it, a rectangular structure, c. 61 x 51.5 m. The latter has ranges of rooms against the walls and an open courtyard. Further structures, though more irregular and flimsy, are visible all around but especially in an east-west alignment paralleling the aqueduct. Kh. Samra lies 3.7 km east of el-Hammam, hard up against the northern line of the aqueduct. It is again a series of rooms against the walls of a rectangular courtyard structure, c. 50 m square.¹ El-Mutrab lies 2.9 km east-south-east of el-Hammam and 1.35 km south-west of Kh.

¹ This might be the ‘walled enclosure D, similar to that at el-Mutrab’ referred to by Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 300).

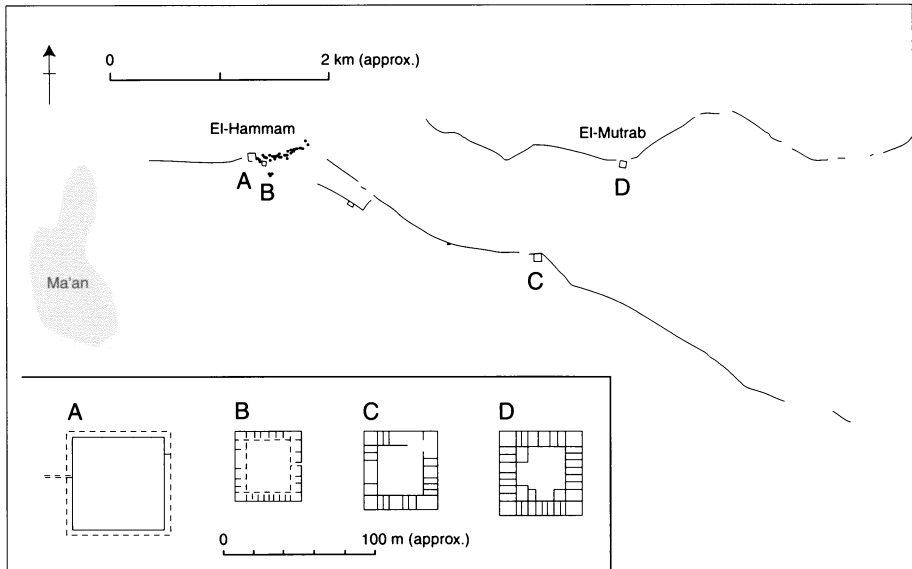


Fig. 18.3: Ma'an to el-Mutrab: sketch plan of the principal features based on aerial photographs dated 1953.

Samra. It is strikingly similar to the latter though perhaps a little smaller.

All three structures are simple courtyard buildings of the type associated with caravanserais or early Islamic residences throughout the region. Although Roman pottery was found at them all, the quantities were modest and Islamic pottery was also identified. They are included here because it seems likely the area does include one or more genuine Roman military structure even if those identified as such are in fact Islamic. The place may — like Tahuna perhaps (ch. 17) — have been an imperial estate and had a military presence. Certainly it has been customary to identify el-Hammam with a place named in the Beer Sheva Edict as “Ammatha” and in the Notitia Dignitatum under the Dux Palaestinae and apparently in this area.

1. THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.33):

Ala Antana dromedariorum, Admatha

The Ala Antana (Camels), at Admatha

Now the Petra papyri have produced a further reference to a man from Petra called Flavius Dusarios who is described as:

2. PETRA PAPRYUS (Inv. 67 = ADAJ 1998: 475):

$\alpha[\pi]\delta \text{ } \rho\alpha\iota\varphi\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\omega\nu \text{ } \text{Καστρον Αμμαθων}$

The Former-Prefect of Kastron Ammatha

Findlater may be right in suggesting the ‘Kastron’ should be located at Ma’an rather than to the east. [Note: We might note that Amatha is apparently the name also of the Azraq Oasis (ch. 8) but it is a common Semitic name meaning ‘the hot place’].

Principal Reading: PA II: 1–6; Musil 1926: 2–5, 243–248; Stein (Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 295–301; Parker 1986: 100–103; Gregory 392–394; Fiema 2002a: 134; 2002b: 212; Findlater 2002: 141–144

B. ZODOCATHA/ZADAGATTA
(ES-SADAQA)

JADIS 1995.022; ES-SADAQA; MAP
3050.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7402;
UTMN 33396; PGE 197.300; PGN 952.600

About 7 km south-west of Ail and c. 23 west of Ma'an is the ruined Roman town at Sadaqa. It lies on the Via Nova Traiana where a branch road runs off west down into the Wadi Arabah at Ariddela/Arieldela (Gharandal). It is almost certainly the Zanaatha of Ptolemy (*Geog.* 5.17.5) and confidently identified with the Zadagatta of the Peutinger Table XVIII M. P. south of Petra and XX MP north of Hauara (Humayma, ch. 20). Documents reveal the military role of the place:

1. THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.24):

Equites promoti indigenae, Zodocathae

The Advanced Native Cavalry, at Zodocathae

Date: c. AD 400

2. TWO GRAFFITI in the Wadi Haggag in Sinai refer to (Negev 1977: nos 72 and 104):

(a) +Κ(ύρι)ε βωηθι τῶν δοῦλων σου/Λέωνος
Καλλινίκου Ζαδάκαθων καὶ τοὺς φίλους
αἰτιοῦ. Ἀμήν. / Κ(ύρι)ε+.

Lord help your servant Leon son of Kallinikos of Zadacatha and his companions. Amen. O Lord.

(b) +Κάστρου Ζαδάκαθα++Κ(ύρι)ε σοσον
τὸν δοῦλόν σου/ Σεργίου Στεφάνου/ καὶ
Κυριακὸς διακόνου/ καὶ Θεόδωρος/
Σεργίνης.

Fortress of Zadacatha. O Lord save your servant Sergius son of Stephen and Kyriakos (son of) the deacon and Theodore son of Sergines.

Date: Christian – Late Roman

3. A PETRA PAPYRUS, as yet unpublished, refers to troops — apparently *limitanei* rather than the previous *Equites Promoti* — at Kastron Zadacathon (Fiema 2002a: 211; 2002b: 134)

Date: AD 593

At the site itself extensive ruins stretch south of the spring covering an area of c. 250 x 150 m, c. 3.75 ha. Traces of a wall enclosing a large rectangular area within the town can be seen at ground level and test-trenching has taken place (Graf 1995: 14 = 1997: VI: 14). As the aerial photograph shows (Fig. 18.4C), the walls are especially clear on the south and west sides and traces can be seen of projecting towers at the centre of the south side (a gate?) and on the west side. Interpretation of and measurement on the aerial photos suggests an overall size of c. 120 x 80 m, 0.96 ha, with projecting rectangular/square towers at the corners and at intervals along the walls.

Although commentators have long realised the fort and garrison must have been in the town, traditionally attention has focused on the structure known as Rujm Sadaqa on a hilltop c. 1 km east of the settlement. As Gregory observes, however, the plan suggests a rather large structure, apparently open along the entire east side. Recent excavation has revealed a tomb on the hill and it may be best to interpret this structure as a shrine perhaps reused in part later as a watchtower.

Principal Reading: PA I: 468–469; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 334; Parker 1986: 99–100; Gregory 395–397; Graf 1995: 5–7, 14 (= 1997c: VI: 5–7, 14)

C. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

South of Petra the line of the Via Nova is hard to identify. Two Roman roads, both marked by milestones, diverge before coming together again at Zodocatha. Moreover, there is the apparently contemporary road known as the Darb er-Rasif running along the edge of the plateau further west and, for most of the time,



Fig. 18.5: Via Nova Traiana: 'milestone factory' below Ain Qana on the Shera'a scarp (Photo: D. Graf).

independent of either of the others (Graf 1995: 7, 12–14 and Fig. 2 (p. 8))

About 18 km due south of Zodoatha the modern road reaches Ras en-Naqb and begins its descent from the scarp into the Hisma Desert. The Via Nova Traiana, however, follows a different alignment crossing the scarp about 5 km to the north-west near modern Qana. An aqueduct commences here, too, at the springs on the scarp and both road and aqueduct (albeit by initially divergent routes) run south-west to Humayma (ch. 19). Milestones and traces of the road have been followed all the way south to the scarp but particularly interesting is what Graf has called a 'milestone factory' just below Qana (Fig. 18.5). A great heap of broken milestones lies beside the road, all anepigraphic like examples further north but in contrast to those in the Hisma below. Graf's work has transformed what was previously known of this area, in particular, he regards the stretch between Zodoatha (Sadaqa) and Hauara (Humayma) as "the best defined segment in the entire south" (1995: 22).

Principal Reading: Graf 1995: 7–22 (= 1997c: VI: 7–22)

**D. KHIRBET EL-QIRANA
NO JADIS; MAP 3149.4; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7452; UTMN 33200;
PGE 201.900; PGN 933.200**

About 5km south-east of Ras en-Naqb is the controversial fort and small town at Kh. el-Qirana. It is located on a hill with views out over the Shera'a Plateau to the north. It lies about 1.5 km east of a stretch of the Khatt Shebib (below). There is a thick scatter of other ancient settlements in the vicinity most of which seem to be Nabataean in their earliest major phase but with continued Roman occupation.

The site was recorded briefly by Musil in 1902 with a published plan (1908: 229–230) and referred to by him again in relation to his visit of 1910 (1926: 50). It was recorded by Glueck in 1934 but without a drawing (1935: 62). Musil and Glueck conflict with one another and Musil's text and plan are at odds. A re-examination of

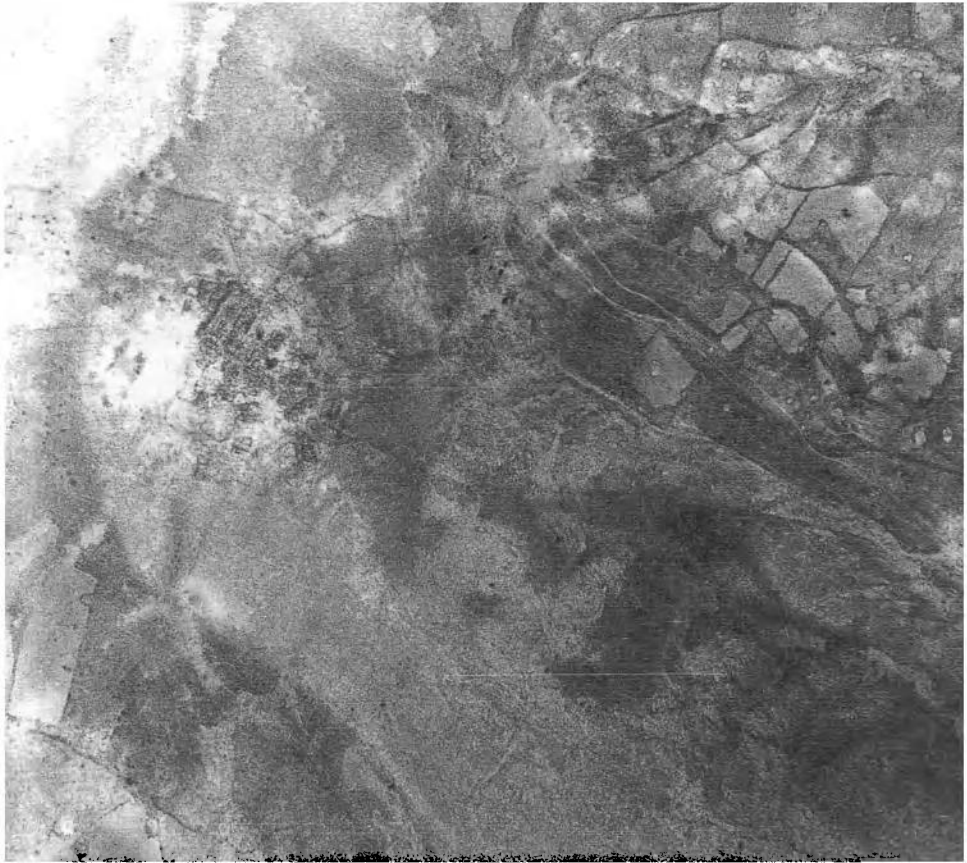


Fig. 18.6: Kh. el-Qirana: vertical air photograph of 1953 (APA 53/HAS53: 37.012 BR).

the accounts and a study of the aerial photographs now permits some greater certainty.

The fort lies on the western side of a small town of some 4.5 ha (Fig. 18.6). It consists of a rectangular enclosure, c. 70 x 45 m, c. 0.315 ha. There are rectangular towers 5.2 x 3.2 m projecting at two corners with certainty and possibly once at all four (Fig. 18.7). There are towers projecting in the middles of the walls, each perhaps 2.5 m square. That on the north-west (correcting Musil) seems to have been larger — perhaps 2.5 x 6.2. The enclosure wall is 2 m thick but those of the towers only 1.2 m. Internally there are 'square' rooms against all four walls and four (?) ranges of rooms in rectangular buildings. The towers and the barrack-like rooms in the central area favour

a military site rather than a caravanserai. Moreover, the main highway north is several kilometres to the north-west. There is no certain trace of a gate. Lander and Parker place it on the north-east wall but the south-east wall would make more sense. Parker reports two cisterns to the west of the structure and another on the north.

Surface pottery is largely divided between Nabataean and Roman and earlier commentators have attributed the fort to both of these at different times (Lander (and Glueck?) and Parker respectively). Architecturally it could be Roman but we know too little of Nabataean military architecture.

Date: Nabataean and/or Roman

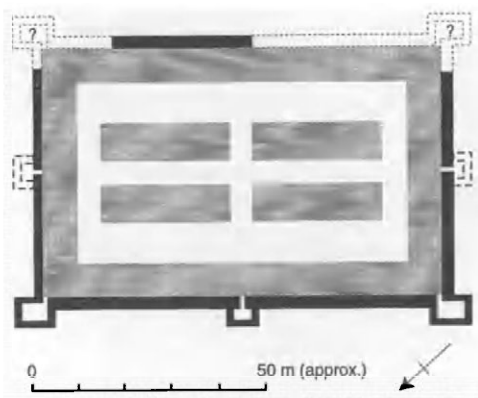


Fig. 18.7: Kh. el-Qirana: suggested plan reconstructed from written sources and aerial photographs.

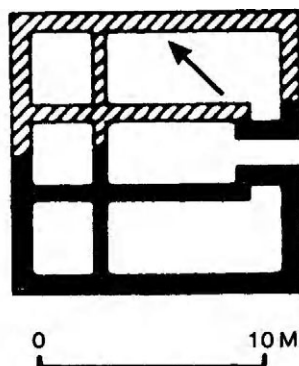


Fig. 18.8: Al-Batra: plan of the tower on Jebel al-Batra (from Gregory 3: F37.1).

Principal Reading: Musil 1908: 229–230; Glueck 1935: 63; Parker 1986: 102–104, 106; Gregory 400–401; Kennedy 2002a

E. AL-BATRA
JADIS 2092.003; JABAL BATRA;
MAP 3149.IV; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7507; UTMN 33144; PGE 207.300;
PGN 927.200

The tower is constructed on a tall hill, the Jebel al-Batra (1555 m), just above several wells on the lower ground over 120 m below. It commands superb views in all directions except the west and overlooks the track running along the edge of the Shera'a scarp from Ras en-Naqb south-eastwards. The hill itself is detached from the Shera'a.

Musil drew a plan (Fig. 18.8) and provided brief comment during his visit of 1910. Stein was there in 1939 but could make out little of what Musil had drawn though acknowledging the magnificent location and publishing a photograph. Stein reported walls still standing to almost 2.5 m. Where Musil saw a structure c. 13 m square, Stein, diffidently, thought it c. 12 x 10.5 m.

Date: Musil thought it Roman; Stein conceded it could be Nabataean or Roman.

Principal Reading: Musil 1926: 45–48; Stein (Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 332–333; Gregory 402–403

F. KHATT SHEBIB

This is the name by which a long wall of basalt boulders is known. It meanders southwards along, broadly, the boundary between steppe and desert (Fig. 18.9). On the Archaeological Map of Jordan it runs for at least 30 km beginning c. 15 km due west of Ma'an and ending just north-west of Kh. Dauq on the edge of the Shera'a escarpment. Much of it is included on the 1: 50,000 maps as well. In fact it can be traced both further north and further south and there are evidently spurs coming in to join the main line. The wall is undated but often presented as medieval. In the light of recent research on its relationship to what may be a Nabataean and (?) Roman fort at Kh. el-Moreighah, it may now be seen as Nabataean or possibly earlier.

Principal Reading: Killick 1986: 432–436; Kennedy forthc. c



Fig. 18.9: Khatt Shebib: vertical aerial view of 1953 around the Nabataean fort (?) at Kh. Moreigha. Note how the wall disappears as it gets near the fort implying it is earlier (APA 53/HAS53: 37.019).

19. THE HISMA

South of the Shera'a Plateau the land drops abruptly by several hundred metres. This region, the Hisma, is significantly hotter and more arid. Fertile soils and water resources are very limited; only in the north around Hauara (Humayma) is there any significant cultivation. The main route southwards from the descent from the plateau at Qana (ch. 19) runs along the western edge of the steppe/desert where it borders the mountain chain overlooking the Wadi Araba further west. Initially the land is very flat, marked only by occasional outcrops. South of Quweira, however, it enters a mountainous area and follows a narrowing valley past Kh. Khalde to its intersection with the Wadi Yitm coming in from the east at Kh. Kithara. Beyond that point the road has to surmount a final mountain ridge to descend to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. At that point, the Wadi Araba which has run south as a great trough from the Dead Sea reaches the gulf as well (ch. 20). East of Kithara lies the scenic desert and vivid red sand and rocky outcrops of Wadi Ramm and its springs. In general water is limited and the route of the Roman road is marked by forts with cisterns and reservoirs filled from harvested seasonal rainwater (Fig. 19.1).

A. THE VIA NOVA TRAIANA

The Peutinger Table shows the main route south from Petra through Zodocatha (Sadaqa) continuing to Haura after XX MP then XXIII

to P(rae)sidi(um). At that point it becomes confused with a road coming in from the Negev in the west before both continue to Haila (Aqaba) on the Red Sea. The Notitia Dignitatum also mentions these three key places as being garrisons: Haure/Hauanae, Praesidium and Aila. Finally, the Beer Sheva Edict(s) includes *Auaron* and *tou Praesidiou*.

The road itself can be traced in various places often close by one of the successive modern roads to Aqaba. More important, however, has been the discovery of milestones by, in particular, Alt (1936) and now Graf (1995a). The stones include several of Trajan (Fig. 19.2) as well as others dated to the Tetrarchy.

Scholars tracing the road have also reported several small watch-towers on or near it as one might expect.

The clear picture is of a road running south through at least two military posts — Hauara and Praesidium — to terminate at a third, Aila on the Red Sea. It was marked by milestones and maintained over at least two centuries and there were watch-towers here and there. As we shall see, that is not a full picture but it does reflect the broad outline of the military occupation of this area.

Principal Reading: Alt 1936; Graf 1995a: 22–33

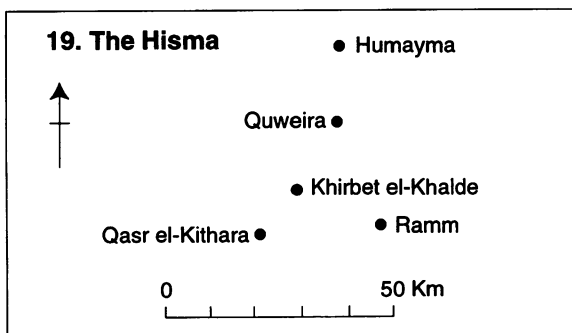


Fig. 19.1: Map of sites in the Hisma (see Graf 1997c: VI, 24)



Fig. 19.2: Trajanic milestone rediscovered by Graf in 1989 just south of Quweira.

**B. HAUARA (HUMAYMA)
JADIS 1892.008; EL-HUMAYMA; MAP
3049.1; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7264;
UTMN 33159; PGE 183.100; PGN 929.200**

The important ruins at Humayma lie c. 30 km south-west of Zodocatha (Sadaqa). They have produced dating evidence extending from the Nabataeans of the 1st century BC to the Early Islamic Period. The ruins correspond quite closely with the XX MP of the Peutinger Table between Zadagatta and Hauara to its south on the Via Nova Traiana and an inscription from the site now confirms the name (below).

The place is also known from a range of other written sources showing it as a Nabataean

foundation of Aretas III (85–62 BC), a town of the Roman Empire and later as an important residence of the Abassid family (AD 690–750). Archaeology fills out the picture and several seasons of excavation have now made it one of the best-known military sites in Jordan.

At its fullest extent it was a town of some 10 ha with buildings scattered across a wide area (Fig. 19.3). Outstanding is the large rectangular structure (B), identified as a fort and now known from excavation to be that rarity in the Middle East, an early Roman imperial fort (Fig. 19.4).

The fort lies on the north-east of the site, detached from the bulk of visible ancient

structures (Fig. 19.5). It is an almost perfect rectangle, 700 x 500 RF — 206.32 x 148.3 m, 3.05 ha. The walls consist of a pair of facing walls made up of a mixture of limestone and sandstone, masonry and unformed boulders. Some bear characteristic Nabataean chisel marking. The core is of rubble, boulders and earth. Neither facing nor core is mortared. Against the rear of this a second, contemporary, wall has been constructed to support a walkway. The overall thickness is c. 3 m. The impression is of a structure made from a great deal of reused material including from Nabataean structures. The large quantities of Nabataean pottery in the Phase I levels support this and may suggest a

significant earlier Nabataean building on or near the site.

Gates open through the centres of the north and south walls. Those on the east and west — as was common — are off-centre, in this case dividing the wall in the ratio of 4:3. Excavation of the East Gate revealed an opening 4.2 m wide and cuts, grooves and metal pieces interpreted as parts of a double wooden door pivoting inwards. At this gate at least, the outer face of the fort walls was plastered.

Especially important for the study of military architecture in the East is the presence of

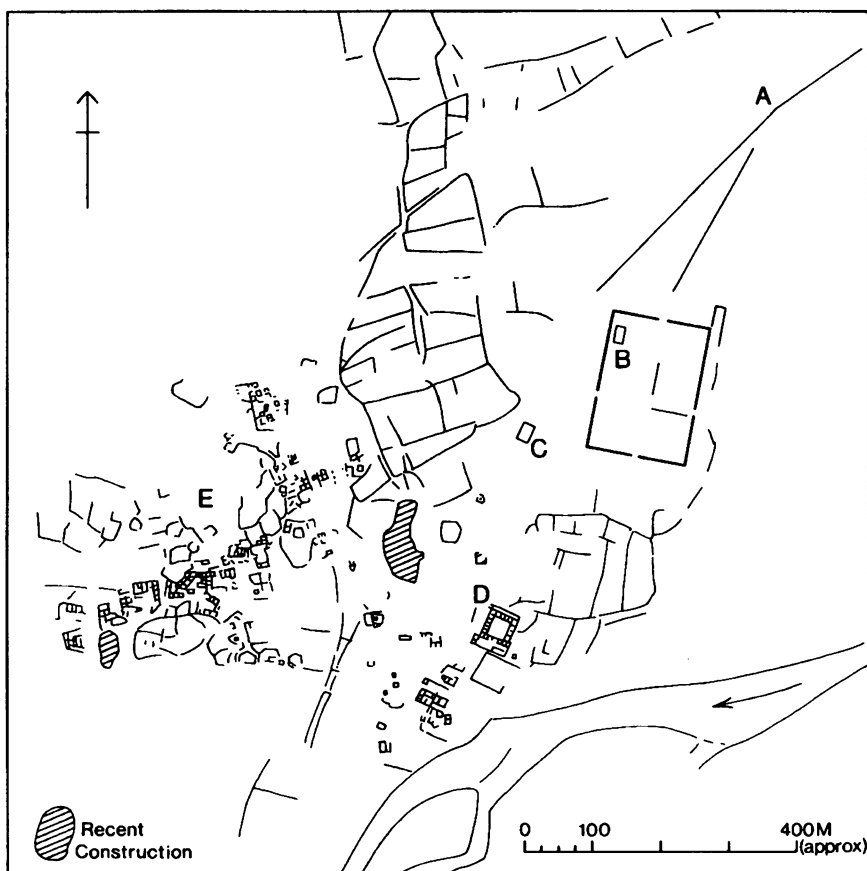


Fig. 19.3: Humayma: plan of the site from a vertical aerial photograph of 1953 (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: 147, fig. 90).



Fig. 19.4: Humayma: aerial view of the fort looking south (APA 98/40.31).

projecting square towers all around. Corner towers are c. 5.85 m square (20 RF) and project c. 1.85 m. That at the south-east angle was excavated. Along the walls are 20 interval towers, each c. 5.8 to 6 m square and projecting c. 1.8 m. All towers are bonded to and part of the Phase I construction.

Inside the North Gate a large building has been revealed as a *Principia*. It is 29.42 m (100 RF) wide in the north across a range of rooms and extends south through a colonnaded courtyard to the *Via Principalis* — a fairly typical general layout for a *Principia*. Terracotta roof tiles have been taken to imply pitched roofs in Phase I on part at least of this building. Phase

II may have had flat roofs as suggested by lumps of clay with impressed reed marks. The rooms of Phase I were plastered with the upper half covered in elaborate polychrome frescoes. Phase II reconstruction was generally of a poorer quality contrasting with that of I.

In the south-east quadrant, a range of rooms, 4.5 x 3.5 m has been interpreted as barracks. One room, however, contained a forge and excavation recovered a mass of metal pieces intended for reworking: “Buckles, three-bladed arrow heads, spear points and butts, sections of scale armour, hobnails for boots, and the cheekpiece of an iron helmet, with fragments of leather still adhering to its inside

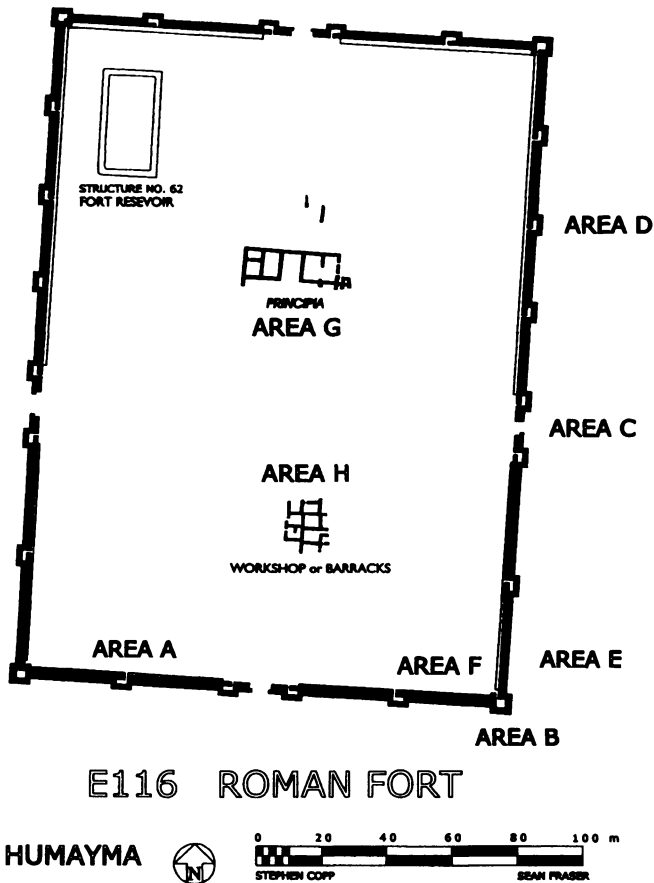


Fig. 19.5: Humayma: plan of the fort according to excavation up to 1998 (courtesy J. Oleson).

surface³⁷. The excavator suggests the building may have been a barracks used later as a workshop or been both things in both phases.

Food refuse was abundant and included not just the expected sheep and goat bones but those of pigs and chickens too. Oyster shells — brought from the Red Sea c. 45 km to the south, presumably — are numerous, especially around the *Principia*. Surprisingly, however, there is only a single sherd of imported wine amphora — and that was not from the fort.

Unexpectedly for southern Jordan (cf. Fig. 2.1) several inscriptions have recently been published from the site. A badly weathered

Latin inscription was found in the *principia* as were two altars with Greek inscriptions; an altar in Latin and further dedication in Greek were found in the *vicus*.

1. ALTAR IN GREEK FOUND IN THE *PRINCIPIA* (Oleson *et al.* 2002: 107–109):

Διὸ Μεγίστω[ι] / Καπετωλ[ι]
/ ωὶ Ἀδριαν[οῦ] (?) / ὃς Ἀγρίππα
/ [ἀνέθηκε] (?)

To the Greatest Zeus Kapitoliος (by) Hadrianos (?) son of Agrippa [dedicated it?].

Date: 2nd–3rd centuries AD

Hadrian (?) is surely a soldier. 'Agrippa' was a popular name in the East from Augustus' time.

2. STATUE BASE FOUND IN THE PRINCIPIA (Oleson *et al.* 2002: 110):

Ἐωτήρι[μος] or Ἐωτήρι[ος] or Ἐωτήρι[χος] / Πρωτος[...] / τηγ[ά]νέθ[ηκε] (?)

Soterios (or Soteris or Soterichos?) Protos ...? Dedicated (?) it.

Date: 2nd century AD

Again presumably a soldier. The name is Egyptian.

3. STATUE BASE (?) FOUND IN THE PRINCIPIA. There are only a few readable letters (Oleson *et al.* 2002: 110–112):

...]PRAESENEMPLEGAT[... or
...]PRAESENTEMERAT[....

Date: 2nd–3rd centuries AD

The text may be evidence for the presence of part at least of the Legion VI Ferrata in the new province at the time of annexation — C. Bruttius Praesens is a known commander in c. AD 114/5 (cf. ch. 5).

4. AN ALTAR IN LATIN FROM THE VICUS (Oleson *et al.* 2002: 112–126):

Pr(o) Sal(ute)/ Augg(ustorum duorum)/ [I]ovi Ammo/ni vexill(atio) [or vexill(ari)/ Leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae)/ Fel(icis?)/ Q. D. F. Hav(arrae)/ cum Iulio Prisco.

For the Safety of the Emperors to Jupiter Ammon a vexillation [or vexillari] of the Legion III Cyrenaica Fortunate (dedicated) the gift that it [or they] made at Hauarra along with Iulius Priscus.

Date: 2nd–3rd centuries AD

The text not only gives us a first reference to a detachment of the provincial legion at this

fort and a further reference to the popular Egyptian deity Jupiter Ammon (cf. the altar from Dumata in Saudi Arabia — ch. 21) but confirms the place-name as Hauara.

5. DEDICATION IN GREEK ON A COLUMN FOUND IN THE VICUS (Oleson *et al.* 2002: 117–119):

Ἄπολλῶς / Διοσκόρου / Μῶρος ὑπέρο / εὐχαριστί / ἀσάνθη / κ[ε]ν[Δ]ιέι / Σε[ρ]άπιδι

Apollo, son of Dioskoros, (called?) Moros, in thanksgiving dedicated (it) to Zeus Serapis.

Date: late 2nd/ early 3rd centuries AD

Once again this probable soldier or veteran reveals an Egyptian connection through the choice of deity and probably the names.

As elsewhere in Jordan the water supply was probably originally Nabataean. A ground level aqueduct has now been traced from the springs at Qana on the Shera'a scarp to the north (above). It reaches Humayma from the north-east and emptied into a large rectangular reservoir just south-west of where the fort was later constructed. When the fort was laid out, a spur was led off from the aqueduct to fill a second reservoir in the north-west corner of the fort. Once again the dimensions are in round numbers of Roman Feet: 100 x 50 x 10 RF (= 29.4 x 14.2 x 3.05 m, c. 1275 cu metres).

Date: stratified coins and ceramics allow dating to the first quarter of the 2nd century through to the 4th. Several Trajanic coins, including an almost unused one of 112–117, were recovered. The excavator interprets Phase I from Trajan to the late 3rd century. There are no coins of Diocletian but then many of the House of Constantine belong to Phase II which the excavator places in the 4th century after the Tetrarchic reorganisation elsewhere in the region. This Phase II ended in a slow decline.

Documents help fill out the picture:

6. IN THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM is (Or. 34.26; cf. 12):

Equites sagittarii indigenae, Hauanae (sic)

Native Horse Archers, at Haua<r>a

Date: c. AD 400

7. The interpretation of the places listed in THE BEER SHEVA EDICT(S) as military posts enables us to include that as a source (Fig. V: line 2):

ἀπι(ὸ) Αὐαρων νο(μίματα) μγ' (καί) τ[οῖς] . . .

Auara, 43 solidi

Date: late-4th/mid-5th century AD?

Principal Reading: Kennedy and Riley 1990: 146–148; Gregory 398–399; cf. 3: 196; Oleson 2001; Oleson *et al.* 1995: esp. 321–330; Oleson *et al.* 1999; Oleson *et al.* 2002

C. QUWEIRA

**JADIS 1891.011; QUWEIRAH; MAP 3049.I;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7240;
UTMN 32990; PGE 180.300; PGN 912.400**

Quweira lies c. 16 km south-south-east of Hauara (Humayma), just east of the modern village. It consists of a small fort now largely buried and extensively looted of stone (much of it now in the Mandate period police post immediately on its west), a large reservoir and a watchtower on the high rock outcrop that dominated the site (Fig. 19.6C). The area is very flat with wide views in all directions.

The fort has been described by several visitors since Musil in 1910 (1926: 62–64). Until 1989 however, when Graf made a sondage there, it had never been explored and had been rapidly deteriorating. That is a great pity as it is clearly is a site of some importance; sondages revealed the tops of arched doorways suggesting a still well-preserved fort.

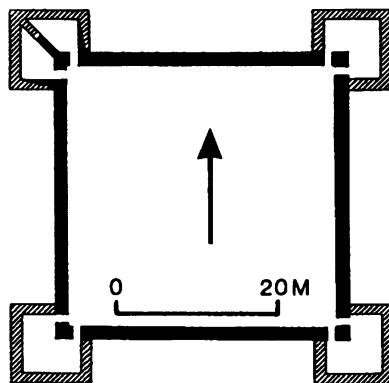


Fig. 19.7: *Quweira: plan of the fort (from Gregory 3: F38.1a).*

The fort is almost square, 32.5 x 31.5 m (internal measurements) (Fig. 19.7). The walls have been variously described as 1.65 (Alt) and 2.65 (Stein). The projecting towers are c. 9 m square, projecting c. 4.5 m. Entrances are through a pair of doors in each corner at right angles to each other (Fig. 19.8). Some of the lintel blocks carry uninscribed *tabula ansata* panels. Presumably excavation would reveal rooms built against the walls and surrounding a small courtyard.

As Gregory notes, the closest parallel is Thuraiya where the fort is only a little bigger (c. 37.5 x 34.5 m) with towers of over 8 m square projecting 3.8 to 4.9 m (ch. 14).

The place has not been identified with any of those named in ancient documents. It has been suggested that the regiment in the Notitia Dignitatum described as being ‘*apud Praesidium*’, may have been at either Kithara (below) or here at Quweira since Praesidium is well-established as being the next site, Kh. el-Khalde (Parker 1986: 109; Graf 1995a: 27). However, the distance from Khalde to either of these places is considerable (16 and 18 km respectively) and it would be strange if Quweira did not have a name.

Date: An early Nabataean inscription and Nabataean pottery imply a pre-Roman



Fig. 19.8: *Quweira: view of the tops of the doors exposed in 1989 in the inside of the south-east corner leading into corner tower.*

occupation. Surface pottery and now the pottery and coins excavated inside the fort during Graf's sondage of 1989 (1995a: 23) suggest the fort is essentially Roman.

The watch tower on top of the adjacent rock outcrop provided a wide view over the plain. Pottery there included Nabataean sherds and there were blocks with Nabataean chisel markings.

Principal Reading: Musil 1926: 62–64; Glueck 1935: 57–58; Alt 1936: 96–86; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 315–317; Parker 1986: 105–108; Gregory 404–406

D. PRAESIDIUM
(KHIRBET EL-KHALDE)

JADIS 1789.002; KHIRBET EL-KHALDI;
MAP 3049.III; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7160; UTMN 32830;
PGE 172.000; PGN 896.500

Twenty-three Roman miles south of Hauara (Humayma) the Peutinger Table locates

Praesidium. The point coincides closely with the ruins at Khirbet el-Khalde, about 33 km from Humayma and 17 km south of Quweira. There is no alternative site within 15–20 km. The landscape has changed considerably since Quweira. A few kilometres south of the latter the road enters the mountains following now the Wadi Yitm for c. 40 km almost all the way to Aqaba. Generally the valley is narrow but after about 8 km, it broadens briefly to 2–3 km wide where some wadis join it from the west.

The ruins of Kh. el-Khalde lie on the north-east side of the basin, c. 800 m north-west of a spring in the hillside (Fig. 19.9C). There are two rectangular structures, several cisterns to the north-west and an aqueduct coming in from the spring.

The fort is a rectangular enclosure, 49.5 x 32 m (Fig. 19.10). There are towers at each corner, c. 6 m square and projecting c. 3.5 m. The walls of the enclosure are of two, perhaps

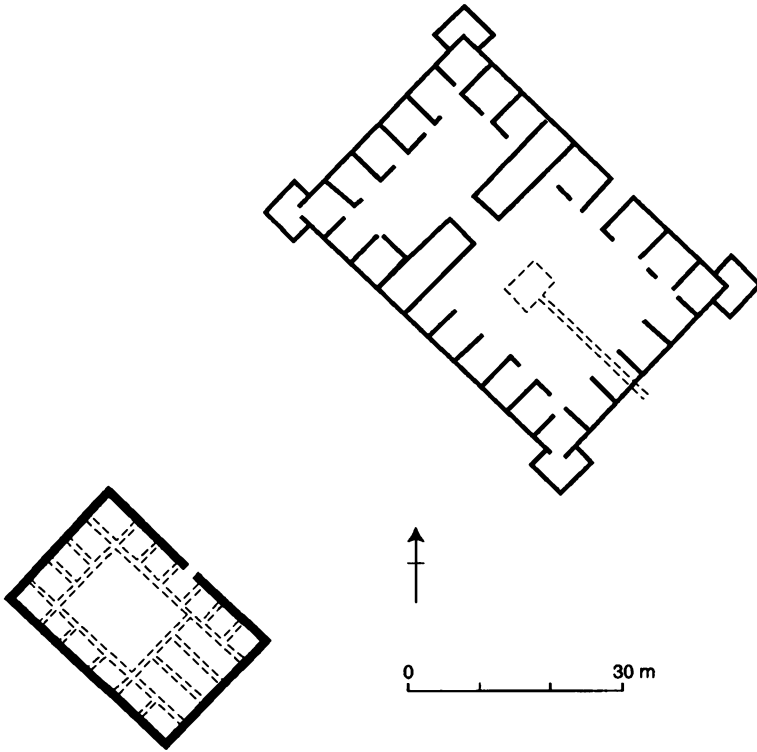


Fig. 19.10: Kh. el-Khalde: plan of the fort and caravanserai (from Kennedy *forthc.* c).

three phases of construction. First is a wall of rough granite blocks, unmortared and in-filled with stone chips. Second is a new external face of high quality sandstone blocks with Nabataean chisel marking, mortared and laid in courses. Finally a wall, again of rough granite blocks, built on top of the first wall and set back. This may be a third phase or, more likely, a heightening of Phase I when a new facing was added which also took the walls higher. There is an agreed entrance through the north wall at a point to the right of centre and c. 3.5 m wide; there may be a second entrance at the other end of that wall.

Inside the enclosure there are rooms built against the walls all around; those in the south-west corner at least are reported to be c. 4 m wide. The resulting courtyard is divided into unequal parts by a range of rooms, running

north to south and apparently consisting of pairs of rooms on either side of a central wall. In the centre of the eastern, larger, courtyard, is a plaster-lined *birkeh*, c. 6.4 m square and fed by a channel coming from the east. The smaller, western courtyard included a bath suite, hypocaust pillars for which have been exposed. A bath building at a military site is a relative rarity in the Middle East (cf. Qasr el-Uweinid, above ch. 7; Bir Madkhur, below ch. 20; Yotvata, below ch. 21). Several visitors have reported high-quality blocks from door frames scattered around.

About 50 m to the south of the fort is the smaller enclosure, c. 32 x 22 m, oriented on the same angle as the fort and commonly identified as a caravanserai. Its walls, c. 1.1 m thick, are of rough granite blocks similar to those of the fort. The entrance is in the north

wall. It leads into a small courtyard surrounded by roughly built rooms against the enclosure wall all around. These seem to be longer and deeper on the east side.

The water supply was provided both by the spring 800 m to the south-east and several cisterns c. 500 m to the north-west on the edge of the main water course of the Wadi Yitm.

Pottery from the surface and the recent sondages has been extensive and is consistently identified as Nabataean and Roman. Several coins have been reported: one of Diocletian (AD 284–305) in the (eastern) gate of the fort's north wall; one each of Constantine (AD 307–337) and Constantine II (AD 337–361) from the sondages; one of Constantius II (AD 337–361) in a cistern to the north-east of the fort. The Via Nova Traiana ran past the site and Trajanic milestones of 112 have been found between Quweira and Khalde and further south at Kithara. There are also two milestone texts in the same area dated to AD 293–305 and 307–308 (Graf 1995a: 23–28, 33).

A Nabataean military post seems likely at Khalde as at Quweira and Kithara. It is likely that both fort and caravanserai at Khalde are substantially Nabataean in origin.

In view of the Trajanic date for Humayma 25 km to the north, there is the distinct possibility now that former Nabataean forts along the route to the Red Sea were garrisoned in the same period. The first certain evidence, however, only comes much later:

8. THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.41) includes the entry:

Cohors quarta Frygum, Praesidio

The Cohors IV Phrygum, at Praesidium

Date: AD 400

The term 'Praesidium' (*phourion* in Greek) is the standard term from Egypt round to Thrace for a military police post on a road (Isaac 1992: 174–175; 180).² The place name is not amongst the names on the fragments of the contemporary or later Beer Sheva Edict(s) which lists the tax payments being made by military units (Hartmann 1913: 181–182;³ Isaac 1998: 451).

Finally, we might note that heightening of walls has recently been proposed for forts of Qasr el-Uweinid and Da'ajaniya (Welsby 1998) (above, chs 7 and 16). The first of these is a site with an inscription describing it (or a neighbouring site) as '*Castellum et Praesidium*'. At Khalde a possibility is that in addition to heightening the walls, a small square fort of c. 32 m square was extended to the west to enclose a second courtyard. The dimensions are very similar to the fort at Quweira (31.5 x 32.5 m) just 17 km to the north (above).

Principal Reading: Savignac 1932: 185–587; Alt 1936: 101–103; Glueck 1935: 54 n. 155; 1939: 15–19; Stein (Gregory and Kennedy)

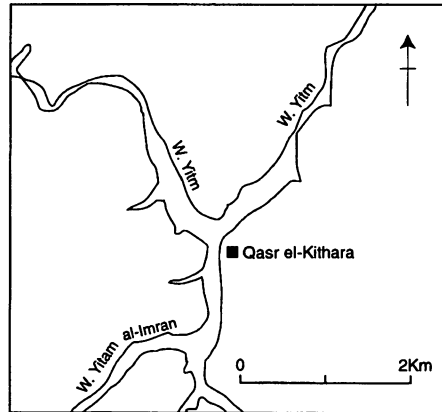


Fig. 19.11: Qasr el-Kithara: sketch plan of the location.

² There is a second place called 'Praesidium' in the Wadi Araba (below, ch. 20) and the small fort south of the Azraq Oasis at Qasr el-Uweinid includes a Latin inscription referring to '*Castellum and Praesidium*'.

³ The Praesidion listed in the edict is certainly the one in the Wadi Araba.

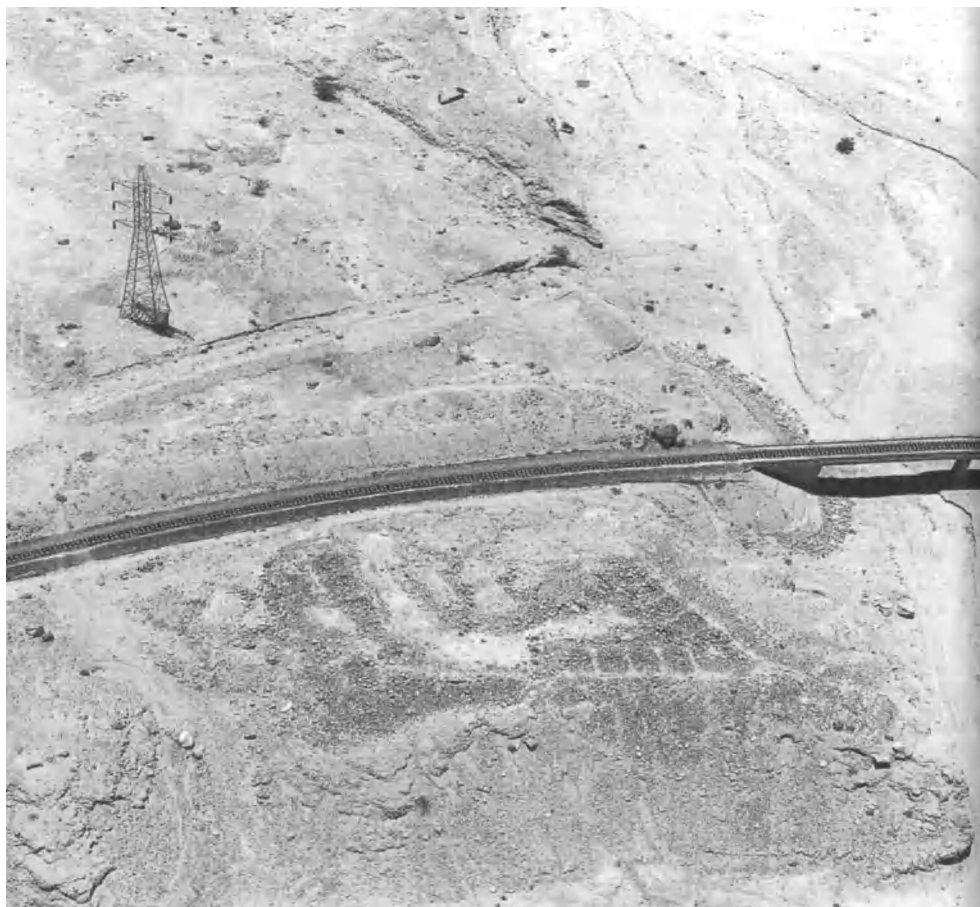


Fig 19.12: *Qasr el-Kithara: aerial view looking north (APA 98/R. Bewley).*

1985: 310–312; Parker 1986: 108–109; Gregory 407–408; Bisheh *et al.* 1993; Waheeb 1996: 346; Kennedy 2002a

**E. QASR EL-KITHARA
JADIS 1688.002; KHIRBET EL-KITHARA;
MAP 3049.III; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7068; UTMN 32703;
PGE 162.600; PGN 884.000**

About 16 km further along its course, the Wadi Yitm is joined from the east by the Wadi Yitam al-Imran and its course is then deflected westwards through the mountains to join the Wadi Araba a few kilometres north of Aqaba on the Red Sea. In the angle between the two wadis, the high ground

overlooking the junction and the turn to the west is occupied by a small fort commanding views along the three wadi directions (Fig. 19.11). The modern roads pass along the west side of the wadi at this point but the new railway has cut through the site, destroying the south wall and part of the interior (Fig. 19.12).

The site is less complex than Khalde and there is greater unanimity amongst commentators despite the desire of early visitors to see round towers (Alt and, in part. Stein). In this instance, too, a plan of the site has been available since Alt's of 1936 (104, Fig. 3). Despite small differences in detail, the plan and dimensions of both Alt

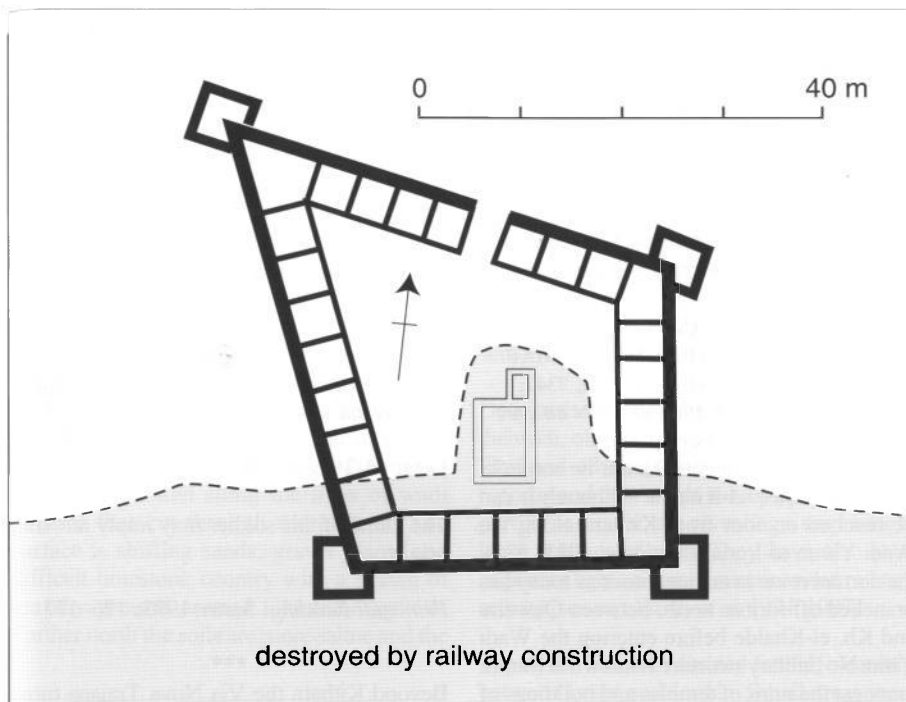


Fig 19.13: *Qasr el-Kithara: plan of the fort (after Georgory 3: F40.1).*

and Stein are in close agreement. In Gregory's apt description, it is essentially a square fort one of whose corners has been pulled out to create a diamond outline (Fig. 19.13). The long sides are 49 and 48 m, the short are 35.5 and 31.6; an overall size of 0.12 ha. The thickness of the wall is variously described as about 1.5 m, 1.6 to 2 m and averaging 2.3 m. It is made from rough granite boulders with a rubble core. The entrance is in the middle of the north wall where there is a break in internal rooms and easy access to the Via Nova Traiana. Three projecting corner towers are clear on the aerial photographs; the fourth is less distinct. They are c. 7 m square. Inside the courtyard is surrounded by approximately square rooms built against the walls on all sides and with walls about 90–100 cm thick. The sole break is on the north where the entrance was through a passage between rooms. The corner rooms were inevitably irregular shapes. In the southern part of the courtyard

is a large free-standing rectangular building, c. 7.3 x 9.15 m, identified as a watchtower.

A short distance to the north is the spring of Ain el-Kharaq.

No ancient name is available for this place. However, there is an entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for an unnamed garrison place which cannot otherwise be fixed but must be close either to the Wadi Yitm Praesidium (Kh. el-Khalde, above) or that in the Wadi Araba (below, ch. 20).

9. NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (OR. 34.35):

Ala secunda felix Valentiana, apud Praesidium

The Ala II Felix Valentiana, near Praesidium

Date: c. AD 400

Pottery extends from Nabataean to Late Roman, 1st–7th centuries. There is a broad consensus that this is a Nabataean post reused in Roman times. The cuttings made by the railway embankment would repay inspection.

Principal Reading: Savignac 1932: 594–595; Glueck 1935: 54; Alt 1936: 104–105; Stein (= Gregory and Kennedy) 1985: 306–308, 431; Parker 1986: 109–111; Gregory 409–411

F. RAMM

JADIS 1988.021; JABAL RAMM; MAP 3049.2; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7342; UTMN 32747; PGE 190.100; PGN 887.900

The well-known ruins at Ramm lie some 28 km east of Qasr el-Kithara. Although it can be reached on foot from Kithara along the Wadi Yitam al-Imran (Savignac 1932: 585), the normal route in ancient times as today has branched off further north, between Quweira and Kh. el-Khalde before entering the Wadi Yitim. No military structure is known at Ramm amongst the ruins of temples and buildings of Nabataean and Roman times. There should be some military structure in view of the significance of the place with its abundant springs and its location on a major route down

into the Hedjaz to other places in which there is clear evidence of both Nabataean and Roman military presence (ch. 21). So far the only evidence, however, is epigraphic:

10. DEDICATION IN GREEK from the spring of Ain esh-Shellaleh (IGLS XXI.4: no. 139):

Μνησθῆ Ἀννιανὸς δοφλικάρως ὁ ἐπισταθὺς τοῦ ἔργου καὶ εὐείλατο(ν) ἔχοι τὴν θεάν.

Let Annianus, Duplicarius, the overseer of the work, be remembered, and may the goddess be merciful to him.

Date: 1st–3rd centuries AD?

The name of this soldier may imply an Arab origin.

Principal Reading: Sartre 1993: 176–177

Beyond Kithara the Via Nova Traiana turns west with the Wadi Yitim to come out a few kilometres later into the trough of the Wadi Araba just north of Aqaba — Roman Aila — where it terminates (ch. 20).

20. THE WADI ARABA

The Wadi Araba is another of the great geographical features of Jordan (Fig. 3.1). The rift valley that begins with the Jordan Valley in the north and the Dead Sea in the middle continues with the broad trough of the Wadi Araba which gives way to the Gulf of Aqaba, a flooded portion of the rift valley. From Aqaba the trough extends north for c. 170 km and 5 to 15 km wide. It passes below sea level just west of Petra. On the west the land rises steeply to the plateau of the Negev Desert stretching to the Mediterranean. To the east the mountains of the Shera'a Plateau rise up even more sharply to heights of 1200 m but can be penetrated along the lines of wadi courses that cut through the plateau. The surface is shifting sands, gravel plains and difficult limestone country with a stretch of marshy ground around Ghadian/Yotveta. Further north the soils are more saline and the

Ghor region immediately south of the Dead Sea is one of salty marshes. The wadi itself is hot, barren and almost rainless. There are a few springs. Settlement is possible only in a few places but was extensive in antiquity as now around the Ghors in the north. Especially important was the copper mining on the north-eastern side in the Wadi Faynan and further north at Nahas, both of which attracted settlement and military attention.

Despite the inhospitable character of much of the wadi, older surveys by Alt, Frank, Raikes, Graf and others (some of them unpublished reports) and the current survey in the southern part, in particular, are revealing a surprisingly large number of sites. They have also shed important light on communications and military activity (see esp. Smith *et al.* 1994; 1997).

The Araba has been divided for half a century between Israel and Jordan. Small areas were returned to Jordan in 1994 (Fig. 20.1).

A. ROADS AND ROUTES

The terrain and climate made any travel difficult. In places the winter conditions of marshland could make routes impassable. Routes cross the wadi, the most important being the one from the Kerak Plateau around the south of the Dead Sea and then on to Mampsis, Beer Sheva and Gaza on the Mediterranean and that from Petra through Oboda to Gaza. The Peutinger Table also shows a road from Ad Dianam — usually identified as Ghadian/Yotveta — westwards to Egypt.

Evidence for a road running along the Araba had been lacking until 1994 when the first of three groups of Tetrarchic milestones was located in the southern Araba on what was then the Israeli side. Each group has 8–10 milestones, with painted texts and belonging to both the First and Second Tetrarchies (AD 284–324) implying both the original construction and subsequent maintenance.

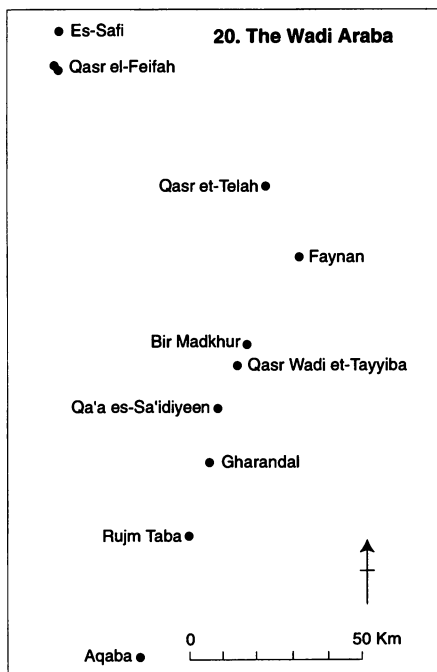


Fig. 20.1: Map of sites in the Wadi Araba.

One ends with 'a Bosia' or 'ab Osia', and the numeral 12. The distance leads exactly to the known Roman fort at Yotveta which remains part of Israel. Traditionally, this fort has been identified as the Ad Dianam of the Peutinger Table. The latter locates the place at XVI MP above Aila (Aqaba) and apparently on the final stretch of the Via Nova Traiana. Scholars have amended this to XXVI taking us to Yotveta — formerly called Ghadian, seemingly preserving the ancient name Ad Dianam. That had always been difficult to accept because of both the emendation required and the unlikely twist in the Via Nova after Praesidium to a place well up the Wadi Araba. The milestones now seem to say the Roman name of Yotveta was Osia or Bosia and we should now remember that an inscription found at Yotveta a few years ago (Roll 1989) has been argued as giving the place-name Cosia (Eck 1992). In short, Ad Dianam may have to be located somewhere else.

The fort at Cosia²/Osia/Bosia (Yotveta) is in Israel but the road to it seems to be in part at least inside Jordan. It is one of a number of roads found in the recent survey. The Tetrarchic date of the milestones has been linked with the transfer shortly before c. 293 of the Legion X Fretensis from Jerusalem to Aila, providing direct access from Palestine to this new major base (Isaac 1998: 72).

The Araba milestones near Yotveta were close by three roads running lengthwise down the Araba along its western side. One is certainly modern, the dates of the others is unknown. Similarly undated is the stretch of surfaced road found running for c. 8 km towards the south of Gharandal along the eastern slope though here the road appears similar to those of known Roman date elsewhere (Smith *et al.* 1997: 59, 60 Fig. 12). About 10 km north of Gharandal, near Qa'a es-Sa'idiyeen, is a quarry with 5 discarded milestones (below). The road probably continued to become that now traced west of Bir Madkhur (with a possible anepigraphic milestone (Perry and Smith 1998: 594)). Further north, another survey has noted an 'Old Road' running close

by the final two sites discussed in this chapter, Qasr et-Tlah and Qasr el-Feifah.

Principal Reading: Avner 1996; Isaac 1998: 71–75; Smith *et al.* 1997

**B. AILA/AELA/AELANA (AQABA)
JADIS 1488.002; AQABA/AYLA; MAP
3049.III; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 6939;
UTMN 32684; PGE 149.700; PGN 882.300**

Ancient Aila lies at the north-eastern corner of an arm of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, 13 km west of Qasr el-Kithara. Under and around modern Aqaba is a succession of important ancient settlements dating from the Chalcolithic onwards. The significance of the place lies in its location: a port giving access to the Red Sea ports and out into the ocean beyond for the trade with and through India; north-west across the Negev Desert to the Mediterranean; at the start of the great route north up the Wadi Araba to the Dead Sea and Palestine; north-east through the Wadi Yitm to Edom, Moab and Syria; and south-east into the Hedjaz and South Arabia. Not just as an import centre either, but also the port through which the copper of the mines in the Wadi Araba could be exported.

The Roman geographer Strabo reports a city (*polis*) — presumably Nabataean — at what he calls Aela/Aelana in the time of Augustus (*Geog.* 16.2.30; 16.4.4). Although not as important economically as the Nabataean port of Leuke Kome further south, it was still a significant point on the trade route, a strategic port. We might expect there something like the arrangement of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (19.6.28–19.7.1) reports for Leuke Kome:

1. PERIPLUS (19.6.28–19.7.1. Trans. Casson 1989: 61–63):

... ὄρμος ἐστὶν ἕτερος καὶ φρούριον, ὃ λέγεται Λευκὴ κόμη, δι' ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων, ἀνάβασις. Ἔχει δὲ ἐμπορίου τινὰ καὶ αὐτὴ τὰ ξιν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἐξαρτιζομένοις εἰς αὐτὴν πλοίοις οὐ

μεγάλοις. Διὸ καὶ παραφυλακῆς χάριν καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν παραλήπτῃς τῆς τετάρτης τῶν εἰσφερομένων φορτίων καὶ ἑκατοντάρχῃς μετὰ στρατεύματος ἀποπέλλεται.

... there is another harbour with a fort [φορούριον] called Leuke Kome, through which there is a way inland up to Petra, to Malichus, king of the Nabataeans. This harbour also serves in a way the function of a port of trade for the craft, none large, that come to it loaded with freight from Arabia. For that reason, as a safeguard there is dispatched for duty in it a customs officer [παραλήπτῃς] to deal with the (duty of a) fourth on incoming merchandise as well as a centurion [ἑκατοντάρχῃς] with a detachment of soldiers [στράτευμα].

Date: The king must be Malichus II (AD 40–70).

In short, a fort, a customs officer and an officer (with a detachment of soldiers).

Augustus' grandson Gaius Caesar fought a campaign near there and may have visited in AD 1 (Romer 1979: 205; Bowersock 1983: 56). After the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in AD 106, this became the southern terminus of the Via Nova Traiana, commemorated on one of the recently published milestones of AD 112 from Aqaba: *a finibus Syriae usque ad Mare Rubrum* ('from the boundaries of Syria as far as the Red Sea') (Graf 1995a: 28). 'Haila' appears on the Peutinger Table with routes to the west, north and north-east illustrated. The latter is the Via Nova Traiana and it has recently been argued (Isaac 1998: 71–74) that the newly attested Roman road up the length of the Wadi Araba was a by-product of the Tetrarchic transfer of the Jerusalem legion to Aila (below and ch. 21).

No Roman military presence is attested for the 2nd or much of the 3rd century. However, it seems likely there was a Roman force there due to the strategic and economic importance of the place and the role assigned to it in the late 3rd century. The discoveries at Humayma (ch. 19) reinforce the inference.

2. EUSEBIUS is a prime source of evidence for the early installation at Aila of the Legion X Fretensis, previously based in Jerusalem (*Onom.* 6.17–21; 7.25–28):

Αἰλάμ (Gen. 14, 1). ἐν ἐσχάτης ἐστὶ <Παλαιστίνης> παρακειμένη τῇ πρὸς μεσημβρίαν ἐρήμῳ καὶ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσῃ, πλωτῆ οἴση τοῖς τε ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου περῶσι καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἐγκάθηται δὲ αὐτόθι τάγμα Ῥωμαίων τὸ δέκατον. καλεῖται δὲ νῦν Ἀϊλά.

Ailath in extremis finibus Palaestinae iuncta meridiana solitudini et mari rubro, unde ex Aegypto Indiam et inde ad Aegyptum nauigatur. sedet autem ibi legio Romana cognomento decima. et olim quidem Ailath a ueteribus dicebatur, nunc uero appellatur Aila.

Ailath is in the remotest part of Palestine, lying near the southern desert and the Red Sea, and one can sail there from Egypt or from India. The Tenth Roman Legion is stationed there. The place is now called Aila.

Date: c. AD 293

It is hard to believe a place deemed significant enough to require a force the size of a Late Roman legion — perhaps as many as 1000 to 1500 men — had not previously been a garrison place for at least an auxiliary regiment.

From the early 4th century has come a monumental building inscription:

3. SEVEN FRAGMENTS OF A MONUMENTAL MARBLE LATIN INSCRIPTION found in and beside the early Islamic (7th–12th century) town of Ayla (IGLS XXI.4: no. 150) (Fig. 20.2):

[D(ominus) n(oster) Imp(erator) Fl(avius) Val(erius) Constanti]nus semper [Augustus et [[Fl(avius) Val(erius) Crispus et Val(erius) Licinianus Licinius Iun(ior)]]] et Fl(avius) Iul(ius) Constantinus no]biliss(imi)

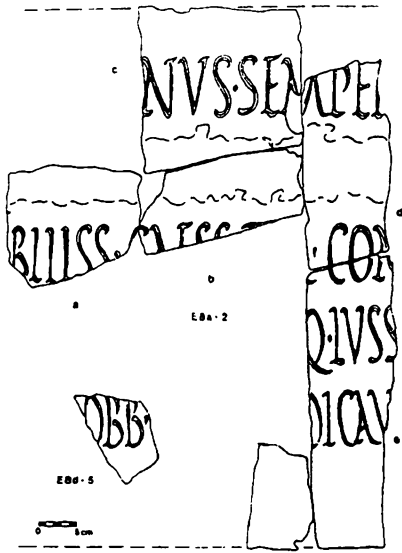


Fig. 20.2: Aila (Aqaba): Fragments of a Latin building inscription of AD 324–326 (from MacAdam 1989).

Caes(ares), Fl(avius) Con[stantius v(ir)
c(larissimus) praefectus praetorio perfici
refici]q(ue) iuss[erunt _____ et
de]dicav[erunt].

[Our Lord the Emperor Flavius Valerius Constanti]nus, Ever [Augustus, and Flavius Valerius Crispus and Valerius Licinianus Licinius Junior and Flavius Julius Constantinus, the Most No]ble Caesars, the Illustrious Flavius Con[stantius, Praetorian Prefect ... ordered and dedicated.

Date: AD 324–6 (?)

4. The Legion X Fretensis was in garrison for at least a century as can be seen from the entry in THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.30):

Praefectus legion[is] decimae Fretensis, Ailae.

The Prefect of the Legion X Fretensis, at Aila.

Date: c. AD 400

Excavation has yet to trace the fortress of the legion but some hint of its character may be

inferred. The excavations of Whitcomb on the Islamic city of Ayla, of the 7th to 12th century, recovered the plan of a rectangular city whose plan is astonishingly like a small version (only 165 x 140 m, 2.3 ha) of the fortresses at Betthorus (Lejjun) and Adrou (Udruh) (chs 15 and 17) (Figs 20.3; 15.8). Indeed, some commentators have argued that this city was originally the Roman fortress (Knauf and Brooker 1988; cf. Gregory 413) but that has been firmly rejected by the excavator (Whitcomb 1990). Nevertheless, it is tempting to believe the inspiration for the plan of the Islamic city was derived from a nearby model.

The Roman city of Aila has been under investigation in recent years and we have now part of the north side of what must be the city wall rather than the legionary fortress. It has been traced for some 120 m, averages 1.6 m in thickness, still stands up to 4 m high in places and has projecting towers, c. 4 m square. The alignment implies an irregular layout overall. It is dated to the late 4th/early 5th century, falling out of use by the 6th/7th century (Fig. 21.4).

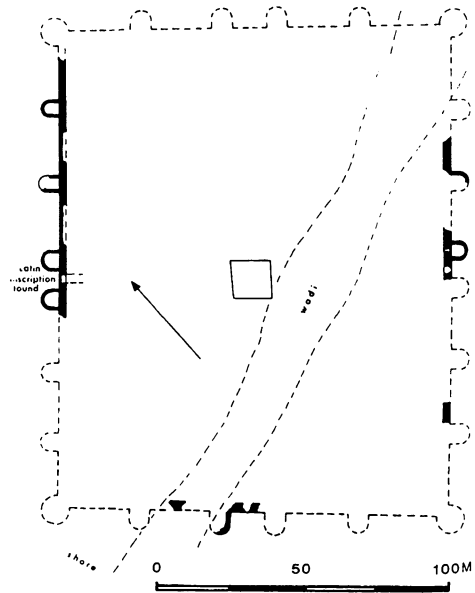


Fig. 20.3: Aila (Aqaba): plan of the 7th–12th century Islamic city of Aila (from Gregory 3: F41.1a).



Fig. 20.4: Aila (Aqaba): aerial view of the Late Roman city walls looking north (APA 98/42.15).

Aila is not amongst the names on the fragments of the Beer Sheva Edict(s) and it has been suggested that the role played by the local bishop in AD 630 negotiating with the forces of Islam, implies the absence of a military commander and garrison by that date.

An important point made by Parker (pers. comm.) is that since their regional survey found no evidence for an agricultural hinterland, this is a military and civil site that must have depended heavily on imports of foodstuffs.

Principal Reading: MacAdam 1989; Whitcomb 1990; Gregory 412–413; Parker 1996; 1997b; 1998; 2000

The South-east Arabah Archaeological Survey (SAAS) has reported on a number of sites and roads in the southern half of the Araba, some previously known but now brought up to date. Small towers have not been listed here but the following site plus Qasr Wadi et-Tayyiba and Qa'a es-Sa'idiyyeen (below) are of greater significance.

C. RUJM TABA
APPROXIMATE LOCATION — NO
JADIS; MAP 3049.IV; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7053; UTMN 33078;
PGE 162.000; PGN 921.600
(NOT 1691.001, RUJM EL-TABAH)

Rujm Taba is a small partly buried fort about 40 km north of Aila (Aqaba), 1 km north of the marsh and just west of the modern highway. It measures c. 21 m square (Smith *et al.* 1997: 57–58).

Date: Surface pottery from the adjacent ruined village just east of the highway is overwhelmingly Nabataean and Roman.

D. ARIDDELA/ARIELDELA
(GHARANDAL)
NO JADIS?; MAP 3050.III; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7124; UTMN 33306;
PGE 169.000; PGN 944.000
(POSSIBLY 1694.004, NO NAME;
NOT 1694.001,
GHARANDAL = MODERN
POLICE POST)

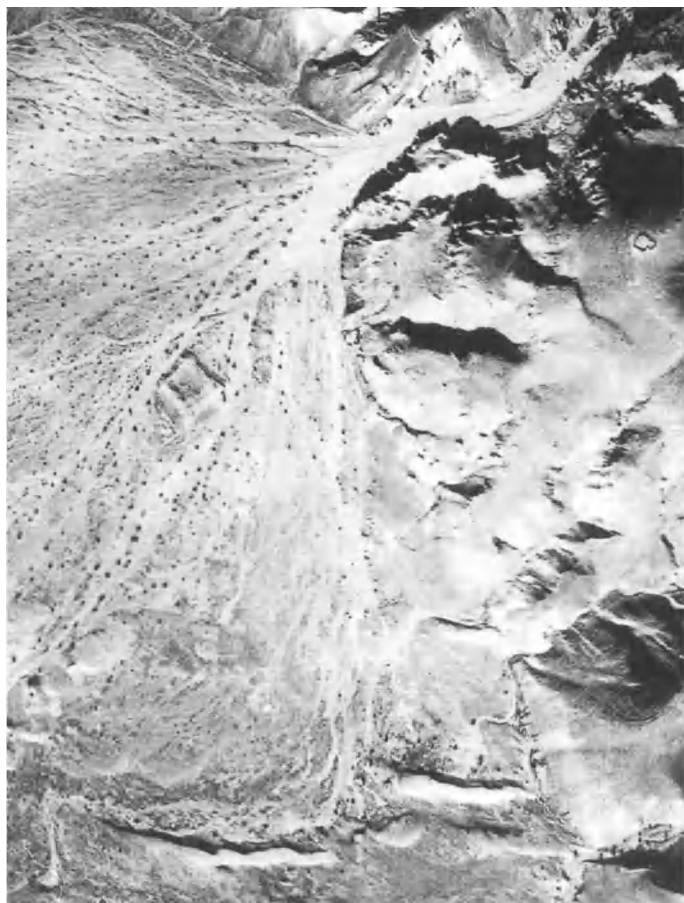


Fig. 20.5:
Gharandal: vertical
aerial view of the fort
in 1938 (APA 38/
RAF).

Twenty-six kilometres north of Rujm Taba, the small fort at Gharandal has been one of the better known in the Araba for many years. The buried fort (Fig. 20.5) commands a pass to Zodocatha (Sadaqa) c. 25 km to the north-east. It is c. 37 m square with projecting corner towers, two square and two rectangular (Fig. 20.6). The wall is said to be 2 m thick and the gate is placed in the east wall. Musil also identified a reservoir c. 100 m to the east and another structure nearby. There is a spring in the mouth of the W. Gharandal just to the east.

The site is commonly identified with an ancient place-name known from several sources including:

5. THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (OR. 34.44):

Cohors secunda Galatarum, Arieldela

The Cohors II Galatarum, at Arieldela

Date: c. AD 400

6. THE BEER SHEVA EDICT(S) include a second reference to the same place with the implication of a military post (Frag. V, line 5):

(ἀπὸ) Αριδδηλων τῆς / Γρα...? [?
νο(μίσματα) ...]

Ariddela of Graf... , ... solidi

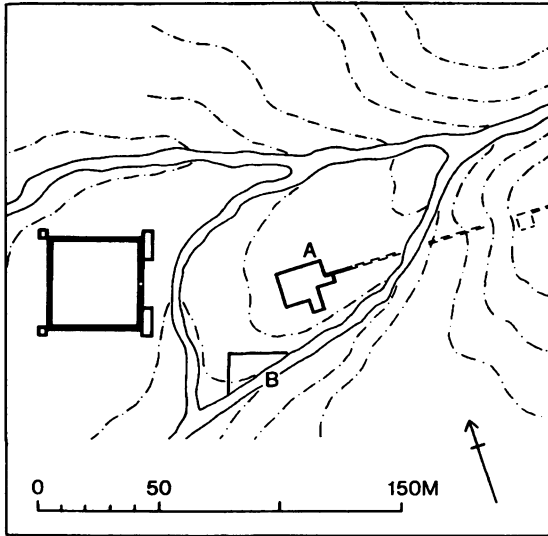


Fig. 20.6: Gharandal: plan of the site according to Musil (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 161).

Date: between the early 4th century and Anastasius but probably later rather than earlier.

Surface pottery was slight but that from fort and neighbouring structures is dated to the Nabataean and Roman periods (Smith *et al.* 1997: 59–60).

Principal Reading: Musil 1907: 193–197; Frank 1934: 231–232; Glueck 1935: 39–40; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 207–209; Gregory 450–451; Smith *et al.* 1997: 59–60

E. QA'A ES-SA'IDIYEEN
JADIS 1795.002?; NO NAME; MAP 3050.III;
UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7134; UTMN 33399;
PGE 170.500; PGN 953.500

The badly damaged fort c. 10 km north-north-east of Gharandal seems to be 21 x (possibly) 32.5 m. The walls are c. 0.65 m thick and a lintel with *tabula ansata* may point to a gate on the north side (Smith *et al.* 1997: 60–62).

Date: Surface pottery is overwhelming 'Early Roman/Byzantine'. The associated quarry nearby included five discarded broken and anepigraphic milestones

F. QASR WADI ET-TAYYIBA
JADIS 1797.004; QASR WADI ET-TAYIBA;
MAP 3050.I; UTM ZONE 36;
UTME 7206; UTMN 33593;
PGE 178.100; PGN 972.700

This small site, variously identified as a caravanserai or fort, lies at the mouth of the Wadi et-Tayyiba that gives access up towards Petra 15 km to the east. It is 24 x 23 m with walls 1.15 m thick. The recent survey doubted the presence of corner towers seen by Glueck and others but noted a mound of rubble in the middle of the west wall

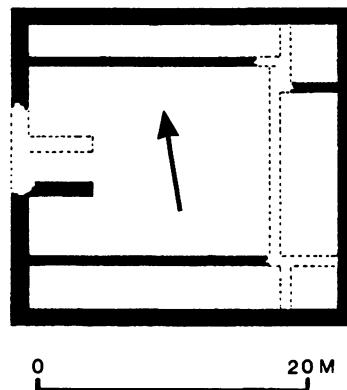


Fig. 20.7: Qasr Wadi et-Tayyiba (from Frank 1934: fig. 22B).



Fig. 20.8: Bir Madkhur: vertical aerial view in 1953 (APA 53/HAS27.038).

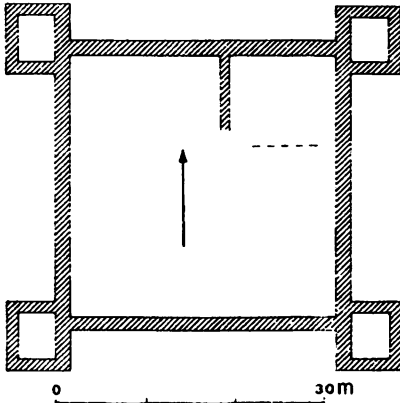


Fig. 20.9: Bir Madkhur: plan
(from Gregory 3: F53.1a).

which they thought might be a collapsed gate or tower. Inside, rooms are built against the walls leaving a small central courtyard. The only published plan is that of Frank (Fig. 20.7).

Glueck reported Nabataean sherds but thought it probably Roman as well, the southern counterpart of Bir Madkhur 8 km to the north-west (below).

Principal Reading: Frank 1934: 230 and Fig. 22B; Glueck 1935: 37–38; Smith *et al.* 1997: 62–63

G. BIR MADKHUR

JADIS 1887.001; BIR MADHKUR; MAP 3050.1; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7253; UTMN 32654; PGE 181.000; PGN 978.700 (NOT 878.700)

The fort lies c. 8 km north-east of Qasr Wadi et-Tayyiba inside the entrance of a wadi presumably guarding the route leading towards Petra c. 10 km to the south-east (Fig. 20.8). The fort is c. 32 x 34 m, with walls 1.8 m thick and projecting corner towers, 8 x 7 m. There seem to be rooms around the walls inside (Fig. 20.9). A short distance west of the site on the fringe of the Wadi Araba are two areas of seemingly ancient field systems (Kennedy *forthc.* c; Perry and Smith 1998: 594).

To the west is a large structure of very regular appearance that might be some sort of caravanserai and the remains formerly identified as a kiln and reservoir are now thought to be a bath building and furnace. Cemeteries have been identified and test-trenching carried out.

Visitors have remarked on the abundant Nabataean pottery and there is now a Nabataean coin as well. Equally, however, there is abundant Roman pottery and several coins of the House of Constantine. The probability is that a Nabataean military post was brought back into use in the 4th century AD.

Principal Reading: Frank 1934: 228, fig. 23; Glueck 1935: 35–37, fig. 6; Gregory 448–489; Smith *et al.* 1997: 63–64; Perry and Smith 1998: 592–595; Kennedy 2001b: 25–28

H. PHAENO (FAYNAN)

JADIS 1900.001; FEINAN; MAP 3051.II; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7391; UTMN 33911; PGE 197.300; PGN 004.200

The immense copper mining area at Faynan, c. 30 km north of Bir Madkhur, includes over 250 mines and hundreds of thousands of tons of slag over a radius of 15+ km some dating back to the Bronze Age. After a break, however, large-scale mining resumed in the Roman period from 1st century BC to the 5th century AD. Eusebius makes several references in his Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine to the terrible mines at Phaeno to which Christians were sent and where some were martyred. There is no explicit mention of soldiers and no military structure has been located at the large settlement of Faynan itself. However, implicit in these texts, as one would expect, is that the great industrial activity there was under military supervision and control.

Principal Reading: Eusebius, *HE* 8.13.5; *Martyrs* 7.4; 13.1–3; *Onom.* 115.3; 169.8–11; *ABD* 2: 780–2; *OEANE* 2: 310–11¹

¹ These and other quotations from Church sources relating to Phaeno are collected in Musil 1907: II, 310 n. 27.

I. TOLOHA (QASR ET-TELAH)

JADIS 1802.019; QASR ET-TELAH; MAP 3051.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7306; UTMN 34134; PGE 189.200; PGN 026.600

Just east of the 'Old Road' and c. 18 km north of Nahas is the remarkable fort and settlement of Qasr et-Telah (Fig. 20.10C). It comprises a small fort, a reservoir and aqueduct, and an extensive area of regular fields apparently very old (Fig. 20.11). There is no satisfactory plan of the fort — that by Musil (1908: 214, fig. 148) is a very schematic sketch as is the recent one by MacDonald. Descriptions are more reliable: an enclosure, c. 40 m sq, walls 2 m thick, and corner towers 4 m square and projecting 2.8 m. The aerial photograph shows traces of internal buildings built against at least the east and north walls. The reservoir nearby is 34.2 x 33.6 m and is fed by the aqueduct several hundred metres long coming in from the Wadi et-Telah at the south-east corner. The fossilised field system is defined by nearly straight banks 50–100 cm wide creating a checkerboard pattern covering an area of c. 1000 x 600 m, c. 60 ha.

Glueck found only Nabataean pottery and a coin. MacDonald (1992: 265, Site 155) found also Roman and Umayyad pottery.

7. The site is commonly identified with an entry in the NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (OR. 34.34):

Ala Constantiana, Toloha.

The Ala Constantiana, at Toloha.

Date: c. AD 400

8. THE BEER SHEVA EDICT(s) also name the place (Frag. V, Line 14):

(ἀπὸ) Τολοανων νο(μίσματα) ἐ' (καὶ) τοῖς ...

Toloha, 15 solidi ...

Date: between the early 4th century and Anastasius but probably later rather than earlier.

Hartmann (1913: 186) notes that it may be the 'Dat Atlah' mentioned in connection with the Islamic expedition of AD 629 which culminated in their defeat at Mutah (ch. 15).

Principal Reading: Musil 1908: 209–214; Frank 1934: 213–215, fig. 13; Glueck 1935: 11–17; 1939: 149–150; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 205–207; MacDonald 1992: Site 155; cf. 92–93, Figs 19–20; Gregory 446–7

J. PRAESIDIUM (QASR EL-FEIFEH)

JADIS 1903.058; FEIFA — WESTERN SEGMENT; MAP 3051.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7345; UTMN 34258; PGE 193.300; PGN 038.900
(NOT MACDONALD 1992: SITE 75) AND JADIS 1903.085; WADI FEIFA; MAP 3051.I; UTM ZONE 36; UTME 7357; UTMN 34254; PGE 194.500; PGN 038.500

Feifa lies in a fertile valley in the marshy *ghor* 15 km south of the Dead Sea and 13 km north of Toloha. It has been identified on the Madaba Mosaic Map as Prasinid and, therefore, with Praesidium of the Notitia Dignitatum and Praesidion of the Beer Sheva Edict(s). As noted above (ch. 7 and 19 s.v. Qasr el-Uweinid and Praesidium (Kh. es-Khalde)), the term means military police post on a road (Isaac 1992: 174–175, 180).

9. NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.35):

Ala secunda felix Valentiana, apud Praesidium.

The Ala II Felix Valentiana, near Praesidium.

Date: c. AD 400

10. THE BEER SHEVA EDICT(S) also name the place (Frag. V, Line 1):

(ἀπὸ) τοῦ Πραισιδίου νο(μίσματα) ἰβ' (καὶ) τοῖς ...

Praesidium, 12 solidi ...

Date: between the early 4th century and Anastasius but probably later rather than earlier.

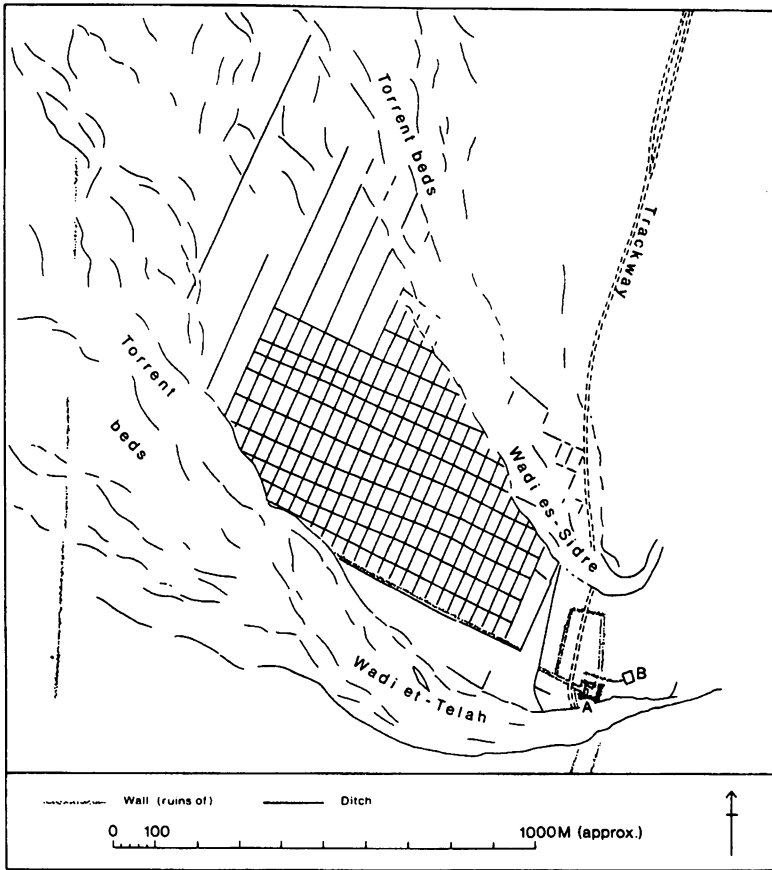


Fig. 20.11: *Qasr et-Telah: plan of the site (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: 207, fig. 158).*

The documents imply a garrison near Praesidium and two structures have been located in the area just east of the modern town of Feifa about 500 m apart. They are strikingly similar as seen from the aerial photograph (Fig. 20.12) but the dimensions measured by Frank suggests the eastern enclosure is c. 105 paces square while the western is c. 53 x 45.6 m. Frank noted some 'ribbed' pottery but otherwise the only evidence of date is the inference from the documents above. Neither were located by the recent survey around Feifeh and the area is now being extensively cultivated.

Principal Reading: Frank 1934: 210–11, plans 11 and 12; Glueck 1935: 9–10; 1939: 147 and

figs 51a and b; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 144–145; MacDonald 1992: 115

**K. ZOARA (ES-SAFI)
JADIS 1904.037; ES-SAFI; MAP 3052.II;
UTM ZONE 36; GRID REF. SHOULD BE
UTME 7353; UTMN 34362;
PGE 194.000; PGN 049.400**

The extensive area of cultivable land in the *ghor* marshes just south of the Dead Sea was as important in antiquity as today. The ancient place-name Zoara is identified with modern Es-Safi and is well-known from the pages of the historian Josephus (e.g. *BJ* 4.482), and now as the centre of an administrative district named in the papyri of the Babatha Archive

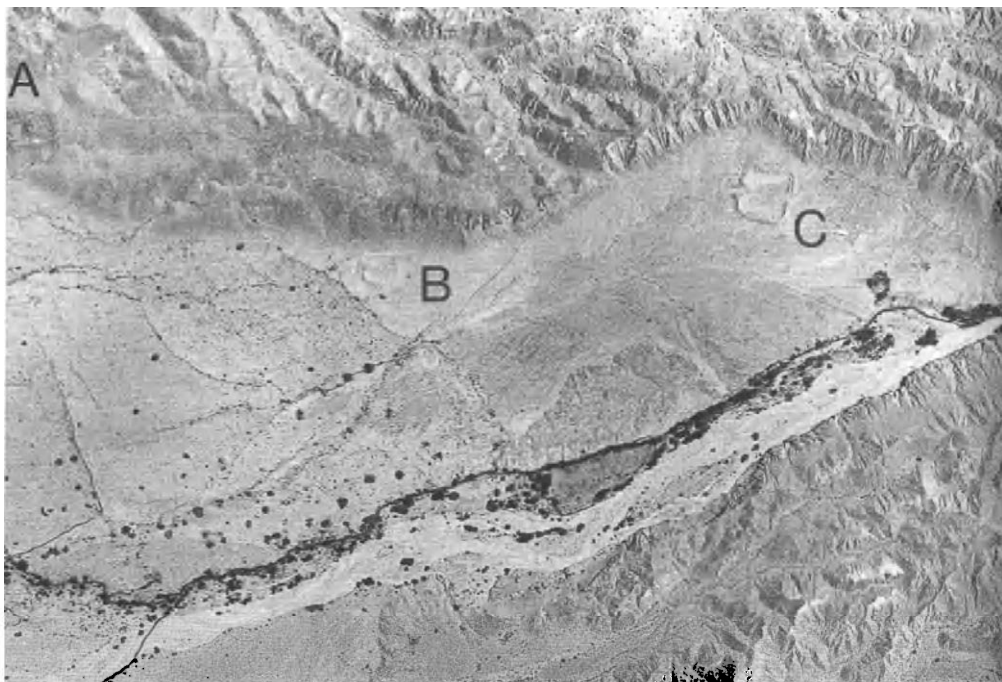


Fig. 20.12: *Qasr el-Feifeh*: vertical air photograph showing three 'forts': MacDonald Site 75 (prehistoric) (A), then the two sites called *Qasr el-Feifeh West* (B) and *East* (C) (APA 53/HAS 27.12 BL).

of the early 2nd century AD (Lewis *et al.* 1989: 21). No military presence is mentioned in either of these sources but there were soldiers there in the late 3rd century and a regiment was stationed there a century later:

11. EUSEBIUS (*Onom.* p. 42, ll. 1–4; p. 43, ll. 14–169–11 [Klostermann]):

Βαλά (Gen 14, 2). ἡ “ἔστι Σιγώρ”, ἡ νῦν Ζοορά καλουμένη, μόνη διασωθεῖσα ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Σοδομιτῶν χώρας. ἡ καὶ εἰς ἔτι νῦν οἰκεῖται, τῇ νεκρᾷ παρακειμένη θαλάσσει, καὶ φρούριόν ἐστι στρατιωτῶν. καὶ φέρεται γε παρ’ αὐτῇ τὸ βάλσαμον καὶ ὁ φοῖνιξ, δεῖγμα τῆς παλαιᾶς τῶν τόπων εὐφορίας.

Bala, quae est Segor. nunc Zoara nuncupatur, sola de quinque Sodomorum urbibus Lot precibus reservata. imminet autem mari mortuo, et praesidium in ea positum est militum Romanorum; habitatoribus quoque

propriis frequentatur. et apud eam gignitur balsamum et poma palmarum, antiquae ubertatis indicia.

Bala, which is Segor, now called Zoara, alone of the (five) cities of the Sodomites was preserved (by the prayers of Lot). It is inhabited even up to now, lying beside the Dead Sea, and is a garrison of (Roman) soldiers. And near it grow balsam and date palms, a sign of the ancient prosperity of the place.

Date: c. AD 293

12. NOTITIA DIGNITATUM (Or. 34.26; cf. 7):

Equites sagittarii indigenae, Zoarae.

Native Horse-Archers, at Zoara.

Date: c. AD 400

21. BEYOND JORDAN

Jordan includes part of the province of Syria Palaestina; but it excludes parts of what was once the province of Arabia. A summary of what is found in those areas is necessary in order to give some fuller coherence to the material in the preceding chapters. The areas in question are a broad strip of southern Syria, the majority of the Wadi Sirhan stretching down into Saudi Arabia, the northern part of Saudi Arabia's province of the Hedjaz, the western part of the Wadi Araba and the Negev in Israel, and a single site in the Sinai Desert of Egypt (Fig. 21.1). The evidence for the more certain sites with physical remains is well-covered by Gregory.

A. SOUTHERN SYRIA

The part of southern Syria just north of the frontier with Jordan is similar in character to that described above in chapters 10 and 9:

villages, forts, towers and roads all set amongst arable soils in the west but giving way further east to an arid landscape strewn with basalt boulders. It is similar, too, in the survival not just of the physical remains but of a number of important inscriptions. Much of what we know of the military in this area depends now as it has for almost a century on the discoveries of the Princeton Expedition. There has been little excavation or recent systematic investigation in the area. The significant places are itemised below but one requires special attention.

Bostra

This was already a major city of the Nabataean kingdom in AD 106 when it was transformed into the seat of the governor of Arabia and base of the sole legion in the province. Until recently documentary evidence — especially

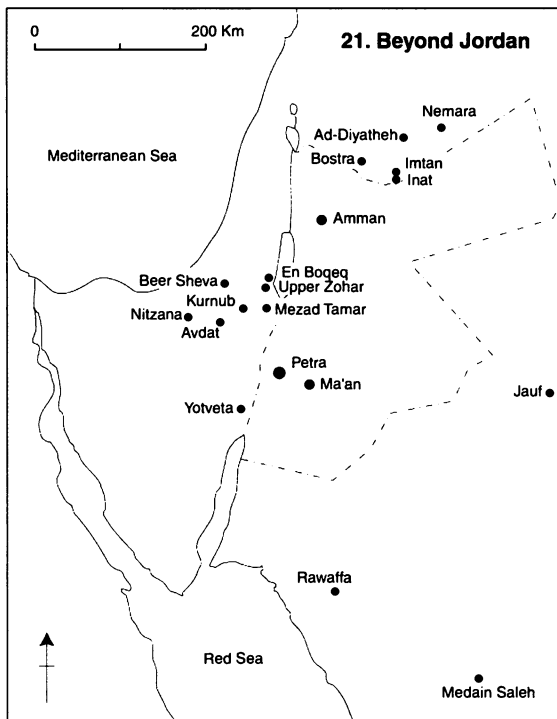


Fig. 21.1: Map of sites in those lands adjacent to Jordan which were once part of the province of Arabia.

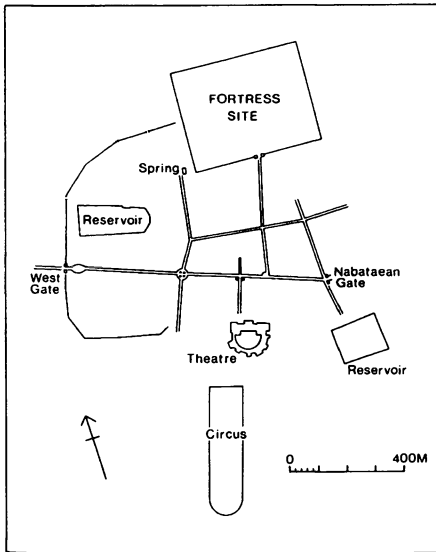


Fig. 21.2: Bostra: Sketch plan of the town and legionary fortress from the air photograph (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 72).

inscriptions, attested to the presence of the Legion III Cyrenaica in the city from the early 2nd century to c. AD 400 (ch. 5).

1. The earliest indication comes from PTOLEMY'S *GEOGRAPHY* (5.16):

Βόστρα Λεγίων

Bostra, Legion (III Cyrenaica)?

Date: time of Hadrian

At the other extreme, following a succession of inscriptions showing the legion, its officers and men present at Bostra, there is the latest attestation:

2. THE *NOTITIA DIGNITATUM* records it there still c. AD 400 (Or. 37.21; cf. 12):

Praefectus legionis tertiae Cyrenaicae, Bostra

The Prefect of the Legion III Cyrenaica, at Bostra

Date: c. AD 400

Like almost every other early Roman legionary base in the East, its precise location and character was long unknown. Amy suggested in 1968 it lay north of the city and in 1976 Moughdad published its location and outline. Five years later Segal spotted it on an old RAF air photograph of the town (Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 71). Further fieldwork has now clarified details.

The fortress was constructed just north-east of a perennial spring on the northern edge of the Nabataean town. It is a rectangle, c. 440 x 360 m, c. 15.4 ha, relatively small but otherwise of a type familiar from the West (e.g. Carnuntum and Noviomagus) and from Satala in eastern Turkey, and commonly regarded as 1st–early 3rd century AD (Fig. 21.2). Parts of the curtain wall have been identified on the ground and Peters (1983: 271, 275), seemingly following an earlier suggestion of Moughdad, reports rectangular towers projecting at north-west and north-east angles and square towers overlapping the walls at the North Gate. Although this remains unproven and would be unlikely, we must recollect the evidence now from Humayma of a Trajanic fort with projecting towers (ch. 19). The north-south axis of the fortress, the *Via Principalis*, seems to be an extension of the *Cardo* running north from the town. Despite the relative scarcity of evidence for early imperial legionary fortresses in the East as a whole, there has still been no full architectural survey but surface exploration has recovered stamped tiles of the legion (Brulet 1984; MacAdam pers. comm.). The little excavation has established a lengthy occupation history.

Principal Reading: Moughdad 1976: 73, 77; Peters 1983: 271, 275; Brulet 1984; Sartre 1985: 96–97; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 124–125; Gatier 2000a; Lenoir 2002

Other sites in southern Syria with physical remains of interest are:

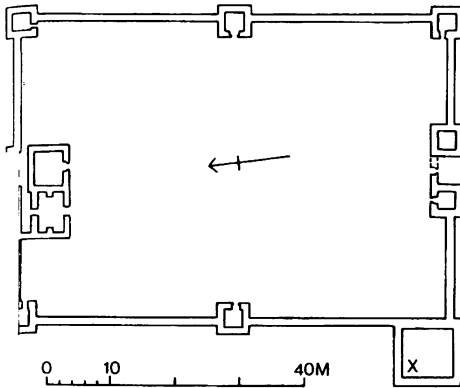


Fig. 21.3: Ad-Diyatheh: plan of the fort (from Villeneuve 1986: fig. 39.3).

Ad-Diyatheh

The location of one of the few Roman forts in the region to have been the subject of excavation. The site is a rectangular enclosure, 71.7 x 51.7 m, 0.37 ha, with projecting square towers at the corners, in the centres of the long sides and on either side of at least one gate (Fig. 21.3). Perhaps datable to c. AD 300.

Principal Reading: Villeneuve 1986; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 195–196; Gregory 230–234; Villeneuve and Sadler 2001

Nemara

This is an enigmatic site. The enclosure may well be Islamic but the tower seems earlier. There are several graffiti of the Legion III Cyrenaica and this is the find spot of the tombstone of the Arab allied ruler, Imrulqais, ‘king of all the Arabs’, who died in AD 328. It may have been a place at which nomads concentrated seasonally and been a point of interaction with Rome.

Principal Reading: Gregory 237–8

Inat and Imtan

Although the surviving physical remains are uncertain, these adjacent sites on the ‘Via Severiana’ (ch. 8) running down to the Azraq Oasis in Jordan, were evidently the location of a significant military presence as attested

by a remarkable series of military inscriptions over several centuries.

3. FROM MOTHATHA (Imtan) a Latin inscription (CIL III: 14,379):

... mil(ites) et equ[i]tes coh(ortis) I [Fl(aviae)] Can[at]hen(orum) et ...

...soldiers and cavalrymen of Cohort I Flavia Canathenorum ...

Date: 1st or early 2nd century AD

4. A second Latin inscription from MOTHATHA (Imtan) (CIL III: 109; cf. 110):

COH II AVG/ THR EQ

The Cohort II Augusta Thracum Equitata

Date: 1st/2nd century AD?

5. FROM INAT COMES AN INSCRIPTION erected by the commander of Gothic auxiliary soldiers perhaps stationed nearby at Mothath (Imtan) (PES III.A.2, pp. 123–124, no. 223):

Μνημεῖον Γούθηθα, υἱοῦ Ἐρμιναρίου πραιποσίτου γεντιλίων ἐν Μοθαθοῖς ἀναφερομένων, ἀπογεν(ομένου) ἐτῶν ἰδ΄. Ἐτιϑβ΄ Περτιούκα΄.

Monument of Guththa, son of Erminarius, commander of the tribal troops (gentiles) stationed among the Mothani. He died at the age of 14 years. In the Year 102, Peritius the 21st.

Date: 28 February AD 208

6. FROM MOTHATHA (Imtan) comes a Greek inscription naming a *ducenarius* with a Gothic name (SEG VII: 1194):

Τοῦτο τὸ μνημα Λαιτιλα δουκην(άριος)/ προμάκηνρος, ἐτῶν νζ΄, ἔτι σα΄.

This is a monument to Laitila, ducenarius and primicerius, aged 57, in the year 201.

Date: AD 306

7. FROM MOTHAN (Imtan) a Greek inscription (Waddington 481, no. 2037):

Οὐρσος ἀκτουάρις οὐξιλλατίονος
Μοθανῶν τῷ μνήμα οἰκοδομήσας ἐκ
θημελίων ἔ[τ]ρους σμε', μνη' Ἰουνίου κγ'.
Ἐνθάδῃ κίτε Οὐρσος βίαρχος πατήρ τοῦ
ὑποτεταγμένου Οὐρσου διὰ τῆς
ἐπιμηλίας [Τ]ι. Κλ. Αὐξίτω. Οἰκεία τῆς
ἀναπαύσε[ω]ς οἰ[χ]ομένη. Χαίρα[μ]ο[ς]
οἰκοδόμος. [Ἀνήλωσα δραχμὰς] μ[υ]ριάς)
χιλίας Σύρο[υ]ς] ἐγὼ δ' Ὀρσος ἐξ
ιδίω[ν] [π]ό[ν]ω[ν].

Ursus, Actuarius of the detachment of Mothani, built the monument from its foundations in June 23, 245. Here lies Ursus, Biarchus, father of the Ursus who was assigned under the management of Ti. Cl. Au—. House of rest for the departed. Chaeamus is the builder. I, Orsus, spent ten thousand Syrian drachmas, out of my own labours.

Date: AD 350

8. For Motha (Imtan), THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM RECORDS (Or. 37.3; cf. 14):

Equites scutarii Illyriciani, Motha

The Equites Scutarii Illyriciani, at Motha

Date: c. AD 400

Principal Reading: PES II: 143–144; III: 123–126, Speidel 1977: 718–719; Kissel 2002: 166–167

B. SAUDI ARABIA: NORTHERN PROVINCE

Stretching south-east of the Azraq Oasis is the broad trough of the Wadi Sirhan (ch. 3). Most of it lies in Saudi Arabia and little is known of the sites reported there at a succession of watering points. As seen above (chs 7 and 8), there was a recognised route in Roman times from Bostra through Azraq to Jauf. The site of Amri in the northern part of the Wadi Sirhan

has been suggested as Amata, a place named on three inscriptions (chs 7 and 8; Zuckerman 1994: 84–86). About 100 km east of its terminus lies Dumata, modern Jauf, 370 km south-east of the Azraq Oasis. It was evidently a route known to the Roman authorities who doubtless inherited their interest in it from the Nabataeans. There are no major physical remains suitable for inclusion in this chapter and, if we had to rely on archaeological evidence, it is unlikely we would view Roman interest and military control as extending any further than the Azraq Oasis. However, inscriptions from or relating to **Dumata (Dumat al-Jandal, Jauf)** tell a very different story, illuminating the extent to which interest penetrated deep into the desert regions.

9. A NABATAEAN INSCRIPTION from the Jauf Oasis (Savignac and Starcky 1957):

This is the Sanctuary built by Ganimu, Camp Prefect (rab masrit) of SFT, in honour of Dusares the god of Gaia who is at [Duma]t. And it has been restored as vowed to MLK PTWR, who is at Dumat, son of Haza. In Year 5 of Malichus the King, King of the Nabataeans.

Date: AD 44

10. LATIN INSCRIPTION from Jauf Oasis (Speidel 1977: 694):

Pro salute domm. nn. Augg. I. O. Hammoni et Sancto Sulmo Fl(avius) Dionysius (Centurio) leg(ionis) III Cyr(enaicae) v(otum) s(olvit).

For the Welfare of Our Lords the Two Emperors, to Jupiter Optimus Hammo and Holy Sulmus. Flavius Dionysius, Centurion of the Legion III Cyrenaica fulfilled his vow.

Date: Either Marcus and L. Verus (161–165), Marcus and Commodus (177–180) or Severus and Caracalla (197–211).

Finally we can look back to the Tetrarchic route stone from Azraq which provides by

name amongst other information a distance of 208 Roman miles to Dumata (ch. 7).

Principal Reading: Kennedy 1982: 188–190; Wenning 1987: 114–115; Speidel 1987; MacAdam 1988; al-Muaikel 1994: 21–27

C. SAUDI ARABIA: THE HEDJAZ

A Nabataean military presence in the Hedjaz has long been known from the presence of a ‘Centurion’ at Leuke Kome (probably Aynunah) attested in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (ch. 20).

Also at **Medain Saleh** from the inscriptions on monumental tombs there (Healey 1993; Graf 1997c: V, *passim*).

As we saw above (ch. 5), from near Medain Saleh have come graffiti scratched on a rock outcrop by Roman soldiers and seemingly dated to the 2nd century AD.

11. ALSO FROM MEDAIN SALEH is a Greek altar (*AE* 1977: 835):

Τύχη Βόστρων Ἀδριανὸς ζωγράφος σὺν λεγιῶνι ΙΙΙ Κυρ(ηνοῦ)αἰκῆ.

To the Fortune of Bostra, Hadrian, a painter of the Legion III Cyrenaica

Date: 2nd century AD?

Principal Reading: Graf 1997c: VIII, 192–202

Rawaffa lies c. 200 km south-east of Aqaba and is the find-spot of the remarkable bilingual, Greek-Aramaic inscription of the 160s AD cited above (ch. 4). The text records the construction of a temple to the emperors by the Thamudic confederacy and explicitly mentions the intervention of the provincial governor in a dispute amongst the tribes of the confederacy.

Principal Reading: Bowersock 1975; 1983: 96–97; Graf 1997c: VIII, 192–202

D. ISRAEL: THE WADI ARABA AND NEGEV DESERT

Several important military posts of the Nabataean and/ or Roman period are known along the western side of the Wadi Araba, the counterparts to those on the east (ch. 20). Further west are several sites which have been excavated in the Negev Desert making this one of the better-explored areas of what was once part of the province of Arabia (cf. now Gichon 2002).

Yotveta

The site lies in the west central Araba. Formerly known as Ghadian the fort has for many years been identified as Ad Dianam of the Peutinger Table. Now, however, a Latin building inscription has cast doubt on that. It dates to 293–306, and includes the word *Costia*. This has been read either as a reference to an *Ala Constantiana* (known in the *Notitia Dignitatum* at Toloha, in the north-eastern Wadi Araba: ch. 20) or as a place-name. The discovery since then of milestones just to the north with distances measured *A Bosia* or *Ab Osia*, makes the latter more likely (cf ch. 20).

Test-trenching has helped to define a square fort, 39.7 x 39.4, with projecting square towers at the corner (Fig. 21.4). Especially noteworthy is the unique construction in mud-brick.

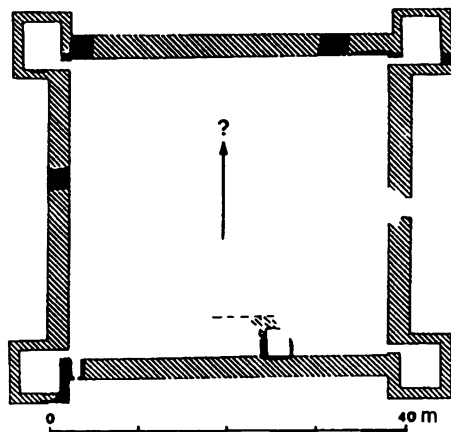


Fig. 21.4: Yotveta: plan of the fort (from Gregory F55.1 (a)).

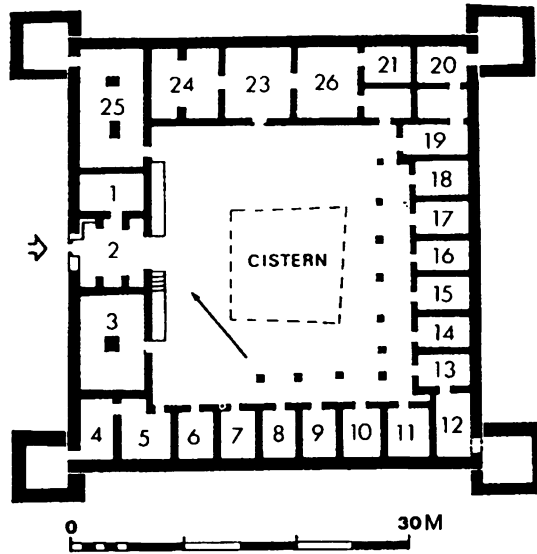


Fig. 21.5: Mezad Tamar: plan of the fort (from Gregory F47.1).

Date: 3rd and 4th century AD

Principal Reading: Meshel 1989; Kindler 1989; Kennedy and Riley 1990: 76; Gregory 452–454; Isaac 1998: 71–74

Mezad Tamar

The fort lies just south-west of the Dead Sea where a road across the north of the Wadi Araba has reached the plateau. There were

extensive excavations there in 1973–1975. It consists of a fort 38 m square with projecting square corner towers and rooms around an internal courtyard (Fig. 21.5)

Date: Late 3rd century AD to c. AD 600

Principal Reading: EAEHL IV: 1148–1152; Gregory 428–32

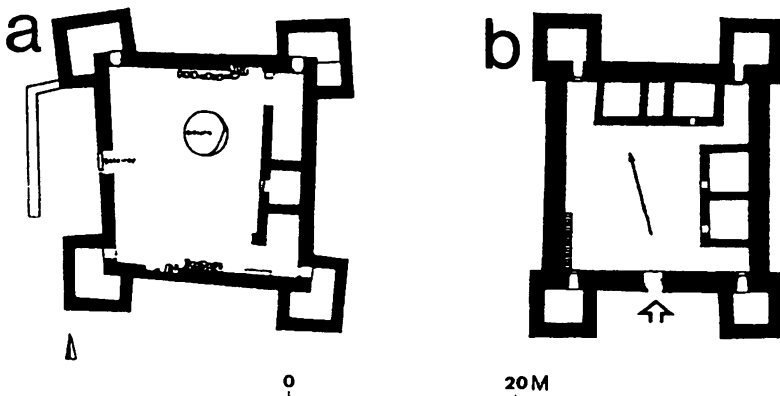


Fig. 21.6: Plans of the fortlets at (a) Upper Zohar and (b) En Boqeq (from Gregory 3: F44.1 and 45.1a).

Upper Zohar and En Boqeq

These two small forts — both less than 20 m square — within a few kilometres of each other on the south-west side of the Dead Sea have been excavated extensively and both have recently been published in full (Fig. 21.6). Both have added an extra dimension to our understanding through their attention to environmental evidence.

Date: 5th to early 7th century (Zohar) and c. AD 300 to early 7th century (Boqeq).

Principal Reading: Gregory 419–424 (for summary prior to full reports); Harper 1996; Gichon 1993; Parker 1997c (for an extensive review of both reports)

Mampsis (Kurnub), Nessana (Nitzana) and Oboda (Avdat)

These three town sites with military structures are all located along the route across the northern Negev from Petra to Gaza on the Mediterranean. They are sites of great significance in the military history

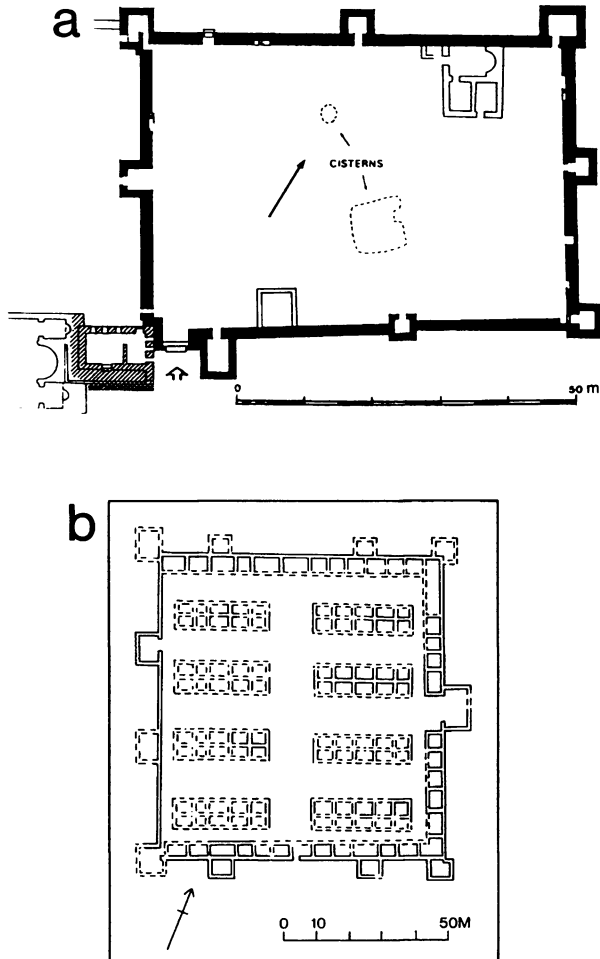


Fig. 21.7: Oboda (Avdat): plans of (a) the citadel fort and (b) the fort (after Gregory 3: F49.1 and Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 116).

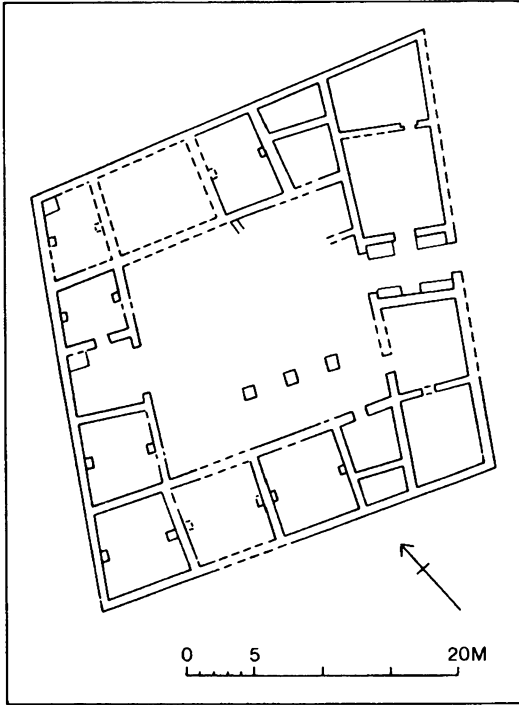


Fig. 21.8: Beer Sheva: plan of the fortlet on the tell (from Kennedy and Riley 1990: fig. 108).

of the region. Mampsis for the military inscriptions, Nessana the Late Roman fort and contemporary papyri with details of military affairs, and Avdat for the two forts there. The last of these is worth illustrating here for the importance of the plans. The citadel fort is a rectangle c. 60 x 40 m with projecting rectangular towers (Fig. 21.7a) and reminiscent of Ad-Diyatheh (above).

The fort on the low ground to the north is c. 100 m square, c. 1 ha (Fig. 21.7b). It is now dated to the c. AD 300 (Erickson-Gini 2002) like some of the very similar forts at Umm el-Jimal (ch. 9), Kh. Khaw (ch. 10) and Da'ajaniya (ch. 16), all of which are of the same size.

Principal Reading: Gregory (425–427, 433–441) for survey, discussion and reading; cf. Kennedy and Riley 1990: 170–172, 196–198, 228–229

Berosaba (Beer Sheva)

Beer Sheva has long been important for the Edict found there a century ago (ch. 1) and more recently for the fort excavated on the *tell*. It is a diamond shape, 31.5 x 31.5 m (Fig. 21.8). Now, examination of a German Air Force aerial photograph of 1917 has revealed the presence of another fort there in the town itself (Fabian 1995: figs 1 and 2). It appears as a distorted rectangle c. 185 x 120 m, c. 2.2 ha. Rooms are visible against the curtain wall and a central building is c. 25 m square. There are no signs of projecting towers. The discoverer believes this is the fort mentioned by Eusebius, the *Notitia Dignitatum* and on the Madaba Map.

Date: The fort on the *tell* seems to be c. 3rd century. Some brief excavation on the new site recovered Late Roman pottery.

Principal Reading: Gregory 416–418; Fabian 1995

PART C

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