

# Places of Ancient Arabia. Epigraphic data in the MAPARABIA gazetteer

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The Arabian Peninsula is still poorly represented in maps and digital reference tools concerning the geography of the ancient world. The ANR-funded project MAPARABIA (ANR-18-CE27-0015) wants to respond to this need, by supporting the description, discovery, understanding, and process of the consistent amount of data about pre-Islamic Arabia that have been generated over the past years.

Within this frame, a Gazetteer of Ancient Arabia has been conceived. As a thesaurus of ancient “places”, the gazetteer focuses on geographic entities provided with at least a name, attested in primary or in secondary sources. It identifies, disambiguates, and describes them, and represents their environmental and semantic relations, as well as their changes over time.

The Gazetteer of Ancient Arabia’s conceptual model is very similar to that of the Pleiades gazetteer [<https://pleiades.stoa.org/>]: the main entity, the abstract concept of Place, consists of at least a Location, that is the physical manifestation, and/or a Name, mentioned in a Source. Places can be related to each other for geographic or historic-cultural reasons.

*al-Bayḏā' / Nashq* place record in the MAPARABIA “Gazetteer of Ancient Arabia” data entry interface: relations with names and relevant sources

The main source of data for the Gazetteer of Ancient Arabia is the epigraphic corpus of the “Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions” – DASI [<http://dasi.cnr.it/>],

which publishes more than 8,000 texts from Ancient Arabia, provided with contextual information. This is the main difference if compared with other gazetteers of the ancient world.

word	language	lexicon/onomastics	occurrences
ns <sup>2</sup> q	Minaic		
		Toponym	1
	Undefined Ancient South Arabian language		
		Toponym	1
ns <sup>2</sup> qm	Sabaic		
		Toponym	46

Toponyms *ns<sup>2</sup>q* and *ns<sup>2</sup>qm* in the onomastic word lists of the Corpus of South Arabian inscriptions in DASI

The population of the Gazetteer is automatically performed by importing on demand data from DASI, in particular: onomastic items (toponyms, tribe names, names of buildings) from the word-lists generated from the EpiDoc-encoded texts (implementing Name records in the Gazetteer); the related epigraphic sigla (implementing Source records); data on the archaeological sites, which are provenance or place of production of inscriptions, and related monuments (implementing the Location records); some vocabularies, above all those related to periodization.

Synchronization with DASI does not prevent from manually entering new Name, Source and Period records, or implementing the existing ones with new metadata, in order to provide a full description of a Place based on other sources than those catalogued in the DASI archive.

The Gazetteer of Ancient Arabia is not openly available yet. However, access is allowed to authorized users at [<http://ancientarabia.cnr.it/gazetteer>]. Its dataset will be released in linked data format and under open license (LOD), in order to enhance interoperability with other repositories.

## REFERENCES

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