

The Many Faces of Dushara – A Critical Review of the Evidence

To approach Nabataean religion and Nabataean deities one has to consider local evidence as demonstrated again by Alpass (Alpass 2013)¹. In this article I concentrate on the evidence of Dushara in Petra and would like to give a critical review of the sources and the monuments. If we consider the nature of Dushara as god of the mountains, as storm god and as vegetation god and as a god with solar features, and if we consider the function of Dushara and the developments in the veneration of Dushara in Petra as the local supreme god, as the protector of clans and of the dynasty, and if we consider the changes regarding the Roman Dusares, we already describe “The many faces of Dushara”.

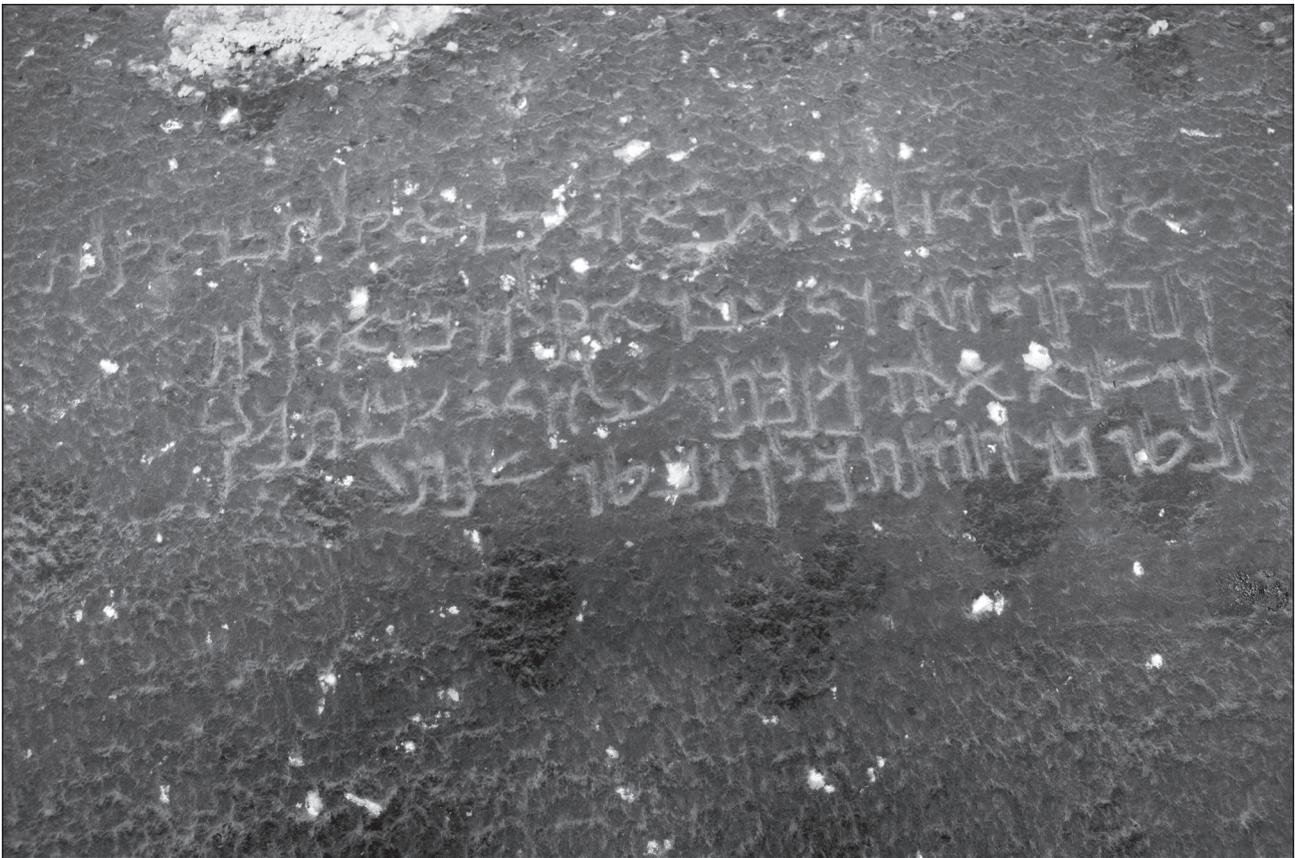
General Structures and Developments

It is of fundamental importance to start with a clarification of the nature of Dushara and of other deities at Petra. The supreme god of Petra was Dushara and later the supreme god of the Nabataeans (Starcky 1966: 985-993; Healey 2001: 80-107; Wenning 2003). Dushara developed from a regional deity of the Edomite mountain range to the local supreme god in the third century BC when Petra arose to some importance and became a station on the incense

road (Wenning 2013a: 18-19). Later, Dushara became the tutelary deity of various Nabataean clans living in and outside Petra (Wenning 2011: 282-286, 293-294). The oldest dated evidence for this development is the famous Aşlah inscription at Petra from *ca.* 96 BC (Dalman 1912: no. 90; Wenning and Gorgerat 2012: 132-134) (FIG. 1). The cult of Dushara spread over the Nabataean realm with those clans outside Petra. Dushara seems to have had the status of supreme god at some of these places too. Some sanctuaries of Dushara outside Petra became prominent like that of Dushara of Gaia (Healey 2001: 89-90). Dushara also became the tutelary deity of the Nabataean dynasty, probably as early as the royal house settled at Petra in the second century BC, but at least during the first century BC (Wenning 2011: 286-290). In the heyday of Petra during the long reign of Aretas IV the local supreme god of Petra became a kind of identity marker. As such Dushara was put into a new program by Rabbel II in the critical political period after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, when the Nabataeans were afraid that Rome could take over the Nabataean kingdom. Among other activities, the Nabataean king supported the main Nabataean sanctuaries in and outside Petra and declared a small group of particular deities as his deities

1. I would like to thank the editorial team for editing this article and Lucy Wadson for kind support in the language. Alpass 2013 was published after finishing this article. Concerning the length

of this article, I refrained to refer to his study afterwards, but give a review in “Gymnasium”.



1. Petra, Triclinium Br. 21, Aşlah inscription, ca. 96 BC (courtesy L. Gorgerat).

to allow all Nabataeans to find their deities among them. Instead of many particular local deities he established a kind of pantheon of a few supreme deities to overcome this particularism. In such a way he tried to unite and to strengthen Nabataean society. I have called this a *re-novatio* (Wenning 1993: 86-93; 2011: 290-292). I avoid describing Dushara as a national god, a god of state or an imperial god as the terms nation, state and imperium do not really fit the type of the Nabataean controlled territories, which get their definition by terms of tribal tradition. That Dushara, nevertheless, was of crucial importance to this program reflects the political aspects of it, in protecting the status of Petra and the survival of the dynasty. This program failed in AD 106. The veneration of Dushara / Dusares continued into the period of the Roman Province of Arabia, but with some important changes (Bowersock 1990; Kropp 2011).

When the first Nabataeans explored the Edomite Mountains sometime in the fifth

or fourth century BC (Bienkowski 2013), they were impressed by the landscape, the wilderness and the fertility of this region at the slope between the Edomite plateau and the Araba. They got the impression that there must have been a mighty god as Lord of this region. Evidently, they did not come to know the Edomite supreme god Qaus, who was venerated here as such. Otherwise, they would have integrated Qaus with his name into the circle of their deities as they did with other foreign deities like Baalshamin, Atargatis and Isis. The veneration of Qōs by the Nabataeans seems to be a later development (Healey 2001: 126-127), probably due to their close contact with Idumaea. Instead of this, they created their own naming Dhu-Shara for the regional god in a traditional way with an epithet. *Dhū al-Sharā(t)* would mean “the one of the Sharāt mountain range” (Healey 2001: 86-87). The Ancient North Arabian *dhū* element supports the suggestion that the name points to people

from North Arabian origin. Dushara was not a god, who was brought by the Nabataeans from their homeland in the Ḥijāz to this area (Wenning 2013a: 16-17), but a regional local deity. Therefore, it makes little sense to ask which known deity is behind the epithet. If the reading “the one of the Sharāt mountain range” is correct, and this is a widely held view, then Dushara is marked as a mountain god, and in the Ancient Near Eastern tradition as a storm-god, by this name. One of the aspects of the storm-god was to bring fertility.

The alternative derivation of the name Dushara relates to the idea of *sharā* being a place rich in water, trees and wilderness. Such a fertile wilderness was suitable to shape a *himā*, which was put under the protection of the deity (Wellhausen 1897: 51; Healey 2001: 88-89). If this interpretation would be more correct, as it seems that more parallels can be cited like Dhu-Ghābat, “He of the thicket”, for the supreme god of the Lihyanites, it would make Dushara in the same way a god of vegetation or fertility. This aspect later allowed an identification of Dushara with Dionysos as god of fertility (Patrich 2005). The old and traditional representation of Dushara and the other deities of the Nabataeans was the veneration of the deity in the betyl (Wenning 2001).

I myself prefer the reading “the one of the Sharāt mountain range” because the mountains and rocks were of such great importance in the veneration of Dushara at Petra. One must recall the betyls, the rock-cut niches and the *mōtab*, while the element ‘mountain’ was not part of the *himā* idea. There is another reason. Dushara is more often compared with Zeus as the supreme god than with Dionysos as the vegetation god. On the other hand, water was of the utmost importance to the cults of Petra. Therefore, we should not exclude the possibility that the meaning of the name became later more complex and included at least both ideas.

We have to consider that Dushara as a god of the early Nabataeans was described in the

common way that the Nabataeans venerated their deities in North Arabia in the Persian period. The priority in veneration was given to one particular deity, male or female, in a kind of henolatry. This deity became the local supreme god and as such the Lord of Heaven, who was higher than the sun-god and moon-god or could have solar and lunar features himself (Wenning 2013b-c). The other deities must not follow a pantheon with hierarchical structures, but were “associated deities” (Starcky 1982; Healey 2001: 83-84). Following his status as the supreme deity, Dushara could be later identified with Zeus, and following his status as Lord of Heaven with Helios. The solar features of Dushara are so obvious that some scholars interpreted him as the sun-god (Healey 2011/1996), while his lunar features seem not to be stressed. The Nabataean deity with a lunar nature was more likely Allāt (Wenning 2013d).

Local Evidence: Inscriptions

Dushara is directly mentioned in nine Nabataean inscriptions in Petra, more than any other deity. The dominance of Dushara at Petra is indicated also by the fact that besides him, only Obodas Theos is mentioned as a local male deity in the inscriptions (Wenning 2015), while there are various goddesses venerated locally (Wenning 2013d). Three other inscriptions need debate about whether they reflect Dushara. One is the unpublished inscription mentioned by Schmitt-Korte, which cannot be proved yet (Merklein and Wenning 1998: 84). The other one is Dalman 1912: no. 92, where the god of Sa‘bu probably can be identified as Dushara, but there are various suggestions about this deity (Healey 2001: 153-154). The third inscription from the so-called Chapel of Obodas, mentions besides Obodas Theos, also Dhu-Tharā, the god of Ḥutaishu, at a nearby place (CIS II 350). It could be that Dutharā is to be seen as a variant of a dialect expression of Dushara (Wenning 2011: 285).

Two other inscriptions probably cannot be

connected with Dushara, certainly not with the Dushara of Petra. An inscription at Qattar ad-Dayr relates to the betyl of Boşra (Milik 1958: no. 7). It is debated if this means a personification of the town or the indication of the god of Boşra, which could be a local goddess (Milik 1958: 246-249; Wenning 2001: 81-82, fig. 2) or the local Dushara (Nehmé 1997: 131 note 22; Wenning 2004: 39). Another inscription on the stairs to Ğabal al-Khubtha is dedicated to Al-‘Uzzā and the “Lord of the Temple” beside an “empty” niche (Dalman 1912: no. 85; Wenning 2001: 80-81, fig. 1). The “Lord of the Temple” was usually identified with Dushara (Healey 2001: 82), but following strong evidence from Hegra a new interpretation was given (Nehmé 2005/06: 188-194).

In four inscriptions, single individuals were put “in the eye of“ (*qadam*) Dushara (CIS II 401; Dalman 1912: no. 28; RÉS 1427; Milik and Starcky 1975: no. 7), that is under the protection of this deity. The eye-betyl with schematic eyes and nose expresses the same wish, that the deity may perceive the worshipper (and smell the sacrificed incense) (Wenning 2001: 83-84, fig. 3). Dushara is called “the god of Manbatu” in the Aşlah inscription, dated to *ca.* 96 BC. He was the protector of the clan and was integrated into the festivities held in the Aşlah triclinium. This can be compared with Dalman 1912:

no. 92, if Dushara was “the god of Sa‘bu”. Comparable is also CIS II 443, where Dushara is called “the god of Madrasa” in triclinium D. 89 in al-Madras in the east of Petra.

Dushara was also the protector of a large rock-cut tomb complex in Wadi Turkmāniyyah (CIS II 350). The complex was called a *ḥaram*, dedicated to Dushara, his *mōtab* and all the gods. They were made responsible for the tomb and the burials there. The *mōtab* was a shaped block of rock to carry the betyl, which was not an altar, but was the mountain landscape of Petra as the seat of the god in a transferred sense (Healey 2001: 158-159; Wenning 2001: 88-90). This official large inscription illustrates the role of Dushara in the local community and the interaction between people, temple and administration. The context of another official inscription is unknown and the inscription is so fragmentary that only parts of the dating formula and the name of Dushara remain (El-Khouri and Johnson 2005).

Only one inscription refers to a temple of Dushara, dated to AD 2/3. The building inscription is written on a column and reports the dedication of a “theatron” to Dushara (G. W. Bowersock in Jones 2001) (FIG. 2). “Theatra” are known from the sanctuaries in the Hauran and the Qaşr adh-Dharīḥ (Healey 2001: 40, 45, 62, 66). These are porticoes and bench-



2. Petra Church, inscription mentions “theatron of Dushara”, 2/3 AD (Courtesy of the American Center of Oriental Research, Amman).

like installations in the courtyard in front of a temple. I have suggested that the courtyard with bench-like installations behind the Temple of the Winged Lions could be such a “theatron” (Wenning 2004: 46-48), but would like to connect the dedication with the temenos of the Qaṣr al-Bint. The appearance of the courtyard of the Qaṣr al-Bint in the first century AD is concealed by the changes that took place in the second century AD. In my opinion, Qaṣr al-Bint was the temple of Dushara, and the description of the betyl of Dushara (Theos Ares) in the Suda refers to it (Wenning 2001: 84-85). But the ownership cannot be argued by the bust of Helios / Sol in a medallion from a metope of the Qaṣr al-Bint (see below). It also does not support the connection of the temple with the sun-god or with Baalshamin. The discovery of an eye-betyl in the temple supports the idea of associated gods, if the betyl depicts Al-‘Uzzā at all (Wenning 2013d), but hardly makes the temple dedicated to Al-‘Uzzā or the Aphrodisieion mentioned in a papyrus of the Babatha archive from AD 124 (Healey 2001: 41-42; Wenning 2013d). Dushara was called Zeus Hypsistos in an *interpretatio Graeca* in the post-Nabataean period of the Roman province (Sartre 1993: 56-58 no. 23). That this title is given in Palmyra to Baalshamin does not make the god in Petra Baalshamin (Healey 2001: 126). The cult of this god was widely spread and could be attached to the local supreme god at many places (Lichtenberger 2003: 229-230). Two altars and a betyl are dedicated to Zeus Hagios in the Roman period (Sartre 1993: nos. 20-21, 27).

With the shifting of the capital of the province to Bostra later in the second / third century AD, the Hauranite cult of Dusares, which is reflected in the Sīq dedications of the city of Adraa (D. 149-161), became part of imperialistic ideas by the Romans who looked for support by the Arabian population of the province. The betyl of Dusares became more an omphalos as a kind of hub of the universe (Kropp 2011: 182-185),

and the epithets of Dusares included aspects of the Sol Invictus (Healey 2001: 102). In this new conception Dusares became a young cuirassed god demonstrated by a coin from Bostra, which was misunderstood as Dionysian iconography (Healey 2001: 99-100; refuted by Kropp 2011: 187). The Hauranite Dusares was an offshoot of the Dushara from Petra.

Local Evidence: Betyls

No doubt, most of the rock-cut niches with betyls in Petra were dedicated to Dushara, but not all. It is impossible to connect a particular type of betyl directly with him, although the Suda describes a specific type which is often chosen for the betyl in the niches (Wenning 2001: 84-85). Schmitt-Korte announced in 1998 an eye-betyl with a dedication to Dushara in Petra (Merklein and Wenning 1998: 84 no. 30), but he has so far failed to publish it. We learn by this possible evidence that we should avoid limiting the representation of Dushara to a single type only. Each type of betyl could be connected to any Nabataean or foreign deity. Unless the betyl is defined by an inscription, it remains difficult to identify the deity which it represents. In some cases the context assists in getting answers (Wenning 2001; 2008; 2010).

A definite classification of Dushara can be proved only for a few of the betyls. These are especially the betyls in the triclinia of Aṣḥāh in the Bab as-Siq (D. 15) and al-Madras (D. 89), which were dedicated to Dushara, and the Hauranite Dusares of the Roman period in the Adraa niche D. 150 in the Siq, which differs from the Nabataean type. The two triclinia show incisions or a niche with the depiction of the tutelary deity on the back wall, who would be Dushara. An aedicule and a nearby rectangular betyl are incised in the back wall of the Aṣḥāh triclinium (D. 15b-c; Wenning 2003: 152-153, fig. 1a-c). While the aedicule indicates a holy place, it is not possible to determine if a betyl was once incised inside the aedicule, because of a secondary cutting exactly at this spot. Unlike



3. Petra, Al-Madras, Triclinium Br. 40, Betyl D. 89b (R. Wenning).

the aedicule, the incised betyl is not in the center and looks rather like an addition to the aedicule. The niche in the Madras triclinium contains a rectangular betyl, of which the upper part is broken off, and in front of it a small betyl (D. 89b; Wenning 2003: 154-155, fig. 2) (FIG. 3). The big betyl could represent Dushara, but CIS II 443 is just one of many inscriptions on the walls of this triclinium and not the official votive inscription. Therefore, some uncertainty remains.

Local Evidence: Sculptures

Which image do we have in mind when we classify a sculpture being a depiction of Dushara? And what is the reason to assume so? Above I have mentioned that the nature of Dushara allowed a comparison with Zeus and Dionysos and other Greek deities. That Dushara was compared to various Greek deities illustrates the differences in the conception of Semitic and Greek deities. Each Greek deity was given a limited nature and function, while the supreme Semitic god or goddess was rather omnipotent.

The Hellenization of the Nabataean elite and the *interpretatio Graeca* of Nabataean deities were the background to depict Nabataean deities in the shape of Greek types since the late first century BC. It seemed to me that the Nabataean sculptures which followed Greek types have been overestimated in scholarly discussion concerning their value for the Nabataean deities. These representations need more differentiation. Not every sculpture of a deity leads to the conclusion of a local veneration of this deity.

Dushara or Zeus?

Zeus is represented in several Nabataean reliefs from Petra. None of these are cultic representations for veneration, nor are they pure decoration, but part of particular programs, which could serve to illustrate the power and blessing of the local god(s). A slab with the bust of Zeus / Jupiter was for many years exhibited above the entrance of the Cave Museum in Petra, now opposite the entrance to the Petra Museum (Parr 1957: 6-7 no. 1, pls. 1-2; Wenning 2013c: fig. 1). The god is shown heavily bearded, crowned by a laurel wreath with a medallion, clad in a cloak, which covers his left shoulder and breast, and holding a scepter behind his left shoulder. The head is turned to his left and slightly looking up. Among various identifications the relief is addressed as Dushara-Zeus. What is the meaning of writing the god's name with a hyphen and is it correct to do so? Will it be explained by the caption that Dushara is shown in the type of Zeus? I myself once called such depictions "masks" indicating aspects of Nabataean deities (Wenning 1989). In the meantime I am not sure that "masks" is describing the evidence at best. I am afraid it was rather misleading in this general statement.

Should it be stated that Dushara and Zeus are merged into one deity? This assumption would explain the writing with a hyphen. The main argument for this view is the bilingual inscription of Syllaios from Miletus, dated 9/8 BC (RÉS 675). His votive is dedicated in the Greek ver-

sion to Δύ Δουσάρει. Usually, this is translated as “Zeus Dusares”, but this would be a unique epithet of Zeus. The epithet was not necessary if an equation of Dushara / Dusares with Zeus was intended as Δῖος can refer to Zeus directly. The meaning of Δῖος includes “belonging to Zeus” and “stemming from Zeus” (Gemoll 1959: 220). Then, Δῖος Δουσάρεις rather explains the nature of Dusares. Starcky suggested the reading “the god Dusares” (Starcky 1955: 95), which does not seem completely fitting. I suggest the translation “Zeus-like”. In my opinion, the inscription does not support the equation of Dushara with Zeus. That Dushara is seen as equivalent to Zeus is based on both their status as the supreme god in the religious systems of the Nabataeans and the Greeks.

The bust of the slab follows Greek prototypes of Zeus from the Hellenistic period. It is clearly a Zeus by iconographical classification and not a Sarapis or a Zeus-Sarapis as often suggested. For being a Sarapis the head misses the calathos and the small curls at the forehead. Zeus-Sarapis is depicted in a later intaglio from the Basilica, probably dating into the early second century AD (Henig 2001). Usually these gems do not represent local deities and are not produced locally. A small relief following the type of the bust of the slab was excavated by Schmid at the baths on Umm al-Biyara in 2012². A very rough imitation of the type was excavated in the so-called Great Temple in 1999 (Joukowsky 2007: 240, figs. 5.37-38). The dating and the precise identification are difficult and it remains even uncertain if the bust follows the above discussed type.

The type is used to depict the planet god Jupiter in the great frieze of Khirbat at-Tannūr (Glueck 1965: pl. 154), where he just represents Jupiter and is not referring to a Nabataean deity (Wenning 2009: 579-581). The planet gods are crowned by Nikes in the Khirbat at-Tannūr frieze. A small frieze from the Basilica in Petra

shows the same composition and the same type of Zeus / Jupiter, a bust of the god in a medallion crowned by Nikes (Roche 2001: 354-355 no. 18). There are slabs with Hermes / Mercury and some slabs with Nikes which could be part of a large frieze (Wenning and Hübner 2004: 162-163, group 10; 174, group B 4). Therefore, it is very possible that in Petra the same subject existed in two versions, a monumental frieze of the seven planet gods and a smaller citation, to which the fragment from the Basilica belongs. The frieze of Khirbat at-Tannūr, dated to the earlier second century AD, could follow the large frieze in Petra. If this argumentation is compelling, then the frieze slab just represents Zeus / Jupiter and we have to skip the caption “Dushara-Zeus” and reject this relief as a representation of Dushara.

The use of Greek prototypes is more complex. Not all reliefs of deities in Greek tradition should be thought of as not representing Nabataean deities. The two outer reliefs of the great frieze at Khirbat at-Tannūr show the local supreme deities in the Greek shape of Zeus and Hera in types different from the types of the planet gods (Wenning 2009: 580-581, fig. 5-6). Here the bust of Zeus was a code for the local Nabataean god whoever he was and demonstrates the possibility of having a Greek type for depicting a local Nabataean deity. The local deities are put on the same level as the planet gods and they promise the same blessing. There is also a small bust relief of Zeus / Jupiter in the type of the planet god among the finds from Khirbat at-Tannūr, which seems to have framed an entrance (Glueck 1965: pl. 153b). The counterpart of the relief was one with Hera (Glueck 1965: pl. 45b). At Khirbat at-Tannūr the two reliefs probably represented the local supreme deities (Wenning 2009: 581). That means, concerning Zeus, the same sculptural type could represent the planet god Jupiter and the local supreme god. Therefore, it cannot be

2. S. G. Schmid and P. Bienkowski, The International Umm al-Biyara Project (IUBP). Preliminary Report on the 2012 Season. III. 2012 excavations – b. Structure 20, in *The Association for*

Understanding of Ancient Cultures (AUAC) 2013: www.auac.ch, fig. 25.

excluded that the small relief from Umm al-Biyara also refers to the local supreme deity, Dushara. The reverence for this deity, which is so closely connected to rock and water, is not surprising in a bath on the mountain-top.

In all these cases we need to know the context, the program of the frieze or the panels and the complete composition of the sculptural decoration of the building in order to make a decision whether the Greek or the Nabataean god is represented. So far, we miss this information for all friezes with busts of Zeus at Petra.

A silver coin of Obodas II (III), dated to 21/20 BC, shows the bust of a bearded deity with a thunderbolt below. The coin appeared on the art market in 2008 (Hoover and Barkay 2010: 201 no. 24, pl. 17.24) (FIG. 4). We do not know the reason for the minting, but another coin of the same king, dated to 16 BC, has the legend “Benedictions by Dushara” around the head of queen Hagaru (Schmitt-Korte 1990: 110 no. 19, pl. 11.19). The thunderbolt and the iconography of the head point to Zeus, although the bearded head does not correspond with the above discussed representations of Zeus at Petra. Nevertheless, it could be that the Zeus type of the coin was chosen to depict Dushara. This unique coin seems to be the earliest



4. Coin of Obodas II with the bust of a bearded deity, 21/20 BC (<http://www.acsearch.info/record.html?id=109659>).

evidence for using a Zeus type for Dushara, if one agrees that Dushara should be seen here.

Nabataean lead coinage with additional types was not well-known before Hoover 2006. Among his Group F are coins said to be with the stylized head of Zeus or of a ruler (Hoover 2006: 113-114 nos. F 19-21, pl. 27), but there is a great uncertainty in the identification due to the poor preservation of the items. It is even debated whether these coins are Nabataean (Hoover and Barkay 2010: 207). Among Groups K and L there are coins with the head of Zeus crowned by a laurel wreath (Hoover 2006: 115-116 nos. 43-61, pl. 28; Hoover and Barkay 2010: 209-210 nos. 109-130, pl. 18). Zeus seems to be depicted here in two types, one with a longer head, which is similar to the head on the silver coin, the other one more rounded to stocky. These coins were probably minted by Aretas IV. Because the obverse shows a bull, which could indicate fertility, it was suggested that the depicted god could be Zeus-Hadad, but there is no need for this small local money to refer to a deity in Syria. It rather expresses the fertility aspect of Dushara.

The thunderbolt of the storm-god and of Zeus is known from many Nabataean temples (Wādī Ramm, Khirbat at-Tannūr, Qaṣr adh-Dhariḥ, Khirbat Brāq), where it was developed into a floral element of the decoration (Glueck 1965: pl. 178), but possibly still symbolizes protection and power. In Petra itself it is found on a four-sided basis and on several slabs of a frieze of weapons, mainly as decoration of shields (McKenzie 1988: 95 no. 80; Kader 1996: 134, fig. 66 nos. B 6.8.12-14).

The thunderbolt is also known from figures of eagles. The eagle was introduced into Nabataean art with the coins imitating Tyrian shekels, but rarely the eagle holds a thunderbolt as on a coin of Obodas II from 25 BC and of Aretas IV (Schmitt-Korte 1990: 109 no. 16, pl. 11.16; Barkay 2007/08: 97 no. 9, fig. 10). There is only one slab with an eagle and a thunderbolt in his claws, belonging to a series of various

animals and mythological creatures (McKenzie 1990: pl. 63c; Kader 1996: 134, pl. 40c); the thunderbolt of this slab corresponds with that of the basis. A small incense altar is decorated with an eagle, which seems to stand on a thunderbolt (Lindner 1990: 151, pl. 19 B). All other representations of eagles at Petra are without the thunderbolt. None of the monuments with thunderbolts in Petra seems to relate directly to Zeus or Dushara, rather the thunderbolt became a common sign of power.

In general, the eagle was the symbol of the highest god or the sun-god in ancient Near Eastern religion and of Zeus / Jupiter in Greek and Roman religion. But only the Roman altar of Zeus Hagios illustrates that at Petra. An eagle was secondarily cut above a betyl of the complex Nabataean niche in the Eagle Valley (D. 51e) (FIG. 5). The interpretation remains problematic, but it is probably similar to eagles on sacred buildings and then could refer to Dushara (Lindner 1997: 104, 111). It can be discussed if the eagle here would refer to Dushara as the Lord of Heaven or as the local Zeus-like supreme deity. On the Nabataean



5. Petra, Eagle Niche Valley, eagle D. 51e (R. Wenning).

coins the eagle is a symbol for the divine power of the dynasty in the Ptolemaic tradition. That can be considered also for the eagles of the Khazne (McKenzie 1990: 141 pl. 86c), while normally the aspect of protection and apotheosis is emphasized when the eagle is depicted on tombs, such as those of Hegra. Therefore, there are more aspects to be considered and the eagle became a common symbol of power without direct linkage to Zeus (Lindner 1997: 103; Al-Salameen 2012: 31-34). One will be somewhat surprised not to find more eagles referring to Dushara, but obviously the Nabataean artists at Petra preferred to depict the god himself.

There are some other monuments with Zeus in Petra dating to the Roman period. An altar dedicated to Zeus Hagios was found on the northern bank of Wadi Musa opposite the Temenos of Qaşr al-Bint (Parr 1957: 14; pl. XV B; Sartre 1993: 54-55 no. 21). It depicts the bust of a bearded god with a scepter above his left shoulder, but the type differs from the Jupiter-type of the friezes. The relief is damaged and worn and is said to be lost today. The altar probably should be dated to the early post-Nabataean period of the Province of Arabia. Another Roman altar dedicated to Zeus Hagios from the Siq shows in relief the broken remains of the eagle of Zeus (Sarte 1993: 53-54 no. 20, pl. XVII). Nobody will be surprised about these reliefs in that time, but we have to ask if Dushara should be seen behind these dedications or if a separate new deity was introduced, Zeus / Jupiter. That foreign deities were introduced to Petra is supported by the inscriptions. There is also a terracotta relief of Zeus Ammon found at the Temple of the Winged Lions (R.I. no. 154; personal information by D. Johnson). The Roman administration and the Roman army are the moving force behind this development.

A few heads in high relief found in Petra follow types of Zeus or other Hellenistic "Vatergottheiten". A head was found in the so-called Great Temple (Joukowsky 2007: 200, fig. 4.95). It is locally made and probably

should be dated to the second century AD. It clearly follows a Hellenistic type, but it needs more research to determine the classification. Another local head was discovered in the Basilica, but is heavily damaged and should be dated somewhat later than the other head (Roche 2001: 352 no. 11). By the type, it could represent Zeus. If these heads are related to Dushara / Dusares, we really do not know.

Summarizing the evidence of Dushara depicted as Zeus in the Nabataean period, we have the silver coin and the lead coins and possibly the small relief from Umm al-Biyara. Although there was no problem depicting Dushara in the type of Zeus, we do not find this in the official, monumental or cultic buildings. I doubt that Zeus has been venerated in Petra in the Nabataean period as a Nabataean deity. Using the Zeus type, I do not consider this a syncretism of the two deities.

Dushara or Helios?

Concerning the above mentioned bust of Helios in a medallion from the Qaṣr al-Bint (McKenzie 1990: 68c; Wenning 2013c: fig. 2), no one would expect that all the medallions of the temple showed the same bust of Helios in rotation with rosettes. That becomes clear already when one compares this bust with the worn and damaged (by iconoclasm) remaining bust of the frieze at the temple itself (Zayadine, Larché and Dentzer-Feydy 2003: fig. 7). Therefore, the Helios hardly refers directly to the temple owner or to the solar aspect of Dushara. Helios was rather part of a particular story with Greek deities. Therefore, Helios is the Greek god Helios and not a Helios-Dushara and not a depiction of Dushara.

Another medallion depicts a bearded god with a diadem. Rays of sun run along the diadem indicating a solar deity. The relief was discovered in Wadi Musa (Zayadine 1981: 350, pl. 103.1), where an inscription from AD 25/26 mentioned Baalshamin, the god of Manku, who need not be king Malichus (Wenning

2011: 287-288 contra J. T. Milik in Khairy 1981). That the bust represents Baalshamin can be suggested, although other identifications cannot be excluded. A radiate crown does not exclusively represent Helios or Baalshamin, but could be just an indication of status and solar connotation of other supreme gods. The identification depends of course also on the program to which the medallion belongs. We know nothing about that. Therefore, the suggested classification as Baalshamin and also the relation of the medallion to the sanctuary of Baalshamin in Gaia remain uncertain.

A frieze block from Petra depicts Apollo with Kithara (McKenzie 1990: 135 no. 6, pl. 62c). In the composition of Khirbat at-Tannūr such an Apollo represents a solar deity (Wenning 2009: 579-580), but at Petra the block is integrated into another program of the so-called 1967-Group (McKenzie 1990: 134-135). These reliefs possibly point to an assembly of Greek deities, although the concrete subject remains unknown.

An intaglio said to be from Petra depicts a male deity with rays of sun (Parlasca 1992: 131-132, fig. 7), but there is nothing that would relate it to Dushara. Finally, in triclinium Br. 532 a sun is incised in the right wall accompanied by a Nabataean inscription *ḥama* / sun (Dalman 1912: 25, fig. 12). The sun has got a face with short strokes of hair indicating the rays of sun. The position on the right wall and the sketchy execution supports that the incision is not the cultic figure of veneration. It seems more like a promise of resurrection in the context of the necropolis here. It is difficult to tell if a solar deity is really depicted and appealed to or if the symbol simply carries a more general message.

Summarizing the evidence of Dushara depicted as Helios, we have nothing in Petra that supports this. In my opinion, Dushara was the local God of Heaven with solar features. Whether Dushara was venerated as a sun-god can be debated since I cannot see a structural pattern like a triad in Petra in which the sun-god

is normally embedded. Therefore, the remark by Strabo, that “the Nabataeans worshipped the sun, building an altar on top of the house/temple, and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense” (*Geographica* 16.4.26), could be a misunderstanding of the Greek visitors to Petra. The worship fits with the nature of Dushara as the Lord of Heaven and his solar features. While solar aspects of Dushara are obvious, which is also supported by the story about the birth of Dushara (see below), there is nothing that makes him Helios and nothing to assume that he was equated with Helios and was venerated as Helios.

Dushara or Dionysos?

More differentiation is needed also for the widespread view that Dushara was equated with Dionysos (El-Khoury 2005), although this view was debated (Patrich 2005). Beyond the aspect of fertility, both deities share nothing. It is important to consider that the sources of the post-Nabataean period rarely reflect the earlier situation, but mostly follow later sophisticated philosophies like the struggle between wine-drinking and wine-shunning gods and other literary episodes. This misleading track was created much earlier by Herodotus in the mid-fifth century BC, when he stated (*Hist.* III.8), “The only gods they [the Arabs] recognize are Dionysos and Urania... Dionysos in their language is Orotal, and Urania Alilat.” Orotal is a misspelling of the North Arabian god Ruḏā. The statement of Herodotus was accepted by Aristoboulos and Strabo, but Aristoboulos called the divine pair Uranos and Dionysos, and Strabo called them Zeus and Dionysos (Wenning 2013b: 337-339; 2013d). The gloss of Hesychius, who equates Dusares with Dionysos in the late fifth century AD, follows developments in the post-Nabataean period, especially in the Hauran (Patrich 2005: 97, 113). Therefore, Herodotus and Hesychius cannot be taken as brackets for the assumption to equate the Nabataean Dushara with Dionysos.

A frieze slab depicting Dionysos (McKenzie 1990: 135 no. 3, pl. 62a; Wenning 2013c: fig. 3) is often cited in the context of such an assumption and was labeled Dionysos-Dushara. The argumentation against this classification of this slab is similar to the above-discussed slab with the bust of Zeus. Here again we have to consider that this motif is part of a series of frieze slabs depicting Greek deities, among them Ares, Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena and Hermes (Wenning and Hübner 2004: 164-165, group 12). The slab belongs to the so-called 1967-Group. Of special interest among this frieze is the block with Athena, Hermes and a goddess on the (unpublished) third side. It must have been the decoration of an anta or rather of a freestanding column with a cranked entablature in front of a gate / Propylon or other building. Such a building could have been the older Propylon to the smaller Temenos of Qaṣr al-Bint or the Propylon to the Temple of the Winged Lions, which was closer to the find-spot. Both Propyla were pulled down in the early second century AD and are not known today. The concrete topic of the frieze remains unknown. Nevertheless, the Dionysos of the frieze will be just Dionysos and is not a cipher for the vegetation god Dushara and does not represent Dushara.

Two other bust reliefs probably depict Dionysos, one from the Roman Temenos Gate (Wenning and Hübner 2004: 159 note 16, no. 7.2), and the other from the British excavations (Roche 1990: 385, fig. 6; Wenning and Hübner 2004: 163 no. 11.5). The last one is a corner block with the bust of the moon-goddess on the other face. Neither context supports the assumption of connecting these busts with Dushara. A medallion with a bust was excavated in trench 120 of the so-called Great Temple in 2006, which covers the southern part of the Roman bath in the west part of the Lower Temenos (Joukowsky 2007: 95; personal communication and photograph by M. S. Joukowsky). Considering the ivy wreath, not

Helios, but Dionysos (or a maenad) is depicted.

A Dionysian component of the sculptural decoration of rich villas and baths is stressed referring to a newly excavated torso of a youth with a feline skin from the baths on Umm al-Biyara (Schmid and Bienkowski 2012a: 258-259, fig. 15). This idea is supported also by several Dionysian heads among the figural capitals from Az-Zantūr, the Basilica and Beidha and panels with masks and an altar with the thyrsos from the Basilica (Kolb, Gorgerat and Grawehr 1999: 265, fig. 6; Roche 2001: 354-357 nos. 13, 15, 22-23; 354; Bikai, Kanellopoulos and Saunders 2008). This Dionysian decoration begins already in the Nabataean period.

A head with an ivy wreath from the Basilica was said to represent Dionysos (Roche 2001: 352-353 no. 12), but needs further classification. A head of Dionysos is said to be among the sculptures from the excavations of the Roman exedra of the Qaṣr al-Bint Temenos (Zayadine 2008: 356-357). Three terracotta figurines from Petra represent Dionysos or Dionysian figures (El-Khoury 2002: nos. 106-107, 143).

The Medallion and Block Relief from the western way to the Great High Place is widely viewed as the bust of Dionysos in the medallion above the betyl of Dushara below. This was already fixed in its first publication (Starcky 1965: 10-11, fig. p. 10, up-side-down). Because of the ivy wreath Starcky pointed to Dionysos, and citing Hesychius, assumed a double representation of Dushara, respectively Dushara-Dionysos. He was followed by almost all scholars. The identification as Atargatis by Hammond 1968 was not accepted. Kropp argued that the medallion and the betyl could rather represent two deities (Kropp 2011: 190-191, fig. 13). I have studied the niche several times during my survey for the Petra Niches Project (Wenning 2010; 2012: 482, fig. 29-30). The relief is the central niche of a triclinium cut in the rock face. A closer checking of the wreath revealed that it has no elements of ivy or

vine leaves, but only long lancet-like leaves of laurel. Such thick and broad laurel wreaths can be seen also on the portraits of the kings in the coinage. Therefore, the bust does not represent Dionysos, and probably also not Dushara. I agree with Kropp, that the betyl and the bust do not depict the same deity (Kropp 2011: 190-191), because all others parallels concern two deities, and I assume that Obodas Theos could be represented (Wenning 2015).

I also discuss in the separate article a terracotta relief of two deities, which was compared with the rock-cut relief (Kropp 2011: 190, fig. 12) (FIG. 6). It depicts a standing old bearded god on a column and the bust of a young god in a tondo carried by the column. I assume the old god is Dushara, while I do not assume the young god is Dionysos.

To sum up, I do not know of any evidence where Dushara is depicted as Dionysos in Petra. There are some representations of Dionysos, of which most belong to the post-Nabataean period, and some Dionysian decorations, which are even earlier. I doubt that Dionysos was venerated in Petra in the Nabataean period as a Nabataean deity and that there was a syncretism with Dushara. The presence of Dionysos and Dionysian subjects among the sculptures can be explained in the wider tradition of the Roman East as described by Schmid and Bienkowski 2012a.

Local Types of Dushara

The above survey resulted in the statement that Dushara is represented in some betyls and incisions, and possibly in busts on coins, on a small panel from Umm al-Biyara and in a herm of the lower part of a terracotta relief. In all cases, the artists chose Greek heads of an older bearded god (Zeus type). There seems to be no depictions of Dushara as a young god. But so far, the focus was to look for gods in Greek types who could be connected with Dushara by common nature or status. We looked mainly for architectural reliefs, but have to consider other genres of art too. This new approach alters the picture.



6. Petra, terracotta relief, herm of a bearded deity (Courtesy K. Parlasca).

Among the votive niches and incisions in the rock faces there are a few anthropomorphic motifs like the Medallion and Block Relief and the eagle of the Eagle valley niche. Lucy Wadeson and I presented two types of reliefs we interpreted as depictions of the tutelary deity of the Nabataean stonemasons in 2012 at the Nabataean conference organized by Jordan

University in Petra (Wadeson and Wenning 2014a-b). There are a total of about eleven figures carved by the stonemasons themselves, some very simply done. All figures are placed in shallow niches in high positions in the rock faces or rock-cut façades. The first type depicts the god in the shape of a Greek herm (FIG. 7). Among them is the so-called “Sword deity” from the so-called Great Temple (Joukowsky 2007: 145, figs. 4.10-11). The examples of the second type are less homogeneous, but follow the general composition of a standing figure with betyls. Again, a Greek prototype is chosen for the god himself, probably the type of a craftsman in a short garment (FIG. 8). The figure of the Umm Sayhun quarry group and the figure of the niche at the Ain Braq channel, first described by Z. al-Muheisen (2009: 74; Wenning 2012: 475-476, fig. 21), are of special interest. It is quite understandable that the stonemasons were seeking protection by their tutelary god in their very dangerous job. Considering the strong relation of Dushara to the rock, the “Lord of the stonemasons” seems to be none other than Dushara. Different from the above Zeus-types, Dushara is depicted here as a young god, beardless and with full hair framing the face.

The local terracotta figurines are important when looking for local deities, especially the types which are found in greater quantities. There are more than 50 examples reported for each of the seated female deity and of the standing nude god (El-Khoury 2002: pls. 1-30, 75-99). This is by far the greatest amount among these figurines, about one-third of all anthropomorphic types. That reflects a great popularity of these types. It seems they are also the earliest Nabataean types, dated to the late first century BC (Gorgerat 2006: 77). The concept and details of both types are so similar that there is no doubt that the two figurines belonged together. Nevertheless, concerning the evidence of stratigraphic find context, they could have been handled as single figurines too.



7. Petra, Tomb Br. 528, herm of the “Lord of the stonemasons” (Courtesy L. Wadson).

This does not contradict the assumption of a group, but fits absolutely with the nature of each of the figurines. Considering the iconography and the close relation of the two figurines, the seated female figure was assumed to be a mother goddess, and the standing boy was assumed to be her son (FIG. 9). The seated figure was correctly classified as an Aphrodite type and was finally identified with Al-‘Uzzā (Parlasca 1990: 87-88). I agree with this identification.

I have discussed the evidence of Al-‘Uzzā in Petra in a long article (Wenning 2013d). In contrast to the common view, I believe the importance of Al-‘Uzzā in Petra is less

dominant. Considering the idea of “associated deities” (Starcky 1982; Healey 2001: 83-84), I debate whether she was venerated as the spouse of Dushara, while I emphasize her role as mother of Dushara.

Both figures are shown in a frontal and stiff position in a local style. The shaping of the figures corresponds greatly. The nude goddess sits on an armless stool, the feet rest upon a small footstool. Despite her nudity the feet are shod. The nude boy is standing upon a small base. The attitude, the nudity, the throne and the bases support the view that we are dealing with divine figures. The hairstyle is detailed,



8. Petra, Quarry Umm Sayhun, relief of the “Lord of the stonemasons” (Courtesy L. Gorgerat).



9. Petra, terracotta, the Nabataean child god (Courtesy K. Parlasca).

well-executed and expresses higher ranks. The coiffure of the goddess with so-called Libyan curls follows Alexandrian prototypes. The long, not stepped corkscrew curls in combination with parted hair on the forehead are especially typical for Isis, but not exclusively. The arms are bent. Both figures raise their right hand with an open palm in a gesture of blessing. An armlet is put around the right wrist. The left hand holds a pomegranate. Venus rings at the neck of the goddess are a sign of beauty. Sharp thick lines are visible below the belly button of both figures. The boy is modeled in a childlike manner with pronounced puppy fat. These features indicate fertility. This seems to be the main message of the figurines, even more important than solar features. The boy carries a necklace with big beads, with a *lunula* in the shape of an inverted crescent as pendant. The *lunula* does not refer to a lunar aspect of the figure, but has become a common motif among apotropaic amulets (Wenning 2013d). The message of the *lunula* is the promise of protection given to children. Bridled horses among the Nabataean terracotta figurines have got also a *lunula* as a protective amulet.

I divide the figurines of the standing god into a main type and four sub-types or variants. In contrast to El-Khoury 2002: 13, I do not believe that these differences represent different stages of life from childhood to adulthood. The main type I was handed down in two sizes, the bigger one is more three-dimensional (El-Khoury 2002: nos. 80-93, 95-100, 131 and 158 and nine items not in that catalogue). Type II appears more flat, with a more feminine body and shows a bracelet on the left upper arm (El-Khoury 2002: no. 94). Type III is a variant without a necklace and stands on a round base (El-Khoury 2002: no. 75 and another item not in that catalogue). Type IV is a variant with the right arm lowered (not in El-Khoury 2002). Type V is a variant showing the boy seated (El-Khoury 2002: nos. 23 and 52, and another item not in that catalogue).

There are various suggestions to identify the standing nude god as Eros, son of the Aphrodite-like seated goddess, although this type misses wings. Other suggestions include Harpocrates (on Harpocrates in Petra see Wenning 2013d), Aion and even a Hermaphrodite, Ruḏā and a temple boy. There was also the demand to put the figures into a Nabataean context. El-Khoury 2002 and I myself since 2001 were the first to point out another interpretation and such a Nabataean context (El-Khoury 2002: 42-43; Wenning 2013d). Independent of each other, we both connected the figurines to a report of Epiphanius of Salamis about the birth of Dusares from a virgin (*Panarion* II 51.22,11 dated to 374-377 AD) and concluded that the figurines could represent Al-‘Uzzā and her son Dushara, although this suggestion was not adopted by other scholars. The dominant belief that Al-‘Uzzā was the spouse of Dushara made it difficult to see Dushara as her son. The other reason could be the argumentation of El-Khoury. She demonstrated correctly that both have aspects of fertility, but pointed to Syrian fertility cults and compared the Khirbat at-Tannūr deities, where she assumed Dushara was connected to Al-‘Uzzā (but see Wenning 2009). She referred also to the above discussed slabs with busts of Zeus and Aphrodite to underline the close relationship between Dushara and Al-‘Uzzā. I demonstrated above the problems of this interpretation and the relationship between Dushara and Al-‘Uzzā does not explain why Dushara should be the son of Al-‘Uzzā. El-Khoury failed to explain this crucial point. Instead she liked to classify the nude standing god as a young god. In my opinion the motif is not the pattern of an old god, a young god and a goddess, but that of the mother goddess and her child. Her idea of a Nabataean “holy trinity” has to be rejected. Instead of her considerations, the nude boy has to be put in the Alexandrian tradition of the child god. I would like to explain my position here and begin with a quotation of the report of Epiphanius of Salamis.

“The leaders of the idolaters ... in many places hold a great feast on the very night of Epiphany... First of all, in Alexandria they hold festival in what is called the Coreum, which is a great temple, namely the sacred precinct of Core. They stay awake the whole night singing hymns to the idol to the accompaniment of flutes. They keep it up the entire night, and after cockcrow torchbearers descend into an underground shrine and bring up a wooden statue seated naked on a litter... They carry the statue in a circle seven times around the very center of the temple to the accompaniment of flutes, kettledrums, and hymns and thus reveling carry it back down to the place underground. Asked what the rite means, they say: Today at this hour Core (meaning the virgin) engendered Aeon. This is also done in the city of Petra ... in the temple of the idol there. They sing hymns to the virgin in Arabic, calling her in Arabic “Chaamu”, which means Core or “virgin”, and the one born from her “Dusares”...The rite is also performed in the city of Elusa on that night as in Petra and Alexandria...” (translated by Amidon 1990: 182).

The church father Epiphanius is of course more interested in the birth by a virgin than in the child god. There is also a great debate about the meaning of “chaamu” in scholarly discussion (Wenning 2013d), which covers up the importance of the child. The festival concerns the winter solstice on the sixth of January and is celebrated like a mystery in a couple of cultures. Among others we can add the birth of Mithras to the same night. The transformation of the water of the Nile into wine happened also during this festival. The solstice festival was the birth of light. The astral components of the festival are obvious. The water ceremonies expressed fertility, the rebirth of vegetation. The continual rebirth of deities made them immortal. All this re-established the natural order for good and this guaranteed the continued existence of temple, city, family, tribe and dynasty.

We will not be so wrong if we assume that the celebration of the birth of Dushara at Petra and Elusa was similar to the described event at Alexandria, despite some variations considering the traditions of Dushara. It needs no great imagination to reconstruct the event and to understand why this was such an experience for all participants: gathering in the temple of Dushara, the idoleion, in the evening of the fifth of January, staying the whole night, and singing hymns to the accompaniment of flutes and drums. After so many hours, the first light, the Morning Star, and the rising of the sun announces the birth and the epiphany of Dushara, indicated also by revealing the betyl, which then is carried seven times in a circumambulation around the temple to be presented to all worshippers, making the epiphany public. Could it be that the figurines are a memory of that? Most figurines are found in houses. In Egypt, figurines of the child god were considered to be of great value for the owner. Another aspect is possibly more dominant. Considering the emphasis of fertility of both figurines, it seems probable that the wish for children was connected to the two figurines. This could explain why so many of the figurines are found in the houses.

The reason that the festival happened also in Elusa seems to be the importance of the veneration of Al-‘Uzzā there. The veneration of the planet Venus, especially as the Morning Star, is testified at Elusa in the fourth century AD (Healey 2001: 67-68). It seems that Venus followed Al-‘Uzzā at this place as the supreme deity in the Roman period. It was suggested that the name of the site is related to the name and the veneration of Al-‘Uzzā here (Winnett 1940: 122). The temple of Venus in Elusa and the festivals around this temple were famous in the Roman period. The sources are important in supporting the assumption that Al-‘Uzzā was the local supreme deity in Elusa and was connected to the birth of Dushara in the winter solstice festival. Therefore, she was venerated as the mother of Dushara. According to Epiphanius

we can expect the same constellation for Petra and it is likely that he reports a much older tradition. A figurine of the standing nude god and two of the seated goddess were excavated at az-Zanţur, dated to the horizon of the destruction of 363 AD (Gorgerat 2006: 75), although the Nabataean type of the seated goddess is replaced by a more rough type in the Roman period (Bignasca 1996: 284-285; El-Khoury 2002: pls. 46-65).

The birth of Dushara / Dusares could be compared with the birth of Jesus as the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ took place on the sixth of January in the East until Justinian, who in 560 AD urged the Christians in Jerusalem to adopt the earlier Roman date. The change is not testified before patriarch Sophronius (634-638 AD). Even before 336 AD, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ was connected with the festival of Sol Invictus, which took place in Rome since 274 AD on the 25th of December, the winter solstice according to the Julian calendar. On the other hand, Rome adopted Epiphany in the fourth century AD from the East, but changed the contents (Kroll 1975: 51, 57, 230-231, 545-546).

The standing nude child god is an independent Nabataean type, although the type owes its invention to the idea of Egyptian child gods (Budde, Sandri and Verhoeven 2003; Sandri 2004). He is not an *interpretatio Nabataea* of Eros or Harpocrates (from Egyptian *Har-pa-chered*), and does not correspond to Aion in Alexandria. There are about 20 different child gods known from Egypt. Therefore, another local type would not be unusual. The depiction of gods as children was already common long before the Hellenistic period, but it attained a new quality in Ptolemaic Alexandria. Child gods became an important phenomenon. The childlike innocence of children inspired more confidence than the older gods. They became bearers of great hope. Child gods were judged to be wise. They administered justice, gave prophecies and granted oracles (Budde 2010b).

Therefore, the solstice festival was of great importance and we should avoid seeing the terracotta figurines as just lovely genre images.

It is not necessary to demonstrate the Alexandrian influence on Petra, beginning with the veneration of Isis and architecturally with the Khazne (Wenning 2013d). The popularity of Isis in Petra is partly based on her traditional conception as mother goddess, although this aspect of Isis was less important in Petra; only one example of an *Isis lactans* has been found so far (Wenning 2013d). The dominant mother goddess in Petra was Al-‘Uzzā. The Alexandrian influence is visible also in the two discussed figurines, especially in the figure of the seated goddess. The *lunula* could refer to the Egyptian young moon Chons, who was completing the solar child god Horus/Harpocrates (Budde 2010: 34). Tholbecq compared the exposure of the divine image to the sun on the *wabet* platform followed by a procession during the New Year festival in Egypt (Tholbecq 2007: 122-123). Patrich discussed a figurine of a seated boy from el-Katute as such a figure (Khairy 1986: 101, 103, 107, figs. 3-4; Patrich 2005: 110). Therefore, we can see the two terracotta figurines in this tradition and we can transfer the nature of the Egyptian child god to Dushara as the Nabataean child god, as one of the many faces of Dushara.

A final remark concerns the surprising high number of Erotes in the Nabataean art of Petra. The message of Erotes with festoons or an Eros with the water hydria corresponds to the idea of the fertile child god (Schmid and Bienkowski 2012a: figs. 10, 13). Of course the Erotes do not represent Dushara, but they reflect the same fertility aspect which belongs to him. Therefore, it should not be excluded that an allusion to the child god Dushara could have been intended at Petra.

In conclusion, there are many faces of Dushara at Petra. He is depicted as the old god (FIG. 4, 6), the young god (FIGS 7-8) and the child god (FIG. 9). Besides the Greek Zeus type,

the local types with the betyls, the “Lord of the stonemasons”, and the child god are of great importance. The impression after this review is that the image of Dushara was more Nabataean than often previously described.

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