THE CULT OF DUSHARA AND THE ROMAN ANNEXATION OF NABATAEA

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AND THE ROMAN ANNEXATION OF NABATAEA

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the cult of Dushara, the head of the Nabataean pantheon, in the Nabataean and Roman periods, in order to better understand Nabataean cultural identity following the Roman annexation of Nabataea by Trajan in AD 106. I explore Dushara's cult during the Nabataean and Roman periods by analyzing literary, archaeological, and artistic evidence. An important aspect of Dushara's worship is his close connection with the Nabataean king as "the god of our lord (the king)" in inscriptions. A major question for this thesis is how Dushara's worship survived in the Roman period after the fall of the Nabataean king.

Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Semitic sources attest to the worship of Dushara in the post-Nabataean period, but these sources are often vague and sometimes present misinterpretations. Therefore, we must necessarily look to archaeological and artistic evidence to present a more complete picture of Dushara's worship in the Roman period. Specific archaeological sites examined in this thesis include Oboda and Sobata in the Negev; Bostra, Umm el-Jimal, and Sī' in the Hauran; Hūrāwa, Khirbet edh-Dharih, and Dhībān of central Jordan; Petra, Hawara, and Iram in southern Jordan; and Hegra in northwestern Saudi Arabia. Most of these sites contain some evidence for Dushara's worship, although much cannot be dated. Artistic evidence is also an important aspect in the study of Dushara's worship. In the Nabataean period, Nabataean deities, including Dushara, are generally depicted as a betyl, a rectangular, aniconic stone; however, given the relative lack of inscriptions and other datable evidence associated with betyls, their date is often difficult to determine. Numismatic evidence suggests that Dushara's cult

continued into the Roman period. Aniconic imagery appears on coinage from Antoninus Pius in the mid-2nd century to Gallienus in the mid-3rd century, including coins from Bostra, Adraa, Charachmoba, Medaba, and Petra. However, anthropomorphic imagery of Dushara appears on coinage from Bostra for a brief span under Commodus in AD 177 and Caracalla in AD 209/210. This emergence of anthropomorphic imagery, which possibly reflects earlier portraits of Nabataean kings, may have been influenced by the Hellenized elites, the presence of the *Legio III Cyrenaica*, or the rise in power of the indigenous peoples.

This thesis demonstrates that a fundamental aspect of Nabataean culture survived following the fall of the kingdom. Although the evidence for Dushara's cult is erratic and often difficult to interpret, it is clear that the cult continued in some capacity well into the Roman period and possibly as late as the Islamic period. The worship of Dushara was perhaps one way in which the people of Arabia could associate themselves with the culture of the past stay and stay connected to their Nabataean roots.

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Abbreviations

ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJP	*The American Journal of Philology*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*
CRAI	*Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
DM	*Damaszener Mitteilungen*
EAEHL	*Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IFAPO	Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient
IGLS	*Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*
OEANE	*Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PPUAES	*Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria, 1904-1905 and 1909*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RES	*Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique. Accadémie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Paris*
SHAJ	*Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Geography and History

The Nabataean kingdom during its height under Kings Obodas III and Aretas IV in the 1st centuries BC/AD included within its geographical borders southern Syria, most of Jordan, the Negev in southern Israel, the Sinai Peninsula, and the northern Hejāz region in northwestern Saudi Arabia. Following Trajan's annexation of the kingdom in AD 106, the new Roman *Provincia Arabia* included much of the same area, excluding the extreme southern settlements including Hegra. Most occupation was concentrated in the areas just south and east of Palestine (fig. 1).[1]

The main geological feature of the area is a great rift that extends from Syria through the Sea of Galilee, Jordan Valley, Dead Sea, Wadi Arabah, Gulf of Aqaba, down the Red Sea and beyond to East Africa. Earthquakes are frequent in the area and are evident in the archaeological record throughout the region. The climate of the province varies widely, with harsh mountainous deserts in the south and east, lush coastline on the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and fertile agricultural land in the regions to the north.[2] Perhaps the most heavily-settled area in the province is the western part of the Jordanian plateau, a large limestone feature covering the area east of the Dead Sea. The area receives adequate rainfall for agriculture and includes the major cities of Gerasa (Jerash), Philadelphia (Amman), and Petra. To the north of this plateau is Bostra, the capital of the

[1] Patrich 1990a, 23, Ill. 1; Bowersock 1983, 1; Hammond 1973, 56.
[2] Bowersock 1983, 5.

province. Bostra also enjoyed relative prosperity during the Roman period due to its location among the lava fields of the volcanic Jebel Drūz, allowing for a productive agricultural hinterland.[3] The vast deserts in the southern portion of the province, however, are not as hospitable as regions to the north. The Sinai, the Negev, the Hismā, and the Hejāz are extremely arid environments and certain regions would have been virtually uninhabitable if not for the irrigation technology developed by the Nabataeans.[4] Nevertheless, the location of the Nabataean kingdom was significant for the region's prosperity, with its trade access to the Mediterranean Sea and to southern Arabia and eastward via the Red Sea.[5]

The Nabataeans, also known as the Nabatu tribe, were not indigenous to the region. Some time prior to the 4th century BC, these people migrated from the Arabian Peninsula along with several other Arab tribes.[6] The motivation and exact date for this migration are unclear, though the Nabataeans were clearly established in the region of Petra by 312 BC, as seen in Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History* from the 1st century BC.[7] Though his account is not entirely reliable due to his heavy reliance on earlier Hellenistic sources, Diodorus describes the Nabataeans as nomads who rely on pasturage and trade from Arabia Felix and who occasionally resort to brigandage for survival.[8] Later, in the 1st century AD, Strabo describes the culture of the Nabataeans as told to him

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[3] Bowersock 1983, 6-7.
[4] For instance, see Evenari, *et al.* 1982 for Negev water conservation.
[5] See Diodorus 19. 94. 4-5.
[6] These include the Safaitic, Thamudic, and Lihyanite tribes.
[7] Hammond believes unrest in the southern Arabian peninsula led to these migrations (1973, 9-13); Diodorus, 19. 94. 1ff.
[8] His sources include Polybius, Ephorus, Timaeus, Hieronymus, and Posidonius (Drews 1962, 384). See Chapter 3 for details.

by philosopher friend Athenodorus, who lived in Petra. While these two authors provide the earliest extensive information about the Nabataeans, the people whose capital was at Petra, other accounts are not as clear. The distinction between the Nabataeans and other tribes is often blurred and ancient authors tended to term the people of this region under the blanket name "Arab." It must be noted that several other Arab tribes also existed within the realm of the Nabataean kingdom, though these other tribes were mostly nomadic.[9]

The early period of the Nabataeans is virtually unaccounted for, with the exception of Diodorus, who describes them as a nomadic people who were forbidden to construct stone houses, grow crops, or drink wine.[10] Later in the late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD, Strabo in his *Geography* portrays the Nabataeans in a rather different light. The Nabataeans, particularly those in Petra, are described as mostly sedentary, with great temples and extensive trade networks already established.[11] Josephus' *Antiquities* from the 1st century AD preserves several names of the early Nabataean kings. Inscriptions from the beginning of the 1st century BC onward provide further details on the Nabataean king chronology, which is generally reckoned as follows:

Aretas I	c. 168 BC
Aretas II	c. 120-96 BC
Obodas I	c. 96-85 BC
Rabbel I	c. 85-84 BC
Aretas III Philhellen	84-62 BC
Obodas II	62-59 BC
Malichus I	59-30 BC
Obodas III	30-9 BC

[9] Bowersock 1983, 20.
[10] Diodorus, 2. 48. 1-2; 19. 94. 2-6.
[11] Strabo, 16. 4. 26.

Aretas IV Philodemos	9 BC-AD 40
Malichus II	AD 40-70
Rabbel II	AD 70-106[12]

The most important Nabataean kings for this study are Obodas III, Aretas IV, and Rabbel II.

The Nabataeans entered a period of prosperity in the late 1st century BC that continued through the 1st century AD. Trade networks, irrigation, agriculture, and urbanization were particular focal points for development in King Aretas IV's reign. Later in the 1st century AD prosperity shifted northward under the reign of Rabbel II, and the capital of Nabataea may have been transferred from Petra to Bostra some time late in the king's reign.[13] By AD 106 Trajan's expansionistic program extended to Nabataea, which was annexed as the new *Provincia Arabia* on March 22 following the death of Rabbel II. New territory included the former Decapolis cities, including Dium, Gerasa, and Philadelphia, unifying the whole area east of the Jordan River.[14] Evidence suggests that this was a relatively peaceful campaign, though there may have been some minor military encounters. Trajan did not include *Arabicus* in his formal imperial titulature, as seen during his Dacian campaigns. Additionally, coinage depicting the annexation reads *Arabia adquisita* instead of *Arabia capta*, the latter of which suggests formal rebellion and war.[15] The region fell under the jurisdiction of a provincial governor by the name of Cornelius Palma, governor of Syria, with the capital established at Bostra. The

[12] Healey 2001, 29-30, from Wenning 1993.
[13] Bowersock 1983, 32.
[14] Negev 1978, 642-645.
[15] Bowersock 1983, 81.

province's main legion, the *Legio III Cyrenaica*, was stationed at Bostra.[16] Building projects began throughout the province, including the construction of the *via Nova Traiana*, a military and trade route from Aila (Aqaba) in the south to Bostra in the north.[17]

The province continued to prosper throughout the Roman period, with several imperial visits in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and the influx of Christians and pilgrims. In the Late Roman period, a massive earthquake in AD 363 severely disrupted settlement of the region, including Petra.[18] By the mid-7th century AD, most cities were under the control of the Muslims.[19] Though the history of the Nabataean kingdom and the Province of Arabia covers a broad chronological span, only the period from the 1st century BC through the late 3rd/early 4th century AD will be treated in this thesis.

Nabataean Culture and Sedentarization

Prior to the creation of *Provincia Arabia*, the Nabataeans had developed cultural traditions that were distinct from those of neighboring peoples. Aspects of Nabataean culture peaked during the 1st centuries BC/AD, including the written script,[20] ceramic style, architecture, and coinage; however, a less concrete aspect of the Nabataean ethnic identity was their religion. In anthropological terms, religion is a way for a set of individuals to shape their perception of life, the world, and their place within it, allowing

[16] The appearance of a foreign governor and two military garrisons, the *Legio III Cyrenaica* and the *Legio VI Ferrata*, provides further evidence that Nabataea's annexation was not completely peaceful (Bowersock 1983, 79-82).
[17] Negev 1978, 642-645.
[18] Brock 1977, 267-278; Hammond 1980, 65-67.
[19] See Hammond 1973 and Bowersock 1983.

one to identify and connect with others of a similar mindset.[21] In the case of the Nabataeans, a group of people relatively isolated from the rest of the Roman world,[22] the practice of their own religion, in addition to the aspects mentioned above, created a bond among the Nabataean people. Their form of public religion and worship, seen as far west as Puteoli in Italy by the mid-1st century BC, helped to create an ethnic identity for the Nabataeans, which left a mark on the Greco-Roman world.

As a client kingdom of the Roman Empire, the Nabataeans were able to establish valuable political and trade connections with the west, leading to their political prominence and thus creating a greater Roman awareness of the Nabataean culture in the 1st centuries BC/AD. This growing awareness was facilitated by the publication of works by Diodorus Siculus and Strabo in which the Nabataeans are studied. It is also during this period that Dushara, the head of the Nabataean pantheon, experienced a rise in profile due to his growing association with the later Nabataean royal figures, including primarily Kings Aretas IV and Rabbel II.

A key factor in the development of Nabataean material culture is the process of sedentarization, which began around 100 BC. Following their settlement, Nabataean material culture becomes much clearer in the literary and archaeological record. The most detailed evidence for the sedentarization of the Nabataeans comes from their capital city of Petra. Until recently most excavations in Petra focused on the monumental structures in order to elucidate the public life and culture of the Nabataean peoples.

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[20] The Nabataean script is a form of Aramaic.
[21] Rives 2000, 245.

Within the past few decades, excavation has also revealed some domestic structures at Petra,[23] which has helped in the interpretation of Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, who provide conflicting evidence as to the sedentarization of the Nabataeans.[24] The urbanization of Petra during the 1st centuries BC/AD is indicative of a growing population within the city. Despite the Nabataeans' relative lack of prominence in the historical and archaeological record from 312 BC to 100 BC, the appearance of stone domestic complexes, fine ceramic ware, coinage, and civic building projects throughout the city provides further evidence for the sedentarization of the Nabataeans from 100 BC onward.[25] Other parts of the kingdom follow Petra's example several decades later.[26]

What appears from the archaeological evidence is that the Nabataeans enjoyed an economic boom resulting in the sudden minting of coins around 84 BC. Stone houses were constructed overtop the earlier tent-dwelling layers, signifying that the Nabataeans were making a move towards permanence, although tent dwellings appear to have coexisted with stone structures as well.[27] An increase in trade and the presence of the

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[22] This isolation is apparent especially in Roman literary sources, who relied heavily on earlier Hellenistic sources and often confused various Arab tribes, including the Nabataeans with one another. See Chapter 3.
[23] See in particular the ez-Zantur excavation reports in Stucky, *et al.* 1991, 1992, 1994.
[24] Diodorus states: "It is their custom neither to plant grain, set out any fruit-bearing tree, use wine, nor construct any house; and if anyone is found acting contrary to this, death is his penalty" (Diodorus, 19. 94. 2-3; trans. Oldfather 1933). Strabo states: "Their homes, through the use of stone, are costly . . . They worship the sun, building an altar on top of the house [or temple?], and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense" (Strabo, 16. 4. 26; trans. Jones 1930).
[25] Schmid 2001b, 427.
[26] Structures built during the kingdom's urbanization include colonnaded streets, temples, *nymphaea*, markets, military structures, as well as houses.
[27] The houses used the natural terrain and were constructed in a haphazard manner, as if the Nabataeans changed only their building material and not the manner in which they erected their dwellings. Additionally, it appears as if the Nabataeans knew little about stone construction, or at least stone construction on this terrain, since stratigraphy from these houses exhibits many layers of destruction. In the Nabataean phase of one house, its foundations were erected too close to the edge of the natural terrace and collapsed; there is evidence for at least two reconstruction phases for this house (Stucky, *et al.* 1991, 261). Quite often, a house did not allow for a shift in the terrain, which resulted in collapse. Further proof that

Romans in the neighboring area may have contributed to this boom, as can be seen in Diodorus:

> *οὐκ ὀλίγων δ' ὄντων Ἀραβικῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν τὴν ἔρημον ἐπινεμόντων οὗτοι πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων προέξουσι ταῖς εὐπορίαις, τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντες οὐ πολὺ πλείους τῶν μυρίων· εἰώθασι γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι κατάγειν ἐπὶ θάλασσαν λιβανωτόν τε καὶ σμύρναν καὶ τὰ πολυτελέστατα τῶν ἀρωμάτων, διαδεχόμενοι παρὰ τῶν κομιζόντων ἐκ τῆς Εὐδαίμονος καλουμένης Ἀραβίας.*[28]
>
> While there are many Arabian tribes who use the desert as pasture, the Nabataeans far surpass the others in wealth although they are not much more than ten thousand in number; for not a few of them are accustomed to bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most valuable kinds of spices, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudaemon.[29]

The motivation for sedentarization by the Nabataeans is not entirely clear. It may have been a result of the king's wish to centralize the kingdom, creating a more stable environment conducive to trade, or it may have been a byproduct of an already booming economy, with settlement being the next logical step. Sedentarization may have also occurred through the influence of neighboring societies, who were already settled. Nevertheless, the settlement of the Nabataeans into permanent cities and villages is key in studying their culture.

During the Roman period, aspects of Nabataean culture began to slowly diminish. The Nabataean language fell out of use and was used only rarely on the fringes of the empire by the 4th century AD. Greek, the language of the Greco-Roman East, was

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Nabataeans were generally unfamiliar with the logistics of stone construction in this region is that these houses show no evidence of retaining walls, a feature which could have prevented collapse from the ever-changing natural terrain (Stucky, *et al.* 1991, 261). The layout of the houses shows that the builders were familiar with Hellenistic domestic design and palatial structures, including features such as the peristyle and Corinthian capitals, but without previous experience with Petra's landscape, they were unfamiliar with the static problems of these structures (Kolb 2003, 232; Stucky, et al. 1992, 178).

[28] Diodorus, 19. 94. 4-5.

[29] Trans. Oldfather 1933.

preferred over Nabataean for legal documentation, coinage, and business interaction of the cities, gaining popularity throughout the province.[30] Nabataean cities, including Petra and Bostra, became *poleis* and colonies under the Roman emperors, suggesting their importance within the province.[31] Nabataean fine ware pottery also began its decline following the annexation of Nabataea. By the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, the ware had transitioned from being elaborately decorated with its "egg shell" thickness to a coarse, thick ware painted carelessly with dark globular patterns.[32] The religion, particularly the worship of Dushara, appears to have continued in the Roman period, but evidence is not as abundant as in the Nabataean period.[33] Additionally, there arises a preference for Greco-Roman-style games in northern Arabia, including primarily the *Actia Dusaria* of Bostra from the 3rd century AD.

Religion

The question of Nabataean sedentarization is important for this thesis because it may help to explain certain religious practices. The main symbol for a Nabataean deity was a betyl, a small rectangular aniconic stone.[34] Though some examples can be found carved into rock faces, others are freestanding and moveable. Additionally, there are some "portable" betyls that could be carried by hand. During the urbanization of the

[30] Millar 1993, 415-418, 421. This transition is also apparent in the "Babatha Archives," a collection of legal documents of a Jewish women living in Nabataea around the time of the Roman annexation (Millar 1993, 415-418).
[31] Millar 1993, 418-420.
[32] See Hammond 1959 and Parr 1970 for ceramic studies.
[33] Much of the religious evidence for the Roman period appears on coinage, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
[34] See Wenning 2001.

kingdom in the 1st centuries BC/AD, however, Greco-Roman-style temples began to appear, suggesting that with the move towards agriculture and sedentarization, the Nabataeans wished also to make their place of religion permanent.

This thesis will follow the transition of Nabataean religion from a "portable" nomadic state to a sedentary state with rituals based in temples. Though both types of practices existed throughout the life of the kingdom and into the provincial period, the sedentary style of worship appears to have arisen with the influence of the Roman Empire, raising questions about the impact of Rome on Nabataean culture. To what degree were the Nabataeans influenced by Roman conventions of religion, namely the construction of Greco-Roman-style temples and the appearance of gods in anthropomorphic form rather than as the traditional "betyl" or sacred stone? To what extent were the Nabataean deities syncretized with the Roman pantheon?

An important facet in this study of Nabataean religion is the role of the primary deity, Dushara. Especially during the later part of the Nabataean kingdom, Dushara was linked specifically with the king, appearing in inscriptions as "the god of our lord (the king)."[35] His close ties with the royal family gave him exceeding power, above and beyond the rest of the pantheon; however, his association with the king and the royal house was particularly sensitive and his existence relied heavily upon the prosperity of the Nabataean state.[36] With the fall of the Nabataean king, the person with which Dushara was the most closely associated, Dushara's significance theoretically may have

[35] See specifically Healey 1993.
[36] Knauf states that a tribe could not exist without its deity; therefore, Dushara and the Nabataean state enter a codependent relationship in which both rely on the other for survival (Knauf 1989, 58-59).

been altered. Would the acquisition of Nabataea by the Romans and the change to *Provincia Arabia* in AD 106 have drastically changed the nature of Nabataean religion?

These questions will be addressed through the analysis of literary sources, archaeological evidence, and artistic evidence. In this thesis I will first outline the worship of other Nabataean deities in Chapter 2, in an attempt to contextualize the worship of Dushara as the head of the pantheon. Chapters 3-5 will be devoted primarily to the study of Dushara. In these chapters, I will examine Greco-Roman and Semitic literary sources, archaeologicial evidence, in particular various sanctuaries associated with Dushara, and artistic representations of Dushara, both aniconic and anthropomorphic. The goal of this thesis is to make comparisons in the veneration of Dushara between the Nabataean and Roman periods by studying changes in the artistic representation, architectural features, and worship visible primarily in the archaeological record. Through these means, I hope to show ways in which the worship of Dushara as the head of the Nabataean pantheon continued following the Roman annexation of Nabataea, despite his severed ties with the Nabataean king, with whom he was most closely associated, and continued to act as a way for Nabataeans to collectively identify with one another under Roman rule.

Chapter 2
Dushara and the Nabataean Pantheon

The Nabataean pantheon appears to have involved a relatively small number of deities. Cult centers appear throughout the kingdom, including the fertile regions from the Hauran and Bostra, to Hūrāwa (Khirbet et-Tannur), Khirbet et-Dharih, and Petra, down into the more arid area from Iram (Wadi Ramm) to Hegra (Meda'in Saleh).[37] Because Nabataean lifestyles varied based on geographical location, deities often acquired attributes based on each region, thus affecting their name or importance within the pantheon. A deity's name can reflect the place in which he or she originated, a natural occurrence or association, i.e., lightning, rivers, or mountains, or it may reflect his or her role in the pantheon. It is unknown if the names that are preserved today are the original names or if they are merely epithets of the god or goddess[38]; for instance, Dushara's name means "the god (*dhû*) of ash-Sharā (*Sharâ*)," a mountain range located near Petra, Jordan.[39] Also, based on numerous inscriptions from the Nabataean kingdom, it appears that many of the Nabataean gods and goddesses share familial relationships, whether through marriage or through offspring. Because these relationships tend to be complex, they are somewhat difficult to interpret. Nonetheless, it is possible through various types of evidence to outline the most important Nabataean deities and their attributes.

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[37] Evidence for worship and cult centers appears outside the kingdom, as well, including Palmyra, for instance. These will be discussed in association with each deity.
[38] Healey 2001, 80-83.

Deities

Shay' al-Qawm

Shay' al-Qawm (*šy'' lqwm*), whose name means "the one who aids the people"[40] or "protector of the clan,"[41] is a protective deity known throughout Safaitic inscriptions as a protector of caravans and nomads.[42] The deity is also possibly linked with Dushara.[43] The inscriptions naming the deity are not numerous but widespread, reaching as far as Hegra in the south and Palmyra in the north. A dedicatory inscription attests to the cult in the Hauran:

> This is the portico(?) which PN made for Shay' al-Qawm the god in the year twenty-six of Rabel....[44]

Based on the chronology listed for King Rabbel II, this inscription can be dated to AD 96/97.[45] Another inscription from AD 132 found in Palmyra reveals more about the deity:

> These two altars 'Ubaydu..., the Nabataean of the Rawāh tribe who was a cavalryman at the fort and camp of 'Ānah, for Shay' al-Qawm the good and bountiful god who does not drink wine, for his life and the life of.....[46]

Not only does this inscription reveal that Shay' al-Qawm was worshipped as far north as Palmyra, but it suggests a following of soldiers, in addition to nomads. It also reveals the

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[39] Starcky 1966, col. 986; Teixidor 1977, 83.
[40] Starcky 1966, col. 996; Healey 2001, 146.
[41] Sourdel 1952, 81.
[42] Safaitic is a text used primarily by nomads in the desert regions of southern Syria, northeastern Jordan, and northern Saudi Arabia. The text appears from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD, generally as graffiti on rocks (see McDonald 1995).
[43] See below.
[44] Healey 2001, 144, from *RES* §§ 471, 86.
[45] Healey 2001, 144; see also Sourdel 1952, 81.
[46] Healey 2001, 145, from *CIS* II, 3973; see also Teixidor 1977, 89.

deity's abstention from wine, a trend seemingly popular among nomadic Nabataeans as reported by Diodorus.[47]

al-Kutbā

Located in southern Jordan is a rock sanctuary with evidence for another Nabataean deity, al-Kutbā (*'lktb'*). Nestled in the mountains of Iram is 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh, a natural spring surrounded by betyls, quadrangular stones used during Nabataean worship. Two betyls in particular feature the deities al-Kutbā and al-'Uzzā placed adjacent to one another with an inscription below reading:

Al-Kutbā who is in Gaia // al-'Uzzā[48]

This inscription not only places al-Kutbā's worship within Gaia/el-Jī, located outside Petra in modern Wadi Musa, but it also associates al-Kutbā with al-'Uzzā. Unfortunately, al-Kutbā's gender is not known, so it is difficult to determine if al-Kutbā is al-'Uzzā's male consort. Strugnell, Starcky, and Zayadine believe the deity to be male and a scribal god of the Nabu/Thoth/Hermes/Mercury pattern.[49] Under these circumstances it would seem likely to pair male al-Kutbā with female al-'Uzzā, who is associated with Aphrodite, thus completing the Mercury/Hermes-Aphrodite connection.[50]

[47] Healey 2001, 146; Diodorus 19.94.3; see also Gawlikowski 1990, 2669; see also Knauf 1990, 176 ff.
[48] Healey 2001, 120, from Savignac 1934, 574-575. Inscription is described in detail in Strugnell 1959.
[49] Strugnell 1959, 35-36; Starcky 1966, cols. 993-996; Starcky 1982, 196; Zayadine 1990, 37, 43.
[50] Strugnell 1959, 36. Here Strugnell cites Arrian (*Indica* 37) for the Hermes-Aphrodite relationship. Healey (2001, 120-124) and Patrich (1990b, 185-195) believe the deity to be female.

Qōs

The Nabataean/Edomite weather god, whose worship center is at Hūrāwa in central Jordan, is Qōs (*lqws*). Two inscriptions, from Bostra and Hūrāwa, name the deity as the recipient of ritual offerings. A bilingual inscription (Nabataean and Greek) in Bostra is located on a basalt eagle and reads:

PN made this (eagle) for Qōs: Moainos[51]

The second inscription, in Hūrāwa, is located on a stone stele and reads:

(Stele) which Qōsmalik made for Qōs, the god of Hūrawā[52]

Hūrawā appears to be the ancient name of Khirbet et-Tannur, so this inscription links Qōs directly to Khirbet et-Tannnur.[53] The deity is also represented at the site seated on a throne, holding a thunderbolt, and flanked by bulls (fig. 2).[54] The combined imagery of an eagle, bulls, and a thunderbolt suggests that Qōs was a weather god.[55]

Hubal

Hubal (*hblw*) is known primarily through Thamudic graffiti[56] and tomb inscriptions in Hegra, usually juxtaposed with Dushara and other major deities. The

[51] Milik 1958, 235-237, n. 3; Healey 2001, 126-127.
[52] Savignac 1937, 408; Milik 1958, 237-238; Healey 2001, 126-127.
[53] Healey 2001, 127; Nelson Glueck believed Hūrāwa's primary god was Dushara in the form of Zeus-Hadad (Glueck 1965, 86).
[54] Gawlikowski 1990, 2670.
[55] Teixidor 1977, 90.
[56] Starcky 1966, col. 998. Thamudic is a general term for those languages from North Arabia, including previously unidentified texts such as Lihyanite, Safaitic, Taymanitic, Dedantic, Hasaitic, Hismaic. The name "Thamudic" is a misnomer since the language may in fact have no relation to the Thamūd tribe, a pre-Islamic group that disappeared prior to the Islamic period (see MacDonald and King 2000 and Shahīd 2000).

following inscription dates to 1 BC/AD and describes the fine for desecrating a tomb or using it in any other way than was originally intended:

> (and) he will be liable to Dushara and Hubalu and to Manōtu in the sum of 5 *šamads*...[57]

Not much is known about the deity, but it is suggested that he is, in fact, a god since the final *–w* in his name generally represents a divine name.[58] Hubal is later represented in Islamic sources, especially by ibn al-Kalbī, who describes Hubal as a stone statue with a golden arm, worshipped in the Ka'bah at Mecca.[59]

Manāt

Manāt (also Manawatu or Manôtu, *mnwtw*), one of the more important Nabataean deities, is part of the female triad, which includes Allāt and al-'Uzzā, all of whom were worshipped into the Islamic period.[60] Manāt, whose name means "fate, portion, lot," represented no astral character[61] and is equated to the Greek goddess Nemesis.[62] Her name is incorporated into personal names, including those in Thamudic and Safaitic,[63] and she has strong associations with the Quran.[64] Recognized as a possible daughter of Allāh, Manāt was worshipped as an idol in Qudayd, near Mecca, by worshippers who

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[57] Healey 2001, 128.
[58] Healey 2001, 127.
[59] Ibn al-Kalbī, from Faris 1952, 23-24, sec. 28.
[60] See Ibn al-Kalbī's (d. AD 821/822) *Book of Idols* (Faris 1952), for an Islamic interpretation of these three deities; see also Ryckmans 1951, 14-16.
[61] Henninger 1981, 11.
[62] *CIS* 197-198.
[63] Healey 2001, 134.
[64] Gawlikowski 1990, 2668; Starcky 1966, 1001; Healey 2001, 134; Ryckmans 1951, 15.

shaved their heads following their pilgrimage.[65] This longevity in worship, from the Nabataeans to the Muslims, attests to the wide distribution of her followers. In the Classical period, evidence for her worship exists as far away as Dacia, where a Palmyrene dedicated a Latin inscription to her in AD 160.[66] Further evidence suggests that Palmyra was a worship center for Manāt, including a sanctuary dedicated to her in AD 89 and a Palmyrene *tessera* inscribed with her name and depicting the goddess seated while holding a scepter.[67]

Like Hubal, Manāt appears in several tomb inscriptions in Hegra. She is often placed alongside Dushara in curse inscriptions, suggesting a possible link between Manāt and Dushara in Hegra.[68] The goddess is also associated with another divine name in these inscriptions, her Qaysha (*qyš'*, *wqyšh*, *qyšh*). It is unknown if Qaysha is a deity or an epithet for Hubal, since Manāt and Hubal are also closely associated at Hegra. It is clear that Qaysha is a divine name based on a tomb inscription from Hegra:

> ...according to the copy of this deposited in the temple of *qyš'* [69]

This inscription suggests that Qaysha is a deity with his own place of worship. Other tomb inscriptions throughout Hegra suggest that Qaysha is a protector of tombs. It is unknown if Qaysha represents Hubal or not.[70]

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[65] Ibn al-Kalbī, from Faris 1952, 12-14, sec. 13-16.
[66] *CIL* 7954.
[67] Healey 2001, 135.
[68] Healey 2001, 133.
[69] Healey 2001, 136 (H 36:9); see also Starcky 1966, col. 1001.
[70] Healey 2001, 137.

Allāt and al-'Uzzā

The remaining goddesses of the female triad, Allāt and al-'Uzzā, are the most important Nabataean deities after Dushara and play key roles within the Nabataean pantheon. While Allāt and al-'Uzzā were recognized as two separate entities in the Islamic tradition, it is unknown if they were considered one deity or two in the Nabataean world.[71] It is possible that, in the Nabataean pantheon, Allāt and al-'Uzzā may represent two aspects of the same deity, especially since Allāt and al-'Uzzā both appear in inscriptions at 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh[72] and both are associated with different phases of the planet Venus.[73] According to Healey, Allāt and al-'Uzzā represented the same goddess whose name changed depending on place of worship. Al-'Uzzā's name, a female version of 'Azīzu, means "the mightiest" and may in fact be an epithet of Allāt.[74] Both goddesses are depicted as sisters in the Islamic period, each a separate entity.[75]

Allāt (*'ltw'*) enjoyed popularity throughout the Arab world, from southern Arabia to Palmyra, and particularly in Iram and the Hauran. Worship of this deity covers a broad area of the Near East, appearing in Akkadian, Palmyrene, Safaitic, Aramaic, and Nabataean texts.[76] She was associated with Athena throughout the Hauran region during the Roman period,[77] with the Syrian goddess Atargatis,[78] and, according to Herodotus, with Aphrodite-Ourania:

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[71] Teixidor 1977, 68-9.
[72] Healey 2001, 116.
[73] Henninger 1981, 11.
[74] Healey 2001, 114.
[75] Ibn al-Kalbī, from Faris 1952, 14-29, sec. 16-34; Taylor 2002, 128-132.
[76] Fahd 1986, 692; see also Ryckmans 1951, 15.
[77] Sourdel 1952, 69; Starcky 1966, col. 1001.
[78] Sourdel 1952, 73.

ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον 'Οροτάλτ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην 'Αλιλάτ.[79]

[The Arabians] call Dionysus, Orotalt; and [Aphrodite] Ourania, Alilat.[80]

The Arabic word *al-ilahat* and the Nabataean word *'lht(')*, both meaning "the goddess," are closely associated with Allāt's name, which may explain Herodotus' confusion.[81]

Sourdel describes Allāt as a "warrior goddess" in the tradition of Athena, "armed with a lance and in honor among the soldiers."[82] On an altar of unknown provenience dedicated by a veteran, Allāt appears wearing a cuirass and a high-crested helmet.[83] Regarding astral representations, Allāt and al-'Uzzā seem to represent the morning and evening phases of Venus.[84] Since the morning star, i.e., Venus, is thought to have a warrior aspect in pre-Islamic rituals, this helps to explain the association between Allāt and Athena.[85]

Though Allāt does not appear in any inscriptions at Bostra, coinage from the city depicts the goddess as Tyche of Bostra, suggesting that there was a cult center there.[86] Additionally, an inscription at 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh in Iram located beside a niche reads, "This is Allāt, the goddess who is in Bostra."[87] Other inscriptions in Iram and 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh refer to her as "the great goddess who is in Iram,"[88] placing her in the temple in Iram.[89] Her largest cult center was in the Hauran region at Salkhad, where a temple was

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[79] Herodotus III. 8.
[80] Trans. Godley 1921.
[81] Sourdel 1952, 69; Healey 2001, 113.
[82] Sourdel 1952, 73.
[83] Sourdel 1952, 73. The altar appears in Suweida, but its provenience is unknown (Sourdel 1952, 73, n. 3).
[84] Henninger 1981, 11.
[85] Teixidor 1977, 69.
[86] Sourdel 1952, 72; Kindler 1983, 57-8.
[87] Healey 2001, 110, from Savignac 1933, 411-412: n. 2.
[88] Healey 2001, 110; Iram is the ancient name for Wadi Ramm (also appears as Wadi Rum).
[89] Zayadine and Farés-Drappeau 1998.

constructed around AD 65.[90] It is interesting to note that despite her importance Allāt does not appear in any inscription at Petra, the capital of Nabataea, though she may be associated with a statue of Athena found at the Qasr al-Bint *temenos* gate.[91]

The relationship between Allāt and Dushara is unclear. One inscription describes the goddess as "the mother of the gods of our lord Rabbel."[92] Since Dushara is frequently described as "the god of our lord Rabbel," this would suggest a possible hierarchy among the gods and that Allāt was Dushara's mother rather than his wife.[93] Additionally, the pairing of several betyls into one niche may point to familial relationships among the deities, but without further epigraphic proof, this suggestion can only be speculative.[94]

The last major deity, if in fact separate from Allāt, is al-'Uzzā (*'l'z'*, *'l'zy'*), the patron goddess of Petra. Al-'Uzzā's name, a female version of the divine name 'Azīzu, means "the mightiest one" and is first attested in Lihyanite[95] inscriptions from the 4th or 3rd century BC.[96] Throughout the Nabataean kingdom, the goddess is generally represented as a betyl, often with stylized, semi-anthropomorphic features, including a stemmed, vertical nose and starry eyes.[97] The goddess is also frequently associated with two foreign deities, Aphrodite and Isis, particularly at Petra. Evidence for identification

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[90] Taylor 2002, 130; Sourdel 1952, 73.
[91] Zayadine 1989, 119.
[92] Sourdel 1952, 73; Healey 2001, 109.
[93] Healey 2001, 109-110; see also Wenning and Merklein 1997, 106.
[94] Healey 2001, 81-82.
[95] Lihyanite refers to the texts of the Lihyān people of early Arabia, concentrated primarily in northern Saudi Arabia (see Drewes and Levi della Vida 1986).
[96] Taylor 2002, 130; see also Sourdel 1952, 74.
[97] Starcky 1966, col. 994; Gawlikowski 1990, 2665-2666.

with Aphrodite can be found in a bilingual Nabataean and Greek inscription from the island of Cos, ca. AD 9:

ll'z' 'lht' // θεᾶι 'Αφροδίτη

To the goddess al-'Uzzā // To the goddess Aphrodite[98]

This inscription reveals that the worship of al-'Uzzā reached outside the Nabataean realm into the Mediterranean. Al-'Uzzā also figures prominently throughout Petra, where a cult of Isis is known to have existed.[99]

During the majority of the Nabataean period, it appears that al-'Uzzā was primarily associated with Petra; however, in the later years of the Nabataean period, the goddess appears elsewhere, including Bostra and 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram. A Nabataean inscription from Bostra reads:

Taymu bar Badru, for al-'Uzzā, goddess of Bostra.[100]

This suggests that al-'Uzzā's following at Bostra could have grown in importance to equal that of Petra, or it may indicate that, following the transfer of the capital from Petra to Bostra and the fall of the Nabataean kingdom to the Romans, al-'Uzzā's worship center moved as well.[101]

Within the Nabataean pantheon, al-'Uzzā has several connections with other deities. As previously mentioned, al-Kutbā and al-'Uzzā are represented as neighboring betyls in the rock sanctuary of 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram, where they are associated as

[98] Rosenthal 1939, 91, n. 4; Levi della Vida 1938; Healey 2001, 116-117.
[99] Taylor 2002, 130-131.
[100] *RES* 2091.
[101] Healey 2001, 115.

Mercury and Venus.[102] At Petra some inscriptions to al-'Uzzā appear near those of Dushara, leading scholars to believe that the two deities were husband and wife in the Petraean cult.[103] The relationship between Allāt and al-'Uzzā also remains unclear.

The Nabataeans not only worshipped their own deities, but incorporated foreign deities into their pantheon. Foreign deities never replaced any Nabataean deity, but were merely additions to the pantheon.[104] As previously mentioned, Atargatis and Isis are the main foreign goddesses, often associated with Allāt and al-'Uzzā respectively, but another major foreign deity is Baalshamin, the Syrian "Lord of Heaven" whose history dates back to the second millennium BC.[105] Baalshamin is often associated with the Syro-Mesopotamian storm-god Hadad and, in the Roman period, is identified with Zeus,[106] thus, perhaps linking him with Dushara.[107] Baalshamin enjoyed a wide following, with inscriptions appearing in the Hauran, Bostra, Iram, and possibly in Gaia, outside of Petra.[108]

Not only did Nabataeans worship divinities, but there is some evidence of ruler cult, as well. The primary example of a ruler being deified is King Obodas III,[109] the Nabataean king reigning from 30-9 BC.[110] Within the texts, the divinity appears as 'Obodat ('*bdt*), which may represent King Obodas III. An inscription from AD 20

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[102] Starcky 1966, col. 1003.
[103] Milik and Starcky 1975, 126; Zayadine 1979, 185-197.
[104] Healey 2001, 83.
[105] Healey 2001, 124.
[106] Sourdel 1952, 21-27.
[107] There is little evidence linking Baalshamin and Dushara. See Healey 2001, 126, and Teixidor 1977, 83.
[108] Healey 2001, 124-126; Gawlikowski 1990, 2670. Some scholars wish to prove that the Qasr al-Bint in Petra was dedicated to Baalshamin based on a dedication to Zeus Hypsistos, an epithet often associated with Baalshamin (see Taylor 2002, 105).
[109] Obodas III is often called Obodas II in texts (Healey 2001, 150).

linking 'Obodat to King Aretas IV and other members of the royal family would point to this interpretation.[111] In addition to the worship of 'Obodat, there is also the syncretized deity Zeus Obodas, referred to in several inscriptions in Oboda into the 3rd century AD.[112] It also appears that Dushara and 'Obodat were associated with one another.[113]

Dushara

Evidence strongly suggests that Dushara was the head of the Nabataean pantheon and the Nabataean state. Inscriptions repeatedly refer to him as the god of the king, placing him above the Nabataean ruler as the supreme being of the Nabataean state. Though the rest of the Nabataean pantheon enjoyed regional popularity, Dushara is the only deity to have clear ties throughout the entire Nabataean realm, as well as outside the kingdom. Appearing aniconically and anthropomorphically, Dushara's imagery appears in various sanctuaries and on coinage. His close ties with the royal family gave him exceeding power, above and beyond the rest of the pantheon, but his existence seemingly would have relied heavily on the prosperity of the Nabataean state.[114]

It is unclear if the name Dushara is the actual name of the deity, or if it is merely an epithet of the god. Strictly speaking, the name Dushara (*dwšr'*) means "the one (i.e., Lord) of ash-Sharā", referring to the ash-Sharā mountain range located near Petra

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[110] Hammond 1973, 103-104; Negev 1986a, 107-108, 111-112. Some scholars believe '*bdt* represents King Obodas I (Starcky 1966, col. 972; Bowersock 1983, 62-63).
[111] *CIS* II, 354; Milik 1959, 559-560; Dijkstra 1995, 57-60; Healey 2001, 148.
[112] Millar 1993, 421; Negev 1986b, 59-60.
[113] See below.
[114] Knauf states that a tribe could not exist without its deity, therefore, Dushara and the Nabataean state enter a codependent relationship in which both rely on the other for survival (Knauf 1989, 58-59).

between the Wadi el-Ġuwēr and Rās an-Naqb in Jordan.[115] The name suggests that Dushara originates from southern Jordan and served as the region's primary deity. According to Gawlikowski, since Dushara is "the one of ash-Sharā," the ash-Sharā range should be considered *himâ* or *haram* during the pre-Islamic period, indicating a sacred space that provides protection for trees, animals, and even fugitives.[116] With the cultural expansion of the Nabataeans during the late Hellenistic period, Dushara's worship spread throughout the Mediterranean and is mentioned occasionally by Greek and Latin authors. In Greek, Dushara appears as *Δουσάρης* and in Latin as Dusares. By the Islamic period, the name was written dhu-al-Shara, reflecting the deity's geographical roots.[117]

Perhaps Dushara's most important association, and thus the most politically sensitive, is that with the royal family. Inscriptions frequently linked Dushara with the Nabataean king. Popular epithets for the king were "lord" or "our lord," as seen in the following tomb inscription in Nabataean from Hegra:

> And whoever does other than what is written above shall be liable to the god Dushara regarding the inviolability referred to above, for the full price of a thousand Haretite sela's, and to our lord King Haretat for the same amount.[118]

The inscription, dating to the early 1st century AD, refers to King Aretas IV in his kingly epithet of "lord." Dushara is generally referred to as "god of our lord (the king)."[119] When he is not necessarily named, we may assume it is Dushara by this epigraphic

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[115] Starcky 1966, col. 986; Knauf 1989, 59; Healey 2001, 87; Teixidor suggests that "Sharā" may also refer to a tribal name (Teixidor, 1977, 83). See also Ryckmans 1965, 246.
[116] Gawlikowski 1990, 2663; see also Gawlikowski 1982.
[117] Healey 2001, 87; see also Ibn al-Kalbī 1952, 33.
[118] *CIS* II, 199; Healey 1993, H 1: 6-9.
[119] See Dijktra 1995, 310-314.

formula, which generally precedes either Aretas IV or Rabbel II.[120] An example of this formula is seen in the following inscription from a Hegran tomb, and dating to the early or mid-1st century AD to the reign of King Aretas IV[121]:

> And none shall be buried in this tomb except by hereditary title, nor shall this tomb be sold nor given in pledge. And whoever does other than what is above shall be liable to Dushara, the god of our lord, in the sum of a thousand Haretite (sela's).[122]

Another inscription following a similar formula from Hegra describes the legal nature of tomb usage, and dates to approximately AD 30:

> And none at all of Su'aydu and his brothers, males, and their sons and their descendants has the right to sell this tomb or write a deed of gift or anything else for anyone at all, except if one of them writes for his wife or for his daughters or for a father-in-law or for a son-in-law a document for burial only. And anyone who does other than this will be liable for a fine to Dushara the god of our lord in the sum of five hundred Haretite sela's and to our lord for the same amount, according to the copy of this deposited in the temple of Qaysha.[123]

In the Hauran region, an inscription from Imtan dating to AD 93 describes Dushara, assimilated with the local deity A'ra, as the "god of our lord, (god) who is in Bostra."[124] Not only does this inscription suggest the deity's close association with the Nabataean royal family, but it attests to the wide distribution of this epigraphic formula.[125]

Dushara also appears in a legend on a silver coin of Obodas III in 16 BC, linking Dushara to the royal house.[126] The obverse of the coin features a laureate King Obodas with his name appearing in the legend. On the reverse a veiled queen is depicted, but the

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[120] Healey 2001, 154.
[121] Healey 1993, 195.
[122] Healey 1993, H 28: 2-6.
[123] Healey 1993, H 36: 6-9.
[124] *RES* § 83; translation from Healey 2001, 63.
[125] Healey 1993, 227-229.
[126] Healey 2001, 154.

legend reads "Benedictions by Dushara." Stephanus of Byzantium of the 6th century AD notes that King Obodas III was deified and since the coin was minted approximately 6 years prior to Obodas' death, the legend on the reverse of the coin suggests the king's favor among the gods.[127] Also, in Tertullian's *Ad Nationes*, dating to the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD, and in the Syriac version of Epiphanius' *Panarion* dating to the late 4th/early 5th centuries AD, "Dusares and Obodos" are mentioned as deities worshipped by the "Arabians."[128] Though this association seems to be linked only primarily with the settlement of Oboda, it indicates Dushara's link with a Nabataean ruler. Since the deified King Obodas III is associated with Oboda, this assimilation may have been a way for the inhabitants of Oboda to elevate the status of their city's deity 'Obodat.[129]

A major indication of the importance of Dushara to the royal house is the transfer of the deity from Petra to Bostra during the capital's move under King Rabbel II.[130] Not only does this move suggest a more sedentarized economy in Bostra versus the old caravan-based trade of Petra, but it also sedentarizes Dushara in an area known for its agricultural production. The king also forms ties between Dushara and Bostra, assimilating the god with A'ra, a local Syrian deity.[131] The link between these two deities seems strong during the 1st century AD, especially under the reign of Rabbel II, as an earlier inscription of Malichus I in the mid-1st century BC mentions A'ra only, with no

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[127] Schmitt-Korte 1990, 110, no. 19. The text in Stephanus' *Ethnika* is as follows: *Ὄβοδα, χωρίον Ναβαταίων. Οὐράνιος Ἀραβικῶν τετάρτῳ "ὅπου Ὀβόδης ὁ βασιλεύς, ὃν θεοποιοῦσι, τέθαπται."*: Oboda, a place of the Nabataeans. Ouranius in the fourth *Arabika* says, "Where King Obodas, whom they deified, was buried." (Stephanus, "*Ὄβοδα*"; Meineke 1958, 482; Healey 2001, 149).
[128] Tertullian *Ad Nationes*, ii. 8. See Healey 2001, 147-151.
[129] Millar 1993, 421; Negev 1986b, 56-60.
[130] Teixidor 1977, 85.
[131] Dijkstra 1995, 312.

identification with Dushara.[132] This move by Rabbel II indicates the king's wish to shape the idea of Dushara as the Nabataean national god and make Dushara his own, within his own city.

With the move of Dushara from Petra to Bostra and his assimilation with a local Bostran deity, we may also expect offerings to the deity to appear in Bostra. Since Dushara is frequently referred to as "the god of our lord (the king)," it is possible that the royal family benefited from such offerings, which may explain the abundance of inscriptions linking the god with the royal family.[133] The royal family may automatically have become the physical beneficiaries of gifts and offerings to the god, and the dedicators would thus "express their allegiance to the royal house."[134] This provided Dushara with a key political role in the Nabataean state, placing him higher than any other deity. Due to this role, however, Dushara's place at the head of the state felt much pressure during the Roman annexation under Trajan in AD 106. With the fall of the Nabataean king, the person with which Dushara was the most closely associated, Dushara's worship theoretically would have been altered in some way. Thus, analysis of the transition into the Roman period is important in understanding how the role of Dushara changed within the Nabataean pantheon.

As the head of the Nabataean pantheon, closely tied with the Nabataean state as a whole, Dushara was frequently assimilated with various deities, both Semitic and non-Semitic. With the transfer of the Nabataean king and his capital from Petra to Bostra,

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[132] Bowersock 1983, 73.
[133] Dijkstra 1995, 313.
[134] Dijkstra 1995, 313.

King Rabbel II relocated the cult of Dushara as well. It was in Bostra that Dushara was assimilated with the local god A'ra, a relationship that is perhaps the most well-known since the name "Dushara-A'ra" made its way onto many inscriptions and coins from the city of Bostra. This assimilation is also preserved, though incorrectly, in the 10th century AD Byzantine *Suda* lexicon, in which the Nabataeans are believed to have worshipped the Greek god of war Ares, written as "*Θεὸς Ἄρης*." This in fact may have been a misinterpretation of Dushara's name and his association with A'ra, written as "*Αρρα*."[135]

Several inscriptions attest to the link between Dushara and A'ra. An example from Hegra, which dates to around AD 39/40, reads:

> This stele Shakūhu bar Tūrā made for A'ra who is in Bosra, god of Rabel; in the month of Nisan, the first year of king Maliku.[136]

Several things are particularly interesting with this inscription. First, A'ra, not Dushara, is named as the god of Rabbel. Also of note, this inscription was created during the reign of King Malichus II, King Rabbel II's predecessor, thus the Rabbel in the inscription could refer to Rabbel I or Rabbel II, prior to his accession to the throne as there is no reference to a kingly status.[137] Nevertheless, because of Dushara's known link with A'ra, it can be assumed that Dushara is understood as well.[138]

By AD 93, Dushara's roots are firmly planted in Bostra in connection with A'ra, as seen in an inscription from Imtan in the Hauran:

> This stele Mun'at bar Gadiyu dedicated to Dushara-A'ra, god of our lord, (god) who is in Bosra.[139]

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[135] *Suda*, from Adler 1931, II: 713.
[136] Healey 2001, 98, from Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 204-206: n. 39.
[137] See Dijkstra 1995, 310-314, and Bowersock 1983, 72-73.
[138] Starcky 1966, cols. 988-990; Dijkstra 1995, 310-314; Healey 2001, 98.
[139] Healey 2001, 98, from *RES* § 83.

This inscription is the first firmly dated inscription associating Dushara with A'ra.[140] Here Dushara-A'ra is also closely linked with the king, known by his epithet as "lord." The king during this time would have been Rabbel II.[141]

A'ra also makes an appearance in Greek in a bilingual inscription, also written in Nabataean, from Umm al-Jimal:

> *Μασεχος Αουειδανου Δουσαρει Αρρα*
>
> This is the stele Mashiku bar 'Awīdā made for Dushara (Greek: Dushara/A'ra)[142]

The inscription, located on an altar, is of unknown date. Interestingly, the Greek text assimilates Dushara with A'ra, but not the Nabataean text.[143]

Another major deity of the Nabataean pantheon is the enigmatic figure Rudā, who is often associated with Dushara. Some scholars believe that Dushara is Rudā, but this seems unlikely since Rudā appears in no Nabataean inscriptions during any period, nor does the deity appear in any personal names in the region. If Dushara is in fact Rudā, the main god of the Nabataean pantheon, it seems likely that Rudā would appear in at least some epigraphic sources.[144] Another major component in this argument is the question of Rudā's gender. Several inscriptions and texts insinuate that Rudā may in fact be female. In some Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions, Rudā is followed by female verb forms or

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[140] Starcky 1966, col. 988.
[141] Bowersock 1983, 73; Dijkstra 1995, 310-314.
[142] Healey 2001, 98, from Littmann 1914, 34-35: no. 38; 1909, 383-386: no. V.
[143] Starcky 1966, col. 988.
[144] Healey 2001, 94.

words, such as "lady," that would suggest Rudā is female.[145] Some scholars believe that Rudā may have both female and male aspects.[146]

It has often been suggested that Dushara and Shay' al-Qawm may each represent different aspects of Rudā. A notable division possibly exists between Dushara and Shay' al-Qawm concerning alcohol and the nomadic lifestyle. Shay' al-Qawm abstains from alcohol and is generally associated with caravans and nomadic peoples, as the "protector of the people" or "protector of the clan."[147] In contrast, Dushara is often associated with the Greek god of wine, Dionysus, particularly in the agricultural region of the Hauran.[148] This connection with Dionysus links Dushara to alcohol use and, therefore, is a characteristic that distinguishes him from from Shay' al-Qawm. According to Knauf, this adoption of wine consumption may have been introduced to the Dushara cult by Hellenistic settlers, suggesting then a division between sedentary inhabitants of villages and cities, with their fixed temples, and those living on the outskirts of settlements and in the desert, with their moveable shrines.[149] Patrich, however, believes that neither deity was associated with wine consumption and that Dushara was connected with the cult of the dead and resurrection, along with Dionysus and Osiris.[150] Interestingly, this division between the two deities may represent two separate aspects of Rudā, Shay' al-Qawm as

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[145] *CIS* V, 5011; Healey 2001, 95.
[146] Littmann 1940, 106-107. Some inscriptions have female figures carved next to them, which may suggest Rudā is female, but Winnett and Reed propose that this may indicate a male's interest in the female body (Winnett and Reed 1970, 75-76).
[147] Sourdel 1952, 81.
[148] See below for discussion on Dushara's assimilation with Dionysus.
[149] Knauf 1990, 177-178.
[150] Patrich 2005, 103-113.

the warrior and Dushara representing fertility.[151] Nevertheless, if indeed Rudā is female, this would negate the argument that Shay' al-Qawm and Dushara are aspects of Rudā.

Greco-Roman Associations

Greco-Roman deities also played a large part in the Nabataean pantheon through their assimilation with gods and goddesses. Dushara is associated with Zeus (sometimes as Zeus-Hadad), Dionysus, and Helios. His assimilation with Zeus seems natural since both are the main gods of their respective pantheons.[152] Evidence for this pairing can be found on a bilingual inscription (Greek with fragmentary Nabataean) from Miletus:

> *Συλλ]αῖος, ἀδελφὸς βασιλ[έως,*
> *ὑπὲρ βασιλέως 'Οβόδα]*
> *ἀνέθηκε· Διὶ Δου[σάρηι Σωτῆρι*
>
> Syllaeus, brother of the king,
> on behalf of king Obodas,
> dedicated to Zeus Dusares Soter[153]

The inscription most likely dates to the end of the 1st century BC based on the references to Syllaeus and to Obodas as king.[154]

Though Dushara and Zeus seem like a likely pair, relatively few inscriptions exist connecting them.[155] The most well-attested Greco-Roman assimilation is that between Dushara and Dionysus. Several ancient writers, including Herodotus from the 5th century BC, Strabo from the 1st century AD, and lexicographer Hesychius from the 5th century

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[151] Knauf 1990, 178. Whether they are assocated with Rudā or not, Patrich believes Dushara and Shay' al-Qawm are the same deity (Patrich 2005, 103).
[152] Starcky 1966, col. 990; Teixidor 1977, 82-85.
[153] Kawerau and Rehm 1914, 387-389: no. 165; trans. from Healey 2001, 101; see also Cantineau II, 45-56.
[154] Josephus (*JA* 16: 284) and Strabo (*Geo.* 16.4.24) make references to Syllaeus and his Roman travels from the 1st century BC (see Dijkstra 1995, 71).

AD, describe Dionysus as one of the gods which the "Arabs" worshipped.[156] Some scholars believe the association with Dionysus marks Dushara's full transition, from the desert nomad to the sedentarized Hellenized deity.[157] This association may be influenced by the region in which the imagery of Dushara-Dionysus appears, namely the Hauran, a region which is known for its agricultural production including grapes. Thus wine may link Dushara and Dionysus together.[158] Some temples in the region, including that at Si', have been attributed tentatively to the worship of Dushara as Dionysus. Sourdel believes that grape and vine imagery appearing in this area must necessarily be associated with Dionysus, but Starcky discredits this hypothesis for lack of clear evidence for the worship of either Dushara *or* Dionysus.[159] Another form of evidence is numismatic, including a coin of Commodus depicting Dushara anthropomorphically with "Dionysiac" imagery; however, some scholars believe that this imagery is not Greco-Roman in nature, but connected with the imagery of earlier Nabataean kings.[160] Many of these associations between Dushara and Dionysus derive specifically from the northern section of the

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[155] Taylor 2002, 125.

[156] Herodotus III. 8; Strabo 16.1.11; for Hesychius, see Latte 1953, 475; see also Cook 1940, 912, n. 1. See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of these ancient texts. It should be noted that ancient authors often used the term "Arab" to describe indigenous people from the area east and south of the Dead Sea. Whether or not this term refers to one of Nabataean origin is generally uncertain, but clues often lead us to associate the two.

[157] Glueck 1965, 313. This argument, however, does not explain Herodotus' source (III. 8), in which Dionysus is named as a major deity of the "Arabs," since sedentarization had not yet occurred (Patrich 2005, 102).

[158] Patrich believes that wine is not associated with Dushara and that any connection between him and Dionysus (and including Osiris) is related to the cult of the dead and resurrection (Patrich 2005, 112).

[159] Sourdel 1952, 63-64; Starcky 1966, col. 990. Also, only the southern portion of the Hauran was controlled by the Nabataeans, so vine and grape imagery that may appear is not necessarily representative of Nabataean culture (Patrich 2005, 98).

[160] See Hill 1922, xxvi, pl. xlix: 13. Numismatic evidence will be discussed below in Chapter 5. For Nabataean king imagery on coins, see Bowersock 1990.

kingdom and do not necessarily represent the beliefs and rituals from the whole of Nabataea or Arabia, so the evidence must be approached with caution.[161]

The other major Greco-Roman deity assimilated with Dushara is Helios, the sun god. Strabo indicates in his *Geography* that the Nabataeans worshipped the sun on their rooftop altars and Dushara is described as *anikêtos* in an inscription from Suweida.[162] Also, a Hegran tomb inscription describes a god "who separates night from day," but it is not known if this specifically refers to Dushara.[163] If this inscription does refer to Dushara, as many scholars believe it may, this further suggests Dushara as a supreme god, a creator god, separating him from the rest of the Nabataean pantheon.[164] Nevertheless, there appears to be some form of sun worship among the Nabataeans, which would not be unlikely since Arabs of the Greco-Roman period contributed to the spread of a sun cult.[165] Also, many Near Eastern gods are often associated with the sun.[166] If Helios is assimiliated to any one god among the Nabataean pantheon, it seems likely that it would be Dushara.[167]

Epigraphic Evidence and the Geographical Distribution of Dushara's Worship

Inscriptions are the main source of evidence for Dushara, as well as for other Nabataean gods. This evidence is key in determining specific geographical locations

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[161] Healey 2001, 100-101. Sartre believes any association between Dushara and Dionysus to be erroneous (Sartre 2005, 529-530, n. 78).
[162] Strabo 16.4.26; Sourdel 1952, 65.
[163] Healey 1993, H 2:4.
[164] Teixidor 1977, 85.
[165] Teixidor 1977, 49.
[166] Healey 2001, 102-103.
[167] Sourdel does not believe that Dushara was assimilated with Helios (Sourdel 1952, 65-68).

where Dushara was worshipped, which usually lie along trade routes, but it also reveals Dushara's prominence among the other gods of the pantheon.[168] When listing gods and goddesses in inscriptions, such as the tomb inscriptions from Hegra, the Nabataeans often used a formula of naming Dushara first, followed by "and all the gods":

> Whoever opens it for himself or removes her from this burial-niche for ever shall be liable to our lord Haretat, King of the Nabataeans, lover of his people, in the sum of a thousand Haretite sela's. And may Dushara, the god of our lord, and all the gods curse whoever removes this Wushush from this burial-niche for ever. And may the curse of Dushara and all the gods bear witness to this.[169]

This particular style of tomb curse not only emphasizes the legal implications of desecrating a tomb, but the invocation of Dushara and the other gods further indicates the importance of the tomb's inviolability.[170] Another example is the Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription from Petra:

> ...and all the rest of the property which is in these places are sacred and dedicated to Dushara, the god of our lord, and his sacred throne and all the gods, (as) in the documents of consecration according to their contents. And it is the responsibility of Dushara and his throne and all the gods that it should be done as in these documents of consecration and nothing of all that is in them shall be changed or removed and none shall be buried in this tomb except whoever has written for him an authroization for burial in these documents of consecration for ever.[171]

Like the Hegran tomb inscription, the Turkmāniyyeh inscription from the 1st century AD follows the formula of invoking Dushara "and all the gods" for the protection of the tomb.[172] But some inscriptions list individual deities, after Dushara:

> And may Dushara and Manotu and her Qaysha curse anyone who sells this tomb or buys it or gives it in pledge...[173]

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[168] Hammond 1973, 94.
[169] *CIS* II, 211; Healey 1993, H 11: 6-8. Wushush is named earlier in the inscription as the name of the woman buried.
[170] Healey 1993, 136.
[171] *CIS* II, 350: 3-4; Milik 1959; Healey 1993, 238; see also McKenzie 1990, 35.
[172] Starcky 1966, col. 931.

> And may Dushara and his throne and Allat of 'Amnad and Manotu and her Qaysha curse anyone who sells this tomb or buys it or gives it in pledge . . . And whoever does not act according to what is written above shall be liable to Dushara and Hubalu and to Manotu in the sum of 5 *šamads*...[174]
>
> Whoever sells this grave, may the curse of Dushara, [of Hubal], and of Manāt be upon him.[175]

Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions also often mention Dushara and other Nabataean deities in invocations.[176] Some Safaitic inscriptions mentioning Dushara date as late as the 5th and 6th centuries AD, indicating that his cult continued, at least among the nomadic tribes, well into the Roman period.[177]

While it is clear that Dushara was the head of the Nabataean pantheon, his relative absence in theophoric names is notable, particularly when compared to other Nabataean deities, such as al-Kutbā and Allāt.[178] Though theophoric names may reflect more tradition than a distinct following for a deity,[179] logically Dushara, as the head of the pantheon, should appear in a greater number of names, but he appears in very few.[180] Some Greek names related to Dushara do exist, though, coming primarily from the northern sector of the Nabataean kingdom. These names include *Αβδισαρου* from Bostra, *Αβδισαρ* from Tell Ghariyé, *Θ[ε]ιμοδου[σαρους]* from Mouseifiré, *Θε[ιμ]αδουσαι‹ρ›ους* from

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[173] *CIS* II, 197; Healey 1993, H 8.
[174] *CIS* II, 198; Healey 1993, H 16.
[175] Cooke 1903, 113, n. 5.
[176] Knauf 1990, 175.
[177] Patrich 2005, 98.
[178] Healey 2001, 23; see also Negev 1991.
[179] Hawting 1999, 117. Hawting also states that theophoric names cannot be used solely to determine the presence of pre-Islamic cults, since traditional Muslim scholars may have changed the pagan and idolatrous names to reflect Allāh instead (Hawting 1999, 117-118, n. 21).
[180] Healey 2001, 23.

Umm al-Jimal, and *Θεμοδουσαρου* of unknown provenience from the Hauran.[181] Nabataean examples include only two names, *'Abddushara* and *Taymdushara*.[182] Additionally, two Christian inscriptions from the 3rd century AD at Bostra reveal an individual named *Δουσάριος*.[183] The question remains how a god that figures so prominently in the pantheon could remain so elusive in theophoric names.[184] Dushara may in fact be reflected in some names, but not necessarily in the traditional sense. Hundreds of names contain words such as "god", "high", "most high", or "lord", words that may have been used as epithets of Dushara.[185] This may suggest that the deity referred to in these theophoric names was prominent enough not to be named. This idea is plausible, but should be approached with caution since Dushara is never fully identified in these names.

The northern limits of Dushara's worship in the eastern Empire seem to have been the Auranitis and middle Batanaea of the Hauran, just to the north of Bostra (fig. 3).[186] The southernmost limit is Hegra, with evidence of Dushara's worship seen in tomb inscriptions.[187] The main settlement associated with Dushara is Gaia/el-Jī (modern Wadi Musa), situated on Petra's doorstep. Several inscriptions attest to the presence of Dushara at Gaia, including an AD 87/88 inscription from Oboda ('Avdat in Israel) and an AD 44/45 inscription from al-Jawf (in northwest Saudi Arabia), both reading "Dushara,

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[181] Sourdel 1952, 61, n. 7-12. Note that Sourdel's publication which cites these Greek theophoric names provides no accents, perhaps reflecting the nature of the original inscriptions.
[182] Healey 2001, 23; see also Ryckmans 1965, 247.
[183] Sourdel 1952, 61; Cumont 1926, 318-319, 399-400.
[184] See Negev 1986a, 16.
[185] Most of these examples derive from the Sinai peninsula following the Nabataean period (Healey 2001, 23-24).
[186] Sourdel 1952, 59, 123-124; Hammond 1973, 94.

god of Gaia."[188] Al-Kutbā is also associated with Gaia, thus pointing to a possible connection between the two deities and raising questions as to the importance of Gaia as a settlement.[189] A Greek inscription from the Hauran at the site of Sammet el-Baradan describes "the god of Gaia":

> *Ἰλααλγη καὶ τῷ ἀνγέλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰδαρουμᾳ*
>
> To Ilah-al-Gē and his angel Idaruma[190]

The inscription refers to the god of Gaia with his angel, a figure that is unattested elsewhere, but it is unclear if this refers to Dushara or al-Kutbā.[191] Also located in Gaia at the entrance to the Siq (Petra's main entranceway) is an inscription reading "Dushara, god of Manbatu."[192] This name is found only in Gaia, which may suggest some association with Dushara's cult, but it is unknown if the name refers to a place or a personal name.[193]

Another inscription describes Dushara as the "god of Madrasa," further linking Dushara to the Petra region:

> Remembered be Wahbu bar Qūmu and his mother, PN, for good before Dushara, the god of Madrasa.[194]

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[187] See Healey 1993.
[188] Negev 1963, 113-117, n. 10:3; Savignac and Starcky 1957, 198: 2-3; see also Dijkstra 1995, 310.
[189] Healey 2001, 90. Some scholars have argued that Gaia was the settlement associated with the uninhabited Petra (see Negev 1988, 33-35).
[190] Milik 1972, 428-432, pl. xv, 1); Healey 2001, 90; Teixidor 1977, 91-92.
[191] Healey believes the inscription refers to Dushara (Healey 2001, 90).
[192] *RES* § 1432; Niehr 1998, 221; Healey 2001, 90.
[193] Healey 2001, 90.
[194] *CIS* II, 443; Healey 2001, 91.

This inscription possibly refers to al-Madras, a mountain south of the Siq at Petra which seems to have been of religious significance. Other inscriptions dedicated to Dushara were also found on al-Madras.[195]

In Petra there are approximately 15 to 19 high places, many of which may be associated with the worship of Dushara, based on the presence of betyls and the simplicity of architecture atop each space.[196] Betyls and various other niches also appear along the walls of the Siq, the long, narrow, water-cut channel used as the road into Petra, connecting Gaia to Petra. Additionally, the temple of Qasr al-Bint along the colonnaded street may have been dedicated to Dushara and al-'Uzzā in their Greek forms of Zeus and Aphrodite.[197] The association with Dushara is based on two inscriptions. The first is an inscription fragment naming Zeus Hypsistos, and the second is from the *temenos* of the temple and is dedicated to *Ζεὺς Ἅγιος*-Dushara.[198]

Inscriptional evidence links Dushara to the site of Hawara/Auara (modern Humayma) as well. Hawara is located between Petra and Aila (modern 'Aqaba) and sits at the base of the Sharā mountain range in the Hismā desert. Several betyls and altars appear at the site and its environs, suggesting a possible cult site for Nabataean deities. An inscription located at the base of Jebel Qalkhah, the mountain closest to the ancient site, reads "Servant of al-Hawar."[199] This may be expanded to read "Servant of (the God

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[195] Healey 2001, 91. One inscription on al-Madras dedicated to Dushara was commissioned on behalf of King Aretas IV around AD 7 or 8. See *CIS* 442 and Dijkstra 1995, 54-55.
[196] Hammnond 1973, 99. For an example of a cultic high place, see Robinson 1901.
[197] Zayadine 1986, 243, 245; Parr 1967-68, 18.
[198] For a detailed discussion of findings at Petra, see Chapter 4.
[199] See Graf 1997; see also Healey 2001, 91.

of) al-Hawar."[200] With the site's close proximity to the Sharā mountain range, the proposed home of Dushara, and the presence of betyls throughout the site, the main god of Hawara may in fact be Dushara.[201]

Though clearly a key deity in Bostra, the actual location of Dushara's cult center is unclear; therefore, we must rely on epigraphic and numismatic evidence. In addition to appearing on numerous inscriptions throughout the city, Dushara is depicted on several coins, both aniconically and anthropomorphically.[202] Dushara is also revered at Bostra through a series of games called the *Actia Dusaria*, celebrating the Battle of Actium and Dushara throughout the city quadrennially in the 3rd century AD.[203]

Other major sites throughout the kingdom include Adraa, Hūrāwa (Khirbet et-Tannur), Khirbet edh-Dharih, Iram (Wadi Ramm), and Hegra. Adraa, located northwest of Bostra, minted coins depicting Dushara is the form of a dome-shaped betyl.[204] The Adraans are also known for their pilgrimmages to Petra to make ritual offerings to Dushara, as suggested by the presence of Adraan-style betyls carved in niches along the Sīq.[205] Additionally Hūrāwa is one of the more important sites in the list, since it existed solely as a temple complex with no surrounding village.[206] The temple at Hūrāwa seems to be connected to Qōs, possibly linked with Dushara, and Atargatis, who may be assimilated with Allāt. According to Ball, the temple at Hūrāwa may have served as a

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[200] Healey 2001, 91-92.
[201] Graf 1997, 75. Graf also believes that the god may be Qōs as well, though he assimilates the two deities (see Graf 1997, 75).
[202] Healey 2001, 99; see also Hill 1922, Cook 1940, 908.
[203] Sourdel 1952, 68; see also Healey 2001, 99; see Chapters 4 and 5 for *Actia Dusaria*.
[204] Coinage will be discussed later in Chapter 5; see Hill 1922, xxvii; Sourdel 1952, 60.
[205] Sourdel 1952, 60; see Chapter 5 for discussion of betyls.
[206] Glueck 1965, 47-48.

national shrine on a pilgrimmage route, with the temple of Khirbet edh-Dharih, located a few miles south, serving as a stopping point.[207] Evidence at other minor sites suggests the presence of a Dushara cult and/or a temple; for example, inscriptional evidence attests to three priests at Meshqouq erecting a temple to Dushara in AD 207 and other inscriptions at Imtan and Suweida in the Hauran could suggest the presence of temples to Dushara.[208] There is also a base of a statue believed to be for Dushara and a small temple located at Si'; however, there is no firm evidence for Dushara worship at this site.[209]

But Dushara is attested outside of the Nabataean realm as well. An inscription in a museum at Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh, Egypt, dating to 34 B.C., reads:

> This is the (quadrangular) shrine which Wahb'alahi . . . made to (the honor of) Dushares the god who is in Daphne (as it is known) in the Egyptian language.[210]

Daphne may correspond to Tell ed-Defenneh, Egypt, which is southwest of Pelusium, located at the eastern base of the Nile delta. It is assumed that the presence of Dushara here may be associated with trade connections.[211] Though there is another settlement by the name of Daphne located outside of Antioch, its location in Egypt and the appearance of Cleopatra's name later in the inscripion suggests its findspot was local.

The cult of Dushara also made its way westward during the height of the Nabataeans' prosperity, appearing at sites such as Miletus, Delos, and Puteoli.[212] Evidence for possible worship at Miletus is based primarily on an inscription by Syllaeus

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[207] Ball 2000, 350.
[208] The temple may also date to AD 147. See Sourdel 1952, 60, n. 8, 61, n. 1-2.
[209] Sourdel 1952, 61, n. 3-4; Dentzer 1979, 331-332; Graf 1997, III, 2; Healey 2001, 65-66.
[210] Fiema and Jones 1990, 242.
[211] Jones et al. 1988, 53-54.
[212] Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 127-128.

dedicated to Zeus Dusares Soter at the temple to Apollo Delphinios.[213] A similar inscription by Syllaeus exists at Delos with 3 lines in Nabataean and 3 lines in Greek dating to approximately 9/8 BC.[214] Unfortunately much of the inscription is illegible, but it appears that Syllaeus dedicated another inscription to Zeus Dusares (*[Δ]ιὶ Δου[σάρει]*).[215] The complex in which the inscription was found appears to have been home to several deities, though much remains elusive.[216]

An open-air temple to Dushara was erected in Puteoli, home to a Nabataean trading colony, around 54 BC by a figure named Banhobal.[217] The temple offered space for followers of Dushara to gather during social and religious activities and to make offerings to the god. Located inside the temple is an altar and three marble bases which each bear the same inscription in Latin: "DVSARI SACRVM" (figs. 4-5).[218] One of these marble bases, which bears this inscription, was found underwater in the Bay of Naples at Puteoli.[219] On top of the base along the back are 7 incised slots which each held flat stones of similar shape and size. These stones were first interpreted as dedicatory plaques, lacking inscriptions which were thought to have been painted.[220] Instead, it is more likely that these stones are miniature betyls, perhaps each representing a different Nabataean deity. This would explain the shape and plain nature of these

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[213] See above; Kawerau and Rehm 1914, 387-389: no. 165; trans. from Healey 2001, 101; see also Cantineau II, 45-56.
[214] Roussel and Launey 1937, 292, no. 2315; Bruneau 1970, 244-245.
[215] Bruneau 1970, 244.
[216] Bruneau 1970, 244-245.
[217] Dijkstra 1995, 72-74; Glueck 1965, 347; Peterson 1919, 151-152.
[218] Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 128, cat. nos. S. 3-6, figs. 64-67.
[219] See Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 130-131, n. 4.
[220] de Franciscis 1967, 212.

stones.[221] This particular base yielded no other inscriptions indicating the dedicator or the purpose of the monument.[222]

Another Nabataean inscription on a stele from Puteoli suggests a restoration or an addition made to the sanctuary some time between the mid-1st century BC and the mid-1st century AD. The inscription reads as follows:

> This is the sanctuary that have restored [ ] and Ali, the bronze-worker (or: and the upper part of bronze) [ ] and Marty who is also known as Zabdata [ ] Saidu son of Obodas at his own expense for the life of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, and that of Huldu, his wife, princess of the Nabataeans, and that of their children. In the month Ab of the 14th year [ ] after the time (?) in which the first sanctuary (or: the sanctuary in front) was built, that has made Benhabel son of [In the] 8th year of Malichos, king of the Nabataeans, they have bestowed the interior of this sanctuary.[223]

It appears that two or three individuals restored or added to the Nabataean religious complex in Puteoli, but due to the frequent lacunae of the inscription, the purpose and date are uncertain. It is clear, however, that the individuals dedicated their work to the Nabataean royal family only and not to any deity. Since the inscription refers to the Nabataean sanctuary, we might assume that this particular sanctuary may have housed several deities.[224] Other evidence indicating a presence of Dushara worshippers at Puteoli is a Nabataean inscription from AD 11:

> Here are two camels, which were offered by Zaidu and Abdelge . . . to the god Dushara who heeded them. In the 20th year of King Haretat, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people.[225]

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[221] See Bisi 1972.
[222] See de Franciscis 1967, 212.
[223] *CIS* II, 158; translation from Dijkstra 1995, 72; see also Cooke 1903, 256.
[224] Dijkstra 1995, 72-74.
[225] Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 143, cat. no. S. 2.

The inscription appears on a marble plaque and describes the offering of two camels made to Dushara by Zaidu and Abdelge, though we can most likely assume that camel figurines were offered here and not actual camels (fig. 6).[226] There appears to be a relatively strong presence at Puteoli of a Dushara cult during the 1st centuries BC/AD, which is most likely due to Nabataean trade relations with the west.[227] The Dushara cult of Puteoli declined following the Roman annexation of Nabataea, suggesting a collapse of the Nabataean identity with the advent of *Provincia Arabia*.[228] That the trading colonies in the western part of the empire entered a decline is not surprising, since Petra lost a great deal of its importance following the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, with most trade routes shifting from Petra to Palmyra. Addtionally, the transfer of the capital from Petra to Bostra severely hindered the productivity and prosperity of Petra.[229]

The evidence for Dushara offers several possibilities regarding his essential nature. It is possible that Dushara was regarded as a deity of vegetation,[230] particularly in the Hauran, a region abundant in agriculture, but this does not necessarily pertain to the Nabataean world as a whole. If this attribute can be applied to Dushara, then it would have only occurred after the sedentarization of the Nabataeans.[231] Dushara may have also been a mountain god, especially considering his ties with the Sharā mountain range. The appearance of betyls and niches throughout the Sīq, Petra's high places, and Hawara, for

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[226] Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 128, cat. no. S. 2; Peterson 1919, 151-152; Parlasca, *et al.* 1997, 130-131.
[227] Glueck 1965, 77, 347-348.
[228] Tran Tam Tinh 1972, 131.
[229] Bowersock 1983, 118, 129-132.
[230] Zayadine 1989, 115.
[231] Hammond 1973, 96.

instance, might indicate that mountains were central to his worship. Imagery associated with Dushara within his temples may also suggest possible attributes of the deity, including vines/leaves, eagles, lions, serpents, and bulls. According to Glueck, the eagle and lion imagery implies an association with Zeus-Hadad, not only as the main deity of the pantheon, but this association could indicate the solar nature of Dushara, as well.[232] Also, worship on the cultic high places of Petra may more closely link Dushara to the sun.[233]

[232] Glueck 1965, 471 ff., 482, 289-290, 487, 286-287, 64, 205-206; see also Hammond 1973, 96.

Chapter 3
Literary Sources

Several ancient authors, both Greco-Roman and Semitic, discuss the Nabataeans in respect to their religion, particularly emphasizing Dushara and the practices associated with his worship. The main Greco-Roman sources include Herodotus' *The Histories*, Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History*, Strabo's *Geography*, Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, Maximus Tyrius' *Philosophumena*, Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*, Arnobius' *Adversus Nationes*, Epiphanius' *Panarion*, lexicographer Hesychius Alexandrinus, and the *Suda* lexicon. Semitic sources, primarily written in Syriac and Arabic, include Hishām ibn al-Kalbī's *Book of Idols* and 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām's *Sīra*.

It should be noted that Greco-Roman sources often describe the peoples in and beyond the southeastern corner of the Roman Empire as "Arabs," without distinguishing between Nabataeans and the many other nomadic Arab tribes living in and around Nabataea. All Greco-Roman sources dealing with these people must be approached with caution.[234] The same problem was not encountered with inscriptions because one major factor in separating the Nabataeans from other tribes, such as the Safaitic and Lihyanite, is their language. Nabataeans adopted Aramaic, the language of the Near East, but altered the script with semi-cursive characters to make it Nabataean.[235]

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[233] See Chapter 5 for discussion on Dushara's imagery.
[234] Hammond 1973, 9-11; Bowersock 1983, 20.
[235] Hammond 1973, 10.

Greco-Roman Sources

Our first glimpse of Nabataean religion comes from Herodotus in *The Histories*, which dates to the mid-5th century BC and mentions the worship of "Arab" figures as Dionysus and Aphrodite.[236]

ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον Ὀροτάλτ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην Ἀλιλάτ.[237]

[The Arabians] call Dionysus, Orotalt; and [Aphrodite] Ourania, Alilat.[238]

The assimilation of Aphrodite/Ourania and Allāt (*Ἀλιλάτ*) is clear. We might assume that Herodotus refers to Dushara as equivalent to Dionysus, especially since Dushara and Dionysus were often assimilated throughout the Hauran region.[239] Also Ryckmans believes the "Oro-" in "Orotalt" may refer to A'ra, a Bostran deity which is closely tied to Dushara.[240] However, this interpretation has been problematic since some scholars believe that Orotalt may instead refer to the god Rudā.[241] While Herodotus is important in understanding the religious associations of these "Arabs," it is not until later that sources reveal anything significant about the history, culture, and religion of the Nabataeans.

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[236] Herodotus, III. 8.
[237] Herodotus, III. 8.
[238] Trans. Godley 1921.
[239] See Sourdel 1952, 62.
[240] Ryckmans 1965, 246.
[241] Zayadine 1990, 42; Knauf 1989, 179-180; Patrich 2005, 103.

Diodorus Siculus and Strabo

Diodorus Siculus began his *Library of History* during the mid-1st century BC, finishing soon after 36 BC based on his latest historical reference.[242] He compiled a broad history of many areas, relying on earlier Hellenistic sources for the history of Nabataea and its environs. These sources include Polybius, Ephorus, Timaeus, Hieronymus, and Posidonius.[243] Despite the occasional discrepancies in his text, Diodorus remains a major source for the history of the Nabataeans.[244]

A key segment in Diodorus' text regarding religion is that which discusses the Nabataeans' abstinence from wine:

> *νόμος δ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς μήτε σῖτον σπείρειν μήτε φυτεύειν μηδὲν φυτὸν καρποφόρον μήτε οἴνῳ χρῆσθαι μήτε οἰκίαν κατασκευάζειν· ὃς δ' ἂν παρὰ ταῦτα ποιῶν εὑρίσκηται, θάνατον αὐτῷ πρόστιμον εἶναι.*[245]
>
> It is their custom neither to plant grain, set out any fruit-bearing tree, use wine, nor construct any house; and if anyone is found acting contrary to this, death is his penalty.[246]

This excerpt portrays the Nabataeans as nomadic people forbidden from sedentarization and the pleasures of wine, which may have been true for earlier periods of Nabataean history, namely the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC, since sources used in Diodorus' text are from the Hellenistic period.[247] It is also possible that nomadic and sedentary Nabataeans coexisted. The reference to abstention from wine mirrors that which is seen

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[242] Oldfather 1933, ix; Lewis and Reinhold 1990, vol. I, 15.
[243] Drews 1962, 384.
[244] Diodorus occasionally cited conflicting accounts from several different sources and often manipulated them to adhere to his history (Drews 1962, 384).
[245] Diodorus, 19. 94. 3.
[246] Trans. Oldfather 1933.
[247] Diodorus never traveled to the area, thus his reliance on dated sources is problematic (Lewis and Reinhold 1990, vol. I, 15). The reflection of Nabataeans as solely a nomadic people in Diodorus clearly

in the worship of Shay' al-Qawm, a nomadic deity.[248] This text could possibly refer only to nomadic Nabataeans and not those who lived within cities like Petra.

A later passage in Diodorus discusses an annual festival of the "Arabs" from Petra:

> *Τὰ μὲν οὖν νόμιμα τῶν Ἀράβων τοιαῦτ' εἶναι συμβέβηκεν. ὑπογύου δ' αὐτοῖς οὔσης πανηγύρεως, εἰς ἣν εἰώθασιν οἱ περίοικοι καταντᾶν οἱ μὲν ἀποδωσόμενοι τῶν φορτίων, οἱ δ' ἀγοράσοντές τι τῶν αὐτοῖς χρησίμων, εἰς ταύτην ἐπορεύθησαν, ἀπολιπόντες ἐπί τινος πέτρας τὰς κτήσεις καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους, ἔτι δὲ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας. τὸ δὲ χωρίον ὑπῆρχεν ὀχυρὸν μὲν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἀτείχιστον δέ, καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπέχον δυεῖν ἡμερῶν ὁδόν.*[249]
>
> It appears that such are the customs of the Arabs. But when the time draws near for the national gathering at which those who dwell round about are accustomed to meet, some to sell goods and others to purchase things that are needful to them, they travel to a meeting, leaving on a certain rock their possessions and their old men, also their women and their children. This place is exceedingly strong but unwalled, and it is distant two days' journey from the settled country.[250]

From the description in this passage, it appears that Nabataean men travel from Petra, described as a rock, to a known location during a certain time of the year. It is possible that Hūrāwa served as the location for this festival, since Hūrāwa stands alone as a temple, separate from a city.[251] Annual festivals are also mentioned below by Strabo and Epiphanius.[252]

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contrasts Strabo's 1st century AD work, which describes the Nabataeans as generally sedentary, some with costly houses of stone (see Strabo, 16. 4. 26).

[248] Healey 2001, 145, from *CIS* II, 3973; see also Teixidor 1977, 89; Gawlikowski 1990, 2669; Knauf 1990, 176 ff.

[249] Diodorus, 19. 95. 1-2.

[250] Trans. Oldfather 1933.

[251] Ball 2000, 350; Healey 2001, 161.

[252] Strabo, 16. 4. 26; Epiphanius, 51. 22. 11.

Strabo's sources are more contemporary than Diodorus'; Athenodorus, who was a philosopher residing in Petra and a friend of Strabo, is a particularly reliable source.[253] In *Geography*, which dates to the early 1st century AD, Strabo describes Nabataean religion and ritual practices in more detail than any previous source:

> *οἰκήσεις δὲ διὰ λίθου πολυτελεῖς, αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἀτείχιστοι δι' εἰρήνην . . . ἥλιον τιμῶσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος ἱδρυσάμενοι βωμόν, σπένδοντες ἐν αὐτῷ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ λιβανωτίζοντες.*[254]
>
> Their homes, through the use of stone, are costly; but on account of peace, the cities are not walled . . . They worship the sun, building an altar on the top of the house [or temple?], and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense.[255]

In this passage, not only do we have evidence contradictory to Diodorus' account regarding the housing preference of the Nabataeans, but it appears that the Nabataeans may have practiced cult rites within their own homes. Some scholars, however, believe that *δῶμα* does not refer to a house, but perhaps to a temple. Since some temples are known to have staircases, like the Qasr al-Bint in Petra, Strabo may be referring instead to an altar placed on top of the temple roof, or even atop a high place in Petra.[256]

Other practices of the Nabataeans revealed by Strabo include banquet dining, as seen in the following passage:

> *συσσίτια δὲ ποιοῦνται κατὰ τρισκαίδεκα ἀνθρώπους, μουσουργοὶ δὲ δύο τῷ συμποσίῳ ἑκάστῳ. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐν ὄγκῳ μεγάλῳ πολλὰ συνέχει συμπόσια· πίνει δ' οὐδεὶς πλέον τῶν ἕνδεκα ποτηρίων ἄλλῳ καὶ ἄλλῳ χρυσῷ ἐκπώματι.*[257]

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[253] Strabo is often referred to as an "arm-chair geographer," relying on other sources including Eratosthenes, Artemidorus, Posidonius, and Aelius Gallus, who led Roman campaigns into Arabia Felix (Strabo, 16. 4. 22; MacAdam 2002, 297).
[254] Strabo, 16. 4. 26.
[255] Trans. Jones 1930.
[256] Healey 2001, 103.
[257] Strabo, 16. 4. 26.

> They prepare common meals together in groups of thirteen persons; and they have two girl-singers for each banquet. The king holds many drinking-bouts in magnificent style, but no one drinks more than eleven cupfuls, each time using a different golden cup.[258]

Though wine is not explicitly mentioned in this passage, it is possible that it was consumed at these *symposia*, contradicting Diodorus' earlier claims concerning the Nabataeans and their supposed lack of wine consumption; however, it is also possible that the Nabataeans were consuming other drinks, such as mead or date wine.[259] It is unclear with what event these banquets are associated; they could be funerary, religious, or social events. If these banquets are religious, it is possible that they are linked with a festival in early January referred to in Epiphanius' *Panarion*, discussed below.[260] Religious banquetting is further suggested based on archaeological evidence of a large *triclinium*, known as the Dīwān, located at the entrance to the main religious center at Hegra in Saudi Arabia.[261]

Other Sources

In *Apologeticum*, which dates to the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD, Tertullian defends the existence of Christianity in the Roman Empire by recognizing several non-Roman deities who are worshipped within Roman territory, including Dushara:

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[258] Trans. Jones 1930.
[259] Patrich 2005, 101-102.
[260] Epiphanius, 51. 22. 11.
[261] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the Dīwān.

> *Unicuique etiam provinciae et civitati suus est deus, est Syriae Astarte, Arabiae Dusares.*[262]
>
> Each province and city has its own god, of Syria is Astarte, of Arabia Dusares.[263]

Tertullian in an attempt to argue for the recognition of Christianity uses Dushara as an example of how the Romans recognize and allow the existence of other non-Roman deities. It is with Tertullian that we finally have formal identification of the name of the main Nabataean god, "Dusares," Latin for Dushara. Previous sources had only vaguely described Nabataean religion, whether through Greek assimilations or by listing various cult rites.[264]

The following group of sources describes the appearance of the Nabataeans' cult object used during the worship of Dushara and other deities, namely the betyl. Maximus Tyrius' *Philosophumena*, which dates to the last half of the 2nd century AD, briefly mentions Nabataean cult rituals:

> *Ἀράβιοι σέβουσι μέν, ὅντινα δὲ οὐκ οἶδα. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα εἶδον· λίθος ἦν τετράγωνος.*[265]
>
> The Arabians revere a god, but which god I know not; their image, which I have seen, was a square stone.[266]

A god is not named in this source, but it may be implied that Dushara is the god to which Maximus is referring. More importantly, he describes the deity's image as a "square stone."

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[262] Tertullian, 24. 8.
[263] Patrich 1990a, 52, n. 6.
[264] Herodotus, III. 8; Diodorus, 19. 94. 3; Strabo, 16. 4. 26.
[265] Maximus Tyrius, 2. 8.
[266] Patrich 1990a, 51, n. 3.

Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*, a source which dates to approximately AD 200, mentions "Arabs" and their worship of the stone:

> *πάλαι μὲν οὖν οἱ Σκύθαι τὸν ἀκινάκην, οἱ Ἄραβες τὸν λίθον, οἱ Πέρσαι τὸν ποταμὸν προσεκύνουν*[267]
>
> In ancient times, then, the Skythians used to worship the dagger, the Arabians their sacred stone, and the Persians their river[268]

Here again is evidence for the worship of a stone, which shows the importance of the betyl in Nabataean religion.

Arnobius' *Adversus Nationes*, which dates to the early 4th century AD, mentions the "Arabs" and their religion in a rather disdainful tone:

> *Ridetis temporibus priscis Persas fluvios coluisse, memoralia ut indicant scripta, informem Arabas lapidem, acinacem Scythiae nationes.*[269]
>
> It is ridiculous that in ancient times the Persians venerated rivers; written memoirs indicate that the Arabs [venerated] a shapeless stone and the Scythian nations a dagger.[270]

Arnobius fails to mention any deity's name, but the betyl is stressed as an important feature of the "Arab" or Nabataean religion.

A detailed account text from the late 4th/early 5th centuries AD is the *Panarion* by heresiologist Epiphanius, which describes certain "rites" of the Nabataeans at Petra:

> *Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἐν Πέτρᾳ τῇ πόλει (μητρόπολις δὲ ἐστι τῆς Ἀραβίας ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἐδὸμ ἡ ἐν ταῖς Γραφαῖς γεγραμμένη) ἐν τῷ ἐκεῖσε εἰδωλίῳ οὕτως γίνεται καὶ Ἀραβικῇ διαλέκτῳ ἐξυμνοῦσι τὴν παρθένον καλοῦντες αὐτὴν Ἀραβιστὶ Χααβοῦ, τουτέστιν Κόρην ἤγουν παρθένον, καὶ τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς γεγεννημένον Δουσάρην τουτέστιν μονογενῆ τοῦ δεσπότου. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἐν Ἐλούσῃ γίνεται τῇ πόλει κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν νύκτα ὡς ἐκει ἐν τῇ Πέτρᾳ καὶ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ.*[271]

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[267] Clemens Alexandrinus, 4. 46. 2.
[268] Butterworth 1919, 101.
[269] Arnobius, 6.11.
[270] Patrich 1990a, 51, n. 5.
[271] Epiphanius, 51. 22. 11.

> This is also done in the city of Petra (this is the capital of Arabia, which is called Edom in the scriptures), in the temple of the idol there. They sing hymns to the virgin in Arabia, calling her in Arabic "Chaabu," which means Core or "virgin," and the one born from her "Dusares," which means "only begotten of the Lord." The rite is also performed in the city of Elusa on that night as in Petra and Alexandria.[272]

In this passage Epiphanius elucidates the rituals of the Nabataeans with the intent of showing that the Nabataeans understood the concept of a virgin birth, like the Christians.[273] In his explanation, he names the main deity of the Nabataeans as Dushara, but is incorrect in his explanation of Dushara's origins. According to Epiphanius, Dushara is worshipped as the son of a virgin (*χαάβον*), which raises questions as to the role of Rudā, if female, or Allāt in relation to the deity.[274] In fact, it appears that Epiphanius confused the Arabic word *ka'ba*, which means "stone, cube, betyl," with words such as *ka'iba* or *ku'ba*, which mean "young females" or "female breasts." Because of this confusion, Epiphanius concluded that Dushara was born from a virgin, misinterpreting Dushara's actual worship in the form of a stone.[275] Aside from the etymylogical confusion, Epiphanius does indicate a festival of the Nabataeans that occurred on the sixth of January, around the winter solstice.[276] This may perhaps be associated with the banquetting discussed in Strabo's passage mentioned above.[277] The

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[272] Trans. Amidon 1990.
[273] Sourdel 1952, 67.
[274] Epiphanius' text sometimes reads χααμον, but χααβον is most often preferred (Hawting 1999, 125, n. 45).
[275] Mordtmann 1876, 99-106; Hawting 1999, 124-125.
[276] Mordtmann 1976, 99-106; Ryckmans 1965, 247; Healey 2001, 160.
[277] Strabo, 16. 4. 26.

festival is also linked to those at Alexandria and Elusa, which consist of a night-long vigil, chanting, singing, and music.[278]

The lexicographer Hesychius from the 5th century AD assimilates Dionysus with Dushara:

> *Δουσάρην· τὸν Διόνυσον. Ναβαταῖοι, ὥς φησι Ἰσίδωρος.*[279]
>
> Dusares: Dionysus. (Among the) Nabataeans, as Isidore says.[280]

Isidore could refer either to Isidorus of Charax, a geographer from the Tigris region, or to Isidorus of Alexandria, the head of the city's Neoplatonic school in the late 5th century AD.[281] The association between Dushara and Dionysus was common, particularly in the northern Hauran region, an area known for its agriculture.[282]

The Suda *Lexicon*

Perhaps the most detailed description of a betyl is that from the *Suda*, a lexicon which dates to the 10th century AD. Despite its late date and confusion between Dushara and the Greek god Ares, the passage provides key information that supports earlier sources and their description of betyl worship associated with the Nabataeans:

> *Θεὺς Ἄρης. τουτέστι θεὸς Ἄρης ἐν Πέτρᾳ Ἀραβίας. σέβεται δὲ θεὸς Ἄρης παρ' αὐτοῖς. τόνδε γὰρ μάλιστα τιμῶσι. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα λίθος ἐστὶ μέλας, τετράγωνος, ἀτύπωτοΰψος ποδῶν τεσσάρων, εὖρος δύο. ἀνάκειται δὲ ἐπὶ βάσεως χρυσηλάτου. τούτῳ θύουσι καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῶν ἱερείων προχέουσι. καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἡ σπονδή. ὁ δὲ οἶκος ἅπας ἐστὶ πολύχρυσος, καὶ ἀναθήματα πολλά.*[283]

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[278] See Cook 1940, 913-916.
[279] Hesychius Alexandrinus Δ. 2277.
[280] Latte 1953, 475.
[281] Cook 1940, 911-912; Patrich 2005, 97.
[282] See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the assimilation of Dionysus and Dushara.
[283] *Suda*, from Adler 1931, II: 713.

> Theusares – that is, the god Ares at Petra in Arabia. The god Ares is worshipped by them, for him they honor above all other. The image is a black stone, square and unshapen, four feet high by two feet broad. It is set on a base of wrought gold. To this they sacrifice and for it they pour forth the victims' blood, that being their form of libation. The whole building abounds in gold and there are dedications galore.[284]

While the Nabataeans most likely did not worship Ares in this manner, the identification of Theusares as Dusares is compatible with other evidence of the worship of Dushara with betyls. Indeed the betyls found throughout the region are of similar size and shape to that described in the above passage from the *Suda*.[285]

Semitic Sources

The Semitic sources are fewer than the Greco-Roman sources and are also much later. The appearance of Dushara, as Dhu 'l-Sharā in these sources, attests to the longevity of the deity's worship, even into the Islamic period. Other Nabataean deities such as Allāt and al-'Uzzā are also mentioned in the context of pagan idols. The reference to Dushara in Hishām ibn al-Kalbī's *Book of Idols* (AD 821) is relatively short and describes Dushara as an idol associated directly with one tribe, the Azd.[286]

> The banu-al-Hārith ibn-Yashkur ibn-Mubashshir of the Azd [tribe] had an idol called dhu-al-Shara (Dusares). One of the Ghatārīf, referring to it, said:
>
> > 'We would descend upon the region surrounding dhu-al-Shara,
> > And our mighty army would, then, smite the foe.'[287]

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[284] Patrich 1990a, 50-51.
[285] Patrich 1990, 59. *Betyls* will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 in regards to the artistic representation of Dushara.
[286] Ibn al-Kalbī from Faris 1952, 33, sec. 38; for a discussion of this tribe in relation to the Nabataeans, see Starcky 1966, col. 986.
[287] Ibn-al-Kalbi 1952, 33.

In this context, it is clear that Dushara is regarded as an enemy to the Islamic faith that must be defeated.

In 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām's (d. AD 833) *Sīra* Dushara appears in the story of Tufayl, a man who had recently converted to Islam. In the story Tufayl urges his wife to cleanse herself in a ritual bath before she can convert to Islam, saying:

> 'Then go to the *hinā* (*himā*) of Dhu 'l-Sharā and cleanse yourself from it.' Now Dhu 'l-Sharā was an image belonging to the Daus and the *himā* was the *temenos* which they made sacred to him; in it there was a trickel of water from a rivulet from a mountain . . . So she went and washed.[288]

Following this ritual cleansing she accepted the faith and traditions of Islam. The story is slightly ambiguous but suggests that the wife of Tufayl was previously a follower of Dushara and in order for her to fully accept the faith of Islam, she had to cleanse herself from her former pagan rituals. The location for her purification described in the passage possibly links Dushara with more natural features, such as a stream or a mountain, which seems likely due to his associations with the ash-Sharā mountain range. Also, the tribe of Daus may have been confused with the Duserani, or "worshippers of Dushara," another name for the Nabataeans. This confusion may in fact be due to the words' similar spellings.[289]

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[288] Healey 2001, 89, from Wüstenfeld 1859-1860, 253; see also Hawting 1999, 123-124; see Gawlikowski 1982 for a discussion of *himā* and *haram* in the context of pre-Islamic Arabian religion.

Chapter 4
Nabataean Religious Sites

Due to the often lacunal nature of ancient texts, the study of Nabataean religion, though still in its formative stages, relies heavily on material culture. Archaeological evidence from temples and sanctuaries throughout the former Nabataean kingdom reveals information of a sort not generally discussed by ancient authors, including temple plans, architectural features, artistic representations, and graffiti. With this evidence archaeologists have attempted to identify the actual cult practices of the Nabataeans as well as to determine the chronology of particular cult sites.

The religious sites discussed can be divided into five major geographical regions: the Negev, the Hauran, central Jordan, southern Jordan, and northwestern Saudi Arabia. Two sites from the Negev region include Oboda and Sobata. Sites within the fertile region of the Hauran include Bostra, Umm el-Jimal, and possibly Sī'. In central Jordan, the major cult centers are Hūrāwa (Khirbet et-Tannur) and Khirbet edh-Dharih, and smaller sites including Dhībān, although it is possible these sites are not linked with Dushara. Sites from the southern portion of the Nabataean kingdom are Petra (including Umm el-Biyara), Hawara (Humayma), Iram (Wadi Ramm) in southern Jordan, and Hegra (Medā'in Sālih) in northwestern Saudi Arabia (fig. 1). Sites discussed in this study are major Nabataean cult sites with the inclusion of some minor sites with architectural, epigraphic, or artistic evidence suggesting the worship of Dushara.

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[289] Ryckmans 1965, 246.

The Negev

Sobata

Sobata (Subeita, Shivta), one of the major Nabataean sites in the Negev, is located southwest of the Dead Sea in Israel, approximately 40 km. southwest of Beersheba (fig. 7). The site was founded some time in the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, though the bulk of evidence remaining today is from the Byzantine period (fig. 8). In the Late Nabataean period, agriculture and horse breeding were introduced into the area and the settlement enjoyed a short period of prosperity. Little is known from the Late Roman period, but settlement continued through the Byzantine period and into the Islamic period, up to at least the 8th or 9th century AD.[290] Due to the paucity of Nabataean and Roman remains at the site, little evidence exists suggesting the worship of Dushara. The evidence that does exist includes a dedicatory inscription to Dushara dating to the reign of King Aretas IV.[291] Also, located just outside the settlement is a large cistern with a pilaster located inside, upon which there were carved niches that Negev believes represent Dushara and other Nabataean deities.[292]

Oboda

The settlement of Oboda, located on a mountain range southeast of Sobata in the northern Negev, was established as a Nabataean trade station in the late 4th or early 3rd century BC, and benefited from its location along a major trade route between Aila on the

[290] Negev 1993d, 1404-1405.
[291] *RES* § 533; Wenning 1987, 155-156; Negev 1993, 1405; Healey 2001, 68.
[292] Negev 1993d, 1405; Wenning 1987, 155; Negev 1976, 73.

Gulf of Aqaba and Jerusalem (fig. 7).[293] In the first centuries BC/AD, Oboda enjoyed a period of prosperity under Kings Obodas III and Aretas IV, as can be seen by the construction of temples, the increased manufacture of Nabataean pottery, and the increased breeding of camels, sheep, and goats (fig. 9).[294] Some time in the reign of Malichus II (AD 40-70), Oboda was destroyed by a fire, leading the settlement to rely more on agriculture and animal breeding than trade by the reign of Rabbel II (AD 70-106). Oboda's prosperity continued into the Roman period, as did much of the Negev, with construction continuing over the Nabataean ruins as late as AD 296.[295] In the Late Roman period Diocletian constructed a fortress on the city's acropolis as part of the emperor's attempt to strengthen the eastern frontier. Also Christian churches began to appear throughout the settlement, often constructed over old Nabataean temples.[296] By the time of the Arab conquest in AD 636, Oboda was abandoned.[297]

The religion of Oboda was somewhat different from that in other Nabataean towns, since the primary object of worship was the deified King Obodas III (30-9 BC). During the early years of his reign, King Obodas III reconquered the Negev after the Nabataeans were driven out under Alexander Jannaeus, thus providing motivation for the creation of the king's cult.[298] It is also believed that the king may have been buried in Oboda, suggesting that the city was the head of the king's cult.[299] Obodas' assimilation

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[293] Goods on this route also came from Petra and the surrounding region (Negev 1993b, 1155); Negev 1997, 236.
[294] Negev 1993b, 1155.
[295] Negev 1993b, 1155.
[296] Negev 1993b, 1155; Negev 1997, 236.
[297] Negev 1993b, 1155; Negev 1997, 236.
[298] Negev 1993a, 1134.
[299] Negev 1997, 236; see Stephanus, "*Ὀβοδα*"; Meineke 1958, 482; Healey 2001, 149.

with Zeus and Dushara appear to have elevated the king's status as a deity; however, these connections seem to have been concentrated within the settlement of Oboda.[300] The most religiously significant complex within Oboda is the temple atop the acropolis which was constructed around the last quarter of the 1st century BC, though it remained in use until the end of the 3rd century AD (figs. 10-12). The majority of the complex lies beneath the remains of a Byzantine church, but excavations have revealed that the Nabataean temple structure is constructed in typical Moab tripartite style, measuring 11.08 x 13.72 m. and consisting of a porch, hall, and *adyton*.[301] The *adyton* is unusually divided, with two large niches, possibly dedicated to Dushara and Allāt, with a third smaller niche possibly dedicated to King Obodas III.[302]

The Hauran

Bostra

Bostra, the most important Nabataean city in the Hauran region, is located in southern Syria, approximately 10 km. north of the modern Jordanian border (fig. 3).[303] The city is of unknown origins, but it has been continuously occupied since the Nabataean-Roman period.[304] Because of this continuous occupation, many of the remains are obscured by modern structures. Some of the ruins were reused during later

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[300] See Negev 1986b.
[301] Negev 1993a, 1157.
[302] Negev 1993a, 1157-1158.
[303] For a detailed discussion of the history and archaeology of Jordan, see Sartre 1985, in particular 45-97 and corresponding plates.
[304] Recent excavations by the American University of Beirut have uncovered occupation levels dating back to the Bronze Age period. A varied form of the city's name may also appear in Egyptian texts from the New Kingdom, around 15th century BC (Dentzer 1997, 350-351).

periods, leaving these structures dismantled and often difficult to interpret. As a result, excavations in the past have produced relatively few material remains, but a current project to relocate the modern town promises to reveal much more of the ancient city within the next few decades.[305]

Bostra came under the control of the Nabataeans under King Aretas III at the beginning of the 1st century BC and, by the end of the 1st century AD, the city was the capital of the Nabataean kingdom following King Rabbel II's move from Petra. After Trajan's annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in AD 106, Bostra remained the preeminent city of the region as the capital of the new *Provincia Arabia*.[306] During the Roman period Bostra was not only the administrative capital of the province, but was also the home to the *Legio III Cyrenaica*. Additionally, Bostra was the northern terminus to the *via nova Traiana*, increasing the city's importance as a trade capital. Though Bostra's population dwindled over time, the city remained important throughout the Christian, Islamic, and Medieval periods.[307]

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Nabataeans slowly began to develop the city, primarily in the central and eastern portions, shortly after it came under King Aretas III's control (fig. 13).[308] Part of this urbanization project may have included the construction of streets, gates, temples, and sanctuaries, though much is left to speculation due to post-Nabataean destruction. The remnants of a large limestone enclosure wall containing stucco decoration and Nabataean capitals stood behind a portico; it is possible

[305] Ball 2000, 198.
[306] For the impact of Trajan's annexation of Nabataea, see Sartre 1985, 63-72.
[307] Dentzer 1997, 352; Ball 2000, 198.

that this area may have been part of a *temenos* for a temple, but the construction of a later Christian complex hinders an archaeological investigation (fig. 14).[309] Other objects found in the center of the city include Nabataean-style cut blocks from a large building. It seems probable that a Nabataean temple would have stood somewhere near the major crossroads of the city.[310] These possible temple structures and the Roman road follow an eastern orientation, suggesting that the Roman road lies overtop a Nabataean road. The relationship of these structures to the road suggests the presence of a religious processional way, with the temple perhaps lying on the eastern end of the way.[311] Since Dushara is linked with the deity A'ra as the god of the Nabataean king and of Bostra, a large temple in the city center would likely have been dedicated to Dushara-A'ra.[312] This is supported by a Nabataean inscription located in a wall of a possible temple:

> This is the wall which . . . and windows which Taymu bar . . . built for Dushara and the rest of the gods of Bostra.[313]

Since Dushara is linked with Bostra in this inscription, it can be assumed that the god is assimilated with the Bostran deity A'ra. Also, this inscription suggests the presence of a temple dedicated not only to Dushara, but "the rest of the gods," which could include

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[308] See Dentzer 1986; Ball 2000, 198; Peters 1983, 273-274; Healey 2001, 63.
[309] Ball 2000, 198; Dentzer 1997, 352.
[310] Dentzer 1997, 352.
[311] Ball 2000, 198.
[312] This temple may still be beneath the modern city or under later ancient remains. See Sartre 1985, 60; Dentzer 1997, 352. See Chapter 2 regarding the epigraphic evidence of Dushara's assimilation with A'ra in Bostra.
[313] Littmann 1914, 56-57, no. 69; *RES* § 2025; Healey 2001, 63-64.

Baalshamin, Allāt, and al-'Uzzā, among others.[314] Unfortunately, sources do not provide a date for this inscription.[315]

Sartre believes a temple for the indigenous cult existed in the city center into the 3rd century AD, most likely hosting the worship of Dushara.[316] If this theory is correct, it would place the worship of Dushara most likely near the center crossroads of the city, suggesting a large following within 3rd century Bostra. This seems likely since Dushara appears on Bostran coinage, in addition to being the subject of games within the city. These games are known as the *Actia Dusaria* and were held quadrennially in Bostra beginning with the reign of Emperor Philip "the Arab" during the 3rd century AD. In later years, the games were also celebrated at Tyre, Damascus, Adraa, and Petra.[317] The title *Actia Dusaria* combined a reference to Augustus' victory at the Battle of Actium and the Romanized version of the head Nabataean deity Dushara.[318] Little is known about the games, but several imperial coins exist honoring the games; for example, the coin of Trajan Decius and Herennius Etruscus dating to the early 250s AD features on its reverse the inscription "ACTIA DVSARIA COL[ONIA] METR[OPOLIS] BOSTRENORUM" surrounding an image of three betyls atop a raised platform approached by steps (App. 1, no. 11, fig. 12). On top of the middle betyl are seven flat, cake-like objects, while the

[314] See Healey 2001, 64; see also Sartre 1985, 59-60.
[315] We may assume that this inscription is of Nabataean date, but other inscriptions mentioning Dushara and/or A'ra have been dated to as late as AD 148.
[316] Sartre attributes the *kalybe* as the place of worship (Sartre 1985, 93), but recent excavations by the Directorate of Antiquities of Bosra in 1994 established the *kalybe* as a monumental fountain (Dentzer 1997, 352). Nevertheless, there may have been another temple for Dushara in the city center. For a discussion of the *kalybe*, see Ball 2000, 292-294.
[317] Hammond 1973, 104.
[318] Bowersock 1983, 121-122.

other two each have one flat object on top, all of which are surrounded by a wreath.[319] This coin places emphasis not only on the games, but on the worship of Dushara and other Nabataean deities through the betyl. It is also possible that the game coincided with annual Nabataean festivals celebrating the new year.[320]

Most monuments throughout Bostra date to the Roman period, with the *decumanus* lying overtop the former Nabataean street. Roman buildings include baths, a hippodrome, a theatre, a nymphaeum, and military structures.[321] Some sanctuaries of the Roman period appear as dedications to Greco-Roman deities, such as Roma and Augustus, Tyche,[322] Zeus Epicarpios, and Zeus Hammon. The latter deity appears because of influence from the *Legio III Cyrenaica* stationed in Bostra. Since this legion was formerly stationed in Egypt prior to Bostra, they adopted Zeus Ammon as their tutelary god, an amalgamation of Greco-Roman and Egyptian deities.[323]

Umm el-Jimal

Located south of Bostra is the rural agrarian settlement of Umm el-Jimal, constructed entirely out of black basalt (fig. 3).[324] The standing remains date primarily to the Byzantine and Islamic periods. Extant buildings include 15 churches, many houses,

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[319] Spijkerman 1978, 86-87, 66; pl. 17.66.
[320] Hammond 1973, 104.
[321] See Ball 2000, 198-204.
[322] Tyche may have taken over the sanctuary of Allāt (Sartre 1985, 93).
[323] See Sartre 1985, 64, 93; Dentzer 1997, 352; Butler 2003, 341.
[324] For a complete discussion of early excavations, see Butler 1919, part 3: "Umm Idj-Djimāl." For recent scholarship on the settlement, see de Vries 1998. Inscriptions for Umm el-Jimal were published by E. Littmann and included Nabataean, Safaitic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic. For the Nabataean inscriptions, see Littmann 1914.

military barracks, gates, and reservoirs, among others (fig. 15).[325] Within the Late Antique city walls, there are no remains dating to the Nabataean/early Roman period, but a small village lies 200 m. to the east and dates from the late 1st century AD to the late 3rd century AD.[326] It is possible that the move of the Nabataean capital from Petra to Bostra in the late 1st century AD affected the welfare of this site, causing the settlement to flourish for the next two centuries. Following the destruction of this village, stones and other rubble were reused to construct the Byzantine town.

During early excavations of the site, Butler believed there to be a Nabataean temple within the walls of the Late Antique town, based on the presence of the following bilingual (Greek and Nabataean) inscription:[327]

Μασεχος Αουειδανου Δουσαρει Αρρα

This is the stele Mashiku bar 'Awīda made for Dushara (A'ra)[328]

Later analysis of these structures has demonstrated that the "Nabataean temple" is a much later 4th century structure and the stele was robbed from another area (fig. 16).[329] Nevertheless, the presence of this inscription indicates that a sanctuary or shrine to Dushara may have existed somewhere at Umm el-Jimal, perhaps within close proximity of the structure in which the stones were reused. The inscription also points to the worship of Dushara-A'ra, revealing that this assimilation was recognized at sites other than Bostra.

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[325] de Vries 1997, 276,
[326] de Vries 1997, 277-278.
[327] Butler 1919, 155-156.
[328] Littmann 1914, 34-35, no. 38; Healey 2001, 65.

Sī'

Another settlement from the northern sector of the kingdom is Sī' (or Seeia), located north of Bostra near the Decapolis city of Canatha (fig. 3). Sī' was an important cult center and may have been a pilgrimage site for the northern part of the Nabataean kingdom. Inside the settlement are three main temples, the largest dedicated to Baalshamin (fig. 17). It is unclear to which deity the remaining two were dedicated. Butler proposed that the corner temple within the complex was dedicated to Dushara, though there is no direct evidence supporting this theory.[330] In fact, an inscription dedicated to the local goddess Seeia was found near the podium of this so-called "Dushara" temple. In light of this evidence, it seems more likely that this temple was dedicated to the local goddess rather than to Dushara, though Dushara may have been honored in the last of these three temples.[331] In actuality, the temple complex of Sī' is generally non-Nabataean in design, most likely the result of an amalgamation of cultures along the northern fringes of the Nabataean kingdom.[332]

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[329] de Veaux and Parker 1998, 159-160.
[330] Butler 1919, 346-351; see also Dentzer 1979, especially 331-332.

Central Jordan

Hūrāwa

Located in central Jordan is Hūrāwa, a Nabataean temple site located 300 m. above Wadi el-Hasa on the summit of Jebel Tannur (fig. 18).[333] The temple, measuring 40 m. x 48 m., stands alone and is not associated with any local settlement, suggesting the temple's regional importance within the Nabataean kingdom. The structure's early stages date to around 7 BC, with the major building program following over the next few decades under King Aretas IV. The temple most likely remained in use until the earthquake of AD 363, when the site was abandoned.[334]

Access to the site is permitted by a single, steep path leading to the summit of Jebel Tannur, where worshippers were then led to steps and the eastern gateway of the temple (fig. 19).[335] The entrance of the temple is decorated with engaged columns and pilasters, which support Nabataean capitals. This leads into the paved outer courtyard, measuring 15.6 m. x 15.6 m (fig. 20). In the northeastern section of the courtyard is an altar. Porticoes, built atop a small podium, line the courtyard on the north and south and lead to *triclinia* on either side. These banquet rooms would have most likely served as dining areas for pilgrims, perhaps during religious festivals.[336] Other rooms line the perimeter of the complex, as well, perhaps serving as housing for pilgrims, priests, or

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[331] Graf 1997, III, 2. There still remains no specific evidence of Dushara present at Sīʿ (Healey 2001, 65-66).
[332] Patrich 1990a, 47-48; Millar 1993, 395.
[333] Excavations began under Nelson Glueck with the American Schools of Oriental Research in 1937 (Roche 1997, 154). Glueck's work *Deities and Dolphins* (1965) deals largely with evidence from Hūrāwa.
[334] Roche 1997, 155.
[335] Glueck 1978, 1152; Healey 2001, 59. For a complete discussion of Hūrāwa, see Glueck 1965, 73-191.
[336] Roche 1997, 154.

temple servants. In the western section of the complex lies the inner sanctuary, a structure which faces east and is elevated on a podium accessed by four steps.[337] The doorway to the inner sanctuary is flanked on either side by engaged columns and niches, and is topped with a representation of a vegetation goddess accompanied by her foliage and fruit imagery. Glueck identifies this deity as Atargatis, a goddess imported from Syria.[338] Inside the sanctuary is a shrine in the form of an altar, measuring 3.5 m. x 3.5 m. in its final stage, with room for circumambulation. In front of the altar beneath the pavement of the shrine are several crypts, used for the storage of burnt sacrificial offerings.[339] The presence of several altars, burnt offerings, *triclinia*, as well as sherds of Nabataean drinking vessels, supports the theory that Hūrāwa was a major site of pilgrimage in the Nabataean period.[340]

Imagery within the temple consists primarily of fruit, vines, leaves, fish, and thunderbolts, as well as anthropomorphic representations of several deities. Glueck accordingly attributes this iconography to the Mesopotamian storm-god Hadad and his female consort Atargatis, but also includes Tyche and Nike in his list of deities present at the site.[341] As a major cult center in Nabataea, one should expect the major deity of the structure to be Nabataean. While Glueck believed this deity to be Dushara in the form of Zeus-Hadad (fig. 2), Starcky analyzed Glueck's findings and reevaluated Hūrāwa, noting

[337] Glueck 1978, 1152; Healey 2001, 60.
[338] Glueck 1978, 1152.
[339] Roche 1997, 154.
[340] See Starcky 1968; Roche 1997, 155; Ball 2000, 350.
[341] Glueck 1965, 288-292, 381-382, 395-400, 409-411.

that only Qōs, the Edomite weather god, appears in any inscriptions at the site.[342] One Nabataean inscription reads:

(Stele) which Qōsmalik made for Qōs, the god of Hūrawā[343]

This and other inscriptions present at the site show that Hūrawā was the ancient name for Khirbet et-Tannur, therefore, this inscription places great importance upon Qōs at the site. As for the anthropomorphic representations of the deities at Hūrāwa, it appears that old Edomite deities were later portrayed as the Hadad and Atargatis couple.[344] In light of these discoveries, it is interesting to note that no betyls are mentioned in excavation reports. The inclusion of elements from outside the Nabataean tradition could suggest cultic variations within this region, perhaps with a continuation of the worship of older Moabite and Edomite deities, such as Qōs.[345] It is possible that Dushara was worshipped here, but the main deities appear to have been Qōs and Atargatis.

Khirbet edh-Dharih

Further south is Khirbet edh-Dharih, located 7 km. south of Hūrāwa and 20 km. north of Tafīleh in Wadi La'ban.[346] The site consists of several houses, oil presses, tombs, cemeteries, and a Nabataean-Roman temple (fig. 21). Similarly to Hūrāwa, the temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih enjoyed a relatively long life, dating from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD.[347] Considering Khirbet edh-Dharih's similar date and close

[342] Starcky 1968, 208-211.
[343] Milik 1958, 237-238; Healey 2001, 61.
[344] Roche 1997, 154-155.
[345] Starcky 1968, 208-211.
[346] Roche 1997, 154.
[347] Khirbet edh-Dharih was destroyed by the same earthquake of AD 363 (Jarif and al-Muheisen 2002, 66).

proximity to Hūrāwa, it appears that the temples at these sites were connected. This theory is further bolstered by a Nabataean inscription dating to the year 8/7 BC found at Hūrāwa describing one Natirel as the custodian of the area at the "head of the spring of La'ban;" i.e. the temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih.[348] Since the inscription was located at Hūrāwa, one can assume that this person cared for both temples.

The temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih is remarkably well-preserved (figs. 22a-b). The complex contains two courtyards, the second of which surrounds the temple. The inner courtyard, like at Hūrāwa, is paved with porticoes along either side, but also contains benches that form a *theatron*. The temple itself, measuring 23 m. x 37 m., is divided into three sections. A decorated façade with engaged columns lines the entrance to the structure. One enters through a large door and is then led through a long open-air vestibule with walls covered in a thick layer of painted plaster. Along the upper trim of these walls is a denticulated frieze in stucco. Through the vestibule is the *cella*, the walls of which are decorated with stucco in architectural designs and painted with bright colors, including red, white, black, and blue. Beyond the *cella* is a square podium, often described as the *motāb*, approached by two sets of stairs.[349] On top stood the betyl as the symbol of the deity represented, though it is not known which deity was worshipped in the temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih.[350]

Following the annexation of Nabataea, the temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih underwent changes in worship. The two sets of stairs leading up to the *motāb*, or

[348] The script of the inscription has not been determined as Nabataean based on the different uses of some characters. See Savignac 1937, 405-408, no. 1; Starcky 1966, 930; Healey 2001, 60-62.

podium, were filled and replaced by a wooden staircase in the center. One of the former staircases was blocked by a column drum to serve as a vat to receive liquid libations that would spill over from that poured on the betyl. Surrounding the podium was a long narrow corridor allowing access to crypts at the back.[351] Despite these changes, it still remains unclear who was worshipped at the Khirbet edh-Dharih temple.

Dhībān

Located in the Moabite region of Jordan, just east of the Dead Sea, is the ancient city of Dhībān, approximately 64 km. south of Amman (fig. 23).[352] The settlement enjoyed a rich history during Biblical times, but was deserted some time in the 6th century BC. In the late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD, the Nabataeans entered the region and undertook massive reconstruction programs until around AD 106, when Nabataean Dhībān was abandoned. During the Roman period, there is very little evidence for occupation, with the exception of a few inscriptions and coinage, both suggesting military presence in Dhībān.[353] Aside from this evidence though, very little construction took place during the Roman period; the city apparently remained in a bleak state until a "renaissance" in the 5th century AD.[354]

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[349] The *motāb* is the base of a *betyl* and is generally known as the throne of the god, which the *betyl* represents (Healey 2001, 158-159).
[350] al-Muheisen 2002, 46.
[351] al-Muheisen 2002, 46.
[352] See Winnett and Reed 1964 for excavation reports from the first 2 seasons and Tushingham 1972 for the 3rd season.
[353] The first of these inscriptions is a dedication to Emperor Septimius Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta, dating to around AD 201. It is possible that by this period, there was a military unit stationed at Dhībān. Military presence at the settlement is later supported by another inscription, which describes the construction of a tower by Claudius Capitolinus, *legatus Augusti pro praetore* (Tushingham 1972, 56-57).
[354] Tushingham 1972, 57-59.

Under the Nabataeans, the walls and gates of the city were reconstructed. In the early 1st century AD the Nabataeans also constructed a large temple, similar to the Qasr al-Bint in Petra (fig. 24).[355] The temple today is completely destroyed, but enough architectural features exist to allow excavators to reconstruct the temple plan. The complex, which, based on its size, must have been the most prominent Nabataean structure, was approached by a grand staircase[356] and was surrounded by an unwalled sacred precinct.[357] The interior of the temple is divided by two cross walls into three parts: the *pronaos*, the *cella*, and the *adyton*.[358] Similar to the layout of the Qasr al-Bint, the *adyton* was also divided into three sections by two shorter walls. Interestingly, the back wall of the temple behind the *adyton* is 40 cm. thicker than the other walls of the temple, suggesting an area for cult niches or possible stairs leading up to a second story or roof.[359]

The Dhībān temple may have been a place of pilgrimage but it is unclear as to which deity it was dedicated. Based on its similarities to the Qasr al-Bint in Petra, a temple believed to have been dedicated to both Dushara and al-'Uzzā as their Greek counterparts, it is possible that the Dhībān temple could have been associated with Dushara, as well.

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[355] Tushingham 1997, 156-158; Wenning 1987, 63.
[356] The major difference between the Dhībān temple and the Qasr al-Bint at Petra is the presence of a planned staircase. At the Qasr al-Bint, the staircase appears to have been constructed later than the temple and, thus, was not an integral part of the original temple plan, as at Dhībān. In light of this evidence, it appears that the Qasr al-Bint was the original temple and the Dhībān temple was a "copy." (Tushingham 1972, 33).
[357] Tushingham 1997, 158. Date of temple based on ceramic evidence (see Tholbecq 1997, 1082).
[358] Tushingham 1972, 28.

It is notable that none of the sites in central Jordan can be firmly associated with Dushara. Though the Nabataeans had a presence in this region, it appears that the religion of the Moabite and Edomite cultures was preferred, at least at Hūrāwa and Khirbet edh-Dharih.[360]

Southern Jordan

Petra

Further south located approximately 80 km. south of the Dead Sea is Petra, perhaps the most important and influential Nabataean city (fig. 25).[361] Petra enjoyed a rich history from the late 4th/early 3rd centuries BC through the Byzantine period, with some evidence for occupation into the Crusader period.[362] As the kingdom's capital during the Nabataean period, Petra played a key role not only in administrative affairs, but also in religion. Throughout the city is a wide range of features used in Nabataean cults, including Greco-Roman-style temples, high places, and betyls (fig. 26).[363] For the sake of this thesis, only major religious structures will be addressed.

Of the temples within Petra, the most important appears to be the Qasr al-Bint, located at the southern end of the colonnaded street along the bottom of the Wadi Musa (fig. 26). The entire sanctuary area covered an area of approximately 200 m. in length

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[359] Tushingham 1972, 29.
[360] Patrich 2005, 96.
[361] Negev 1993c, 1181. For a comprehensive review of Petra's architectural features, see McKenzie 1990. For the city's history, see Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904-1905; Starcky 1966; Hammond 1973; Wenning 1987 197-304; Negev 1990; Wenning and Merklein 1997; and Taylor 2002.
[362] Negev 1993c, 1181. The city was partially destroyed in the AD 363 earthquake.
[363] Betyls will be discussed in great detail in the artistic representation portion of this chapter. See below.

and was entered through a monumental arched gate, which led to a large *temenos*.[364] An inscription found within the benches located along the *temenos* wall is dedicated by a temple official to King Aretas IV, giving the temple a *terminus ante quem* of the beginning of the 1st century AD.[365] In front of the temple inside the *temenos* is believed to be the remnants of an altar, perhaps used in outdoor religious rituals.[366] At the end of the *temenos* is the temple, a large tripartite structure (32 m. x 32 m.) with walls preserved up to 23 m. in height and accessed by a grand staircase through four columns, leading to a forecourt area, or the *pronaos* (figs. 27-28).[367] Within the *pronaos* is a doorway, beside which is a small niche to receive a cult statuette. This doorway leads to the *cella* and to the triapsidal sanctuary, or *adyton*, at the rear of the structure.[368] The central "apse" was approached by a series of steps and most likely contained a large cult statue, though the only features that remain are a raised podium, a few large marble statue fragments, and a broken eye-idol.[369] Along the perimeter of the two side "apses" are concealed staircases leading first to balconies overlooking the interior of the temple and then to the roof.

The deity worshipped in the Qasr al-Bint is not clearly defined. An inscription in the temple most likely dating to the Roman period mentions Zeus Hypsistos, and a Nabataean-period inscription, perhaps originally located in the *temenos*, mentions *Ζεὺς Ἅγιος*-Dushara.[370] It is unclear if these inscriptions indicate that the temple was dedicated to Zeus and Dushara as an assimilated deity or if only one of the two was chosen for

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[364] Parr 1967-1968, 7.
[365] Pottery found at the site dates as early as the mid-1st century BC (McKenzie 1990, 34-35).
[366] Parr 1967-1968, 18-19; see also Healey 2001, 40.
[367] Wright 1961a, 10.
[368] Wright 1961a, 9-11.
[369] Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 293-295. See below for description of eye-idols.

worship. Perhaps the most plausible theory regarding the temple's deity or deities is that of Zayadine and Farajat, who believe that the Qasr al-Bint was dedicated both to Dushara as Zeus and al-'Uzzā as Aphrodite.[371]

The second temple of importance is the Temple of the Winged Lions, located across the wadi and colonnaded street from the Qasr al-Bint (fig. 26). This temple, so named for the presence of winged lions atop the capitals, is more elaborate than the Qasr al-Bint and measures 17.42 m. x 17.42 m. (fig. 29). Based on inscriptions recovered from associated neighboring workshops, the temple is dated to the early 1st century AD. It was later destroyed in the earthquake of AD 363.[372] The temple is ornately embellished, complete with decorative marble floors, though the majority of the floor was made of local stone. The walls were also coated in a layer of plaster and covered in painted decorations, such as floral motifs and dolphins. Located around the altar podium at the rear of the structure were columns topped with the winged lion imagery. Similar to other Nabataean temples, the podium would have housed an altar or betyl representing the presiding deity. According to Hammond, who has led excavations here since 1974, the cultic object atop the podium may have been curtained during cultic rituals.[373] Among the remains at the temple is an eye-idol, perhaps representing al-'Uzzā, and items representing Osiris. Based on the imagery and the eye-idols found throughout the

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[370] Parr 1957, 13-14.
[371] Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 295.
[372] Hammond 1982, 233. See also Healey 2001, 43.
[373] Hammond 1982, 233.

complex, it has been suggested that the temple is dedicated to al-'Uzzā, but possibly to Dushara, as well.[374]

Another possible temple to the east of the Qasr al-Bint on the south side of the wadi is the so-called "Great Temple", or "South Temple" (fig. 26). The major building phase of the structure dates to the 1st century BC, with a rebuilding phase shortly following in the mid to late-1st century AD.[375] The layout of the structure is different from other temples discussed thus far. After entering through a monumental *propylaeum*, the worshipper reached the walled *temenos*, paved with hexagonal limestone blocks. A set of stairs led to the *pronaos*, which contained a centrally located *theatron*, an odd feature to be located within the center of the temple. Columns line the structure throughout, particularly within the *pronaos*, and large corridors and walkways line the perimeter of the structure.[376]

Within recent years, the idea of the "Great Temple" serving as a religious structure has come into question. First and foremost is the absence of an altar, an important feature in a Nabataean temple, though the later addition of the *theatron* in the center of the "Great Temple" may have destroyed any altar that existed prior.[377] The addition of the latter may suggest that the structure was originally a temple and was later renovated to serve a different purpose, but this, in fact, would have been a sacrilege. Religious sites were viewed as sacred space (*haram*) in antiquity and were generally not

[374] Hammond 1982, 234; Tholbecq 1997, 1075.
[375] See Joukowsky 1998.
[376] See Joukowsky 1998.
[377] Schluntz 1999, 82-84, n. 5.

reconstructed as non-religious sites.[378] Interestingly, in addition to the usual Nabataean remains of lamps, glass, ceramics, etc., religious material has surfaced, including images of the Greek goddess Tyche, a portable betyl, and a Nabataean horned altar, though this evidence pales in comparison to the material located in other temples, such as the Temple of the Winged Lions located across the colonnaded street at Petra.[379] If this is indeed a religious structure, it is perhaps dedicated to Tyche and a Nabataean counterpart, such as al-'Uzzā or Allāt, but the structure most likely was used both in Nabataean and Roman periods as a public assembly hall.[380]

Other structures at Petra can be more firmly connected to the worship of Dushara. The Turkmāniyyeh tomb, located in an isolated area north of Petra's city center (fig. 26), dates to the mid-1st century AD and is known primarily for its lengthy Nabataean inscription describing the layout of the complex and its dedication to Dushara:

> This tomb and the large burial-chamber within it and the small burial-chamber beyond it, in which are burial-places, niche-arrangements, and the enclosure in front of them and the porticoes and rooms within it [i.e. the enclosure] and the benches (gardens?) and *triclinium*(-garden?) and the wells of water and the cisterns(?) and walls (?) and all the rest of the property which is in these places are sacred and dedicated to Dushara, the god of our lord, and his throne Harišā and all the gods, (as) in the documents of consecration according to their contents. And it is the responsibility of Dushara and his throne and all the gods that it should be done as in these documents of consecration and nothing of all that is in them shall be changed or removed and none shall be buried in this tomb except whoever has written for him an authorization for burial in these documents of consecration for ever.[381]

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[378] Schluntz 1999, 91-92. See also Gawlikowski 1982 and his discussion of *haram*, the sacred space for ancient Arabs.
[379] Joukowsky 2001, 51; Schluntz 1999, 86.
[380] Schluntz 1999, 135.
[381] *CIS* II, 350; Milik 1959, 556; main translation from Healey 2001, 51-52, but adapted by Milik 1959, 556.

A key feature to this inscription is the possible mention of a *triclinium* associated with the tomb. It is unknown if the sole purpose of this dining room would have been for funerary banqueting, but the dedication of the entire complex to Dushara and "all the gods" and its isolation from the rest of the city suggests that the Turkmāniyyeh *triclinium* may have served host to *marzēhā* cults comprised of guilds and other groups who held ritual meals in *triclinia*.[382]

In addition to temples, the Nabataeans often manipulated the natural landscape for their worship; for instance, because of Petra's naturally rocky and mountainous environment, high places provided Nabataeans with many opportunities for outdoor worship. High places are well-attested archaeologically and are possibly referred to by Strabo in his discussion of roof-top sun worship.[383]

Perhaps the best known high place is el-Madhbah, located high atop the Zibb 'Atūf ridge above the central part of the city (fig. 26).[384] The top of el-Madhbah is rock-cut with steps leading up from the city below. At one end is a podium on which stood a rock-cut altar with holes that were possibly used to hold some sort of cult object (fig. 30). Next to the altar is a basin with a drain system, used either for liquid libations or sacrificial blood. Also located at el-Madhbah are two reservoirs, perhaps used during sacrificial cleansing or for other rituals.[385] Based on the simplicity of the carvings and structures, it is possible that Dushara was the main deity worshipped here.[386]

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[382] For *marzēhā* cults, see Healey 2001, 165-169.
[383] See Chapter 3.
[384] See Healey 2001, 48.
[385] Hammond 1973, 98-99; Wenning 1987, 216-220.
[386] Hammond 1973, 98-99.

Another high place relevant to this study is the mountain site Umm el-Biyara, situated 330 m. above the center of Petra (fig. 26). The site dates from the Edomite to the Nabataean periods, but the Nabataean remnants remain largely unexcavated (fig. 31).[387] Luckily, a few religious features have surfaced in the last few decades, including a collection of betyl-niches at the Umm el-Biyara "grotto," identified by Milik as dedicated to Zeus-Dushara (fig. 32). This rock sanctuary lies next to what appears to be a large building, perhaps an associated temple (fig. 33).[388] The structure lies atop monumental foundations with a grand staircase leading up to the entrance. The "grotto" sanctuary appears to have been a later addition to the possible temple structure. Additionally, the sanctuary's commanding view over Petra's city center, particularly over the Qasr al-Bint, may indicate a relation between the two structures.[389]

Hawara

Located 44 km south of Petra in the Hisma desert in southern Jordan is Hawara (Humayma), also known as Auara and Havarra in the Nabataean and Roman periods respectively (fig. 25). Nestled between Jebel Qalkha and Jebel Humayma, the ancient city covers an area of about 25 acres and was first established by King Aretas III in the 80s BC perhaps in the hopes of increasing sedentarization among the region's nomads (fig. 34). Very little is known about the early years of the settlement, though an extensive water-supply system appears some time in the 1st century BC, possibly in an attempt to

[387] Bennett 1980, 209; Bienkowski 1997, 274-276.
[388] Bennett 1980, 211.
[389] Bennett 1980, 211.

increase settlers and trade.[390] Following the annexation of Nabataea in AD 106, Trajan constructed a Roman fort at Hawara to monitor caravan traffic and other travelers in the Hisma. The city also became a stopping point off the *via nova Traiana*, the major military and trade route leading from Aqaba in the south to Bostra in the north. Thanks to the construction of this new road, the area enjoyed relative prosperity into the Islamic period, where the settlement housed the Abbasid royal family.[391]

The most important structure pertaining to this thesis at Hawara is a mudbrick complex within the *vicus* of the associated Roman fort to the north.[392] Dating to the late 2nd century AD, the complex consists of several structures, including several possible homes and a shrine or temple, and was decorated with elaborate architectural features and large painted frescoes (fig. 35).[393] Worshippers entered the religious complex from the east by way of a 20 m.-long processional way, which led through an open courtyard and westward into the shrine itself, allowing the worshipper to view Jebel Qalkha, a mountain that loomed over the complex in the range to the west (figs. 36-37). The mountain may have been associated with worship within the complex.[394] Located in the shrine are votive offerings and an aniconic betyl possibly representing Dushara, but the presence of Latin and Greek dedications to Jupiter Ammon and to Serapis in addition to the Nabataean votives suggests the vibrant religious syncretism of the area.[395] Not only is

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[390] Oleson 2004, 353. See also Oleson 1997b.
[391] Oleson 1997a, 121; Oleson 2001, 578.
[392] This is termed by the excavators as E125.
[393] Oleson, *et al.* 2001, 456-457.
[394] Oleson, *et al.* 2005, 554.
[395] Jupiter Ammon and Serapis reflect the Egyptian culture of the soldiers in the Third Legion *Cyrenaica*, who were stationed in Egypt for 125 years prior to their arrival in Arabia (Oleson 2004, 356, 358); Oleson, *et al.* 2001, 456-457.

this complex serving the religious function of the indigenous culture, but to the soldiers of the *Legio III Cyrenaica* vexillation in the fort to the north, as well.[396] Also of note is a collection of betyls several kilometers south of Hawara at the base of Jebel Qalkha, all located within close proximity of the natural spring of the site.[397] As Hawara lies at the base of the ash-Sharā mountain range, it is reasonable to assume that the god of the surrounding region of Hawara is Dushara, "the one of ash-Sharā."[398]

Iram

A major site of note in southern Jordan is Iram (Wadi Ramm), located along a southerly trade route, 40 km. east of Aqaba (figs. 1, 38).[399] The site is perhaps most well-known for its temple to Allāt at the base of Jebel Ramm, which dates to the reign of King Aretas IV in either AD 32 or AD 36.[400] The temple, measuring 13 m. x 11 m., originally may have been surrounded by a *temenos* and was approached by a set of stairs, which led to the *cella* (fig. 39). Hexagonal stones cover the floor and the walls are decorated with painted stucco. Walls of engaged columns surround the podium, leaving room for circumambulation, and remains include a betyl, an altar base, and a possible statue fragment of Allāt. Along the perimeter of the temple are several rooms, perhaps used

[396] Oleson, *et al.* 2005, 554.
[397] Graf 1992, 69; see also Oleson 2001, 575.
[398] Graf 1992, 75. See also Chapter on Dushara at etymology of his name.
[399] See Savignac 1932, 1933, 1934; Starcky 1966, 978-980; Wenning 1987, 101-105; Negev 1997; Tholbecq 1998.
[400] Zayadine and Farés-Drappeau 1998, 257. Tholbecq believes the main temple was constructed either in the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, with major reorganizations made in the late 1st century AD, perhaps under the reign of King Rabbel II (Tholbecq 1998, 246).

during cult rituals or to house temple officials or pilgrims traveling to the site.[401] There were also stairs leading to an upper story or roof.[402]

Additionally there is the 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh rock sanctuary located in the mountains behind the Allāt temple dating to the reign of King Rabbel II (AD 70-106), containing several betyls and associated inscriptions surrounding a natural spring (figs. 38, 40, 41).[403] Of note is a Nabataean inscription naming Dushara, appearing as follows:

> This . . .
> Dushara . . .
> . . . . . .
> and Baalshamin gods of
> our lord.[404]

The inscription accompanies a betyl located at the back of the sanctuary, and comprises the only example of both Dushara and Baalshamin being named as the gods of the king.[405] Several other deities are named in this sanctuary, further supporting the claim that Iram served as an important religious center for the southern portion of the kingdom.

Northwestern Saudi Arabia

Hegra

Hegra (Meda'in Saleh), the southernmost Nabataean settlement, is located in northwestern Saudi Arabia 460 km southeast of Petra. Very little of the city's history is known prior to the mid-1st century BC, when the Nabataeans gained control of Hegra

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[401] Tholbecq 1998, 251.
[402] Tholbecq 1997, 1077-1078.
[403] See Chapter 2 for inscriptions relating to different deities.

from the Lihyanite tribe. Following this period, Hegra served as the administrative and military center for the southern portion of the Nabataean kingdom (fig. 1).[406] Located both on the trade route from Yemen to Syria and on the pilgrimage route to Mecca, the city benefited from frequent caravan and pilgrim traffic. Unfortunately, little is known about this great city, which, during the Nabataean period, was second in importance only to Petra. Jaussen and Savignac in the early 1900s contributed a great deal to the study of Hegra, but relatively few archaeological excavations have been conducted here.[407]

The landscape of Hegra is similar to that at Iram, with windswept sandstone pillars of rock situated on a bed of sand. The settlement of Hegra itself is surrounded by mountains on all sides, providing an abundant space for rock-cut buildings and tombs (fig. 42).[408] Remnants of stone pillars suggest massive structures lie beneath the surface level, though heavy erosion and the lack of major excavations in the area hinder the study of the city center.[409] Of the 80 monumental tombs located throughout the settlement, 27 can be clearly dated to the 1st centuries BC/AD. These tombs are of a similar style to those at Petra, though no human figures appear in any carving at Hegra.[410] Carved figures that do appear are sphinxes, serpents, griffins, and eagles, the latter of which is

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[404] Savignac 1934, 576-577, no. 19.
[405] Savignac 1934, 577.
[406] The site is also known in Islamic tradition as Al-Hijr. Other peoples are also known to have lived at Hegra, including the Lihyanites, Thamud, Sahmites, and Jews (Wenning 1996, 256; Parr 1997, 446; Al-Talhi, et al. 1988, 47-48); Wenning 1996, 255; McKenzie 1990, 11.
[407] The first comprehensive archaeological excavations did not occur until 1986, under the Saudi Arabian Department of Antiquities and Museums (Al-Talhi, et al. 1988, 47). For a comprehensive study of the architecture at Hegra (Meda'in Saleh) in comparison to Petra, see McKenzie 1990. For funerary epigraphic evidence, see Healey 1993.
[408] Parr 1997, 446; Al-Talhi, et al. 1988, 47.
[409] Wenning 1996, 253.
[410] Healey 2001, 53. For a detailed analysis and comparison of the Hegran and Petran tombs, see McKenzie 1990.

generally used over tomb doorways, perhaps representing Dushara (fig. 47).[411] The eagle is often featured above tomb doorways, offering protection for those who remain inside. This artistic imagery may be connected to Dushara's assimilation with Zeus, a deity known to be related to eagles.[412]

Located in the northeastern section of the site is a rocky outcrop forming a circle and is known as Jebel Ithlib, the center of which may have been used for cult rituals (fig. 43). Wenning believes that Jebel Ithlib is the only suitable area for the *marzēhā* cults, which were featured around feasting and *triclinia*.[413] This theory is bolstered by the appearance of the Dīwān, a large *triclinium* (10 m. x 12 m.), located at the entrance to the gorge leading to the center of Jebel Ithlib (figs. 44-45).[414] As the only recognized *triclinium* at Hegra, the Dīwān may have served a variety of functions and hosted large congregations of people, though a religious function is suggested by a cult statue dedicated to Shay' al-Qawm.[415] Also, several cult niches and betyls appear throughout Jebel Ithlib, further supporting the religious significance of this area (figs. 46-47). It is possible that the gorge served as the processional way and the interior of the mountain hollow served as a "natural *haram*," or sacred space.[416] Along an inaccessible ledge inside the area is an inscription that mentions the "Lord of the temple," which may refer to Dushara.[417] A few deities appear throughout the Jebel Ithlib area, but the reference to

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[411] Wenning 1996, 257.
[412] Wenning 1996, 257.
[413] Wenning 1996, 261.
[414] Wenning 1996, 260-266. For a detailed description of *marzēhā* cults, see Healey 2001, 165-169.
[415] Healey 2001, 54.
[416] Healey 2001, 54.
[417] JS I, 213-216, no. 57.

the "Lord of the temple," if it is Dushara, may suggest Dushara's prominence of the major religious site at Hegra.

Summary

After a review of the archaeological remains throughout the Nabataean realm, it appears that the Nabataeans did not follow a distinct pattern for their cultic monuments.[418] The variety of temple construction shows that even if the Nabataeans were influenced by the Greco-Roman temple, there was not one style which they preferred. Some Nabataean temples included *triclinia* for cultic banqueting, such as at Hūrāwa; some included more than one level, such as at Qasr al-Bint and the temple at Iram, though most probably had roof access; some included a triapsidal *adyton*, which may have included cultic statues or other features, such as at Dhībān and Qasr al-Bint, while others featured an altar or circumambulatory podium at the center or rear of the temple, such as those at the Temple of the Winged Lions, Khirbet edh-Dharih, Hūrāwa, and Iram. Other cultic areas for the Nabataeans included more natural areas associated with mountains or natural springs. Mountaintop high places, such as the el-Madhbah high place which consisted primarily of a courtyard and an altar, were extremely popular at Petra. Their religious significance is indicated by the numerous rock-cut betyls and niches carved into the mountainside along the stairway leading to the top. Other natural features include collections of betyls near water sources and mountains, such as the sanctuaries at 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram and at the base of the Jebel Qalkha at Hawara.

[418] See Tholbecq 1997.

The Nabataeans also manipulated natural areas for their own usage, including the creation of a sacred area inside the circular hollow of Jebel Ithlib at Hegra, as well as the various niches carved along the Sīq at Petra.

The variety in cult facilities perhaps may be explained by the presence of different groups or clans worshipping in different areas of Nabataea. Since sedentarized and nomadic groups seem to have coexisted during the 1st centuries BC/AD, at least in Petra, it may be speculated that the temples were used by the sedentarized population in the larger towns and cities, while the rock-cut sanctuaries and high places were used by the more nomadic groups. The practice of worship by the Nabataeans appears to have been mostly public, considering the number of temples, high places, and open areas throughout the region, though smaller niches and betyls, like the portable "eye idols", may suggest some form of private worship.[419]

The cult centers of Dushara, however, are even more difficult to isolate, given the relative lack of inscriptions in the Nabataean religious context. Sites that have concrete evidence for the presence of Dushara worship include primarily rock-cut sanctuaries such as those at Hegra and 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram, and Petra. The religious area at Jebel Ithlib in Hegra contains many rock-cut betyls, some of which use Dushara's well-known epithets. Also, several tombs owners invoke Dushara in inscriptions for the protection of their family's resting place. These tombs date in the 1st centuries BC/AD. The rock-cut sanctuary at Iram, however, can be much more closely dated to the reign of King Rabbel II (AD 70-106). Similar to those at Hegra, the inscriptions at 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh use

[419] Nehmé 1997, 1047.

epithets of Dushara, suggesting his worship. Dushara appears to have had a strong presence at Petra, appearing in several inscriptions. There are also numerous betyls throughout the city, though they are rarely accompanied by an inscription providing an adequate chronology.

The cult centers specifically devoted to Dushara are difficult to identify, given the relative lack of inscriptions and the ambiguous nature of Nabataean religion. Though many sites have betyls or inscriptions naming Dushara, there is no firm evidence for his association with any given temple or shrine. In the Negev, the dedicatory inscription to Dushara and other possible religious evidence at Sobata dates to the early or mid-1st century AD. At Oboda, the possible temple to deified King Obodas III, that also contained betyls, was in use from the last quarter of the 1st century BC until the end of the 3rd century AD. In the Hauran, it is reasonable to assume that Bostra contained at least one temple dedicated to Dushara, considering his importance to the city during the late Nabataean period and into the 3rd century AD with the arrival of the *Actia Dusaria* games. However, modern occupation has severely hindered the study of the Nabataean and Roman settlements. At Umm el-Jimal, the reuse of a Dushara inscription in the Byzantine settlement suggests the presence of a religious structure dedicated to the deity within the Early Roman/Late Roman site, but specific dates are unclear.

In central Jordan, sites such as Dhībān, Hūrāwa, and Khirbet edh-Dharih have no clear evidence for a connection with Dushara. Dhībān could possibly have been dedicated to Dushara, based on its similarities with the Qasr al-Bint temple in Petra, but no evidence exists to suggest this association. The temple at Hūrāwa, however, is

notably un-Nabataean in structure. The artistic imagery suggests that this temple, and possibly the temple at Khirbet edh-Dharih, may have been dedicated to the Moabite or Edomite religious figures, instead of Nabataean deities.[420]

In southern Jordan, Petra is the major religious site for the region; however, no temples are firmly associated with Dushara. The Qasr al-Bint temple complex may have been associated with Zeus Hypsistos-Dushara and Aphrodite-Athena-al-'Uzzā, but only a few inscriptions exist from the *temenos* area that would suggest these deities. Various betyl niches and high places are also likely associated with Dushara, including the "grotto" and possible temple at Umm el-Biyara, but many of these structures and carvings cannot be dated. In Hawara, the Roman-period betyl placed at the head of the processional way in the mudbrick shrine could represent Dushara, but there are no inscriptions to confirm this.

[420] Patrich 2005, 96.

Chapter 5
Artistic Imagery of Dushara

The indigenous representations of deities in Nabataea were generally in the form of the betyl, an aniconic stone either free-standing or carved into rock. Betyls appear throughout the entirety of the Nabataean kingdom and most abundantly in structures that date to the 1st centuries BC/AD, though some examples date to the Roman period.[421] However, following the creation of *Provincia Arabia*, anthropomorphic forms of Dushara began to appear primarily on imperial coinage throughout the province, possibly indicating the Greco-Roman cultural influence on the region. Occasionally, anthropomorphic and aniconic figures even appear together, for example at Petra.[422] The continuity of Dushara's imagery after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom demonstrates the strength of the local culture. In the Nabataean period, Dushara is closely linked with the royal family, as seen in the abundance of inscriptions from the kingdom, but his appearance in temples, shrines, and on coinage during the Roman period suggests that worship of Dushara was maintained under Roman rule, despite the absence of the Nabataean king after AD 106. However, it appears that Dushara's connection with the king was not replaced by any other deity in the Roman period.

[421] Some betyls appear in contexts which cannot be dated.
[422] Wadi Farasa.

Aniconic Imagery

The plain betyl was the most popular type of artistic representation for deities prior to the Roman annexation of the Nabataean kingdom.[423] Though there are several variations of the betyl, it is generally rock-hewn, rectangular in shape, and placed on a rectangular or square base. Additionally, betyls can be carved into niches, outlined on a rock face, or free-standing. Betyls are found throughout the Nabataean kingdom, with important examples at Petra, Hegra, and the 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh rock sanctuary at Iram.[424] Betyls appear more frequently in Petra than at any other site, with 60 examples alone from the Sīq, the gorge entranceway into the city.[425] Other betyls appear at sites throughout the kingdom, including Hūrāwa, the Negev, Canatha in Sinai,[426] and the Hauran, though examples from the latter are extremely rare.[427] In the Negev region, small encampments containing betyl arrangements are scattered throughout areas outside of the major cities. Among the 200 sites studied by Avner, 2,000 free-standing betyls were located in various arrangements. Out of these 2,000 stones, approximately 95% were located behind the encampments with the back of the stones facing a hill or mountain, thus, allowing the worshipper to face the hill.[428] This suggests further that the Nabataean deities, and in particular Dushara, were associated with natural occurrences.

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[423] See Wenning 2001.
[424] Patrich 1990a, 59-63.
[425] Patrich 1990a, 59, from Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, 222.
[426] Material from Qasrāwet is relatively scarce and does not relate to Dushara. Thus, evidence from this site will not be discussed here.
[427] Patrich 1990a, 63-70. For betyls in the Hauran, we know they existed based on the coinage from this region. See below.
[428] Avner 1984, 115-131; Patrich 1990a, 64-66.

The aniconic artistic tradition from the Nabataean religious context is passed on through literary sources including Maximus Tyrius, Clement of Alexandria, and Arnobius, who provide vague descriptions of the Nabataean cult imagery as that of a stone.[429] Epiphanius confuses the word for "stone" or "betyl" (*ka'ba*) with the word for "young women" or "female breasts" (*ka'iba* or *ku'ba*), thus leading to an account of Dushara's virginal birth that is most likely unreliable.[430] The most vivid account of the Nabataean sacred stone thus far in the ancient sources is in the *Suda* lexicon from the 10th century AD, in which the object of worship is described as a quadrangular stone, aniconic and black, resting on a base of gold.[431] Though Suidas confuses Dushara with the Greek god Ares, the detailed description of the cult object proves to be invaluable when comparing it to the archaeological data. Most extant Nabataean betyls match the description provided in this Byzantine account, in a basic way, though without a golden platform.

As evident in the *Suda*, the role of the betyl base seemed to be important within the Nabataean religious context. The term generally used for this base was *mwtb'* (*mōtab*) and is translated as the "seat" or "throne" under the betyl of the deity represented. Not only did this serve practical purposes as the base for the betyl, but it also appears that the *mwtb'* was worshipped together with Dushara. Evidence for the worship of Dushara's throne appears in the Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription from Petra, in

[429] Maximus Tyrius, *Philosophumena* II, 8; Clemens Alexandrinus, 4.46.2; Arnobius, 6.11. See Chapter 4 for full citations.
[430] Epiphanius, 51. 22. 11; see also Cook 1940, 912-916.
[431] *Suda*, from Adler 1931, II: 713; Patrich 1990a, 50-51.

which the *mwtb'* is invoked alongside Dushara and the rest of the gods.[432] The Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription, which dates to the mid-1st century AD, provides key details regarding the worship of Dushara, as well as the rest of the pantheon.[433] Not only is Dushara listed first, suggesting his superiority over the other Nabataean deities, but his "throne" is given its own name, the Harišā. This indicates that Dushara's throne is worshipped, but separate from the worship of the deity himself. Unfortunately, these bases rarely survive and are difficult to identify in the archaeological record. It is possible that the *podia* within the temples and sanctuaries discussed above, including the Qasr el-Bint, el-Madhbah high place, and Khirbet edh-Dharih, could represent these "thrones." That these areas are circumambulatory further suggests the religious significance of the betyl base.[434] Unfortunately, the paucity of material from the archaeological record hinders further research in this area, with the exception of imagery on coinage. Of note is a coin of Gallienus from Adraa, which dates to approximately AD 255-256 (see App. 1, no. 4, fig. 4 for similar coin).[435] The obverse features the bust of the emperor and the reverse depicts a rounded "hemispherical" betyl placed on top of a base.[436] In front of the base there appear to be several horizontal lines, interpreted by Hill as stairs.[437] It is clear from this image that, in some contexts, the betyl was placed atop a base, perhaps in the more formal setting of a temple or elaborate sanctuary.

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[432] *CIS* II, 350; Milik 1959, 556; main translation from Healey 2001, 51-52, but adapted by Milik 1959, 556. For complete inscription, see discussion on Petra in Chapter 4.
[433] Starcky 1966, col. 931; see also McKenzie 1990, 35.
[434] Teixidor 1977, 87; Healey 2001, 158-159.
[435] Hill 1922, 15, pl. iii. 5.
[436] Hill 1922, 15.
[437] Hill 1922, 15, pl. iii. 5.

Betyls played a key role in the religious practices of the Nabataeans, but even after the tie was broken between the king and the head of the pantheon in AD 106, these betyls seem to have featured in the religious practices of the inhabitants of the new province. Whether it was part of a Nabataean "renaissance" or merely an interest in preserving the culture of the indigenous peoples of the former Nabataean kingdom, the Roman municipal officers in charge of the new Arabian mints often chose to portray betyls of the reverse of several coins, particularly those in the Hauran region and one major example from Petra.[438]

The earliest representation of Dushara as a betyl on an Arabian provincial coin is from Adraa and dates to the reign of Antoninus Pius in the mid-2nd century AD, but the image portrayed is different in shape than the more traditional Petraean betyl.[439] Instead of a rectangular shape, the betyl is rounded on top (App. 1, no. 1, fig. 1).[440] A similar image appears on other coins from Adraa dating to the reigns of Marcus Aurelius, Elagabalus, and Gallienus, ranging a span of approximately 100 years (App. 1, nos. 2-4, figs. 2-4).[441] Like other coins from the region, the betyl also sits on top of a square or rectangular base, approached by steps. This base may represent the *mōtab*, or the "sacred throne," of Dushara. Since this rounded shape appears only on coins from Adraa over a period from the mid-2nd century AD to the mid-3rd century AD, it may indicate a regional difference in the cult of Dushara. The legend of these coins often reads "*ΔOVCAPHC*

[438] Note that coinage minted in the Nabataean kingdom never depicted betyls or any other religious imagery. Instead, the king and often the queen were depicted on the obverse with floral or cornucopia imagery on the reverse (Meshorer 1977).
[439] See Patrich 1990a, 71-72.
[440] Morey 1914, xxviii.
[441] Hill 1922, 15. 2, pl. iii. 5; Spijkerman 1978, 60-65, nos. 1-3, 12, 17.

ΘΕΟC ΑΔΡΑΗ(ΝΨΝ)," linking Dushara distinctly to the city of Adraa. One other rounded betyl appears carved in the rock face in the Sīq of Petra. Since this particular type of betyl is specifically associated with Adraa, its appearance along the entranceway into the city of Petra may suggest that the people of Adraa carved their own representation of Dushara on their pilgrimmage to the great city of Petra (fig. 48).[442]

An early provincial coin from Petra minted under Julia Domna and dating to the early 3rd century AD depicts the goddess Tyche seated under a temple roof holding a trophy in her left hand and a betyl in her right hand (App. 1, no. 1, fig. 5).[443] The betyl is rectangular and very small in comparison to the goddess.[444] This interesting combination of an anthropomorphic Greco-Roman deity and the aniconic Nabataean religious symbol both featured on coinage from the former Nabataean capital may indicate the cultural mixture of peoples within the city. This also shows that Petra was still associated with betyl worship in the 3rd century AD.

A coin from Bostra minted under Trajan Decius and his son Herennius Etruscus, that dates to the mid-3rd century AD, is important not only for its reference to the *Actia Dusaria* games, but also for the betyls depicted on the reverse (App. 1, no. 11, fig. 12). Seated upon a raised platform are three betyls, approached by a ladder or set of stairs. The center betyl is topped by seven flat objects and the two betyls on either side each have one flat object stacked on top. These flat objects have been interpreted as cakes or

[442] Morey 1914, xxviii; Healey 2001, 99-100.
[443] Hill 1922, 36. 16, pl. v. 14.
[444] Another coin from Petra depicts similar imagery (Hill 1922, xxxvii-xxxix, pl. xlix. 21).

loaves of bread, possibly as offerings to the deity or deities featured.[445] A similar image appears on the Bostran coins of Caracalla and Elagabalus, as well (App. 1, nos. 9-10, figs. 10-11).[446] Thus, it seems likely that Dushara was worshipped in betyl form during the *Actia Dusaria* games.

Based on evidence that can be securely dated, it appears that the majority of actual betyls appear in the Nabataean period and representations of betyls appear in the Roman period, with the exception of the Roman-date betyl at Hawara. Unfortunately many betyls, including numerous examples at Petra, do not have firm dates due to lack of associated inscriptions, coinage, or pottery. Sites with clearly dated betyls include Hegra (1st centuries BC/AD), Iram (1st century AD), 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh (AD 70-106), Khirbet edh-Dharih (1st century BC-4th century AD), and Hawara (late 2nd century AD). We can most likely assume that many betyls at Petra date to the 1st centuries BC/AD since much of the city dates to this period. Also, at Khirbet edh-Dharih, it is unknown in which period the betyl in the shrine was used. Representations of betyls, however, appear primarily on coinage in the Roman period, with the earliest example from Adraa, dating to the reign of Antoninus Pius in the mid-2nd century AD. The latest known example also comes from Adraa, dating to the reign of Gallienus in AD 256/257 (see App. 1). This may suggest a growing interest in the more traditional forms of Nabataean worship.

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[445] Hill 1922, 26. 48, pl. iv. 12; see also the interpretation of a similar coin under Caracalla in Kindler 1983, 115, no. 30, and Spijkerman 1978, 76-77, no. 38.

Anthropomorphic Imagery

Numismatic evidence from the *Provincia Arabia* is invaluable in regards to the anthropomorphic imagery of Dushara, in addition to the depiction of betyls. Though there are a few examples in relief from the archaeological record, the anthropomorphic images from coinage are the only ones directly associated with Dushara, as indicated by legends on the reverse of coins. The first, and perhaps most important, example is a coin from Bostra dating to AD 177 under the reign of Commodus (App. 1, no. 6, fig. 6-7).[447] On the reverse of this coin is the image of a male bust facing right, wearing a diadem and draped cloth. The figure appears unbearded, with long and wavy hair over the ears and neck. The legend of the coin reads "*BOCTPHNWN ΔOVCAPHC*," linking the image of the man to the god Dushara of Bostra.[448] Another coin from Bostra is interpreted as depicting a male figure on the reverse as Dushara, but the coin is unfortunately too damaged to be positively identified.[449] Two other coins from Bostra depict a similar image under Caracalla in AD 209/10 (App. 1, nos. 7-8, figs. 8-9). Dushara, depicted anthropomorphically, faces right, wears a laurel wreath across the top of the head, and draped material across the chest.[450] The hair, like on the Commodus coin, is long and

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[446] Kindler 1983, 115, no. 30. Note another Elagabalus coin from Charachmoba (modern Karak) with a similar image (Hill 1922, 27. 3).
[447] This was first studied by C. Morey (1914) in the *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria.*
[448] See Hill 1922, xxvi, pl. xlix. 13; Spijkerman 1978, 74-75, no. 24.
[449] Hill 1922, xxvi, 23, no. 39.
[450] Spijkerman 1978, 76-79, nos. 37, 39. Spijkerman identifies the draped cloth as a paludamentum and a cuirass.

wavy. Both coins identify the image as Dushara, with one legend reading "*ΔOVCAPHC ΘEOC BOCTPWN.*"[451]

Morey ascribes this new representation of the Nabataean deity to the cultural influences of the new Greco-Roman inhabitants of the province, particularly within the new capital of Bostra. He states that at Bostra "it was to be expected that the god should appear in human form, under the steady pressure of Hellenistic materialism."[452] Scholars have disputed whether these anthropomorphic representations are indicative of "Romanization," depicting Dushara with wild Dionysiac imagery, or whether they are connected to Nabataean royal portraits of the 1st centuries BC/AD.[453] The Dionysiac associations derive primarily from the Hauran, a region known for its wine production, and from ancient sources that believe the "Arabs" and/or the Nabataeans worshipped Dionysus.[454] Through this syncretization, it seems logical to link Dushara's anthropomorphic imagery, a style not known prior to the Roman annexation, to the widely-known imagery of Dionysus. However, though the idea of divine anthropomorphism may be a more Greco-Roman practice, the actual imagery used may have in fact developed from the Nabataeans themselves. Prior to the Roman period, Nabataean kings appeared on coinage with a side profile and long, flowing hair, similar to the anthropomorphic representations of Dushara from Bostra. Bowersock analyzed the Nabataean coinage and the imagery of the kings and compared it to that of the

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[451] Spijkerman 1978, 78-79, no. 39.
[452] Morey 1914, xxix.
[453] For Dionysiac imagery, see Sourdel 1952, 62-64, Morey 1914, and Zayadine 1989, 115; for arguments against associations with Dionysus, see Starcky 1966, col. 990.
[454] See Chapter 2 for full discussion of Dionysiac associations. See Chapter 3 for discussion of literary sources.

Commodus coin, along with a similar coin of Caracalla. The profile and hair on the two types of coins are strikingly similar, leading Bowersock to conclude that the provincial coins are not true evidence of a "Romanized" deity, but reflect a "renaissance" of Nabataean ideals, returning to the artistic tradition of the Nabataean kings themselves (App. 1, nos. 6-8, figs. 6-9; figs. 49-50).[455] This potential "renaissance" is reflected further in the simultaneous anthropomorphic and aniconic representations of Dushara on the coinage of Caracalla. Three coins issued around the same time portray both forms of imagery, suggesting that the anthropomorphic form was not a replacement for the aniconic, but an addition to it. Interestingly the anthropomorphic forms are only in use for a few decades, until the time of Caracalla. After this period, only betyls appear in the Nabataean religious context on coinage.[456]

Though numismatic evidence is our main source for anthropomorphic imagery of Dushara, some sculptural evidence may exist, as well. Located during excavations of the Qasr al-Bint at Petra in 1959 were the remnants of a large marble statue, of which only the hand remains. Based on the size of the hand, it is estimated that the statue would have originally stood approximately 6 or 7 m. tall in the *adyton*, the central niche at the rear of the Qasr el-Bint. Scholars believe the statue may represent Zeus Hypsistos-Dushara, the male deity associated with the temple; however, with only the hand

[455] See Bowersock 1990. This "renaissance" follows a period of more "Roman"-style coinage. Following the Roman annexation, provincial officials took control of the Nabataean treasury and removed all Nabataean images from their coinage by replacing them with Roman ones. Once the old images were hammered out, new coinage showed a portrait of Trajan with a standing Arabia and a camel (Negev 1978, 642-645).

[456] Patrich 1990a, 71-73. This time frame may be lengthened if the coin of Philip from the mid-3rd century AD is in fact a representation of Dushara.

remaining, it could possibly belong to a female figure such as al-'Uzzā or Athena.[457] Also, the use of marble indicates a Roman date, so it would have been a Roman addition to the temple if the statue belongs there.

Combined Aniconic and Anthropomorphic Imagery

In addition to the clearly defined images of the aniconic and anthropomorphic forms are combinations of the two. Located in the Wadi Farasa at Petra is an interesting example of a betyl carved into a rock face topped with an anthropomorphic figure in medallion (fig. 51). The question remains as to who is depicted in the medallion above the betyl. Hammond proposes that the figure is female and represents Allāt-Atargatis, though Zayadine believes that the figure is male based on the analysis of the armbands on the figure and represents Dushara.[458] Healey also raises the possibility that the image may be Dionysus, if in fact Dushara is associated with Dionysus.[459] Since the two images are linked, it is believed that the human figure is a representation of the god depicted as the betyl and the anthropomorphic image was used to replace the inscription naming the deity.[460] In this case, the image is most likely Dushara.

"Eye Idols"

A less obvious combination of the aniconic and anthropomorphic traditions is the so-called "eye idol," a rectangular betyl with eyes and sometimes other facial features

[457] Parr 1967-1968, 18.
[458] Hammond 1973, 100; Zayadine 1975, 336-337.
[459] Healey 2001, 100.

carved on the front, either recessed, incised, or raised.[461] These are not as widespread as a regular betyl, appearing in Petra, 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram, and Hegra. Based on inscriptional evidence often located near these objects, "eye idols" generally represent either the Nabataean goddess al-'Uzzā or the Syrian goddess Atargatis. One example at the rock sanctuary of 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh is a niche containing two betyls, one of which has incised squares for eyes. The inscription is as follows:

> This is al-'Uzzā and the Lord of the House, that was made by Aqbar Phm and Haggy, artisans.[462]

As evident from the inscription, this particular niche associates al-'Uzzā with Dushara, known from his common epithet "Lord of the House."

Perhaps the most famous "eye idol" is a 1st century AD example found within the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra, used as architectural decoration for the temple (fig. 52). The front of the rectangular stone slab is trimmed with geometric shapes and topped with a wreath, perhaps representing a laurel. In the center of this wreath is a depression, perhaps once used to house a jewel. In the center of the stone are two recessed eyes outlined by protruding eyebrows and lids. Hanging from the center is a nose, thin and rectangular, and beneath the nose is a mouth with raised lips. A Nabataean inscription at the bottom of the stone reads: "The goddess of Hyn son of Nybt."[463] Since the Temple of the Winged Lions is generally associated with al-'Uzzā, she is likely represented in this particular image.[464]

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[460] Patrich 1990b, 187
[461] See Patrich 1990a, 82-86.
[462] Savignac 1933, 413, no. 4; English translation from Patrich 1990a, 55.
[463] Patrich 1990a, 85.
[464] Patrich 1990b, 187.

Other "eye idols" that appear in the Nabataean kingdom include portable examples, which were miniature versions of the larger stone slabs (fig. 53). These idols only appear at Petra and are believed to have replaced figurines in certain rituals[465]; however, it is possible that portable examples may have existed at Hegra. A niche in the Jebel Ithlib sanctuary shows a rock-cut cavity with a carved grooved along the bottom, which could have possibly held a portable betyl or "eye idol."[466] Even smaller examples include the so-called "al-'Uzzā earrings."[467] Located at the Negev site of Mampsis/Kurnub were a pair of circular gold earrings 18 mm. in diameter. The trim of the earrings is braided and the center features two oval gems on a background of gold dots. Located beneath the two gems, which mimick the eyes in stone "eye idols", is a circular protrusion, perhaps representing a nose.[468] The "face" on these earrings is believed to represent al-'Uzzā (fig. 54).[469]

While these "eye idols" are representative of the mixture of anthropomorphic and aniconic imagery, all the examples most likely represent female figures particularly al-'Uzzā and Atargatis. There is no direct evidence for the representation of Dushara as an "eye idol."

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[465] Patrich 1990a, 83; Bennett 1962, 238-239.
[466] Wenning 1996, 263.
[467] See Patrich 1984.
[468] Patrich 1984, 42-43.
[469] Patrich 1984, 42. This is identified as al-'Uzzā based on comparisons with two other pieces of Negev jewelry. Another earring from Mampsis follows a similar pattern as the first earring, but contains a small female figure in the middle. When compared to the Aphrodite figure on a pendant from Oboda, it may be

Summary

The imagery from Nabataean religious contexts is key when determining the continuity of religious practices following the Roman annexation. Betyls first appear in the 1st century BC, at the pinnacle of the Nabataean kingdom, and continue onward into at least the 4th century AD. The geographic distribution of the betyl is widespread, covering all corners of the Nabataean kingdom, appearing especially in Petra, Iram, and Hegra. Additionally, betyls appear on imperial coinage in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD from Bostra, Adraa, Charachmoba (Kerak), Medaba (Madaba), and Petra. It is quite clear that the aniconic form of religious imagery was extremely important to the Nabataeans, but that, following the Roman annexation, anthropomorphic images appear for a brief span of time. Human representations of Dushara appear on coinage for a few decades during the late 2nd/early 3rd centuries AD in the form of a Nabataean king, possibly reflecting a revival of Nabataean imagery. This type of artistic representation fails to survive and appears no later than the mid-3rd century AD. Despite the disappearance of the clear anthropomorphic imagery, a mixture survives in the form of an "eye idol," a style which first appears in the 1st century AD and lasts until the first half of the 4th century AD, although none of these represent Dushara.[470] Even though Dushara was closely linked with the Nabataean royal family prior to the Roman annexation, the end of Nabataean rule did not end the worship of Dushara; however, his role within the

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assumed that the "face" on the earrings represents al-'Uzzā, who was assimilated with the Greek goddess Aphrodite (Patrich 1984, 42-43).

[470] Patrich 1984, 41.

pantheon is not clear in the Roman period. Artistic and numismatic evidence nonetheless suggest that he remained the primary deity in the Nabataean sphere.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

The cultic space of the Nabataeans appears to follow no clear pattern and may reflect the following of different groups; i.e., the sedentarized and nomadic Nabataeans. These areas include temples, rock-cut sanctuaries, and high places, as well as private niches comprising free-standing, rock-cut, or portable betyls. While many of these areas cannot be dated, such as high places and private worship areas, the date of construction for temples and rock-cut sanctuaries appears to lie within the 1st centuries BC/AD, during the height of the Nabataean kingdom; however, some areas were in use well into the Roman period. Many sites in the region can be associated with the worship of Dushara, but those which have a clear chronology are few in number, and include primarily Hegra (1st centuries BC/AD) and 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh at Iram (AD 70-106). Petra, the main Nabataean religious site, does not offer a precise chronology for Dushara's worship. We can assume that many betyls were carved during the 1st centuries BC/AD and that he was possibly worshipped in temples, such as the Qasr al-Bint, into the Roman period. Other evidence from the Roman period possibly suggesting Dushara's worship appears at the shrine at Hawara, dating to the late 2nd century AD, and at the Temple of Obodas III in Oboda, which remained in use until at least the end of the 3rd century AD. Several other complexes may have been used in the Roman period, but there is no firm archaeological evidence. This includes especially the possible temple at Bostra, which must have been a prominent feature in the city into the 3rd century AD during the *Actia Dusaria* games.

The artistic imagery from the Nabataean and Roman periods helps to elucidate possible changes in Dushara's worship. The popularity of the betyl is suggested by its longevity, dating from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD, and its wide geographical distribution, appearing throughout the expanse of the Nabataean kingdom. However, following the creation of *Provincia Arabia* in AD 106, anthropomorphic images of Dushara emerged on imperial coins beginning in AD 177 under Commodus. This anthropomorphism of Dushara never obliterated the aniconic form, but they coexisted, and, after a short span of several decades, anthropomorphic representations of Dushara ended by the mid-3rd century AD. There is also a medallion and betyl arrangement carved on the face of a rock at Wadi Farasa in Petra, though there is no conclusive evidence to determine the date and if this is indeed Dushara; therefore, numismatic evidence remains an important guide for the chronology of Dushara's anthropomorphic imagery. By the mid-3rd century AD, however, the preference for aniconic imagery returns and anthropomorphic imagery on coins is abandoned.

The importance of Dushara's anthropomorphic imagery has been emphasized as a "renaissance" of Nabataean culture and ideals[471]; however, evidence tends to rely solely on numismatic evidence, most of which derives from the northern sector of the province. This movement of anthropomorphism is not widespread enough to suggest a broad cultural movement. In order for this to have been a "renaissance" of Nabataean culture and ideals, seemingly this imagery would have appeared elsewhere, and other aspects of Nabataean culture would have been revived, including the Nabataean language, ceramics,

[471] Bowersock 1990, 31-33.

and architecture. As discussed previously, many of these aspects, though they continue into the Roman period, began to wane following the Roman annexation. While Dushara's anthropomorphic form is indeed reminiscent of the imagery of former Nabataean kings, and may represent a cultural association of the minting city to the Nabataean past, the imagery is an isolated phenomenon. If indeed there was a Nabataean cultural revival, this is reflected in the appearance of betyls on provincial coins more than the anthropomorphic imagery. During the Nabataean period, betyls were not depicted on royal coinage; however, their appearance on Roman-period coins suggests their popularity in each city's sanctuaries.

What is important to remember when analyzing the imagery of the numismatic evidence is that coins are representative of those in charge of the mints, not necessarily by any given individual. The appearance of anthropomorphic imagery may have been introduced by the influence of the Hellenized elites, wishing to portray the main deity as a man. Whether by depiction of an anthropomorphic or aniconic form, provincial cities chose Dushara as representative of the pride in their culture and Nabataean heritage. Though there does not appear to be a "renaissance" of the Nabataean culture, it is possible that the appearance of Dushara as both a kingly male figure and a betyl on coins under the reigns of Emperors Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Philip, all of "Arab" or Syrian descent[472], and the appearance of the *Actia Dusaria* in the new metropolis of Bostra could

[472] As the son of Julia Domna, Caracalla and Geta were prominent figures from Emesa. Elagabalus, the son of Caracalla, is also based out of Emesa in central Syria, and ruled AD 218-222. It should be noted that the cult object of the god Elagabal, of whom Elagabalus was a priest, was a conical black stone. Philip was from the Hauran region and reigned AD 244-249. During the first year of his reign, he founded a new city in the northern Hauran called Philippopolis, but is also thought to have been a patron of the province of Arabia. (Butcher 2003, 50-1, 54, 92, 106, 118, 343

suggest a rising interest in things eastern.[473] The *Actia Dusaria*, in particular, not only show civic pride, but also a cultural amalgamation within Bostra; this is suggested by the games' commemoration of a Roman victory at the Battle of Actium combined with cultic activities in honor of the major indigenous deity Dushara.

Other elements of the Nabataean culture continued into the Roman period, including primarily their ceramics and written script.[474] Nabataean fine ware production experienced a boom in the 1st century AD, but slowly diminished in the Roman period. While production continued as late as the 4th century AD, the ware had lost its artistic flare and appeal in the Roman Arabian market, leading to its demise.[475] The Nabataean language, a form of Aramaic adapted for trade purposes in the 2nd century BC, continued in form until the 4th century AD, when early forms of Arabic became more common.[476] Not only did the Nabataean script continue through the Late Roman period in Arabia and the surrounding areas, but some inscriptions of the Roman period were commissioned by individuals who still called themselves Nabataean. An important example originates from Palmyra in AD 132 as a dedication to Shay' al-Qawm:

> These two altars 'Ubaydu . . ., the Nabataean of the Rawāh tribe who was a cavalryman at the fort and camp of 'Ānah, for Shay' al-Qawm the good and bountiful god[477]

This inscription describes the individual not only as a Nabataean, but as a Nabataean living outside the former realm of Nabataea. His position as a cavalryman in Palmyra may have influenced his decision to include his tribe on the inscription, suggesting that

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[473] Bowersock 1990, 31-33.
[474] These aspects never regained their strength following the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom.
[475] See Hammond 1959 and 'Amr 2001.

he wished to be associated with a certain ethnic background. He was seemingly proud of his cultural heritage and wished to display it through not only his title, but through a dedication to a Nabataean deity.

The continuation of Nabataean culture following the fall of the kingdom demonstrates the power of the indigenous society as a whole and their wish to associate themselves with the culture of the past. This is achieved by the continuation of their main cult, i.e., the worship of Dushara, and the representation of the deity both as the traditional Nabataean betyl and as a male figure in the form of a Nabataean king. His cult clearly continued well into the Roman period and possibly as late as the Islamic period. Safaitic inscriptions dating to the 5th and 6th centuries AD suggest that Dushara's cult remained strong, at least on the fringes of the province.[478] Likewise, Dushara's appearance as pagan god "dhu-al-Shara" in ibn al-Kalbī's *Book of Idols* from the 9th century AD indicates that the deity's following was still strong.[479] It was perhaps through the worship of Dushara that the people of Arabia could stay connected to their Nabataean roots.

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[476] Healey 2001, 10.
[477] *CIS* II, 3973; translation from Healey 2001, 145.

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[478] Patrich 2005, 98.
[479] Ibn al-Kalbī from Faris 1952, 33, sec. 38.

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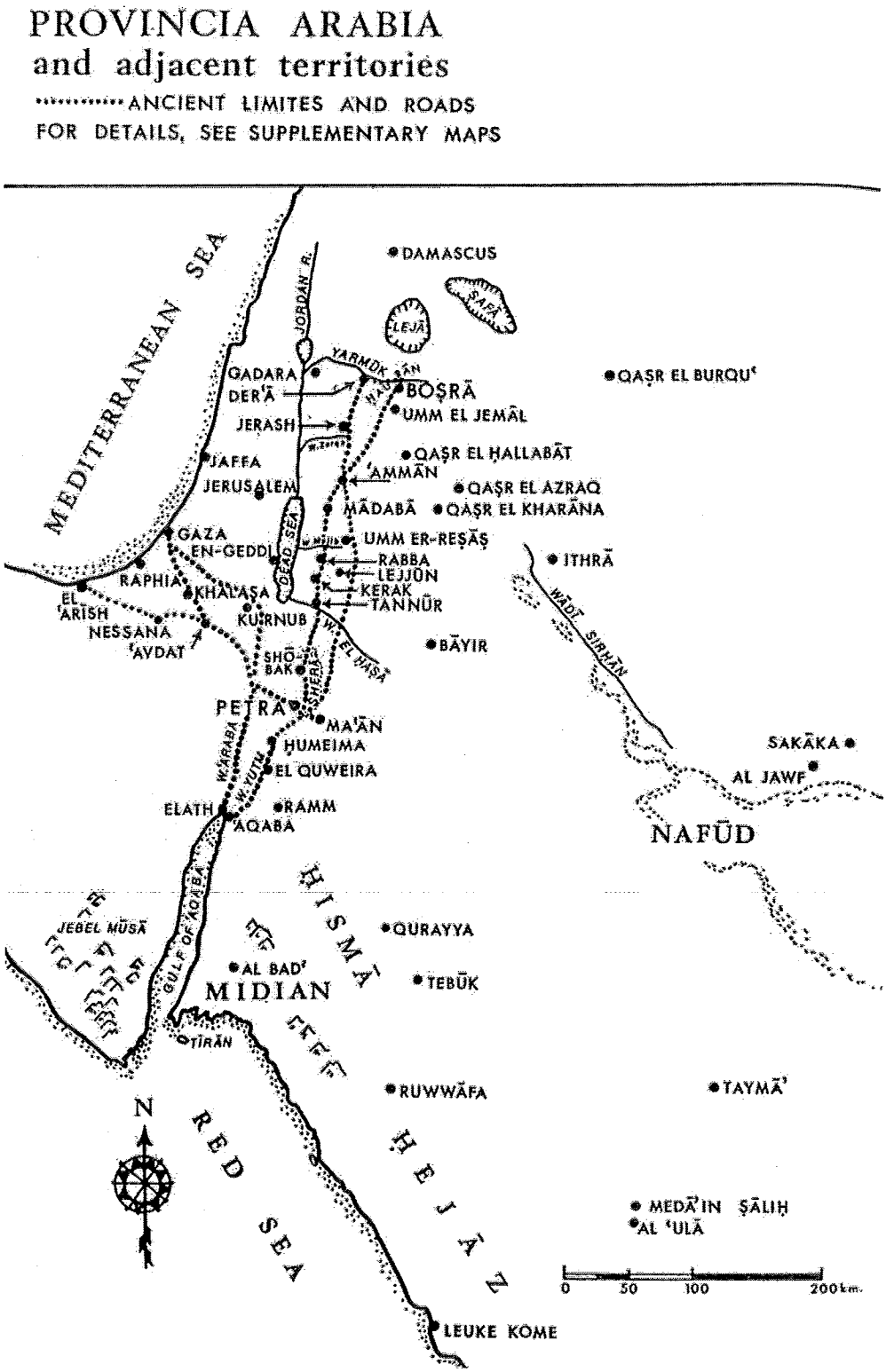


Fig. 1 – Map of *Provincia Arabia* (Bowersock 1979, 220, fig. 33).

Fig. 2 – Zeus-Hadad-Qōs statue from Hūrāwa (Glueck 1965, 94, fig. 41).

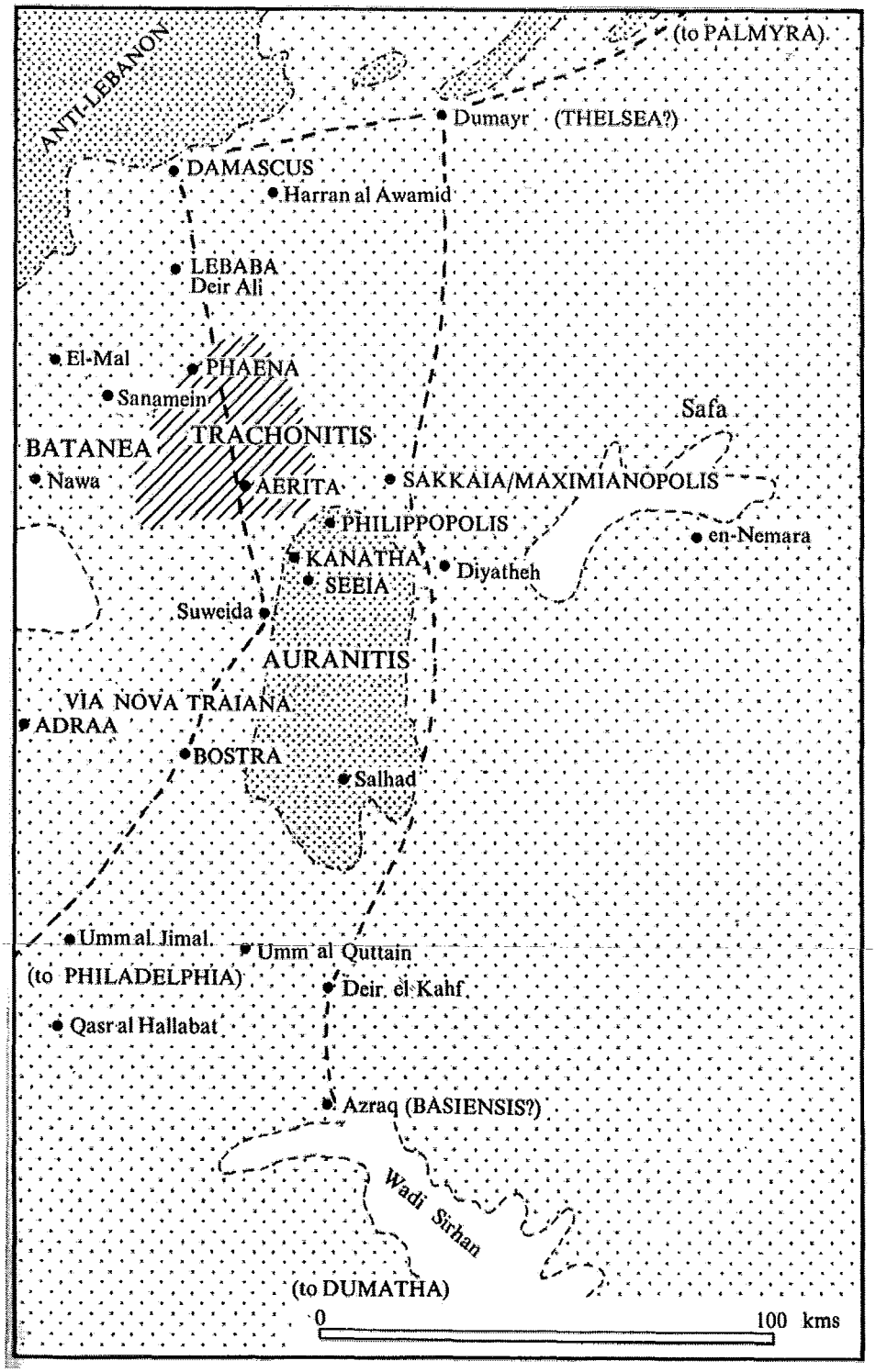


Fig. 3 – Map of Northern Arabia (Millar 1993, 571, map VII).

Fig. 4 – Marble altar to Dushara, bearing inscription "DVSARI SACRVM" on alternating sides (Puteoli) (Tran Tam Tinh 1972, pl. XLVII, fig. 64. S.6).

Fig. 5 – Marble "base" to Dushara, bearing inscription "DVSARI SACRVM" on front. Note also small betyls fitted into appropriate slots on top (Puteoli) (de Franciscis 1967, 210).

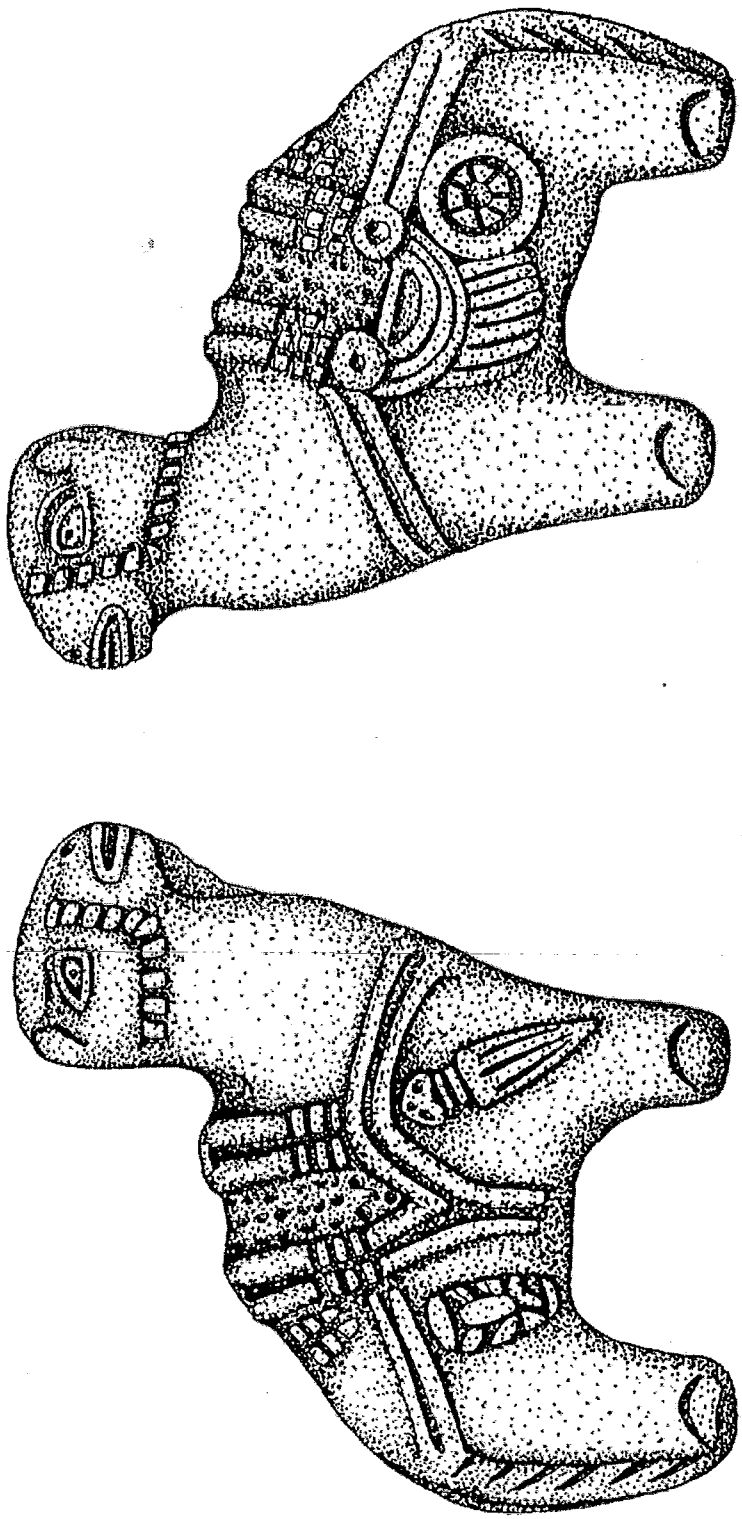


Fig. 6 – Camel figurines (Parlasca 1997, 129, fig. 145 a.b).

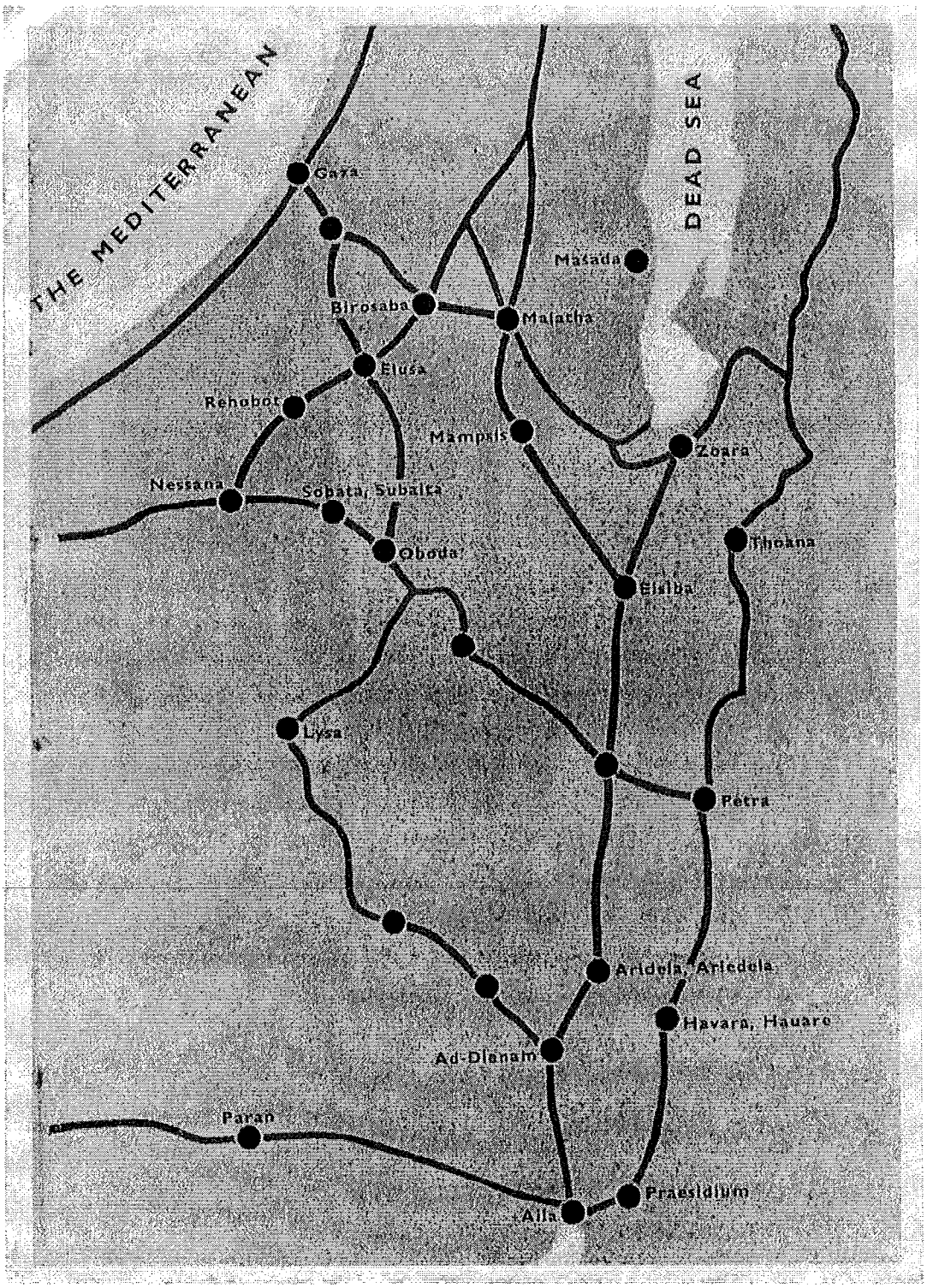


Fig. 7 – Map of the Negev region (Negev 1966).

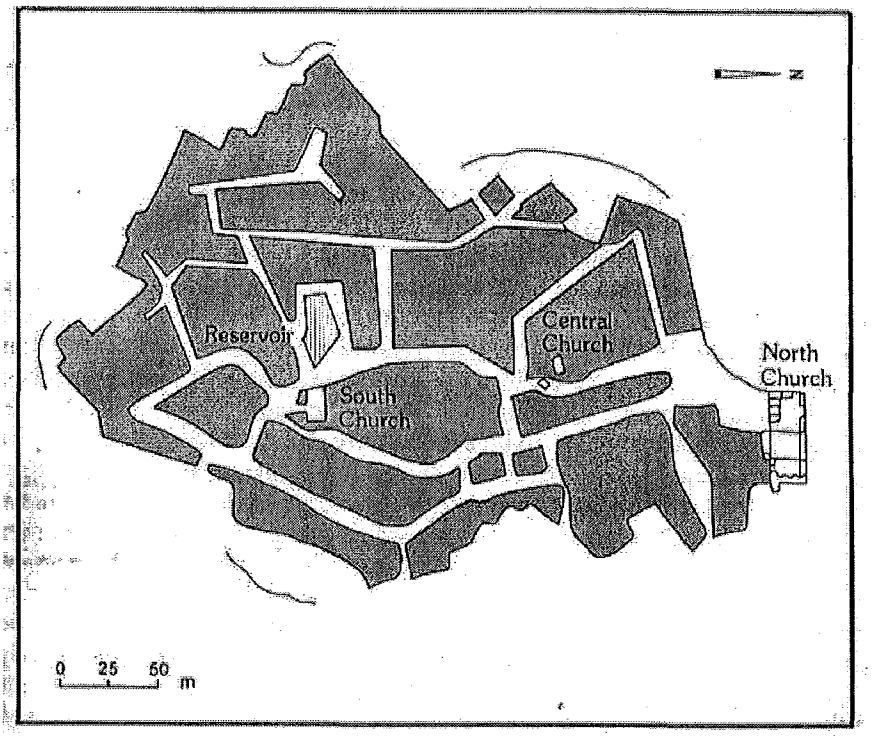


Fig. 8 – Map of Sobata (Negev 1993d, 1405).

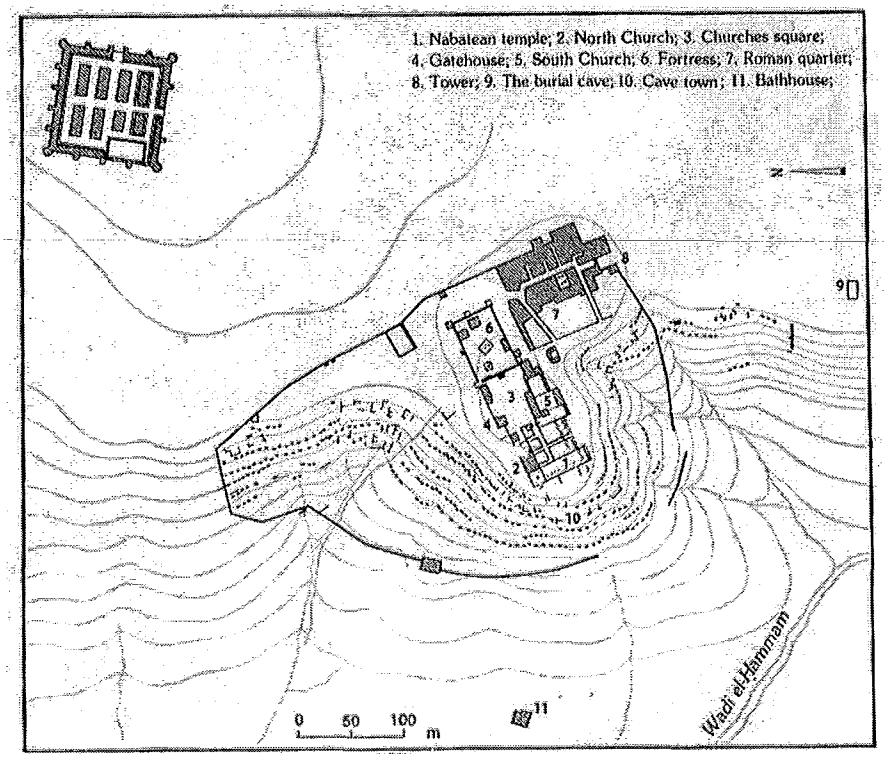


Fig. 9 – Map of Oboda (Negev 1993b, 1155).

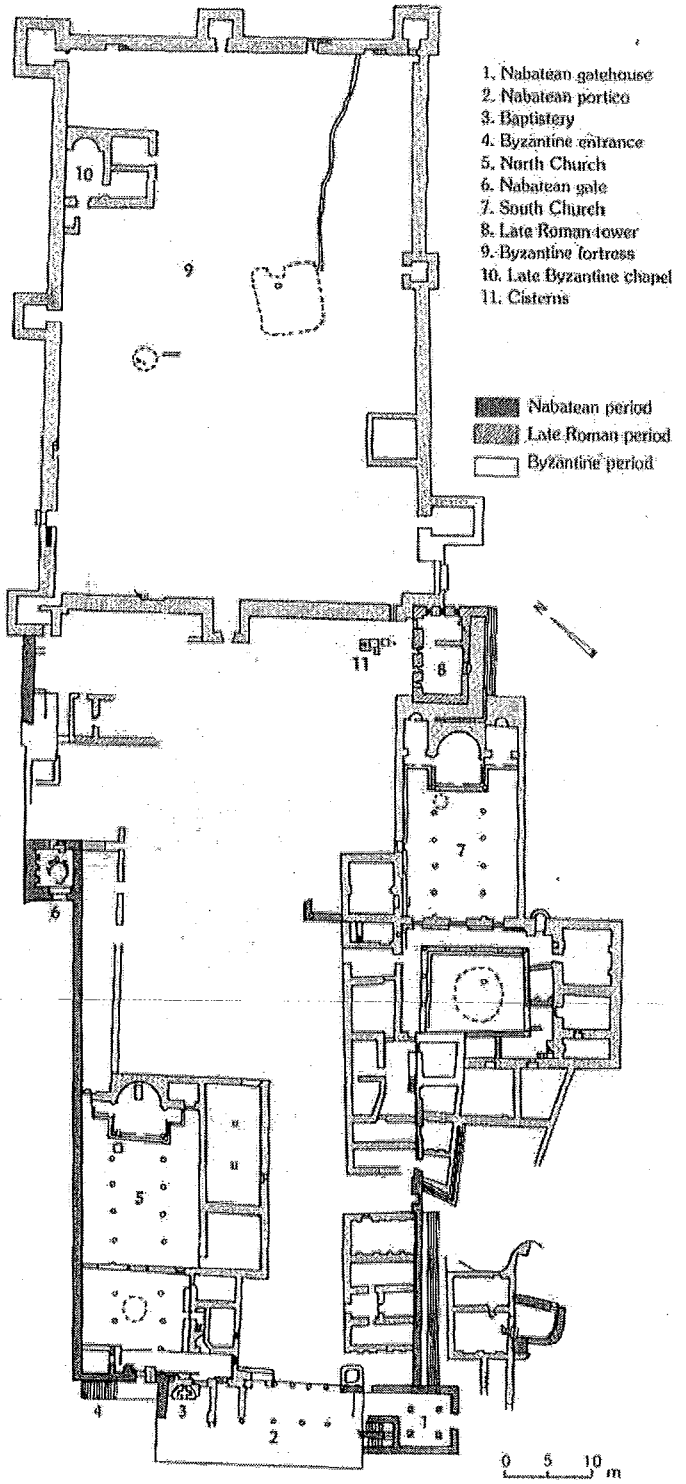


Fig. 10 – Acropolis of Oboda (Negev 1993b, 1157).

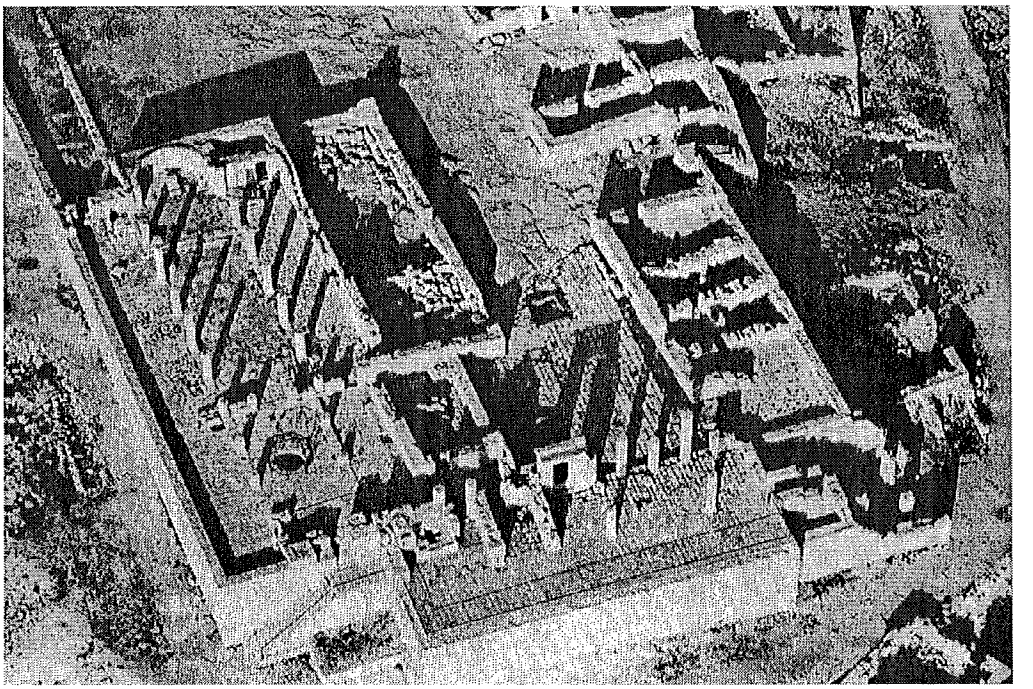


Fig. 11 – Aerial view of Nabataean temple, located beneath the Byzantine protrusion at bottom of picture (Negev 1993b, 1158).

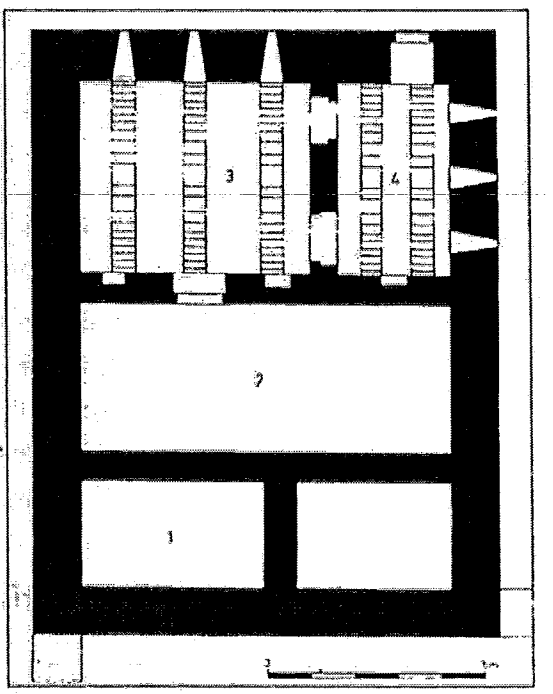


Fig. 12 – Oboda temple plan (Negev 1991, 67, fig. 4).

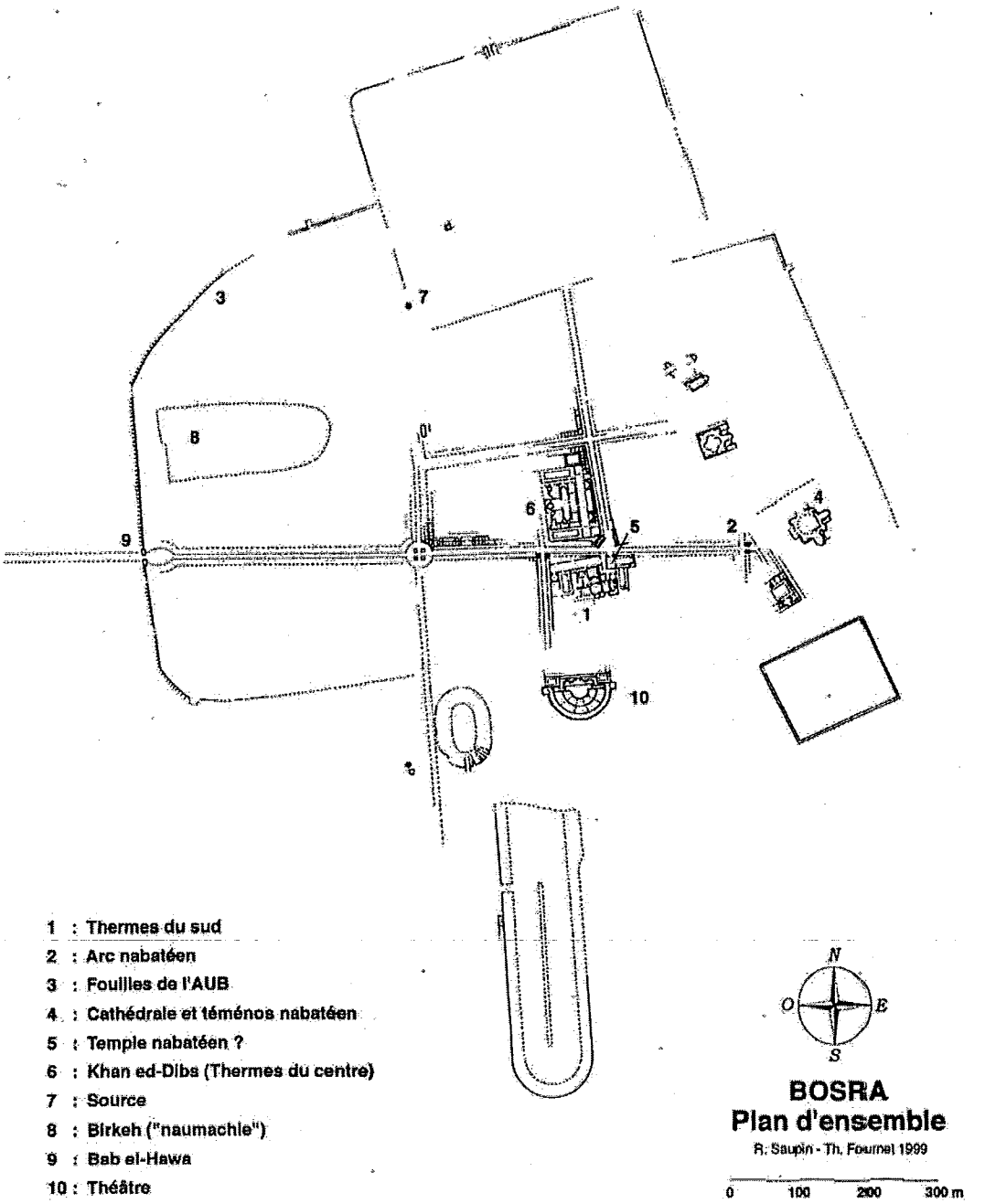


Fig. 13 – Map of Bostra (Dentzer, Dentzer-Feydy, and Blanc 2001, 458, fig. 1).

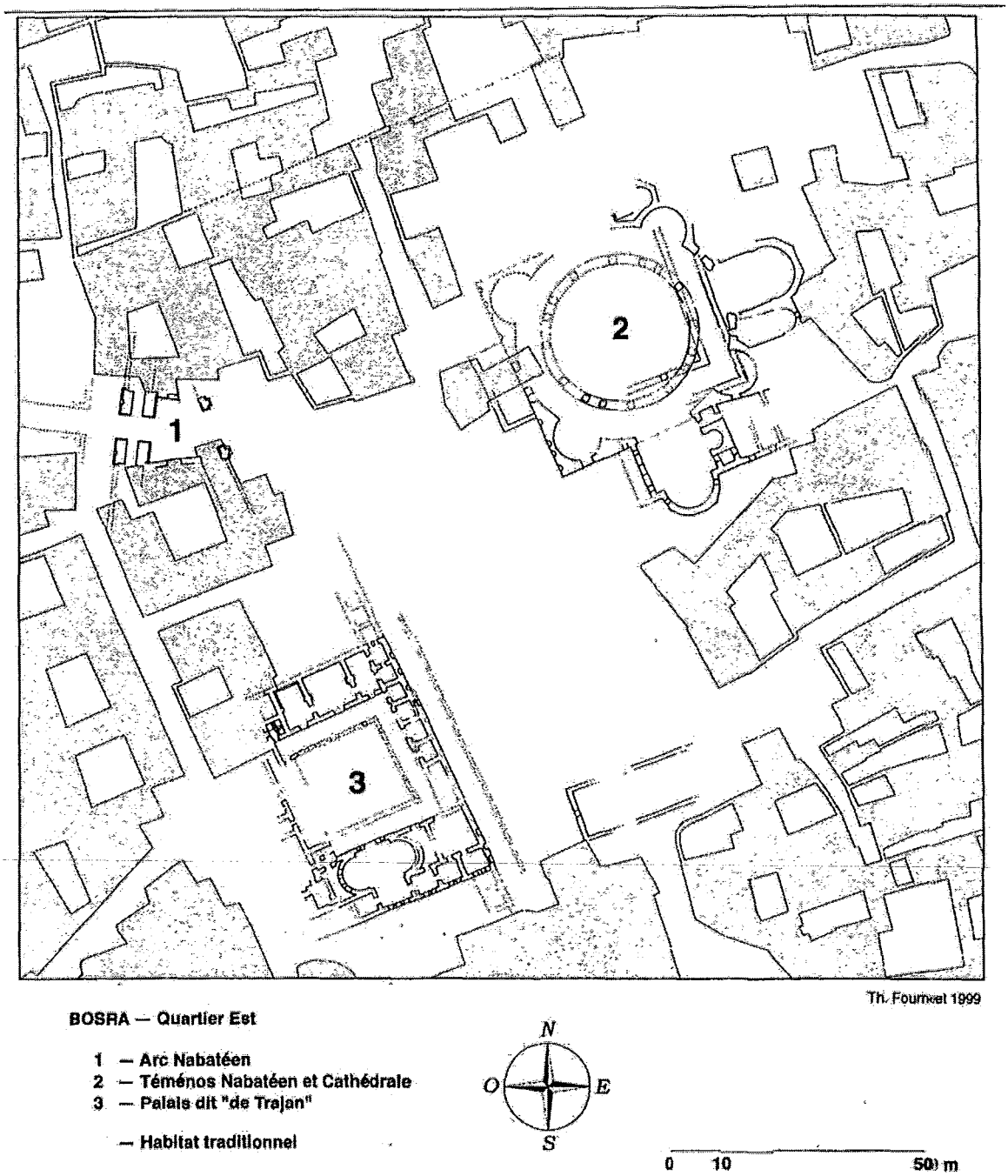


Fig. 14 – Possible Nabataean temple remains, beneath Christian church (#2), at Bostra (Dentzer, Dentzer-Feydy, and Blanc 2001, 460, fig. 2).

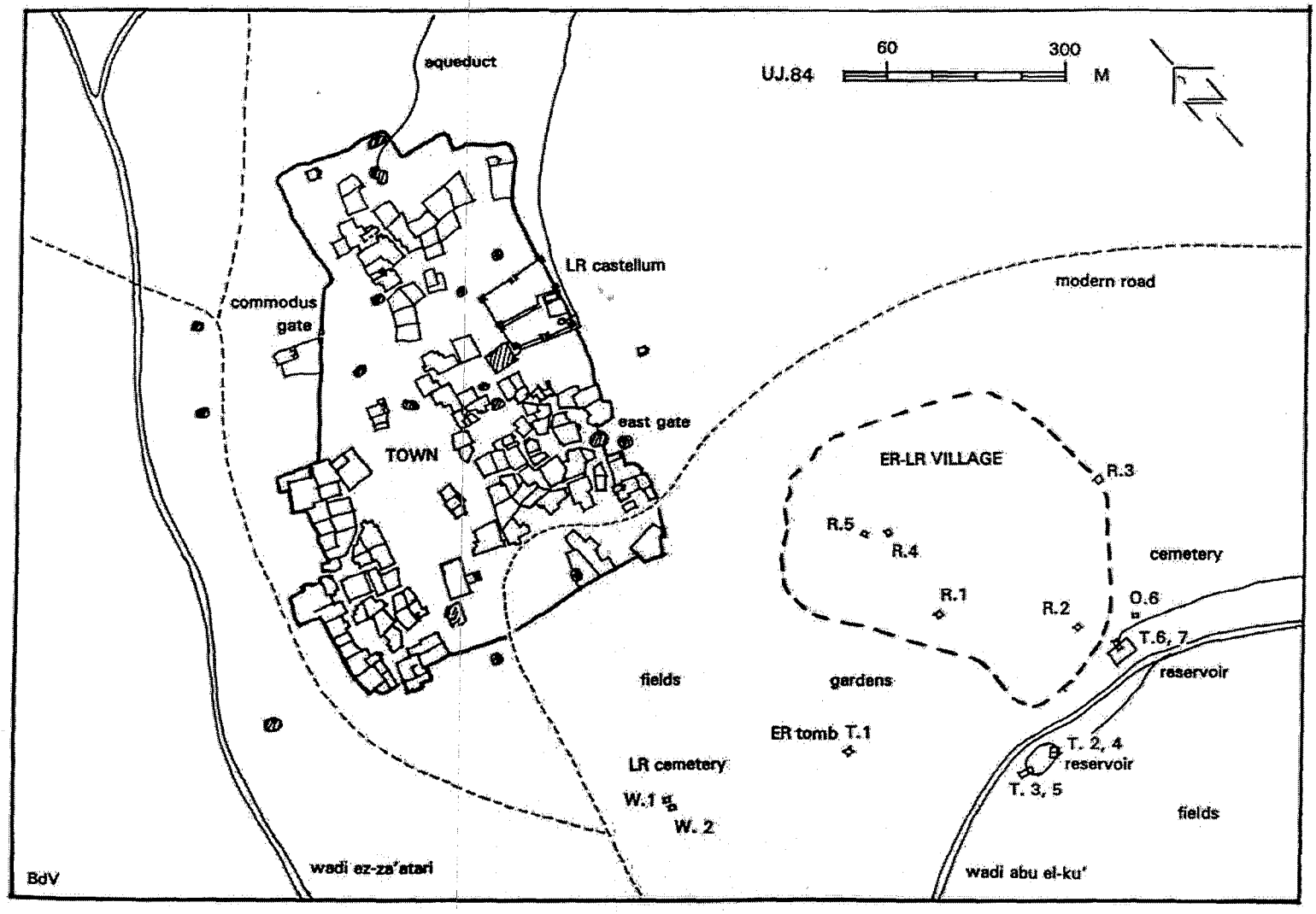


Fig. 15 – Plan of Umm el-Jimal (de Vries 1997, 277).

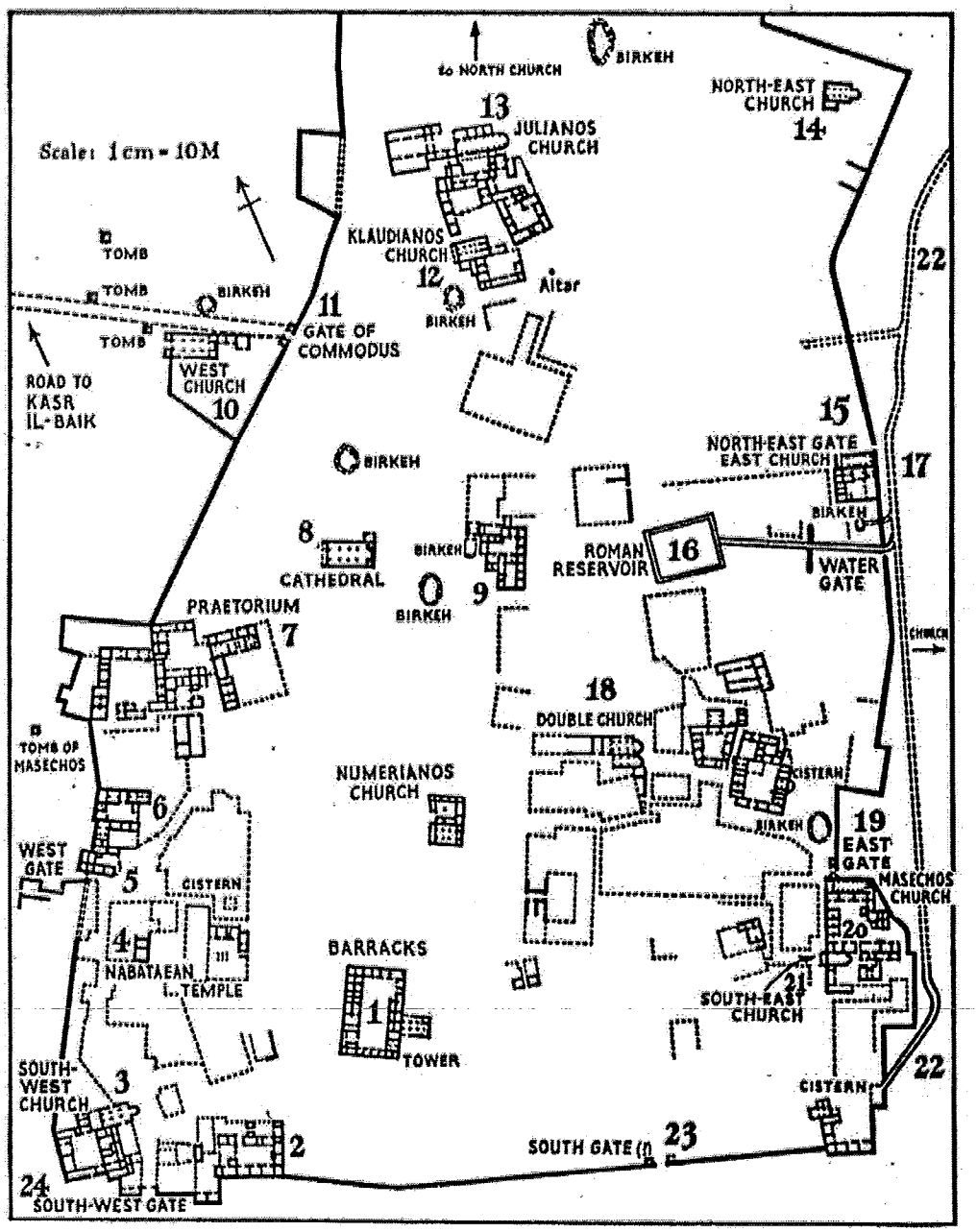


Fig. 16 – Inside the city walls of Umm el-Jimal (Harding 1959, 149, fig. 8).

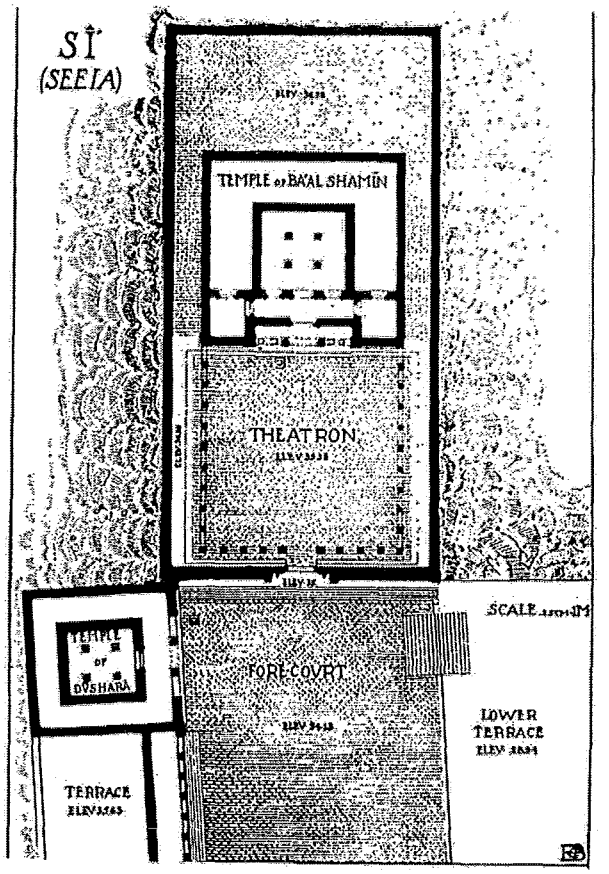


Fig. 17 – Plan of Sī'tem ple (Dentər 1979, 326).

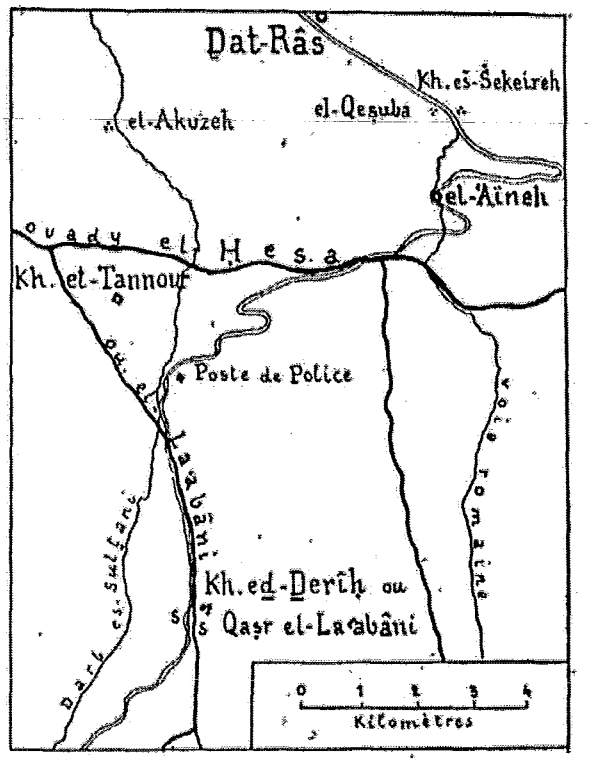


Fig. 18 – Map of Hūrāwa in Wadi el-Hesa and Ki rbet edh-Dharih in Wadi el-Ḥ' ban (Savignac 1937, 430, fig. 1).

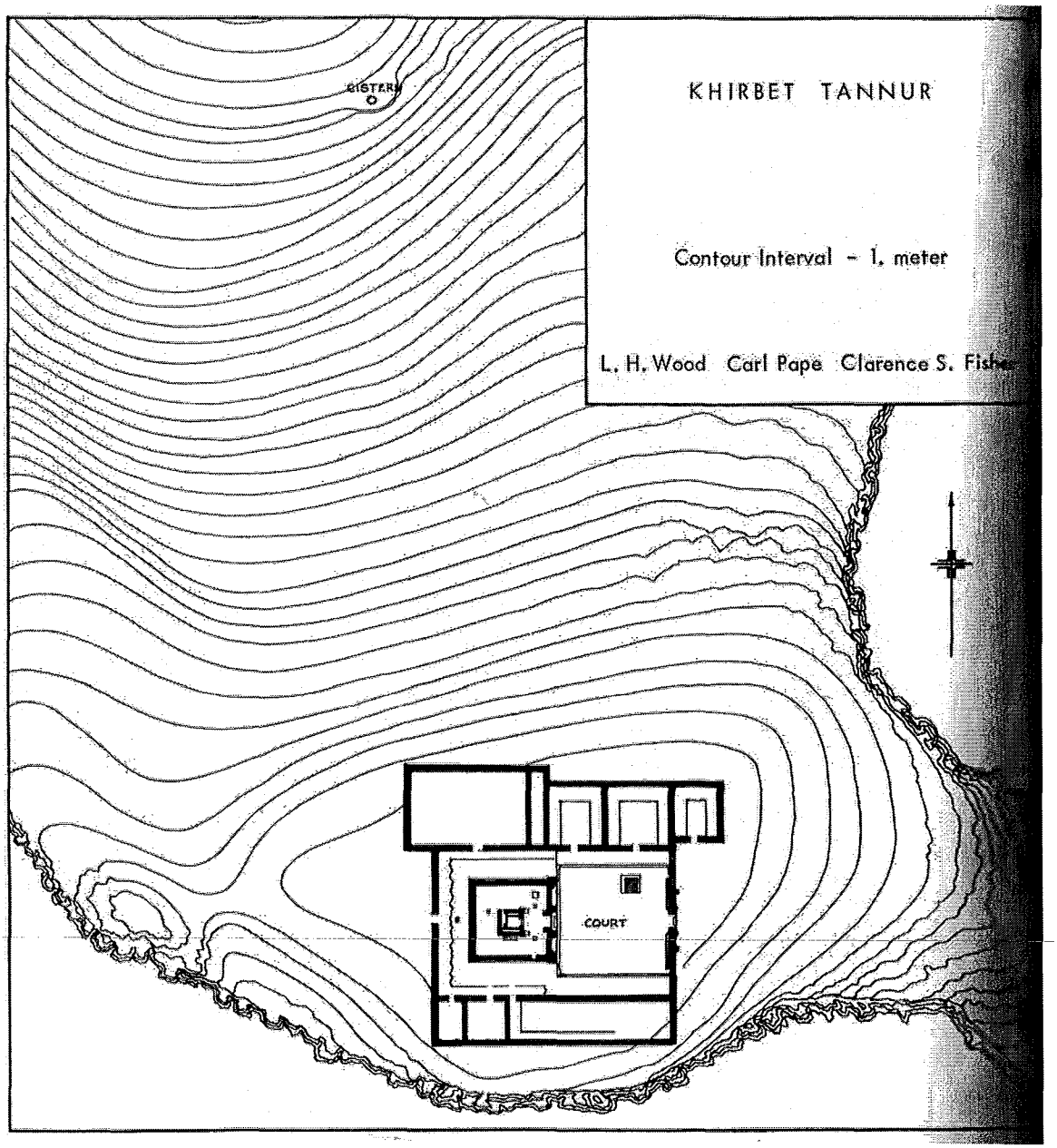


Fig. 19 – Site plan of Hūrāwa (Glueck 1965, 630, plan H).

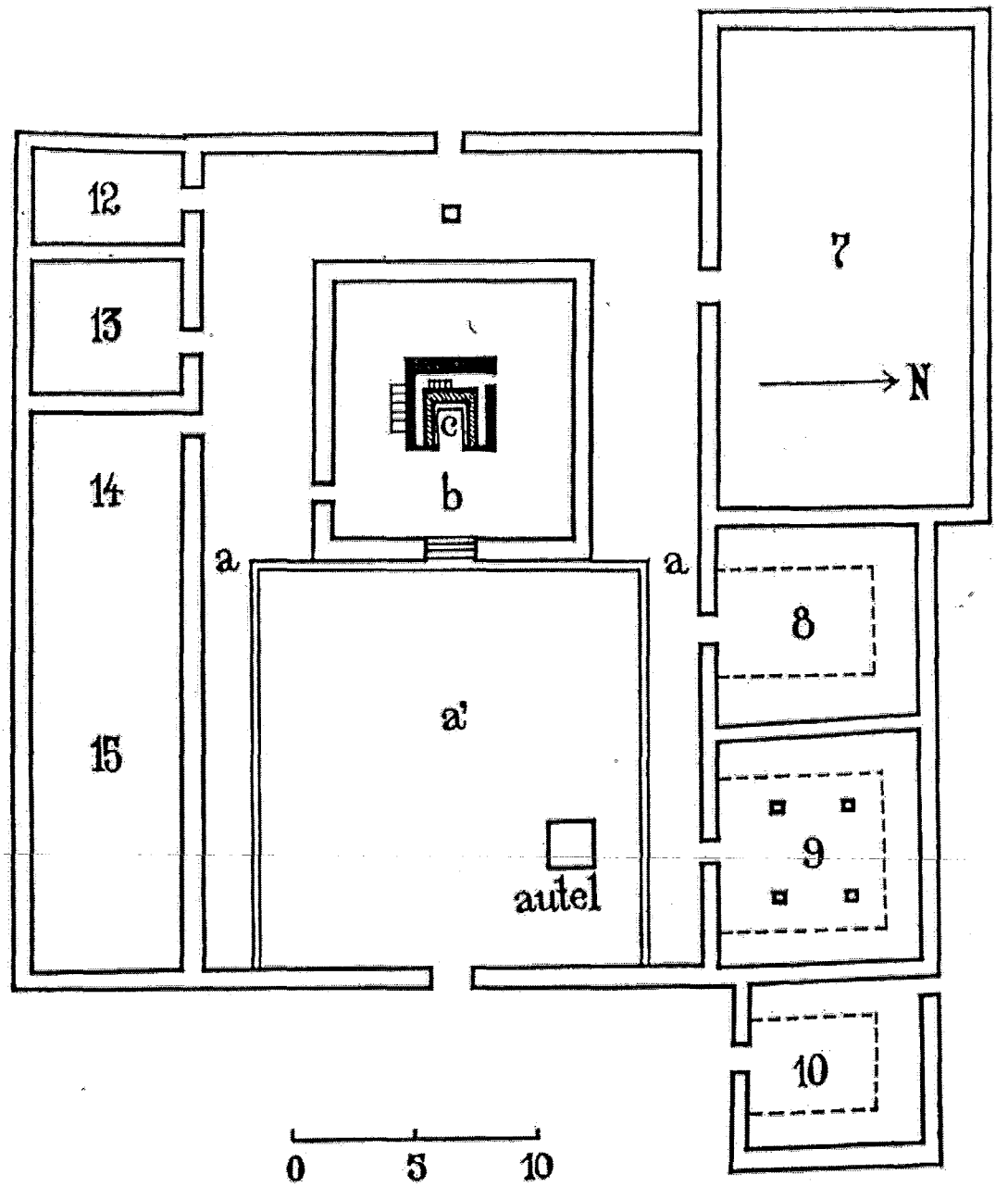


Fig. 20 – Hūrāwa temple plan (Starcky 1968, 210, fig. 1).

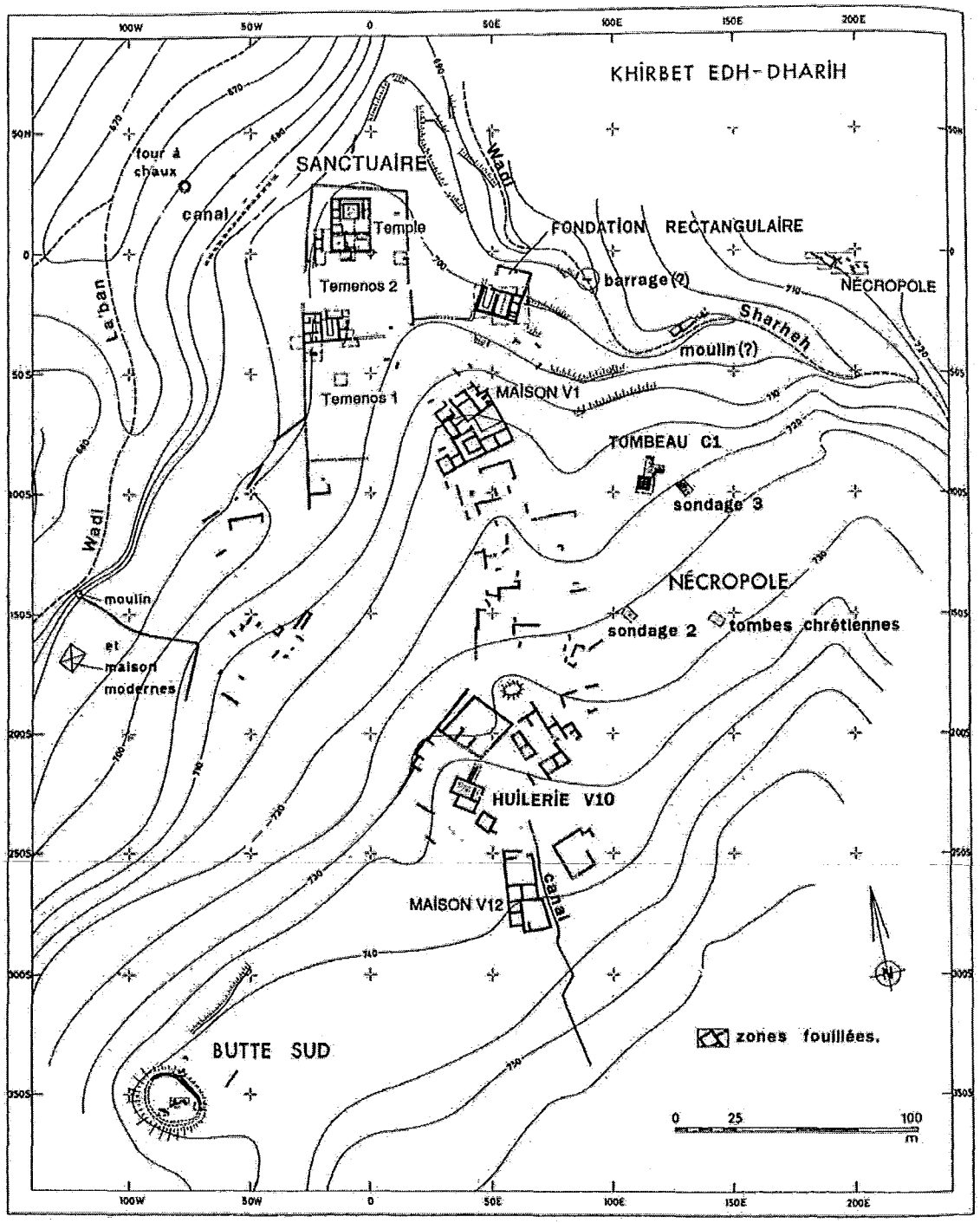


Fig. 21 – Site plan of Khirbet edh-Dharih (al-Muheisen and Mennevue 1994, 738, fig. 1).

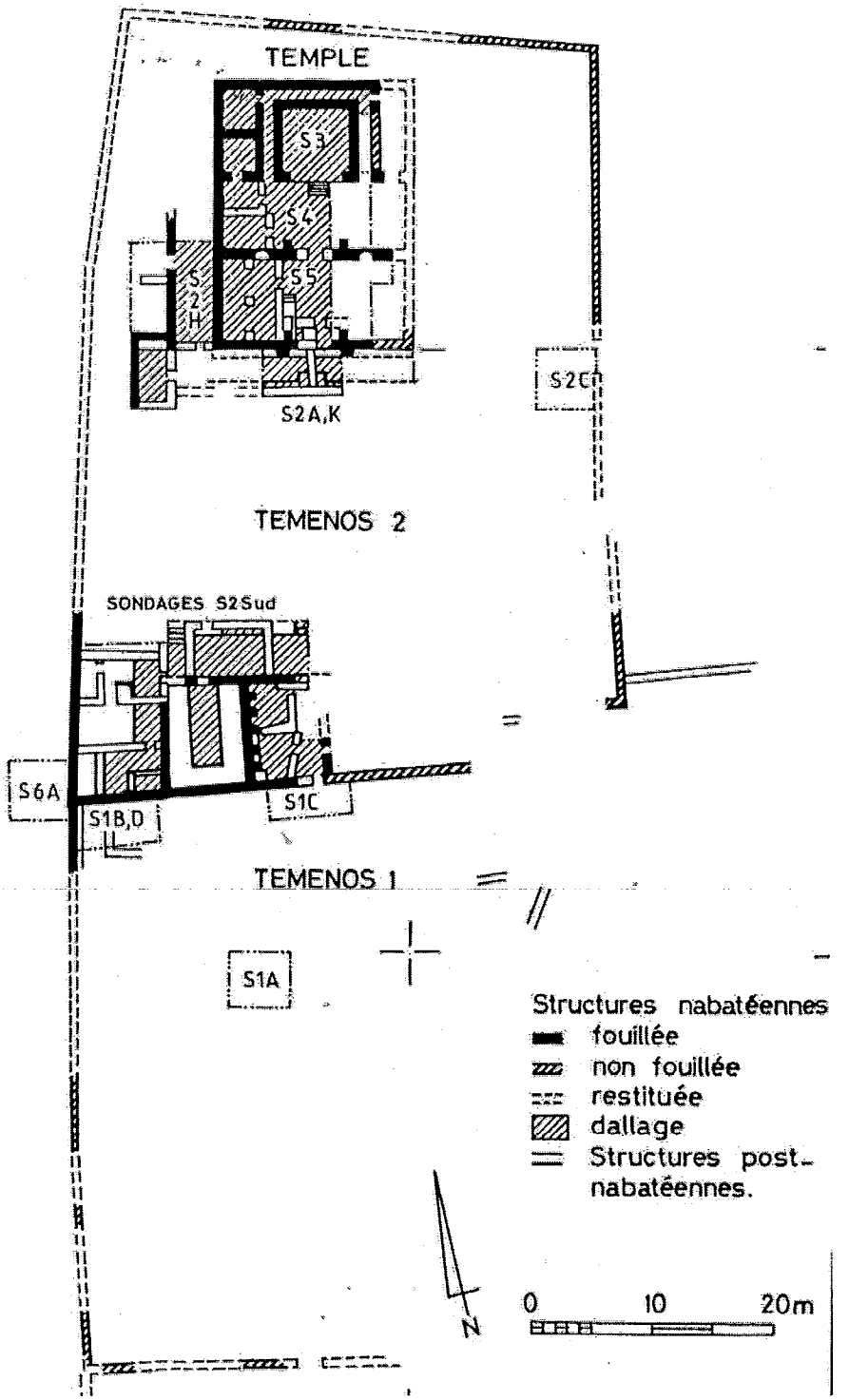


Fig. 22a – *Temenos* area of K irbet edh-Dharih (al-Muheisen and Men euve 1994, 740, fig. 2).

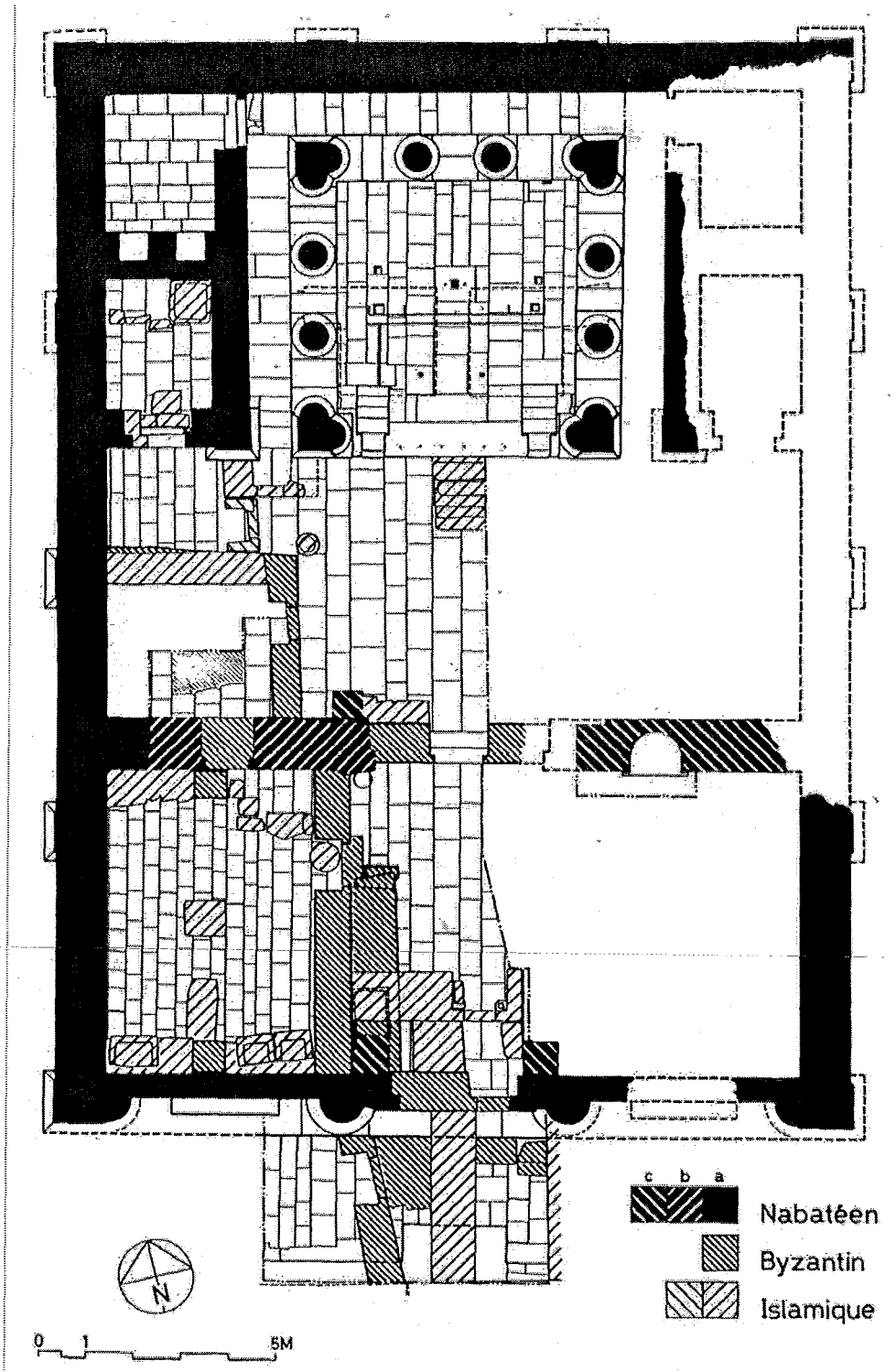


Fig. 22b – Khirbet edh-Dharih temple plan (al-Muheisen and Meneuve 1994, 743, fig. 4).

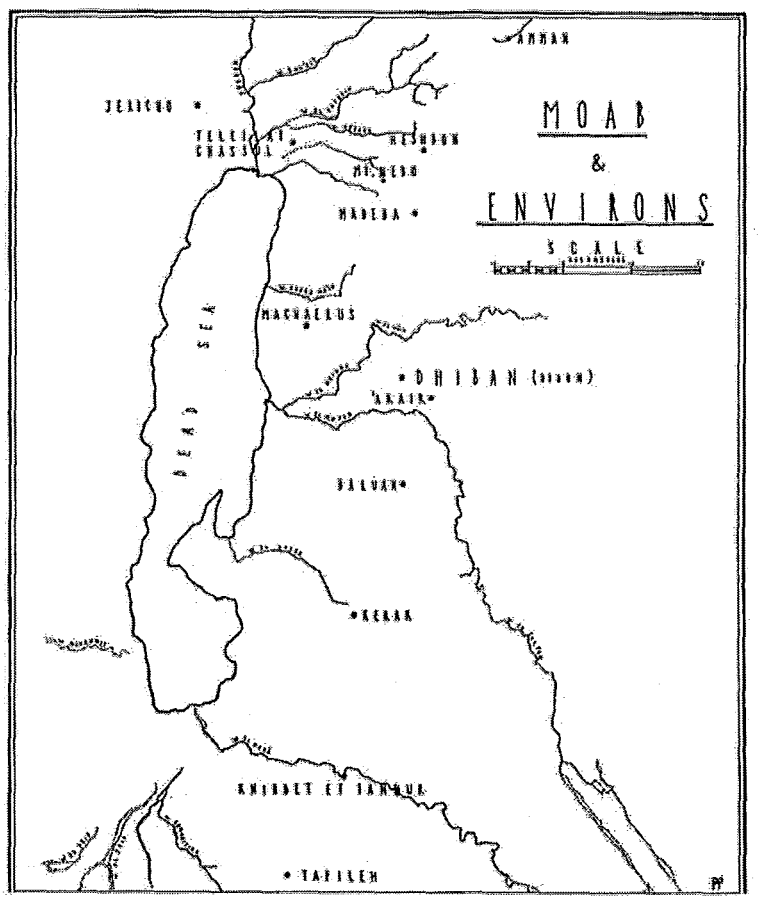


Fig. 23 – Map of Moab region (Winnett and Reed , 1964, pl. 84).

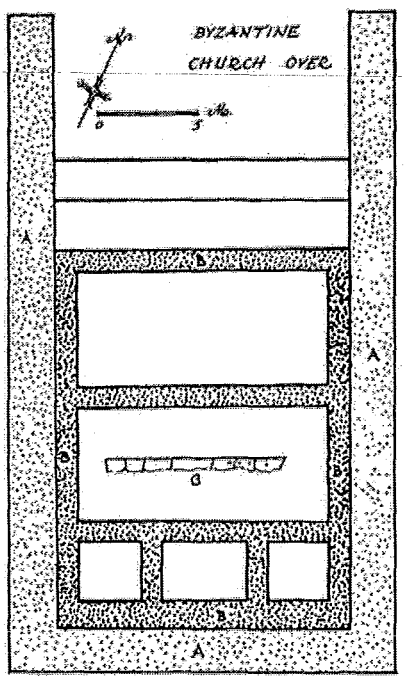
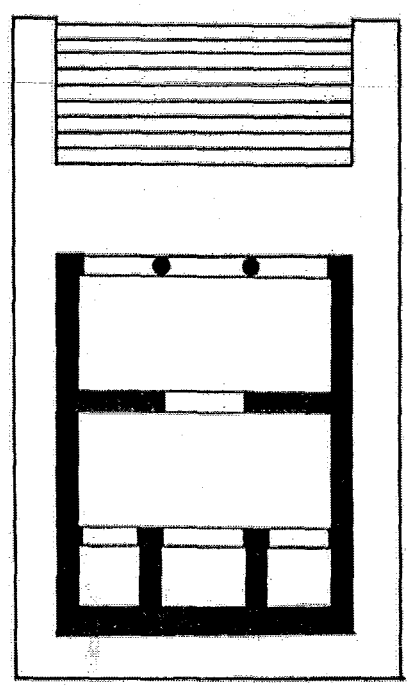


Fig. 24 – Dhīban temple plan (Wright 1961b, 27, fig. 1).



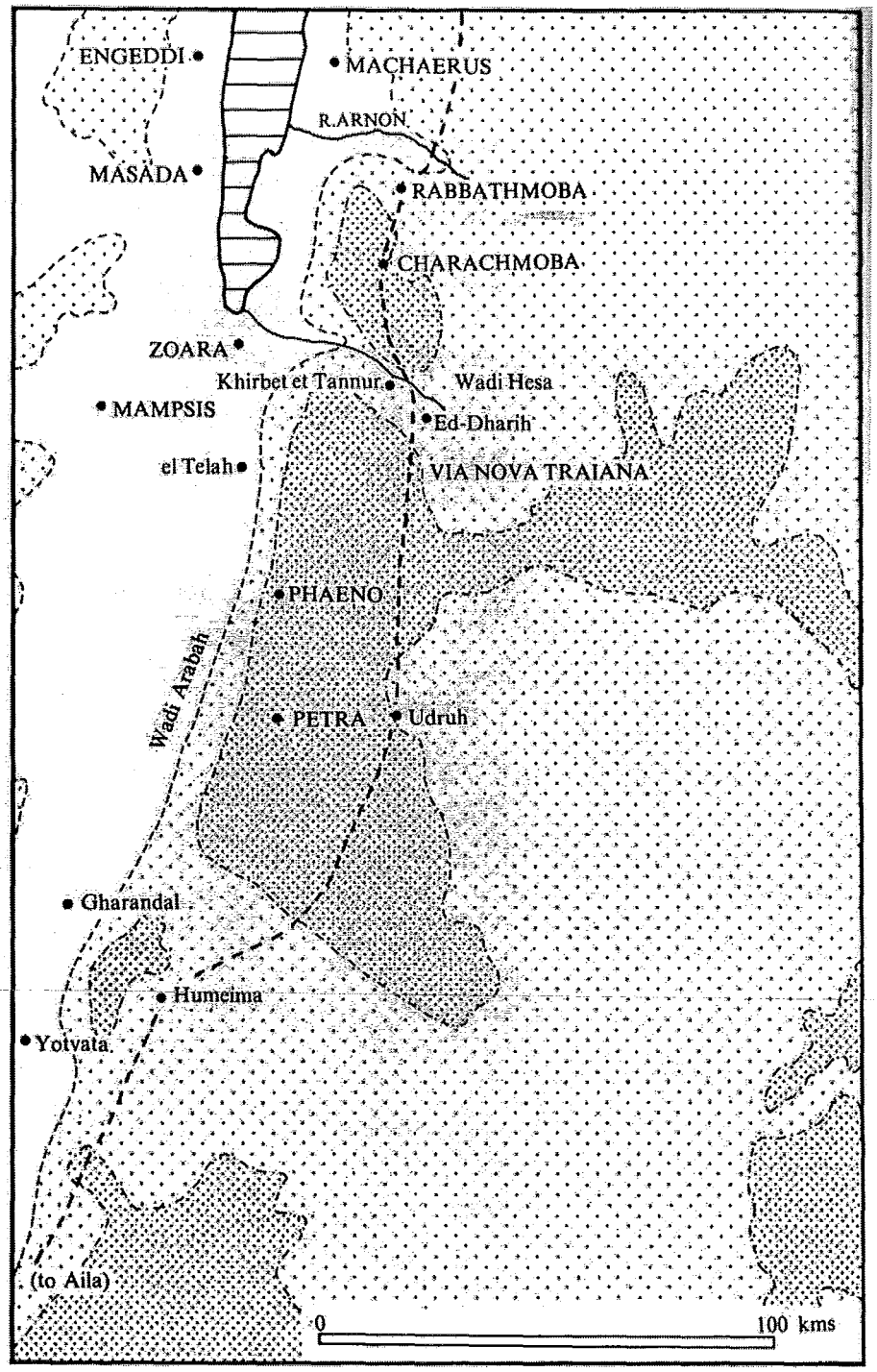


Fig. 25 – Map of central Arabia (Millar 1993, 572, MI).

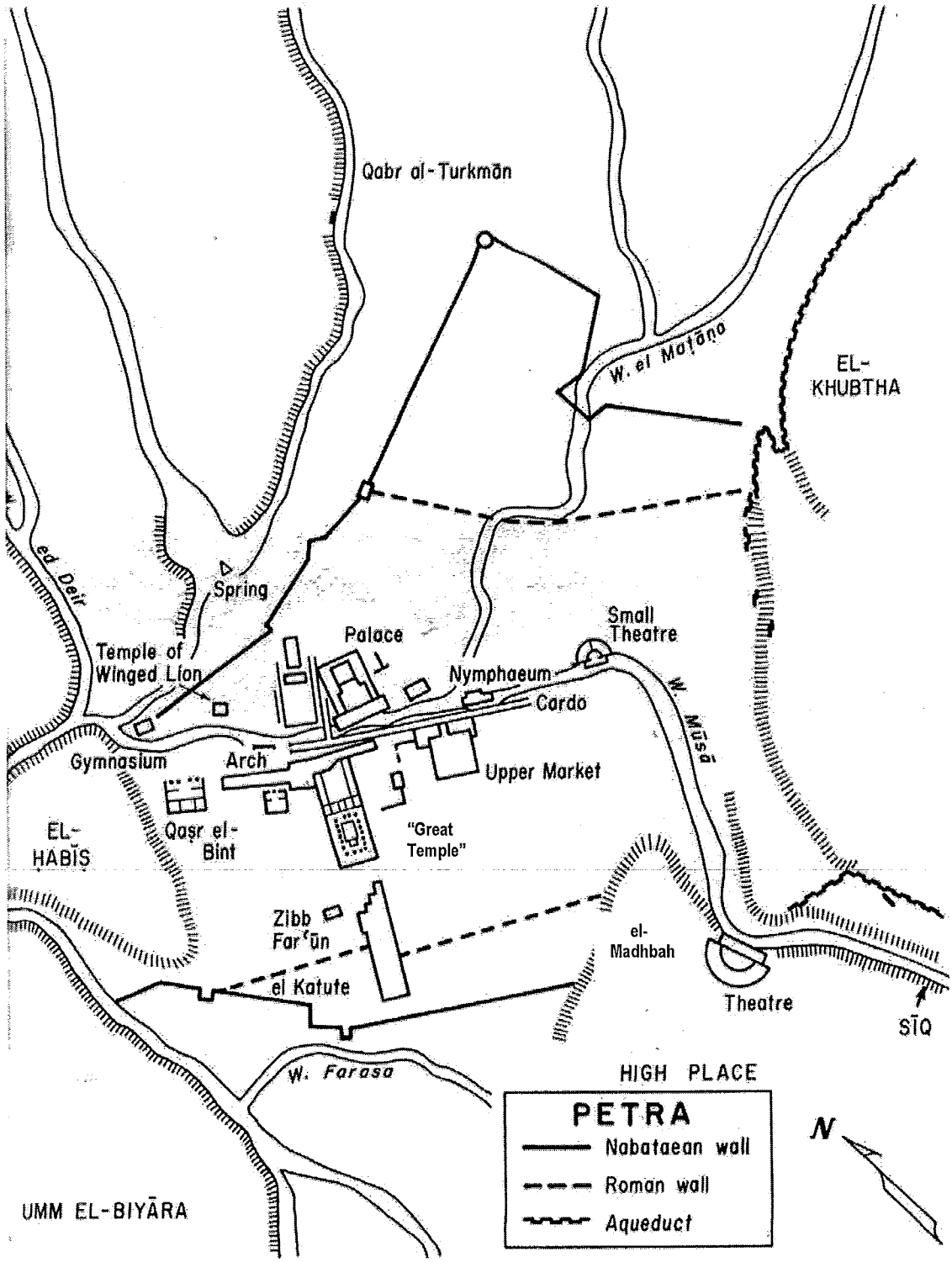


Fig. 26 – City plan of Petra (Bowersock 1983, 187).

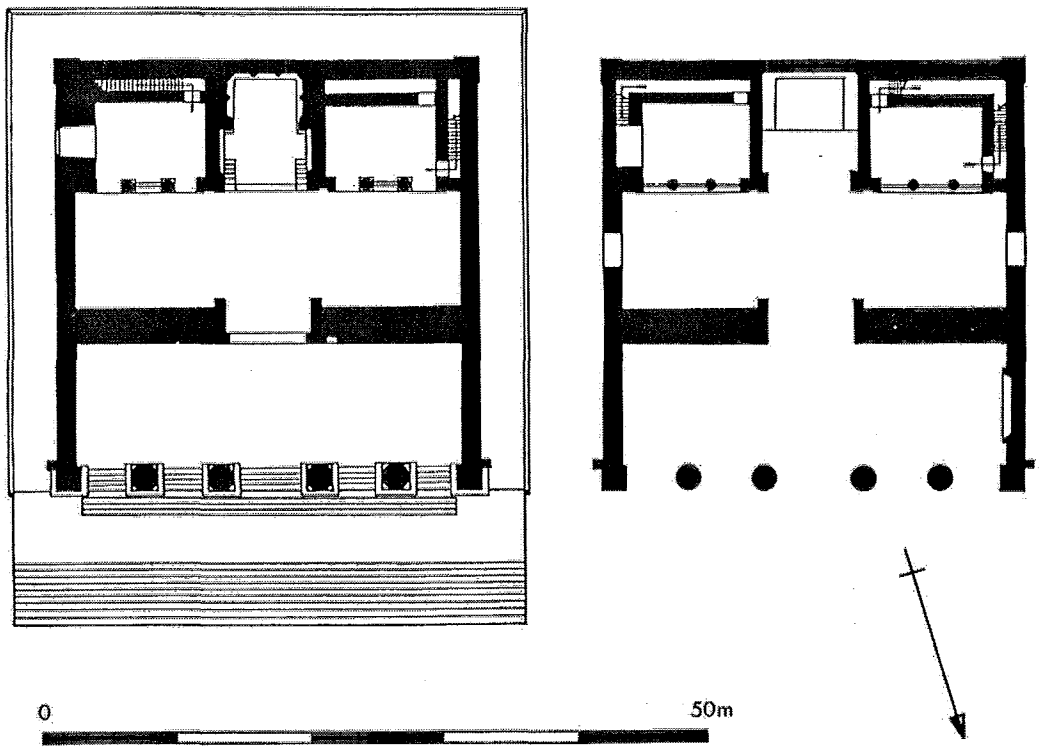


Fig. 27 - Qasr al-Bint temple plan, Petra (McKenzie 1990, pl. 69).

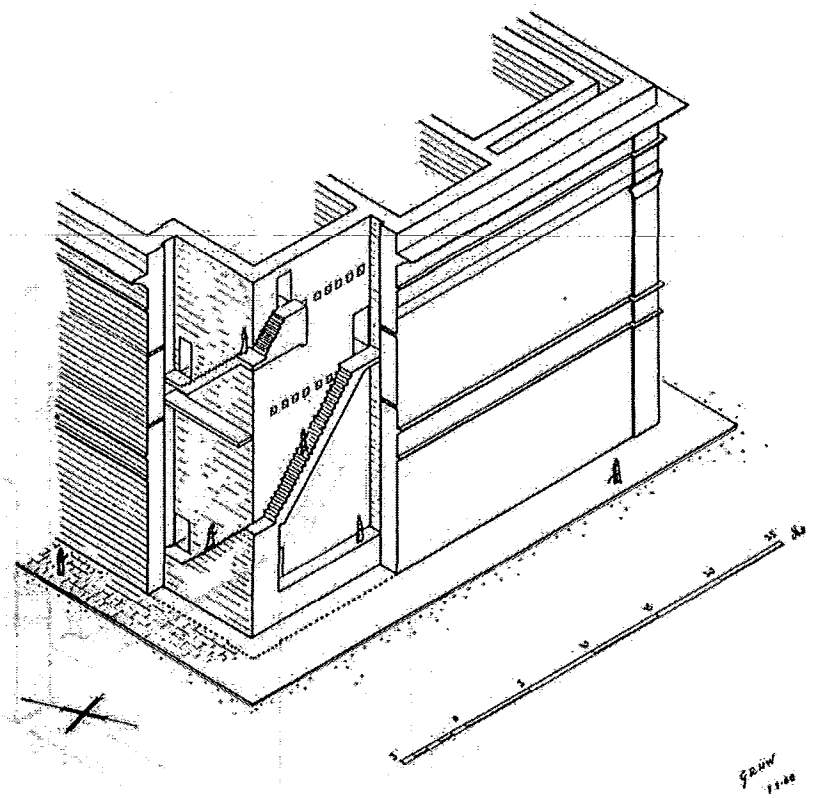


Fig. 28 – Isometric view of the Qasr al-Bint, Petra (Wright 1961a, 13, fig. 5).

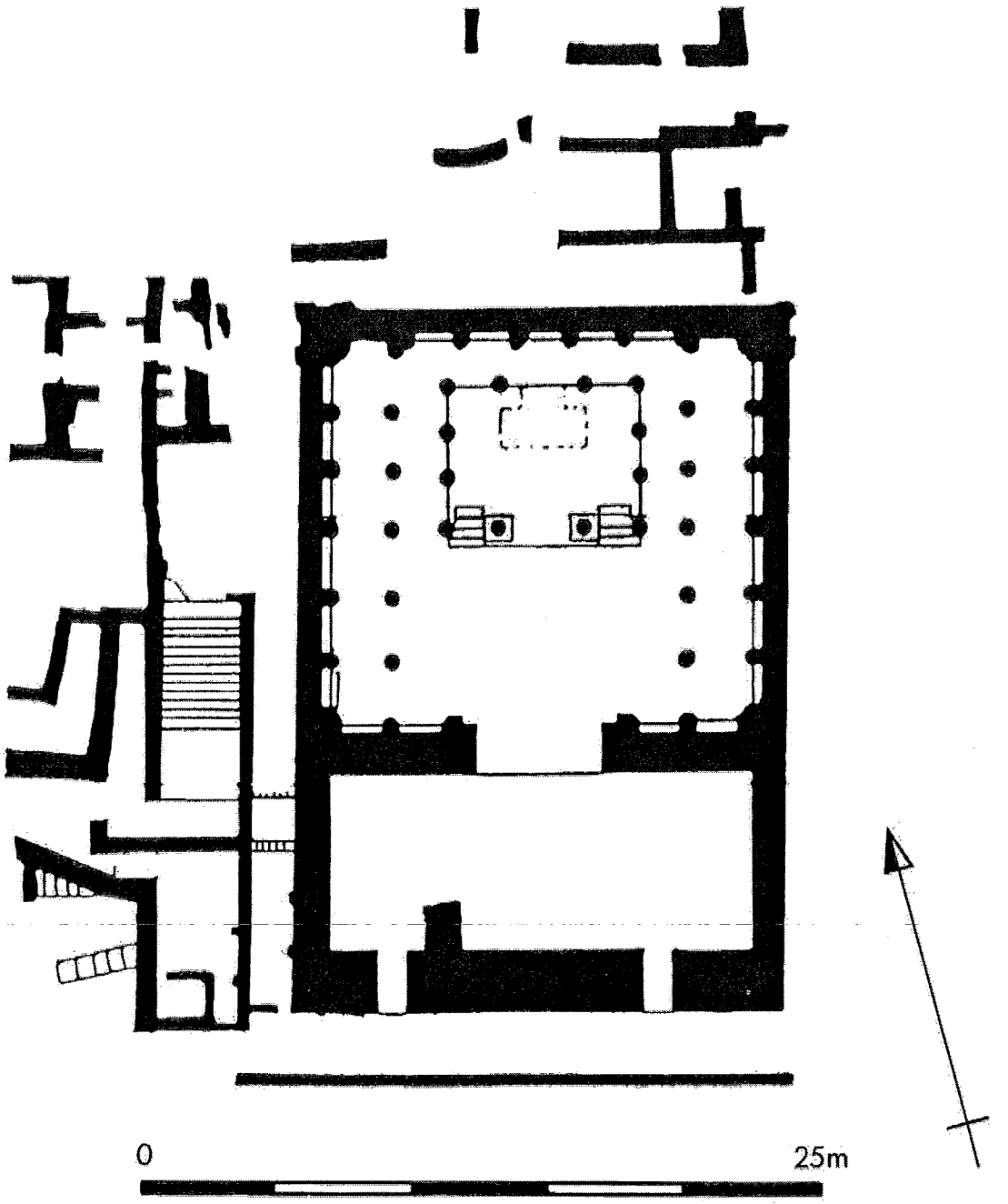


Fig. 29 – Temple of the Winged Ion s temple plan, Petra (McKenie 199 0, pl. 78b).

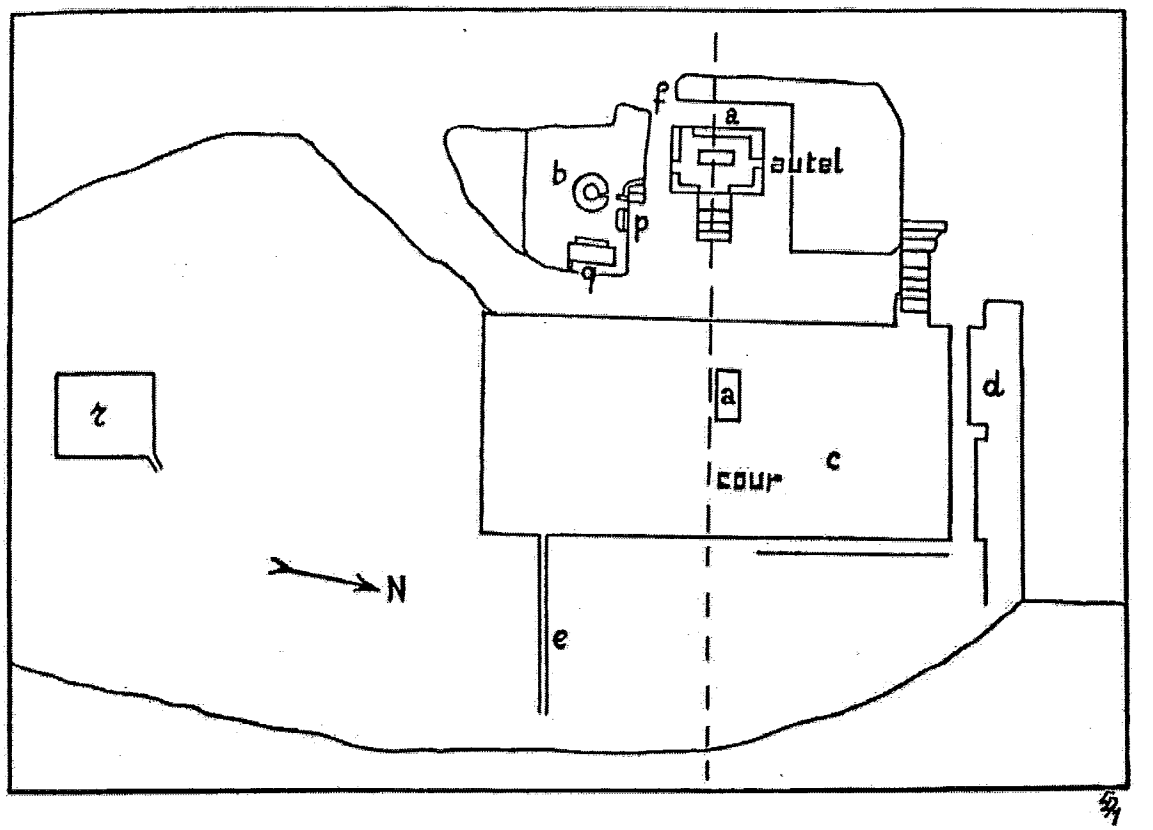


Fig. 30 – Plan of the el-Madhbah high place atop the Ḏ bb ʿAtūf ridge, Petra (Dussaud 1955, 39, fig. 6).

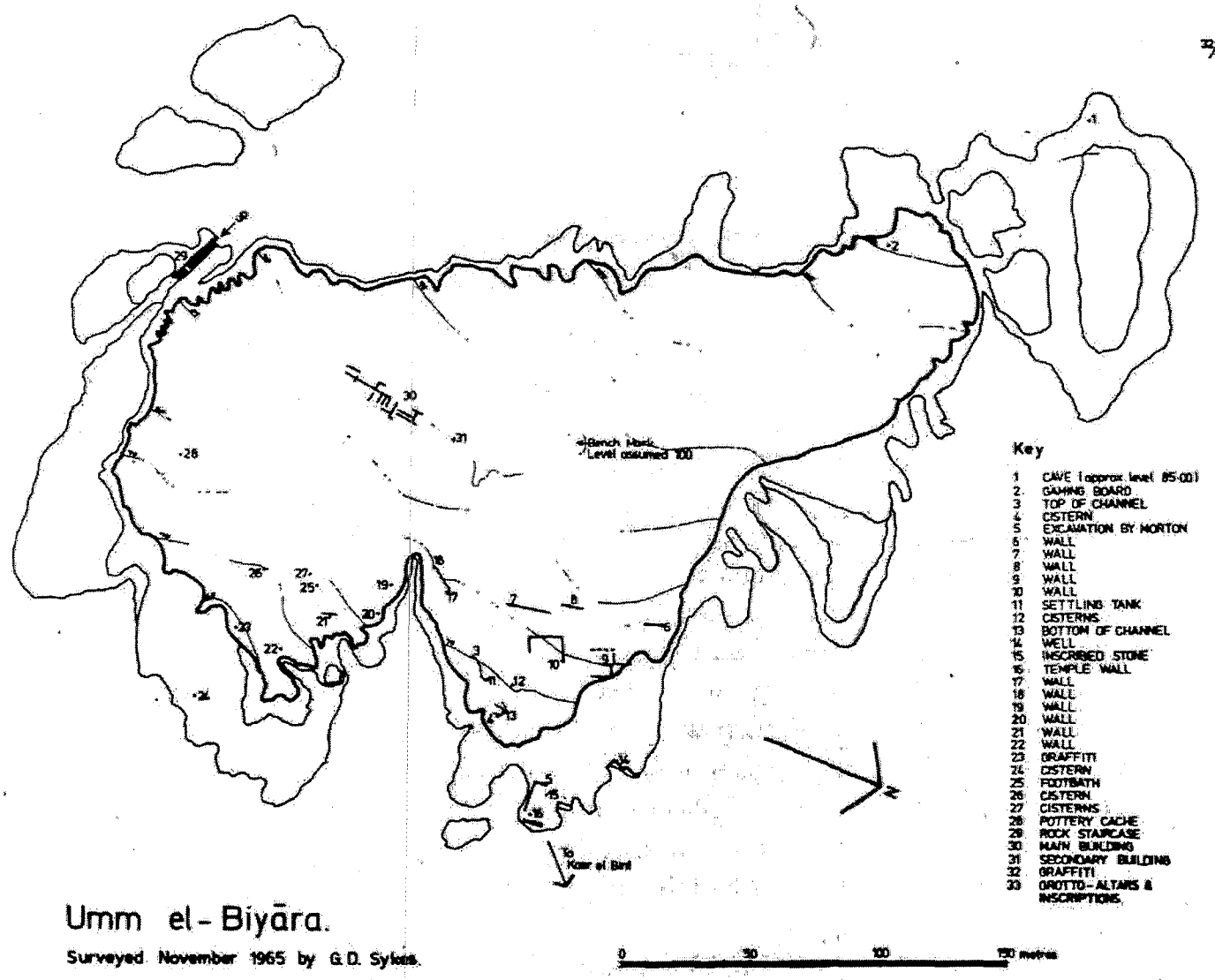


Fig. 31 – Site plan of Umm el-Biyara (Bennett 1980, 209, fig. 1).

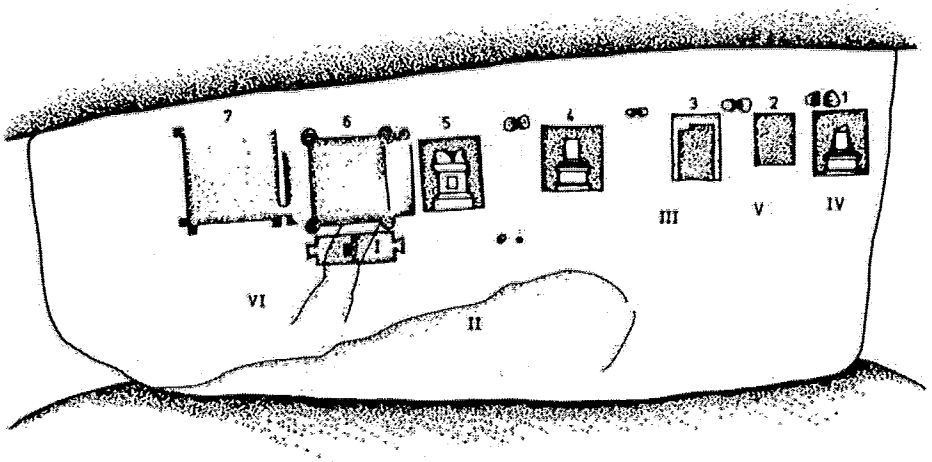


Fig. 32 – Umm el-Biyara "grotto" (Bennett 1980, 210, fig. 2).

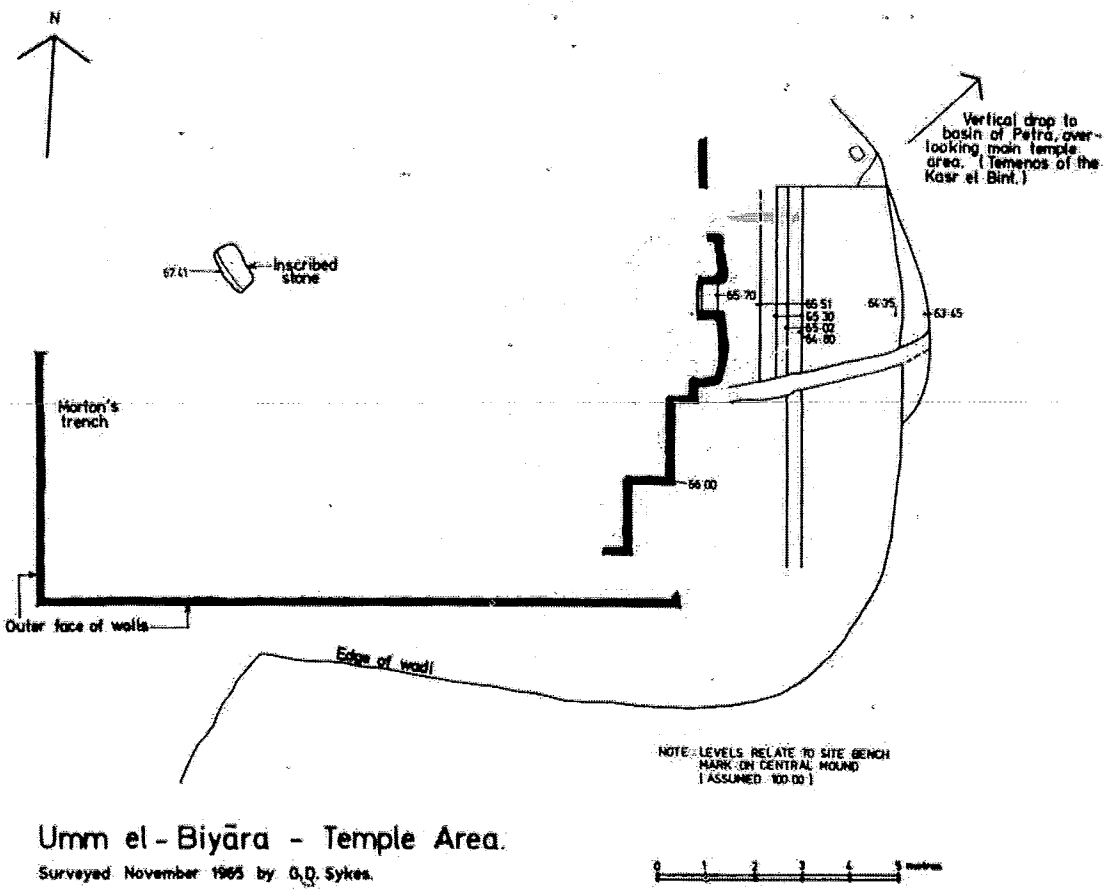


Fig. 33 – Umm el-Biyara temple (Bennett 1980, 211, fig. 3).

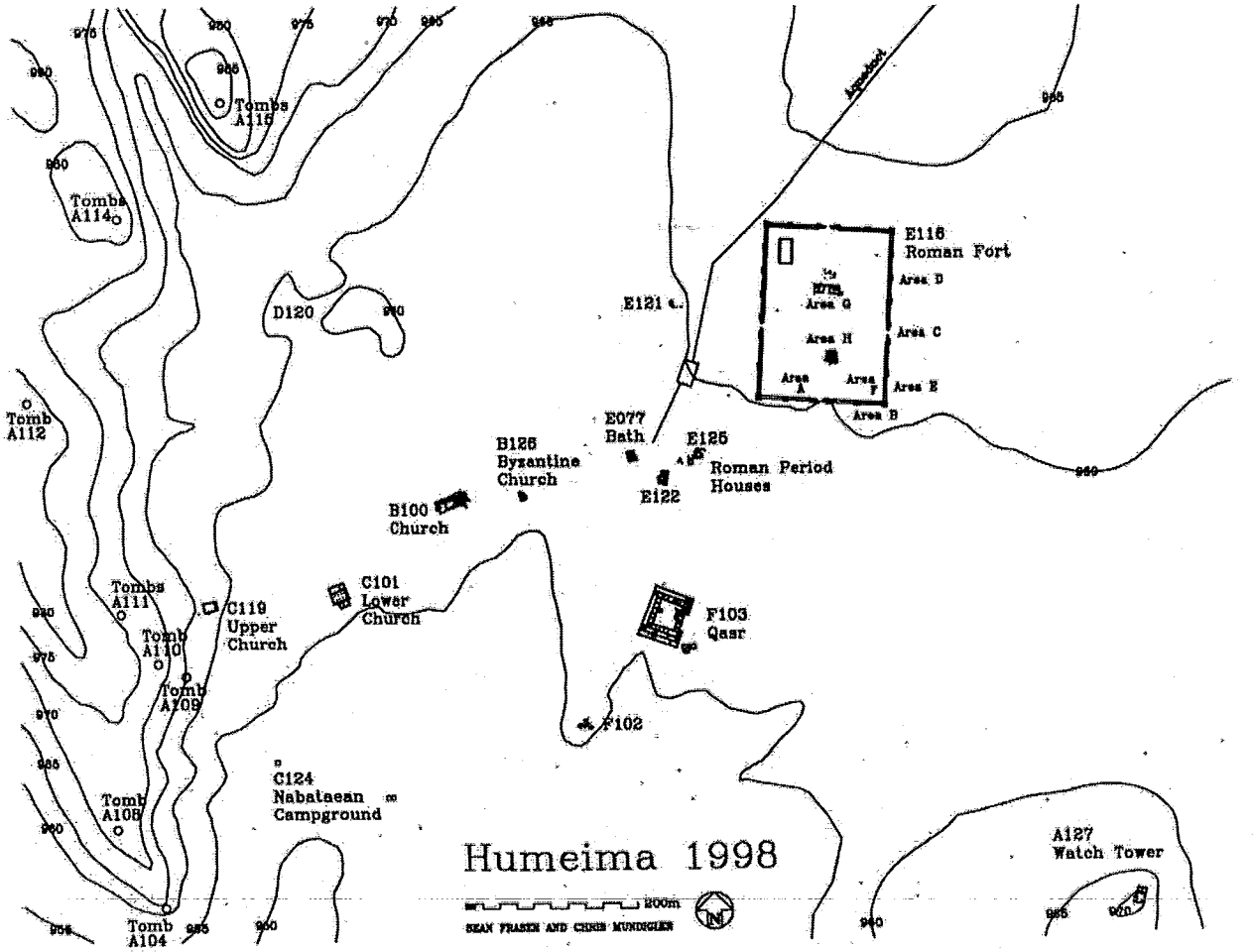


Fig. 34 – Site plan of Hawara (Oleson 2001, 572, fig. 3).

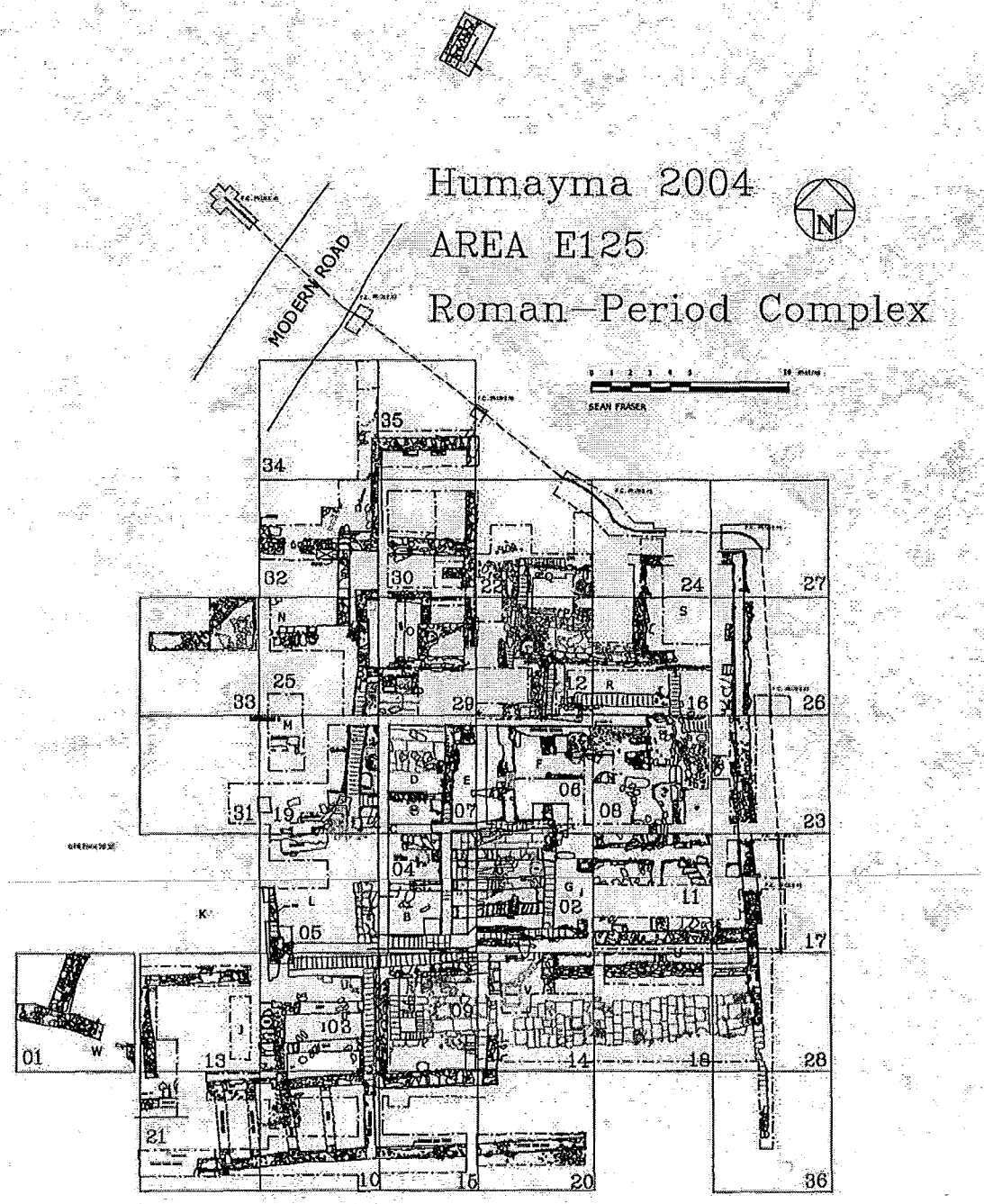


Fig. 35 – Mudbrick complex in *vicus*, Hawara (E125). Note processional way and shrine in southeastern corner (Oleson 2004, http://web.uvic.ca/~jpoleson/Images/E125%20Plan%202004%20B&W.jpg).

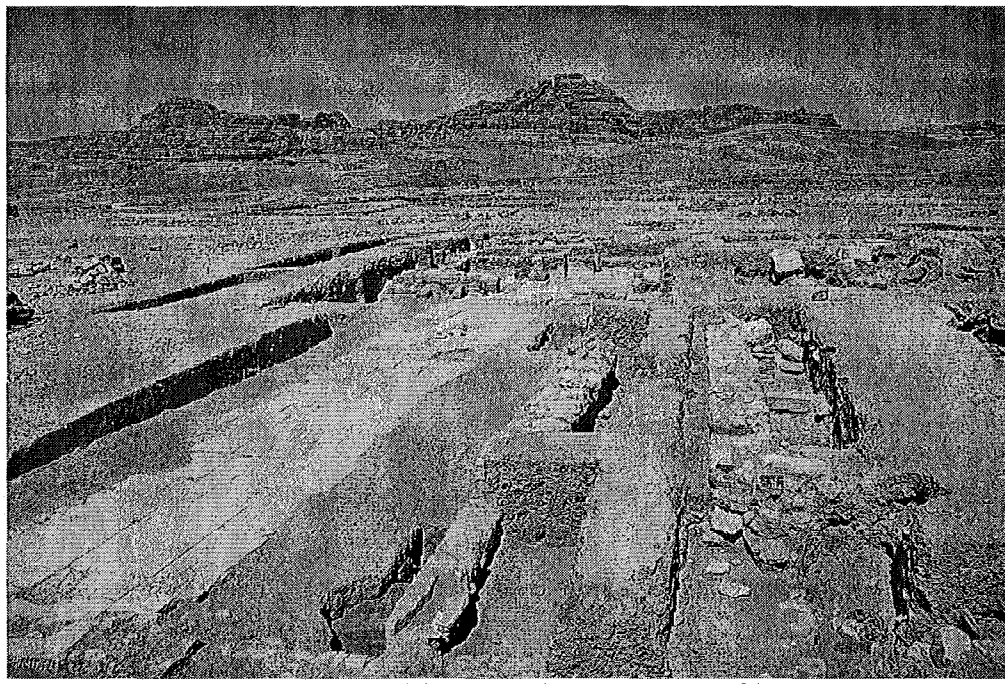


Fig. 36 – Processional way of mudbrick complex in *vicus*, Hawara (Oleson 2004, http://web.uvic.ca/~jpoleson/Images/ProcessWay.jpg).

Fig. 37 – Shrine with aniconic betyl, Hawara. Note Jebel Qalkha's relationship directly behind shrine area (Oleson 2004, http://web.uvic.ca/~jpoleson/Images/D2004.652.jpg).

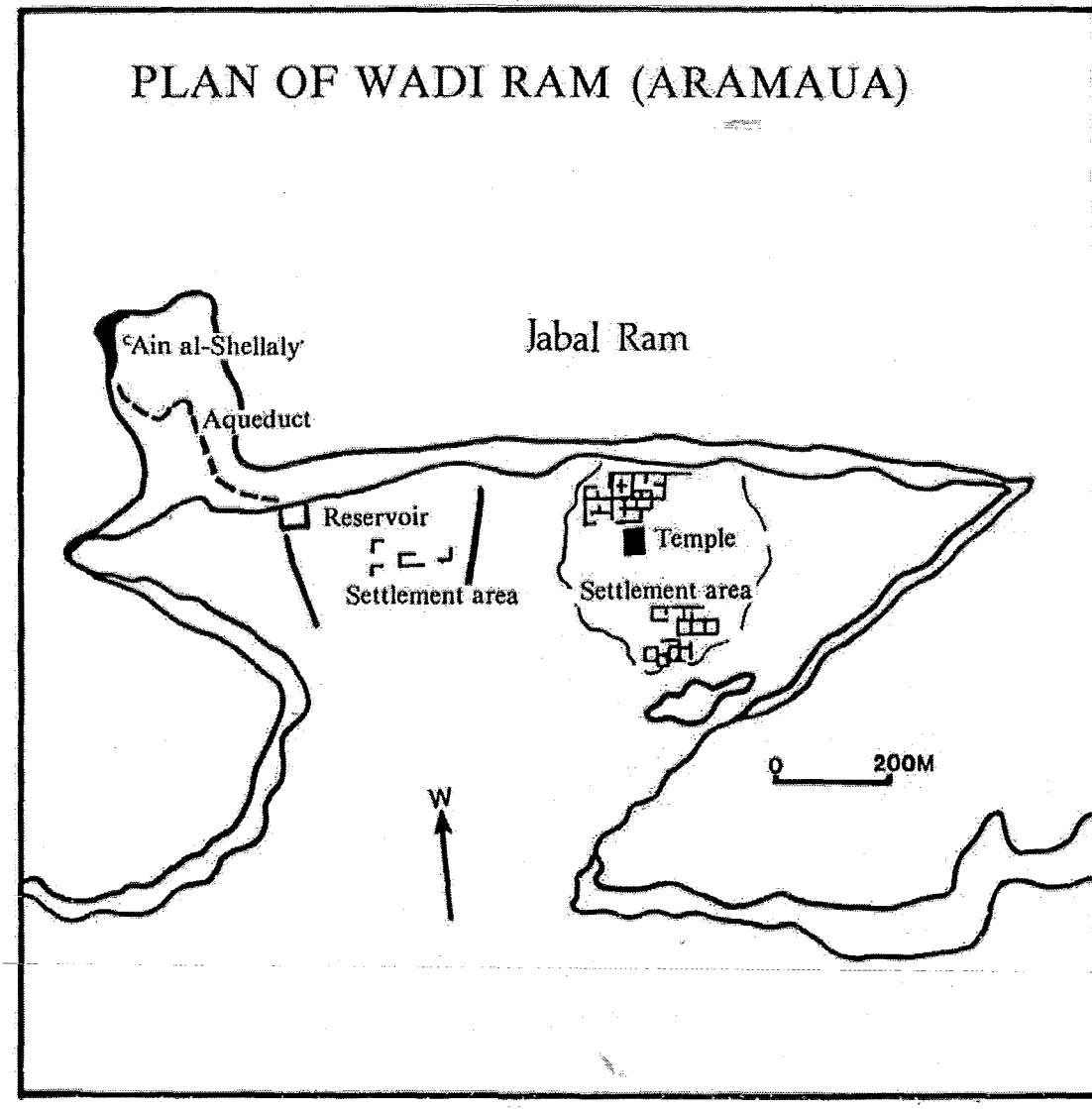


Fig. 38 – Site plan of Iram (Graf 1983, 656, map 2).

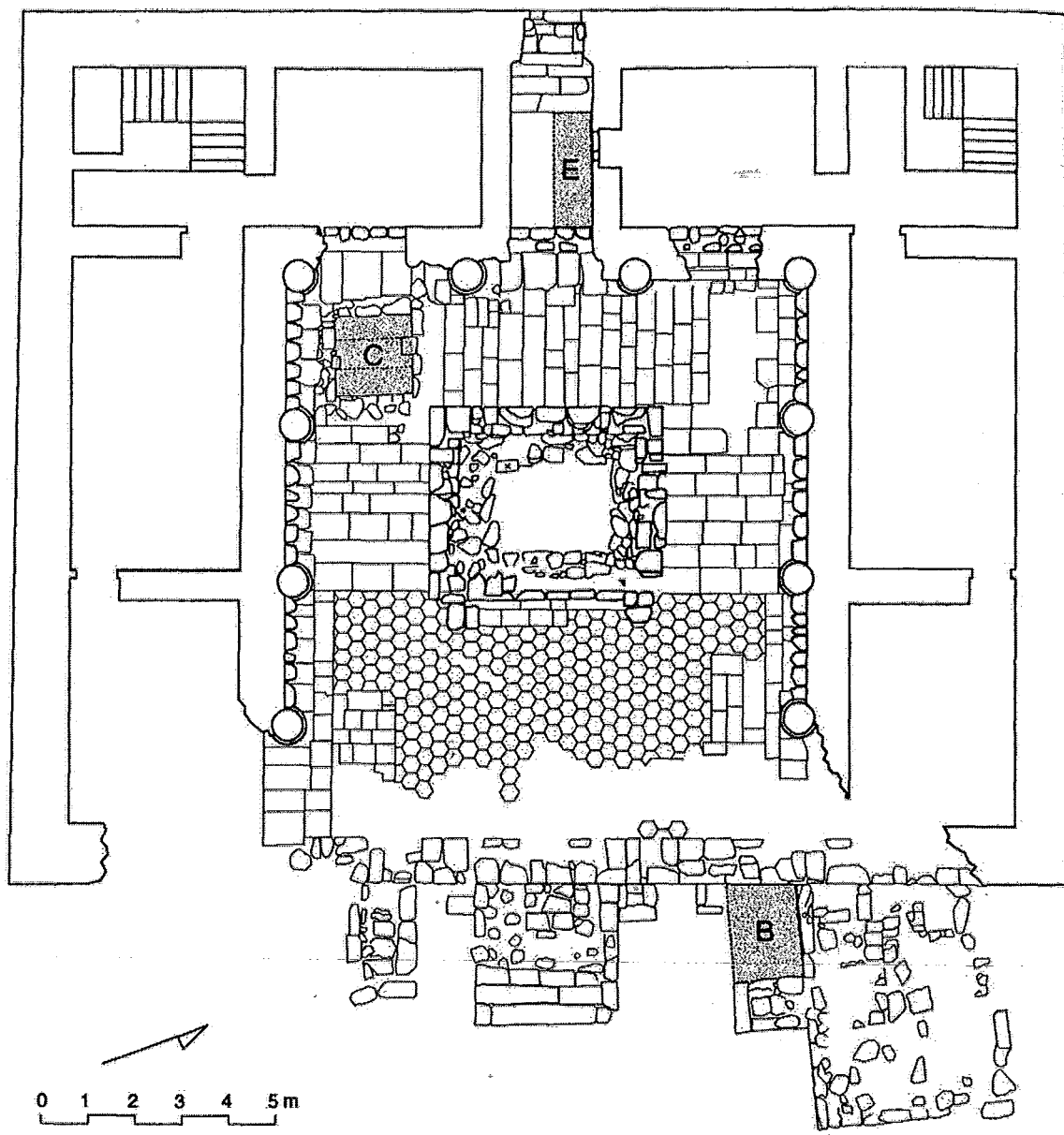


Fig. 39 – Plan of Allāt temple, Iram (Tholbecq 1998, 242, fig. 1).

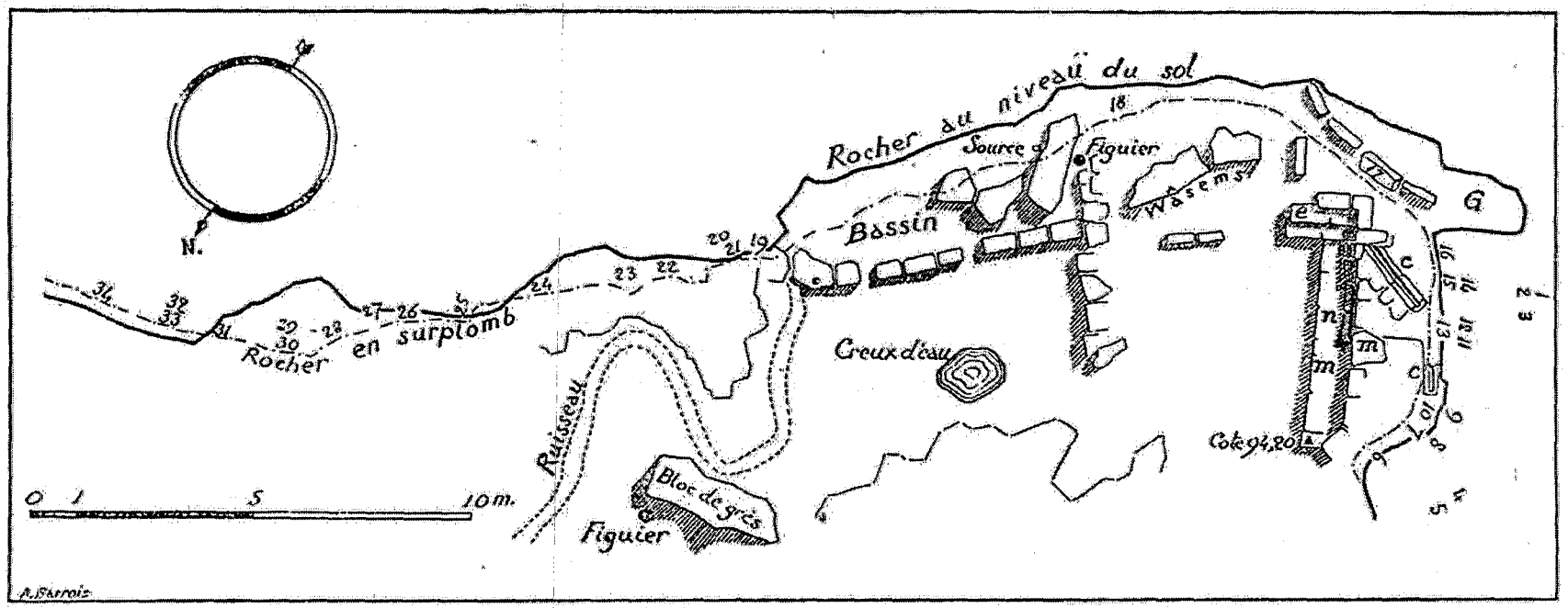


Fig. 1. — Dayr. Rxxx. Plan détaillé d'Aïn Sellâleh, localisant les inscriptions et les symboles religieux.

G, grotte. — *c, c, m, n*, vestiges d'un monument votif de Ḥabbel; cf. pl. XXXVII. — N° 7, bétyle d'Allat de Bosrâ; cf. pl. XXXIX et fig. 7. — N°s 11-12, bétyles d'un dieu inconnu et d'el-'Uzzâ; cf. pl. XXXVIII et fig. 9 s. — N° 20, bétyles d'el-'Uzzâ et du *Seigneur du temple*; cf. pl. XXXVI, 2 et fig. 11.

Fig. 40 – Site plan of 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh, Iram (Savignac 1934, 573, fig. 4).

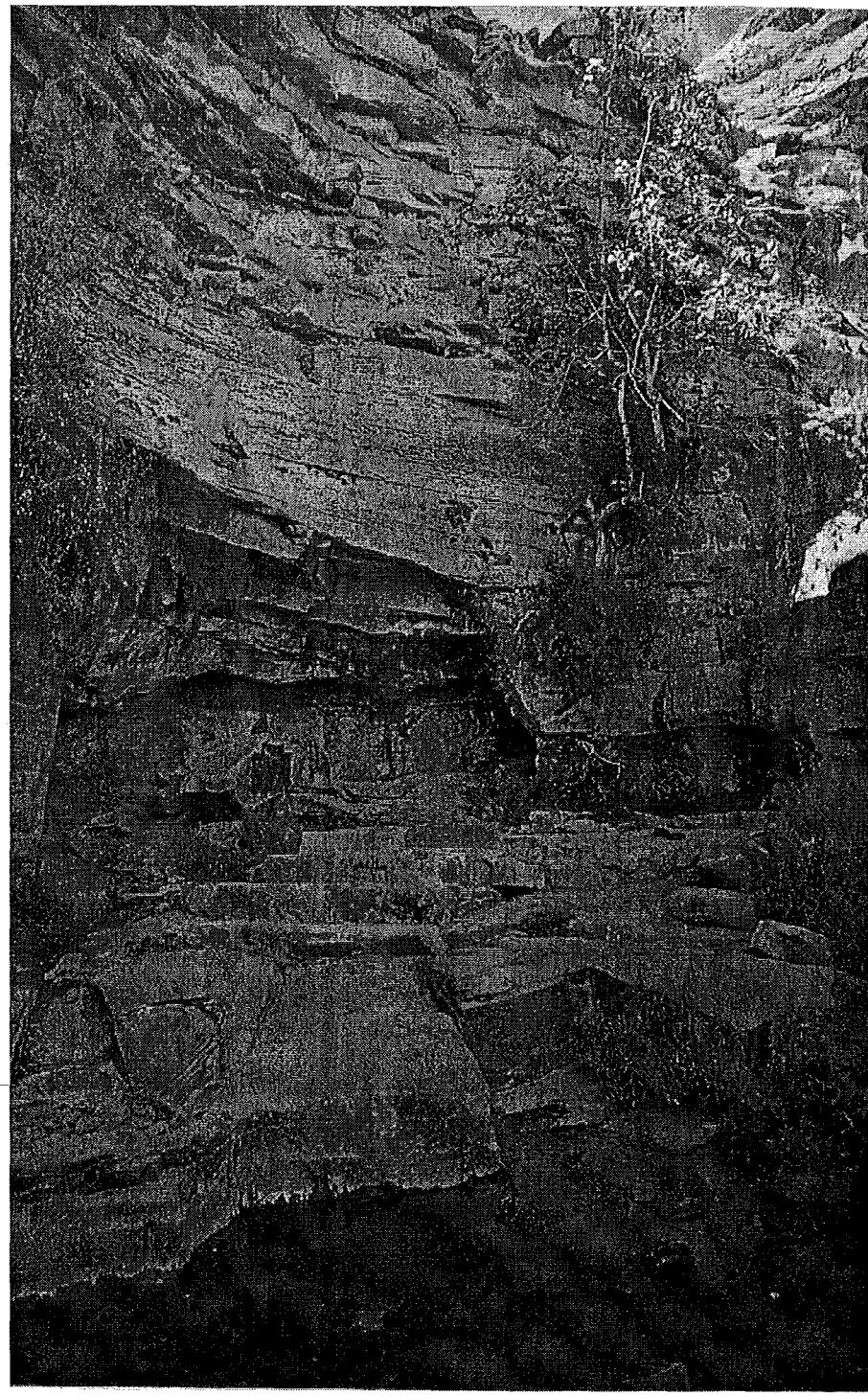


Fig. 41 – View of 'Ayn esh-Shallāleh, Iram (Taylor 2002, 128).

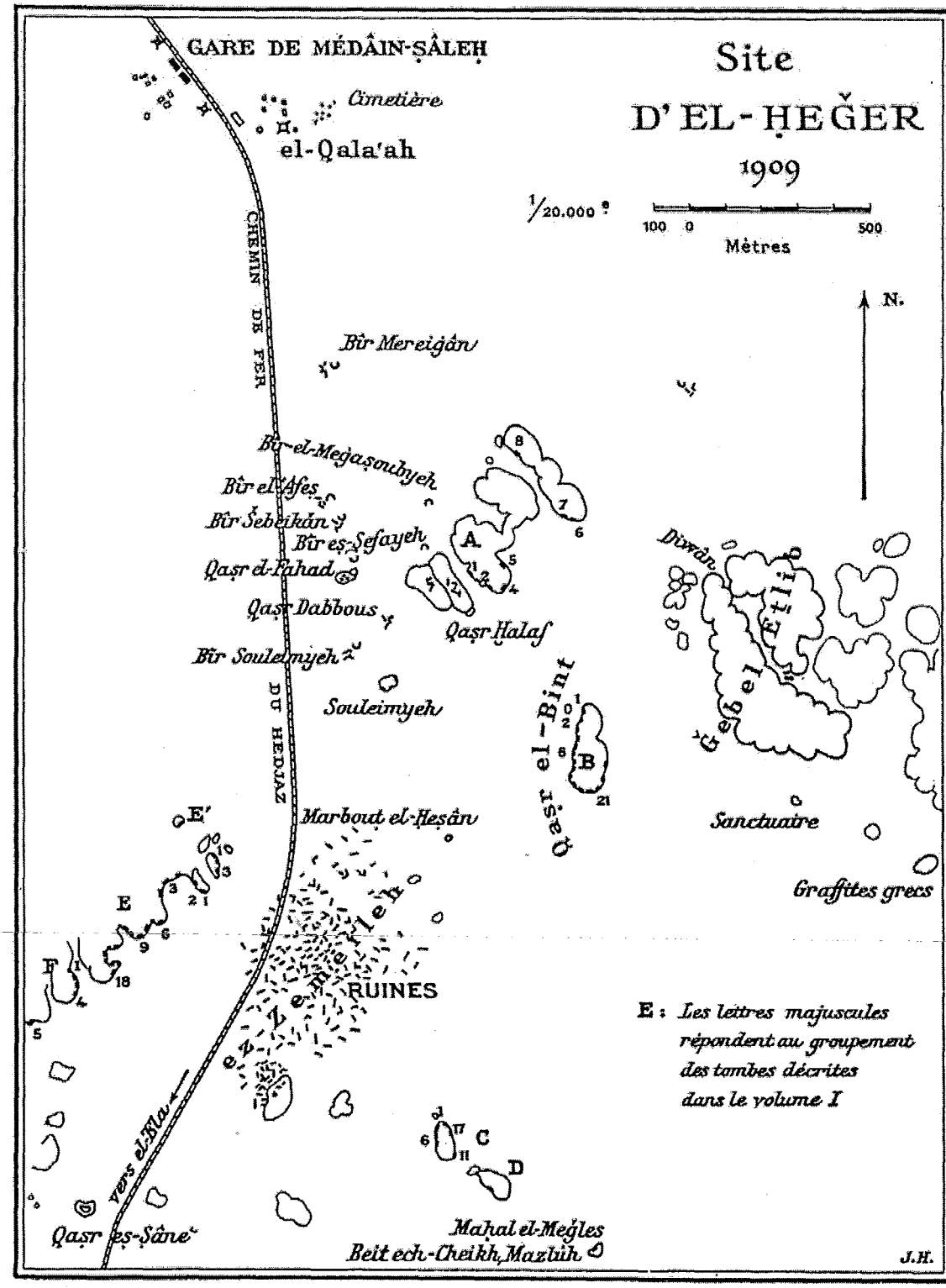


Fig. 42 – Site plan of Hegra (Jaussen and Savignac 1914, pl. 37).

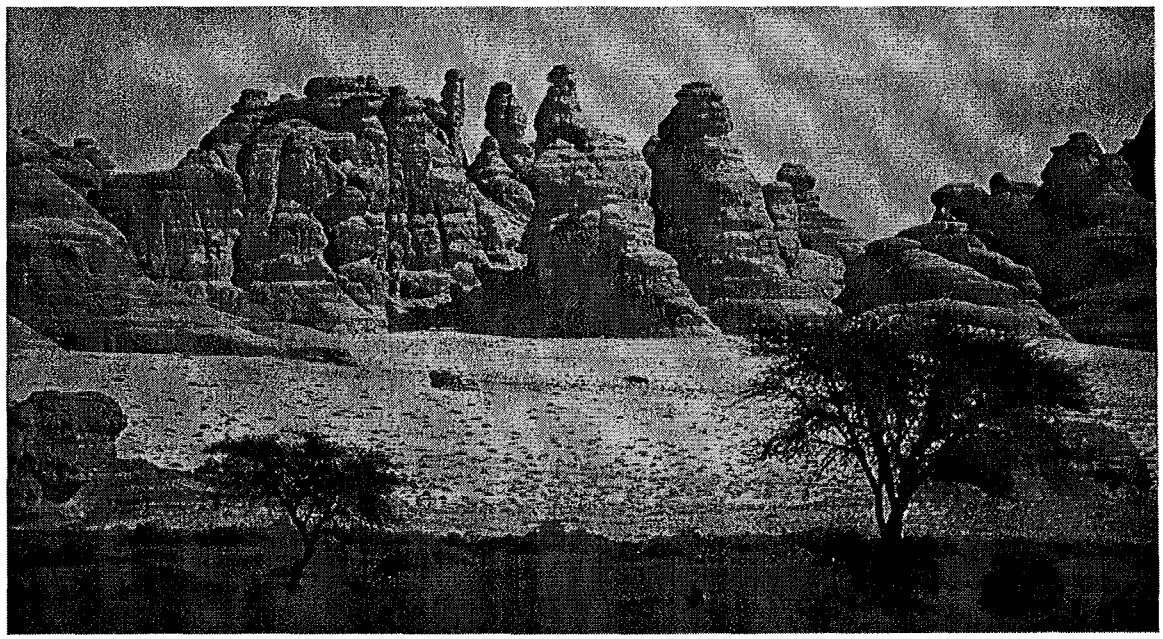


Fig. 43 – Landscape of Jebel Ithlib (Taylor 2002, 155).

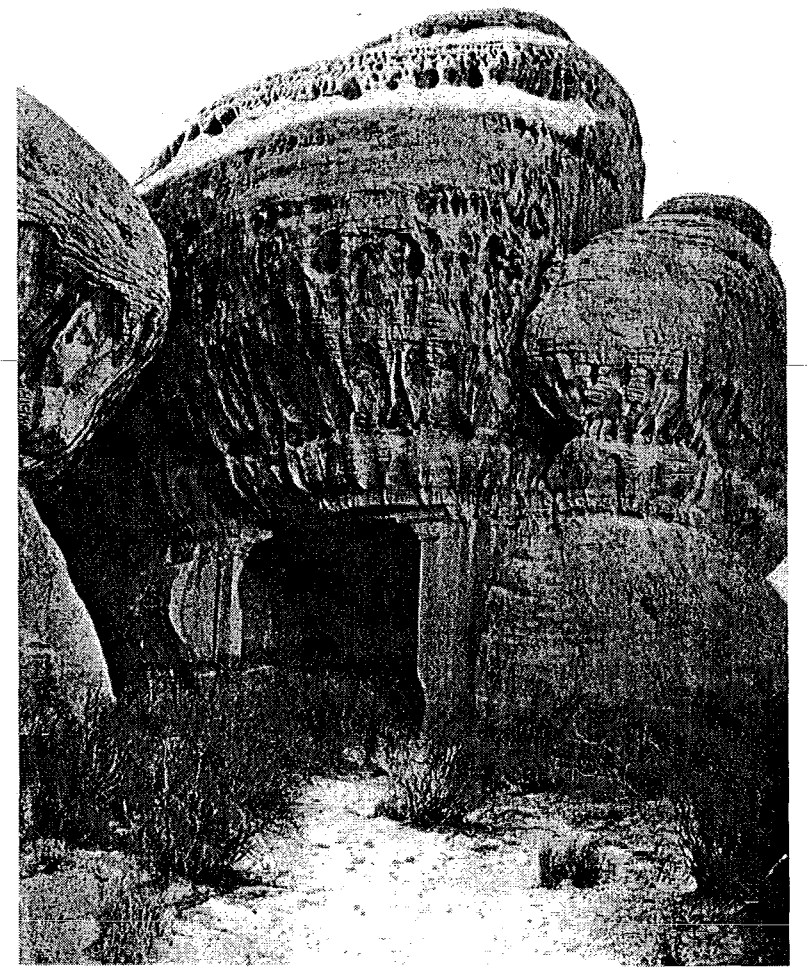


Fig. 44 – The Dīwān *triclinium* at the entrance to Jebel Ithlib, Hegra (Jaussen and Savignac 1909a, fig. 198).

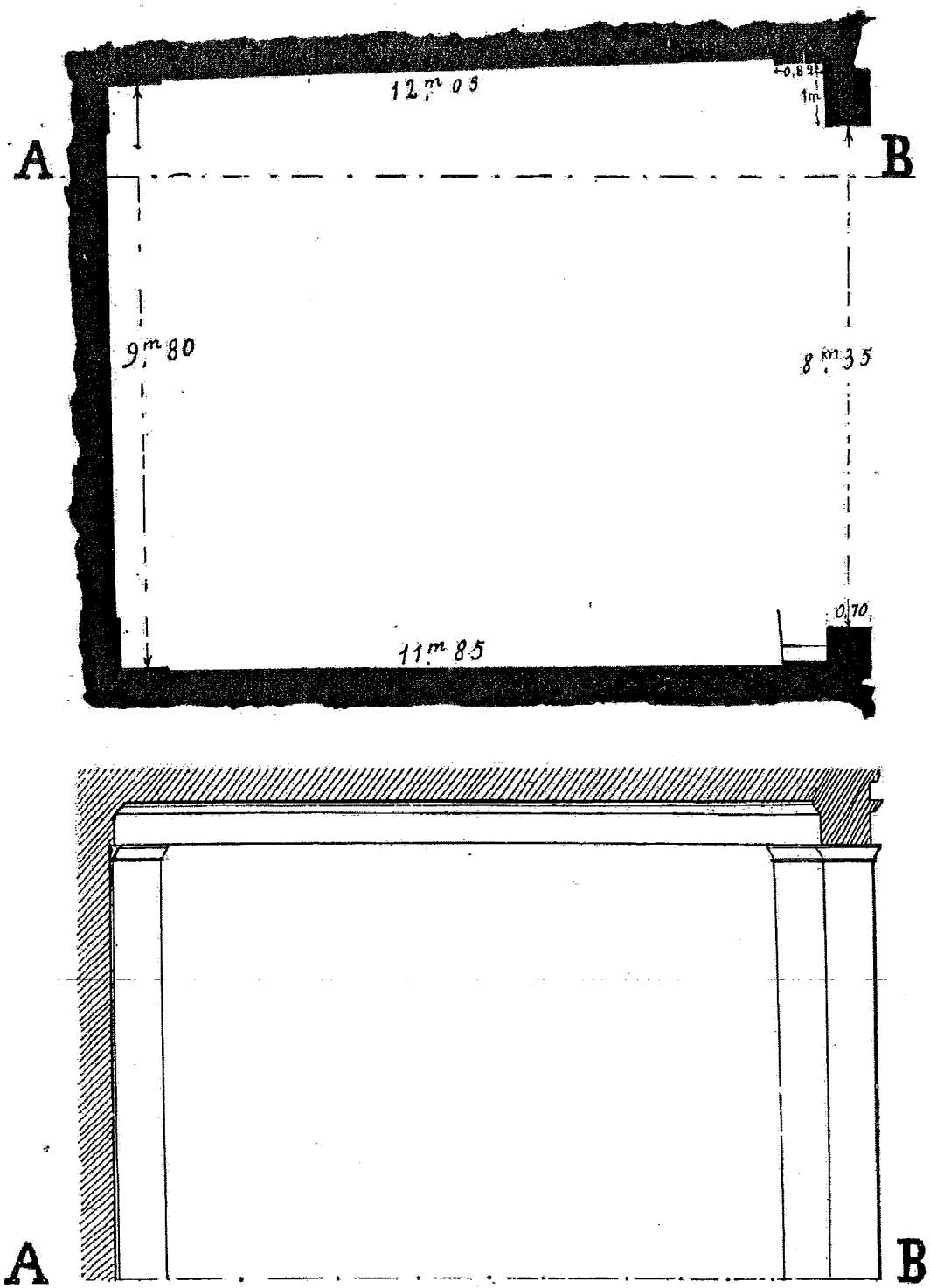


Fig. 45 – Plan of the Dīwān *triclinium*, Hegra (Jaussen and Savignac 1909a, fig. 499).

Fig. 46 – Niche with three betyls, near Dīwān *triclinium*, Hegra (Jaussen and Savignac 1909a, fig. 208).

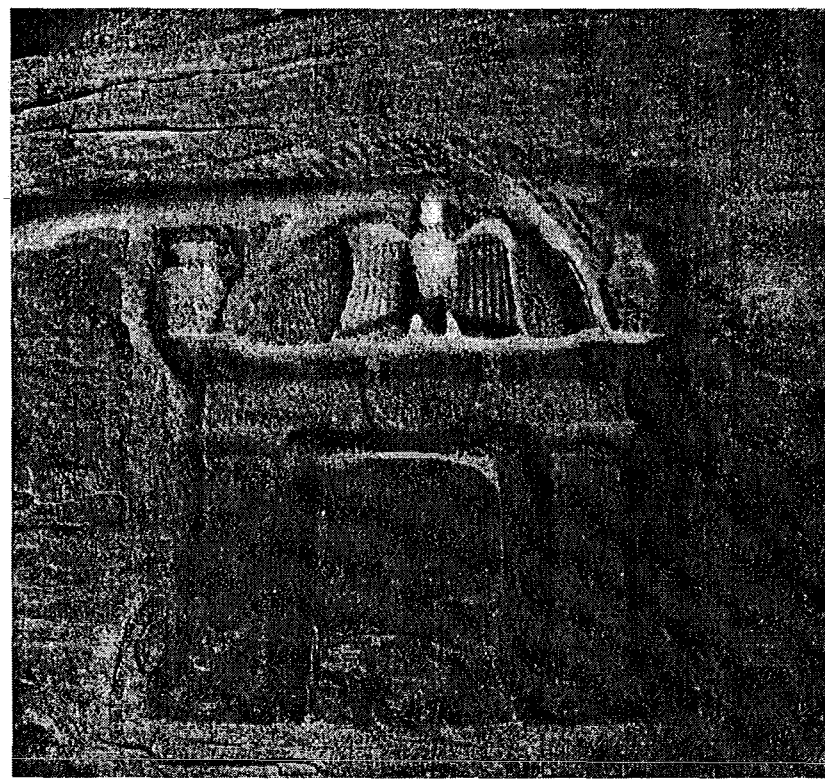


Fig. 47 – Betyl in niche with eagle, Jebel Ithlib, Hegra (Jaussen and Savignac 1909a, fig. 218).

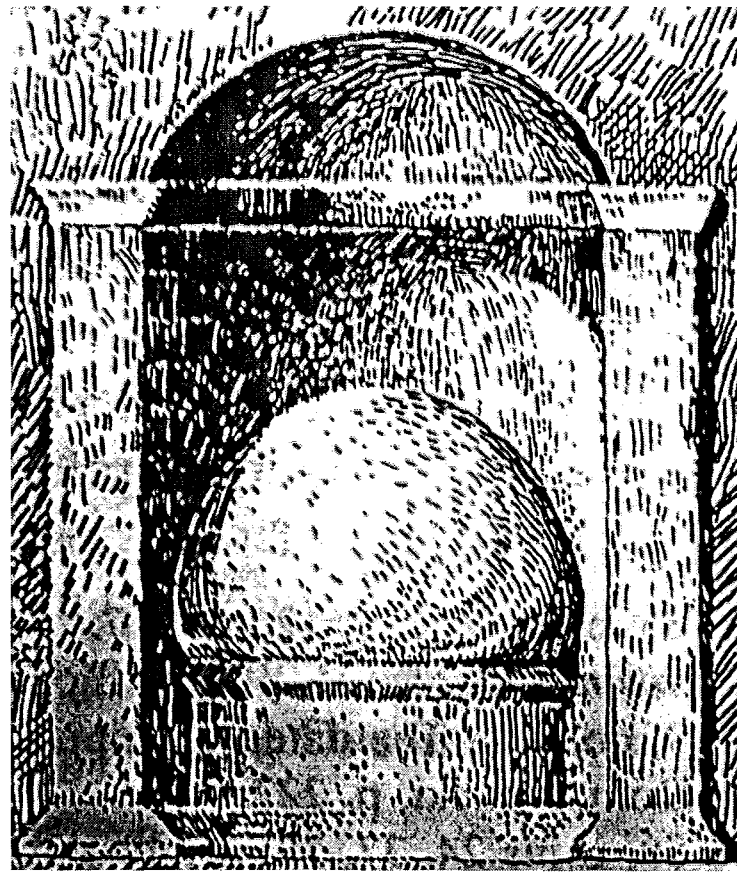


Fig. 48 – Adraa betyl carved in the Sīq, Petra (Patrich 1990a, 72, ill. 18).

Fig. 49 – Nabataean coin depicting King Obodas III (Meshorer 1977, pl. 2.21).

Fig. 50 – Nabataean coin depicting King Aretas IV (Meshorer 1977, pl. 4.52).

Fig. 51 – Dushara medallion over betyl, Wadi Farasa, Petra (Zayadine 1975, 336, 3).

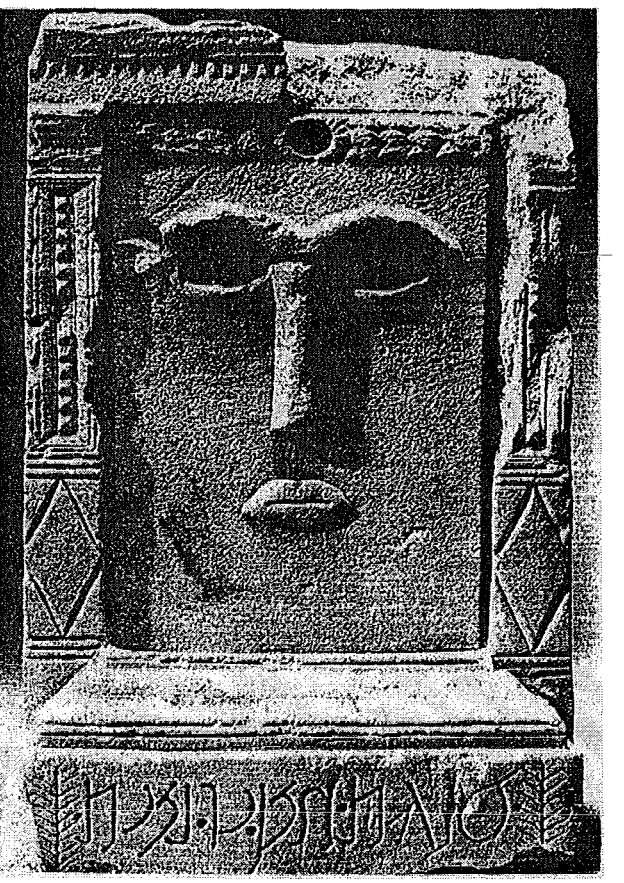


Fig. 52 – Anthropomorphic betyl, Temple of the Winged Lions (Petra) (Patrich 1990a, 84, ill. 28).

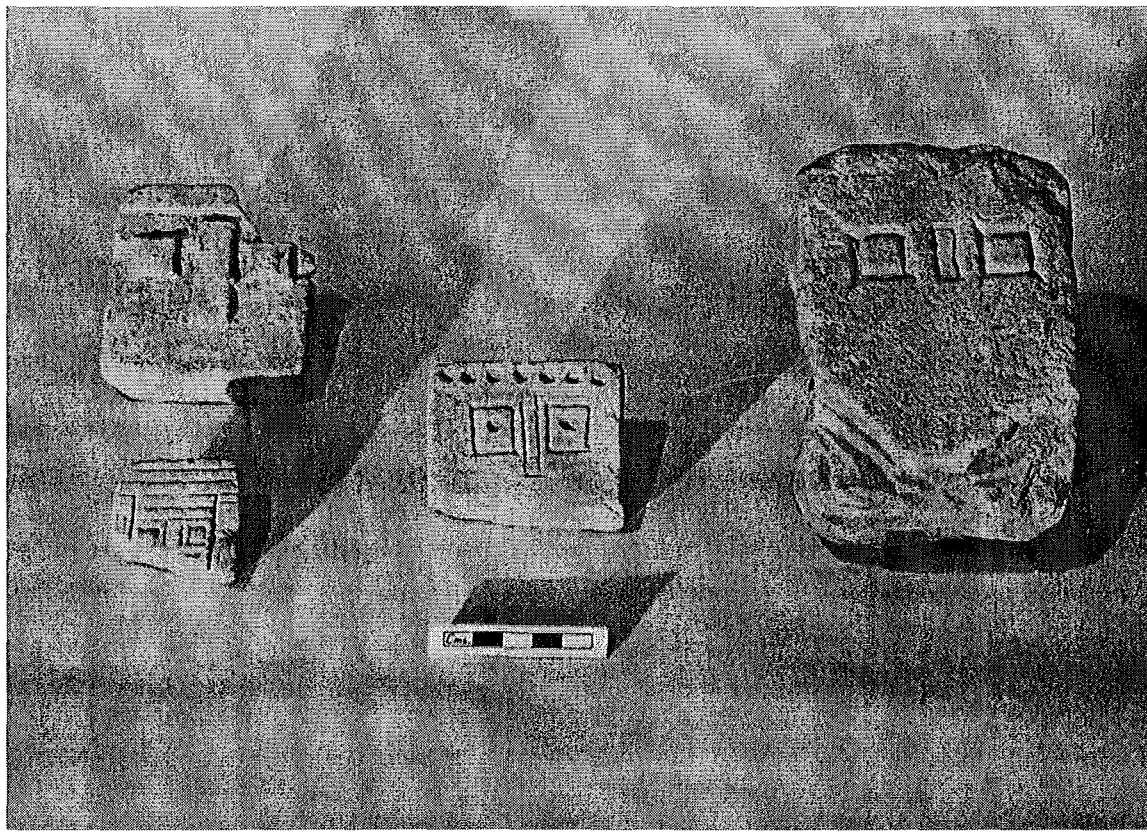


Fig. 53 – Portable "eye idols" (Glueck 1965, 441, pl. 199).

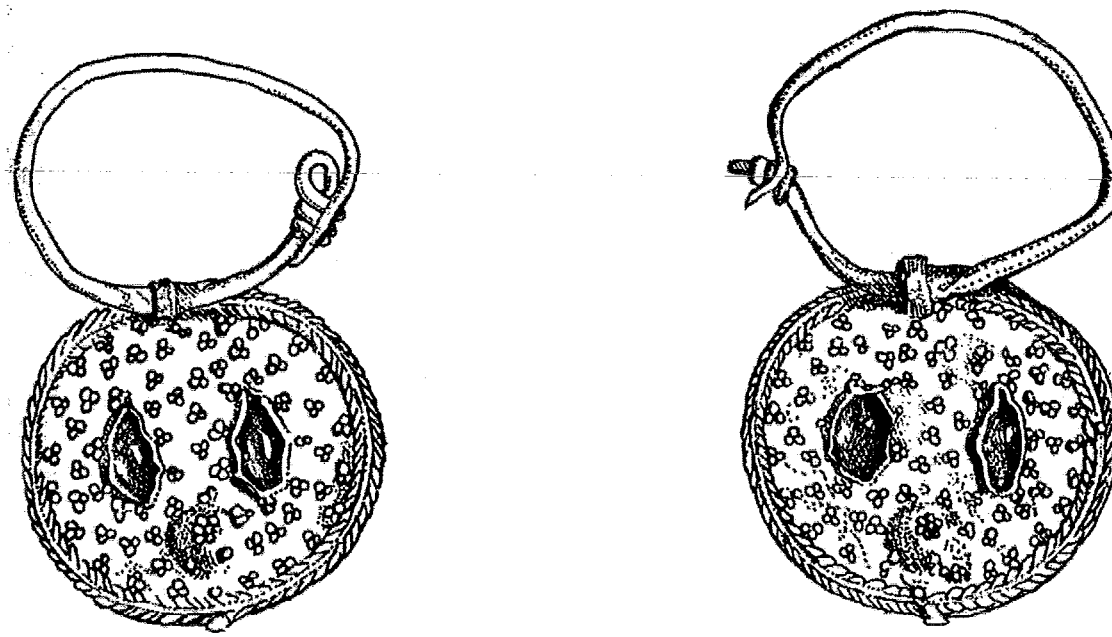


Fig. 54 – al-'Uzzā earrings (Patrich 1984, 43, 1-2).

APPENDIX 1
COINS OF ARABIA

Adraa

No.	Emperor/Empress	Date	Obverse	Reverse	Source	Fig.
1.	Antoninus Pius	138-161	Bust of Antoninus Pius, facing r., laureate, bearded, inscr.: *AVT·KA-- --Λ·ANTWNINOC*	*Aniconic*: Dome-shaped betyl atop altar, inscr.: *·ΔOVC APHC·ΘEOC·AΔPAHNWN*	Spijkerman 1978, 60, 1; pl. 10.1.	1
2.	Marcus Aurelius	175/176	Bust of Marcus Aurelius, facing r., laureate, bearded, inscr.: *AVT.M·AV· ANTONINOC*	*Aniconic*: Dome-shaped betyl atop altar, resting on columns and a base, approached by stairs, inscr.: *ΔOVCAPHCΘEOCAΔPAHNWN·E·O*	Spijkerman 1978, 60, 3; pl. 10.3.	2
3.	Elagabalus	Early 3rd-c.	Bust of Elagabalus, facing r., laureate, inscr.: *AVKAICAPANTWNINOC*	*Aniconic*: Dome-shaped betyl atop altar, resting on columns and base, approached by stairs	Spijkerman 1978, 62, 12; pl. 10.12.	3
4.	Gallienus	256/257	Bust of Gallienus, facing r., radiate, wearing paludamentum and cuirass with gorgoneion, inscr.: *ΓAΛΛI HNOCEB*	*Aniconic*: Dome-shaped betyl atop altar, resting on columns and base, approached by stairs, inscr.: *AΔPAHNWNPNA;*	Spijkerman 1978, 64, 17; pl. 11.17.	4

Petra

No.	Emperor/Empress	Date	Obverse	Reverse	Source	Fig.
5.	Julia Domna	Early 3rd-c.	Bust of Julia Domna, facing r., draped, hair waved atop head, inscr.: *IOVAIA ΔOMNA[CE]B*	*Aniconic*: Tyche seated within temple, holding betyl with right hand, inscr.: *AΔP, ΠETPA; MHT*	Spijkerman 1978, 230, 39; pl. 51, 39.	5

Bostra

No.	Emperor/Empress	Date	Obverse	Reverse	Source	Fig.
6.	Commodus	177	Bust of Commodus, facing r., wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *Λ·AVP·KOMOΔOC· KAIC· AVTOK·VIOC EV*	*Anthropomorphic*: Bust of Dushara, facing r., wearing diadem, draped, inscr.: *BOCTPHN WNΔOVCAPHC*	Spijkerman 1978, 74-75, 24; pl. 13.24; Hill 1922, xxvi, pl. xlix. 13.	6-7
7.	Caracalla	209/210	Bust of Caracalla, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *M·AVP ANTWN·K*	*Anthropomorphic*: Bust of Dushara, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *ΔOVCAPH NBOCTP;*	Spijkerman 1978, 76-77, 37; pl. 15.37.	8
8.	Caracalla	209/210	Bust of Caracalla, facing r., laureate, inscr.: *ANTWNINON AVΓ· ·EVCCEBHN*	*Anthropomorphic*: Bust of Dushara, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *ΔOVCAPHCΘEOCBOCTPWN*	Spijkerman 1978, 78-79, 39; pl. 15.39.	9
9.	Caracalla	209/210	Bust of Caracalla, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *ANTWN*	*Aniconic*: 3 betyls placed atop a square platform, approached by steps or ladder; central betyl topped with 3 flat objects and 2 outer betyls topped with 1 flat object each; small figure stands on either side of betyls on platform, inscr.: *---; -OCTP-; ETPΔ*	Spijkerman 1978, 76-77, 38; pl. 15.38; Kindler 1983, 115; pl. III.30.	10
10.	Elagabalus	Mid-3rd c.	Bust of Elagabalus, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: *AVTKAICAPANTWNINO*	*Aniconic*: 3 betyls placed atop a raised platform, each topped with flat objects, with small figure standing near betyls, approached by stairs, inscr.: *ΔOΓ C A PHC ΘEOC*	Spijkerman 1978, 78-79, 42; pl. 15.42.	11
11.	Trajan Decius and Herennius Etruscus	251-253	Bust of Trajan Decius, facing r., laureate, wearing cuirass and paludamentum, inscr.: IMPCMQTRAIANVSDECIUSAVG	*Aniconic*: Betyl atop raised platform topped with 7 flat objects, sided by 2 other betyls each topped with 1 flat object, approached by steps, all surrounded by wreath, inscr.: ACTIADVSARIACOLMETRBOST RENORUM	Spijkerman 1978, 86-87, 66; pl. 17.66.	12

APPENDIX 1
COIN IMAGES

Adraa

Fig. 1 – Coin of Antoninus Pius

Fig. 2 – Coin of Marcus Aurelius

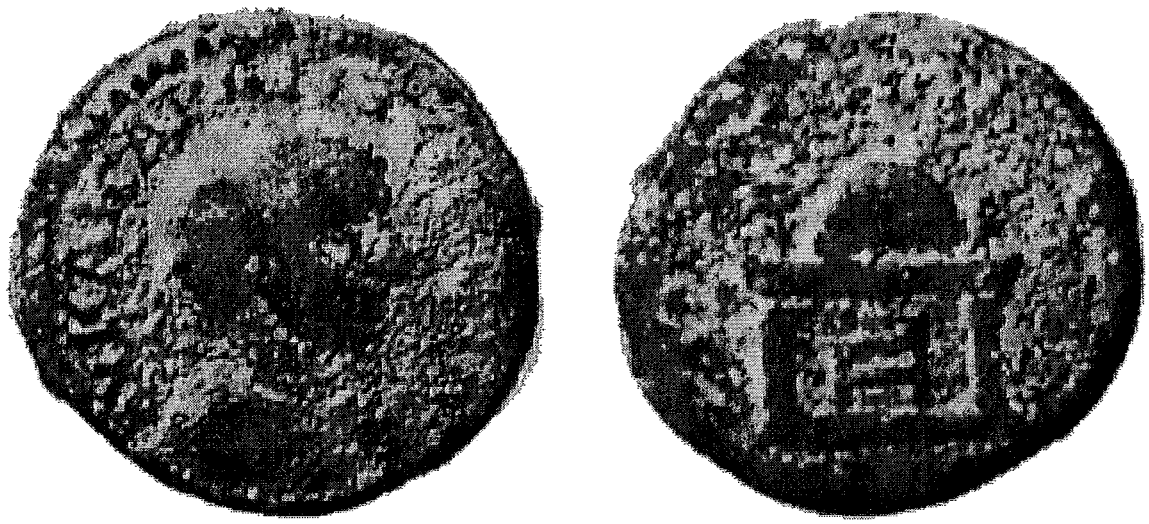


Fig. 3 – Coin of Elagabalus

Fig. 4 – Coin of Gallienus

Petra

Fig. 5 – Coin of Julia Domna

Bostra

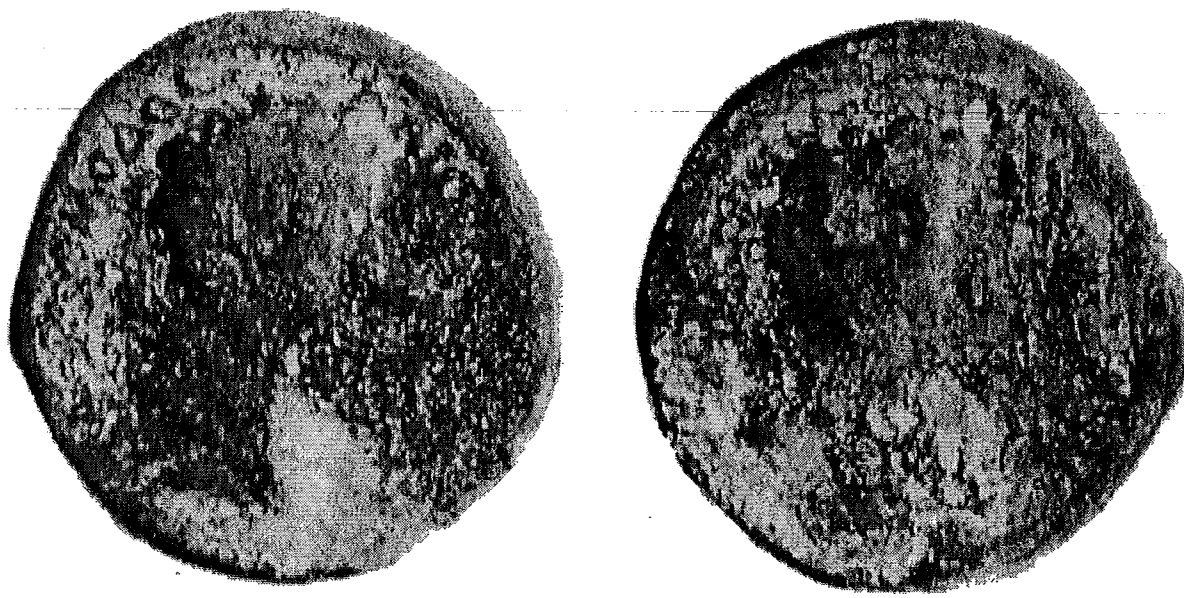


Fig. 6 – Coin of Commodus

Fig. 7 – Coin of Commodus

Fig. 8 – Coin of Caracalla

Fig. 9 – Coin of Caracalla

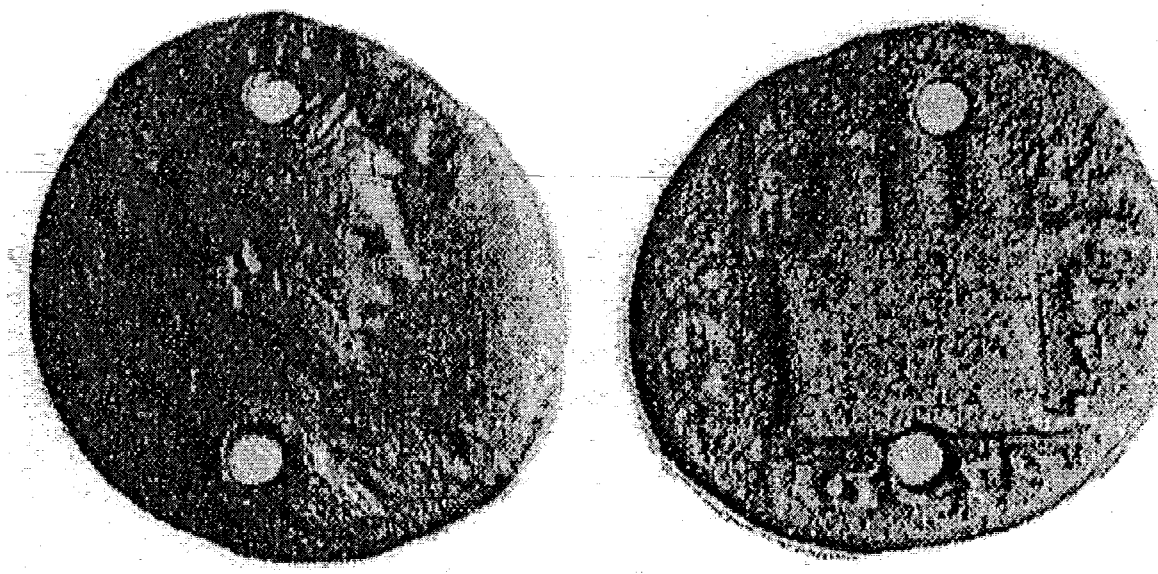


Fig. 10 – Coin of Caracalla

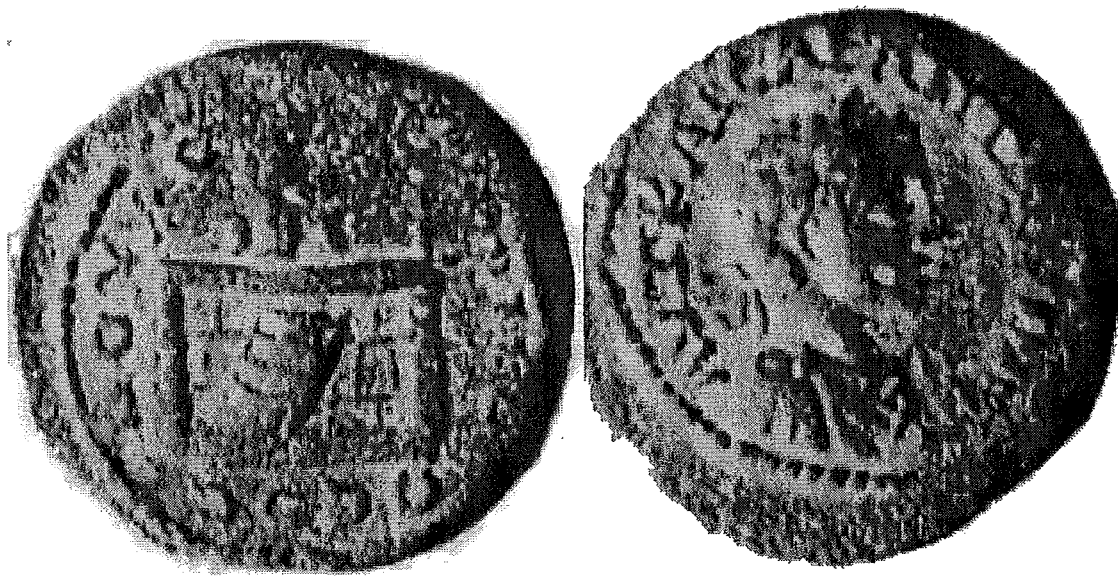


Fig. 11 – Coin of Elagabalus

Fig. 12 – Coin of Trajan Decius and Herennius Etruscus