



**Qur'anic Geography: A Survey and Evaluation
of the Geographical References in the Qur'an with Suggested
Solutions for Various Problems and Issues**

Dan Gibson

Author Info

Dan Gibson is an independent Canadian scholar and historian in the field of Arabian and Islamic history. Following in his father's footsteps as a biblical historian exploring the ancient Edomites and Hyksos peoples, Dan moved to the Levant in 1979 and then to the deserts of southern Jordan in 2000 doing life-long field work. His research focuses on the inconsistencies and impossibilities of Islamic history as told by traditional Islamic sources. Dan also wrote *Early Islamic Qiblas: A Survey of Mosques Built between 1 AH/622 CE and 263 AH/876 CE* and other works, including *The Sacred City* documentary at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snHOrXvkLGQ>. His website: <http://nabataea.net> has gained worldwide attention, both for its scope and depth in presenting the early civilizations of the Arabian Peninsula.

Publisher, Date & Pages

Independent Scholars Press, 2011, 470 pages.

Cover Description(s)

This book covers historical records of the four known times when peoples of the Arabian Peninsula united and burst out of the Arabian deserts to conquer other nations. The book also examines the geographical references in the Qur'an cross-referencing them with historical locations. The surprise comes when Gibson examines the Holy City of Islam, known as Mecca. Here Gibson finds evidence that the original Holy City was in northern Arabia. He theorizes that during an Islamic civil war one hundred years after Muhammad, the Ka'ba was destroyed and the Black Rock was moved to its present location. Gibson examines the evidence and addresses many questions and objections that readers may have. This book contains many references, as well as some useful appendices including a 32 page time line of Islamic history, and a 20 page annotated selected bibliography of early Islamic sources in chronological order from 724 AD - 1100 AD, plus a list of many early Qur'anic manuscripts. It is fully referenced with many illustrations and photos, and is a must for every academic library or scholar of Middle Eastern History.

Endorsements

- Pfander Centre for Apologetics
- Rick Oakes, North-West University, S.A.
- The One Truth Project, UK

Comments

Jay Smith not only confronts the late dates of Muhammad's biography (Sira) and sayings (Hadith), all appearing in extant written form 200-300 years after Muhammad's death, but he also confronts the late date for the first reference to Mecca (741 AD), and the fact that all of the earliest Qiblas (direction of prayers) in all of the earliest mosques (up until 725 AD), are not pointing to Mecca at all, but uniformly pointing instead to the city of Petra, in Jordan, 600 miles too far north! He also notes that almost all of the geographical locations in the Qur'an fit Petra, and not Mecca, from Dan Gibson's book *Qur'anic Geography*.

Jeremy Smyth, *The Mecca Question* - Gibson presents his findings that the city of Petra in Jordan was the first and original Holy City of Islam and that it wasn't until over a hundred years after the death of Muhammad that Abbasid rulers in Iraq endorsed the village of Mecca in Saudi Arabia as Islam's holy city. At first, this theory sounds unbelievable, but Gibson presents overwhelming archeological, literary and historical evidence to support his position.

Dmitry Kotik - This book is thorough, brilliant and convincing. Gibson treats the Qur'an and early Muslim historians with fitting respect and honesty. He is not overly skeptical or dismissive. His main argument is strong and enlightening as he anticipates objections with diligence and care.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Acknowledgements

Introduction

PART I: Geographical Background to Arabia

1. Geographical Locations in the Qur'an
2. The Founding of the Nations

PART II: The People of 'Ad

3. The People of 'AD
4. 'Ad in the Bible
5. The Kings of 'Ad
6. 'Ad and the Book of Job
7. 'Ad and the Pharaohs
8. 'Ad, Edom and the Hyksos

PART III: The People of Midian

9. The People of Midian

PART IV: The People of Thamud

10. The Kingdom of Thamud
11. Thamudic Trade Routes
12. The Thamudic Golden Age
13. The Thamudic Kingdom Crumbles

PART V: Pre-Islamic Arabia

14. The Tribes of Arabia
15. The City of Medina

PART VI: Islam's Holy City

16. The Holy City
17. The Qibla
18. Archaeological Evidence
19. Literary Evidence
20. Historical Evidence
21. Navigation and Pre-Islamic Poetry
22. The Abbasid Writers
23. The Case for Aqaba and Al-Aqsa
24. Qur'anic Geography

PART VII: Appendices

- A. Timeline of Early Islamic History
- B. Annotated Bibliography of Early Islamic Sources
- C. Early Qur'ans
- D. Bibliography of Secondary Sources
- E. Index

Rating on a scale of 1 to 5

1. Not a good use of your time
2. Okay, but not that useful
3. Satisfactory, not great – but a good read
4. Loved reading it
5. Impactful, highly recommend

This book is rated as: 4-5

“Recommendation” Statement

This book has played a notable role in contemporary efforts to restore the history of Islam, which the early Umayyad and Abbasid Islamic scholars revised for political purposes. Although Gibson's later works on *Early Islamic Qiblas* and *The Sacred City*

advance the research much further, this book was foundational in his discoveries. As such, it contains important information on early Arab trade navigation, and other seminal topics that support the remarkable conclusions reached in Gibson's thesis. The book presents a comprehensive study of geographic references in the Qur'an in light of their historical context. This includes an outline of the history of ancient tribes that lived in Arabia, with Qur'anic references to the peoples of 'Ad, Midian, and Thamud, which are identified with ancient civilizations. It also contains a detailed study of references to the "Holy City" around the vicinity in which the Qur'an was first received by Mohammad, and appendices that summarize and support the findings.

The book demonstrates that Qur'anic geographical references are concentrated in Northern Arabia, and that the original Holy City of Islam is not Mecca but another city that was a major ancient trade center known as Petra, in the present day country of Jordan, and to which prior civilizations in Arabia were connected. The book explains why this location fits the Qur'an and early Islamic history much better than Mecca and why evidence for this location was censored by early Islamic historians. The book supports this through a study of ancient architecture, art, and literature in comparison with geographical and archeological data. Gibson uses the best early Islamic biographers of Mohammad and scholars of the Islamic Sunna to make his case.

Reviewer

Steve Krstulovich
September 14, 2020