

NABATAEANS
at the
SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE



British Museum, London
28–30 July 2011



MBI AL JABER
Foundation

18:30 Thursday 28 July
BP Lecture Theatre

MBI Al Jaber Foundation Public Lecture

‘From the capital of Petra to the provincial city of Hegra: new insights on the Nabataeans’

presented by

Laila Nehmé (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Orient et Méditerranée, République Française*)

Based on her experience as an archaeologist who worked in Petra in the 1990s and in Hegra (Madā'in Šālīḥ) from 2002, the lecturer will present an overview of both sites, exposing their common features and their differences, in terms of landscape and urban space, before focusing on the Nabataean presence in the north-western part of Saudi Arabia. The results of the joined Saudi-French excavation project, which is being undertaken there, will also be summarized but the presentation will extend to other sites where a Nabataean presence is evident.

This is a FREE but TICKET ONLY event. Tickets are available from the British Museum Booking Office +44 (0)20 7323 8181 or directly from the Ticket Desk in Great Court (Open 10.00 am to 16.45 pm daily).



Special Session — Friday 29 July 2011

(All Lectures - *Stevenson Lecture Theatre*)

The Nabataeans in Focus: current archaeological research at Petra

Organizer: Lucy Wadson (Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, UK)

The last few years have seen a significant intensification of archaeological activity in the environs of Petra. New projects, such as in Wādī Farasah, the Outer Siq, Umm al-Biyārah, and the various necropolises and cultic areas of the surrounding mountains are particularly important in enhancing knowledge of the social, religious and funerary activities of the Nabataeans and their relation to the topography of the city, its urban core and how it functioned.

This session aims to bring together key projects in order to gain a new understanding of how different areas of the city functioned, how they relate to one another and what original ideas they reveal about Nabataean culture, society and the urban development of Petra. The key questions that the session will tackle include:

- How did Petra's natural environment influence the Nabataean architectural and sculptural style, urban planning, carving and construction techniques, and more social factors such as religious rituals and burial practices?
- How should we define the Nabataean cultural identity, which is only now being appreciated as something distinct from better-known surrounding cultures in the region?
- How do aspects of Petra's urban, religious and funerary landscape relate to other cities and settlements in the territory of the Nabataeans and wider region?

The latter question will engage with the topic of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation Public Lecture, to be delivered by Laila Nehmé at the conference (see above). In addition, this session will act as a platform to promote discussion of the various methodological approaches taken in archaeological projects

related to the Nabataeans in the face of limited literary sources and debates over chronology. This will raise important questions concerning the direction in which future archaeological activity at Petra should be going.

09:30 — **Friday 29 July 2011**

Introduction — *Lucy Wadeson (Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, UK)*

Chair: *Laïla Nehmé (CNRS, République Française)*

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An early architectural phase under the temenos of the Qaṣr al-Bint at Petra

The excavations carried out by the French Archaeological Expedition at the Qaṣr al-Bint (Petra) revealed a dwelling area that predates the cultic complex. The earliest phase is attested by small terrace walls, few installations and sparse material. However the surface explored by making a few soundings is narrow and did not enable the team to make a comprehensive study of the occupation.

Of more consequence are the levels of the later architectural phase covering these terraces is that all construction elements have the same orientation. The well-lined walls are made of stones and are finely plastered and the floors are, in some cases, covered with slabs. The material associated with these levels, the pottery and the numismatic finds, as well as the ¹⁴C dates, point to an occupation of around the third to first century BC.

These architectural remains, as a whole, provide new insights into the earliest phase of occupation revealed by the archaeology at Petra, showing an established permanent and densely urbanized settlement in the left bank of the Wādī Mūsā.

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09:55 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

WENNING, Robert

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Professor Dr Wenning is a Biblical and Classical Archaeologist. He retired on the 1st of April 2011 but remains as a researcher at the Humboldt University at Berlin. He has worked in the following universities: Beer Sheva (Israel), Muenster, Tuebingen, Osnabrueck, Princeton (IAS, USA), Bonn, Eichstaett, Jerusalem (Dormitio), Stellenbosch (SA), Fribourg (Switzerland) and Berlin. His field of research includes: Greek imports in pre-Hellenistic Palestine; Roman sculptures in Israel (CSIR); Tombs and burial customs in the Iron Age in Judah (Habilitation) and the archaeology, religion and history of the Nabataeans (Survey of Nabataean votive niches at Petra; Director of the International Aslah Project with Laurent Gogerat). He has published 165 articles and monographs.

The International Aslah Project and Dalman's 'Sanctuaries': new research in Petra

In a survey over 800 Nabataean votive niches at Petra were documented by Robert Wenning. Many of them belong to 'sanctuaries' as defined by G. Dalman (1908). In addition, L. Gogerat and R. Wenning were privileged to excavate one of the sanctuaries, known as 'The Aslah Triclinium'. This is the oldest dated rock-cut monument at Petra (c.96/95 BC). The first season of the excavation was in the spring of 2010. The second season of The International Aslah Project will be carried out in April 2011, in which tomb Br. 24 will be excavated. We attempt to explain how the different structures of the site are related to one another. It is important to excavate small unities like this to develop our understanding of the Nabataean culture and religion. The Aslah-Triclinium-Complex will be discussed in the context of other 'sanctuaries' as the focus of the paper. It contributes to most of the aspects highlighted in the description of the special Nabataean session (above). The research provides information on how a particular area of Petra functioned, how the area is related to other areas, how the natural environment influenced the shaping of the site, and how burial practices and religious rituals explicitly defined a social and cultural identity.

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10:20 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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Professor Dr Schmid carried out his PhD study on Nabataean fine ware pottery at Basel University. He spent six years as the deputy director of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece (Athens and Eretria), six years as tenured full professor of classical archaeology at Montpellier University (France)

and from 2008 has been a tenured full professor at Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany). He has carried out excavations in Switzerland, Greece and Jordan.

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The speaker was educated in Poland and the United States. In 1992–1997, he directed the Petra Church Project and the Roman Street Project for the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan. In 2000–2010, he taught at the University of Helsinki and was a Research Fellow at the Academy of Finland. Altogether, the speaker has the experience of 30 years of archaeological research and fieldwork in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Switzerland. Currently, the speaker is preparing the final publication of the Finnish Jabal Haroun Project which he directed in field between 1997 and 2007.

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Newly discovered Nabataean royal residences in Petra

According to ancient sources, the Nabataean kings had royal quarters in the city of Petra in southern Jordan. No further details are available. Can the sources can be trusted? And, if so, what exactly did these royal quarters look like?

Recent fieldwork at Petra proposed two distinctive spots as being the most probable candidates for royal residences. The first is on Umm al-Biyārah, best known for its Iron Age village. A survey in recent years has shown that during the first century BCE the Nabataeans constructed spectacular buildings on that prominent spot, overlooking the entire area. While these buildings can be considered a royal residence due to various factors, they most probably should not be identified with the main palace of the Nabataean kings, since that structure is likely to be located within the city of Petra. There is another location where all the prerequisites for such a structure are fulfilled. A new survey corroborates the hypothesis of the Nabataean kings' main palace being located there and, consequently, not in any of the other locations proposed to date.

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10:45 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

TUTTLE, Christopher

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The speaker completed his Ph.D. at Brown University in 2009, with a doctoral thesis about the Nabataean coroplastic arts. He has been employed on the directorial staff of the American Center of

Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan since 2006. He is currently involved in three research projects at Petra: co-directing the Brown University Petra Archaeological Project with Susan E. Alcock, conducting the independent Petra Quarry Marks Survey Project, and directing the Temple of the Winged Lions Cultural Resource Management Initiative, which is a joint project executed by ACOR and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities.

Glimpsing the working man's worldview: thoughts on results from the Petra Quarry Marks Survey Project

Petra's buildings are largely constructed of sandstone blocks taken from the surrounding mountains. Many of the quarries that yielded the building materials are extant. Despite their importance to the history of Petra, no comprehensive study of these quarries has been undertaken. Although studies have examined technical aspects of the processes of quarrying and masonry, at present, we do not understand such critical data as the number and extent of the quarries, or their geographical distribution and how this might relate to industrial practicalities (e.g. provisioning, transport, etc.). In 2005, the author began a survey for GIS documentation of quarry locations. Intentional marks made by quarrymen were found on finished surfaces in many quarries; these marks are intriguing as they appear to have no relationship to the quarrying processes. With this discovery, the focus of the author's research changed, becoming the Petra Quarry Marks Survey Project.

This presentation will show exemplars of the 'quarry marks' discovered to date, and explore some of the possibilities for interpreting their function(s) and meaning(s). Other than inscriptions, these 'quarry marks' may be a significant dataset available for delving into the cognitive realm of the ordinary working men who helped build the ancient city of Petra.

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*Chair: John Healey (School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
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11:40 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

WADESON, Lucy

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Lucy Wadson recently completed her PhD thesis on the façade tombs at Petra, in which she made the first detailed study of the tomb interiors. As the G.A. Wainwright Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford, she is working on publishing her thesis as a monograph. This also incorporates the results from the two projects she directs at Petra: the Funerary Topography of Petra Project and the International el-Khubtha Tombs Project. The author's expertise is in Nabataean burial customs and rock-cut architecture, but her research interests lie in the general field of the archaeology of the Greco-Roman Near East. Her most recent publications have dealt with the chronology of Nabataean façade tombs and tomb complexes at Petra.

The Funerary Landscape of Petra: results from a new study

The landscape of Petra is characterized by a variety of rock-cut tombs, including façade tombs, block tombs, shaft tombs and pit graves, all of which have aspects that are unique to Nabataean architecture. Tombs from each of these types have been the focus of recent excavations. These include excavations

of the Soldier Tomb Complex (S. Schmid), Tomb 303 (I. Sachet), and al-Khubtha Tombs (L. Wadeson) which have aimed to shed light on their dating and Nabataean burial practices. The current author also made the first in-depth study of the interiors of the façade tombs, revealing new insights into their chronology and associated funerary practices. The next stage of research has been to examine the area outside the tombs, their topographical setting and the development of the cemeteries in the Funerary Topography of Petra Project. One aspect of this project involves determining to what extent Petra's natural environment has had an effect on the form and location of the various tombs, and the architectural and chronological relationship between them. This paper will address these issues and argue that the different types of tombs are the result of both a specific ideology and adaptation to Petra's rocky terrain. Understanding this relationship will enhance our knowledge of the nature of the funerary landscape of Petra and the Nabataean architectural identity.

References

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12:05 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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Dr. David Johnson is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Brigham Young University with a PhD from the University of Utah. He has worked at Petra since 1977 originally with Dr Philip Hammond on the Temple of the Winged Lions and in Wādī al-Matahah from 1998. Other projects include work at Tell el Shukafiyyah (Tall al-Shuqāfiyyah) in Egypt, at the Awwam Bilqis in Yemen, and currently in the Dhofar region of Oman. His major interests are Nabataean trade, language and also cultic practices in the area during the Greco-Roman Period.

Votive offerings from Nabataean open air shrines and burials in Wādī al-Matahah, Petra, Jordan

In 1998, the Department of Anthropology at Brigham Young University began excavation of a group of first century AD. Nabataean middle-class rock-cut tombs and open-air ritual shrines in Wādī al-Matahah in the northern suburbs of Petra, Jordan, in order to answer a number of questions concerning Nabataean ideology and burial practices.

Between 1998 and 2010, six small Nabataean rock-cut shaft tombs and four larger Nabataean rock-cut chamber tombs with carved façades, as well as six open-air shrines of various types were excavated. One of the results of the excavations was the discovery that common natural and man-made items were extensively deposited in the tombs as votive offerings including hematite, sandstone, quartz, limestone fossils, pottery shards, lithics, beads of carnelian and amethyst, glass, copper bells, animal bones, seashells and plaster fragments. This use of common materials as votive offerings had previously been recorded for temples in the same time period throughout the Graeco-Roman world including Britain but never in a mortuary context (Merrifield 1987:16).

One additional previously unrecognized finding from these votive offerings was the fact that some had been modified either by painting, chipping, carving, etching or moulding, often in miniature, to produce the image or face of the protective deities associated with the Nabataean Pantheon (Dushares, Allat, al-ʿUzza, Manat, al-Khutba²) or the deities identified and syncretized with them from Egyptian (Harpocrates, Thoth, Bes, Isis) or Greco-Roman (Hermes, Apollo, Artemis) mythology.

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12:30 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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I am doctoral student at the Humboldt-Universität of Berlin. My PhD project, currently conducted at the Berlin-based Cluster of Excellence Topoi – ‘The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilisations’ - deals with the cultural background for the formation of the Nabataean tomb complexes known from Petra. In this context I participated at last year's excavation campaigns of the Early Petra Project at the Aslah-Triclinium and of the IWFP at the Soldier Tomb complex. I studied Classical Archaeology and Art History at the Humboldt-Universität of Berlin and graduated in Classical Archaeology with a master thesis on bronze table-ware from about 500 BC to 300 BC. Beside the participation at archaeological projects in Germany, France and Romania, my studies concentrated mainly on research projects in the Troas and in the Ulubey Canyon region conducted by the Archaeological Institute and the Theological Institute of the University of Heidelberg.

The Tomb complexes in Petra and in the wider Mediterranean area during the Roman Imperial period

The archaeological results of the last decade in the necropolis of Petra have vitally advanced the re-evaluation of its monumental rock-cut tombs. The tomb monuments have proved to be multi-structural building complexes, with quasi-architectural rock façades being only a part of the funerary precinct, and thus have confirmed the record given by the ‘Turkmaniyyah-Tomb’ inscription. The tombs’ overall appearances as well as specific functions of their structures are at the centre of a cultural-historical study concerned with mostly unknown Nabataean burial customs. In addition, further analogies can be cited with reference to Hellenistic monuments in bordering regions, for they bear close formal similarities. Such a comparison would suggest a supra-regional approach to the topic. Although the nearly complete lack of written records make conclusive evidence more difficult, this approach may offer the possibility of an insight into certain aspects of afterlife beliefs and commemoration practices as they are conveyed by the Petraean monuments. The paper will present archaeological and epigraphical sources from the wider Mediterranean area. These sources are crucial to any discussion about the origin of the principal features of funerary architecture and its functions.

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☞ 12:55-14:00 LUNCH ☞



Chair: Peter Parr (*Institute of Archaeology, University of London, UK*)

14:00 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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Susan E. Alcock is a classical archaeologist, with interests in the material culture of the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia, particularly in Hellenistic and Roman times. Much of her research to date has revolved around themes of landscape, imperialism, sacred space and memory. She has been involved with fieldwork in Greece and Armenia, but is now directing the Brown University Petra Archaeological Project (BUPAP). Her books (solo authored or edited) include: *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), which won the Spiro Kostof Award from the Society of Architectural Historians; *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and *Empires: Perspectives from history and archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Landscapes north and nearby Petra: The Brown University Petra Archaeological Project (BUPAP) 2010-2011

Brown University has had, of course, a long relationship with the site of Petra through excavations at the 'Great Temple' complex in the city centre. In 2010, a Brown-based team launched a new — and very different — phase of archaeological investigation at and nearby Petra.

This paper outlines BUPAP's first two field seasons, principally concentrating on two aspects of our work: mapping and excavation at the medieval village at al-Bayḍā' and an intensive regional survey in the area just north of Petra (e.g., Wādī al-Slaysil).

Each element of the project was intended to expand our understanding of Petra and its regional setting along different dimensions. Work at medieval al-Bayḍā' not only involved documenting a vulnerable village site but provided a substantial ceramic sequence for medieval southern Jordan. Using intensive systematic methodologies more familiar in the Mediterranean world, the regional survey has recovered a remarkable — and fragile — landscape, clearly testifying to major changes in settlement and land use, from Palaeolithic to the present, in an area just a few kilometres north of Petra.

Our overall intention is to combine with other recent efforts (as demonstrated in this Seminar) to put Petra in context: both by expanding our diachronic understanding of the site, and by deepening our conceptions of its dynamic hinterland.

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14:25 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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The speaker was educated in Poland and the United States. In 1992–1997, he directed the Petra Church Project and the Roman Street Project for the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan. In 2000–2010, he taught at the University of Helsinki and was a Research Fellow at the Academy of Finland. Altogether, the speaker has the experience of 30 years of archaeological research and fieldwork in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Switzerland. Currently, the speaker is preparing the final publication of the Finnish Jabal Haroun Project which he directed in field between 1997 and 2007.

Reinventing the Sacred: From shrine to monastery at Jabal Haroun

The Jabal Haroun (Jabal al-Nabī Hārūn), located c.5 km SW of Petra in southern Jordan, is the highest peak in the area, easily attracting attention and stirring the imagination. According to the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, the mountain is the burial place of Aaron, Moses's brother. Since 1997, the Finnish Jabal Haroun Project (FJHP) has carried out archaeological excavations of a Byzantine monastery located on the high plateau of the mountain. But the existence of the monastery exemplifies only a part of the whole spectrum of the religious significance accorded to the mountain from Nabataean times, a significance that continued well into the Islamic period. The excavations revealed that initially the site was occupied by a major Nabataean sanctuary, probably from the first century BC–AD. In the later fifth century, a Byzantine monastery was built at the site. However, by the fourth century, the period of struggle between traditional Nabataean cults and Christianity, the mountain began to be associated with the Biblical tradition of the Exodus, and attracted Christian pilgrimages. Apparently, one of the religious phenomena associated with the rise of Christianity in the Near East — the transformation of a pagan, cultic place into a sacred, Biblical location — had taken place at Jabal Haroun. While presenting the history of the Nabataean cult at Jabal Haroun, the paper will concentrate on the critical fourth century during which the Christian reinvention of the religious tradition took place in Petra.

References

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14:50 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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Dr Chaim Ben David is the Head of the Holy Land Studies Department in the Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee. He is researching ancient routes in the desert areas of Israel and Jordan from the Iron Age to the Nabataean/Roman period. With others he is working on the publication of all the milestones found in the Roman province of Judaea-Palaestina.

Nabataean or Late Roman? Reconsidering the date of the paved section and the milestones along the Petra-Gaza road

Some scholars have dated the paved section and the milestones found in the Negev along the Petra-Gaza incense route to the Nabataean period; others agree with this early date but suggest that the road was also in use during the Roman period.

Apart from the Negev, no paved sections or milestones along the incense routes from the Persian Gulf or from Southern Arabia to Petra have been recorded. Not more than three dated milestones prior to AD 106 have been found in the region. These and other questions lead us to doubt the possibility of an early date for the paved section and the milestones. Recent excavations in ʿAvedat have produced evidence that the army camp, thought for years to be Nabataean, was constructed in the late third or early fourth century AD.

We would like to define two stages of the road in the Negev. The first stage was when it was used as a camel route can indeed be dated to the Nabataean period and is apparently part of the Petra-Gaza incense route. The second stage with paved sections and a milestone can, in our opinion, be dated to the Diocletian period may be part of the Roman road leading to the headquarters of the X legion in Ailah (ʿAqabah) and not to Petra. This paper defines the different stages of the incense route and concludes that the dating of the period of the paved road and milestones should be to the Late Roman period and not to the Nabataean one.

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15:15 — *Friday 29 July 2011*

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Professor JK Davies FBA FSA, now Emeritus, was Rathbone Professor of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at Liverpool 1977-2003. His published work has all been in Greek History (Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic), and mostly on social, administrative, cultic, and especially economic aspects. He initiated and leads a research group on Hellenistic Economies, which organises periodic international colloquia.

Nabataean trade: contexts and structures

Various recent monographs and conference publications have re-opened the debate about how to describe and model the economic processes and activities of the Mediterranean and its hinterlands in the Hellenistic period (conventionally 323–31 BCE), the intention being ultimately to replace Rostovtzeff's outmoded portrait (1971). It is an informal, international debate, ranging from serious attempts to adopt and adapt modern economists' theories and terminology to detailed work on commodities, sites, institutions, and the fluid and complex structures of demand and supply.

Nabataean activity in trade and transport came to be an integral component of such structures, but has not yet figured as highly it should in our discussions. Yet it poses questions of pre-eminent importance. First, the case offers a 'worked example' of the supply of a commodity (spices) whose areas of production lay 'out of the region' (in Mediterranean terms): does that offer a model for the supply of other commodities? Secondly, can one estimate the level of annual traffic in monetary terms? How were the spices 'paid for', and what happened to the proceeds? Thirdly, it was in the Nabataeans' interests to create and protect reliable and secure transit routes: how was this done, and how effectively? Fourthly, did Nabataean prosperity derive from entrepreneurs' gains or from fiscal liens, or from both? Fifthly, how, and how effectively, did they protect their activities from competition and predatory action?

References

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