

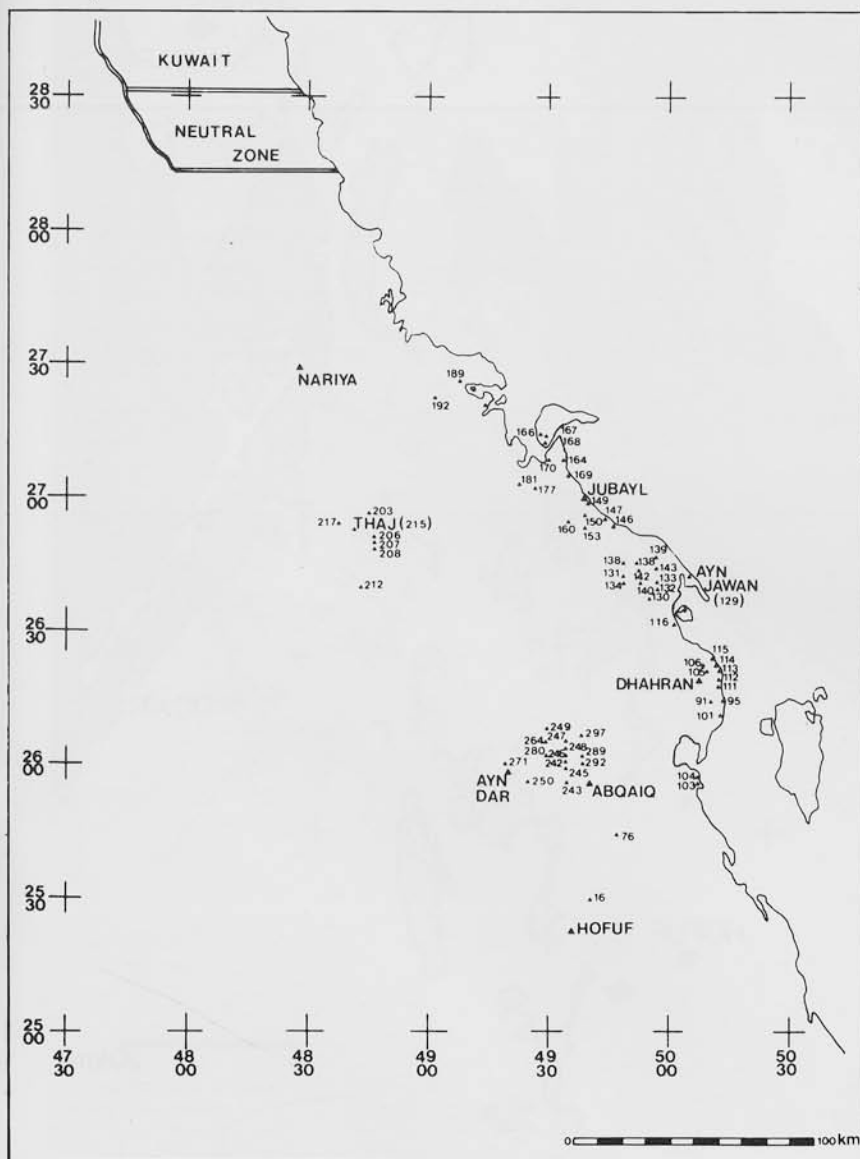
Northeastern Arabia

From the Seleucids to the Earliest Caliphs

I

Distribution map of sites discovered during the survey of 1977 that can be dated to the period ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 300. The numbers in parentheses are those given to the sites as they were found.

DANIEL T. POTTS



The course of Near Eastern archaeology, as we are seeing very vividly today, is highly susceptible to the winds of political change. Iran and Afghanistan, to name but two examples, are lands in which it is at present impossible for western archaeologists to work. Yet this trend is hardly new, and in the Arabian peninsula political conditions have always played a very important role in determining where and when research was or was not possible.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, for example, both the northwestern and southwestern parts of the peninsula were investigated by European scholars, whether searching for remains of the Nabataean kingdom, ancient Dedan, the land of Midian, or Qataban and Saba. But in the northeastern part of the peninsula, with the exception of politically motivated explorers cum agents (Potts 1984a: Table 1), such was not the case, and indeed until very recently, the only exploration of any kind was that carried out by members of the ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) community. In the last several years, however, research teams from the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, and the Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology, Free University of Berlin, in cooperation with the Saudi Arabian Dept. of Antiquities, have helped to throw light on this forgotten corner of the Near East, traditionally known as Al-Hasa. A season of survey in 1977 (Fig. 1) between Dhahran and Kuwait (Potts et al. 1978) was followed up in 1982 by a brief reconnaissance (Potts n.d.) of the site of Thaj, the largest site (ca. 8 sq. km.) in northeastern Arabia and one inhabited between ca. 300 B.C. and A.D. 300. Finally, in 1983, a very productive season of excavations was carried out at Thaj (Potts, Pedde, and Fanelli n.d.).

In the following pages, some of the results of our research on ancient Hasaeen society will be discussed, focusing on one of the least understood periods in the region's history, the 3rd century B.C. to the 7th century A.D. The area is of extreme interest given the fact that here we have an indigenous, North Arabian culture that was influenced in turn by its

nearby Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian neighbors in Babylonia and Iran, and by its more remote trading partners in southern Arabia. Yet throughout its history, the unique character of the region has persisted.

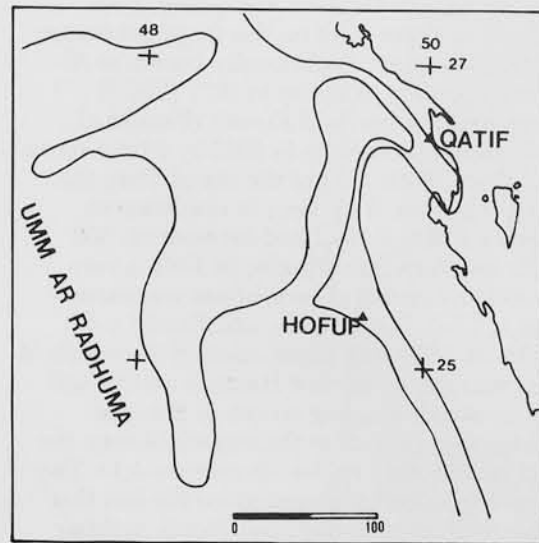
The Ancient Hasaeen Environment

To begin with, what were the environmental conditions which permitted settled habitation in this area? For the layman, and certainly many scholars as well, oil and extreme aridity are the first things that come to mind when the name Saudi Arabia is spoken. But it is perhaps not always recognized that all of Saudi Arabia's oil comes from northeastern Arabia — the area of our concern — and from off-shore wells in the neighboring Arabian Gulf itself. And it is certainly also worth stressing that where oil wells are dug, large amounts of fresh water are required to produce the mud which encases and thereby cools the drilling apparatus. And where fresh water is present in the Near East, it is unlikely not to find substantial remains from the ancient past.

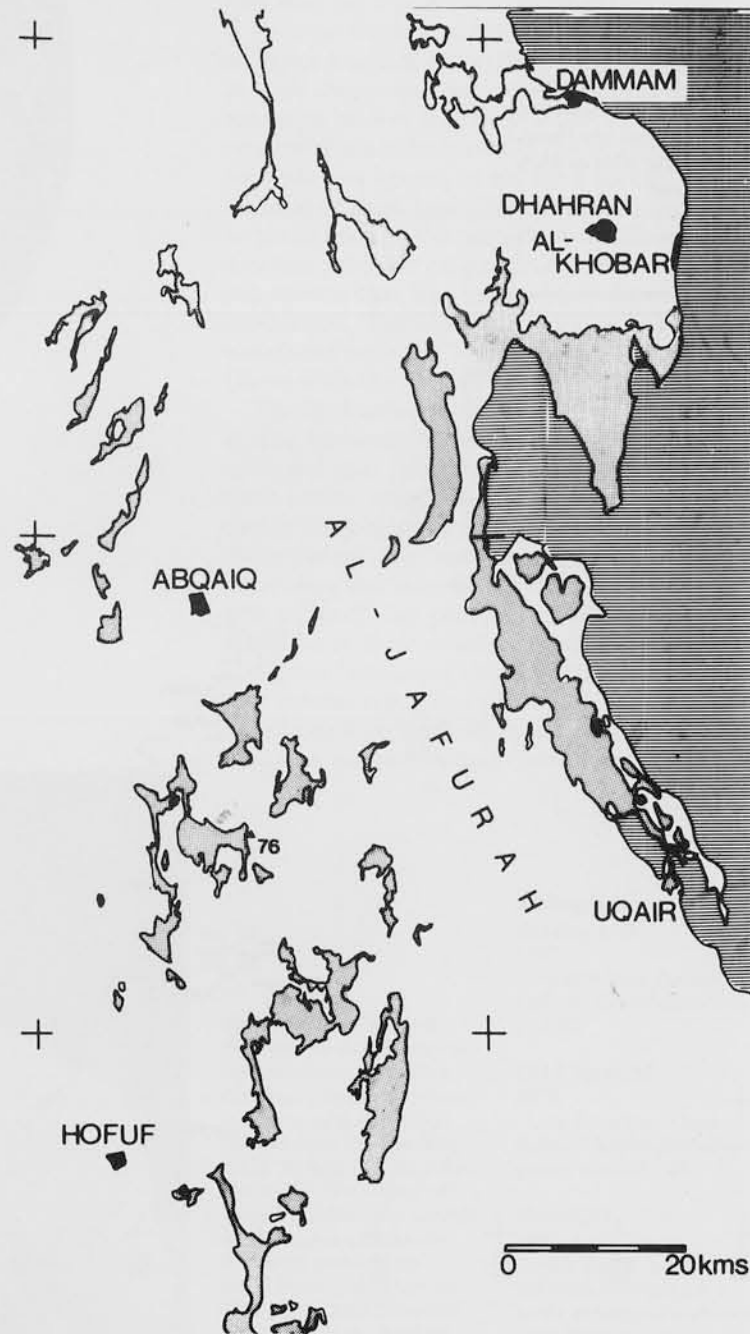
The water in question is not rain water, however, for of that there is little in eastern Arabia. In 1946, for example, only 5.3 mm. fell in Dhahran. And while 215.1 mm. are recorded for Ras Tannura in 1955, the average over the last fifty years has been only about 84 mm., a far cry from the 200 mm. generally conceded to be necessary for dry-farming in the Near East. These statistics tell us not only that there is little rain water to be expected, but also that the yearly variability is enormous. To be sure, what little rain does fall can, quite

2

Approximate course of the Umm ar-Radhuma aquifer in eastern Arabia.



3
Distribution of sabkhas between Hofuf and the Gulf. Site 76 is a site by the 'banks' of this former riverine system, and dates to the period ca. 300 B.C.—A.D. 300.



literally, make the desert bloom, as a result of which the wildflowers of the Arabian desert have become justly famous. In addition, it is surely of importance for the Bedouin whose herds of camel, goat and sheep graze here, and for the wild asses of Thaj, mentioned by the pre-Islamic poet 'Amr b. Kulthūm in the 6th century A.D. (Thilo 1958:103) and still to be found here today.

4

LANDSAT photograph of eastern Arabia, scale 1:750,000, showing the course of the "Hofuf"/Muhallim/Murannimal river as it ran from Hofuf to the Gulf, now reactivated and used for draining irrigation water to the sea.



But there can be no comparison between this meager and sporadic source of water and the abundantly endowed Umm ar-Radhuma aquifer, located at a depth of 280–600 m. below ground level, whose course is shown in Fig. 2. Naturally, prior to the advent of deep drilling, there could be no question of directly tapping this rich water source, but we know that three other aquifers which are much shall-

lower receive their water from the Umm ar-Radhuma formation, and it has been possible at least since the Seleucid era, when the first stone-lined wells at Thaj must have been dug, to reach water at depths of 10–35 m. below ground level. These wells have been cared for over the years, replastered or in some cases repaired with cement, and nowhere else is their effect more impressively shown than in the Qatif oasis, where 32 hand-dug wells have a total discharge of no less than 36,000 cubic meters of water per day, the largest spilling forth 30–50 liters of water per second (Potts 1984a:91). This water supply has enabled the large-scale cultivation of dates in both the Qatif and Hofuf oases, so famous throughout the Islamic world and praised by early Arabic poets such as Labīd b. Rabī'a (d. A.D. 661) and Du'r-Rumma (d. A.D. 720).

But garden cultivation was not the only form of subsistence production in ancient Hasa. Large-scale agriculture was also important for the sustenance of the many towns and cities whose names are preserved on Ptolemy's map of Arabia. In this regard it is particularly interesting to note that Pliny (Nat. Hist. VI,159) speaks of a river Murannimal flowing from inner Arabia towards the Gulf, just as Al-Aṣā (d. A.D. 629), Labīd (d. A.D. 661), Al-Hamdani (d. A.D. 945) and Yacut (A.D. 1179–1229) did, calling it the "Muhallim", and writing that the "Muhallim is a great river, and it is for Arabia, what the Oxus is for Balkh." Although the existence of this river was much debated by later authorities, both Arab (e.g., Abu'l-Fida', A.D. 1273–1331) and European (e.g., G. F. Sadleir in 1819), there is hardly a pre-modern map of Arabia that does not show it. Furthermore, it is important to note that a series of *sabkhas* — salt-lakes which are dry in summer and wet in winter — stretches from Hofuf northeastwards towards the Gulf (Fig. 3), indicating that a fluvial system could have once existed here, of which the *sabkhas* are the mere residue. In fact, low-level aerial photographs of the area almost equidistant between Al-Uqayr and Hofuf show a series of river channels and traces of irrigation canals.

We know from pottery found on its surface that the site associated with this irrigation system was occupied in the period of our concern. Indeed a recent satellite photograph (Fig. 4) shows the course of Pliny's Murannimal river quite clearly, now in use again for drainage as part of a new irrigation project. Geomorphologists have determined that the Jaffurah sands, which currently stand between Hofuf and the Gulf, were responsible for the original blockage of the river, moving across its outlet to the sea and thereby causing pools of stagnant water to form the chain of *sabkhas* mentioned above.

𐩦𐩣𐩦𐩣
 𐩦𐩣𐩦𐩣
 𐩦𐩣𐩦𐩣
 𐩦𐩣𐩦𐩣
 𐩦𐩣𐩦𐩣

1049

Chaldean Origins?

Let us turn briefly now to another problem, namely, what were the origins of the culture of which we find the first traces in the 3rd century B.C.? Without reaching back into the remote past of the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th millennia B.C., we have little more than a handful of unpublished seals of Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian type from eastern Arabia to let us know that the area was inhabited during the first half of the 1st millennium B.C. What is perhaps of potentially greater importance, however, is a dedicatory inscription (Fig. 5) carved on a rock face in the Hofuf oasis which represents that rare genre of texts variously called Old Arabic, Chaldean or, more commonly, Proto-Arabic, dated to between the 5th and 9th centuries B.C. While the actual dedicatory content of the text is of considerable interest, the mere fact of its existence in northeastern Arabia is of even greater significance, for it was W. F. Albright's belief that such inscriptions, known also from Ur, Uruk, Abu

Salabikh, Nippur, and Anah on the Middle Euphrates (Potts 1984a: Table 7), represented the earliest traces of the Chaldeans. Fifteen years before the Hofuf inscription was known to the scholarly world, he suggested that the last dynasty to rule Babylonia before the Persian conquest, the dynasty which included the illustrious Nebuchadnezzar, had originated in "an undetermined part of east Arabia." Does this inscription then provide confirmation for Albright's thesis? At this point it is still too early to tell, although this is the southernmost Chaldean or Proto-Arabic inscription thus far discovered. It is also interesting that the Chaldeans appear in yet another context, namely as exiles expelled from Babylon to Gerrha. By whom they were expelled we do not know, although it is sometimes said that, if indeed the tale is true, they were expelled either by Sennacherib in the early 7th century B.C., or else left following the Persian conquest of Babylonia.

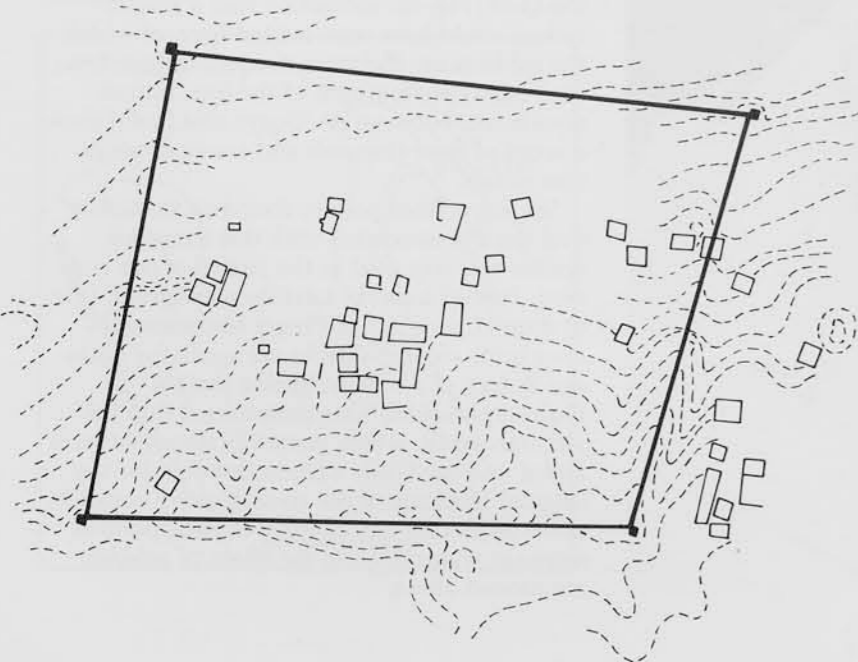
Gerrha

Gerrha, regardless of whether or not it was founded or in part populated by Chaldeans, is famous as that fabulously wealthy emporium to which Antiochus the Great made an expedition in 205 B.C. As Strabo tells us, the caravaners of Gerrha went to the Hadhramaut in 40 days' time to purchase incense (for the route followed, see Potts 1983a) and were the main suppliers of that most coveted commodity to their contemporaries in Babylonia. In an exceptional case, according to Agatharchides, they even went to Petra to sell incense. This was not necessarily a case of carrying coals to Newcastle, but perhaps, as W. W. Tarn suggested more than a half century ago, came about because the Ptolemies had penetrated western Arabia and diverted the caravans bearing incense from southern Arabia away from Petra to their own advantage (Potts 1983a: 122, n. 69).

But what of the location of ancient Gerrha? Many suggestions have been made, but new evidence is emerging which suggests that the site of Thaj is the best candidate (Potts 1984b). To understand why this may be the case, however, we must first consider the etymology of the name Gerrha. W. W. Müller has suggested that Greek 'Gerrha' derives from North Arabian 'HGR' via an Aramaic form 'Hagara.' Indeed there is plenty of evidence from ancient Hasa for the use of Aramaic in addition to the indigenous 'Hasaeen' dialect of ancient North Arabian, and it is not unlikely that Aramaic eventually superseded Hasaeen as the popular language of the area. Aramaic inscriptions, Hasaeen-Aramaic bilinguals, and Aramaic toponyms on Ptolemy's map of Arabia, including Magindanata, Bilbana, Ibirtha, and Masthala (Altheim and Stiehl 1968: 94-95,

5 Ja 1049, a Proto-Arabic inscription in the Hofuf oasis (after Potts 1984a: Fig. 19).

6 Simplified plan of the central area of Thaj, showing the ancient city wall in black and the outlines of modern houses. The total length of the wall is 2535 m. Individual wall lengths are as follows: north 725 m., south 685 m., east 535 m., and west 590 m. The entire orientation is NNW. The average width of the walls is 4.5 m., with a variance of ca. 10 cm. Drawing, made after the original plan by Dipl.-Ing. J. Fanelli, will appear in Potts, Pedde, and Fanelli n.d.



165; 1969: 27-30) all attest to the use of Aramaic in the region. This said, the task becomes one of identifying the site known to the ancient inhabitants of the area as HGR.

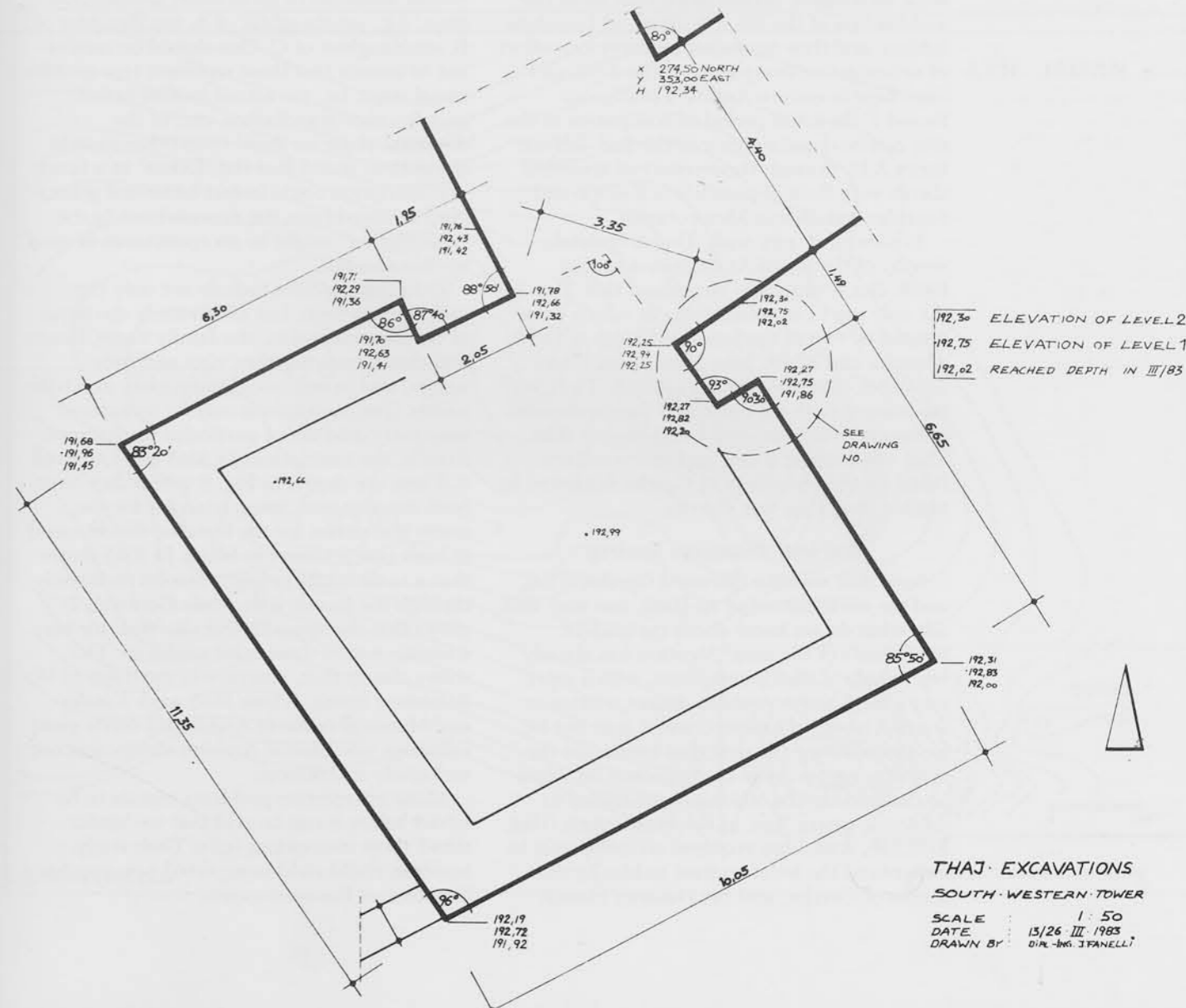
HGR, Gerrha and Thaj

HGR is a common South Arabian designation for a walled, fortified city. Of all the archaeological sites discovered thus far in northeastern Arabia, only Thaj has a city wall (Fig. 6) complete with towers which merits the South Arabian designation HGR. It was, indeed, the immensity of the site, only a fraction of which is contained within the city wall, and the fact that surface finds attested to a major occupation in the Seleucid era, that prompted our investigations here.

The full report on our work is in press (Potts, Pedde, and Fanelli n.d.), but it may be helpful to give a brief account of the main results here. Thaj, with an areal extent of ca. 8 sq. km., may be the largest site in the entire Arabian peninsula. The first season concentrated on establishing a ceramic sequence through the

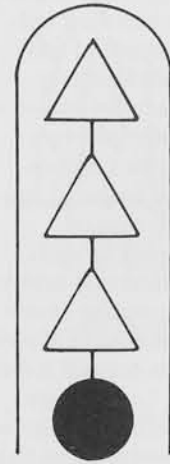
completion of a deep sounding down to virgin soil, the clearance of part of a large building complex extending over 600 sq. m., mapping of and test excavation alongside the city wall, and the uncovering of an enigmatic building outside the walled city area. A sequence of four building levels and their associated pottery form the basis for our preliminary definition of four occupational periods. The earliest two (Periods 4 and 3) are datable to the 3rd century B.C., due to the presence of Seleucid egg-shell ware, well-known on many sites in Mesopotamia of this period. Period 2, with which the first large-scale architectural activity at the site can be associated, cannot be much later, for it is marked by the presence of Greek black-glazed sherds whose forms suggest a date in the 3rd century B.C. as well. Luckily, we recovered identical sherds beneath the foundations of the city wall during a sounding at the southwest tower (Fig. 7), and are now able to date this massive, irregularly rectangular construction—4 m. wide and more than 2.5 km. in total length—with reasonable accuracy. It

7 Detail of the southwest corner tower of the city wall at Thaj, showing exact dimensions and angles of the construction. Each corner of the city wall had a tower, and smaller turrets could be seen along the length of the eastern and southern walls. The southwest tower was by far the most well preserved and was therefore chosen for excavation.

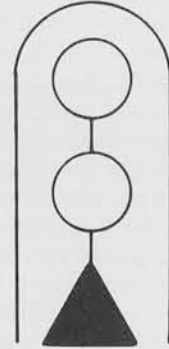


8
Diagrams of two Hasaeen inscriptions, Cornwall 2 and Ja 1045. Cornwall 2, found near Qatif, reads "tombstone and grave of Shibām the daughter of Suhār the son of 'NNHL the son of Shamit of the people (clan) of Yd'B." The diagram shows the deceased female as a black circle and her three male ancestors as open triangles. The clan is indicated by the arch. Ja 1045, found near Abqayq, is less well preserved; it reads "[tombsto]ne and gra[ve of .]dam, son of [. . .], daughter of Ha[. . .]. . . ja', he [r] of the clan of . . ."

CO. 2



Ja 1045



must be stressed, furthermore, that all of the architecture at the site is built of cut limestone ashlar, and thus represents an enormous effort of urbanization completely without parallel elsewhere in eastern Arabia. Finally, our Period I, the latest period of occupation at the site, can be dated roughly to the 2nd-4th centuries A.D. through the recovery of rouletted sherds with Roman parallels in Europe and Sasanian parallels in Mesopotamia.

In view of its city wall, Thaj is certainly worthy of the South Arabian designation HGR. But it must also be stressed that Thaj is the only site in eastern Arabia at which coins minted by two of the presumed kings of HGR, Abyatha and Abi'el, have been found (Potts 1984b:88; 1984c; Robin 1974:87,89). Thus, on the basis of both the coins and the massiveness of the city wall, one could well suggest that Thaj was ancient HGR, and as a corollary, based on the etymology of Gerrha suggested by Müller, that Thaj was Gerrha.

Ancient Hasaeen Society

Now that we have discussed Gerrha, Thaj, and the environment of Al-Hasa, one may well ask, what do we know about the ancient inhabitants of the area? Mention has already been made of their inscriptions, which represent a local North Arabian dialect written in South Arabian characters, and it may not be too speculative to suggest that herein lies the language encountered by Antiochus III when he came to Gerrha seeking to neutralize its economic power. For, as Polybius reports (Hist. XIII,2,9), Antiochus required an interpreter to understand the letter written to him by the people of Gerrha, and the Hasaeen dialect,

represented by the still small corpus of no more than 30 inscriptions, seems a likely candidate for the language in which this letter was written.

But what do these texts tell us of the people of Gerrha or the region as a whole? C. Robin and J. Ryckmans date them to the Seleucid era, and as such they should be examined in every way possible for information which could throw light on early Hasaeen society. In fact, although the known inscriptions are all funerary (for a complete listing of these inscriptions see Potts 1984a: Table 8), they do serve as a mirror of the society which created them, when examined from an anthropological perspective. For the inscriptions, although standardized, contain not only the name of the deceased, but also different formulae of descent which tell us something about the organization of their society. Six formulae of descent are to be found in these inscriptions. In the simplest, of which eight examples are known, the deceased's name is given ("grave-stone and grave of X"), followed by those of his/her ancestors in up to three 'genealogical steps,' e.g., son/daughter of A, son/daughter of B, son/daughter of C. One should be careful not to assume that these represent true generational steps, i.e., the actual mother/father, grandmother/grandfather, etc., of the deceased, since we know from other cases in the ancient world that the "father" in a funerary inscription could in fact be several generations removed from the deceased, while the "grandfather" might be an eponymous or even mythic ancestor.

Other inscriptions include not only the genealogical steps, but additionally the name of the deceased's clan, the family name, family and clan names together, clan and tribe names, and in one case, family, clan, and tribe names. Two inscriptions may be considered exemplary, and are of particular importance, namely, the inscriptions Ja 1045 and Cornwall 2. These are shown in Fig. 8 where they have been diagrammed, using triangles for the males and circles for the females; the deceased in each case is shown in black. Ja 1045 shows that a male might indicate descent exclusively through the female line, while Cornwall 2 shows that the opposite was also true, for here a female names three male ancestors. This shows clearly that, contrary to the thesis of W. Robertson Smith, whose 1885 work *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* still exerts great influence, pre-Islamic Arabian society was not exclusively matrilineal.

Many interpretive problems remain to be solved before it can be said that we 'understand' these inscriptions fully. Their study, however, could yield unexpected new insights into ancient Hasaeen society.

Ancient Hasa and the Parthians

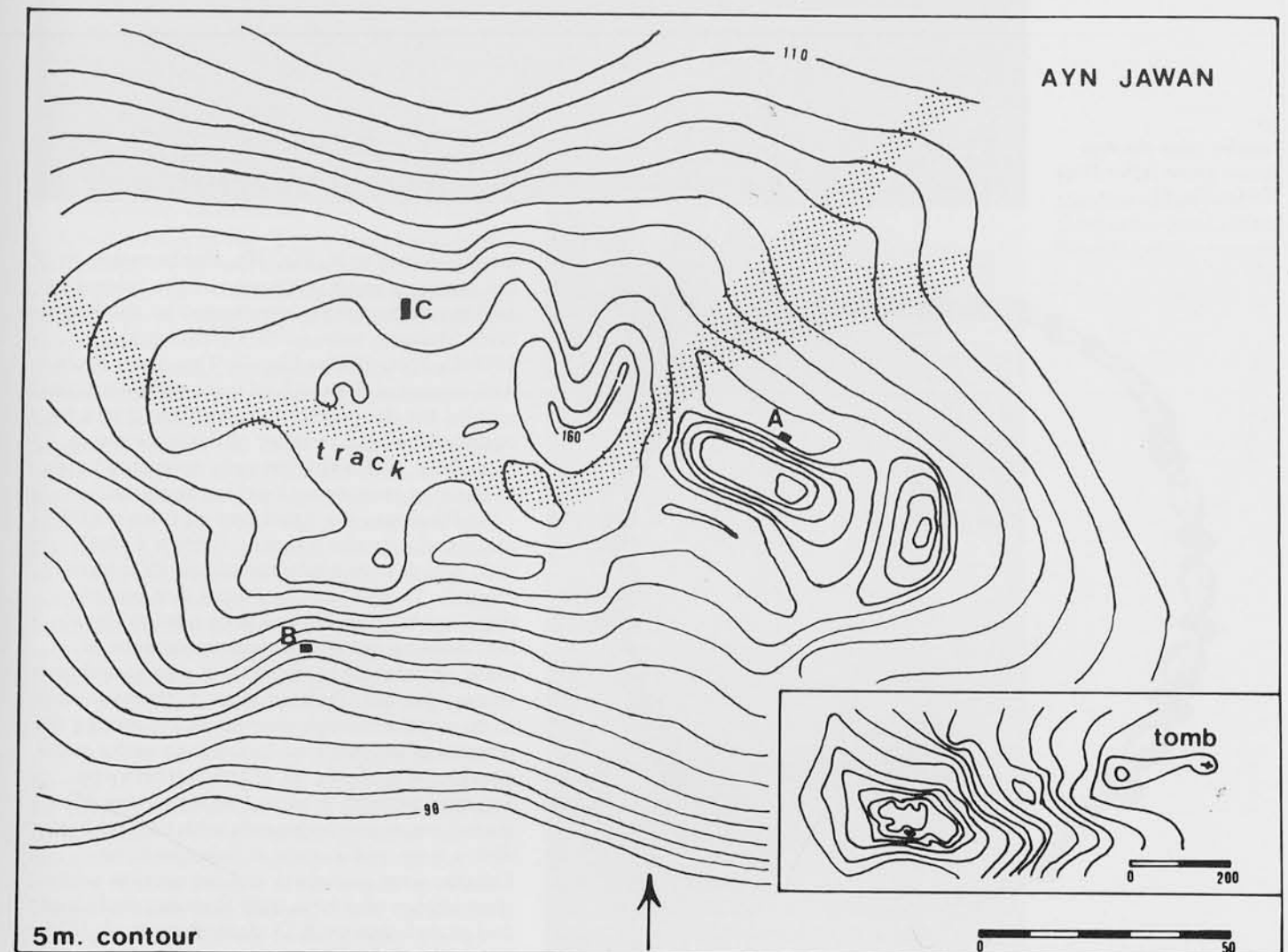
The decline of Gerrha is usually attributed to the rise of Parthia, the consequently greater importance of the land route from the east through Iran, and the activities of those successful merchants of Charax Spasinou, the city from which Isidoros, author of *Parthian Stations*, hailed. Another competitor, of course, was Palmyra, a city in the Syrian desert with enough influence in the Gulf to have had a satrap on Bahrain attested in A.D. 131 and well-carved tombs on the Iranian island Kharg.

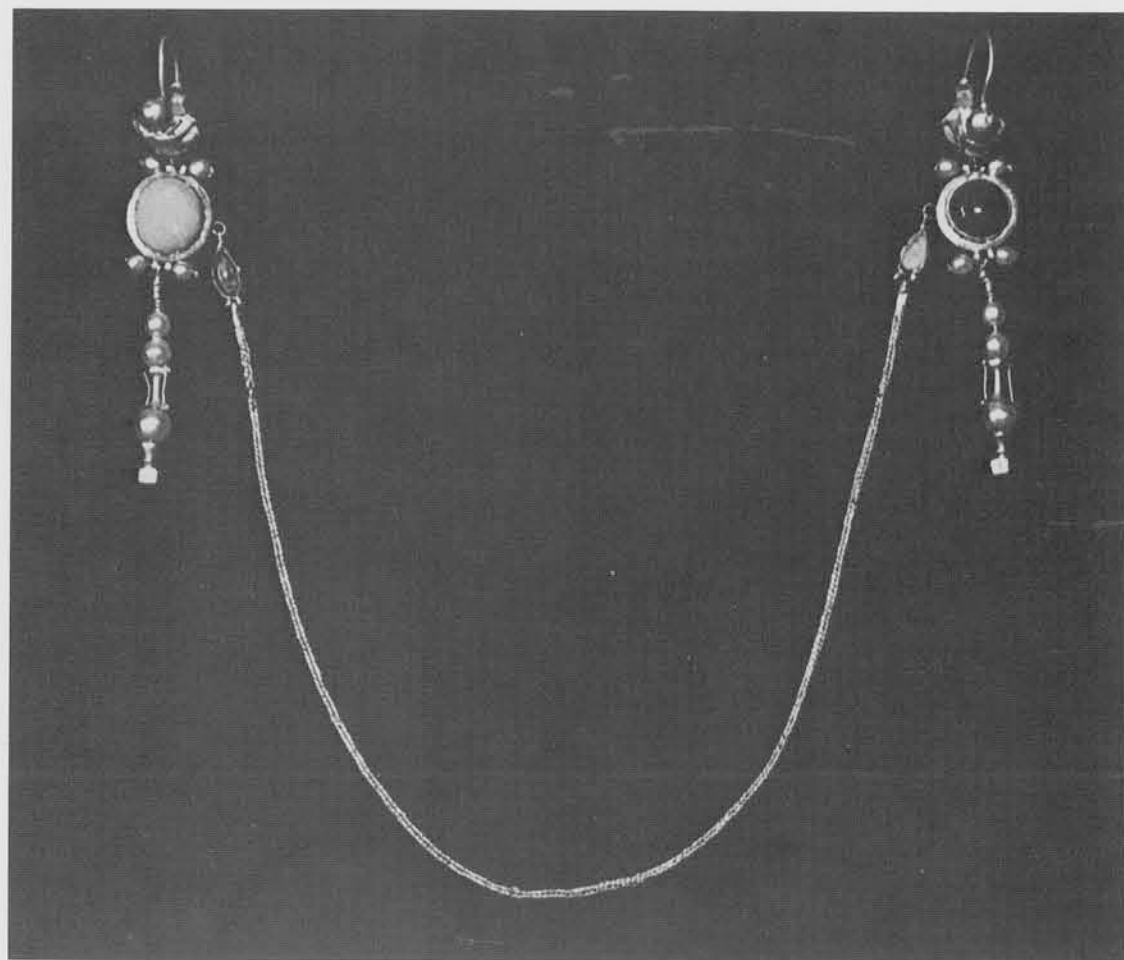
However one wishes to look at the decline of Gerrha, it must be stressed that Parthian contact with northeastern Arabia was not insubstantial. Ardashir, the founder of the Sasanian empire, waged a campaign against eastern Arabia in A.D. 228. In Tabari's account of that campaign we read that he encountered and conquered the local king, whose name was

Sanaṭruk. Now Sanaṭruk is a distinctively Parthian name (snṭrwk), also attested in the Parthian royal family and among the rulers of Hatra, Armenia, and Adiabene. Despite objections from various scholars, such as Franz Altheim (Altheim and Stiehl 1965:228) and Geo Widengren, as to the veracity of Tabari's testimony, there is no reason to doubt that a Parthian governor may have been resident in eastern Arabia. Certainly this would explain the otherwise enigmatic fact that, as Ardashir's first act upon becoming king, he chose to invade the area.

If we look to our area for archaeological indications of Parthian presence, moreover, we find several of interest. At the site of Ayn Jawan (Fig. 9) a T-shaped tomb of cut limestone ashlar was opened in the late 1940s by several American oil men (Bowen 1950). It was obviously a wealthy tomb, as shown by the

9
Plan of the site of Ayn Jawan.





10
Jewelry from the Ayn
Jawan grave (after Potts
1984a: Fig. 6).



jewelry found in it (Fig. 10). Furthermore, it lies next to a small settlement of the Seleucid and Parthian periods investigated by the Peabody Museum team in 1977 (Potts et al. 1978:21; Potts 1984a: Fig. 7). This grave could well represent the tomb of some petty Parthian royalty, for the jewelry found within it can be compared with a number of Parthian pieces from Iran. Nor is this the only excavated tomb in the area containing Parthian material.

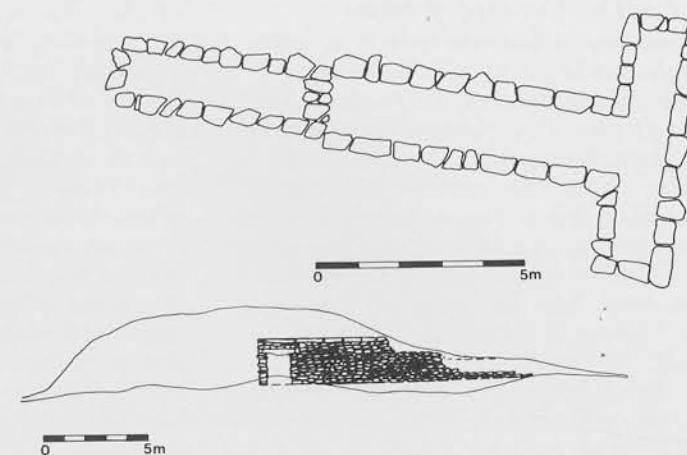
At Dhahran, the American oil town on the mainland opposite Bahrain, there is a tomb field which once contained about 1500 burial mounds. In 1977 we discovered that one of these tombs (Fig. 11) had been cut into by a bull-dozer, a not uncommon occurrence as many of them lie in the area of a proposed new runway for the Dhahran airport. We were able to do a quick salvage excavation, recovering the remains of at least four individuals and a small number of artifacts, all of the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Typical Parthian green-blue glazed amphorae fragments with twisted handles, a type well-known at Seleucia or on Failaka, were recovered, not to mention a fine glass pitcher of a type with Roman parallels of 2nd or 3rd century A.D. date (Potts et al. 1978: Pl. 10/43-45,48).

Before leaving Ardashir and his time, there is another interesting point which should be mentioned. Tabari tells us that, in addition to defeating Sanatruk, Ardashir founded a new city in eastern Arabia on the site of Khatt. The name of this city has been rendered variously in the sources, but Frye has recently reaffirmed Altheim's suggestion that it should be read Peroz-Ardashir, i.e., "victorious is Ardashir." Now it is interesting that the district Khatt is normally identified with, at least in part, the modern Qatif oasis (Thilo 1958:59), and here in 1941, P.B. Cornwall heard of a headless statue found there some years before and subsequently reburied, which he then succeeded in re-excavating (Cornwall 1946:45). The dress of the statue (Fig. 12), with its long coat and skirt, is not at all like the typical Parthian baggy trousers and *kandys* (type of coat) in many folds, but rather calls to mind the relief showing the investiture of Ardashir himself at Naqsh-i Rajab. We may well wonder whether this slightly smaller than life-size statue is not a relic of Ardashir's campaign in the area and subsequent foundation of Peroz-Ardashir. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of this important piece are not known, but I am in touch with a number of retired ARAMCO employees who were in Arabia in the late 1940s and early 50s, and they may be able to help in locating it.

Lakhmids, Sasanians, and Nestorians

A text known as the "Provincial Capitals of Eranshahr," composed between A.D. 754 and 775, tells us that Ardashir installed a governor or *marzban* in eastern Arabia, and this marks the beginning of ca. 400 years of direct or indirect Sasanian domination in the area. Under Ardashir's son, Shapur I, however, actual administration of the area passed to the Sasanians' clients, the Arab dynasty of Al-Hira in Iraq known to us as the Lakhmids. It was perhaps at the hands of one of the Lakhmids, Mar al-Qays, that Thaj was destroyed ca. A.D. 300 (Potts n.d.). At any event, we do not hear of it in Tabari's account of Shapur II's campaign against eastern Arabia in 325. Obviously Lakhmid control in the early years of the 4th century was not a great success, for Shapur found it necessary to make a punitive expedition into the area, penetrating deep into central and even western Arabia.

It is about 30 years after the death of Shapur II, in the year A.D. 410, that we read for the first time in the acts of a synod held by Bishop Isaac at Seleukeia-Ktesiphon of the existence of Nestorian bishoprics in northeastern Arabia. Present at the synod was Paul, bishop of Ar dai and Todoru. These names have been maintained down to the present day in slightly altered form. Darin, i.e., Ar dai, is the



name of the main town on the island of Tarut, i.e., Todoru, just opposite the Qatif oasis. The only relics of the Nestorian community, which flourished in northeastern Arabia from at least the beginning of the 5th century until perhaps the 10th century A.D., are three grave stones. These were originally found at Darin, but by 1914, as we learn from a letter written by an American missionary to the German orientalist Eduard Sachau, the objects were on Bahrain, and indeed they are now on display in the Bahrain museum.

11
Plan of the tomb at
Dhahran excavated in
1977 by the Peabody
Museum team.



12
Headless statue from
Qatif (after Potts 1984a:
Fig. 11).

The Coming of Islam

The breakup of Sasanian control in northeastern Arabia began by A.D. 629 when the Arab governor of the area, al-Mundir b. Sawa, received an invitation from the Prophet to convert to Islam. Seeing this as an opportunity to overthrow his Sasanian overseer Sēboxt, al-Mundir sent a delegation to Medina, concluding a treaty with Muhammad, and providing the new Moslem regime with their very first taxes, namely, dates and grain from eastern Arabia. This act of conversion, however, was principally aimed at overthrowing the Sasanians' control, not at taking up a new religion, and as soon as the Prophet died, the movement known as *ridda* (apostasy) began, in which the eastern Arabians renounced Islam. But this movement was short-lived. At Juwaytha, later the site of the first mosque in eastern Arabia (said to have been built in 635), the defeat of al-Mundir b. an-Nu'man in 633 opened the way for an advance towards the coast. In 635 Darin was the object of the final assault which destroyed the *ridda* movement once and for all. Yacut tells us that the conquest of Darin required boats, and that the Moslem army had

none. Sayf says that the journey to Tarut would have taken a day and a night's sailing, but God performed a miracle by parting the waters separating Tarut island and the mainland, thereby allowing the Moslem army to advance. He says that the water barely went over the tops of the camels' feet as they crossed Qatif bay. In fact, at low tide one can today walk across the bay with no trouble, and there are obviously shades of God parting the waters of the Red Sea for the Hebrews in this apocryphal tale. Nevertheless, the Moslem conquest did not put an end to the Nestorian community here, and we possess records of an important synod held on Tarut in 676 (Potts n.d.), as well as later references to Christians and Jews in the region.

Research on northeastern Arabia is still in its infancy, but it is hoped that this brief review has shown how many fascinating topics await the researcher who enters into this field of study. For here one has an opportunity to combine the fruits of over a century of archaeological, philological, anthropological, and historical scholarship on Iran, Iraq, and Arabia, with the results of surveys and excavations undertaken within the last few years.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the friends and colleagues with whom I have worked in eastern Arabia over the last several years. These include my companions on the survey of 1977: J. Frye, C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, and D. Sanders; my friend Ali al-Mughannam of the Saudi Arabian Dept. of Antiquities, who was with us in 1977 and accompanied me to Thaj in 1982; and F. Pedde and J. Fanelli, who were with me at Thaj in 1983. I would also like to thank many American families in Dhahran for their warm hospitality. Of these I would like to single out Mr. and Mrs. Bert Golding, who have always done their utmost to help me, and Mr. and Mrs. James P. Mandaville, for their generosity and support. All of the work was undertaken in cooperation with the Saudi Arabian Dept. of Antiquities, to whose staff I express my thanks, especially to Dr. A. H. Masry, Assistant Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs and Director of Antiquities.

Bibliography

Altheim, F., and R. Stiehl
1964-69
Die Araber in der Alten Welt 1-V(2). Berlin: W. de Gruyter.

Bowen, R. Le B.
1950
"The Early Arabian Necropolis of Ain Jawan," *BASOR Supplementary Studies* 7-9. New Haven.

Cornwall, P. B.
1946
"Ancient Arabia: Explorations in Hasa, 1940-41," *Geographical Journal* 107:28-50.

Potts, D. T.
1983a
"Archaeological Perspectives on the Historical Geography of the Arabian Peninsula," *Münstersche Beiträge zur Antiken Handelsgeschichte* II(2):113-124.

1983b
Dilmun: New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrain. Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 2. Berlin.

1984a
"Northeastern Arabia in the Later Pre-Islamic Era," in *Arabie orientale, Mésopotamie et Iran méridional de l'âge du fer au début de la période islamique*, ed. R. Boucharlat and J.-F. Salles, 85-144. Mémoire No. 37, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations. Paris.

1984b
"Thaj and the Location of Gerrha," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 14:87-91.

1984c
"A Preliminary Report on Coins of Seleucid Date from Northeastern Arabia in the Morris Collection." Paper read at the Seminar for Arabian Studies, July 17, 1984, Cambridge.

n.d.
Northeastern Arabia, from Alexander the Great to the Coming of Islam. Forthcoming.

Potts, D. T.,
A. S. Mughannam, J. Frye,
and D. Sanders
1978
"Preliminary Report on the Second Phase of the Eastern Province Survey 1397/1977," *Atlas* 2:7-27.

Potts, D. T., F. Pedde, and
J. Fanelli
n.d.
"Preliminary Report on the First Season of Excavations at Thaj, Winter 1983." To appear in a forthcoming issue of *Atlas*.

Robin, C.
1974
"Monnaies provenant de l'Arabie du nord-est," *Semitica* 24:83-125.

Thilo, U.
1958
Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie. Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 3. Wiesbaden.



Daniel Potts received his A.B. from Harvard College in 1975 and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard University in 1980. Since 1981 he has been teaching Near Eastern archaeology at the Free University of Berlin. He has done fieldwork in Iran, Turkey and, most recently, in Saudi Arabia where he led a survey and excavations at Thaj in 1982 and

1983. He was the editor for *Dilmun: New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrain* and has written numerous articles on Arabian Gulf archaeology. He is currently working on a synthesis of Gulf archaeology and history, of the period from ca. 8000 B.C. to A.D. 800. He plans to begin fieldwork in the Oman peninsula this winter.