

The World of the Nabataeans

Volume 2 of the International Conference
The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans
held at the British Museum, 17–19 April 2001

Edited by Konstantinos D. Politis

Alte Geschichte

Oriens et Occidens 15

Franz Steiner Verlag

Konstantinos D. Politis (ed.)
The World of the Nabataeans

ORIENS ET OCCIDENS

Studien zu antiken Kulturkontakten
und ihrem Nachleben

Herausgegeben von
Josef Wiesehöfer

in Zusammenarbeit mit Pierre Briant,
Amélie Kuhrt, Fergus Millar und
Robert Rollinger

Band 15



The World of the Nabataeans

Volume 2 of the International Conference
The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans
held at the British Museum, 17–19 April 2001

Edited by Konstantinos D. Politis



Franz Steiner Verlag 2007

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <<http://dnb.d-nb.de>> abrufbar.

ISBN 978-3-515-08816-9



ISO 9706

Jede Verwertung des Werkes außerhalb der Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist unzulässig und strafbar. Dies gilt insbesondere für Übersetzung, Nachdruck, Mikroverfilmung oder vergleichbare Verfahren sowie für die Speicherung in Datenverarbeitungsanlagen.
Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigen Papier.
© 2007 Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart
Druck: Printservice Decker & Bokor, München
Printed in Germany

Contents

<i>Prologue</i>	
Konstantinos D. Politis	7
<i>The Rediscovery of Petra, 1807–1818</i>	
Norman Lewis	9
<i>The Nabataeans in History (Before AD 106)</i>	
Robert Wenning	25
<i>Nabataean Inscriptions: Language and Script</i>	
John F. Healey	45
<i>Nabataean Religion</i>	
John R. Bartlett	55
<i>Nabataean Art between East and West: A Methodical Assessment</i>	
Joseph Patrich	79
<i>Nabataean Monumental Architecture</i>	
Laurent Tholbecq	103
<i>Nabataean Dwellings: Domestic Architecture and Interior Decoration</i>	
Bernhard Kolb	145
<i>Nabataeans under Roman Rule (After AD 106)</i>	
David Graf	173
<i>Nabataean Cultural Continuity into the Byzantine Period</i>	
Konstantinos D. Politis	187
<i>The Spice Trade from South Arabia and India to Nabataea and Palestine</i>	
Fawzi Zayadine	201
<i>Nabataean Water Supply, Irrigation and Agriculture</i>	
John P. Oleson	217
<i>Animal Exploitation in the Nabataean World</i>	
Jacqueline Studer	251

<i>The Urban Development of Petra</i>	
Peter J. Parr	273
<i>Textiles of the Graeco-Roman Period from the Dead Sea Region</i>	
Hero Granger-Taylor	301
<i>Nabataean Fine-ware Pottery</i>	
Stephan G. Schmid	309
<i>Experimenting the Manufacture of Nabataean Fine-ware Pottery</i>	
James R. B. Mason	327
<i>Monetary Interchange in Nabataean Petra</i>	
Julian M. C. Bowsher	337
<i>The Nabataeans as Pastoral Nomads: An Archaeological Perspective</i>	
Steven Rosen	345
<i>The Cultural and Heritage Management of Petra</i>	
Zaki Aslan	375
<i>Epilogue</i>	
Glen W. Bowersock	385
Contributor's Addresses	389

Prologue

The idea of holding an international conference concerning the 'World of the Herods and Nabataeans' was originated by Drs Nikos Kokkinos and Konstantinos Politis. Their respective researches into these closely-related subjects inspired them to plan an assembly of the most eminent academics to discuss the varied issues generated by the study of the Herodian Dynasty and the close familial relationship they shared with their Nabataean neighbours.

Their efforts were greatly assisted by the enthusiasm of Sam Moorhead who facilitated the arrangements for this unique conference to be held in the Clore Education Centre which is part of the newly-built Great Court of the British Museum in London. This was the inaugural academic congress to be held in this centre at the beginning of the new century. The venue, combined with the attendance of all the invited scholars, ensured the success of this extraordinary event.

With the exception of Jacqueline Studer's, the papers in this volume are presented by authors who attended the conference. It should be noted however, that five of the original contributions do not appear here, as it has been decided that they would be published elsewhere: *Petra Depicted, 1812–1847* by Bryony Llewellyn; *Recent Excavations at the 'Great Temple' in Petra* by Leigh-Ann Bedal; *A Group of 120 Clay Bullae from Petra with Titles of the City* by Haim Gitler; *The Date of the al-Khasneh at Petra: A New Approach* by Karl Schmitt-Korte; and, *Conservation of the Textiles and Leather from Khirbet Qazone, Jordan: From Excavation to Display* by Pippa Cruikshank, Anna Harrison and John Fields.

In addition to the British Museum sponsoring and hosting the conference, several other institutions made valuable contributions to the symposium. They were the Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies, the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Karim Rida Said Foundation and the Kress Foundation. The Wingate Foundation also helped with the costs of editing.

The stimulating insights gained by the participants, engendered by the informative papers given by the speakers, encouraged Drs Kokkinos and Politis to separately edit the proceedings in what has become two volumes.

With appreciation of the efficiency of the publishers Steiner Verlag and gratitude to all the contributors I now proudly present this, the second volume encompassing the 'World of the Nabataeans'.

Konstantinos D. Politis,
Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies, Athens



The Rediscovery of Petra, 1807–1818

Norman N. Lewis

This paper is concerned with three early nineteenth century travellers and the contributions they made to our knowledge of Petra. They were U.J. Seetzen, who guessed that the ruins in Wadi Musa might be those of Petra but was not able to get there, J.L. Burckhardt who reached Wadi Musa and tentatively identified the ruins as those of Petra, and W.J. Bankes who was the first to make drawings of some of the monuments and to copy inscriptions there. The section on Bankes differs from those on Seetzen and Burckhardt in that it is largely based upon Bankes' own papers many of which have only recently been thoroughly studied.

U.J. SEETZEN was the pioneer explorer of the country beyond the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. He was the first European in modern times to visit Jerash and Amman and to identify the ruins there as those of Gerasa and Phila-delphia. From time to time since his day it has been suggested that he was also the first European to reach the ruins of Petra in Wadi Musa.¹ In fact his travel journals and letters, summarised below, make clear that although he tried to reach Wadi Musa he failed to do so.

Seetzen's first journeys south of Damascus were made in December 1805. In January 1806 he left Damascus for the last time and made a wide ranging tour which included Jerash, Amman and Kerak.² He 'enquired for Petra' at Kerak but obtained no useful information.³ Having rounded the southern end of the Dead Sea he reached Jerusalem on 6th April 1806 and spent most of that year west of the Jordan. In December he explored the western side of the Dead Sea and in the following January made a second tour of the eastern side and returned to Jerusalem.⁴

On 13th March 1807 he set off from Jerusalem on a journey which was to take him via Sinai to Suez and Cairo.⁵ At Hebron, as he prepared for the desert stages ahead of him, local people talked to him about the country to the south and south-east and gave him the names of places, inhabited or deserted, which were to be found there. Among them were Wadi Musa, 'Pharaün' and 'Seyyidna Harün'. Later, as Seetzen travelled south from Hebron, his guide took up the theme,

¹ Gage, for example, who published an abridged translation of Ritter's *Erdkunde* (Gage 1866 I, 419) wrote that 'I cannot doubt that Seetzen is to be considered the true modern discoverer of Petra', and as recently as 1972 an article in the *Archaeological Encyclopaedia of Israel* stated not only that Seetzen was the first European traveller to reach Petra but also that he 'had no idea of its true identity' (This statement was replaced in subsequent editions of the *Encyclopaedia* by another in which Burckhardt was identified as the discoverer).

² *Monat. Corr.* XVIII 331–367, 417–448; *Brief Account* 7–47; *Reisen* I, 362–426.

³ *Monat. Corr.* XVIII 434; *Reisen* II, 356; Burckhardt 1822, 387.

⁴ *Reisen* II, 217–274, 293–385.

⁵ *Monat. Corr.* XVII 132–153; *Reisen* III, 3–163.

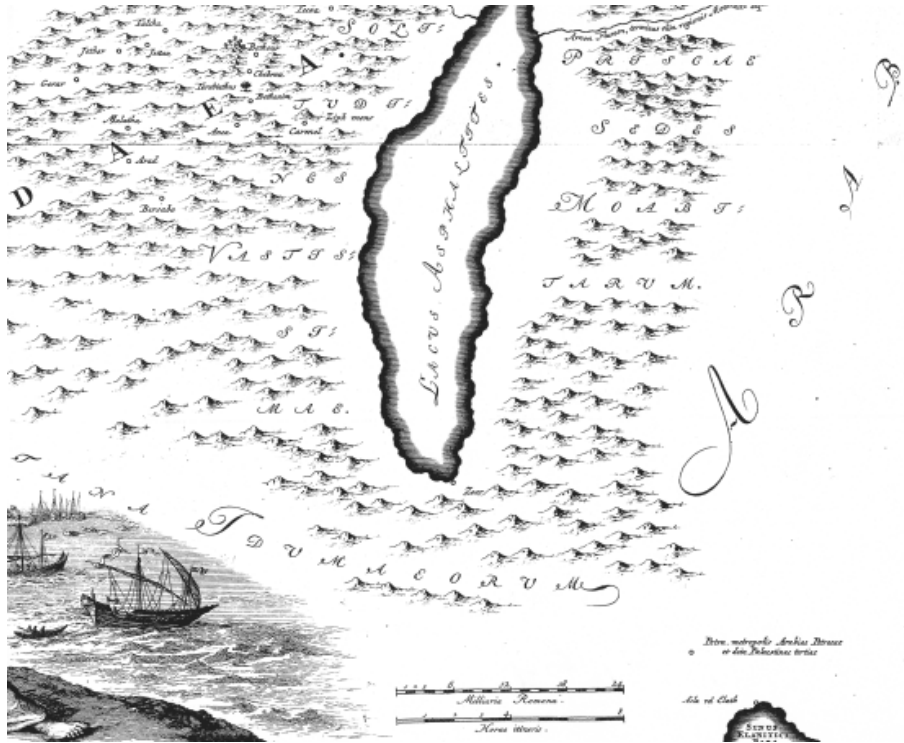


Fig 1. Part of the frontispiece map in Reland's *Palæstina*, 1714.

telling him that he was unlikely to find interesting ruins in the area through which they were then passing; he should go east to the Jibal and the Sharah where there were marvellous ruins. Fired by enthusiasm the guide exclaimed 'By God, when I behold the ruins of Pharaūn I could weep!' and he went on to say more about Wadi Musa and its environs. It became clear to Seetzen that the ruins of 'Pharaūn' were in Wadi Musa and that the *mazar* of Harūn, to which Muslims made pilgrimage, was on a rocky mountain above the Wadi. Seetzen speculated at length about all this; he knew that Harūn was the Arabic name for Aaron and wondered whether the eminence above the Wadi could really be Mount Hor and whether Pharaūn might be Pharan, or perhaps Petra.⁶ He thought about it a great deal and would have liked to follow up the information, but he could hardly change his plans at this point. He pursued his chosen route via Beersheba and the Tih desert to western Sinai and thence to Suez and Cairo, where he arrived on 24th May 1807.

⁶ *Monat. Corr.* XVII, 136–139; *Reisen* 1855 III 16–19

Little more than a year after this he decided to try to find the mysterious ‘Pharaūn’ which, as he told von Hammer in a letter from Cairo dated 10th July 1808, was said to be in Wadi Musa, a well watered valley near which on a high rock was the reputed tomb of Aaron. It might possibly be the site of Petra, he continued, but whether or not that were so the association of the Israelites with that area made it so interesting to him that he felt he must try to get there. He did not know where it was but guessed it to be a day or two east or north east of Aqabah. ‘Pharaūn’ was only one of three places he hoped to reach; the others were ‘Midian on the Red Sea three days’ journey south of Aqabah’, and the ruins of Medain Saleh in Hijaz on the route of the Syrian Hajj.⁷

In making his plans Seetzen seems not to have taken fully into account the difficulties of travelling in the Hijaz and adjacent areas which were now more or less controlled by the Wahhabis. The great Syrian and Egyptian pilgrim caravans no longer travelled each year to and from the Holy Cities, and Wahhabi raiding and tribute collecting parties ranged far to the north – even the people of Kerak ‘became Wahabis’ for a time from 1808.⁸ We have no details of what attempt, if any, Seetzen made to reach Wadi Musa or the other places he had mentioned in his letter of 10th July 1808; in a later letter, dated 29 July 1809, he described his further exploration of Sinai and sent von Hammer a sheet of Sinaitic inscriptions he had copied, but all he said about Aqabah or Petra was that he had been unable to get to them, his plans having been frustrated by the Wahhabis.⁹

Seetzen had no further chance of finding Petra. He travelled to Mecca later in 1809, to Mocha in 1810, and never returned to the north. He died, almost certainly of poison, near Mocha in 1811.

J L BURCKHARDT’S ‘Description of a journey from Damascus through the mountains of Arabia Petræa and the desert El Ty to Cairo, in the summer of 1812’ begins with the following words:

‘Wishing to obtain a further knowledge of the mountains to the east of the Jordan, and being still more desirous of visiting the almost unknown districts to the east of the Dead sea, as well as of exploring the country which lies between the latter and the Red sea, I resolved to pursue that route from Damascus to Cairo, in preference to the direct road through Jerusalem and Ghaza, where I could not expect to collect much information important for its novelty.’¹⁰

⁷ Fundgruben I, 43–45. Burckhardt was sent a copy of this first, 1809, issue of Fundgruben in 1811, when he was in Aleppo. He mentioned this, and Seetzen’s letter of 10th July, 1808 which was published in it, in a letter he wrote to his friend G.C. Renouard on 3rd May, 1811 (B.L. Add. Ms. 27620), but did not mention Seetzen’s speculations about Wadi Musa; the only part of the letter which interested him seems to have been that in which Seetzen described his book-buying successes in Cairo, contrasted ruefully by Burckhardt with the modest results of his own efforts in Aleppo. It would appear that he either did not read the rest of the letter or read it without much interest and soon forgot it. He would not, at that time, have heard of Wadi Musa and had probably not yet considered the route he might eventually follow to Cairo. So far as is known there is no indication in anything else Burckhardt wrote that he was aware of Seetzen’s speculations concerning Wadi Musa or Petra.

⁸ Burckhardt, 1822, 283

⁹ Fundgruben II, 474

¹⁰ The summarised narrative which follows is based on Burckhardt 1822, 311–456 and

Wearing 'the most common Bedouin dress' and mounted on 'a mare that was not likely to arouse the cupidity of the Arabs' Burckhardt rode out of Damascus on the 18th June 1812. He took a south-westerly route, crossed the Jordan at Jisr Banat Yaqub and reached Tiberias on 23 June.¹¹ From here he intended to go to Al-Salt, the place from which he planned to start his journey east of the Dead Sea, but he chanced to meet Lady Hester Stanhope's companion Michael Bruce who 'easily prevailed' on him to accompany him to Nazareth where Lady Hester was staying.¹² After meeting her Ladyship he joined a little caravan of petty merchants who were going to Al-Salt.

He reached Al-Salt without difficulty but was delayed there while he looked for, bargained with and eventually engaged a man to accompany him to Kerak. Not all the time was wasted; one day, tiring of Al Salt, he rode over to Al Fuhays, nearby, and there 'was so fortunate as to find a guide who five years ago had served in the same capacity to Mousa, the name assumed by M. Seetzen' who agreed to take him to Amman.¹³ There Burckhardt was able to make notes and to sketch a plan, as he had done at Jerash in May; the resultant lengthy and informative descriptions of the two sites eventually appeared on pp. 252–265 and 357–360 of Burckhardt 1822. From Amman he returned to Al-Salt and, on 13th July, got away to the south.

At Kerak another twenty days of delay ensued because Yūsuf Majali, the Shaykh of Kerak, would not let him go further on his own or with a single guide; he himself was going southward in a few days, he said, and Burckhardt should go with him. While Burckhardt was in Kerak he enjoyed the hospitality of many of the Christian townsmen and from them obtained much information about the country round about. Finally on 4th August Shaykh Yūsuf accompanied by forty horsemen started for a tour to several villages south of Kerak and Burckhardt

except where otherwise stated all page references in the text and notes of this section are to Burckhardt 1822.

¹¹ At first sight it seems surprising that Burckhardt should go to Tiberias, west of the Jordan, when his objective was Al-Salt. This was probably due to the fact that in May he had been unable to reach Al-Salt from Jerash because of the unsettled state of the country, the Bani Sakhr in particular constituting a menace to travellers (p. 264). Now, a month later, he did not want to be obliged to turn back again, and calculated correctly that he would be more likely to find other people going to Al-Salt from Tiberias or other towns west of the Jordan than from the sparsely populated and dangerous area to the east. That the diversion to Tiberias was not due to any sudden change of plan is shown clearly by a letter he wrote on 16th May 1812 – soon after his return from the Hauran and almost a month before he left Damascus again – in which he outlined the route he proposed to take, and did in fact take (Letter to J. Fiott, B.L. Add. Ms. 47490).

¹² Burckhardt's description of the meeting with Lady Hester is in his pages 335–337. A commentary on it with reference to other sources is in Lewis 2001, 57–69, and particularly 68–69.

¹³ This was the second time that Burckhardt found a man who had guided Seetzen. During his tours of the Hauran and the country south of it, in 1810 and 1812, his paths several times crossed those followed by Seetzen in 1806. (p. 57, 71, 211, 268, 362, 374, 387, 390) He came to admire Seetzen, whose name was often mentioned by the country people, and who Burckhardt concluded, had been 'indefatigable in his researches'. (Letter to G C Renouard, 3rd May 1811, BL Add. Ms 27620)

went with him. Although Burckhardt had paid the Shaykh an agreed amount for his guidance and protection the latter now demanded more and as they travelled subjected Burckhardt to various impositions and humiliations. It was not until the Shaykh and his men turned back to Kerak on 12th August that Burckhardt was able to make his own way with a succession of beduin guides. He sold his mare in order to buy provisions and went barefoot. Having stopped briefly at Shaubek he followed the Aqaba road for a day or so but then turned a little towards the south-west. He did so because he wanted to avoid Aqabah with its soldiers and officials and more immediately because he was 'particularly desirous of visiting Wadi Mousa, of the antiquities of which I had heard the country people speak in terms of great admiration; and from thence I ...hoped to cross the desert in a straight line to Cairo' (p. 418). The 'country people' he referred to were probably his informative hosts at Kerak and the 'terms of great admiration' which they used almost certainly resembled the information which Seetzen had been given at Hebron four years earlier. Listening to them Burckhardt may have wondered, as Seetzen did, if the ruins might be those of Petra, or he might have remembered something of what Seetzen had written in his letter of 10th July 1808, but he gives no indication of this.

He determined to make the detour to Wadi Musa, but he needed an excuse for so doing; as he said, to have left the Aqabah road 'out of mere curiosity to see the Wady would have looked very suspicious in the eyes of the Arabs'. Fortunately he knew that Aaron's tomb was situated 'at the extremity of the valley'¹⁴; and he therefore 'pretended to have made a vow to slaughter a goat in honour of Haroun (Aaron)... and by this stratagem I thought that I should have the means of seeing the valley on my way to the tomb. To this my guide had nothing to oppose; the dread of drawing upon himself, by resistance, the wrath of Haroun, completely silenced him' (p. 419).

At Al-Ji near the head of Wadi Musa he hired another guide to conduct him to the tomb and evidently told him the same story. He and this man walked, carrying a goat and a waterskin, through the Siq, past the Khazneh, the theatre and Qasr al Bint and then turned away from the valley to climb towards Jabal Harun. Just before sunset they reached a high plateau from which the tomb was clearly visible, and there they immolated the goat. They slept at the place of sacrifice and in the morning returned to Al-Ji by the way they had come. The 'stratagem' had succeeded admirably.

Three days later Burckhardt threw in his lot with a party of eight beduin, with twenty camels, making for Cairo. They crossed the Arabah and the Tih desert ('the most barren and horrid tract of country I have ever seen') in a series of forced marches, and reached Cairo before sunrise on September 4th.

Burckhardt announced his arrival in Cairo to his 'employers', as he called the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, by a letter dated 12th September, telling them amongst much else that he had visited

¹⁴ This was an uncharacteristically inaccurate statement; in fact he knew that the tomb was on Jabal Harun.

Wadi Musa 'and the remains of an ancient city which I conjecture to be Petra, the capital of Arabia Petraea, a place which, as far as I know, no European traveller has ever visited'. After a short description of the ruins he mentioned the tomb of Aaron and added, in parentheses, '(if I remember right, there is a passage in Eusebius, in which he says that the tomb of Aaron was situated near Petra)'¹⁵. In the next few weeks Burckhardt wrote letters to his family and friends telling them about his discovery, as well as a full account for the Association.¹⁶ In one of the letters, written on 18th October 1812 to Renouard, he added to a brief description of the ruins the following words: 'I am ignorant whether Mr Seetzen has seen Wady Moosa; if not, the discovery is mine, and I pride myself a little on it because the spot is difficult of access, especially from the North. From Akabah it may perhaps be visited with less danger.'¹⁷ In the same letter he wrote that 'among several circumstances which strengthen my opinion, [that the ruins were those of Petra] is the authority of Eusebius who says that Aaron was buried near Petra (v. Reland geog. sacra)'¹⁸

¹⁵ Burckhardt 1819, xlvi.

¹⁶ Some of the letters Burckhardt wrote at this time are cited below, others are in Burckhardt-Sarasin 1956, 139, and in Otter 1824, 598–604. Other people also wrote spreading the news, not always very precisely. Lady Hester Stanhope, for example, told her cousin that 'Sheick Ibrahim, the traveller, after leaving me at Nazareth, went God knows where into the desert, and has discovered a second Palmyra...' (Cleveland, 1914, 151)

¹⁷ B.L. Add. Ms 27620. Burckhardt was, of course, correct. No other traveller was able to reach Petra from the north (i.e. using Burckhardt's route) until the Turkish military occupation of the region in the 1890s (although Bankes and his companions did the journey in the reverse direction in 1818). Following Linant and Laborde's pioneering journey from Egypt, Sinai and Aqabah in 1828, however, hundreds of tourists used this route to reach Petra in succeeding decades.

¹⁸ A difference between the phraseology of Burckhardt's letter of 12th September 1812, on the one hand, and the words used in the letter of 18th October and in his full report to the African Association is of some interest. In the letter of 12th September he writes, 'if I recollect right there is a passage in Eusebius...' whereas it is clear from the letter of October 18th and from his full report that he had consulted Reland's *Palaestina* (a compendium of geographical and other information derived from the works of classical authors) and that it was this from which he took Eusebius' statement. We do not know why he expressed himself differently in each of the three documents but a probable explanation is as follows. When he arrived in Cairo he was in rags and carrying almost nothing – certainly no books or notes on books, and when he wrote his first letter he must have been relying on an uncertain memory. It is most unlikely that he had a copy of Reland with him in Syria (he explains in another letter – Otter 1824, 597 – that he had few classical books there), and his reading of Reland must have been done before he left England in 1808. It is not surprising that four years later he could not remember where he had read the 'passage in Eusebius'. (It is, perhaps, more surprising that he did not remember Reland's bold and challenging map, Fig 1 above). We know from the letter of 18th October 1812 that he had papers sent from Damascus to Cairo and he probably also arranged to have others sent from England to await his arrival in Cairo. By the time he wrote his letter of 18th October to Renouard and started to write his full account for the African Association he would have been able to collect his belongings, to have notes ready to hand and to be somewhat more definite and specific in his references. It is likely that he had notes from Reland with him rather than the two-volume book; if he had had the latter he would have been able to quote Eusebius' words as given by Reland:

'Mons Hor in quo mortuus est Aharon erat juxta urbem Petram.' (Reland 1714 Lib. III, 930)

Burckhardt finished the full account of the journey from Damascus before the end of 1812 and sent it off to London. The conclusion of his description of Petra is admirably short, precise and modest; it reads as follows:

'In comparing the testimonies of the authors cited in Reland's *Palæstina*, it appears very probable that the ruins in Wady Mousa are those of the ancient Petra, and it is remarkable that Eusebius says the tomb of Aaron was shewn near Petra. Of this at least I am persuaded, from all the information I procured, that there is no other ruin between the extremities of the Dead sea and Red sea, of sufficient importance to answer to that city. Whether or not I have discovered the remains of the capital of Arabia Petrea, I leave to the decision of Greek scholars'. (p. 431)

Unfortunately the Association made no announcement about Burckhardt's discovery until 1819, when they published his letter of 12th September 1812 in the 'Memoir on the Life and Travels of John Lewis Burckhardt' which appeared as a Foreword to his *Travels in Nubia*. This was followed in 1822 by his *Travels in Syria* containing the full account – ten years after Burckhardt's death.

W J BANKES and Burckhardt first met in Cairo towards the end of 1815 and immediately became good friends, Burckhardt describing Bankes in a letter as 'a very superior man.... indefatigable and accurate in his researches' and adding that 'he draws beautifully and is besides well stocked with learning'.¹⁹ (Bankes was equally complimentary; he wrote in his journal that Burckhardt was 'made on purpose for a traveller, full of energy and enterprize', and praised his mastery of Arabic and his knowledge of the East).²⁰ They exchanged information and discussed further plans and when Bankes left Egypt for Syria at the end of the year he took with him 'invaluable information and advice' given him by Burckhardt. They continued their discussions by correspondence until 1817. In what proved to be Bankes' last letter to Burckhardt he wrote of his plans to explore the country beyond the Dead Sea; the letter was dated October 15th, 1817, the date of Burckhardt's death.²¹

In November, 1817 Bankes stayed in Aleppo for a few days and there met Charles Irby and James Mangles, two naval officers who like him had travelled extensively in Egypt and Nubia and who were now 'exploring' Syria. They met again on March 2, 1818, at Tiberias, where Bankes renewed a suggestion he had made in Aleppo that the three of them should travel together, and more specifically that the others should join him in a tour east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea and they 'embraced the opportunity of accompanying him'.²² Ten days later they forded the Jordan and made for Jerash where they spent several days taking measurements and drawing plans. They then paid some beduin to guide them to Al Salt and Kerak, but things went badly. They reached Al Salt with some difficulty but having fallen out with their guides were obliged to retreat across the

¹⁹ Burckhardt's letter to Clarke, 28th June 1816, in Otter 1824: 617–624.

²⁰ Bankes' journal of his journey from Alexandria to Cairo, August 1815, pp. 23–24, Egyptian Department, British Museum.

²¹ Dorchester Record Office, Bankes papers, ref. no. HJI/75.

²² Irby and Mangles 1823, 296.

Jordan and to find their own way to Jerusalem.²³ They stayed in Jerusalem for over a month, making more careful preparations than they had for their first attempt and adding to their numbers. Thomas Legh who had recently arrived in Jerusalem having travelled from Moscow, joined them and so did Giovanni Finati who had served Bankes as personal servant and interpreter in Egypt and Nubia.²⁴ Attended by other servants, guides and guards they made a party which at least initially numbered eleven men. Bankes had tried to persuade officials in Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem and elsewhere to authorise the journey, but finding none of them helpful, he and his companions 'determined to proceed, trusting to our numbers and force, and to try our fortune with the sheikh of Hebron' and with others beyond.²⁵ They left Jerusalem on May 6th, 1818.

There could have been no greater contrast between Burckhardt's deliberately unobtrusive manner of travelling and that of Bankes' party. Although as a matter of convenience they put on Arab dress they did not pretend to be other than Europeans. They had good horses, firearms and plenty of money and had phenomenally good luck in finding the right people to guide and protect them, foremost amongst whom was Yūsuf Majali, the shaykh of Kerak. (They evidently did not know that Shaykh Yūsuf had ill treated and cheated Burckhardt six years earlier. At first he seemed to them to be 'a plain, blunt, honest old man' and despite the faults in him which they discovered as they went he served them well; they realised that they could not have reached Wadi Musa without his help).²⁶ They found their way from Hebron to Kerak without much difficulty, and then Shaykh Yūsuf took them in charge. He led them to the tents of Muhammad Abu Rashid, a Shaykh of the Huwaytat tribe, who agreed without hesitation to take them to Wadi Musa. Unfortunately Abu Zaytun, the Shaykh of Wadi Musa, was present when Muhammad Abu Rashid undertook to do this, and he fiercely objected to the plan.²⁷ This was the prelude to five days of arguments, quarrels and negotiations. The situation became very tense and inter-tribal strife and bloodshed were feared, but eventually some sort of agreement was reached, 'peace was

²³ The beduin were of the same tribe, the Bani Sakhr, as those who were indirectly responsible for Burckhardt's retreat from his area in May, 1812 and for his decision in June to take the route west of the Jordan as far as Salt; see p. 12 and Note 11 above, and Finati 1830, II, 271–2.

²⁴ As a result of this accession to their numbers the journey of Bankes and his companions from Jerusalem to Petra and beyond is extraordinarily well documented; Bankes in his journal which commences with the departure from Jerusalem (the ms. of which is in the County Record Office at Dorchester, ref. no. HJ4/19 and 20, cited below as 'Journal'), Irby and Mangles 1823, 335–486 (most but not all of which is an edited version of Bankes' journal), Legh in MacMichael 1819, 187–267 and Finati 1830, II 234–278 all left accounts of it. Use is made of all these in the following summary; citations are given only when extracts are quoted.

²⁵ Irby and Mangles 1823, 338.

²⁶ Irby and Mangles 1823, 367.

²⁷ This was Muqabil Abu Zaytun, who continued to make difficulties for travellers at Petra until his death in or about 1848. We do not know exactly why he so strongly opposed the entry of the Bankes party; in his later encounters with visitors his object was primarily to ensure that they paid as much as possible for the privilege of entering 'his' territory. (At least a dozen published accounts by travellers between 1837 and 1849 mention him, some of them at length).

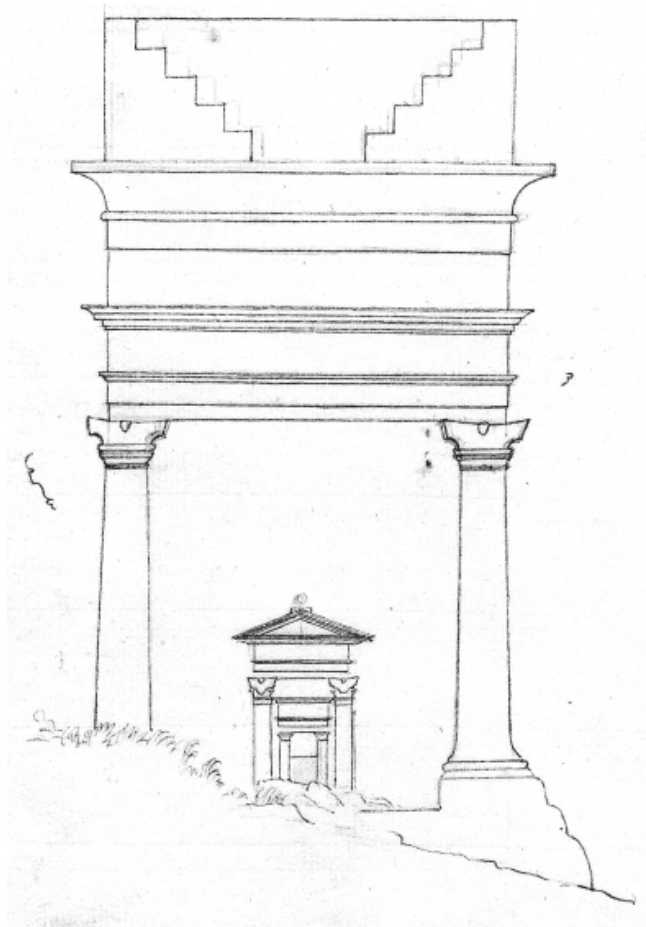


Fig 2. Bankes' sketch,
no title. Probably
Brünnnow no. 825.
Dorset Record
Office ref. no. D/
BKL;IV/A8

proclaimed' and on 24th May Shaykh Muhammad was able to lead the travellers through the Siq and into Petra.

Shaykh Muhammad was apparently nervous that further trouble might develop while the travellers remained in Wadi Musa and he insisted that they must leave after two full days. During that short period, however, they were allowed to do whatever they wished (even to climb Jabal Harun and to enter Aaron's tomb) and Bankes, assisted by the others, produced an impressive body of work. Bankes was observant and perceptive and the portion of his journal devoted to Petra (much of which was written out by Irby at Bankes' dictation) contains over 11,000 words of information, comment and speculation. The journal and his sketches complement each other.²⁸ To take one example, Bankes commented at

²⁸ The reproductions of Bankes' sketches in this paper are from originals in the Archive of the Bankes family of Kingston Lacy and Corfe Castle held by the Dorset Record Office and owned by the National Trust. The author gratefully acknowledges permission to reproduce them. Dorset Record Office reference numbers are given in the caption to each illustration.

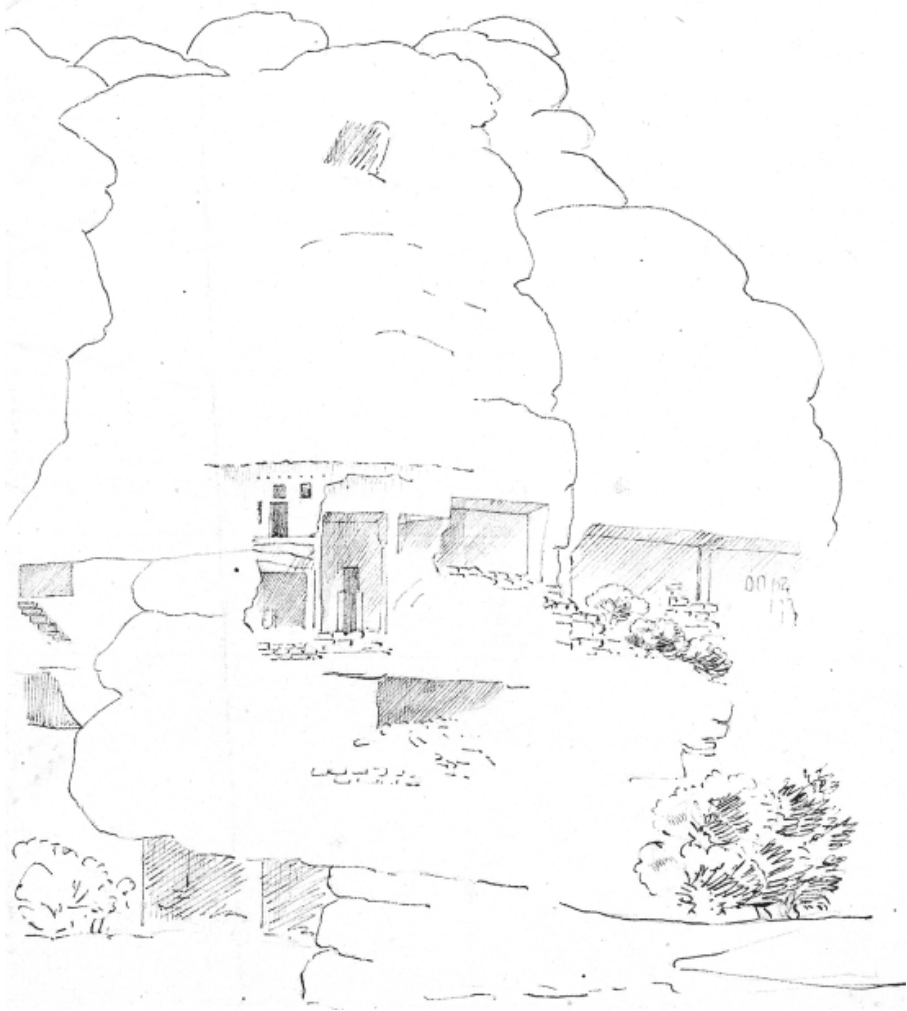


Fig 3. Bankes' sketch, 'Petra. The Nubian Geographer Nubicus Climat III says the houses at Petra were excavated in the rock' Dorset Record Office ref. no. D/BKL: IV/A9

length on the 'features of a sort of architecture that was new to me and is perhaps not elsewhere to be found', and he noted in particular the 'peculiar and indigenous style' of the tomb facades of the type shown in Fig. 2. At the angles of many of these, he continued, are 'pilasters with a considerable diminution upwards whose capital is very peculiar. I had already seen it at Bostra and at Shohba and had supposed it always the rough draft of an unfinished Ionic capital as it comes from the quarry. It is, however, almost universal on these tombs, and is certainly

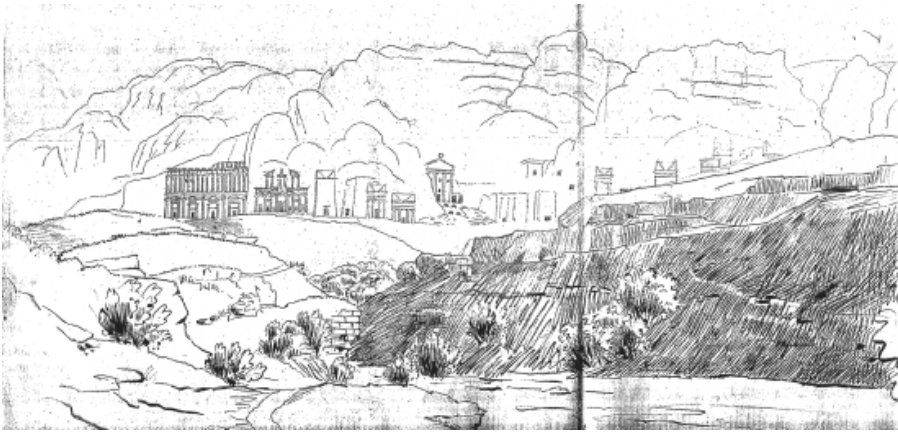


Fig 4. Banks' sketch, no title. View of Khubtha ridge from the West. Dorset Record Office ref. no. D/BKL: IV/A6

the Arabian order...'²⁹ (He would doubtless have been pleased to know that late nineteenth and twentieth century scholars would also recognise the affinity of the 'horned' capitals at Bosra and elsewhere in the Hauran with those at Petra and would call them, not 'Arabian' but 'Nabataean'.³⁰

Similarly, on his sketch of troglodyte dwellings in Wadi Siyagh, (Fig. 3) he noted that 'the Nubian Geographer Nubicus Climat 3d. says that the houses at Petra were excavated in the rock.'³¹ In his journal he describes some of these 'grottos'... which, he wrote, were certainly not sepulchral; they were residences, some large and roomy, others 'small and mean'. He also pointed out, however, that it was not 'universally true' that the people lived in excavated houses, as was 'evident from the great quantity of stones employed in the lesser kind of edifices which are scattered over the whole site which are no doubt the remains of dwellings of the inferior sort'.³²

²⁹ Journal, II, 2. Irby and Mangles 1823, 409, judiciously substituted 'may be called' for 'is certainly'.

³⁰ Butler, 1919, wrote of 'a new architectural order' much as Banks had. Cf. Dentzer-Feydy, 1986, 279–286 and McKenzie 1990, 185 and 190.

³¹ Banks was evidently familiar with *Geographia Nubiensis*... the title under which G. Sionita and J. Hesronita in 1619 had published their translations into Latin of an abridgement of the work of the twelfth century Arab geographer al-Idrisi, of whose name they were apparently unaware. Thereafter, until P. A. Jaubert published his *Geographie d'Edrisi* in 1836–40, the unknown author was commonly known as 'the Nubian Geographer'. (Some scholars, however, were familiar with al-Idrisi's name and work before Jaubert published; Reland, for example, and Renouard, who was to become Professor of Arabic at Cambridge in 1815 and who introduced Burckhardt to al-Idrisi's work in 1808. Burckhardt was particularly interested in what al-Idrisi wrote on Africa; see his notebooks in Cambridge University Library, Add. Ms. 282 and his letters to Renouard of 21st August 1808 and 3rd May 1811, British Library Add. Ms. 27620.

³² Journal, II, 18.



Fig 5. Bankes' sketch, no title. The Khazneh. Dorset Record Office ref. no. D/BKL: IV/A7

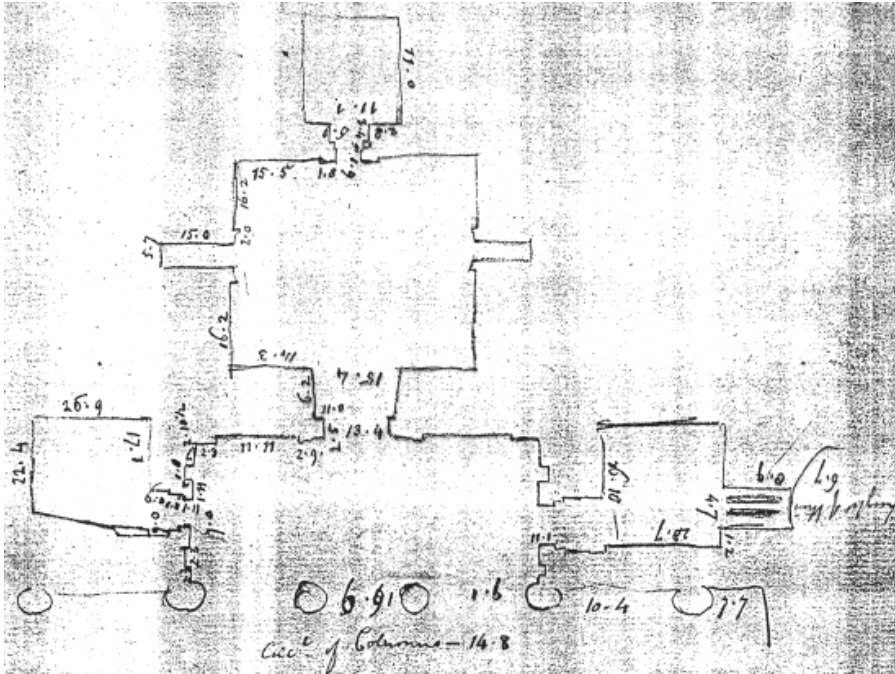


Fig 6. Bankes' sketch, 'Petra. Ground plan of gt. Tomb or Temple'. Dorset Record Office ref. no. D/BKL: IV/A5

Many of Bankes' sketches, like Fig. 4, are rough, but bold and effective. His fine drawing of the Khazneh (Fig. 5) is very different; it was, said Finati, 'the work of many hours'.³³ In style it resembles many of the drawings he did in Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor: beautifully drawn, realistic and accurate. He made no attempt to embellish his subjects or to hazard reconstructions. The plan of the interior, with its detailed measurements, (Fig. 6) must have been produced by several of the party working together. It stands comparison with Dalman's, done eighty years later.³⁴ Similarly, their measurements of the 'Turkmaniyah' tomb appear closer to the true dimensions than those of Brünnow and Domaszewski.³⁵ The plan and elevation of Qasr al Bint are, however, faulty in several respects.

All of the inscriptions which Bankes copied in Petra are shown, numbered and annotated on a lithograph printed in England after his return home in 1820 (Fig. 7) No. 2 on the lithograph is from the inscription on the rear wall of the Urn tomb, which, as Bankes noted, 'proves the establishment of Christianity at Petra'. No. 3 is an excellent copy of the Arrianos epitaph which was inscribed on a

³³ Finati 1830, 263. We are fortunate to have the drawing; it was purloined on the journey back from Petra to Acre, but Bankes was able to buy it back from the thief a few days later – Irby and Mangles 1823, 481.

³⁴ Dalman, 1911, plate xv.

³⁵ Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904–09, 363.

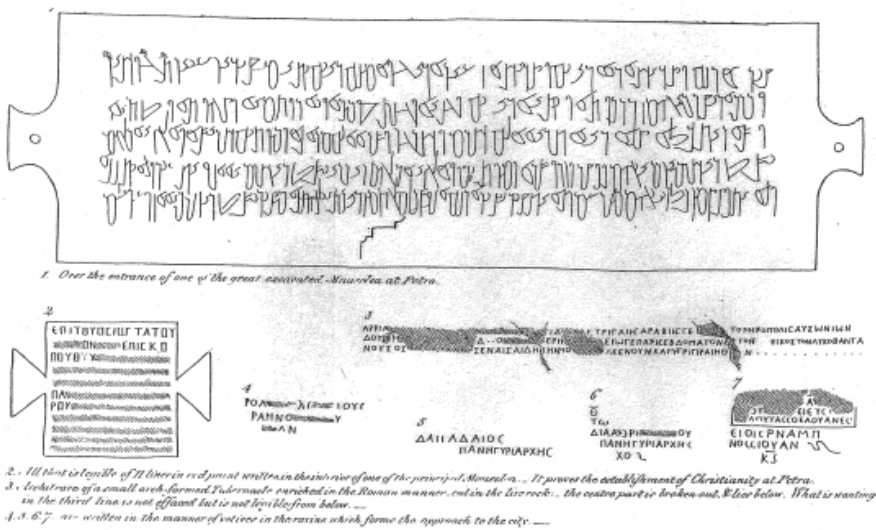


Fig 7. Lithograph of Banks' copies of inscriptions at Petra

monument near the theatre which collapsed in 1847. The most important text is that at the top of the lithograph, the 'long inscription in some strange character which it was a great labour for my master to copy' as Finati put it.³⁶ This was the Nabataean inscription on the front of the Turkmaniyah tomb. The inscription is in five long lines, high up, and difficult to transcribe, but, as Banks noted, the letters are cut 'with much neatness and precision and are in a state of wonderful preservation' and he was able to make an extraordinarily accurate copy. He also pointed out that the letters were 'exactly similar to those scratched upon the rocks in the Wadi Makutub and about the foot of Mount Sinai'.³⁷ In his journal and in a note on his fair copy of the inscription he appears to suggest that the script of the inscription might be the same as or related to that of the letter sent by the Nabataeans to Antigonos the One-eyed after his attack on them in 312 B.C. Thus he was not only the first person to record a Nabataean inscription in Petra and to recognise that this and the Sinaitic graffiti were in the same script, but also to attribute it to the Nabataeans and to put it into its correct historical context.³⁸

At daybreak on 26th May the party started the long return journey to the north and after putting in a little more work on the survey of Jerash which Banks had started in 1816 they reached Acre on June 25, soon after which they dispersed.³⁹

³⁶ Finati 1830, 263.

³⁷ Journal II, 4–5.

³⁸ I owe the foregoing observation on the Turkmaniyah inscription to M.C.A. MacDonald. A more complete discussion of the subject will appear in a joint paper by Mr MacDonald and myself in the journal SYRIA, forthcoming.

³⁹ Irby and Mangles 1823, 479–486

After Bankes' return to England in 1820 friends and colleagues eagerly expected him to publish some of the work he had done in Egypt, Syria and elsewhere during his travels.⁴⁰ He did in fact take the first step by having a number of lithographs made, including the one of the Petra inscriptions; he must have intended to publish these but never did so. Part of the explanation is apparent in a letter he wrote to Byron in 1822 in which he said 'As for publication, I am always thinking of it, and from a strange mixture of indolence with industry always deferring it...'⁴¹ and although he continued for some years to think about publishing some of his material, the only book which appeared under his name was the *'Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Giovanni Finati'* (1830) of which he was the translator and editor. In a footnote to p.148 of that book he wrote that he hoped to publish some of his Syrian material 'in the course of the present year', but he did not do so. Three years later he was accused of committing a homosexual offence. He was acquitted but when, in 1841, he was faced with a similar charge he fled to Italy where he remained until his death. His papers, on which the foregoing account is largely based, remained unregarded in his house, Kingston Lacy in Dorset, until nearly the end of the 20th Century. They may now be consulted at the Dorset County Record Office in Dorchester.

References

- R. E. BRÜNNOW and A. von DOMASZEWSKI
1904–09 *Die Provincia Arabia*. Strasbourg
- J. L. BURCKHARDT
1822 *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*. London
- C. BURCKHARDT-SARASIN and HANSRUDOLF SCHWABE-BURCKHARDT
1956 *Scheik Ibrahim (Johann Ludwig Buckhardt) Briefe an Eltern und Geschwister*. Basel.
- H. C. BUTLER
1919 *SYRIA, Publication of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–05, Div IIA*. Leyden
- CLEVELAND, DUCHESS OF
1914 *The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope*. London
- G. DALMAN
1911 *The Khazneh at Petra. Palestine Exploration Fund Annual*. London
- J. DENTZER-FEYDY
1986 *Hauran I*, part 2, 279–286. Paris.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Legh in MacMichael 1819, 220, Turner 1820, II, 454, Leake in Burckhardt, 1822, iv.

⁴¹ Letter, Bankes, Jan 2nd 1822, to Byron, in the archives of John Murray, Publishers, whose permission to publish this extract is greatly appreciated.

G. FINATI

1839 *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Giovanni Finati.* (Translated and edited by W. J. Bankes.) London

W. L. GAGE

1866 *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula by Carl Ritter, Translated and adapted to the Use of Biblical Students.* Edinburgh.

C. L. IRBY and J. MANGLES

1823 *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor during the years 1817 and 1818.* London. (Printed for private distribution; reprinted London 1985)

P. A. JAUBERT

1836-40 *Géographie d'Édrisi*, 2 vols. Paris.

FR. KRUSE. See Seetzen

LEGH, T See MacMichael, 1819

N. N. LEWIS

2001 *The Anger of Lady Hester Stanhope: some letters of Lady Hester, John Lewis Burckhardt and William John Bankes. Travellers in the Levant*, ed. S. Searight and M. Wagstaff. Durham.

W. MacMICHAEL

1819 *A Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the Years 1817, 1818.* London. (The last chapter of this book, p. 188f., is an account of T. Legh's journey to Petra with Bankes, Irby and Mangles, as told by Legh to MacMichael.)

J. McKENZIE

1990 *The Architecture of Petra.* London

W. OTTER

1824. *The Life and Remains of the Rev. E. D. Clarke.* London.

H. RELAND

1714 *Palaestina ex Monumentis Veteribus Illustrata.* Trajecti Batavorum

U. J. SEETZEN

1810 *A brief account of the Countries adjoining the Lakes of Tiberias, the Jordan and the Dead Sea.* Published for the Palestine Association of London. Bath. [Seetzen's name appears on the title page as M. Seetzen.]

U. J. SEETZEN

1854-55 *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petræa und Unter-Aegypten.* Ed. Dr. Fr. Kruse. 3 vols. Berlin.

G. SIONITA and J. HESRONITA

1619 *Geographia Nubiensis...* Paris.

W. TURNER

1820 *Journal of a Tour in the Levant* (3 vols). London

Periodicals

Fundgruben des Orients (Mines de l'Orient), Vol. 1, 1809, Vol 2, 1911. Wien.

Monatliche Correspondenz beförderung der Erd-und Himmelskunde, herausgegeben vom Freyherrn F. von ZACH, Vols. 13f. Gotha.

The Nabataeans in History

Robert Wenning

What is possible to write the history of the Nabataeans was done about twenty years ago by Glen W. Bowersock in his *Roman Arabia*. Recent research, excavations, inscriptions and other finds have changed the picture to some degree, but in general, Bowersock's treatment is still the best history of the Nabataeans available today. I neither want to repeat this nor give just an overview, but like to discuss a few of the problems¹. The history which can be reconstructed from Greek and Roman sources is more or less the history of the contacts of the Greeks, Romans and Jews with the Nabataeans and it is their view of the Nabataeans. It is so to speak a history of Nabataean foreign affairs and this is only one part of their history. There is no Nabataean literature. The few, longer Nabataean inscriptions, coin legends and other archaeological evidence do not really fill the gap. Being a tribal society of nomadic tradition the Nabataeans could have had an oral tradition. This 'history' cannot be reconstructed.

There are more problems involved in writing a history of the Nabataeans. The period which can be described best is the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. This is supported by rich archaeological evidence. In A.D. 106 the Nabataean kingdom was transformed into *provincia Arabia*. The Nabataeans lost their influence in the area. The history of the second and third centuries A.D. is no longer a history of the Nabataeans, but of the Roman *provincia Arabia*, although the Nabataean population and their culture survived into the Late Roman period.

The step into history

What happened before the first century B.C. and what happened before 311 B.C. when the Nabataeans are undoubtedly mentioned in historical sources for the first time, is still unknown. I do not want to speculate on the origins of the Nabataeans, the area they occupied, and the date of their origins². In my opinion, all suggestions given so far are problematic to indicate where one should look for the

¹ I would like to thank the organizers of the conference for all the help they offered and especially for the wonderful opportunity of this conference. Many colleagues gave me value comments on my paper, I express my thanks to G. W. Bowersock, S. Dar, D. F. Graf, H. Gitler, J. F. Healey, N. Kokkinos, M. C. A. Macdonald, K. D. Politis, P. Parr, J. Patrich, I. Shatzman, and F. Zayadine. M. Neujahr and K. D. Politis kindly proof-read the English of my draft; any remaining mistakes are mine. The article was transmitted in 2002 and up-dated February 2004.

² Cf. Milik 1982; Knauf 1986; Graf 1990; with some critics Macdonald 2000, 47–48; Hackl-Jenni-Schneider 2003, 15–19.

origins of the Nabataeans. All that can be said with certainty is that the Nabataeans are known in the sources since the fourth century B.C. Up to that time the Qedarites, the dominant Arab tribe of the Persian period, controlled the south from the Hejaz and all of the Negev into southern Palestine with a local center at Lachish. The Qedarites are known as the immediate neighbours of the Achaemenid province, Yehud, from biblical and other sources³. They must have controlled the frankincense trade in their realm.

It now seems that there is some evidence for the time when the Nabataeans appeared in history and when they became the main traders of frankincense from the Arabia peninsula to the Mediterranean World. Aramaic ostraca finds indicate that the Persian province Idumaea must have been established before 363 B.C.⁴. The historical context was after the revolt of the Pharaoh Hakoris and King Euagoras from Salamis in 385/80 B.C. For some reason the Qedarites joined the coalition against the Persians⁵, probably after Hakoris won the Mediterranean coast around 383 B.C., and when Euagoras needed help to resist a new attack by the Persians in 381 B.C. After the Euagoras revolt was put down it is assumed that a reorganisation of Arabia took place by the Persians before the Persian campaign against Egypt in 373 B.C. Beside the establishment of Idumaea, which meant the loss of a large territory, the Qedarites obviously lost of their privileges of the frankincense trade. It can be assumed that they were replaced by the Nabataeans⁶. Arabia did not become a Persian province and enjoyed still a large degree of autonomy. It might be that the Nabataeans lived in the Hejaz or lived in southern Jordan and therefore were chosen by the Minaeans or the Persians to become their middlemen and by this rose to influence and power in the area. On the other hand it has been argued that the Persians lost their interest in the former area of the Edomite Kingdom after about 400 B.C., which allowed the Nabataeans to gain importance in this area⁷. All these changes contributed to the process by which the Nabataeans gained control of the frankincense from Dedan to Gaza. Gaza, the final destination of the frankincense route was granted special status as a Persian garrison⁸. It allowed the Persian King to control both the incense trade as well as the routes to Egypt by water and overland.

There seemed to be other evidence for this early period of the Nabataeans, the so-called Philisto-Arabian coins and some theophoric names. Both groups turned out to be of no such relevance. One of the consequences of the reorganisation of the area seems to be the introduction of coinage minted at Gaza, the so-

³ Knauf 1985a, 96–108.

⁴ Lemaire 1999.

⁵ Diod. Sic. 15.2.3–4.

⁶ Nabataeans are listed as traders of the frankincense route in the younger sources and not the Qedarites. Concerning the relationship between Qedarites and Nabataeans I do not follow the assumption of Knauf 1985a, 106–108 who takes the Nabataeans as a subtribe of the Qedarites. The punishment of the Qedarites would loose its sense, if the privileges were turned to a subtribe in such a tribal system. Furtheron, there are differences between the Qedarites and the (later) Nabataeans concerning language, religion, trade routes etc.

⁷ Knauf 1988, 76–77.

⁸ Mildenberg 1990.

called Philisto-Arabian coins⁹. These coins are divided into two groups of minting authorities by Mildenberg, the first he attributed to city of Gaza, the second to regional non Persian rules of northern Arabia¹⁰. He described some heads on the coins as portraits of bedouins¹¹, among which one would expect Nabataeans following the above considerations. There is more than one problem with this interpretation and with the identification made by Mildenberg. It is not easy to trace a particular prototype; some of the 'portraits' seem to belong to a completely different context. At present, these coins do not contribute to the understanding of the Nabataeans.

A continuity from Edomites to Nabataeans is often stated, but there is a gap of some centuries between Edomite and Nabataean settlements¹². There does not seem to be any more Edomite settlement in Edom after around 400 B.C. Nabataean settlement of Edom barely started before the second century B.C., but took place mainly in the first century B.C. and first century A.D. Petra with some finds of the second half of the third century B.C. is at the beginning of this process¹³. Nevertheless, Bartlett is not completely wrong in assuming a kind of continuity from Edomites to Nabataeans¹⁴, but in a more complex development. Those Edomites who had not left their homes to go merging with the Idumaeans population, probably returned to a nomadic life and may have joined tribes in the Hisma or other desert areas¹⁵. Could these parts of the regional population have preserved the memory of Qaus, venerated by Nabataeans as Qos four hundred years later? Or is Qos passed on to the Nabataeans by the Hellenistic Idumaeans, among whom Qos was a prominent deity? One way or another there is a continuity.

Petra in 311 B.C.

One gets the impression from the famous report of Hieronymus of Cardia about Petra and the Nabataeans¹⁶ that Petra in 311 B.C. was not yet the seat of the tribe and certainly not the religious center of the Nabataeans. Therefore, one should not misinterpret the site during this period. It may be described as a camp site

⁹ Gitler 2000; Mildenberg 2000.

¹⁰ Mildenberg 2000, 382–283 pls. LVIII–LX. Cf. Knauf 1985b, 24–28.

¹¹ Mildenberg 2000, 385, 390–391 nos. 71, 75, 79, 80, 83, 85. Nos. 71, 75 rather portray the Great King or Persian officials because of the *kidaris*. No. 80 is of greater importance. The obverse could show a ruler, a male head crowned with a diadem. Contrary to Mildenberg it is not a cap, because the curls overlap the diadem. The reverse shows a warrior riding a dromedary. He sits in the so-called shadad-saddle and is clad with a sword. There is a thymiaterion in front of him. Therefore one may assume a warrior deity of the desert people rather than a fighting king. Any name and context given to the rider and the ruler remain hypothetical.

¹² Hart 1986; 1987a–b; Schmid 2000a, 109.

¹³ Wenning 1987, 200–201.

¹⁴ Bartlett 1979; but cf. Bartlett 1990.

¹⁵ Knauf 1988, 76–77; Knauf 1995.

¹⁶ His report is found in the Geography of Diodorus Siculus 2.48–49; 19.94–100.

with a few people in charge of the frankincense stores and the herds of dromedaries in the surrounding area.

Concerning the year 311 B.C., instead of the common 312 B.C., one should follow the reconstruction of Errington 1977 and Winnicki 1989 describing the activities of the *diadochs* in Syria in the years 312 to 311 B.C. They date the battle at Gaza between Demetrios Poliorketes and Ptolemy in the autumn instead the spring of 312 B.C. Demetrios lost and went back to Tripolis in Phoenicia. Ptolemy established his interest up to Sidon. In the following spring of 311 B.C. Antigonos Monophthalmos occupied the Phoenician coastal cities. From here he sent two expeditions against the Nabataeans, the first under the command of Demetrios, the second under Athenaios. Both campaigns which were intended to subjugate the Nabataeans, or at least to bring back booty¹⁷, failed. The information comes from the above mentioned Greek officer and historian Hieronymus of Cardia, who led a third expedition to the Dead Sea.

Concerning the identification of 'Petra' (in Greek literal 'the rock') by Diodorus Siculus is debated among scholars¹⁸. The continuity of the place-name seems to be a good argument to identify the famous Petra with the 'Petra' in the ancient report. If one looks for the easily defendable rock with only one access where the Nabataeans tried to hide their goods, as described in the report, Umm al-Biyara is the best candidate¹⁹. Nevertheless, this identification does not seem to be correct if one takes the data of Diodorus seriously. In chapter 95 he gives the distance of 2,200 stades from the district of Idumaea, that is about 250 miles. This is often misstated as it is thought that the figures are wrong. But Diodorus did not describe the distance between Gaza and Petra²⁰ (about 130 miles), but rather the distance from Phoenicia to Idumaea. The situation is more clear in chapter 98. After plundering 'Petra' Demetrius tried to go as far as possible before camping near the Dead Sea at a distance of 300 stades to 'Petra', that is about 34 miles. The distance from the famous Petra to the Dead Sea would be about 74 miles. The distance reported in Diodorus locates the site of Khirbet es-Sela^c. Therefore the 'Petra' of Hieronymus and Diodorus should be identified with Khirbet es-Sela^{c21}. The site also fits the description in Diodorus as a natural refuge with an easily defendable ascent.

The early material found so far at the Petra we know today identifies this site as one of various places to store goods by the Nabataeans. Gradually this site became more established. This may be due to the fact that the plateau of Khirbet

¹⁷ It might be that the Greeks noticed the Nabataeans and their wealth for the first time during the conquest of Gaza in 332 B.C., although the sources mention only Arabs (Arrian 2.25–27; cf. Plutarch, Alexandros 25.6; Pliny, Hist. Nat. XI.33.62). The rumour about their wealth could easily have influenced these later campaigns.

¹⁸ Starcky 1966, 886–900, 943; Lindner-Hübner-Gunsam 2001, 273–275. This discussion is connected with the debated identification of Old Testament Sela (= rock) in the Edomite mountains.

¹⁹ Horsfield 1938, 3–4. I do not agree with Knauf 1997, 21–22, who identified "Petra" with Jebel el-Hubtha.

²⁰ The attacks of the Greeks on 'Petra' did not happen during the siege of Gaza.

²¹ Zayadine 1999, 89–90; Lindner-Hübner-Gunsam 2001 (description of the site).

es-Sela^c was difficult to reach, as opposed to the valley of Petra, where the Umm el-Biyara could have served as a refuge²². For the Greeks the ‘capital’ of the Nabataeans remained to be a ‘Petra’, a rocky site in the mountains of Edom. They did not care about the changes in that area as they had no other knowledge about it before the second century B.C. The Nabataeans, on the other hand, had names for both sites. *Raqmu* was the name for the Petra we know today²³. The Greeks had no problem to connect their ‘Petra’ with *Raqmu*, the ‘capital’ of the Nabataeans since the second century B.C. Probably they did not even realise that the name shifted from one site to the other.

The account of Hieronymus of the way of life of the Nabataeans is more idealistic than it seems at first. One can romanticise the wild and freedom-loving nomads of this account. But here a more general picture of nomads was constructed by using common topoi²⁴. The account should be read with caution. There is no reason to deny the nomadic nature of the Nabataeans. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the Nabataeans lived predominantly in tents and possibly in rock-cut caves until the Augustan period, when they started to build houses²⁵. Petra should be seen as a great tent site for a long time during the earlier periods.

Petra, the seat of the tribe

There are a few inscriptions referring to Nabataean traders or Nabataean slaves in the Hellenistic world²⁶. The oldest reference for *Petraioi* is probably an inscription from Miletus from the middle of the third century B.C.²⁷. Others belong to the second half of the second century. A few literary sources of the Hellenistic period²⁸ show some Nabataeans at different places in the third and second centuries B.C., but do not contribute to the question of the sedentarisation of the Nabataeans, rather illustrate their nomadic way of life. The sedentarisation of the Nabataeans or at least of parts of Nabataean society is understood as a longer process which started when Petra was chosen to become the seat of the tribe, that is the residency of the royal family and the nobility of the tribe. Dealing with a tribal Arab community in a process of transition from nomadism to sedentarism which follows traditions other than Greek poleis, this kind of sedentarisation does not mean urbanisation, but representation of the upper class. Living in tents did not exclude luxury. A royal court was established at Petra, and became known as the capital of the Nabataeans in the Greek world²⁹. Among the earliest evidence

²² So far no finds from the earlier Hellenistic periods are reported from Umm el-Biyara.

²³ The Nabataean name of Khirbet es-Sela^c remains unknown.

²⁴ Hornblower 1981; Graf 1990, 51–53.

²⁵ Stucky 1992, 139; Kolb 1997, 62–63; 2000, 229–230.

²⁶ Cf. Wenning 1987, 22–23; Roche 1996.

²⁷ Rehm 1997, no. 140/37 (cf. no. 174).

²⁸ Papyri of the Zenon archives, Poseidippos of Pella, Agatharchides of Cnidus in Diod. Sic., 1/2 Macc.

²⁹ Cf. Josephus, AJ 14,1,4.

for it is an inscription from Priene. The city of Priene in Asia Minor sent an embassy to Petra in about 129 B.C.³⁰. Petra also seems to be mentioned in Chinese sources in 126 B.C.³¹

The regional and local deity Dushara³² became the tutelar deity of the tribe, of many tribal clans and of the Nabataean dynasty. Whether the name Dushara is related to the mountains of Edom or describes a deity of the wilderness is debatable³³. Being the deity of Petra, the seat of the tribe, Dushara became the most prominent of the deities venerated by the Nabataeans. Petra became the political and religious center of the Nabataeans living either at Petra or elsewhere in the Nabataean realm. Nabataean clans assembled at Petra for their festivities. The area around the center of the city is full of such places and the clans buried their dead under the protection of Dushara in the famous rock-cut tombs at Petra³⁴.

The transfer of the tribal seat to Petra and the gradual emergence of the capital might be dated into the second half of the second century B.C. when there is more archaeological evidence³⁵. Stucky dated the beginning of a tent settlement at Az-Zantur to the end of the second century B.C.³⁶. Nabataean pottery and coins developed not much before 100 B.C.; the need for these indicates a growing population. One should not forget that this development would be the background for the struggle between the Nabataeans and the Hasmonaeans concerning territories on the east of the Dead Sea and Jordan River.

The Nabataean tribe settled at Petra sometime before 96 B.C. when Dushara is mentioned in the oldest dated Nabataean inscription at Petra in the Bab as-Siq sanctuary. The well-hewn large triclinium of the Bab as-Siq sanctuary³⁷ indicates that one could expect such rock-cut living-rooms, cultic cellae, triclinia and tombs some decades before, though there are no archaeological criteria identifying such early rooms and tomb façades. The same is true for the dating of the betyls, the aniconical representations of Nabataean deities at Petra³⁸.

The First Century B.C.

The earliest concrete genuine Nabataean works of arts are coins and pottery. What is typical for the beginning of Nabataean art is a direct, though simplified imitation of Hellenistic prototypes. This can be demonstrated in coinage³⁹ as well

³⁰ Hiller von Gaertringen 1906, 84–91 No. 108, V 168; cf. Bowersock 1983, 22.

³¹ Discussed by Graf 1996, 209.

³² Macdonald 1993, 345; AAE 2000, 48.

³³ Dyma 1999; Healey 2001, 85–107; Wenning 2003b.

³⁴ McKenzie 1990; Wenning 2003c.

³⁵ Wenning 2003d.

³⁶ Stucky 1992, 137–139.

³⁷ Cf. McKenzie 1990, 170f.; Zayadine-Farajat 1991, 275–278.

³⁸ Cf. Wenning 2001.

³⁹ Wenning 2003d, 145–147. Cf. coins of Aretas II; Kushnir-Stein-Gitler 1992/93 with convincing early dating against the late dating by K. Schmitt-Korte.

as in pottery⁴⁰. While in minor art this kind of influence is more obvious, in monumental art, particularly the tomb façades, eastern traditions continued and adopted Hellenistic forms relatively late, but then culminated dramatically in the Khazneh, an almost pure Alexandrine style façade of the third quarter of the first century B.C.⁴¹. Social institutions adopted Hellenistic forms and behaviour as well, as can be seen from later coin legends and titles in inscriptions. Among the social elements where Arab and ancient Near Eastern traditions and Hellenistic institutions converged is the banquet/symposium and the *marzeah*, an assembly of a particular group to carry out the veneration of their tutelary deity or to have a memorial meal⁴². Nabataean society remained a tribal organisation and the sheikhs/kings of the tribe seem to have followed the behaviour of Hellenistic eastern kings only within the constraints the tribal rules allowed them⁴³.

One should not overemphasise the Hellenistic influence on the Nabataeans in the late Hellenistic period. No doubt, the Nabataeans were hellenized by the end of the second century B.C., but as far as this development is reflected in the arts, Nabataean culture seems to gradually change by about the middle of the first century B.C. One cannot speak of a substantial Hellenisation before the last third of the first century B.C. The development of a unique Nabataean style in the arts follows the same gradual transition phases⁴⁴. Characteristic Nabataean art can be found from the Augustan period onwards.

Often the coins of Aretas III, minted at Damascus during the years 84–72 B.C.⁴⁵, are seen as evidence for a greater Hellenisation of Petra. It is doubtful, though, that this conclusion can be made on the basis of these coins. They continue in style and legend of his predecessors' coins. The coin legend calling Aretas 'Philhellenos' might reflect a legitimate story that he took the crown of Coele Syria to help the people of Damascus because he was chosen as King of Coele Syria by the citizens of Damascus. First in line was Aretas the legal successor of the Syrian King Antiochus XII Dionysus who was defeated and killed by the Nabataeans in the battle of Motho. Aretas did not establish a Nabataean power at Damascus, but continued the policy of his Seleucid predecessors and acted as King of Coele Syria⁴⁶. It is difficult to establish what benefit the Nabataeans gained from his rule at Damascus. Aretas defeated Alexander Iannaeus but did not get back any 'Nabataean' cities or areas occupied by the Hasmonaeans. He could not stop him to conquer cities east of the Jordan, such as Pella. It is interesting that the Damascus coins did not appear at Petra under Aretas III. Here,

⁴⁰ Schmid 2000a, 110–125, 133, 147–150, 157.

⁴¹ Cf. Schmid 2000a, 157–158; Schmid 2000b, 486–492; Wenning 2003d, 150–161 (with new photographs of the reliefs).

⁴² Cf. Wenning 1997, 181–182; McLaughlin 2001.

⁴³ Wenning 1997, 179–181. See below the description of a banquet by Strabo. Cf. further on the critics of Macdonald 1991 on the understanding of the Nabataean society as a Bedouin state by E. A. Knauf.

⁴⁴ Schmid 2000a, 24, 37–38, 147–150, 157–159; Wenning 2003d.

⁴⁵ Meshorer 1975, 12–16 pl. 1; Schmitt-Korte-Price 1994, 93–94.

⁴⁶ Cf. Bowersock 1983, 25.

the peculiar imitations of Hellenistic coins of Aretas II continued. True Nabataean coins did not appear before the reign of Obodas II in 62–60 B.C.⁴⁷

During his last year, Aretas III had to accept Roman sovereignty. Even the Nabataean kings kept their autonomy until A.D. 106. The decision of how to organise the Roman East was taken by Pompey in 63 B.C. with the new *provincia Syria* and the client kingdoms of the Hasmonaeans and Nabataeans. The realisation to make the Nabataeans Roman clients was concluded when M. Aemilius Scaurus undertook an expedition against the Nabataeans in 62 B.C. and accepted their submission together with a large amount of money from Aretas III before reaching Petra⁴⁸. In 58 B.C. Scaurus issued a coin at Rome to commemorate the subjugation of Aretas⁴⁹.

Malichus I (59–30 B.C.) being mostly a loyal client to Rome (aside from the alliance with the Parthians in 41/40 B.C.) supported the triumvir Marc Antony, the legal Roman representative in the East. The love-affair of Antony with Cleopatra VII and her attempts to recreate a Ptolemaic empire is well-known. She demanded great parts of the Roman East. Antony did not grant her as much, but nevertheless gained territory in 34 B.C. This probably included the lucrative balsam groves on the Dead Sea shores and the control of the Red Sea, which was more strategic for Nabataean trade. Cleopatra made the Herodian and Nabataean kings to fight each other in order to weaken them. The battles resulted with a major defeat of the Nabataeans near 'Amman in 31 B.C. causing the Nabataeans to accept Herod as their *prostates*, their overlord⁵⁰. But little resulted of this defeat as Octavian's victory of Actium and the death of Antony and Cleopatra completely changed the situation.

The Augustan period

Octavian confirmed the autonomy of both kings. He changed not the previous border between the two kingdoms apart from the fact that he gave the important harbour city of Gaza to Herod and allowed him to keep the conquered city Esbous. At that time he did not cut off other Nabataean territories. In 23 B.C. Herod became protector of the Batanea, the Trachonitis and the Auranitis, and in 20 B.C. of the Gaulanitis, areas which were of greater interest to the Nabataeans and settled by Arab tribes⁵¹ if not partly by Nabataeans. The Herodian protector-

⁴⁷ The existence of this king is much debated. The numismatic evidence seems to support the assumption (cf. Wenning 1993b, 32–33; Schmitt-Korte-Price 1994, 96–97) and as well the Tell esh-Shuqafiya inscription (Fiema-Jones 1990), if the crucial number in the dating, year 18 or year 14 of Cleopatra, can unambiguously be read as 'year 18' as it seems.

⁴⁸ After 62 B.C. Aretas III is not mentioned in the sources. One should not exclude the possibility that Aretas III lost his crown by decision of the tribal assembly because of these events. Obodas II followed him in 62/61 B.C. Kokkinos 1998, 95 note 40 prefers to lower the reign of Aretas III to 60 B.C., directly followed by Malichus I in 60/59 B.C.

⁴⁹ Schmitt-Korte 1991, 145–146 nos. 67–70.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bowersock 1983, 40–43.

⁵¹ Cf. Schottroff 1982; Macdonald 1993; Wenning 1994; Knauf 1998.

ate of these regions meant there was a kind of Jewish-Roman buffer zone between Syria and the Arab groups to the east, and the south⁵², and the control of Nabataean trade into Syria to the displeasure of the Nabataeans⁵³.

These events did not affect the Nabataean art, though the fall of the Ptolemaic kingdom in 30 B.C. probably did. There might have been an interest in Alexandrian art for a longer period. The Khazneh may be part of this as it can be assumed that Alexandrian influence became one prominent factor after the fall of the Ptolemaic kingdom when Alexandrian artists were seeking employment. During this phase the formulation of Nabataean type column capitals, the Isis-niche from the Wadi Siyyagh dated to 26/25 B.C.⁵⁴, the dual-portraits of king and queen on the coins of Obodas III (since 29/28 B.C.) and possibly somewhat later wall-paintings and Alexandrine prototypes among the sculptures and the terracotta figurines⁵⁵. How the great building projects and their decorations are influenced by Alexandrian influence⁵⁶ needs more study. If the first phase of the so-called 'Great Temple' was indeed an *oecus corinthus*, a peristyle building and a monumental reception hall⁵⁷, such influence is possible⁵⁸.

While an approach towards Hellenistic forms continues over a longer period amongst Nabataean artifacts, by the last third of the first century B.C. a new style was created, which is today called 'Nabataean'. This new style affected all genres of art but culminated in the great cultic and public buildings of the Augustan period in the centre of Petra which have been described as a conception of a new Nabataean identity⁵⁹. Such a splendid new style of monumental art can be found elsewhere in the Roman East of that period⁶⁰. Concerning Petra, the expedition by Aelius Gallus into Arabia Felix in 25/24 B.C. reactivated the frankincense route for the Nabataeans to an extent not seen before, and created immense wealth. The acceptance of temples and figural sculpture by the Nabataeans, and living in built structures, exhibiting of wealth and a hospitable royal court with many foreigners, as described by Strabo, is not only embedded in the overall

⁵² Bowersock 1983, 50; Kasher 1988, 160–161, map 15.

⁵³ There are three aspects to understand this decision. The main reason as given by Josephus is that Augustus gave the areas to Herod, because he trusted in Herod to bring peace to the area (Josephus, AJ 15.10.1) and because Herod was highly regarded by him (Josephus, BJ 1.20.4). On the other hand, Rome did not agree to the Ituraean-Nabataean demands concerning the regions (cf. Kasher 1988, 157–160). At least, concerning the date 23 B.C. it should not be excluded, that the decision is to be taken as a concealed punishment of the Nabataeans after the failure of the Aelius Gallus expedition into Arabia Felix in 25/24 B.C. Because of the vague circumstances no official measures were taken in the first years after the expedition (Bowersock 1983, 49). Later, Syllaeus, the Nabataean advisor, was accused of treachery concerning the expedition and was beheaded at Rome for this (Strabo, Geogr. 16.4.23–24).

⁵⁴ Merklein-Wenning 1998.

⁵⁵ Wenning 2003d, 161–164.

⁵⁶ Cf. McKenzie 1990, 85–104, 124–126; Tholbecq 1997, 13–14 (cf. his contribution to the conference).

⁵⁷ Cf. Förtsch 1996, 83–87.

⁵⁸ Schluntz 1998, 221–222; Wenning 2003a.

⁵⁹ Freyberger 1998, 25, 103.

⁶⁰ Freyberger 1998, 26, 121–123.

cultural development of the east during this period, but seems to be a product of the particular political and economic situation of the Nabataeans.

Strabo on the Nabataeans

Strabo is the main literary source for some of our insights into the social and cultural order of Petra and the Nabataeans during this period⁶¹. Postdating the execution of Syllaeus in 6 B.C. the report of the Nabataeans seems to be written before 3/2 B.C.⁶². Strabo was told about that by his friend, the philosopher Athenodorus of Tarsus⁶³. His report is very illuminating. On the other hand, one must be cautious with particular information of Athenodorus, who does not understand the tribal aspects of Nabataean society very well. For example, if he admires the Nabataean government because the Nabataeans were not engaged in lawsuits with one another, contrary to the many Romans and foreigners at Petra, he seemed not to know that the judicature was the responsibility of the king and tribal organisations, usually during the great assembly of the tribe.

Athenodorus describes King Obodas as a man who did not care much about public and particularly military affairs, a trait, as he remarks, common to all Arabian kings. Attributing his prejudice to a misunderstanding of how the Nabataean King held court and left the handling of public affairs to his vezir, he influenced old⁶⁴ and current scholarship describing Obodas as a weak and lazy king⁶⁵. The great building programme at Petra and elsewhere in the Nabataean Kingdom and other developments which took place under Obodas, contradict such a statement as these activities cannot be attributed only to Syllaeus, in spite of his ambitious.

According to Strabo the Nabataeans publicly fined anyone who has diminished his possessions. This again reflects tribal law. While herds of camels or sheep might belong to a family, pasture land and water rights are owned by the tribe. A single member of the tribe was not allowed to give up part of it. The tribal assembly could punish members violating the law and honour all who contribute to assets of the tribe⁶⁶.

Athenodorus claims that the Nabataeans did not have many slaves since they were served by their relatives; once again reflecting an element of tribal structures. Concerning slaves Athenodorus may be correct since various inscriptions indicate that there were some slaves, though their number seems rather small.

In this context Athenodorus describes the Nabataean King as *demotikos*, acting as the man of the people (often incorrectly translated as 'democratic'),

⁶¹ Strabo, Geogr. 16.4.21–26.

⁶² Cf. Bowersock 1983, 55.

⁶³ Probably Athenodorus, son of Sandon, and not the older Athenodorus Kordylion. He was one of the teachers of Octavian.

⁶⁴ Josephus, AJ 16.7.6.

⁶⁵ Bowersock 1983, 46, 50.

⁶⁶ Tribal rules of modern Bedouin societies might be different, cf. Henninger 1989, 83–138.

because the king himself serves his guests at communal meals. It is important to note the context in which this is said⁶⁷. Athenodorus mentions banquets of groups of thirteen people, each banquet with two girl-singers, organised by the king in a magnificent style. The custom was that no one drink more than eleven cupfuls, each time using a different golden goblet. This indicates that it was a particular event with clear and possibly formal or ritual regulations. In the next sentence Athenodorus speaks about the account that the king has to give in the tribal assembly (*demos*), where even his mode of life is scrutinised. This fits very well with the position of the tribal leader, in spite of any title, to be *primus inter pares*. He is supported by the nobility of the tribe. Even though leadership is dynastic, the king depends on the nobility. He will be judged by a successful rule and he must give benefits to the nobility. Along with positions and estates, and sharing in trade profits, he has to give communal meals in a magnificent style at his own cost. Here he acts as the *rab marzeah*, personally serving his guests, to show them that he is of no higher rank than them. A similar institution is known from the Graeco-Roman world, where a *symposiarches* or a *quinquennalis* headed an association. This was an important social element but does not seem to be a *demotikos* in the sense Athenodorus indicated the Nabataean custom.

Athenodorus correctly describes that Nabataean cities such as Petra had no protective walls. This was not on account of the *pax Augusta*, as he states, but according to the tradition of tent sites and Arab-Semitic settlements⁶⁸. When he declares that the land produces no horses, and camels afford the service they require instead of horses, he probably mixed it with his impression of caravans. From literature concerning battles as well as from archaeological evidence, it is known that riding horses was common amongst Nabataeans⁶⁹.

Another prejudice of Athenodorus was to characterise the Nabataeans as businessmen and traders, but not very good warriors. Indeed, the way they used the desert for military tactics was quite different from the Roman way of trying to win on the traditional battlefield or by laying siege to towns. The Nabataeans required a strong military power to protect their trade routes and caravans. They fought many battles against Hasmonaeans and Herodians. They participated in Roman armies as clients and at least as a dromedary unit after A.D. 106. Therefore one should be cautious to see them as such bad warriors⁷⁰. Petra itself was not the place to show much of a military presence as opposed to Rome and other Roman capitals and cities, such as Caesarea.

Athenodorus describes Nabataean dwellings as houses built of stone and being costly. The new excavated wealthy mansion of az-Zantur IV⁷¹ seem to be later than the houses visited by Athenodorus at Petra, but it becomes clear from

⁶⁷ Wenning 1997, 180–181.

⁶⁸ Cf. a tent site at Oboda (Negev 1983, 46, fig. p. 73) and the open settlements of the first centuries B.C./A.D. in the Decapolis and the Hauran (Wenning 1994, 12–14).

⁶⁹ Cf. Macdonald 1997, 74–75, who suggested that Athenodorus/Strabo could have received this information from Aelius Gallus.

⁷⁰ Graf 1994.

⁷¹ Kolb 2000; Kolb 2001; Kolb-Keller 2001.

the source, that at his time there must have been more than one such house. Living in built houses had become a normal dwelling form. Athenodorus does not mention tent or cave dwellings which also must have existed, and which were also costly to decorate. It might be that he only liked to compare these rich Nabataean mansions with houses he was familiar with. Nevertheless, his statement is important for the dynamic changes which had taken place at Petra within only a few decades⁷².

A well-known misunderstanding is Athenodorus' statement that the Nabataeans regard their dead as dung burying their kings beside dung-heaps. He confuses the similar-sounding words for dung and tomb⁷³. No archaeological evidence indicates such a custom which Athenodorus claimed. On the contrary, most Nabataeans or at least the nobility of Nabataean clans are buried in huge rock-cut tombs with large façades. Among them are the Khazneh and the so-called Urn Tomb, which may be royal. There are also hundreds of shaft tombs and simple graves (some of which are of later date). There is nothing dishonourable amongst the many burials.

Athenodorus listed locally produced and imported products. Local products included gold, silver⁷⁴ and most of the aromatics, despite the fact that Nabataeans were actually trading, and not producing these. Imports are brass, iron, purple garb, styrax, crocus, costaria, embossed works (*toreuma*), paintings (*graphe*) and moulded works (*plasma*). In at least one case, *plasma*, that is sculptures, Athenodorus is again wrong. There are various Nabataean sculptures at Petra worked in the local sandstone pre-dating A.D. 106⁷⁵.

In general, Athenodorus described more what he believed to see than reality. It is apparent that he was so proud of his own Greek culture he considered himself superior, that he was astonished to find such a rich culture among a people he considered barbarians. Nevertheless, his report describes Petra as a splendid part of the Graeco-Roman world during the late first century B.C. without any unusual feature, characterised by the previous reports of Hieronymus of Cardia.

The enigma of the Nabataeans in the Hauran

Good relations between Hasmonaeans and Nabataeans during the second century B.C. are reflected in the Books of Maccabees as indicated above. This concerns the Hauran and the Galaaditis. At that time Bosra was not yet a Nabataean settlement. There is little information about other Arab tribes in the Galaaditis and Moabititis. It seems that the Moabititis, Ammonitis and Galaaditis were neither settled nor controlled by Nabataeans. Probably the Nabataeans did not expand north of Wadi el-Hesa or of Wadi el-Mōjib before the Hasmonaeans started to occupy territories in Coele Syria east of the Jordan during the late second/early

⁷² Stucky 1992, 137–139; see above.

⁷³ Wright 1969.

⁷⁴ Rosenthal-Heginbottom 1997.

⁷⁵ Hübner 1997; Weber 1997, 114–121; Wenning 1999; Wenning 2004.

first century B.C. That does not mean that the Nabataeans could not have used the old 'Kings's Highway' to reach Syria with their trade-goods beside the more important route through the great Wadi Sirhan to the east. But the early presence of Nabataeans in the Hauran probably did not result in this trade. There is no reason to assume an immigration of Nabataeans into the Hauran from southern Jordan in the third century B.C. The evidence for Nabataeans in the Hauran from the well-known Zeno papyri from 259 B.C. cannot be taken to state the presence of Nabataeans in the region as a regular part of the population⁷⁶. Probably these Nabataeans lived like others, as nomadic groups in the region. What seems to be remarkable, is the fact that the early sources call these groups 'Nabataeans'. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see any dominant role of the Nabataeans in the region at this time.

The situation changed dramatically in the early Roman period. During the last 20 years there has been a discussion of the so-called 'Nabataean evidence' from the Hauran in the early Roman period in terms of differences in language, art and culture from the evidence in Arabia Petraea⁷⁷. What was described as 'Nabataean' in the past should be characterised better as 'Hauranite'. The inscriptions are currently labelled as 'Aramaic'⁷⁸. The differences are greater than can be explained as regional features alone, and rather, point to a separate development and different traditions, among them the stronger being Aramaic⁷⁹. Although one cannot and should not exclude Nabataeans being among the Hauranite population, it seems that according to the inscriptions there was a greater activity of various tribes, clans and groups arriving in the Hauran and moving in the area in the first century B.C. It may be assumed that some clans invaded the Hauran directly from Aramaic-speaking areas of Mesopotamia or the Persian Gulf or somewhere with strong Aramaic influence. While the Nabatu of the south formed a kingdom based on the frankincense trade, the Hauranite people lived as more independent smaller tribes and clans or became partly settled benefitting from the fertile land. One of the first greater settlements was Qanawat.

In 23 B.C. the southern Hauran was cut off from the Auranitis which was given to Herod by Augustus. It is not very difficult to describe the border between the two parts⁸⁰, but more difficult to understand this division. One reason might be that the southern part was far less fertile. Another reason could be that the south did not yet have a settled population in the late first century B.C. The northern Auranitis developed under stronger Hellenistic and Roman influence; inscriptions are dated according to the reigns of the Roman emperors. The south

⁷⁶ Graf 1990, 54.

⁷⁷ The interpretation of Wenning 1987, 25–51 (regions B–F) is outdated by the new researches in the Hauran; cf. Dentzer 1985/86; Macdonald 1993.

⁷⁸ Scholars have just started more systematically and profoundly to establish regional differences of the 'Nabataean' and other languages of the Near East and started to discuss the consequences of that for the history of the 'Nabataeans'. Cf. Macdonald 2000; Healey, this conference.

⁷⁹ The Aramaic tradition was emphasised by J.-M. Dentzer 2003.

⁸⁰ Cf. Dentzer-Feydy 1988, Fig. 1.

was also closely connected with the Nabataean kingdom, at least since Malichus II, when inscriptions are dated according the reigns of the Nabataean kings⁸¹. The people living in the south between Bosra and Umm el-Jimal with cultic centres at Salkhad and Bosra, seek support and agreement with the Nabaṭu, then the most important Arabic tribe of the Near East. Probably this was not accidental. According to epigraphical evidence one can almost be sure that one of the tribes living here, the Rawahu, was related to the Nabataeans⁸².

Nabataeans and Jews

In view of the of the 'World of the Herods and the Nabataeans' a few remarks on the relationship between Jews and Nabataeans should be added. The main source is Flavius Josephus. He describes the many conflicts the Nabataeans had with the Hasmonaeans and the Herodians. They had also some family relations. Often and following the literary sources, the conflicts have been emphasised in modern scholarship⁸³. Contrary to politics and conflicts there were close interactions in neighbourly relations, trade exchange, activities in real estate and intermarriages.

At the beginning the good relations between the two peoples during the second century B.C. are reflected in the Book of Maccabees⁸⁴. Petra was the destination of many who try to flee persecutions in Jerusalem, among them the Jewish high priest Jason in 168, Herod the Great in 40 and Hyrkan II in 30 B.C. Masada was chosen as the refuge for the Herodian Dynasty not only because it was distant from Jerusalem, but also because it was the nearest route to Nabataea crossing the Lisan peninsula. One reason to seek exile amongst the Nabataeans was the fact that Herodian and Nabataean royalty were related and that there had been a history of good relations for many years. The rich Idumaeen noble man Antipater, the father of Herod, had married a Nabataean princess, Kufra/Kypros⁸⁵. Their children were sent to Aretas III during the war with Aristobulus II. The Nabataean king supported Hyrkan II and Antipater in the siege of Jerusalem in 65/64 B.C., which was stopped by the legate of Pompey. Antipater put 300 talents at Aretas' disposal to avoid the invasion of M. Aemilius Scaurus in 62 B.C. Nevertheless, when Herod fled the invading Parthians in 40 B.C. and attempted to seek refuge at the Royal court at Petra, he was not accepted as a refugee by Malichus I for political reasons. This resulted in a break-down in the good relationship between both rulers.

Later, one finds Syllaeus, the vizir of Obodas III, at the Herodian court seeking to marry Salome, the sister of Herod. Herod set the condition that Syllaeus had to become Jewish, an impossibility for Syllaeus, making him an enemy of Herod. On the other hand, Herod's son Antipas married a Nabataean

⁸¹ CIS II 174 from A.D. 50/51.

⁸² Macdonald 1993, 358f.

⁸³ Cf. among others Kasher 1988; Kokkinos 1998.

⁸⁴ 1 Macc. 5.25; 9.35.

⁸⁵ Josephus, BJ 1.8.9.

princess, a daughter of Aretas IV, possibly Phasaelis⁸⁶. After many years Antipas disowned his wife in A.D. 33/34 when Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip developed a passion for him. Phasaelis escaped from Machaerus to her father's court. Aretas IV took revenge with a great military victory over Antipas in A.D. 36.

Despite personal relationships between the dynasties and nobilities, and probably other people, there seems to be little evidence for Jews in the Nabataean Kingdom and for Nabataeans in the Herodian Kingdom. And there does not seem to be much evidence that one side had much influence over the other. Rather, both looked for Graeco-Roman ideas and monuments, and both were shaped partly in the same way by this cultural influence. This was lately demonstrated by a comparison of architectural features of dwellings⁸⁷. What Jewish evidence can be found is a Jewish(?) name at Petra⁸⁸, a tomb of a Jew at Hegra from A.D. 42/43⁸⁹ and some other Jewish names and Hebrew graffiti in the neighbourhood of Hegra⁹⁰, though not precisely datable, but probably later than the tomb. Looking into the Herodian Kingdom, not a single Nabataean inscription is found there. Nabataean coins have been found at 24 sites⁹¹, but this cannot be taken for an exclusive presence of Nabataeans. There are only a few places where Nabataean pottery is recorded⁹². Eight places are listed with pseudo-Nabataean pottery from the Herodian period made in Jerusalem⁹³. It is interesting to see this imitation of Nabataean pottery. We can only speculate as to what it means⁹⁴.

The main source for an intermingling between Jews and Nabataeans are the documents from the well-known archive of Babatha from A.D. 93 to 132, concerning the latest phase of the Nabataean Kingdom and the first decades of *provincia Arabia*. Her property near Mahoza⁹⁵ was situated in the Nabataean territory southeast of the Dead Sea, the greater area in which the Khirbet Qazone Nabataean cemetery⁹⁶ is situated. While the burial customs are different, the type of the graves of the Khirbet Qazone cemetery are of the so-called 'Qumran type' and demonstrate that the same regional features can be found on both sides of the

⁸⁶ Kokkinos 1998, 229–232, 268.

⁸⁷ Cf. Kolb 2000, 277–283, 295–296; Kolb 2001.

⁸⁸ Starcky 1965, 48 no. 12. There is no proof, that this name cannot be Aramaic/Nabataean. The context of the inscription does not support the interpretation as a Jewish name.

⁸⁹ Healey 1993, 95–97 no. 4 (A.D. 42/43).

⁹⁰ Jaussen-Savignac 1909/1914, inscriptions nabatéennes nos. 172bis, 315, 386, 387 and Hebrew inscriptions II 641–644 nos. 1–8; T. J. Milik in Winnett-Reed 1970, 163 nos. 1–2 (Hebrew); Noja 1979, 288–314.

⁹¹ Not limited to the Herodian kingdom there are 45 sites in Israel with Nabataean coins known to me. An article about these coins and others from Jordan with a stratigraphical context is in preparation.

⁹² Cf. Wenning 1987, 134–137.

⁹³ Jerusalem, Jericho, Herodium, Masada, Qumran, Ein Feshka, Nahalat Yehuda, Sepphoris(?) and Nabataean Oboda; cf. Schmid 2000, 115–116.

⁹⁴ Schmid 2000, 116.

⁹⁵ Cotton-Greenfield 1995; Yadin-Greenfield-Yardeni-Levine 2002. It has been suggested that Babatha may have been an Idumaeen Jewess (Kokkinos 1998, 294).

⁹⁶ Politis 1998.