

The Goddess of Victory at Al Humaymah and in Nabataean Art

Recent analysis of archaeological material excavated from the site of Al Humaymah (Nabataean Hawara, Roman *Hauarra*) has identified at least two depictions of the goddess Victoria/Nike. The first of these representations is a fragment of a marble statue of the deity, which is also the first example of figural marble statuary found at the site. The second example is a painted depiction of the winged goddess in a figural wall painting from the Roman fort that appears to show a triumphal procession, which may be the first known illustration of such a scene on painted plaster from the Roman world. Both these examples represent significant discoveries from Al Humaymah and add to a growing corpus of depictions of Victoria/Nike both in the art of this region and in the visual culture associated with the Roman military along the wider eastern frontier. This contribution presents these two recently identified depictions

of Victoria/Nike from Al Humaymah and ends with a brief discussion of this deity's appearance in the art of the Petra region.

The Archaeological Site of Al Humaymah

Situated in the northwest corner of the northern Al Hismah Desert, the archaeological site of Al Humaymah lies approximately 55km northeast of Aqaba and 45km south of Petra (FIG. 1). Appearing on the Peutinger Table with its Latin name *Hauarra*, the site is described as being 44 Roman miles from "*Haila*" (Aila/Aqaba) and 38 Roman miles from "*Petria*" (Petra). It was thus strategically located about a two-day journey from both these important settlements.

Although there is evidence suggesting that habitation in the vicinity of Al Humaymah dates as far back as the Paleolithic period, the settlement

itself was seemingly established by the Nabataeans in the first century BC. Likely known at this time as Hawara, the community served as an important stop along the King's Highway for trade between Petra and the port of Aila on the Red Sea. Successive habitation and development of the site, as well as a major destructive event around the end of the first century AD, have limited what is known about the Nabataean settlement at Hawara, but there is extensive evidence for the water catchment, storage, and distribution system that supported life here. This complex water system comprised no fewer than five reservoirs, 57 cisterns, three dams or barrier walls, and a two-branched 27km-long aqueduct (Oleson 2010: 63–171).

Soon after the annexation of Nabataea by Rome and its reorganization into the new *Provincia Arabia*, the site of Al Humaymah became home to one of the earliest forts in the newly established province (Oleson 2009; 2019; Oleson *et al.* 2024). This fort, placed to the northeast of the Nabataean settlement (FIG. 2), is notable for being one of the earliest Roman forts with towers projecting on its exterior (Oleson 2009: 545–546; 2019: 402–403) and for having one of the largest water reservoirs found within a Roman fort (Oleson and Harvey 2024). The size of this fort suggests that it was built to accommodate approximately 500 soldiers and their mounts, and inscriptions found in the fort and the surrounding site indicate that, during the second and early third centuries, the garrison comprised detachments from the *Legio III Cyrenatica*, and possibly for a short time the *Legio VI Ferrata* (Oleson *et al.* 2002). Judging from the widespread reuse of Nabataean cut stone blocks in the fort's walls and internal structures, it is likely that Nabataean Hawara had suffered

extensive damage preceding the fort's construction and possibly the establishment of the new Roman province. The character of this destruction, however, is still uncertain (for a discussion of possible earthquake damage at the site, see Reeves *et al.* 2017: 111, 139).

Despite this apparent damage to the town, the site's position along the newly constructed *Via Nova Traiana* and its new role as a major military base ensured that the settlement of *Hauarra* (as the Romans now called it) thrived throughout this period. The clearest evidence for this continued prosperity comes from the area between the Roman fort and the settlement centre, where excavation has brought to light a cluster of mud-brick and stone buildings that may have been built to accommodate the garrisoned troops. These structures include the garrison baths (Reeves 1996; Oleson 2010: 223–230; Reeves *et al.* 2017: 106–122) and a large mud-brick complex containing a residence and a community shrine (Reeves 2019).

Excavation of this shrine and evidence from inside the fort suggest that the Roman military briefly abandoned the site sometime in the second half of the third century, and it is possible that this abandonment was connected to Diocletian's reorganization of the Eastern frontier or even Zenobia's revolt (Oleson 2010: 59; 2019: 399–400; Reeves 2019: 149–151). Whatever the cause, the fort was regarrisoned in the early fourth century, possibly by the indigenous mounted archers (*equites sagittarii indigenae*) that were listed for *Hauarra* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or. 34.25). Even after the fort's final abandonment in the early fifth century, the mention of *Hauarra* in the Beer-sheba Edict (Bi'r As Sabi' Edict) as well as the construction of five churches in the sixth and seventh centuries attest to

the settlement's continued prosperity¹.

The early Islamic period saw the site of Al Ḥumaymah rise to global significance, as it was here in the eighth century that the Abbasid family established themselves and constructed a *qasr* and associated mosque (Foote 2007). With the Abbasid overthrow of the Umayyad Caliphate and the establishment of their new dynasty at Baghdad, the significance of Al Ḥumaymah appears to have waned, but the site remained inhabited until the 1970s.

Since 1986, archaeological investigation of Al Ḥumaymah has been carried out by the Canadian-led Humaymah Excavation Project, which has primarily focused on the excavation and documentation of the site's water system, Byzantine churches, Roman fort, extramural settlement, and Islamic *qasr*. The first three final report volumes of these excavations have not been published (Oleson 2010; Oleson and Schick 2013; Oleson *et al.* 2024). While studying the excavated material from Al Ḥumaymah, several noteworthy discoveries have been made. These include the identification of previously unrecognized depictions of Victoria/Nike in both carved marble and painted plaster, which are presented and discussed in what follows.

Marble Statue of Victory/Nike

The first of these depictions to be discussed is a small fragment of carved white marble that once belonged to a statue of the goddess of victory (FIGS. 3 and 4) (Harvey 2024a). Recovered from the Islamic *qasr* (F103) on the eastern edge of the settlement (FIG. 2), this fragment was found among wall tumble during surface cleaning of

the southeastern corner of this large residence². Despite its poor preservation and poor archaeological context, excavators quickly identified it as likely coming from a marble statue dating to the Roman Imperial period.

This fragment is the only example of a marble statue found so far at Al Ḥumaymah. It is poorly preserved and badly damaged, with maximum preserved dimensions of 14x9x9cm and a weight of 1,360 g. The proportions and size of this fragment suggests that the entire statue may have once stood approximately 60cm in height. Although not sampled for provenance research, this marble was likely imported from quarries in the Aegean or Asia Minor (Harvey 2024a: 465). Photographs taken shortly after the object's discovery suggest that the marble is of medium grain without any discernible geological bedding planes or flaws.

The surface of this small fragment preserves finely carved folds of drapery on both sides, revealing that it comes from a statue in the round, rather than a relief carving or a sarcophagus. While heavily damaged, enough of this carved drapery remains preserved to identify the folds of a belted *apoptygma* as well as tightly clinging fabric to the centre of the figure's abdomen. Sickle-shaped lateral folds of the *apoptygma* are rendered as if blown back to the sides, where much of the girded drapery is collected above the figure's waist. On the back of the fragment, the hem of the *apoptygma* is carved with blousing folds, while the *peplos* hangs down below.

The arrangement of this carved drapery, and particularly the sickle-shaped lateral folds of the *apoptygma* as well as the clinging of the garment to

¹ For discussion of the site's mention in the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. XXXIV.25) and the Beersheba (B'ir As Sabi') Edict (fragment 2, line 2), see Oleson 2010: 54–55.

² This marble fragment was found during the 1993 excavation season directed by Dr. Rebecca M. Foote and was registered with the number 1993.0198.01.

the abdomen, bear a striking similarity to the carved depictions of gliding *Victoriae/Nikai* that are commonly found in the the Hauran region of southern Syria (FIG. 5)³. Typically carved in local basalt stone, these locally produced statues date to between the first and third centuries AD and were likely set up as votive offerings in sanctuaries, either by themselves or as part of monumental displays (Linant de Bellefonds 1997; Dentzer and Weber 2009: 60–64; Töpfer 2015: 9–13, 2021: 238–240). A well-published example of a large display featuring carved *Victoriae/Nikai* comes from Sahr-al-Ledja in southern Syria (Dentzer and Weber 2009: 23–88, fig. 120), while another may have existed at Umm Al-Jimal, in northern Jordan (Weber-Karyotakis and al-Khdair 2018).

These statues of the goddess fall into two well-defined types, but both schemes depict the deity with a raised and outstretched hand holding a crown and with one leg forward to portray her advancing (Dentzer and Weber 2009: 60–64). This forward motion is also reflected in the drapery of the *apoptygma*, which is pressed against the abdomen by a headwind that causes the garment to ripple out in sickle-shaped folds that frame the abdominal area as an oval. This same formula of carved fabric is seen on the marble fragment from Al Humaymah, and it also appears on a marble statue of a similar gliding *Victoria/Nike* that was found in Latakia (ancient *Laodikeia ad Mare*) on the Syrian coast and that is now held by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Weber 2015: 580–581, fig. 5.7.4). Dating to the second or third century AD, this marble statue has a reconstructed height of approximately 100 cm, making it less

than life-size like the Al Humaymah statue.

Although the carved drapery of the marble fragment found at Al Humaymah is closely paralleled in the statues of gliding *Victoriae/Nikai* from the Hauran, the blousing folds of the rendered fabric also appear somewhat similar to a girded *chiton* commonly depicted on representations of the goddess Artemis. This deity was widely venerated in the region through both her Greco-Roman and syncretized forms (Kampen 2003; Ovadiah and Mucznik 2012: 520–533), and marble statues of Artemis have been uncovered at sites throughout the wider region. These sites include Gerasa (Weber 2002: 485–486; Lichtenberger and Raja 2015: 493, fig. 12), Abila (Mare 1997; Weber 2002: 465), Pella (Weber 2002: 483), and the Sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi (Friedland 2012: 110–113), while Petra has produced a remarkable life-size bronze statue of Artemis found in a *wadi* after a flash flood (Toynbee 1964; Weber 2002: 525).

While the popularity of Artemis and the general form of the carved drapery on the Al Humaymah fragment may lend support to this alternative identification, it is not wholly convincing, and the details of the preserved drapery are a much closer match to those found on the statues of *Victoriae/Nikai* discussed above. Further supporting the identification of the Al Humaymah fragment as a depiction of the goddess of victory is the popularity of this deity in Nabataean art and at sites with a Roman military presence (as will be discussed below).

The discovery of the Al Humaymah marble fragment as a surface find in the Islamic *qasr* and its poor preservation complicates a clear understanding of its date. If it does indeed depict a gliding *Victoria/Nike* like those found in the

³ I am deeply grateful to Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis for generously sharing his expertise and helping to identify this sculpture.

Hauran, a date ranging from the first to third century AD seems most likely. Identifying the location of this statue's display on site may help refine this date range, but this task has also proved difficult, and thus it is not yet possible to suggest a more accurate date of the sculpture.

Although uncovered during surface clearing of the Islamic *qasr* (F103), it is unlikely that the Al Ḥumaymah statue was displayed in this structure. Instead, its recovery from wall tumble may suggest that it was reused there as a building stone. A total of 17 fragments of ecclesiastical marble from the site's churches were also found throughout the Islamic *qasr* (Schick *et al.* 2013: 480–483), and, like the marble statue fragment, these marble pieces may have been used in the building of the *qasr*, or they may have been brought into the area on their way to be burnt for lime.

The close comparanda for statues of Victoria/Nike from the Hauran suggest that the Al Ḥumaymah sculpture may have once adorned a sanctuary, but the only sanctuary-like structure thus far excavated at Al Ḥumaymah is a small community shrine (located in E125) from the extramural settlement (Reeves 2019). This shrine is too small to have held a monumental display of the type found in the Hauran, but it may have held a smaller votive statue of this deity. Alternatively, this statue may have come from a larger display erected at a temple or sanctuary on site, evidence for which comes from the presence of numerous carved architectural blocks (such as Nabataean capitals, column drums, bases, and mouldings) that were reused in the construction of the Roman fort and other Roman period buildings at Al Ḥumaymah (Oleson 2013: 214; Schick *et al.* 2013: 497–501). If indeed from this no-longer-extant temple, the statue may

date to the first century AD. Another possible location for the public display of this statue is a large stone platform (E121) located north of the settlement and west of the fort, very close to the northern approach of the *Via Nova Traiana* into the town. The purpose of this platform remains unclear, but it may have been used for sculptural display, and the use of Roman measurements in its construction convincingly dates the platform to the Roman period (Babbitt 2009: 72–74; Reeves 2016: 172–173, fig. 9).

If not publicly displayed, this statue may have come from a private residence. Similarly sized marble statues uncovered in Petra have been found in elite residences, like those from the palatial-like complex on Umm Al-Biyārah (Schmid and Bienkowski 2012: 258–259, figs. 13, 15; Schmid *et al.* 2012: 81–83, figs. 11, 13). An elite residence on Petra's North Ridge also produced two marble statues (both depicting the goddess Aphrodite), but these were likely deposited sometime after the abandonment of the complex (Parker and Perry 2019: 719, fig. 25).

Few domestic spaces dating to the Nabataean or Roman periods have been excavated at Al Ḥumaymah, but one possible private space where this statue may have stood is the *praetorium* (the commander's residence) inside the Roman fort. Excavation of this domestic complex uncovered a central courtyard featuring a fountain and a suite of richly decorated rooms adorned with mosaics and wall paintings (Oleson *et al.* 2008: 318–324; Harvey 2024b). Not only would the display of the marble statue here have aligned with the decorative scheme of the structure, the image of the goddess of victory would also have been appropriate for the military character of the residence. Furthermore, as will be

discussed below, it is possible that some of the painted plaster recovered from the *praetorium* may have also depicted a Victoria/Nike.

If not from the *praetorium*, this statue may have once adorned the *principia* (or headquarters building) of the fort. Excavation of *principiae* elsewhere in the Roman Empire have produced statues and altars dedicated to Victoria/Nike (Sarnowski 1989: tables 4–5), and a limestone sculpture of this goddess found at Legio is thought to have come from that fort’s headquarters building (Fischer *et al.* 2022: 230). Statue bases uncovered in the Al Humaymah *principia* further support the possibility that the marble statue may have once stood here.

It is, of course, highly likely that the original place of this statue’s display has yet to be excavated. The poor archaeological context of this fragment and its poor preservation severely limit what can be learned about this sculpture’s exact date and placement on site, but its identification as a small statue of Victoria/Nike seems certain. Despite this limited understanding, this fragment represents an important discovery, as it is the only figural marble statue found thus far at Al Humaymah. As such, its discovery provides new insight into sculptural display at the site, and hints at the possibility that other white marble sculpture once existed here. Furthermore, given the rarity of imported marble statues in Nabataea and the Roman *Provincia Arabia*, this fragment is also a significant addition to the limited corpus of marble sculpture from this region. While notable in being the only figural marble statue from Al Humaymah, this fragment is not the only identified depiction of Victoria/Nike from the site.

Victoria/Nike on Painted Plaster

In addition to the marble fragment discussed above, a second (and possible third) depiction of a Victoria/Nike has been identified in painted plaster recovered from the Roman fort at Al Humaymah (FIG. 2) (Harvey 2024b). Excavation of this fort produced a considerable amount of polychrome plaster from all areas, but the largest concentration of painted plaster came primarily from three structures: the *principia* (Area G), the *praetorium* (Area I), and the craft area and latrine complex (Area N).

It was excavation in the craft area⁴ and latrine complex that produced the clearest example of a Victoria/Nike on painted plaster from the fort. Here, during the 2004 field season, excavators uncovered a considerable concentration of plaster fragments from the soil above this structure. At least nine of these fragments contained parts of a Greek *dipinto* with red lettering, while others depicted elements of a figural scene. Unfortunately, the Greek *dipinto* was too fragmentary to provide a clear reading (Sherwood *et al.* 2008: 164, fig. 2c), but one fragment may contain part of the word ἐλπίς or ἐλπίζω (*i.e.*, “hope” (Reeves *et al.* in preparation).

Associated with this *dipinto*, excavators uncovered at least six fragments of painted plaster displaying elements of a figural scene. The plaster on which this figural scene was painted was identical in terms of fabric and inclusions to that on which the *dipinto* was painted. Furthermore, one small plaster fragment contained both part of a Greek letter and a small part of the figural scene, which confirmed the association of the two. The figural scene is regrettably fragmentary, but the composition is at least partially clear.

⁴ It is possible that this area of the fort once held a brewery (Oleson and Sherwood 2022).

The largest fragment of this figural scene depicts two figures (FIGS. 6 and 7). On the right side of the fragment, a figure's right arm, bent at the elbow and with a gold bracelet around the wrist, is clearly visible, above which it is possible to discern the individual's right shoulder and a partial outline of the head. In the top left corner of this fragment, and behind this first figure, the face of a second figure is visible, which is set at a slight angle as if in flight. The right hand of this second figure is visible below and to the right of the face and is shown holding a laurel wreath behind the head of the first figure. It is possible to see the faint traces of a gold bracelet around the wrist of the hand holding the wreath⁵, and behind the face of this second figure, elements of what may be wings are visible.

The placement of this second figure at an angle behind the first and the raised laurel wreath immediately call to mind common depictions of the winged goddess of victory crowning triumphators. The existence of an associated painted plaster fragment depicting a bare foot that does not appear to rest on any surface, but rather to float in the air (FIG. 8), further supports the identification of this figure as a Victoria/Nike. A third plaster fragment from this scene clearly depicts a chariot wheel (FIG. 9), while a fourth (the same fragment that also contains part of a Greek *dipinto*) displays a small section of a military standard (FIG. 10). Specifically, this fragment depicts the curved hook that characterizes the shafts of the *vexillum* and *aquila* and commonly appears on depictions of military standards like the one on the first-century AD tombstone of Gnaeus Musius, *aquilifer* of the *Legio XIV Gemina* (CIL 13.6901) or the mili-

⁵ This bracelet is not reflected in the drawing of the painting (FIG. 7).

tary standard seen in a petroglyph of a Roman soldier in the hills southwest of Al Ḥumaymah (Reeves 2015: 455–456, n. 14). Two other plaster fragments are associated with this figural scene, but what they depict is not clear.

The identifiable figural elements on these additional fragments suggest that this scene depicts a triumphal procession featuring a winged Victoria/Nike crowning a central figure in a chariot, although the identity of this triumphator is not clear. Well-known comparanda from central Italy, such as the triumphal scenes found on the Arch of Titus, the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, and the relief panels of Marcus Aurelius, suggest that this central figure may be the emperor himself. Alternatively, this figure may have been a god, as numerous representations of deities being crowned by Victoriae/Nikai exist, including what may be a strikingly similar wall painting from the Temple of Zeus Theos at Dura-Europos. This painting has been reconstructed to show the cult deity standing beside a chariot, being crowned by two winged Victoriae/Nikai, and surrounded by attendants, one of which holds a standard (Brown 1939: 196–202, fig. 50). This reconstruction, however, is highly problematic, as it was based on only a few fragments and even incorporated elements from a separate painting, which came from the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods (Downey 2016: 204–205). Given the problematic nature of the reconstructed painting from the Temple of Zeus Theos at Dura-Europos, it may be the case that the triumphal painting found in the *Haura* fort is currently the only known Roman triumphal scene painted on plaster, although it is assuredly the case that other similar depictions once existed in this artistic medium.

Identifying the date of this wall paint-

ing and the place of its original display in the fort at Al Humaymah is complicated by the archaeological context of the fragments' discovery in a dump layer overlying the craft area and latrine complex. Although the painting may have come from this area, it is also possible that the fragments were brought in and dumped here from another structure, such as the *praetorium* or *principia*, as the potential imperial character of the figural scene may suggest. The date of this figural scene is equally uncertain, and it may have been produced during the initial construction and occupation of the fort (Phase II, *ca.* AD 106–110 to *ca.* AD 285) or to a later period following a brief abandonment and reoccupation of the fort (Phase IV, *ca.* AD 320 to 363).

Excavation elsewhere in the Roman fort at Al Humaymah uncovered what may be another depiction of Victoria/Nike on painted plaster, although this identification is admittedly highly uncertain. This less-certain depiction of the goddess appears on a fragmentary wall painting uncovered from the fort's *praetorium* (the commander's residence)⁶. Excavation in this structure found the largest concentration of painted plaster from the fort, the majority of which came from a suite of richly decorated rooms in the building's northeast corner. This lavishly decorated residence was built around a central courtyard that featured a fountain, and in the northeast corner of this courtyard near the suite of decorated rooms, excavation uncovered a small concentration of painted plaster in the soil fill.

Several of these fragments of polychrome plaster depict parts of human figures, the largest of which shows a right arm bent at the elbow (FIG. 11).

⁶ This is the same structure that was mentioned above as one of the several places on site where the marble statue of Victoria/Nike may have been placed.

The hand is not preserved, but there is a gold hoop bracelet around the wrists and what appears to be fabric bunched at the elbow, from where it hangs down. Another fragment depicts what is either a clenched fist or a foot (FIG. 12). The possible presence of something being held makes a clenched fist more likely, but it is not possible to definitively associate this hand with the bent arm, although both are of similar scale and colour. A third fragment shows either a human arm or leg depicted on a blue background and at a smaller scale than the appendages discussed above (FIG. 13). A small extant section of a gold ring surrounding the blue background indicates that this motif formed part of a medallion of the type commonly seen in wall paintings across the Roman East.

While numerous examples of these portrait medallions exist, in at least two instances, these medallions are associated with larger representations of the goddess of victory. In the richly painted Palmyrene Tomb of the Three Brothers, which dates to the second century AD, nine blue and golden-yellow portrait medallions are held aloft by winged Victoriae/Nikai (Eristov *et al.* 2019: 100–103, 123–126, pls. 19–21, 32–38). At Mampsis, in the Negev, paintings from an elite residence that dates to the second or early third century AD contain two large Victoriae/Nikai depicted just below a similar portrait medallion on one of the room's transverse arches (Negev 1988: 152–156, photos 152–154).

It is possible, although highly uncertain, that the larger figure(s) represented by the bent arm and clenched fist from the courtyard of the Al Humaymah *praetorium* may have been depictions of the goddess of victory like those in the paintings from Palmyra and Mampsis. The gold hoop bracelet on the bent arm parallels other depictions of this

deity, and it is possible that the no-longer-preserved object in the clenched fist was once a wreath. In the absence of definitive evidence, however, this identification of the larger figure(s) must remain tentative.

Although this second painted depiction of a Victoria/Nike is speculative, it and the much more conclusive presence of this deity in the triumphal scene are appropriate for display in a Roman fort, as representations of the winged goddess of victory are attested at Roman military installations across the Roman East. Examples include the aforementioned sculpture of the goddess that was found at Legio and associated with the site's Roman fort (Fischer *et al.* 2022). In terms of painted depictions of this deity, excavation at the heavily militarized site of Dura-Europos produced several examples, such as the one on a plastered pillar in the *frigidarium* of Bath F3 (Brown 1936a: 63–67, pl. XLI.1), and the similar painting found on a wooden panel of a shrine in the Palmyrene Gate (Rostovtzeff and Baur 1931: 181–193, pl. I). In both these cases, the goddess is shown holding a laurel crown and alighting on a small globe. Dura-Europos also produced a remarkably well-preserved painted *scutum* featuring two winged Victoriae/Nikai crowning a central eagle with wreaths (Brown 1936b: 459–460, pls. XXV, XXV A). Victoria/Nike also appears on a coin type from Israel that was minted in the name of the *Legio III Cyrenaica*, notably the same legion that garrisoned the fort at Al Ḥumaymah (Kindler 1975: 144, no. 1).

The painted plaster recovered from the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah is a significant addition to the study of wall paintings in the region, and the two figural scenes discussed here are only a small part of this larger corpus (Harvey

2024b). While wall paintings in this part of the Roman world are rare, paintings from Roman military installations are rarer still. The analysis of these paintings has thus revealed valuable information not only about the artwork itself but also about those who lived in the military community. Regarding the depiction of Victoria/Nike in the triumphal scene, if this interpretation is correct, this composition would be the only known example of a triumphal procession portrayed in wall painting. As such, it demonstrates that such imagery could and did exist on fugitive material and suggests that similar representations of imperial iconography may have been common across the empire and its frontiers in works of art that no longer survive.

Victoriae/Nikai in Nabataean Art

The marble sculpture and the fragments of painted plaster discussed above are the first depictions of Victoria/Nike to be identified at Al Ḥumaymah, apart from those found on coins uncovered at the site (see, for example, Harvey 2022: 138–141). These representations, however, are not the only ones of this deity from the surrounding region. The goddess of victory was a popular motif in Nabataean art, both before and after the Roman annexation in AD 106, but despite this popularity, there has yet to be a comprehensive assessment of this deity's appearance in the visual culture of the Nabataean world. While this contribution does not seek to fill this notable lacuna in the scholarship, it is worthwhile to provide here a brief overview and discussion of the depictions of Victoria/Nike in the art of Petra and the surrounding region.

Although the statue fragment from Al Ḥumaymah discussed above is the first depiction of Victoria/Nike in

marble from the Petra region, there exist many other stone-carved representations of this deity. Two notable examples are the *Victoriae/Nikai* on the façade of the Khazneh monument in Petra. These two figures appear in the back bays on either side of the central tholos. Although severely damaged and apparently not identified as *Victoriae/Nikai* by some early scholars (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 183, figs. 213–214), these winged figures are generally recognized as depicting the goddess of victory with full-length drapery and unidentified objects held in their hands (McKenzie 1990: 142).

Another stone-carved representation of *Victoria/Nike* from Petra may appear in a relief carving on a stone block that was found along the colonnaded street and depicts the shoulder of a winged figure (Musil 1907: 106, fig. 77; Parr 1957: 9, pl. VI.B). A similar relief carving of a partial *Victoria/Nike* appears on two adjoining blocks coming from the *temenos* area of Qasr Al-Bint (Schmid 2009: 329, fig. 4). Like the Al *Humaymah* statue, this relief carving depicts the thin fabric of the figure's *peplos* pressed against her body to show forward movement. A more complete and higher relief carving from the *Temenos* Gate depicts a winged, but now headless, figure holding a palm branch and cornucopia. Although the presence of the cornucopia led to this figure's initial identification as a winged *Tyche* (Parr 1957: 8, pl. IV.A; McKenzie 1990: 134, pl. 59.b), it has more recently been identified as a winged *Victoria/Nike* (McKenzie 2013: 275). A second, and possibly corresponding, carved depiction of a standing *Victoria/Nike* with wings and a cornucopia was also found in the vicinity of the *Temenos* Gate (Bachman *et al.* 1921: 55, fig. 56).

Relief carvings of *Victoria/Nike*

have also been uncovered outside of Petra. Examples include the one found at KHirbat Burāq, a few kilometres south-east of Petra (Parr 1960: 135, pl. XV.2). This winged figure may have held a cornucopia and formed part of a frieze or spandrel of an arch.

Numerous stone-carved *Victoriae/Nikai*, similar in style to the larger statues found in the Hauran, also appear in the friezes of the Nabataean temples at KHirbat Adh DHarīh and at KHirbat At Tannūr, the carving of which dates to the first half of the second century AD (McKenzie 2013: 61). The winged deities from KHirbat Adh DHarīh were carved in high relief and depicted standing and wearing a *peplos*, as they crown personifications of the zodiac symbols with which they alternated along the frieze of the temple (Villeneuve and Al-Muheisen 2000: 1546, fig. 15). Stylistically similar *Victoriae/Nikai* were also recovered from the temple at KHirbat At Tannūr, where they were likewise displayed along the main order of this temple's façade, alternating with carved busts. A total of ten of these winged deities were found, all of which were carved in high relief wearing a *peplos* and standing on a globe (Glueck 1965: 445–451, pls. 179–184; McKenzie 2013: 87, figs. 140–157). Although weathered and defaced, most of these figures hold the typical attributes of the goddess of victory (wreath and palm branch), but a few appear to carry a cornucopia instead (Glueck 1965: 450–451, pl. 182; McKenzie 2013: 87, fig. 145). The presence of a cornucopia is also seen in several depictions of *Victoriae/Nikai* from Petra (referenced above) as well as in representations of this deity from the Hauran, as discussed earlier (Dentzer and Weber 2009: 60).

Perhaps the most well-known depiction of a *Victoria/Nike* from KHirbat At

Tannūr is the sculpture of this deity holding aloft a zodiac surrounding a Tyche (Glueck 1965: 430–435, 442–448, pls. 47–48; McKenzie and Reyes 2013: 213, fig. 357). This Victoria/Nike is depicted wearing a *peplos* with rosette clasps on both shoulders and a conspicuous chain armlet on her left arm. Additional Victoriae/Nikai from KHirbat At Tannūr include the two on the Alexander Amrou altar depicted standing and holding palm branches and laurel wreaths (Glueck 1965: 506–508, pl. 188; Reyes and McKenzie 2013: 62, figs. 10.4c, 10.4d), as well as the two Victoriae/Nikai on the less-well-preserved round altar (Glueck 1965: 508–509, pl. 189; Reyes and McKenzie 2013: 63–64, figs. 10.5).

Turning to the depiction of Victoria/Nike in Nabataean wall paintings, there is frustratingly little evidence coming from Petra and its immediate vicinity, although this absence may relate to the general lack of preserved paintings from this region. Further afield, but still very much within the Nabataean territory, painted representations of this deity exist at the site of Mampsis in the Negev desert, where they adorn the walls of an elite residence (Negev 1988: 154–156, photos 153–154). These paintings, which may date to the second or early third centuries, have already been discussed above. Unfortunately, the poor preservation of these wall paintings is such that nothing of these figures' attributes remain extant. As a result of this limited evidence from Nabataean wall paintings, those from the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah take on greater significance.

Conversely, the goddess of victory does appear clearly on Nabataean coinage. Examples include representations of this deity on the reverse of early anonymous issues of small bronze coin-

age, which may have been produced by overstriking Ptolemaic coins as early as the third century BC (Barkay 2011). The reverse design of these coins is widely recognized as an imitation of gold staters of Alexander the Great, which show the winged goddess advancing left with a wreath in her outstretched right hand. Depictions of the goddess of victory also appear on early Nabataean lead coins, variations of which may show this deity with a palm branch or sceptre in addition to a wreath (Hoover 2006: 105–107, 109–110, 114–115).

Depictions of Victoria/Nike also appear on other objects, such as a discus lamp found in Petra (Horsfield and Horsfield 1941, 196, no. 426, pl. XLV; Hammond 1957). This lamp dates to the first century AD, and although it was not locally produced, its importation into Petra speaks to the popularity of Victoria/Nike as a motif in Nabataean society. Representations of the goddess of victory almost certainly appear elsewhere in the visual and material culture of Nabataea, but it is not possible (nor is it the intent of this contribution) to list every known example from the region.

This brief discussion has nevertheless demonstrated the popularity of Victoria/Nike as a motif in Nabataean art. An overview of the examples referenced above reveals that representations of this deity typically show her wearing a belted *peplos*, and when depicted standing (such as in the reliefs from KHirbat At Tannūr), the vertical folds of the figure's *apoptygma* are often rendered in a sickle shape, as if blown back by a headwind. Where preserved, these deities are commonly shown holding a laurel wreath, and in some cases a palm branch as well. Interestingly, in a few examples (such as those from the *Temenos* Gate in Petra and several of those from KHirbat At Tannūr) Victoriae/Nikai are depicted

holding a cornucopia. This attribute is typically associated with depictions of Tyche, which was another deity commonly appearing in Nabataean art (Augé 1990).

Given the popularity of Victoria/Nike in Nabataean art, it is worth briefly considering the significance of this motif and the reasons behind its use. Several scholars have interpreted the depiction of this deity as simple expressions of victory, much in the same way as Hellenistic and Roman iconography. Hoover, for example, has suggested that the representation of the goddess on Nabataean coins may have been a reference to specific Nabataean or Roman military victories, or possibly non-military successes of the Nabataean king (Hoover 2006: 114–115). Similarly, Schmid has argued that the shallow-relief carvings of *Victoriae/Nikai* found around the *temenos* of Qasr Al-Bint in Petra appear to be influenced by Augustan propaganda and may be a reference to his victory at Actium (Schmid 2009: 328–330).

Roman influence is also apparent in the depiction of these deities alighting on a sphere, which is seen in a few of the better-preserved reliefs from KHirbat At Tannūr (Glueck 1965: 451, pls. 180, 186; McKenzie 2013: 87, figs. 140–141). The inclusion of these spheres or half-spheres in the statues of Victoria/Nike in the Hauran has demonstrated a close iconographic connection to Roman antecedents for Töpfer, who concludes, “the outstanding popularity of Victoria in Roman Syria must be seen in the context of the expansion of Roman rule or at least Roman art” (Töpfer 2015: 13). The same is perhaps true for Roman

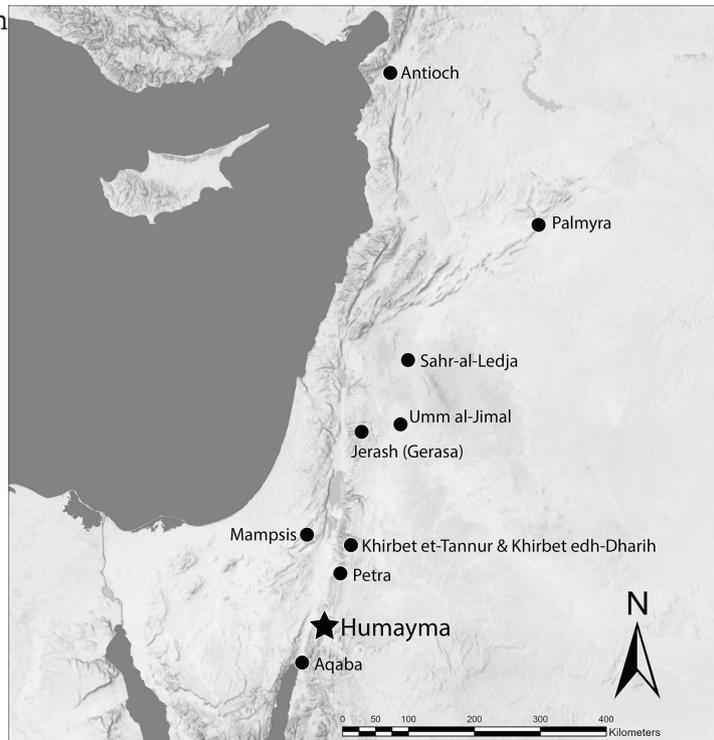
Arabia. After all, the relief carvings from the temple at KHirbat Adh DHarīh, which contain multiple depictions of Victoria/Nike, have been interpreted as a display of allegiance to Roman hegemony (al-Muheisen and Villeneuve 2005: 495).

In addition to being a straightforward reference to military victory or a visual display of allegiance to Rome, the popularity of Victoria/Nike as a motif in Nabataean art was also likely influenced by localized interpretations of this deity. The inclusion of cornucopias in the carved representations of Victoria/Nike in the Hauran as well as farther south at Petra and KHirbat At Tannūr suggests that this deity took on the role of a protective personal goddess associated with fortune and luck, much in the same way as Tyche or Gad (Linant de Bellefonds 1997: 882; Töpfer 2015: 13–16; 2021: 240).

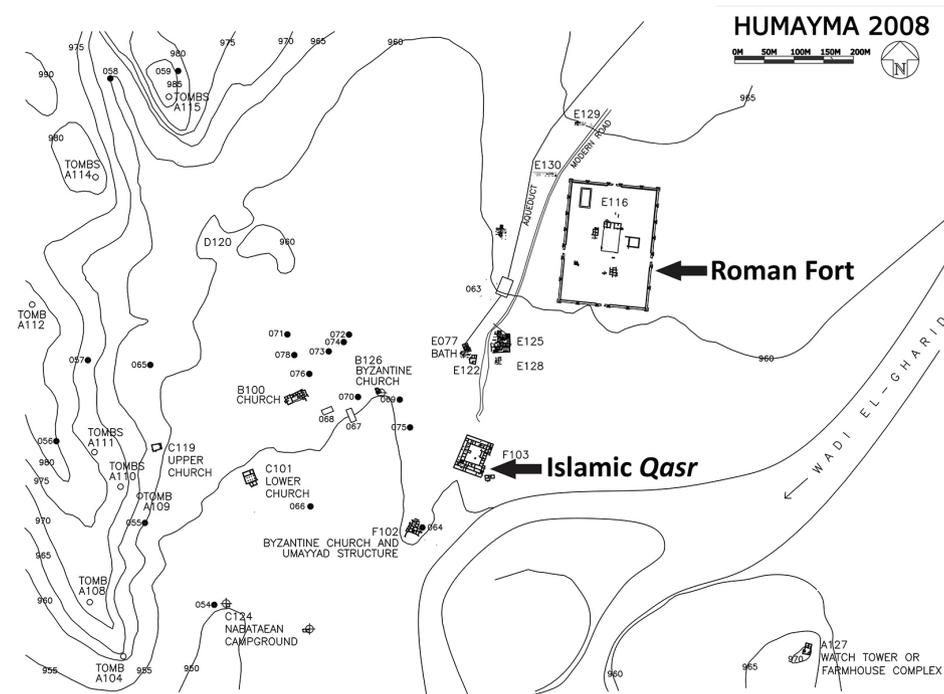
This brief discussion has provided a much-needed assessment of the state of scholarship concerning Victoria/Nike in Nabataean art in the Petra region. Although not comprehensive, it has highlighted the popularity of this motif and the need for further study. It still remains to place the Nabataean iconography of Victoria/Nike into its regional context, and a more careful analysis of the iconographic relationship between this goddess and Tyche in Nabataean art is also needed. Addressing these issues will require further analysis of this deity’s appearance in the visual culture of the region, but doing so also holds great promise. In this light, the newly identified depictions of the goddess of victory from Al Humaymah are a welcome addition to the corpus of known *Victoriae/*

THE GODDESS OF VICTORY AT AL ḤUMAYMAH AND IN NABATAEAN ART

Nikai from this region.



1. Map showing location of Al Ḥumaymah (image by C. A. Harvey).



2. Site plan of Al Ḥumaymah (image courtesy of M. B. Reeves).



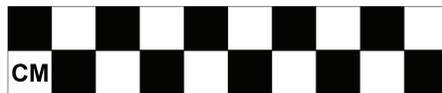
3. Front of marble statue fragment from Al Humaymah, showing the sickle-shaped folds of the *apoptygma* (1993.0198.01) (photo courtesy of J. P. Oleson).



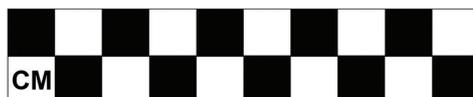
4. Back of marble statue fragment from Al Humaymah, showing hem of belted *apoptygma* (1993.0198.01) (photo courtesy of J. P. Oleson).



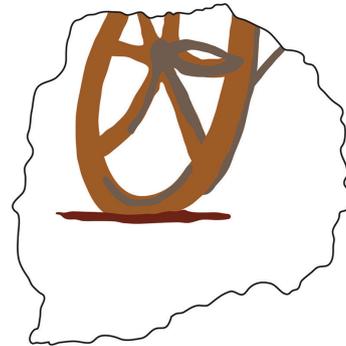
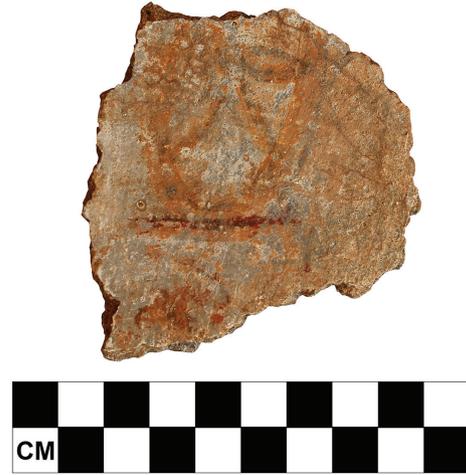
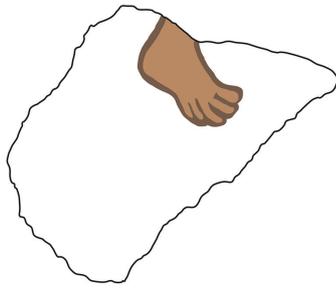
5. Basalt statues of Victoria/Nike from the Hauron. Left: Victoria/Nike from Souweida, in the guise of an Amazon. Damascus Museum. Right: Statue of Victoria/Nike with Heracles knot in the garden of the Damascus Museum. (Photos courtesy of K. M. Töpfer.)



6. Photograph of painted plaster fragment from craft area and latrine complex of the Roman fort at Al Humaymah, showing winged Victoria/Nike (left) and crowning figure (standing right) (photo by C. A. Harvey).

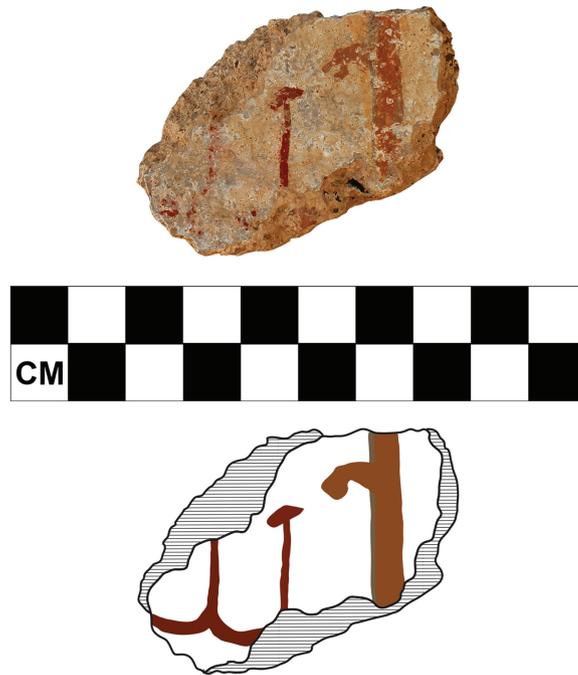


7. Drawing of painted plaster fragment from craft area and latrine complex of the Roman fort at Al Humaymah, showing winged Victoria/Nike (left) and crowning figure (standing right) (image by C. A. Harvey).



9. Photograph and drawing of painted plaster fragment from craft area and latrine complex of the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah, showing chariot wheel (image by C. A. Harvey).

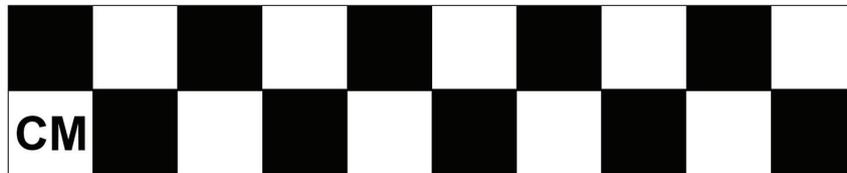
8. Photograph and drawing of painted plaster fragment from craft area and latrine complex of the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah, showing floating human foot (image by C. A. Harvey).



10. Photograph and drawing of painted plaster fragment from craft area and latrine complex of the Roman fort at Al Humaymah, showing part of military standard with downturned hook (right) and part of Greek letter *omega* from associated *dipinto* (left) (image by C. A. Harvey).



11. Photograph of painted plaster fragment from courtyard of the *praetorium* in the Roman fort at Al Humaymah, showing the right arm of figure bent at elbow and wearing gold hoop bracelet (photo by C. A. Harvey).



12. Photograph of painted plaster fragment from courtyard of the *praetorium* in the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah, showing a clenched fist or a foot (photo by C. A. Harvey).



13. Photograph of painted plaster fragment from courtyard of the *praetorium* in the Roman fort at Al Ḥumaymah, showing arm or leg of figure within a gold-bordered, blue medallion (photo by C. A. Harvey).

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