THE RELIGION OF THE NABATAEANS

A Conspectus

BY

JOHN F. HEALEY



BRILL LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN 2001

CONTENTS

Foreword	xi
Abbreviations in Text	xiii
Note on Transliteration of Names	xiv
List of Maps and Plates and their Sources	
Chapter One: Problems of Method and a Survey of Sources	1
Nabataean "Religion"	2
The Study of Dead Religions	3
"Nabataean" Religion	9
The Transformations of Nabataean Religion	13
Syncretism or Assimilation	14
The Sources	17
Epigraphic	17
Archaeological	17
Literary	18
(i) Greek and Latin	18
(ii) Syriac and Arabic	20
Iconographic	21
Onomastic	22
Conclusion	24
Chapter Two: Background: Nabataean History and Trade	25
Nabataean History	25
Nabataean Trade	32
The Nabataean Regions	33
Connections with Arabia	34
Chapter Three: Sacred Places	38
Introduction	38
Religious Installations at Nabataean Sites	39
Petra	39
(i) Temples	39
(ii) Processional Ways	45
(iii) High-places	48
(iv) Locations of Special Cults	49
(v) Tombs	

Ḥegra and Ruwāfah	53
Wādī Ramm	56
Khirbet et-Tannūr and Khirbet edh-Dhariḥ	. 59
Southern Syria (Ḥawrān)	62
The Negev, Egypt and Sinai	
Religious Architecture	71
General	. 71
Typology of Nabataean Religious Sites	. 73
Excursus: Architectural and Related Terms	75
Chapter Four: The Nabataean God and Goddess	. 80
The Nabataean Conception of the Gods	80
Dushara, the Nabataean God	
Dushara's Assimilation to Non-Nabataean Deities	97
Dushara and A ^c ra, the God of Bosra	. 97
Dushara and Dionysos	. 100
Dushara and Zeus	
Dushara and the Sun (Helios)	. 102
Conclusions	106
The Nabataean Goddess: Allāt, al-ʿUzzā	107
Allāt	108
Al-'Uzzā	. 114
Chapter Five: Other Deities Worshipped by the Nabataeans	. 120
Kūtbā and Al-Kutbā	
Deities of Regional Importance	
Baalshamin	
Qōs	
Hubal	
Manōtu and Qaysha	
Foreign Goddesses	
Isis	
Atargatis	. 140
Evidence of Other Deities	
The Protective Deities	. 143
Shay ^r -al-Qawm	. 143
Personal Deities: the Divine Obodas	. 147
Family Deities	
City Deities: Tyches, Şa'bu, Gad of the Nabataeans	. 153
State Deities, the God of the King	167

CONTENTS ix

Chapter Six: Images and Rituals	155
Objects of Worship	155
Cult-niches and Images of Gods	
The mwtb' and Altars	
Sacred Times and Persons	160
Festivals	160
Ritual Action: Offerings	
Personnel	
Private Cults	
The marzēḥā and the triclinium	
Tombs and the Dead	169
Religious Formulae	
"Remembered be"	175
"For the life of"	178
Chapter Seven: The World of Nabataean Religion	181
A Desert Tradition?	
Aniconism	
Emergent Monotheism	
Nabataean Religion in the pre-Islamic Context	
Bibliography	211
Indices	235