

The Rites (Duties) of Worshipping Among the Nabataeans

Introduction

The Nabataeans are associated with Gods as they were seeking to please them believing that they more competent than humans. It was for the worshiper to seek attention of Gods, exerting all possible means and methods, expressing veneration and awe, so in return it will bestow upon the worshiper its blessing and welfare (Ali 1968: 197).

Through this concept humans were considered to be slaves of the Gods, it was the duty of the “slave-worshiper” to provide duties and obligations imposed by the religious life to the Gods at certain times of the year, or on religious occasions, such as offering to the Gods vows and offerings as part of a preliminary ritual to worship. By sacrifice, the worshiper convinces the Gods that he had presented the most precious thing possessed in order to satisfy it, and he did not forget nor overlooked it, and it will respond to him whenever appealed to them, and he had done the duties imposed or desired to them, served them and implemented its orders and rules to the best of his knowledge and interpretation over fixed days or months or seasons set by priests. The worshiper thus expected the

Gods to be willing to hear his complaint, fulfill the demands he has and as part of the Gods’ duty, which requires of him to visit the temples and be blessed by the Gods and make vows and offerings, and pray and learn the rituals of *Hajj* (al-Jarim 1923: 118-124; Ditlef 1958 :227).

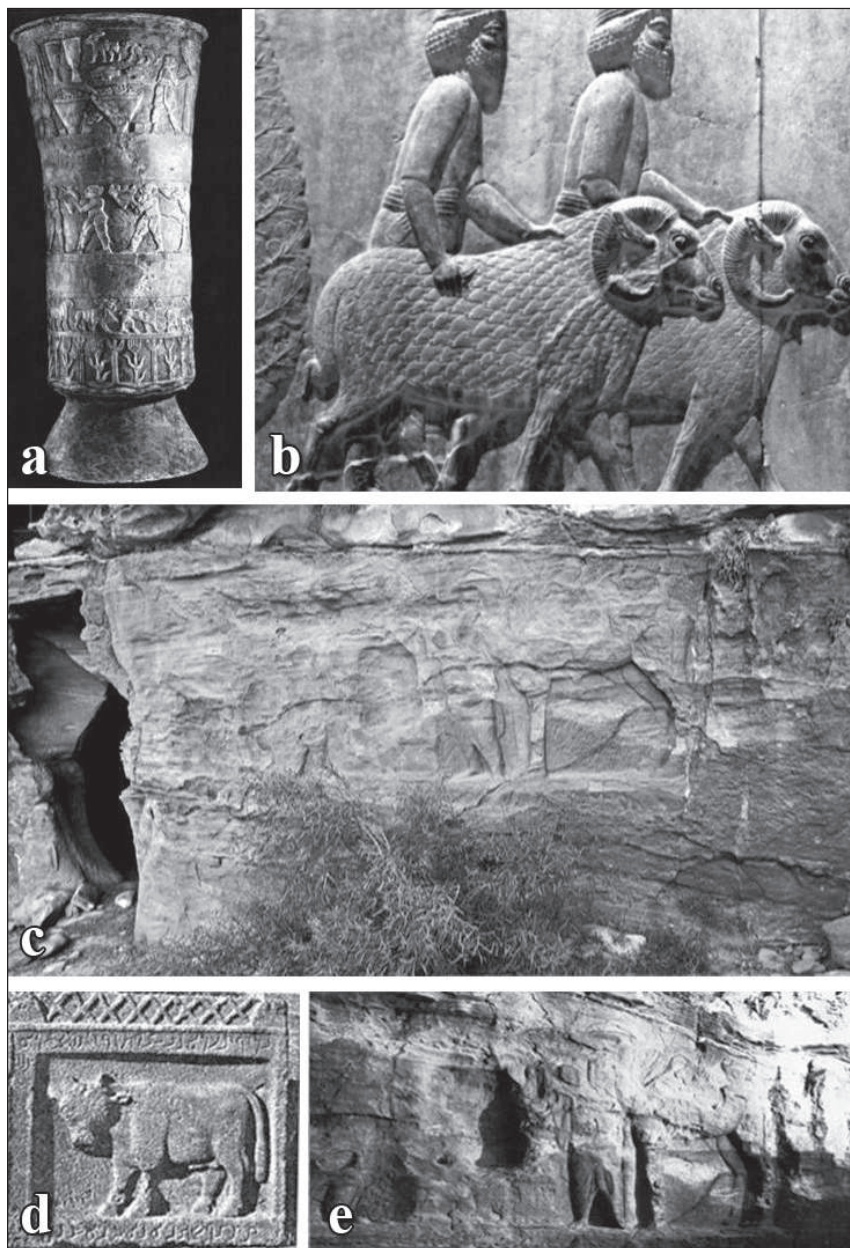
Vows

Vows constitute the manifestation of belief in the spirituality of the Gods, and the vows are just an expression of a conditioned promise (at- Tabari 1954: 91-93). As matter of fact, the vow is but a contract between two parties, the first being the vower who offers the promise to commit to the implementation of a condition or a group of conditions, while the other party is the God or the Gods, which shall commit to the implementation of the requirement or of the vower (Ali: 192). Such practices were common within the inhabitants of Mesopotamia (Alabaster Vase from Warka) as evident of the vow pot shown in (FIG. 1) (Frankfort 1969: 10 plate 3). It shows that this asceticism worship may have been also practiced by the Nabataeans. Vows were divided into two parts: The first material offerings such as sacrifices that are well

reflected in the artistic sculptures held (Ali: 192) by the Nabataeans positioned at the monastery (*ad-Dayr*) (Mckenzie 1990: 172), which is one of the most prominent religious sites location as shown in (FIG. 2).

The word or pronunciation (Msgd) or (Msgd') (LP: 38, 24), which is "Mosque" is very indicative. This is mentioned in the Nabataean inscriptions, which means the altar, significant of the place where to slaughter of sacrificial animals. (CIS: 350/3-4; Cantinea 1930: 22, 137; az-Zabidi 1965 vol. 1: 403). This was interpret-

ed in the linguistic sense as dwelling (perhaps dwelling of the Gods) (az-Zabidi 1965 vol. 8: 183; Ibn Manzūr 1956 vol. 10: 396-397) or the forehead and perhaps (*Qibla*) direction to Holy Macca, which convey the Holy saying: "And (He revealed) that the *masjids* are for "Allah" the mosques are for God" (Surat al-Jinn verse: 18). Also present in the Nabataean text is the word "try 'Mḥrmt (RES: 2093-1) and Mḥrmt' (CIS II: 158. 1, 5, 6; RBL: XIV 199 f. 215-1)" which means trace or Holy placement, (CIS II: 158. 1, 5; RES: 2094; Starcky RB: LXIV) a



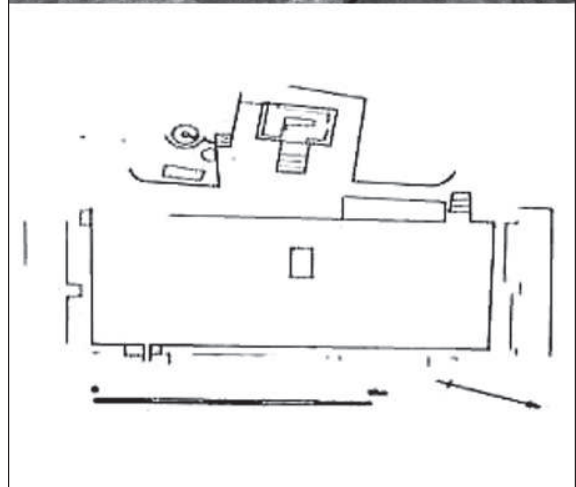
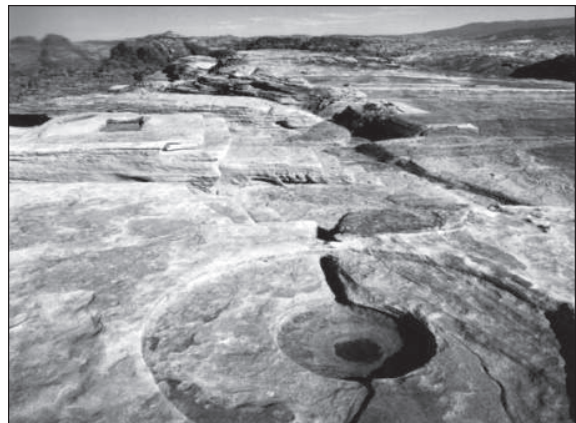
1. a. The Arts of Summer (Parrot, A. 1961: 49). b. The personal photo. c. It provided me (by Taylor, J.E.). d. Semitic Inscription (SĪ. Littmann, E.: 94). e. The camel relive at the Dayr.



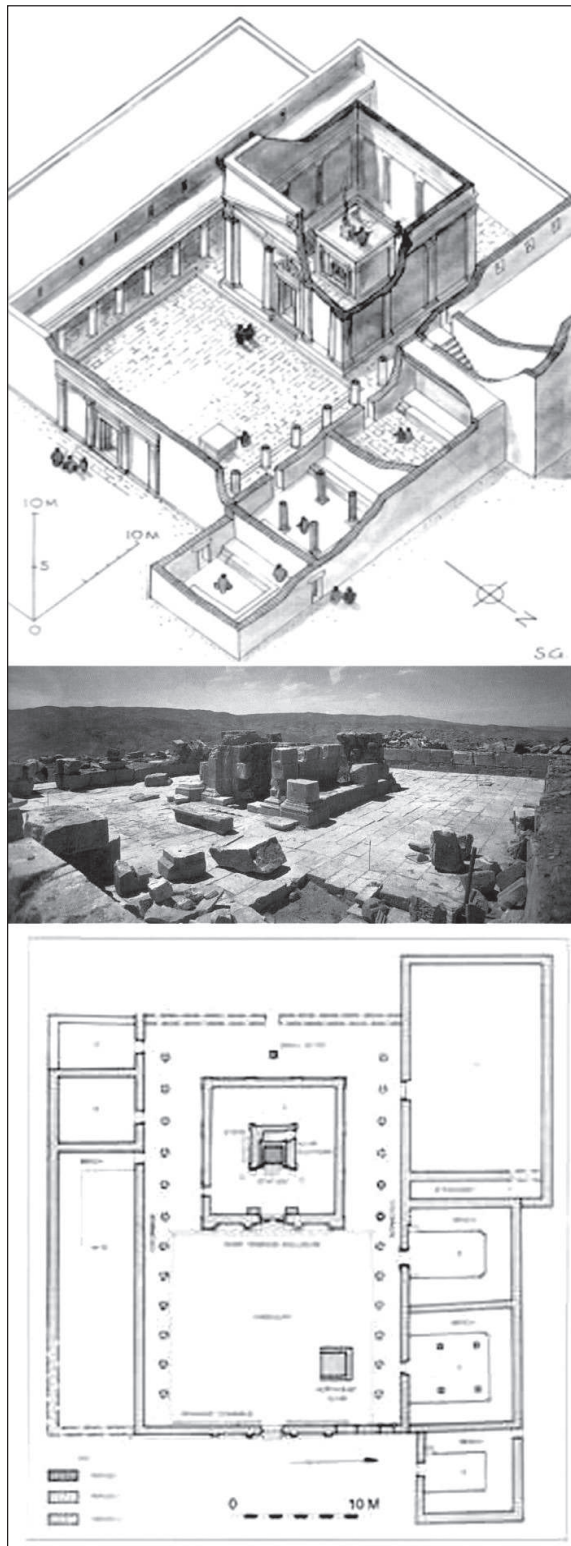
2. The water engineering and irrigation system of the Nabataeans. (al-Muhisen, Z. 2009: 69, L49).

word used to refer to the altar's bench, for the altar is a flat bench on which the sacrifice offered by devotees is slaughtered to appease the Gods of the city thus the blood of sacrificial animals flows over that bench.(az-Zabidi vol. 1: 403) Other types of sacrifice alters also exist independently of the temples, such as the case of the existing building on the upper D top of the mountains from the city Petra, at the opposite side of Mount al-Khubtha, attributed the altar to the first century AD, at the center of the courtyard a platform altar is erected perhaps the purpose of its establishment is to place the sacrifice on top of it. This form has been associated with another form of altar reached by a staircase and is surround from the four sides with benches for seating the devotees and in the western side of the altar inferred the existence of a place to slaughter sacrificial animals, in addition to the presence of a bench with a unique design based on a circular base in connection with a hole accessible channel through which the blood of sacrificial animals and ends at the basin that collects the flown blood (FIG. 3) in addition for having a place for the storage of water may be used for the purposes of washing and abolition.(Mckenzie 1990: 172). Another altar set up by the Nabataeans at the apsidal of Khirbat at-Tannūr dating back to the second century AD, with the presence of places to drain the blood of sacrificial animals through clay pipes are also

working to drain excess water that collects at that position, also located near the altar a pool which might have been used for washing in its water from the slaughter of sacrificial animals, (Glueck 1938: 11-13) same can be said at the apse of Rum Temple and dating to the first century AD, for alters were not only used for the slaughter of sacrificial animals, (Tholbecq 1998: 245) but also were used to put statues of the main city deity as can be deduced from the remains of the Temple of the Winged Lions. This indicates the existence of the remnants of the base of the altar still standing at the aisle of the temple in addition to the presence of cistern for storing water, which are used for the purposes of washing and disinfection (Hammond 1975: 22). It has come off the bench altar standing at the temple precincts as referred to by linguists as the altar dedicated to the idol, or it may be the idol to whom the offerings and vows



3. a, b. Petra. (Taylor, J. 2005: 83).



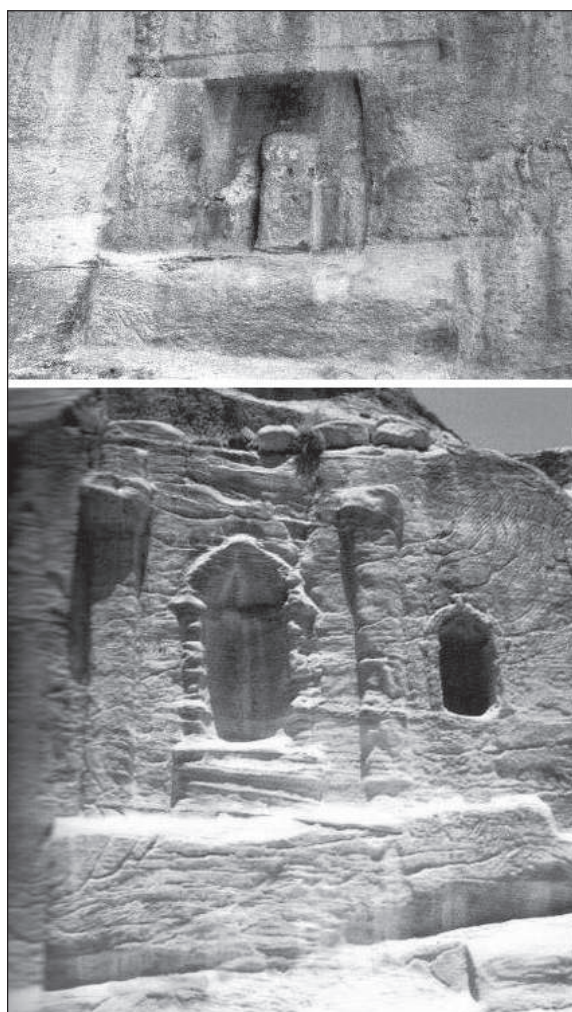
4. a, b, c. Complex plane of Khirbat at-Tannūr (Mackenzie, J.S. Petra 2003: 172-173).

1. The head of Zeus, the God was found under the rebels of the temple. Nabatean inscripts were also found mentioning the God arrow, whose task is similar to God Ḥaddad, which challenges the

and gifts are made, (al-Zabīdī vol1: 403) or it may be the altar of Temple Khirbat at-Tannūr¹ (FIG. 4) of the alters standing at the premises of the Holy room, which is thought to be the place the statue of the God was set, same can be said about the Nabatean Temple at Rum, (Zayadine 1998: 256) although most excavators of those temples named the altar as “*Mihrab*” (Michalowski 1970: 18) meaning niche for prayer, considering them cavities used to put statues of deities where “especially as they most honorable position in the construction and the highest room in the location and sublime place and the direction of the “*Qibla*” the direction of the prayer” (Ibn Manzur vol1: 296).

Same can be said about alters by which the worshipers give offering in the form of a carved stone considering them gifts, having a form of a sculpted stone the bearer can be moved from one place to another as indication for the sanctity of the alters at which they are placed, the carved by one person or more as an expression for gifts and offerings that were donated by philanthropists to that deity (Teixidor 1968: 85) an alter has been found at the temple of Nabataean Khirbat at-Tannūr, on the faces of the altar a symbol of beam light sculpted on the stone body in relief (Gluck 1938: 10-17; 1965: 193-209), the symbol can be also the embodiment of the machine, as dozens of alters engraved were found on which on one of its facets or more mention of on God or more than one Nabataean God, there could be consistence between the symbolic description with the Nabataean inscriptions carved on the facet of those alters (CIS: 176, 350, 3-4; LP: 38; RES: 38, 3676) as in (FIG. 5), or vows is the form of establishment of mosques as homes of the Gods in order to give safety to the lives of providers of these vows or the work of complementary parts of the house of God (the temple), or the work of sculpture to highlight different aspects of the deity (CIS: 526, 490; LP: 182).

God Baalshamin, as the God of thunder, lightning and tornadoes, more to see: Gluck 1938: 15-18; Savignace 1973: 408.



5. a. Large betyl in the hollows for a stone entablature visible. b. The niche below the entrance arch on the north side of the Sīq (Bellwald *et al.* 2003: 43.51).

Second moral vows: Expressed in worship and celibacy and service at the houses of worship where some parents used to warn their sons to a God thus making him a servant of the house of God, therefore, it was not stranger to that nicknamed son of the God who he was vowed to serve or to have a group of people devoting themselves for the Gods. It can be deduced from the scripts related to vows that they were an inevitable consequence created by Nabataean human need embodied in his vision the possibility of influencing the Gods with these vows, and make it tend to response to his request (Ali vol6: 192) and in order to solve the

problems that accompanied his life, the Vow-er presents his vow to the Gods², because he is certain that the Gods are able to achieve his demands and solve his problems, otherwise he would have never approached the Gods with his vows (CIS: 526, 490; LP: 182; JS:172).

Offerings

Known as the offerings of various materials or the sacrifices made in different occasions, reflects human feelings and sense for the Gods, they are his-speaking tongue in his religious life, has been marked by two types the first holds religious significance, and the second is reflected in the form of gifts and offerings (Rose Nekarten 1990: 13-15) for the religious character takes the form of pleasing the Gods, because the life aspects, and all that accompanying that belongs to the Gods, on the basis of the principle of human deficit and the feeling in not being able to achieve compatibility between the inner world and the world of the outside community, and to achieve the aspirations of the soul, all that create a self-sense of venerating the Gods and that drives the human to be a servant of the Gods (Rose Nekarten 1990: 13-15), provides its offerings because they prolong life as discerned from Nabataean texts, which mention the word “Qrb” as compatible with the linguistic origin of an offering (RES: 83, 3676), the types of Nabataean offerings have been divided between providing the sacrifice of camels (الجمال) (CIS: 157) as in (FIG. 6), and perhaps art sculptures support the interpretation of the word, and between the submission great noble constructions in the form of mosques or be complementary parts of the buildings houses the Gods (FIG. 7) or charitable work such as digging dam or channel as can be read in one of Nabataean (RES: 3676; LP: 24, 69).

Prayer

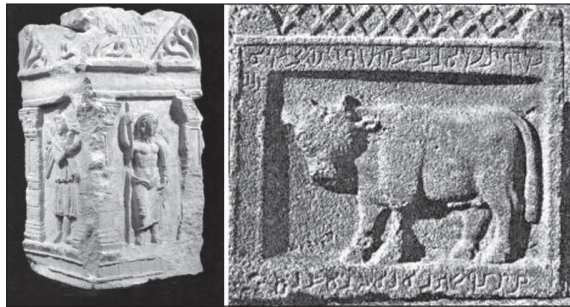
One of the most important religious ritual that is worshipers performed in front of his idols,

2. The Nabataean text included various texts about worshipping included the religious rituals encompassing the vows. More to see:

LP:100; RES: 1450; CIS:185.



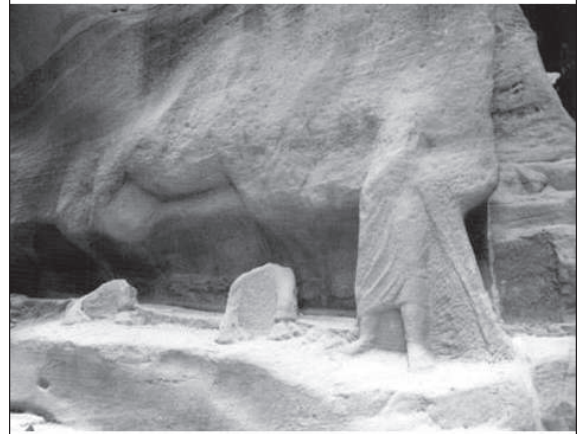
6. a, b. Semitic inscription (Littmann, E.: 38; LP: 90).



7. a. (Graff, D. 2003: 67). b. (Littmann: 94).

which identified their positions in houses of worship, for what is a temple but a place house those Gods (al-Hout 1979: 141), since the Nabataean inscriptions expressed a common word “Bryk” (CIS II 491-2, 590, 861, 868-1, 875-1, 871, 878; BASOR XV: 13no31c, 1, 871, 878; BASOR XV: 13no31c; MS: 116, ARNA 54RES: 1427) “Qdmy” to rise (early), to stand up” (BIA X: 55-4) or “Qm” (RB XLII: 415-5; BASOR XVI: 227-81-5; RAO VIII: 242) which is one of the formulas emerging to pray, for the prayer, is but expressional tool for the call to prayer, (Habib 1979: 162-163) which is performed by lifting of the right hand depicted in those postures artistic sculptures at the Sīq leading to the city of Pe-

tra, as well as the Goddess sitting and placing its hands on its knees, (al-Sa‘adoun 1988: 156-162; Burckardt 2012: 63) as in (FIG. 8), as a sign expressive for that call which invite its worshiper and bids them to perform their devotional obligations, for the prayer, is but an important part the worshiper must have it taken into con-



8. a. Lower group of the camel caravan one of the drovers is visible between the two camels, relief at the Dayr (Bellwald, U. *et al.* 2003: 41). b. The rock canal of as-Sīq runs behind carving of camels led by a person. (al-Muhisen, Z. 2009: 176). c. The upper group of the camel caravan with the front drover on the right (Bellwald, U. *et al.*: 41).

sideration. (al-Matar 1999: 80-84). In addition to Nabataean inscriptions reference to the word “Msgd” (RES: 2052-1) or “Msgd” (CIS II: 161-176-1, 1851, 188-1, 190-1, 218-1; RES83-1,676-1, 2051-1, 82), “linguistically derived from kneeling and from it prostration prayer may mean places of prostration (al-Zabīdī, vol. 2: 371). Where the word prostration “Sajda” of them came the Surah as-Sajdah (the prostration) -سورة السجدة- Holy Quran, the word “to prostrate” and its linguistic derivation came in the religious aspect is contained in several Surahs of the Holy Quran and of them (Holy Quran, Surat Fussilat 24: Verse 37).

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is defined linguistically as coming and intent, it was said pilgrimage to the House because they used to perform the act each year (al-Zabīdī vol2: 16-17) in the month the pre-Islam Arabs knew as Dhul-Hijja (That of the *Hajj*), and the Pilgrimage date are not performed on the account of the solar year, (al-Alusi 1896: 21, 77, 213), devotees of these holy pilgrimage has inadvertently to seek blessing from them, and become closer, as the devoted worshiper performs standard religious rituals, according to the regulations and rules of the specific assets of the *Hajj* and addressing the Gods humble begging prayers beseeching the Gods to accept that pilgrimage. (ad-Diyarbakri 1884: 106). It is also found in the Nabatean written scripts the use of the spelling *hggw*, the plural for the Nabatean word that is found in the linguistic as *hujjaj* (CIS: 680, 1172: 2. LI 1500, 1842- 1,3107; Litmann BSOAS 1953: 13-14. Cantineau II: 93-94; Khraysheh, PNN: 76-77. Glossary: 50) Among other things mentioned in the inscriptions in the region surround aş-Şafā read the phrase “hurried a pilgrim from *Mina* to *Mecca*” and this phrase has expressional implications of the annual return of pilgrims from *Mina* to *Mecca* phrase, (Desso 1959: 122-131), has been secured in line with expres-

sive language specifically the word pilgrimage mentioned above. But what is referred to by some Greeks and Romans historians about the existence of the temple on it are inscriptions, the Nabataeans used to go for the purpose of pilgrimage every five years, (al-Alusi: 72, 77, 212-213) the arrival of one of the pilgrims from a remote Roman country and his return to it after *Hajj* performance, which is performed in spaced intervals and text indicates as following “I pulled away and then returned to the country rum” (Desso: 129), and the return to the speed of the pilgrims (*Hajj*) from *Mina* to *Mecca*, which we hinted to we find the phrase “the pilgrims ran from *Mina* may carry a religiously context (Desso: 129-130), may comply with the linguistic definition of the word pilgrimage mentioned above, and with what Greeks and Romans historians mention secondly that the Nabataeans pilgrimage (*Hajj*) was conducted twice per year, first with the beginning of the year and lasts one month, and the second at the end of the summer (al-Alusi vol. 3: 122-213), and may be related to the trip of winter and summer, from “for the accustomed security of the Quraysh”. Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer” (Surat Quraysh, verses 1-2)³, which was performed among the Arabs and Nabataeans every year is a figment of the pilgrimage which is not so, but some of them seem to stay in *Mecca* markets until the month pilgrimage to perform it before heading back home after he sought the two matters gain and pilgrimage (Ali vol6:350). Temples Nabataean schemes, especially the central ones have added an important aspect of the rituals of worship and of the process of circling or rotation is one of the rites of the pilgrimage, which included schemes such temples, particularly those campus area surrounding the corridors of the Holy Ḥaram of the Nabataeans only for a part of the rites of *Hajj*⁴, reflected in cycling which is performed restrict around the holy places the artistic carvings has added, from the

3. “For the accustomed security of the Quraysh their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer” Surat Quraysh verses 1-2.

4. There are a lots of similarities between the ally ways surrounding the earlier mentioned temple and the temple of Khirbat at-Tannūr

and that of adh-Dharīḥ, that of Ramm. They all have the same circular move and the U shape as the Latin Language, more to see: al-Muheisen, Z. and Villeneuve, F. 1990. Khirbat adh-Dharīḥ Nabataean site in Wādī al-La‘bān. *ADAJ* 34: 12).

city of Petra at one of the sides of the Sīq aspects when a scene is carved showing a group of camel caravans in front of them is a person who drove them and behind them three people and one camel carries something unclear due to erosion (FIG. 9) (Netzer 2003: 7-8).

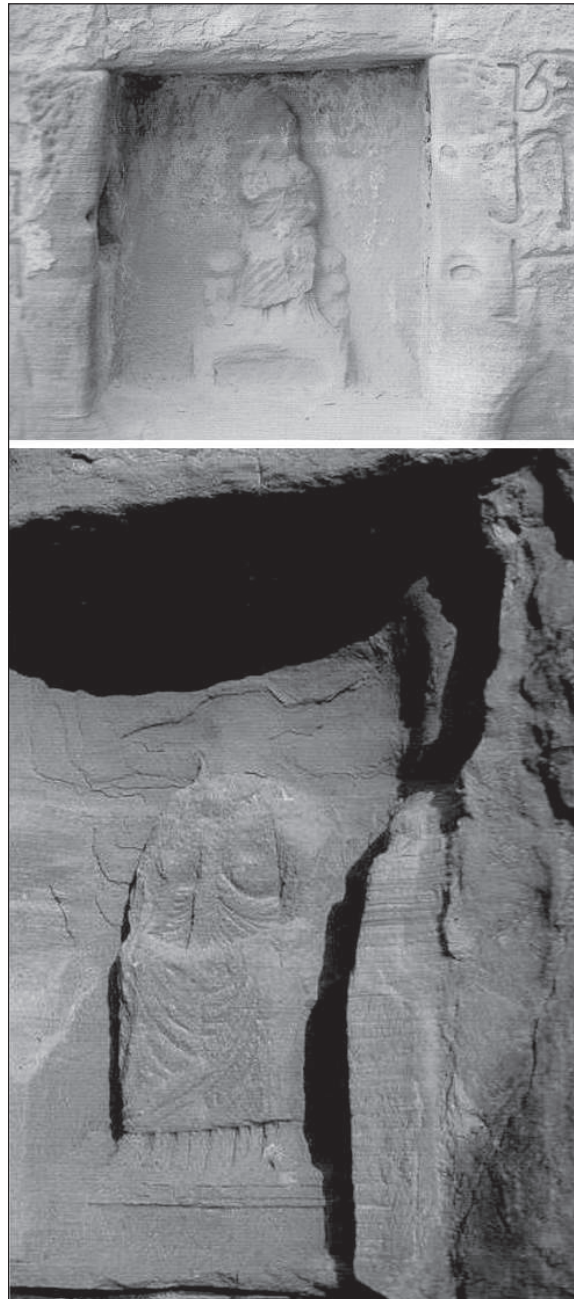
Perhaps the sculptures of the city of Palmyra indicate the scene of circling and seen at the lentil which is set above the surface of the column capitals on the sanctuary of the temple of the God Bel, the largest divine complex in the city of Palmyra (FIG. 10), a scene depicting the Palmyrian circulation, which includes deity but carried inside Hodge under a colored dome in red on camel-back and in front of it are the priests and worshipers sweater and priestesses in religious dress adjective symbolic, and circling, (Colledge 1967: 34-35) which was going on at the temple of God Bel, but through the corridors surrounding the sanctity (al-Buni 1978: 163), through certain times of the year as clarified by historical sources, in order to perform *Hajj* or circumambulation (as-Semsati 1965: 66), and who knew linguistically rotation of the person around a place of placements and roam about the thing or the place where he began it and returning to the starting point (Ibn Manẓūr: vol4: 296-297), but the circumnavigation process or turn is performed only when at the holy places and the best of those places is *Ka'bah* (Safar 1974: 334, 421), in addition that the Arabs had many *Ka'bah* the pilgrims frequented annually at certain times, then *تعتر* offering vows are given and offerings to deities around the *Ka'bah* deities, roam around and then leave after they have performed all the rituals for the *Hajj* (Smith 1894: 112), were probably carried out the rituals of *Hajj* in the non-specific days of the year⁵, which were called by historians as the smaller pilgrimage, which is defined as part of a circumnavigation the worshiper pay by pilgrimage as part for the people to perform these performances. (at-Tabari vol. 2: 105).

Feasts

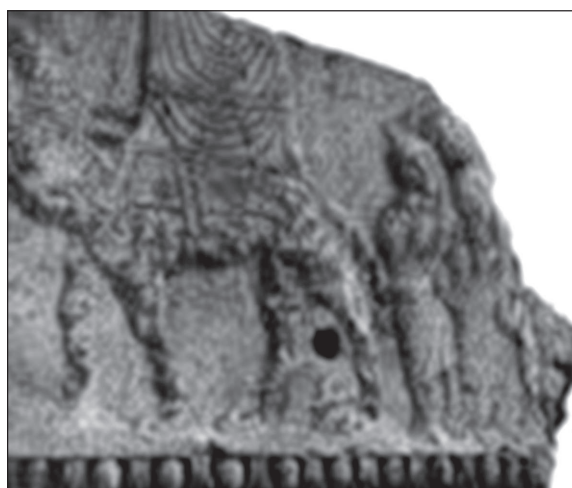
The word holidays in the Arabic language is

5. Perhaps in Jabal Hārūn, more to see (Taylor, j. 2005. Petra: 139).

derived from the word holiday, when he returns from the general meeting on the usual form, (az-Zabidi vol. 2: 438) and in the season's holiday period before Islam where the sacrificial offering and offers the best gifts were shown, and the varieties of food and sacrifice, the priests come to perform religious rituals to be adopted



9. a. Wādī as-Siyāgha, Petra. b. Seated Goddess of Wādī ad-Dalū on the way to Jabal Hārūn. (Zayadine, F. 2003: 63).



10. Personal Photo.

at these events which was divided between the festival takes place in the season or a specific month, and the celebration gala victory (Abdul-Wahid 1985: 207-219; an-Naimi 1976: 25-75), as illustrated in the Nabataean inscriptions “the Nabataeans celebrated the festival which is held every four years one time for the God Dhūsharā” “on schedule in January 6, he was born to a mother virgin” where there were no written signs decrees of the ceremonies of that holiday (Starkey 1970: 12).

Festivities Nabataean was organized twice a year in the first of the spring period and the second period in the fall, one of the most popular holidays in the cities of the Arabian Peninsula before Islam (Glueck 1965: 26).

Bibliography

- abdul-Wahid, F. 1985. *Feasts and Celebration*. Encyclopedia of Civilization of Iraq: Baghdad.
- al-Alusi, M. 1896. *Bulugh al-'Arab fi Ma'rifat Ahwāl al-'Arab*: Baghdad.
- al-Buni, A. 1978. *Palmyrian and Palmyra*: Damascus.
- al-Diyarbakri, H. 1302. *Tarīkh al-Khamīs fi Ahwal Anfas an-Nafīs*: Egypt.
- al-Hout, M. 1979. *In The Way to Mythology for Arabs*: Beirut.
- Ali, J. 1968. *al-Mufasssal fi Tarīkh al-'Arab Qabla al-Islām*. vol 6 : Beirut.
- al-Jarim, M.N. 1923. *Adyanu al-'Arab Fil-Jahiliyyah*: Egypt.
- al-Mtar al-hamd, J. 199. The praying at the Arabs of pre

- Islamic. *History Echo Journal*: Baghdad.
- al-Muheisen, Z. and Villeneuve, F. 1990. Khirbet edharīh: ANabataean site in Wadi al- Lābān. *ADAJ* 34:5-17.
- an-Naimi, R. 1976. *Feasts in the Civilization of Mesopotamia* .M.A Degree: Baghdad.
- as-Sadoun, H. 1988. *Developments Style Sculpture in the Hatra city*. MA :Baghdad.
- at-Tabari, M. 1954. *Tafsir at-Tabari* Vol 3: Egypt.
- az-Zabidi, M. 1965. *Hegira.Taj al- 'Arouse min Jawahir Al Qamus*. vol 1,8: Al-Kuwayt.
- Burckhardt, J. 2012. *Petra*.Basel Verlag Schwabe.
- Cantineau, J. 1930. *Le Nabateen*. Tom I: Paris.
- Colledge, M. 1967. *The Art of Palmyra*: London.
- Desso, R. 1959. *Arabs in Syria Pre- Islamic*. Cairo.
- Ditlef, N. et al. 1958. Handbuch. . *Der Atarabischen Albertumskund 1874-1942*. Translated in Arabic by Foad Hassanien:Egypt.
- Frankfort, H. 1969. *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Orient*: London.
- Glueck, N. 1938. The Early History of a Nabataean Temple (Khirbit et-Tannūr). *BASOR* .vol 69.
- 1965. *The Conflict of Traditionalism And Modernism in the Muslim Middle East*: Texas.
- Habib, G. 1973. Idols at Hatra. *Sumer* Vol 29.
- Hammond,Ph. 1975. Survey and Excavation at Petra, 1973-1974. *ADAJ* 20: 5-30.
- Hilali, M.T. and Khan, M.M. 1989. *The Noble Qur 'ān: in al-Madinah Print*.
- Ibn Manzūr 1956. *Lisan al-Arab*. vol. 10: Beirut.
- Mckenzie, J. 1990. *The Architecture of Petra*: Oxford.
- Michalowski, K. and Dziewanswski, A. 1970. *Palmyra*: London.
- Netzer, E. 2003. *Nabataische Architektur*. Germany.
- Rose Narkartin, I. 1990. *The Offerings System in the Sumerian*. Translation by Abdelqader, K. Kuwait.
- Samosata, L. and al-Semsati, L. 1965. In the Syrian Goddess. *Annuaire Archeologiques* vol. 15.
- Safar, F. and Mustafa, M. 1974. *The Hatra of Sun City Bagdad*.
- Samosate, L. 1965. In the Syrian Goddess. *Anuaire Archeologiques Arabs Syriennes* 15.
- Savignace, R. 1973. Le dieu Nabateen de Laaban et Son Temple. *RB* 42: 408
- Smith, R. 1894. *Lecture on the Religions of the Samites*. London.
- Starkey, J. 1970. al-Nabat. Translated to Arabic by Mahmoud Abedi, *ADAJ* 15: 5-13.
- Taylor, J. 2005. *Petra*. Jordan.
- Teixidor, J. 1968. The Altar Found at Hatra. *Sumer* 24.
- Tholbecq, L. 1998. The Nabataeo-Roman Site of Wadi Ramm (IRAM), a New Appraisal. *ADAJ* 42: 241-254.
- Zayadine, F. and Drappeau, S.F. 1998. Two North Arabian Inscriptions from the Temple of Lat at Wadi Iram. *ADAJ* 42: 255-277.