

Nabataean mythology (Pharaoh's treasury)

Abstract

The rock facades represent the nature of the Nabataean civilization, as they combined elements from all the civilizations of the ancient Near East, including Assyrian, Egyptian, Syrian, Greek, and Roman, in a distinctive and unique Nabataean mold.

Keywords: Nabataean, legend, mythology, sculptures, myth.

Volume 9 Issue 3 - 2024

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Received: October 30, 2024 | **Published:** December 02, 2024

What is the legend?

Myth is the story of the story of a god that is never devoid of a god in all religions. Myth is taken from the word "ostour," and its true origin is Ishtar. The legend is linked to the Iraqi Ishtar, who is the lady of stories. She is the feminine side in myths and was transformed into the star of Venus, which is love, fertility, and life. Myth means Myth and it came from the word Mouth (mouth), as Plato mentioned. It is the stories that come out of the mouth. It is a sacred story and a sacred history in all civilizations and religions whose previous people believed in it, not us. The legend is not a myth, it is part of the religion of previous peoples.

Legend jobs

1. The religious function: It is the narrative part that simplifies religion in the form of poetic stories.
2. Social function: The myth arises in a social environment in which it plays a specific role during periods of birth, marriage, and death. These activities are connected to God, as they give them a sacred touch.
3. Psychological function: After the dominance of reason and science, myth and poetry still satisfy the irrational tendency of man, which is the sea of man's subconscious.
4. The symbolic function: It is a mediator between people to establish an internal balance and a relationship between the self and the social system. The myth is subject to exchange between any two people, and thus the myth turns into a kind of money that advances people's interests and empties their spiritual activity. The myth has crossed the sacred walls in the modern era and gone into literature. Sports and stars.
5. Cognitive function: Myth calls for contemplation, interpretation, reasoning, and simplification of phenomena to reach the truth of the present and secure the future.
6. Ideological function: It is the religious belief of primitive societies.
7. Political function: In our present era, myth serves politics in the sense of creating a false awareness that leads to action to serve their purposes.

Who are the Nabataeans?

- A. There are those who mention that they came after the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam, and they support their opinion by saying that they had a great degree of sophistication and knowledge in water engineering.
- B. The second opinion states that they came from southern Mesopotamia on the western shores of the Arabian Gulf.
- C. As for the third opinion, it states that the name Nabatu and Nabitu were mentioned in the Assyrian tablets, which date back to the 7th century BC, during the time of Assyria, the son of Babylon. We do not know if this name means the Nabataean tribe, which took the land of Edom, located in the south of Wadi Araba, as its place in the middle of the century 4.BC. The first historical ruler came in 312 BC. It mentions the campaign of Antigonos, the Greek leader, on the city of Petra. While the Assyrian texts mention. They are Arab tribes that disturb the western borders of Assyria, and based on the monetary records and the Nabataean writings and inscriptions they left behind, archaeologists were able to establish a progression of their rule from the beginning of Aretas I and ending with Aribel II in the year 106 AD, and representing the period of the rule of Aretas III and IV from 40 BC - 50 BC. The height of the Nabataean city and its prosperity, as the Nabataean Kingdom expanded and included the two regions from Damascus in the north to Mada'in. Saleh (Hajar) and from Gaza on the Mediterranean to the interior desert in the east. This area includes the Negev Sinai - northwest of the Arabian Peninsula. Both sides of Wadi Araba, east of the Jordan River - Dead Sea - southern Palestine - Hauran - Jabal Druze to Damascus in the north. The Nabataean state appeared in the Tur Sinai Peninsula on the ruins of the Edomite Kingdom, and its capital was Sela, which in Hebrew means "The Rock" and in Greek it means "Petra."¹ The first person to mention the Nabataeans was (Theodore) in his chronicles, in which he mentioned the resistance of a Nabataean army consisting of ten thousand men to Antigonos the Greek in Year 312 BC. Orientalists believe that the Nabatean people are not pure Aramaic because they spread throughout Arab countries until the Nabatean Kingdom in Tur Sinai was known as Arab Petraea.²

Nabataean inscriptions indicate that its epithet includes many words from the Arabic language, as in its pagan civilization and in its proper names, it is very similar to Arabic. This strong influence cannot only come from being influenced by one's neighbourhood, but rather it is the result of their racial mixing with the Arabs. From here it is clear to us that there are names of idols such as Al-Arabi, Shi'a Al-Qoum, Al-Lat, Amat Al-Lat, and proper names such as Adent, Asad, Aws, Abdah, Aws Allah, Ma'an, Jadhimah, and Wahab in the Nabataean language.³ However, there is a tendency among a group of orientalisks that the Nabataeans are a Bedouin people who used Aramaic writing in inscriptions and other urban affairs. But we cannot confirm that all Nabataeans were purely Arabs or purely Aramaeans. There is no doubt that there are original Aramaic Nabataean elements, just as there are Arab Nabataean elements. It appears that the conquering Arhats of the Nabataeans were Aramaic, then after settling in Tur Sinai, they mixed with the Arabs, and so they appeared. Two classes, one was original Aramaic and the other was Arabic, its elements multiplied until it gradually overcame the Aramaic elements and completely erased them, and the language of civilization remained the Aramaic language, which in those eras was the language of urbanization among all the nations of the Near East. We must not lose sight of the fact that the presence of the Aramaic language and Aramaic writing among the Nabataeans, who had direct contact with the Arabs, had a significant impact on the pre-Islamic Arab civilization and on the formation of the Arabic linguistic material in the north of the peninsula in terms of urbanization and urbanization, as is thus evident from the Nabataean script and its influence.⁴

On Islamic Arabic calligraphy

a) Religion among the Nabataeans

- 1) The Nabataeans do not have a complex mythology, and their care of graves reflects a kind of ostentation more than the importance of the afterlife. They buried their dead in majestic tombs and placed with them the dead person's personal items, such as jewelry and utensils. They recorded their names on the graves, and the grave was called "Kafir" or "mausoleum".⁵
- 2) They knew religion like other Semitic peoples.
- 3) Beliefs were their main concern, and there were paper amulets written by the Nabataeans, and the worshiper used to raise his hands up to pray.
- 4) They set up shrines in distant places such as Alexandria and Minnopolis in Italy because they were communities there.
- 5) They worshiped gods and goddesses, in addition to deifying some of their cities. It is likely that they worshiped the place itself and imagined it in the form of a god.
- 6) It is not easy to develop a system for the Nabataean gods due to their large number and due to the lack of original references for the Nabataeans regarding religion and beliefs.
- 7) In the event of any kind of violation of the sanctity of graves, fines must be paid to the gods.
- 8) Canaanite and Phoenician sources, as well as Mesopotamia, the eastern Mediterranean coast, and Arabia, are primary sources for Nabataean religious beliefs.
- 9) They carried with them Al-Lat, Al-Azwa, Manat, Dhul-Shara, and the Shiites of the people, all of which suited the nomadic life, especially the Shiites of the people who hated drinking alcohol.

b) The art of sculpture among the Nabataeans (gods):

The Nabataeans formed their gods in the form of stone monuments carved into the rock in the shape of (Stella) and were placed at the entrances to cities.⁶

- 1) None of the gods had such a high degree of art and sophistication as the carving of their temples, especially the Treasury.
- 2) The sculpting of the gods was characterized by large, wide eyes, a large nose, and thick lips, in addition to a short stature, meaning that the sculpting of statues of the gods was devoid of beauty, creativity, and spirit, unlike the art of sculpting the gods among the Greeks and Romans.
- 3) The Nabataeans tended to personalize the monument by approximating the human figure or by purchasing a ready-made statue.

Nabataean mythology is divided, based on the history of the Nabataeans and the extent to which they were influenced by those around them, into three sections:

- 1) Nabataean desert mythology, which was influenced by the Nabataean surroundings.
- 2) Nabataean agricultural mythology that you are after they settled in settlements and cities.
- 3) Complex Nabataean mythology. It mixed with various Eastern, Semitic, Greek and Roman mythologies and reformulated its components.

Nabatean desert mythology

Desert mythology has migrated with the Nabataeans since their first migrations. There is no doubt that it took on its path what it encountered from the mythology of the desert peoples with which it came into contact. However, we can find a feminine desert trinity represented by (Al-Lat, Al-Uzza - Manat) and a male desert trinity represented by (Dhu Shura) - Hubal - the people's shu'a. Al-Lat represents the feminine solar-desert trinity and is the mother of both female and male gods and deities.⁷ The Nabataeans and the people of the Hatra Kingdom worshiped her during the reign of Herodotus, and she was known as Alita, meaning the flower of the sky. She is believed to be the goddess of the sky, which the Syrians also worshiped as a result of the departure of the Nabataean Arabs. Al-Bukhari narrated about her on the authority of Ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with them both, that she was a man who kneaded dough in the pilgrims' market, and it seems that he was a philanthropic man who supported the pilgrims, so when he died, they taught him and carbon. Among the Nabataeans, she was Al-Lat, as stated in the Nabataean texts found in Palmyra, Salkhad, and Al-Hijr. She was also the head of the house, as it was reported that the Kingdom of Zaba had a son from her husband, Udhayna, and her name was Wahb Al-Lat. Among the Assyrians, its worship entered Syria, so they associated it with the identification of the rain god, which becomes among the Nabataeans, with the god Dhul-Shari. Al-Lat's relationship with Dhu al-Shari was constantly changing. Sometimes she appeared as his mother and was called (Shamu), meaning the Virgin, the sun, and sometimes she was described as his wife and lover. (The name Al-Lat was mentioned in Edomite mythology and it is possible that Al-Lat comes from Edom.) In Greek mythology, Lat is equivalent to the goddess Athena.⁸

a) Al-Uzza

The second goddess in the Nabataean female trinity is the one who represents the winter face of the goddess Al-Lat and is symbolized

by the morning star (the planet Venus). She is the goddess (with the mask) in Petra. There is no doubt that she is more representative of the goddess Ishtar with her fertile qualities. She was favored by the people of Mecca, as she is the dear and powerful. Al-Tabari mentioned that the Arabs used to sanctify it as a tree or a stone, and it often had a statue of a woman, and the Quraish used to carry it with them in wars, and the Nabataeans worshiped it. Its name appears to be derived from the Jaziri god (Azizu), who appeared in the Arabian Peninsula and among the Moabites and Edomites. It is said that the Messenger - may God bless him and grant him peace - ordered Khalid bin Al-Walid to demolish Bayt Al-Uzza in the year 8 AH. Al-Uzza met Aphrodite in Greek mythology. A temple was built for her in Petra, which is represented by an unpictured cubic stone with a reduced shape.⁹

b) Manat

As for the third deity, it is Manat, and it is called by the Babylonians as Manatu (Manata), and by the Hebrews it is called (Mena), and by the Nabataeans it is called Manawat. Its name is derived from (death) or fate, as it is the face that represents the underworld of the mother gods, meaning it corresponds to the image of the Sumerian or Babylonian (Areshkigal). It is said that she is the daughter of Al-Uzza and the sister of Al-Lat, and that she has no form and that she was in the accusative case. On the sea coast near Wadi Qadir, it is concluded that it has a connection with the sea, water, wind, and clouds, and the Arabs used to offer sacrifices to it in times of drought, and Saadmanah, Abd Manat, and Aws Manat were named after it, especially the Aws, Khazraj, and Azd tribes, who were extremely wealthy because of it.¹⁰

c) The male Nabataean trinity

Dhu al-Shara: The male Nabataean trinity appears to us in the desert stage as if it expresses one god, Dhu al-Shara, who stands at the head of this trinity to later form the national god of the Nabataeans. Some believe that its name was derived from mountainous areas in the Arabian Peninsula, and some believe that its name was derived from the (Shara) or Sharah mountain range in the south of Petra, which still retains this name. As for the meaning of the word Dhu, it means the lords, meaning the lord of the tribe, and the lords do not represent a diagnostic representation, but rather a symbolic representation. The meaning of the name (Dhu-Shara) may be that it is the enlightening god, which is a reference to the sun. He was associated with Zeus or Dionysius (the Roman Bacchus), especially if he was surrounded by grape leaves.¹¹ Its monuments were pointing towards the sun. He was embodied in the form of a block, rock, or column. Al-Uzza, who was later known as Aphrodite or Venus, was associated with him. It had multiple symbols, the most important of which was the falcon, which we find widespread in the ruins of Petra. Among its other symbols were the bull, the lion, and the snake, all of which symbolized fertility and strength. Dhu al-Shara was not represented by statues in the desert period, but rather by black monuments to which sacrifices were made. His worship spread widely in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Safavids worshipped him as a heavenly god and represented him in the form of a man with a long beard and a hat on his head.¹²

d) Stupid god (Hubal)

He is the second god in the desert male trinity, and he is the god Hubal, whose origin is (Habal), meaning (Baal), and he is a god whose roots are Canaanite. He was worshipped in the Arabian Peninsula and was almost the greatest god among the Quraysh. His statue was made of red agate and was in the form of a man with a broken right hand. The Quraysh made a hand for him from gold. He was found inside the Kaaba and was called (the owner of the darts).¹³ In Aramaic, he is the god of the moon. The Nabataeans mentioned Hubal with the goddess

Manat and with Dhu al-Shari. There are those who believe that the god Hubal was originally Moabite and migrated to the Nabataeans and Lihyanites through Amr ibn Luhay and then migrated to the Arabian Peninsula and was adopted by the Quraysh. It is mentioned that the Arabs' methods of worshipping Hubal are similar to the Moabites' worship of Hubal, as they would erect this idol on top of houses and high hills and slaughter sacrifices to it and prefer it over all their other gods. The Quraysh did the same, as they would erect it on top of the Kaaba.¹⁴

e) The Shiites of the people

He is called the patron saint of the people. He hated drinking alcohol. He is one of the ancient gods of the Nabataeans and perhaps older than Dhu Sharra. He is the protector of souls at night. He leads caravans in the desert. In Greek mythology, he is the god Ares, who is known for his qualities that are opposite or different from those of the Nabataeans. He is a god of war who loves killing and bloodshed. He is hated by the Greek gods and is the main cause of the Trojan War. There are also some of the gods that the Nabataeans worshipped, including the god El: He was known in the Levant and is the Semitic root of the word God. According to Canaanite and Phoenician sources, Ebel was the origin of the gods or perhaps their father. Because Baal was the son of El, he borrowed many of his roots and attributes and became the most powerful. In the Old Testament, the Semitic peoples knew El (God) and that Beit El is the Ramallah that is known today (i.e. the name changed over time). The Nabataeans knew the god El and added him to the names of their kings, such as Rab El and Saad El.

f) The scribal God

He is the god of writing and the Nabataeans called him (Hektebi) which means servant of writing. Researchers have linked him with the Egyptian god (Takhut), the Greek god (Hermes), the Babylonian god (Nabu) and the Roman god (Mercury), all of which are gods responsible for writing. Dr. Fawzi Ziyadin believes that she is the god who protects caravans and controls the destinies of people.¹⁵

Nabataean agricultural mythology

Once the Nabataeans settled down, learned agriculture, and established cities, the beliefs of agriculture and its fertile gods infiltrated them. The gods (Dhu Shara and Al-Lat) were reformulated to be saturated with the beliefs of fertility and the spirit of agriculture. Agricultural offerings appeared, and the vineyard occupied a high position, especially after the Nabataeans learned about grape agriculture in later stages. Perhaps the most important god that entered with the agricultural belief is the god (Baal) in his image (Hadad), which is an Aramaic image of (Canaanite/Sumerian) origin, and he is the god of rain, clouds, and thunder. All the manifestations of fertility among the Syrians and the Nabataeans were influenced by this god, as for the other god is (Qaws) of Edomite origin and his name was found in Khirbet al-Tannur engraved in the form of a priest, the god of Horus and Hauran was the most important area of his worship and the gods (Hadad) and (Qaws) of an agricultural nature merged with the god Dhushara and gave him an agricultural characteristic in addition to the goddess (Atargata) who is the Syrian goddess of fertility Urba (Hierapolis) and she was the wife of the god Hadad, the owner of the throne winged with bulls, as for her, her throne was winged with lions.

Complex Nabataean mythology

The Nabataean spiritual horizon opened up to many beliefs. They took from the Egyptian, Aramaic, Canaanite, Greek and Roman gods and formulated from this mixture their own Nabataean mythology.

At this stage, the god Dhushara became (Zeus - Hadad) and became (Dhushara - Bacchus) and was worshipped in Hauran under the name (Dhushara - Aari). It seems that this development factor was the introduction of the worship of the god Dionysus, the Greek god of wine (the Roman Bacchus). The vine and grape clusters came to represent him. When Dhushara is associated with the lion, bull and falcon, Zeus (Jupiter) becomes the solar god. When Dhushara is associated with grape leaves and clusters, the god becomes (Greek Dionysus) (Roman Bacchus). When Dhu'shara became comparable to Zeus, (Atargata) became his counterpart, not Allat. The Greeks found in her a counterpart, Aphrodite, as she is the goddess of plant life, wheat, dolphins, etc. In some of her statues, leaves appear to cover many parts of her body, face, and neck, and figs and the Romans appear coupled with her. Atargata corresponds to the Mesopotamian goddess (Ishtar), the Canaanite goddess (Astarte), the Greek goddess (Aphrodite), the Roman goddess (Venus), the Egyptian goddess (Isis), and the Anatolian goddess (Cybele). In addition, the worship of the goddess Atarana became famous in the form of the goddess Ishtar-Gettys, who was worshipped in Ashkelon in the form of a half-fish goddess. She is the goddess of dolphins, as models of dolphins were found in the village of Khirbet Brak, in Petra, and in Abda in Wadi Rum, which reflects an image of the extensive maritime trade activity of the Nabataeans. A picture of her (Atarana) appears as a goddess of horses and camels, and as a protector of travelers and a transporter of souls to the underworld, i.e. the world of death.

From Manat to Tyche and Nike

Manat is one of the female triad worshipped by the Nabataeans. She is the guardian of the city of Petra for the Nabataeans, but she later turns into the goddess of luck (Tyche) of Petra and the goddess of victory (Nike) of Petra. Manat returns to him death and war, and the goddess of victory in wars in addition to being the goddess of luck and the supplication of lost opportunities. So Manat, this Nabataean goddess, reflects an image of the two Greek goddesses, Tyche and Nike, alike. They (Tyche and Nike) came together in a wonderful sculpture in Petra, where you see (Nike) carrying the universe on her head through the twelve constellations of the sky. This The statue is in the Amman Museum, while (Tyche) is a sculpture in the middle of the zodiac and this sculpture is in an American museum.

Symbols of the Nabataean Gods

Plant symbols include wheat, specifically the wheat ear, figs and pomegranates, which are symbols of the goddess Ishtar (Genis). As for the vine tree and its clusters, they are symbols of Dhushara in the Dionysus phase. Animal symbols include the eagle to indicate the god Qaws and the eagle generally indicates the sun. As for the second symbol, it is the lion that represents the goddess Al-Uzza and also the lions in the service of the goddess Ishtar Genis. The third symbol is the bull that accompanies (Zeus Hadad) and symbolizes fertility. Various symbols including the lightning rod that represents Zeus (Hadad and the raised palm, which is a national Nabataean symbol that distinguishes them from others and the two intersecting horns of fertility, which is a Hellenistic symbol representing Ishtar Genis) and the symbol of the zodiac and astronomy that also represents her and her connection to human destinies.

Aspects of Nabataean mythology

Nabataean mythology is represented by what the Nabataeans inherited from the Edomites and Canaanites, and this is evident in the places of worship, which are:

High Places, which are an open, wide-floored area carved into the mountain, with a semi-oval shape, in the middle of which is the altar where sacrifices are offered. An example of this is Ma'aliyat al-Raqim. It is called "the altar". Nabataean monuments are erected stones whose height is twice their width, some of which are rectangular and some of which are convex, symbolizing the god, and the monuments may be for more than one god.

Obelisks

They are more regular monuments that may have contained writing. This type of construction is characterized by being pointed at the top in the shape of a needle. This name came from the Greeks (Obelisks). This construction was found in Egypt, where the Pharaoh built it to celebrate his rule for 30 years. Many Egyptian obelisks were taken to Rome. They were known during the time of Emperor Caligula in 37 AD. Some historians believe that obelisks were used as watchtowers in wars or to guide travelers. And the merchants during their travel to know the distance they have traveled. As for the Nabataeans, there are those who mention that the obelisks were used either as a grave, which is a weak belief, or they were used as a building with certain religious rituals that help the souls leave the body of the deceased where they ascend to the upper world. Although there are those who mention that the Nabataeans believed in the soul's exit to the underworld, that is, to the world of the dead.

Temples

The Nabataean gods were worshipped in temples called (Mahramana) or (Bayta) which means (the sacred house) i.e. (the holy house). The most important temples are the Temple of the Winged Lion, the Temple of Al-Lat in Hajar and Salkhad, the Temple of Aara located in (Bosra), the Temple of Khirbet Tannur dedicated to the goddess Ishtar-Ghetis and the god Hadad, the Temple of Al-Uzza in Petra and in Jabal Ram, etc. and the Temple of Qasr al-Bint, which was built to worship the god Dhushara.

The treasury

The Treasury is considered one of the most important and famous architectural buildings in Petra and the most beautiful in terms of sculpture. The Treasury was built during the reign of Harith III and is his tomb. This is the prevailing opinion among historians and researchers, especially after the wonderful discovery that took place in 2003, when many graves were found below or near the front of the Treasury, which suggests that it is a tomb built for Harith III. However, some believe that it was built as a shrine to worship the goddess Isis, who represents the goddess Al-Uzza among the Nabataeans. As for the symbols carved on the front of the Treasury, they show that the Treasury was built during the Nabataean era and the sculptures were carved in later periods, i.e. in the Hellenistic era, not the Roman era. This opinion is preferred by historians and researchers. The treasury is divided into two floors, the lower and the upper, both of which are filled with sculptures and symbols that show the direct influence of the Nabataeans on it, as follows:

Lower floor

The lower floor includes human and animal sculptures, as the right and left facades are represented by sculptures of (Castor and Pollux), known in Roman mythology as (Dioscuri), who are two gods who represent protectors of caravans and human souls, in addition to the fact that one of them faces east and the other faces west, riding

horses, which indicates that they follow the direction of the sun at sunrise and sunset, in addition to one of them taking the evil soul to hell and the other taking the good soul to heaven. They are both sons of Zeus, but Castor is immortal and was a tamer of horses, while Pollux is immortal and was a boxer. Legend has it that they got into a big fight with their cousins. Castor was killed, but Pollux survived. In honor of them from Zeus, Pollux spent a day in the underworld with Castor and another day on Mount Olympus. Some legends mention that Zeus immortalized them in the form of bright stars so that they would stay together forever. This sculpture on the facade of the treasury resembles the two gods Abgal and Ashar in Palmyra, where a shrine for them was found there. Also in Khirbet Samrin, where a sculpture of the god Abgal on horseback was found, and the name Abgal was written at the bottom of the sculpture in Greek letters (Twp).

Upon entering the vault, you will notice two chambers with human or animal figures above their doors. Unfortunately, due to the obvious destruction, the true nature of this sculpture is unknown, but it is believed that they are two sculptures representing eagles, a symbol of victory in all civilizations. This belief is supported because the sculpture resembles the sculpture found in the triangular panel Pediment, where there is a sculpture of an eagle.

The frieze: Through the sculpture in the frieze, we can see a series of vases decorated with a frame of winged animals known as (griffins) with high heads and tails that merge in the middle in a spiral with flowers and leaves. The sculpture of this mythical animal was found in Greek and Roman temples such as the Temple of Apollo in Didyma and in the Temple of Emperor Antoninus and Faustina in Rome and dates back to the second century AD. And after this mythical animal has been known since the Archaic era in Greece. As the legend mentions, the griffins came from the far north where they were guardians of the golden ring of the people of the one eye and the griffins symbolized or represented wealth and extravagant riches. In the treasury, they were guardians of the wine cup of the god Dionysus, where the vases took the form of a (Krater) without handles, which is known as a wine cup. Many examples of this type of pottery have been found in southern Arabia, in addition to the Fertile Crescent region, starting from Iran, where it was dedicated to the worship of the god Mithras, and in Syria, where it was dedicated to the worship of the goddess Ishtar Geis. This type of sculpture is not necessarily funerary, as researchers mention that the sculpture of vases represents a symbol of honoring the god by pouring wine on the body of the sacrifice or offering. The frieze is topped by a triangular panel (Pediment) topped with 3 mashrabiya or facades. The triangular panel is distinguished by its many decorations, as there is a sculpture of a female head in the middle, which scholars have differed on the identity of this head. Some say that under the head is an Amazonian, due to the presence of a similar sculpture on one of the vases found in Italy. Some say that under the head is Medusa with strands of hair in the shape of snakes. However, researcher Nelson Glueck states that the head in the triangular panel is similar to the sculpture of the head found in Khirbet al-Tannur, where a sculpture of the head of Ishtar Gates was found, surrounded by spiral roses and covering her face with leaves. However, there is still doubt about this sculpture, as is the case in the Treasury. There is another opinion that states that this sculpture is of a mask, which is a religious theatrical symbol known to the Greeks before the Nabataeans. Along the top of the vault is a narrow frame separating the lower floor from the upper, carved at the top of the triangular panel. Along this frame is carved a row of rosettes, ranging in size from four to five petals. This carving was common in the Greek and Hellenistic eras, but there is no doubt that the Greeks took this carving from the Persians, as is clear from

the Persians found in Persepolis, which dates back to the 6th and 5th centuries BC. However, the basis of carving this beautiful decorative element dates back to the 1st century BC, that is, to the time of the Assyrians, who were the first to use this symbol, which was later influenced by the Nabataeans, who included it on the vault.

Upper floor

The upper floor is distinguished by being divided into three round facades known as (Tholos) in the middle of which are three niches or kiosks surrounded by two external niches connected to each other by a broken triangular panel. The upper floor contains a sculpture of nine female statues divided as follows: On both sides of the Tholos there is a lower one for the Amazons, who are the warriors who are characterized by courage and strength. They played an important role in the Greek and Roman civilizations. Some say that they came from Asia Minor or Iran, while others say that they came from the coast of Libya. This name came from Iranian culture and means warriors (Hamazon) or from Greek civilization and means those who resemble men or are without husbands or those with severed breasts or those with severed right breasts, where they used to put the bag filled with arrows. The Amazons lived for 700 years and had many queens. They participated in the Trojan War, where one of their queens was killed by Achilles, in addition to the god Hercules entering a certain war because of the belt or belt of Hippolyta. It is noted on the treasury on the upper floor below them on the right and left sides of the facade, in addition to the internal kiosks and around (Tholos), where there is a statue of the goddess Isis or Atargatis or the Ptolemaic queen (Prince) below.

The two Amazons on the facade of the treasury wear short skirts and carry an axe. As for the interior, it is believed that they carry a shield. The number of their statues reached 6 statues. In the inner kiosks of the treasury, two sculptures of the winged goddess of victory, Nike, known to the Romans as Victoria, were found. She was the goddess who brought victory to all Greek cities. She was wearing a long, pleated dress, and wings were placed on her shoulders to help her fly. In Greek mythology, Nike is considered one of the virgin goddesses along with the goddesses Athena and Artemis. As for the sculpture in the middle of (Tholos), the opinions of researchers and historians differed on it. The statue in the middle represents a woman leaning her head to the right, holding a small tool in her right hand and a horn of prosperity in her left hand. This symbol was known to the Egyptian goddess Hathor, as she appears in all her sculptures holding the horn of prosperity, which was replaced by the goddess Isis in the Hellenistic era. However, Dr. Fawzi Zayadin compared this statue on the treasury with one below of one of the Ptolemaic queens called (Berenice) standing in a similar manner on one of the pottery dating back to the Ptolemaic era. A statue of her was carved, holding a horn of prosperity in her left hand and a circular ring decorated with flowers in her right hand. Many pottery known as Oinochoa was found bearing this sculpture of the Ptolemaic queen, in addition to the fact that Emperor Philadelphus II carved statues of his wife Arsinoe holding a horn of prosperity filled with fruits in her left hand, in addition to a large number of statues of her made of topaz underneath it and placed in a small church built of pure gold. Historians, especially Dorothy Thompson, mention that the Ptolemies made pottery known as Oinochoa in order to honor their queens and raise their status among the subjects. The Ptolemaic queen Arsinoe represented the goddesses Isis and Tyche through the statues under her on the pottery pieces, which suggests to us that this sculpture is a religious symbol depicting the Ptolemaic queen as goddesses and not humans.

The worship of the goddess Isis is one of the most important worships that spread in Ptolemaic Egypt and had many shepherds and believers in it. This appeared in the papyrus writings that were found in the Egyptian city of (Oxyrhynchus) Oxypernekos, where it was mentioned that the worship of Isis spread in Egypt, Central Asia, Greece, Rome, India, Iran and even the Arab countries. As for the Nabataeans, specifically in Petra, it was found through these writings in lines 100 and 102, Isis was mentioned as Atargatis, and in line 102, the name Isis was mentioned as one of the Amazons. As for line 235, her name was associated with Castor and Pollux, the protectors of the sailor spirits, in addition to their control over winds, light, lightning and snow. The phrase Dioscuri dominated with Isis in Ptolemaic Egypt, where many sculptures appeared for them on coins and pottery lamps. Isis was mentioned in the papyrus, especially in lines 51, 99, 134-135, where she was linked to the phrase of the goddess Fortuna or Tyche in the city of Pompeii and the city of Herculaneum through frescoes and statues. In addition to being mentioned in the papyrus as being linked to winemaking, this is clear from under the grape leaves on the frieze of the treasury. Finally, Isis was mentioned in line 13, where she is described as an immortal goddess who is above the status of her husband Osiris and her son Horus, and this is linked to the sculpture of her statue in the middle of the treasury. In the end, Dr. Fawzi Zayadin believes that the Isis in the treasury is none other than the goddess Al-Uzza, as the Nabataeans linked their goddess to the gods of Greece and Rome, and worshipped her in a way that suited their nomadic life.

Notes on the safe

At the top of the triangular panel, there is a sun disk decorated with wheat ears, symbolizing the goddess Isis and the goddess Hathor as well. On both sides of the triangular panel, there is a winged animal, which is clearly influenced by Egyptian civilization. It was known in the Assyrian civilization before the Egyptians and was called Sphinx. This type of creature is characterized by having the body of a lion and the head of a human, and its mission was to protect the city walls from enemies. As for the Greeks, it was carved in a somewhat different way, as it had the body of a winged lion, the face of a woman, and the tail of a snake. Greece had known this type of creature through its trade with Egypt and before the arrival of Alexander the Great. Sculptors preferred to place it under royal tombs and religious temples to protect them and expel evil spirits. As for the Greeks, this mythical animal used to ask riddles and puzzles. When a person was unable to answer, it would devour him.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflict of interests

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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