THE ‘LORD OF THE STONEMasons’: PART II.
‘STANDING FIGURE WITH BETYLS’ AT PETRA

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This paper presents the second type of representation of the ‘lord’ of the Nabataean stonemasons, a male figure standing with betyls. This type is found in five rock-cut reliefs in Petra, usually high in the walls of quarries or monuments. It is argued that, like the so-called ‘sword deity’ figures presented in Part I, this second type was also carved by the stonemasons as another representation of their tutelary deity, possibly Dushara. Study of these little-known figures reveals new information on the diverse depiction of Nabataean deities, as well as on the religious beliefs of the stonemasons at Petra.

Keywords: Petra, Nabataean deities, Nabataean reliefs, betyls, stonemasons

1. INTRODUCTION

In ‘Lord of the Stonemasons—Part I’ we proposed that the six herm-like figures found in various contexts throughout Petra were carved by stonemasons, given their placement high in the rock and association with monuments and quarries (Wadeson and Wenning 2014).1 The most well known of these is the so-called ‘sword deity’ which was discovered during the 2000 Season of the Brown University excavations of the ‘Great Temple’ (Joukowsky 2001, 331–33, figs. 11–12). Our contextual and comparative study of other examples that we collected and recorded allowed us to conclude that this image is not a ‘sword deity’ or ‘dagger god’ but may in fact represent the god Dushara, who is closely linked to the rock. By carving his image in the rock where they worked, the stonemasons sought protection from their tutelary deity. By establishing this new type of divine representation we were able to shed light on the life of the stonemasons at Petra and their religious beliefs.

In this paper, Part II of the subject, we would like to present a second group of five enigmatic carved figures from Petra which we also argue are possible representations of Dushara in his role as ‘lord’ of the stonemasons.2 This group forms a second type that essentially comprises a male figure, usually standing with betyls. Like the so-called ‘sword deity’, this type is also typically carved high in the rock walls of quarries or monuments, which is the key to understanding its significance as protective deity of the stonemasons. While three of the figures were described in previous publications (Dalman 1908, 154, nos. 180 g, 54b; Al-Muheisen 2009, 72–74), their interpretation remained enigmatic. The recent discovery of two more examples indicated that we are in fact dealing with a specific type. A detailed examination of the form and setting of each example in the group, alongside our work on the herm-like figures presented in Part I (Wadeson and Wenning 2014), enables us to offer an interpretation which is open for further discussion. We describe and discuss the five examples below, before presenting our arguments for the identification and interpretation of the figure as Dushara in his role as protector of the stonemasons. This study reveals the complex nature of this Nabataean god and the various ways in which he could be depicted. It also sheds light on the life and values of the stonemasons who created the monuments we see today in Petra.3

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2. THE EXAMPLES

2.1 The figure (D. 180 g) from Triclinium Br. 65

The first known example of a figure standing with betyls is carved in the rock face above the wide entrance to Triclinium Br. 65 (Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904, 186, 231, fig. 261, no. 65; Dalman 1908, 154 no. 180 g, fig. 80b; Nehmé 2012, 45 no. 65; UTM coordinates: x 735.729, y 357.266) (Fig. 1). This triclinium is carved at the beginning of the Outer Siq, high in its northern side and is accessed by a stairway of twenty steps, leading up from the main path. Netzer reconstructed a terrace or even a garden in front of the triclinium, assuming that a barrel vault was constructed to bridge the street below and to support the terrace (Netzer 2003, 62, fig. 79). It is one of the largest tricinia in Petra, measuring c. 12.17 by 12.15 m. Some scholars have associated this triclinium to the nearby Khaznah, given its size and prominent, high location (Dalman 1908, 154; Netzer 2003, 62), while others have debated whether it in fact may belong to one of the other many tombs in this area (Brockes 1994, 118; Nehmé 1994, 146).

In the smoothed façade above the triclinium is a large, diagonal crack in the rock. Immediately below the middle part of this crack is a carved figure with at least two masons’ marks further to the right in the form of chevrons (compare with Dalman 1908, figs. 91–92)
The figure itself is located at almost 7 m above the ground level and is therefore likely to have been carved during the smoothing of the façade. It may not have originally been visible if indeed an anteroom or porticoes fronted this triclinium, and was therefore likely to have been a private dedication by the stonemason(s) during the carving of this monument—in a similar fashion to the herm-like figures presented in Part I (Wadeson and Wenning 2014).

The figure was published by Brünnow and von Domaszewski (1904, 188, 232, fig. 262), Musil (1907, 79, fig. 48), and Dalman (1908, 90–91, 98, 117, 154–56 no. 180 g, fig. 80b), who all provided sketches of it. In his second book, Dalman then published a photograph of the carving (Dalman 1912, 25–26, fig. 13). In more recent decades, Roche (1985, catalogue 347, 399, 444 no. VII 3, pl. 44 ter) and Tarrier (1988, 186) referred to the figure in their respective PhD theses. However, the significance of the figure has remained elusive.

In Dalman’s 1912 photograph (1912, 25–26, fig. 13), a cross is visible below and to the left of the left betyl. The presence of this cross led von Domaszewski and Dalman to interpret the figure as a crucifix (Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904, 188; Dalman 1908, 117, 156), until Dalman later recognised the two betyls and refuted this interpretation (1912, 25–26). Dalman then proposed that the figure depicted the sun-god, wrongly interpreting the chisel marks around the head as sun-rays and pointing to an example in Madâ’in Śāliḥ as a parallel (Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 411–15, figs. 201–201 bis, 203). All that remains of Dalman’s cross today is the horizontal line (Fig. 2). Upon close observation, it seems that there was never a
cross and Dalman was misled by the mason’s tool-marks. Since Dalman, no other interpretation has been given to this figure. However, the discovery by the authors of comparable examples (with and without betyls) in similar contexts now enables us to offer new ideas on the function and significance of these figures.

2.2 The figure (D. 54b) in the Eagle Niche Valley (Wādī Umm Dfaylah)

Dalman recorded a carved figure in a chamber in the Eagle Niche Valley (Wādī Umm Dfaylah) (1908, 98, 116–17, 154, no. 54b, fig. 80b), which bears similarities to the figure described above, although lacks the flanking betyls. The rock-cut chamber is located at the western edge of the valley and was used as a guard-room overlooking the interrupted old way to the plateau of Jabal al-Khubthah (Fig. 4) (Lindner 2003, 160; Nehmé 2012, 102, no. 1054(54); UTM coordinates: x 736.384, y 357.412). The rock has been dramatically cut away at this point, creating a deep escarpment (Lindner 2003, 160–17, figs. 17–18). This cutting at the western end of the Eagle Niche Valley closed off access to Jabal al-Khubthah and Petra. On the opposite side of the escarpment, the stairs of the old way are still visible; however, it is impossible to access them due to the treacherous nature of the slope. Wenning suggested that the old way could have been cut off when the new road through the Siq was constructed in the early first century BC, in order to make that the only eastern access to the city (Wadeson 2012b, 101).

For information regarding the figure, we must rely on Dalman’s description and sketch (1908, 98, 116–17, 154, no. 54b, fig. 80b) since we were unable to find the carving despite several attempts. Dalman’s sketch shows a figure standing with its arms outstretched and legs apart, similar to the sketch he made of D. 180 g (1908, 154) (Fig. 5). However, we ought to exercise some caution with the drawing since in reality the D. 180 g figure was not standing with its legs in such a manner. Figure D. 54b is shown in a rounded niche and is not framed by betyls, unlike Figure D. 180 g (2.1). Nevertheless, given the apparent similarities between the two figures, it is possible that the same type is being reproduced here as a sort of citation, perhaps even by the same group of stonemasons. The quarrying that took place in the

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Fig. 3. Detail of Figure D. 180 g, Petra (Photograph: L. Gorgerat).
Eagle Niche Valley (Lindner 2003, 156, 158, 160, figs. 3–6, 14) and the destruction of the old way meant that particularly dangerous work was undertaken by the stonemasons in this area.

2.3 Figure (A) in the Umm Sayhūn Quarry

A carved figure was discovered by Robert Wenning in the Umm Sayhūn quarry, which lies in the north-east of Petra and is accessible via the road to Umm Sayhūn, alongside Wādi Turkmāniyyah. Rababeh provides a useful description and plan of the quarry (Rababeh 2005, 51, 53–54, 78, 80, figs. 2.4–5; 3.3–4; cf. Abu-Jaber et al. 2007, 112–16, 124, figs. 67–69, 80–82), in which he distinguishes four zones. The figural relief is located in his Zone A, on the fourth rock face from the north (Fig. 6). Zone A is composed of seven steep rock faces, the highest of which measures 21 m. The relief is carved approximately 16 m high into the quarried surface and is orientated towards the north-east (Fig. 7). Given this now inaccessible height in the rock, it was clearly carved when the stone was being quarried from the top down and when the stonemasons worked from accessible platforms.

The relief consists of a group of three niches that are surrounded by a large rectangular frame (Fig. 8), indicating that they should be interpreted as one group. The central niche contains a standing figure, which is framed by two complex niches either side. The niche on the right side has a broad frame on both sides, which has been cut diagonally at the top, and contains a rectangular block that has a small square cut out of it in the middle. It is topped with what appears to be a crudely carved architrave that is slightly rounded at the top. The recessed square can either be interpreted as a niche itself in a broad, double frame, or as a recessed betyl inside a niche that is carved in relief. Although the former type is uncommon at Petra, parallels can be observed in the Siq and on the slope of Jabal al-Khubthah. The latter type of recessed betyl is well known at Petra (Wenning 2001, 85–86) but it is usually represented as a niche within a niche.

The niche on the left side is more elaborate than that on the right. It too has a broad lateral frame that has been cut diagonally at the top, but it also contains a thinner outer frame. The top of the niche also looks like it has an architrave, but its upper part is recessed and appears to carry a semi-circular feature (cf. Dalman 1908, no. 230, fig. 110). The interior
of this niche appears to be divided into three recessed parts by a cross-like feature that tapers at the bottom and bulges at the top (Fig. 9), which is uncommon for Nabataean niches (e.g. Dalman 1908, nos. 161, 607; Tholbecq 2011, fig. 13; Wenning 2011, fig. 22). Those that are divided tend to be accompanied by architectural elements in the niche (e.g. Dalman 1908, no. 593). The two recessed spaces at the bottom may be interpreted as niches in a niche—the one on the left rectangular and the one on the right arched. The outline of a carved betyl is slightly visible inside the left betyl-niche, while the arched niche follows the type of the recessed betyls. Given the lack of parallel examples, the recessed space at the top, defined by the cross-like carving, cannot be explained at this stage.

The central niche is arched and contains the standing figure (Fig. 10). This niche appears to be squeezed in between the niches on either side, and although it is the smallest of the group,
it is the dominant one given its position and the size of the figure within it. The figure appears to be a male standing in frontal view. Due to the crude execution of this figure and the weathering of the stone, it is difficult to determine any facial details or recognise specific attributes. However, it seems that he is not bearded, which would indicate his youth. A short garment is also vaguely visible between and around the figure’s thighs, which may be a short-sleeved belted tunic pulled up to cover the body and upper arms. The left arm of the figure hangs down beside the body, while the right arm seems to have suffered some damage or else was never finished. The figure is supported on his right leg, while his left leg is slightly bent and turned to the side, indicating movement towards the right. The feet are indicated, but this part of the figure appears to be less finished than the upper part.

Thus, when taken together as a group, these three niches present a standing male figure flanked by betyls. Given the high position of this relief in the quarry wall, it is likely that it was carved by the stonemasons as a private votive during their work.

2.4 Figure (B) in the Umm Ṣayḥūn Quarry

On another one of the walls in the Umm Ṣayḥūn quarry, oriented to the west, is a carved rectangular niche containing a standing figure (Figs. 11 and 12). This relief was pointed out to the authors by Christopher Tuttle, to whom we are most grateful for providing a description and photographs and for allowing us to publish his discovery. The niche itself is shallow and rectangular in shape. The surface is extremely worn and thus the outline of the figure is not particularly clear, apart from the head and neck which are more pronounced. There is also a chance that the figure was never finished. It is possible to see the faint outline of shoulders, legs, and possibly a raised right arm that is holding something.

The location of this figure, the shape of its head and neck, and the broad-shouldered, angular body are comparable to the figure in the central niche of the group described
above (2.3). However, unlike that figure, this one does not stand in an arched niche, nor is it flanked by betyls. It seems reasonable that the figure was also carved by stonemasons during their work in this quarry. Based on the similarities between the figures, and their vicinity, it is likely they were carved by the same stonemasons. It seems to be a simplified citation of the group, though it is unclear why this particular example lacks the betyls.

2.5 The figure near ‘Ayn Brāk Channel B, Jabal al-Madhbah

An interesting series of votive niches on the highest terrace of the western slope of Jabal al-Madhbah was mentioned by Al-Muheisen in his unpublished thesis (1986, pl. 107) and later in his book on the Nabataean hydraulic system (2009, 72–74). However, they escaped scholarly discussion until Wenning studied them during his 2011 survey of the Jabal Al-Madhbah area for the ‘Petra Niches Project’ (2011, 475–76, fig. 21). The terrace is accessed via a broken staircase near Tomb Br. 217. The niches are associated with an offshoot of Branch B of the ‘Ayn Brāk channel in Wāḍi Farasah East, to the north of the Lion Fountain D. 254 (Al-Muheisen 2009, 71–77). They are carved in a massive block of rock (h. 2.10 m) on the
Fig 8. Figure 2.3 and niches, Umm Ṣayḥūn quarry, Petra (Photograph: L. Wadeson).

Fig. 9. Niche to the left of Figure 2.3, Umm Ṣayḥūn quarry, Petra (Photograph: L. Gorgerat).
western border of the terrace which has been roughly smoothed (UTM coordinates: x 735.128, y 335.700) (Fig. 13). The channel runs along the base of the rock and a basin is carved in the rock floor in front of the niches.

The group is composed of three small niches. The main niche of the group, which is located in the lower right part, contains a carved figure (Fig. 14). Above this niche is an arched niche with a row of three carved betyls (Fig. 15). This niche does not crown the main niche, unlike a similar example in the Siq (Dalman 1908, 144 no. 144, fig. 65) where a row of betyls (or dwarf pilasters) crowns the top of the plain attic of the niche. To the left of the main niche is a small, empty arched niche (0.04 m × 0.07 m).

The main niche measures 0.12 m by 0.21 m. The figure is standing in frontal view in the right half of the niche and takes up almost the full height of the space. Although the surface is heavily weathered, limiting a precise description, it seems that the head is framed by full hair (Fig. 16). The damaged surface also hinders how we interpret the position of the arms. At first glance it seems that the figure has stumps instead of arms, but Al-Muheisen suggested the right arm may have been raised (2009, 74) or involved in an action relating to the object on the left. The left shoulder appears to be slightly raised, indicating some sort of movement that corresponds to the contrapposto stance of the figure. The weight of the figure is supported by the left leg, while the right leg is placed slightly to the side. The lower parts of the legs and the
feet have almost been completely destroyed by weathering. The shape of the body suggests that the figure is male.

The rectangular object in the left half of the niche is difficult to identify. It rises to approximately three-quarters of the height of the figure, finishing just below his shoulder level. Al-Muheisen suggested the object was an altar (2009, 74), although its form is not typical among known Nabataean altars in Petra, which are usually horned (Dalman 1908, 83, nos. 251, 401a, 402d-e, 607). Such tall altars exist in the Hauranite type of the masgida (Wenning 2001, 82–83 n. 9; cf. the altar of Māṣik from Umm al-Jimal: Littmann 1914, 34–35 no. 38 with fig.), but they are usually profiled. Also, there is no evidence that the figure is shown sacrificing like the camel leaders in a relief on the Dayr plateau (Dalman 1908, no. 464, fig. 218). Another suggestion might be that it represents a tall betyl. Betylts with a height that is more than double its width are not uncommon in Petra (Dalman 1908, nos. 43c, 146, 197). This combination of a standing figure with a betyl would therefore make this relief comparable to examples 2.1 and 2.3 discussed above, yet in this case there is no second betyl on the other side.

Fig. 11. Figure 2.4 in the Umm Ṣayḥūn quarry, Petra (Photograph: C. Tuttle).
The proximity of niches and water channels is widespread in Petra, suggesting the important relationship between water and cult (Wenning 2001, 91; Wadeson 2011, 7). It may be that the relief under discussion here should be interpreted in this sense. However, the composition is closer to the examples so far discussed of a male figure with betyls. Therefore, it is possible that this niche was a personal dedication of the stonemasons who carved the channels high in the steep cliffs—work that carried considerable risks.

The five carvings discussed above represent a male figure standing frontally in a rounded (2.1, 2.2, 2.3) or rectangular niche (2.4, 2.5). These reliefs are typically carved in worked surfaces that are now inaccessible due to their height. That suggests they were cut by the stonemasons during their work. In three of the examples (2.1, 2.3, 2.5), the figure is accompanied by one or two betyls, while the other two (2.2, 2.4) are clearly citations of the standing figure of the group. There are notable similarities between the figures, although each one has some slight variations. The figure always stands frontally and the arms are either by the sides (2.3, 2.4)

Fig. 12. Detail of Figure 2.4 in the Umm Sayhūn quarry, Petra (Photograph: C. Tuttle).

3. IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION

The five carvings discussed above represent a male figure standing frontally in a rounded (2.1, 2.2, 2.3) or rectangular niche (2.4, 2.5). These reliefs are typically carved in worked surfaces that are now inaccessible due to their height. That suggests they were cut by the stonemasons during their work. In three of the examples (2.1, 2.3, 2.5), the figure is accompanied by one or two betyls, while the other two (2.2, 2.4) are clearly citations of the standing figure of the group. There are notable similarities between the figures, although each one has some slight variations. The figure always stands frontally and the arms are either by the sides (2.3, 2.4)
or protruding out (2.1, 2.2, 2.5). The head is very rounded, probably with full hair, which seems to be indicated in at least one case (2.5). Unfortunately, due to the weathering of the sandstone, further details are difficult to determine. Nevertheless, we seem to be dealing here with a specific type given the context, the niche, the form of the figures, and in three cases the presence of betyls.

In seeking a prototype for the figure, upon seeing the figure in the Umm Shayhûn quarry (2.3), one colleague pointed to the type of a standing Zeus, holding a sceptre in his raised right hand, while his left hand rests on his hip. Apart from a himation draped over the left shoulder or arm, the god is naked. One such example can be seen in a Roman fresco from Corinth (Kar-anastassi 1997, 371 no. 289, pl. 231). Nevertheless, such a prototype is speculative given the damaged surface of the reliefs at Petra and the lack of visible attributes, and it seems to us that the figure is clad in a short chiton or tunica in the way craftsmen are represented in Hellenistic-Roman art.

The fact that the figure in the Umm Shayhûn quarry (2.3) is framed within an aedicule-like niche suggests that a deity is represented in a sanctuary (cf. the Tyche of the Khaznah, the Isis from Wādi Abu ‘Ollēqa or the Atargatis in the Siq: Alpass 2010, figs. 4, 12; Dalman 1908, no. 149). Furthermore, the figures that are accompanied by betyls are placed on the same level as these divine representations, and in all three cases are taller than the betyls, thus signifying their own divine status. The figure dominates the betyls, especially in the examples where he takes the central position (2.1, 2.3). This composition recalls groups of three betyls in Petra, in which the middle betyl is taller than the lateral ones (Dalman 1908, nos. 102, 148, 172, 212a) (Fig. 17). The interpretation of such groups remains a debated issue (Dalman 1908, 72–73; Wenning 2001, 87), but it is notable in our examples how an anthropomorphic representation has replaced the central, most important betyl.
Among groups of betyls in Petra, including examples where smaller betyls are set into larger ones (Dalman 1908, nos. 89a, 398d, 542a, 574, 592, 597, 600), Wenning has suggested that the largest betyl could represent the supreme god, while the smaller ones could represent family gods (2001, 82). The Nabataean gods did not form a pantheon with a hierarchical structure and we find deities venerated beside the supreme god Dushara, with whom they are associated (Healey 2001, 81, 84, 86). The betyls are individual private donations, which seem to reflect more family religion in the context of the social structure of the tribal community. In the example above Triclinium Br. 65 (2.1), the betyls are much smaller than the central figure, who seems to be protecting them. For the figures under discussion in this article, we prefer to see the betyls as tutelary deities of the families of the stonemasons, rather than supreme deities associated with the figure.

The combination of figural and non-figural representation in the same composition is observed on other reliefs and monuments in Petra. For example, the ‘Medallion and Block Relief’ on the way to the al-Madhbah High Place from Wādī Farasah showing a bust of a male deity in a medallion above a betyl (Hammond 1968; Alpass 2010, 107–09; Kropp 2011, 190–91, fig. 13; Nehmé 2012, 149),9 the eagle above a betyl in Wādī Umm Dīaylah (Dalman
Fig. 15. Niches above Branch B of the 'Ayn Bräk channel, Jabal al-Madhbah, Petra (Photograph: R. Wenning).

Fig. 16. Detail of Figure 2.5, Jabal al-Madhbah, Petra (Photograph: R. Wenning).
1908, no. 51e and g; Lindner 2003, 157–58, figs. 10–12; Nehmé 2012, 101), and the funerary statue between the four nepheshes on the Obelisk Tomb (Br. 35) in the Bāb as-Siq (Wadeson 2012a, 209–12, 221–22, pl. 2).10 In contrast to previous views, these two modes of representation should not be seen as incompatible, but rather as complementary (Wenning 2001, 87; Alpass 2010, 107; Wadeson 2012a, 223–24).

Considering that in most of our examples the figure is likely to have been carved by the stonemasons, given its high position in quarries, monuments, and other rock-cut features, and the fact that it seems to be a small, personal dedication, allows a comparison with the herm-like figures presented in Part I (Wadeson and Wenning 2014). In that article we argued that those figures represented the tutelary deity of the stonemasons, whose work carried considerable dangers. These dangers are reflected in the five nepheshes carved in a wall of the Wādī as-Siyyagh quarry, possibly memorialising workmen who had a fatal accident (Dalman 1908, nos. 401b,c,e,g; Kühn 2005, 480–81 nos. 139–43, figs. 14–15). Thus, it is not surprising that the stone-cutters would seek divine protection during their work, particularly at the top of a cliff. Besides these figural reliefs, carvings of betyls and altars in the walls of quarries are common in Petra and have been interpreted as dedications by the stonemasons (Dalman 1908, nos. 400a–c, 401a, d, f, 402a, c–e, 403a, b).11

In our previous article, we proposed that the tutelary deity of the stonemasons was possibly Dushara, the chief god of the Nabataeans who was born from the rock and who also owned

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**Fig. 17.** Group of three betyls—D. 172, Siq, Petra (Photograph: R. Wenning).
The reason for depicting him as a herm-like figure may lie in his supposed birth from the rock—with the shaft of the herm symbolising the rock and the arms and head representing the deity. If indeed the carved figure presented in the current article also represents the ‘lord’ of the stonemasons, and thus Dushara, we may question why a different figural type was chosen for his portrayal. Firstly, it is not unusual for Nabataean gods to be depicted in several ways. For example, Wenning has demonstrated how Dushara was represented in Petra as both a young and old god, according to local and Greek types (Wenning forthcoming-a). Secondly, it may be that we are dealing with different workshops or guilds of stonemasons in Petra. In Ptolemaic Egypt and the Roman world stonemasons were organised in ‘collegia fabrorum’ (Stöckle 1924, 166–67; Rostovtzeff 1955, 233, 843–46, 1145–46, 1371–72; Burford-Cooper 1997; Herz 1997; Ruffing 2008, 368, 401–02, 619–22, 639, 749), therefore such a system may have also been implemented in Petra (cf. Nehmé 1997, 1047; Wenning 1997, 182). In Hegra, we learn from the tomb inscriptions that tomb-carving was a family business (McKenzie 1990, 14–31). In any case, the different groups may have had a preferred way of depicting the god. It should be remembered that this figural type is more anthropomorphic than the herm figure discussed in Part I, perhaps reflecting some freedom of choice on the part of the individuals who carved it.

From the distribution of the figures throughout Petra it is not possible to state that particular stonemasons worked in particular areas or on particular monuments. Although most of the herm-like figures are closer to the city centre than the examples discussed here, and two of them are related to prestigious tombs (Br. 765 and Br. 770), there is no obvious pattern. We find the stonemasons working on single monuments like the tombs, on large projects like the ‘Ayn Brāk Channel, and in great quarries like at Umm Ṣayḥūn.

These figures demonstrate that the non-elite of Nabataean society, such as the workmen and craftsmen, could depict their deities in anthropomorphic form and also combine figural and aniconic representation. Although crudely carved, the figures are evidence of the private and direct invocation of the god, and like the thousands of personal graffiti on the rock faces provide insight into Nabataean society and religious beliefs. The figures are not carved to be seen by passers-by, like the votive niches in the Siq, but rather were intended for the group of stonemasons working at those specific places.

This study demonstrates just how important context is to understanding the meaning and significance of this small corpus of carved figures from Petra, which lack details and accompanying inscriptions that would otherwise aid us in their interpretation. Besides having established these figures as a specific type, we hope to have shed light on the varied representation of Nabataean gods, as well as the religious life of the stonemasons at Petra. Our suggestion that these schematic figures are another representation of the ‘lord’ of the stonemasons, possibly Dushara, hopefully brings a new perspective to Nabataean religion, but is one that is open for further discussion and debate.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

D. Dalman 1908
Br. Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904
1 Since our publication of the carved henn-like figures (Wadsworth and Wenning 2014), a possible new example has come to light on the façade of the Turkmaniyah Tomb (Br. 623) in Wadi Turkmaniyah. The figure is carved above and to the right of the busts in the niche in the façade of this tomb. However, a better photograph is required in order to verify the form.

2 The authors gave a joint paper on the subject at the ‘First International Conference on Nabataean Culture’ in Wadi Mīsā, 5–8 May 2012. They would like to thank Nabil Khairu of the University of Jordan for the kind invitation and his organisation of this interesting conference.

3 The Nabataean term for stonemasons (stonemasons) is ṣacli (McKenzie 1990, 14 n. 54; Healey 1993, 93).

4 However, the interpretation of the Mādāʿin Sāliḥ carving is debated, and it is agreed that the lower part represents a betyl (Roche 1993, 62; Wenning 1996, 269).


6 Although impossible to determine given the weathered surface of the rock, the garment could be in the Greek tradition of the short chiton (Bieber 1928, 80, pl. 59.2), which becomes the Roman tunica. The exomis was typical for craftsmen in the Roman period, where, in contrast to our figure, the right shoulder remained uncovered (Pausch 2003, 138–63, figs. 143–150). The few depictions of stonemasons in Roman art do not aid us in identifying our figure (Gummers 1974, 93–100, figs. 16–19; Zimmer 1982, 35–36, Cat. nos. 75–83 with figs.).

7 None of the horn-less altars listed by Dalman (1908, 83) are comparable and his drawing (fig. 124) of No. 261a is misleading.

8 As suggested by the late J. Floren (personal communication: 20 November 2012), Wenning suggests a new interpretation of this figure as Obodas Theos (forthcoming-b).

9 Although not examples of dual representation, two other reliefs may be noted: a horse carrying a betyl in a small tomb in the Báb as-Siq (Dalman 1908, no. 47d; Maurer and Maurer 1978, fig. on p. 21; Nehmé 2012, 100–101), and a standing (or dancing?) figure (possibly an adorant) in front of a niche with a betyl on a quarry terrace near the way to the Al-Madbiḥah High Place (Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904, no. 81, fig. 267; Wenning 2011, 478–79, figs. 23–24; Nehmé 2012, 48–49).

10 Many of these incisions have been documented by Wenning in the ‘Petra Niches Project’, and by Tuttle in his study of Nabataean quarry marks.

11 Wenning discovered an inscription in al-Madras in 1997 (Nehmé 2012, no. MP 68.1), which should be added to the cited inscriptions which mention associations.

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